

ABSTRACT**CHURCH PLANTING USING A CONTINUOUS
QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS: IN A
NEW WESLEYAN CHURCH IN WESTERN NEW YORK**

by

Christopher Mark Baldwin

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a Continuous Ministry Development process created for this study. The Continuous Ministry Development process is used during a new church's development and articulates a church identity for a new daughter church. The church identity consists of the summation of mission, vision, and core values and articulates next steps of ministry development to take place during and after a church start. This study was an evaluation of this process and its abilities to accomplish these desired outcomes. This process was created with elements of ChurchSmart Refocusing and Total Quality Management principles.

The evaluative procedures consist of three components. First, focus groups were conducted as a pretest and after each retreat. Second, my journal detailed observations made throughout the process. Third, evaluations were based on the conclusions of the retreat process. The content of the focus group was transcribed and coded along with the journal. The codes, along with the retreat initiatives, were then quantified and translated into the major findings and conclusions of the study.

Two research questions were then formed. The first question asked if the process developed a shared and cohesive church identity (vision, mission, core values) as well as what factors contributed or detracted from the goal. The aspects that did contribute to this

end were relationship, identity, core values, and vision. The lack of understanding of the planting process due to poor communication, vision, and leadership created a faulty perception on behalf of the people and did not garner their commitment to the process.

The second research question focused on ways people exhibited and/or articulated identity with the new church. Even better than being able to articulate a church calling statement is the ability to practice it, especially in the formation of relationships. The development and implementation of strategic church-wide initiatives and goals is a good measurement of the church's practice and articulation of the identity.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
CHURCH PLANTING USING A
CONTINEOUS QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS
IN A NEW WESLEYAN CHURCH IN WESTERN NEW YORK

presented by

Christopher Mark Baldwin

has been accepted towards fulfillment

of the requirement for the

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at

Asbury Theological Seminary

Mentor

Date

Internal Reader

Date

Dean, Doctor of Ministry Program

Date

CHURCH PLANTING
USING A CONTINUOUS QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS
IN A NEW WESLEYAN CHURCH IN WESTERN NEW YORK

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by

Christopher Mark Baldwin

May 2006

© 2006

Christopher Mark Baldwin

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
Acknowledgements.....	xi
Chapter	
1 Overview of the Study	1
Background of the Study	1
Called to Plant a Daughter Church	1
A Church in Conflict.....	2
The Development of The Vine Wesleyan Church.....	4
The Problem.....	6
Purpose.....	7
Research Questions.....	8
Definition of Terms.....	8
Continuous Quality Management Process	8
Total Quality Management	8
Continuous Improvement.....	8
Mission.....	9
Core Values.....	9
Vision.....	9
Mission/Purpose Statement.....	9
Mission Focus Group.....	9
Hermeneutical Community.....	9

	Critical Contextualization	10
	iii	
	Context of Study	10
	Project Description.....	13
	Subjects	22
	Instrumentation	22
	Data Collection	22
	Delimitations and Generalizability	23
	Overview of Dissertation	23
2	Review of Literature	26
	Biblical Foundations	26
	The Ministry of Philip.....	27
	The Church at Antioch: The Sending Church.....	29
	Theological Foundations.....	31
	Missiology.....	31
	Ecclesiology	40
	Historical Foundations	42
	Apostolic Church Planting.....	42
	Pioneer Church Planting	43
	Replacement Church Planting.....	44
	Sectarian Church Planting.....	45
	Saturation Church Planting	46
	Multiplication (Hiving Off) Church Planting	46

Hermeneutical Community with Critical Contextualization	47
Hermeneutical Community	48
Critical Contextualization	50
iv	
Innovation and Church Planting	51
Total Quality Management and the Church-Planting Process	52
Organizational Culture	52
Strategic Planning	54
The Role of Leadership	55
Mission, Vision, and Core Values	57
Overview of Methodology	59
3 Design of the Study	62
Problem Restated	62
Purpose Restated	62
Research Questions	63
Methodology	63
Subjects	66
Instrumentation	66
Variables and Controls	69
Data Collection	69
Confidentiality	70
Administration of Focus Groups	70
Data Analysis	70

Significance of Study71

4 Findings of the Study72

 Focus Group.....72

 Field Journal.....73

 Research Code73

v

 Core Values.....76

 Perception77

 Vision.....78

 Relationships.....79

 Identity80

 Planting Process80

 People of the Community80

 Commitment82

 Integrating82

 Leadership.....82

Significant Findings83

 Core Values.....83

 Perception85

 Vision.....86

 Relationships.....87

 Identity89

 Planting Process90

People of the Community	91
Commitment	92
Integrating.....	92
Leadership.....	93
Retreat Conclusions	93
Ministry Model	93
Strategic Initiatives	94
	vi
S.M.A.R.T. Goals	94
Major Themes	96
Research Question #1	96
Research Question #2	99
Summary of Major Findings.....	102
Research Question #1	102
Research Question #2	102
5 Summary and Conclusions	103
Major Themes	103
Biblical Reflections.....	106
Relation of Results to Previously Published Studies	111
Church Planter’s Toolkit.....	111
Advanced Strategic Planning	112
Contributions of Study	113
Limitation of Study	117

Unexpected Findings and Conclusions.....118
 Application of Study.....120
 Design of Project.....122
 Further Studies or Models.....123

APPENDIXES

A. Church Plant Retreats.....126
 B. New Church Foundations Retreat #1127
 C. New Church Foundations Retreat #2132
 D. New Church Foundations Retreat #3136

vii

E. Focus Group Pretest151
 F. Focus Group First Retreat Reflection.....153
 G. Focus Group Second Retreat Reflection.....155
 H. Focus Group Third Retreat Reflection.....159
 I. Church Calling Statement.....165
 J. Study Timeline167

WORKS CITED169

WORKS CONSULTED172

TABLES

Table	Page
4.1 List of Code Categories	74
4.2 Ranking of Core Values Based on Frequency	75
4.3 Core Values.....	77
4.4 Results of Lancaster Larry and Lucy	81

FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 The origin of attenders of The Vine Wesleyan Church.....6	
2.1 Two ways to develop leadership team and set organizational vision57	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I offer my deepest appreciation to

Dr. Michael Rynkiewich. Your guidance, wisdom, and encouragement have been tremendously valuable through the process. You are truly a terrific mentor.

Dr. Thompson and Dr. Andrews. Your insights and support guided me to be more thoughtful and thorough, and I greatly appreciate your assistance.

The people of the Vine Church. The ride has been terrific so far, and your prayers and support through the process have been a tremendous encouragement. As a congregation you are truly a gift from God. I am so pleased to be your pastor. God has done so much in our brief history; I am looking forward to experiencing so much more with you.

My family. Tammy, you are my partner in life, partner in parenting, partner in ministry, and partner in education. I can hardly comprehend the amount of time you have spent and sacrificed to make this goal/dream a reality. Your love for me and the boys through this process has been tremendous. You are so incredible and awesome, and I love you so much. Joshua and Jared, I could not ask for two better sons in the world. You guys are the best.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Background

The background and context of this study lays the foundation for the dissertation and consists of the call to start a new church and a description of previous ministry experience.

Called to Plant a Daughter Congregation

Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church decided to plant churches in surrounding communities, rather than grow into a larger megachurch in one location, to make a greater impact for Christ in the Western New York area. I was selected by Eastern Hills to plant a new congregation in Lancaster, New York. My selection was based on my education and experience along with my familiarity with the ministry and people of Eastern Hills. I think part of the consideration of my selection was the fact that I am a native Western New Yorker and my work on staff at Eastern Hills on two prior occasions in student and adult ministries. My wife, Tammy, and I were interviewed by Pastor Karl Eastlack, senior pastor of Eastern Hills. After that interview, we were informed that we were selected as the church planters. As the first church planters selected, the task to determine the best way to proceed in creating a daughter church out of an existing mother congregation began.

First, one hundred people (leadership team of eight and group of ninety-two) from Eastern Hills joined the church plant in Lancaster, New York. These people were either personally selected by me or positively responded to the all-church invitation. Although all of them appreciated the ministry of Eastern Hills, some wanted to start a church that

was a mirror reflection of the mother congregation. At the other end of the spectrum were those who joined the church plant in order to participate in a ministry different from Eastern Hills. In order to understand the desires of both groups, a process was created and followed that encouraged participation while determining God's will and purpose for the new congregation.

Many possibilities exist regarding the procedures for starting a new daughter church. One option is the typical mother/daughter church approach: preach a good sermon, have a reception for vision casting, and then extend the invitation to those at the reception to worship somewhere else. Nevertheless, the most important issue that existed was how to walk people through a process that would result in ownership of a new church and a healthy separation from the existing church. The hope was for the creation of a church that was single-focused and purposeful, different from my previous ministry experience, which is outlined in the next section.

A Church in Conflict

In my time as senior pastor of Levant Wesleyan Church from the fall of 2001 to the summer of 2003, God gave us many learning and growing opportunities, both for me as a leader and for the congregation. After twenty years of unprecedented growth, the church spent seven years in decline before my arrival. After ministering for two months (November and December 2001), I divided the congregation into groups of twenty-five for receptions in our home. During these meetings, over the next three months (January-March 2002), many expressed their desire for the congregation to grow. Nevertheless, they were frustrated because they did not know how to proceed.

After these conversations, the church began a six-month series of weekend retreats, open to all Levant attendees, to discuss the future of the church. While many desired to grow, people had different agendas for which direction the church should turn. With a variety of needs and experiences, the members of the church could not come to an agreement on the vision and direction for the church. Levant began the process thinking it would bring greater clarification to the church; however, it only led to greater conflict. People realized that although they were attending the same church, they had different values, some which were held strongly. These differences led to difficulties in the life of the church.

Because of my experience at Levant, I wanted to use what I learned as I approached the church plant. The key in the establishment of a daughter church is developing a shared and cohesive vision, mission, and set of core values. This creation of a daughter church differed from the Levant church in a number of ways. One was the spiritual health of the individuals. Those involved in the daughter church were in many ways more committed and disciplined in their walk with the Lord. Another reason was the context of ministry. The Levant church, as stated above, was in the midst of a seven-year attendance decline. The people involved in the daughter church were a part of Eastern Hills, which at the time was one of the one hundred fastest growing churches in America. The culture of Levant, as a result of the behavior of previous pastoral staff, was one of distrust and suspicion between the clergy and laity. The atmosphere where the daughter church was created was defined by Christian love, courage, and cooperation. The final aspect that differentiates the Levant church from the Eastern Hills daughter church was a key component in the process itself. In the Levant situation, we did not use

focus groups between retreats to evaluate and clarify conclusions made during the retreats.

For a daughter church to forge a new identity, a process of identifying and discovering existing values is important. The elements of identity and participation are key to the Total Quality Management (TQM) program developed by Edward Deming. The approach to creating a daughter church outlined in this study will combine the qualities of identity and participation from TQM with consideration given to the critical components of biblical truth and cultural context.

The Development of The Vine Wesleyan Church

The Vine Wesleyan Church is the daughter church started by Eastern Hills. I joined the staff of Eastern Hills on 1 June 2004. Prior to my work on the church, some other tasks were given. From 1 June to 31 August 2004 my priority was the creation of an adult Christian education initiative called Eastern Hills University. I was also given some pastoral care responsibilities. An additional task was handling the detail of all special worship services, for instance, the Church at the Ballpark service that was held prior to a professional baseball game in downtown Buffalo.

In September 2004 I was given permission to begin work on the daughter church for a March 2005 launch. I started by holding three informational meetings on different days, at different times, to share with any Eastern Hills attenders who were interested. I then started a monthly preview service to get people together to start building relationships and providing an introduction to our style of music and preaching of God's Word. We then began to organize community outreach projects to communicate to the residents that a new church was coming to Lancaster. During October, November, and

January we held all church retreats outlined in this study. Also in October we started small groups for people who had committed to the church or were interested in its ministry to begin building relationships with one another. We held the last two preview services on 6 and 13 March 2005, with 130 and 139 people in attendance respectively.

The church held its first public service on 20 March 2005 with 355 people in attendance. After nine months, as of 1 January 2006, the church has averaged 193 people in attendance. Student ministries includes grades 5th-12th and averages eighteen students and six leaders. The children's ministry cares for an average of thirty-seven children every Sunday. The church has twenty-five small groups that meet at various locations and times throughout the week. On average, the church has one community outreach project per month. Some examples have been giving away bottled water, the fall festival, handing out flags at the Fourth of July parade, and giving people glow necklaces at the community tree lighting event. We hold a monthly pastor's coffee to connect with people new to the Vine. We also have a C4 strategy that encourages and equips people to get involved in the Vine and become members. The C4 strategy is four classes that orient participants to our local church, the Wesleyan Church, Spiritual Gifts and Church Membership. On Friday 23 December 2005 we had a Christmas service with 315 in attendance. Since launch on 20 March, six children were dedicated to the Lord and three individuals baptized. About three hundred people consider the Vine their home church. How these folks came to attend the Vine is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

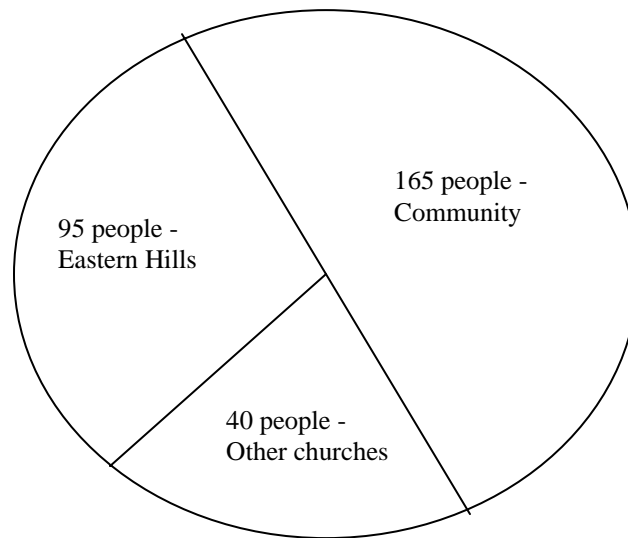


Figure 1.1. The origin of attenders of The Vine Wesleyan Church.

The Problem

One of the opportunities a daughter church has during its development is to articulate its own sense of identity. When the church is formed and established, everyone in the new church needs to understand why. A journey of identity development should result in ownership among participants. As participants take ownership, a sense of belonging develops with those who participate in starting a new church. Ownership of shared ideas could occur with the statement of a personal vision of the church planter; however, the best that would result from this statement is the compliance of others. My desire was for a shared vision to emerge in the church-planting process. A shared vision results in the commitment, not mere compliance, of individuals. The following study shows how the development of a shared vision will be the means to accomplish the goals of belonging and commitment to the organization. A shared vision has to incorporate the personal visions and then encourage people to see how these personal visions fit into a vision of the whole.

The process of creating a shared vision and identity at best should result in participation at every level of the organization. The ministry development and evaluation process uses collaboration and teamwork to create the organization. This idea of teamwork will be part of the process of church creation and method of ministry operation. Many of those attracted to the plant were those working in highly participatory organizations. For them to participate at work but not in church was a frustration in their previous ministry involvement; therefore, the offer to participate in the discussion of vision, mission, and core values was a magnetic force on many to join in the discovery. Participation is not only key to the church plant process, but a major aspect of church culture as well. The culture established sets the expectation of listening to every level of the organization, from Sunday morning greeter to vice-chair of the Local Board of Administration.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to evaluate a continuous quality management process developed for this study. This study evaluates the method on its ability to articulate a shared and cohesive new church identity consisting of the mission, vision, and core values. As a result, it outlines a procedure for approximately twenty to embark on a shared journey (leader and people) in the discovery of a new church identity and culture. The process consists of three retreats with focus group pretest and post-retreat evaluations.

Research Questions

1. Did the process develop a shared and cohesive church identity (vision, mission, and core values)? What factors seemed to contribute to this end? What elements detracted from this goal?
2. What ways do people exhibit and/or articulate identity with the new church?

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of principal terms and their definitions.

Continuous Quality Management Process

Continuous Quality Management Process is the method for church identity creation developed in this study. This process is an adaptation of the ChurchSmart Refocusing Process from Church Resource Ministries with principles of Total Quality Management as explained below.

Total Quality Management (TQM)

Total quality management means that the organization's culture is defined by and supports the constant attainment of customer satisfaction through an integrated system of tools, techniques, and training. As a company makes continuous improvements of its organizational processes, it results in higher quality products and services (Sashkin and Kiser 39).

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is the ability of a process to adapt to any changes that may have taken place. Through a process of regular evaluation and an adjustment of organizational structure and methods (or practice), a company can strive for improvement in various areas.

Mission

Mission is the purpose for the day-to-day existence of the organization. In the church, mission refers to why the church exists in the world.

Core Values

Core values are concepts regarded as most important at an individual and corporate level. They are the feelings and preferences most deeply held by a group.

Vision

Vision is the preferred picture that an organization hopes to attain. In the case of the church, the vision ultimately comes from God and is usually established for a three to five year timeline. It is the understanding of the purposes and hopes for the future held by a group.

Mission/Purpose Statement

A mission or purpose statement is a summary that includes the mission, vision, and core values of the organization once they have been determined.

Mission Focus Group

A mission focus group is the target/focus group of an organization defined primarily by demographic information. For example, a focus group might be categorized as mid-twenties, white, white-collar, mean income \$45,000.

Hermeneutical Community

Hermeneutical community is a group which is firmly committed to the Word of God and to the work that it will take to understand Scripture and make proper cultural applications.

Critical Contextualization

Critical contextualization is the discerning application of the Word of God by a local community to the context of a certain community, culture, or people group.

Context of Study

The study took place in the Western New York District of the Wesleyan Church, at a new church plant in Lancaster, New York. Lancaster is a suburb on the southeast side of Buffalo, New York. This new church is identified as The Vine Church (TVC) and is a daughter church of the mother congregation, Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church of Williamsville, New York. Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church and Lancaster are the main components of the context of this study. The following is a descriptive of the present identity, history, and theology of Eastern Hills and detailed information on the community of Lancaster.

Presently Eastern Hills is one of the top four largest churches in the Wesleyan Church. It was considered the fastest growing Wesleyan Church from 1993–2000. In 2004, Eastern Hills was named as the ninety-fifth fastest growing church in America (Vaughan). It is one of the most well-known ministries in Western New York. Eastern Hills is often featured in Western New York media outlets. Eastern Hills is a church that attempts many of the latest programs or techniques (e.g., Purpose Driven Church—Saddleback Church, video venues—Northcoast Community, Kidstuff ministries—Northpoint Community). Presently the church exists on two campuses on the same road. The 8180 Greiner Road campus consists of eleven acres and is home to the administrative offices, Groundzero, which is the student ministries area, and the Eastern Hills Nursery School.

Eastern Hills employs approximately thirty-five administrative staff and eighteen pastoral staff. Over the last three years, the church has experienced complete turnover of pastoral staff, except Pastor Karl and his wife, Anita. In 2001, Eastern Hills built a new facility at 8445 Greiner Road approximately 0.5 miles to the west of the 8180 campus. This facility includes a 2,200 seat sanctuary, a large foyer with café, six classrooms, and four nursery rooms. The average attendance was two thousand in 2001. When the new facility opened in October, the attendance averaged three thousand for two months. Since January 2002, the church has averaged between 2,700 and 2,800. In 2005 the church had its fourth consecutive building campaign and for the first time fell short of its goal by \$1.2 million.

Eastern Hills was started in 1979 by Rev. and Mrs. Harold Burdick. The Burdicks came from an Evangelical Brethren Church in Ohio to be the church planters. The church met in a few different locations for two years until it was able to purchase a closed Dutch Reformed church at 8180 Greiner Road. Eight ladies attended the Dutch Reformed Church and then began attending Eastern Hills. The first eight years the church struggled, ending in Pastor Burdick's retirement in 1987. Pastor Karl Eastlack came to Eastern Hills in 1987. At the time, nineteen people attended at the church. Eastern Hills was financially supported by the district for the first ten years. After two years, under the leadership of Pastor Karl, the church decided to try to stand on its own financially. The church had grown so much over the first three years of Pastor Karl's time that it built a 150 seat sanctuary and eleven classroom space in 1990. As God continued to bless the ministry of the church, an eight hundred seat sanctuary and staff offices were added in 1994. As this journey of the church continued, the congregation completed construction of a 2,240 seat

sanctuary. Eastern Hills was recognized as the fastest growing Wesleyan church from 1993-2003. Church Growth Today stated the church had grown 1,400 people between the years 2001-2005 (Vaughan). Nevertheless, all of this growth actually took place in 2001 after moving into a new facility. Eastern Hills has reached a plateau in attendance from 2002-2005.

The Wesleyan Church is a denomination formed in the merger of the Wesleyan-Methodist and Pilgrim Holiness Church in 1968. The Wesleyan Church history is part of the holiness movement, and its theological foundation is Wesleyan-Armenian. Wesleyan Church history is rich in social concern and personal piety. As noted later in the chapter, the Wesleyan Church is placing emphasis on leadership development. Although this has not changed their basic theology, it does consume a great deal of the time, focus, and attention of the denomination and Western New York district.

Lancaster was selected by an Eastern Hills church plant committee as the community where the new church would be started and continue to exist. The church was planted in one of the fastest growing areas of the Western New York region. The immediate area surrounding Lancaster includes the communities of Alden, Elma, and Bowmansville. Lancaster was formed from Clarence, New York, a community just north, on 20 March 1833. The village of Lancaster was incorporated on 10 March 1849. Lancaster has both a strong town and village component.

The Lancaster area is denoted in two ways namely town and village. The town is the larger category consisting of all of Lancaster. The village is the portion that is central and eastern part of Lancaster. The village has its own government and is fully contained within the boundaries of the town. The town consists of numerous developments that

have already been built, as well as plans to build more for a number of years in the future. These are all new homes ranging in size and cost. The town surrounds the village to the north, west, and east, and new homes are being built in all of these locations.

The village has a few small shops, a theater, restaurants, and local government offices. It is about half retail and half office space. Another significant part of Lancaster is Transit Road, which serves as its west border. Transit Road is one of the most significant retail roadways in Western New York. On Transit in Lancaster, a number of businesses are being built, such as an Applebee's, Starbucks, Wal-Mart, and Kohl's.

The demographics according to the 2003 Percept study (Percept Group) are as follows. The population is 97 percent Anglo, while the average age is thirty-eight. The majority of people are middle-class, with an average household income of \$63,000. The percentage of households with no faith involvement is 39 percent. Nevertheless, strong faith involvement is only descriptive of 28 percent of the population.

Project Description

This project was an evaluative study in the descriptive mode. It evaluated the process using descriptive means. The project consisted of three all-church retreats. These descriptive means of evaluation are focus groups, researcher's journal, and retreat conclusions, which are outlined in Chapter 3. The first step of the process was the administration of the pretest to the focus groups, which happened at my home on 28 July 2004, with six people present.

The first all-church event (R¹), called the New Church Foundations, happened on Friday, 15 October 2004 at 7:00–9:00 p.m. and Saturday, 16 October 2004 at 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (see Appendix B).

The retreat began by setting some context of the retreat process, including definitions of retreats and why we would meet in this format. The participants' handout is outlined in Appendix C. The first part of this presentation explained that retreats are places where people

- Deal with God personally and corporately,
- Listen afresh to God,
- Discern his leading, and
- Clarify the future.

The next part of the presentation explained the reasons we were meeting:

- The number one reason church plants fail is a lack of agenda harmony,
- We desire for our church to chart its own course,
- We want to do and be what God wants, and
- We want to be intentional and purposeful with all church resources and

ministries.

The next presentation stated the result of the retreats: evangelism, small groups, and other congregations. Then some framing statements were shared with the participants:

1. God is already at work; he always has been;
2. Our call is not to invent but to discover what God is already at work doing;
3. God's call to the church is to align itself to his purposes; and,
4. Alignment requires absolute surrender to God and his purposes.

An explanation of the whole process was then outlined. The retreats were essentially designed to discover where we have been, where we are going, and how we get there.

The next step was sharing the story of Eastern Hills, including the history, purpose, and

vision of their ministry. It served as the context of the church plant and also provided a context for the beginning of the new church story. It laid out the church plant as the next chapter in the story of Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church.

Because the *Refocusing* process is designed for established churches, it begins with outlining a church time line that articulates the significant events of the church's past. The church plant was a new church situation, so no time line of past events was available for evaluation. Therefore, the section was changed to reflect more self-discovery for each participant regarding previous church experiences. This section had four aspects—question, brainstorm, list, and summary:

Question: What events of my history, both positive and negative, have shaped me into who I am today?

Brainstorm: What significant people, circumstances, or events have influenced me a great deal?

List: Give spiritual high points, spiritual valley experiences, positive experiences, and negative experience. The participants were encouraged to consider what they appreciated most or were concerned about their previous church experience.

Summary: What lessons were learned from the previous exercises?

The next part of the retreat was a presentation about the heart of church planting. During this segment, concepts such as *missio Dei*, incarnational ministry, and kingdom of God were defined. Theology and philosophy of the church plant were also outlined. Many had never been part of starting a new church before, and this part of the retreat provided a larger context to what was happening.

After the presentation of the history of Eastern Hills, our personal history, and theological foundation, highlights of the retreat process were outlined. The desired outcome of the retreat was the formation of a church identity through the definition of the new church's mission, vision, and core values. Core value identification was the first step in defining the mission, vision, and core values.

The core values identification began with the Core Values Audit by Aubrey Malphurs. I gave the retreat participants a list of fifty-one possible core values. Once people determined their personal preferences, they came together to the table and determined the top five to ten values as a table. The list compiled by each table was written out on a large piece of white paper. Each table group presented its list to the other table groups.

The next segment of the retreat focused on the purpose or mission of the church. The participants received a list of purpose statements from other churches, summarized in Malphurs' book (164-74). From these statements, they articulated a mission for The Vine Wesleyan Church. Once each table had a purpose statement, it made a presentation to the whole group. The focus group considered the purpose statements created and settled on one for the church.

During the final portion of the R¹, each participant went on a personal prayer retreat. Everyone received a prayer guide to help them pray for the events that occurred during the retreat. The following is the list of questions listed in the prayer guide:

What does God value and what does he think of our values?

Of all the things we have seen about our experiences in church past and present,

- What do we rejoice over?

- What should we release?

What is God trying to say to us?

What do I personally need to surrender for this process to be effective?

These questions revealed that we seek God's agenda, not the agenda of the team leader, the leadership, or the people. All participants were encouraged to surrender any agenda, preference, or idea on how the church plant should be created. A garden of Gethsemane moment was created for everyone involved as a chance to say, "God, not my will, but your will be done" (Matthew 26:39, NIV). After the personal retreats, people came back and shared their prayers and thoughts. We wrapped up the first retreat with a time of corporate prayer.

The next step in the process was conducting our focus group (F¹) for R¹ reflection and evaluation. This focus group consisted of the video recording of the discussion around the following questions: How did you experience the first retreat? Do you have a general understanding of the retreat process? Is the context (Church Plant Understanding, Story of Eastern Hills) of the church plant clear? Were any difficult issues raised in the retreat? What was the highlight of the first retreat?

The next step in the process was the Identity Definition retreat (R²). This retreat took place on Friday, 12 November 2004 at 7:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday, 13 November 2004 at 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. on the campus of Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church. This retreat focused on the accomplishment of three goals. First, we determined our mission focus group, clarified our core values, and then participated in an exercise of vision discovery. The retreat began with a review of the retreat process, which gave us a context for the second retreat.

The mission focus group centered on two considerations. One was the demographics of Lancaster based on the 2000 census. Each participant received this information in their retreat packet. The other consideration was the evaluation of the Lancaster community on behalf of retreat participants. The exercise of Lancaster Larry and Lucy helped us accomplish the evaluation. Each participant got a diagram of a person and then thought of the qualities and dynamics of a typical person or family in Lancaster.

Once the table groups made a list of conclusions about Lancaster Larry and Lucy, each table shared with the group as a whole. Once tables had a grasp on Lancaster Larry and Lucy, the next question asked what the church would have to value in order to reach Lancaster Larry and Lucy, which provided a secondary list of ministry values. Once the tables compiled these lists, they voted for the top five values. The focus group then classified those values as either foundational, behavioral, and ministerial.

The next step expounded on the vision. One way of looking at vision is articulating what God wants to accomplish through obedience. A vision is discovered through personal and corporate surrender, prayer, and listening to God. The participants took a personal retreat. During this personal retreat, they focused on the question, if God has his way, what will our church look like in three to five years?

After the personal retreats, the table groups drew in a diagram what they sensed God said to them. Each table then presented its diagrams to the whole group. After these presentations, they wrote out statements that best described the church's vision. These statements were presented to the group. First, we combined the statements that demonstrated a common theme. The statements mentioned more than once constituted

our vision statement. After the completion of R^2 , the focus group met once again to evaluate the retreat and clarify conclusions drawn.

The second focus group (F^2) took place at the home of Joe and Amy Zaccaria on Thursday, 2 December 2005 at 7:00 p.m. with eight people in attendance. I made a video recording of the conversation. Later, I made an audio recording from the video and transcribed the conversation into notes. Then I assigned codes to the notes in order to draw observations and conclusions.

The next part of the process was the third and final retreat called Next Steps or R^3 . This retreat took place at the campus of Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church on 15 January 2005 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. The retreat had four main aspects, all adapted from the *Refocusing* process. These main aspects included ministry model, S.W.O.T. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis), strategic initiatives, and S.M.A.R.T. goals. First, the participants received a review of the retreat process and an outline of the third retreat to give context to previous retreats. The first step determined the ministry model that best accomplished our stated mission and vision. The ministry model was a conceptual diagram of how people flow through the life of the church and included assimilation and mobilization of people in the church plant. The diagram clarifies how vision is accomplished and how different ministries work together. The participants received ministry models from *Refocusing*, including the seeker-sensitive church, the seeker-driven church, the cell group church, the multiple congregation church, the classroom church, and the incarnational church. The participants, as a table, drew their perception of our congregation's ministry model. Each table presented its conclusions and then worked as a group to decide on our church's ministry model.

After discussion regarding our church's ministry model, participants worked on the S.W.O.T. analysis. Each table listed their observations of the S.W.O.T. analysis and presented to the group. Next, we determined our strategic initiatives. These were major developments that would become church-wide priorities. The question posed to the table groups was, in light of our working vision, mission, values, and ministry model, what strategic initiatives will we need to launch in the next three years? Each table group presented its strategic initiatives to the whole group, and the collective table groups decided on the top initiatives. After participants determined the top initiatives, they converted them into S.M.A.R.T. goals. These S.M.A.R.T. goals make the application of the retreat easy for the lay and staff leadership teams. After the completion of the third retreat, a third focus group retreat took place to evaluate the summit and clarify conclusions made.

The third focus group (F³) occurred at the Zaccaria home. Ten people attended. I made a video recording of the conversation. Later, I made an audio recording from the video and transcribed the conversation into notes. Then I assigned codes to the notes in order to draw observations and conclusions. The process of these focus groups built momentum in the church plant up to and through the launch day.

A key concept in the project was the hermeneutical community with critical contextualization. This hermeneutical community included all the retreat participants who were firmly committed to the Word of God and to its proper cultural application. The community did the work of critical contextualization. Critical contextualization is the discerning application of a text, in this case the Word of God, to the context of a certain

community, in this instance Lancaster, New York. Critical contextualization is most apparent in the retreat exercises that integrate Scripture and demographics.

The end goal of the process was to establish a new church identity through the articulation of the mission, vision, and core values. Aspects of TQM were utilized to reach that end. Paul refers to the church as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12), a living organism. What is distinctive for each person is their DNA, or genetic blueprint, which exists in all cells. Symbolically, the DNA (identity) of the church is composed of three parts—the mission, vision, and core values (Southern and Norton 7). TQM provides the guidelines for a process of identity articulation through the development of the mission, vision, and core values.

A very simple model of TQM consists of the following steps: (1) the company reviews the needs of its customers and whether or not these are being delivered by the company; (2) the company plans the activities needed (both day-to-day and long-term activities) to meet these customer needs; (3) the company establishes and stabilizes the processes required to deliver the products and services needed by the customer; and, (4) the company implements systems to improve its processes, products, and services. Steps 1-4 above constitute a cycle and may be repeated indefinitely for continuous improvement. Similarly, this process helps us review the needs of the congregation and community, plan the ministries needed to meet these needs, develop a system for continual improvement, and make provisions for future implementation of the process for continual evaluation.

Subjects

The goal of the process as a whole is an effective church organizational system designed to meet the needs of the Lancaster, New York, community. The population of the project consisted of eighteen people involved in the first retreat, twenty people in the second retreat, and twenty-one people involved in the third retreat. The focus group included eight individuals selected specifically to participate. The focus group was the place where the conclusions of each retreat were interpreted, clarified, and measured for effectiveness.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation utilized to evaluate the process were focus groups, field journal, and retreat conclusions. Before the all-church retreats, a focus group was selected, and it completed a pretest. After each retreat, the focus group completed a semi-structured interview with group interaction. The semi-structured interview used in the focus groups and given as a pretest and following each retreat is found in Appendixes E-H. A researcher's field journal was kept throughout the process. A field journal was kept throughout the process. The field journal begins with an entry on 31 May 2004, the evening before work began on the new church. The field journal concluded with an entry after a worship service on 14 August 2005 at The Vine Wesleyan Church.

Data Collection

The collection of data took place during the focus group interactions with the pretest, each focus group retreat review, and through the researcher's field journal. I video recorded the conversation and later made a copy on an audio recording. Then I transcribed the content into written form and coded the conversation. The codes were

then analyzed for patterns, cause and effect relationships, and frequency and intensity of comment. The journal was also coded and analyzed for patterns, cause and effect relationship, and frequency and intensity of comment.

Delimitations and Generalizability

The goal of the study was to create the identity of a new daughter church. The assumption was that identity will happen primarily through the creation of a shared vision, mission, core values, ministry model, and strategy at an all-church level. The scope of this study included those individuals making up the new daughter church plant established in Lancaster, New York. The participants were eighteen, twenty, and twenty-one in number with the leadership core team of eight individuals. The focus groups consisted of these eight individuals and their input.

Overview of Dissertation

In the following study Chapter 2 begins with the biblical, theological, and historical foundations of church planting. The review of the biblical text begins with a review of the Great Commission and then traces the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to the surrounding areas. Highlights include the ministry of Philip and the church in Antioch. The biblical foundations detail the developments in Antioch, which became a missionary center for the next step in making disciples of all nations. The biblical section also considers the important decision of Acts 15 that further defined the ministry to the Gentiles.

The theological foundations concentrate on two areas: missiology and ecclesiology. The missiology section is defined in three terms, the *missio Dei*, *incarnation*, and the kingdom of God. The *missio Dei* or “mission of God” defines the

true sent-ness of the church. This concept implies a continuation of the ministry that has been taking place for years. The development of the *missio Dei* nature of the Church occurs because the Father sent the Son, the Son sent the Church, and the Spirit empowers the Church. The idea of the *incarnation* is rooted in the very nature of the ministry of Jesus. Jesus then took on human flesh to bridge the distance between God and humans. The Church's call is to incarnational ministry to share the message of the gospel.

The third aspect of the missiology is the kingdom of God. A proper theology of mission articulates the role of the kingdom of God in church planting. The kingdom of God places a new church in the context of the work of God for the ages. The ecclesiology is based on the biblical narrative of Acts 6. This text describes the organization of the activity of God in the early Church. In the text, key organizational principles exist that inform the church plant identity formation. The theological foundations show how these concepts define both the ministry and nature of the church.

The study of literature then moves to define the important elements of hermeneutical community with critical contextualization. Chapter 2 then concludes with a study and review of the key principles of TQM germane to the project.

Chapter 3 consists of the design of the study. In Chapter 3, the all-church retreat and focus group process is explained. This process is based on the principles of hermeneutical community with critical contextualization and TQM. Chapter 3 includes the aspects of problem, purpose, research and operational questions, instrumentation, research design, data collection, and analysis.

In Chapter 4 a report of findings is given which organizes and displays significant findings. In Chapter 5, a summary of findings and conclusions from the study are

outlined. This summary consists of the evaluation of important data, theological reflection, implications for existing body of knowledge, contributions of research methodology, limitations of the study, unexpected findings, practical applications of findings, and reflection about further studies.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is a review of literature on the foundations of church planting, the use of the hermeneutical community with critical contextualization, and the place of TQM in the church-planting process. Each section will be considered as it relates to planting a new daughter congregation. The first aspects to be considered are the biblical foundations.

Biblical Foundations

In the gospel accounts, two purpose statements are mentioned for the Church to consider. The first comes when Jesus is given a scroll from Isaiah and chooses this text to read:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

Jesus had a mission while on earth that he pursued every day of his existence here.

According to the text, Jesus was clear about his mission. He has the same mission for the Church today. Jesus desires that the Church be focused on preaching the good news to the poor and to reverse the effects of sin on people. God's call for the Church is to proclaim freedom for prisoners, bring sight to the blind, release the oppressed, and proclaim that the Lord has come to show favor upon people, which is a direct reference to the year of Jubilee in Leviticus 25.

He states the purpose for the Church in Matthew 28:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey

everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (vv. 18–20)

These words were for the disciples but still instruct all of his disciples today. Jesus mentions that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to him. Jesus knows this authority is for all time, not just that day. The final piece of the Great Commission was Jesus' assurance that he will be a part of it to the very end of the age. Obviously, Jesus has in mind all disciples, all power, all places, and all times as the context of the Great Commission.

Once the proclamation of Jesus and the Great Commission is understood as the foundation, one can begin to understand the mission of the Apostles and the Church in Acts. Their instructions were clear, and their call was sure. The book of Acts outlines the many highlights and struggles weathered by this new community; this study looks at two key texts. The first text is Acts 8 with the missionary work of Philip in Samaria, who then moves into Caesarea where he has an encounter with an Ethiopian on his journey. This journey serves as the starting point of the Church stepping out of Jerusalem into the rest of the world. The second text is a study of the church at Antioch. This church is mentioned on various occasions during the book of Acts. This church seems to serve as the launching pad of the gospel to the ends of the earth, or Rome, to the Christians in Acts.

The Ministry of Philip

Acts 1:8 states, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The stoning of Stephen in Acts 7 initiated the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem. This persecution results in the scattering of Christians throughout Judea, Samaria, and

essentially the ends of the earth, except the Apostles who stay in Jerusalem. An example of the scattering of all the Christians is told in the story when Philip goes to Samaria in Acts 8. Philip had a powerful ministry of proclaiming Christ and doing miraculous signs. The text defines the miraculous signs as evil spirits who were released from the people and many paralytic and cripples healed. The ministry he did is a reflection of what Jesus outlined in Luke 4:18-19. Philip also believes and is baptized. The result of Philip's ministry in Samaria is great joy among the people and is the first incident recorded in Acts where the message of Jesus Christ is taken out of Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, Philip is not done. The Lord leads him to Caesarea. During Philip's journey, he has a powerful encounter with an Ethiopian eunuch. In a God-ordained moment, Philip encounters a man attempting to understand the scriptures. He shares Christ, baptizes him, and then is swept up by the Spirit. Philip then seems to settle in Caesarea. In Acts 21, Philip is mentioned as entertaining Paul. He gives his life to ministry in this region. Philip's journey takes him from Jerusalem to Samaria to an Ethiopian eunuch to Caesarea. Eventually Peter and John come to Samaria and give their blessing to what is happening. The conclusion is that the influence of Philip leads to churches in Samaria, Ethiopia, and Caesarea. Philip's impact is crucial because he took the gospel out of Jerusalem while the Apostles stayed there. Luke paints a picture of Philip that becomes a New Testament model of how to minister outside of Jerusalem.

The ministry of Philip has tremendous implications for church planting. The obvious fruit of Philip's ministry reflects the blessing of God. The direct result of many following Jesus and being filled with the Spirit is the constitution of local churches. The call and mission of the Church has not changed from the day of Philip, but the context

has changed. God is still calling for the gospel to be taken where it presently does not exist. God is still counting on modern-day Philips to proclaim the gospel and lead people to the foot of the cross.

The Church at Antioch: The Sending Church

A look at the development of the Church in Acts has to include the crucial role of the church in Antioch. Ed Stetzer illustrates the role this church played in the developing of the church planting in the New Testament in his book:

The founding of the Antioch church may be the most important moment in church planting history. Antioch would send missionaries throughout the world. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Antioch church became the first great missionary-sending church (Acts 13:13). On the other hand, the Jerusalem church turned increasingly inward and lost much of its vision, finally disappearing like the Judaizers of the early Christian movement. In contrast, the Antioch congregation reached the world by becoming the first church planting church! (45)

The church in Antioch played an important part in the spreading of the Gospel message.

As a result of the persecution of Stephen, many followers of Jesus scattered from Jerusalem. Acts 11 is a record of people who traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (v. 19). Developments in Antioch began to take place as followers from Cyprus and Cyrene went there. In Antioch, the ministry was extraordinary, not only, in the travels of the gospel, but also in the audience of the gospel. “Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus” (Acts 11:20). The Luke-Acts account is carefully crafted to show the gospel expanding from Jews to Gentiles. Antioch is one of the places to first document the gospel expanding.

Acts 13 is not only a powerful story for the fruit born in Antioch but also for cultivating the ethos of Antioch:

From Antioch, the first great missionary center where there were both Greek- and Syriac-speaking Christians, the gospel spread not only westward into the Greek-speaking world but eastward in its Syriac form along the ancient trade routes linking the Mediterranean with central Asia, India, and China. (Newbigin, Open Secret 3)

With a variety of people groups in Antioch from that church, many missionaries went out all over the world. Sharing the gospel with Greeks was new to the early Church but became a normative experience for the church in Antioch. The conversion of many in Antioch leads to the commissioning of many to the ends of the known earth. In Acts 13, the Holy Spirit called out Barnabas and Saul. Antioch was in the margins of the formal Church and God was at work in the margins:

In the church at Antioch, there were prophets and teachers; Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (vv. 1-3)

Luke began with a quick demographic account of those present. Represented in those mentioned were differences in ethnicity, class, and religious background. These verses are an important record to highlight the significance of the diversity that existed in Antioch. This diversity influenced the creation of a mission-sending church. The diversity is a contrast to the homogenous church in Jerusalem. In the midst of the worship and fasting in Antioch, the Holy Spirit spoke, looking to send Barnabas and Saul. The text in Acts 13 records the beginning of Antioch’s mission work.

Theological Foundations

The theological reflection serves as the framework built on a biblical foundation. The theological reflection of this study centers on two specific areas: missiology and ecclesiology.

Missiology

Missiology is a key aspect to any theological foundation for church planting. A church plant must have a clear understanding of why it is formed. The church should not only articulate the how of evangelism, but the why as well. Missiology will consist of three sections: *missio Dei* (mission of God), Incarnation, and kingdom of God.

Mission of God. *Missio Dei* is a Latin term for the mission of God. The principle of *missio Dei* is contained throughout the Old and New Testament. The *missio Dei* is clear in Jesus' prayer to the Father on behalf of the Church in the Gospel of John: "As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). This prayer of Jesus presents a new understanding of who God is and what his work is. In their book, Darrell L. Guder et al. summarize the *missio Dei* as more than the activity of the church; rather, *missio Dei* is a result of "God initiative, and rooted in his purposes to restore and heal creation" (4). According to Guder et al., God has always focused on the purpose of encouraging people to understand and encounter who He is. This in turn encourages people to view God in the constant pursuit of its fulfillment. The mission is not a part of what God does or has been about; it is reflective of his identity, character, and purpose.

According to Lesslie Newbigin, two misunderstandings of the *missio Dei* lead to its misapplication: "On the one hand, there are those who place exclusive emphasis on

the winning of individuals to conversion, baptism, and church membership. The numerical growth of the Church becomes the central goal of mission” (Gospel 135).

Missio Dei is more than an issue of size. In other words, a church can have large numerical numbers and simultaneously have an incomplete or no understanding of the mission of God. *Missio Dei* is defining the heart of God.

A second misunderstanding of *missio Dei* that misses the point altogether;

On the other hand, there are those who condemn this as irrelevant or wrong. The gospel, they will say is about God’s kingdom, God’s reign, over all the nations and all things. At the heart of Jesus’ teaching is the prayer: “Your kingdom come; your will be done, as in heaven so on earth” (Matt. 6:10). (Newbigin, Gospel 135)

This understanding sees the church’s enlargement of influence and its ability to bring about heaven on earth to be the primary task of the Church. The trouble begins when people assume that their work brings this into existence.

When a church focuses on numerical growth and increased influence, it does not understand the *missio Dei*. The key, Newbigin states, is “that both parties are inadequately aware of the central reality, namely that mission is not primarily our work—whether of preaching or of social action—but primarily the mighty work of God” (Gospel 136). The mission of God is not understood as the work that humans do. It is defined as the work Jesus did on the cross and the continuing presence of the Spirit. In the book of Acts, Jesus asked those gathered to look at his scars. Those scars now defined them as a people and represented the gospel they present. He then asked them to wait for the Spirit. The *missio Dei* is about what God did on the cross and what God is doing now in the world.

In his book, David J. Bosch summarizes the idea of *missio Dei*:

Mission understood as being derived from the very nature of God.[sic] It is thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. The classical doctrine of the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit expanded to include yet another “movement”: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world. (390)

The difficulty is that the Church in Western civilization has not defined God in this way and neither did Israel. Many think mission was a coincidental activity of God that was a result of his loving nature. To link mission with the nature of God, and not just the work, will require a paradigm shift for many in the Church. This shift is from understanding mission as the activity of God to the nature of God.

Once people understand mission as not the work of God but the nature of God, then they are able to see the progression from the Father sending the Son and the Son sending the Church. John 17:18 states, “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.” This sending nature flows from the Father to the Son, then to the Church. Therefore, mission is not only the nature of the Father and Son, but the Church as well. For many, churches mission is one of many items in the budget and one of many activities of church life. The church has defined mission as a program, not any different from worship, prayer, or Sunday school. Nevertheless, the implications of *missio Dei* should be felt and reflected in all of church life. Robert E. Webber defines *missio Dei* this way:

The *Missio Dei* identifies God’s purpose in the world to rescue the world, save it, redeem it, and restore it. To this end, God sent Jesus Christ. By his sacrificial death and resurrection, he has conquered the powers of evil. He has sent his Holy Spirit to apply his saving work to the entire created order. The ramifications of *Missio Dei* are manifold. We do not define God’s mission. It defines us. It tells us who we are, what our mission is, how we are to do ministry, worship, spirituality, evangelism. There is not aspect of the Christian life, thought, and ministry that is not connected with God’s mission to the world. (240-41)

The impact of the *missio Dei* is all encompassing. Webber would contend that *missio Dei* affects the way churches look at all ministries. Through the lens of *missio Dei*, people look at every aspect of church and personal life as a way to fulfill this mission. Another way of thinking through the implications is to evaluate all that is done through the grid of the *missio Dei*. Churches need to view things like the prayer ministry, Sunday school, and people's personal walk through the lens of the *missio Dei*.

The most important implication of a theology of *missio Dei* is the incorporation of an understanding of mission as not only the work of God, but reflective of his nature and person as well. Christianity, personally and corporately, reflects mission at its core. *Missio Dei* forces the paradigm shift of seeing the Church in the work of God and not God in the work of the Church.

The incarnation. The word *incarnation* is not technically found in the biblical text. Although it is not found in word, it is indeed reflected in principle:

[Jesus], Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:6-11)

In this text, Paul summarizes the journey of Jesus. Jesus gave up all that was rightly his at the right hand of the Father. He then put on human flesh and in every way became man while remaining God. His life on earth was a journey of obedience to all the Father desired. Jesus was obedient in life and death. Jesus endures the worse the world gave him. His experience in the flesh was complete from birth to death. His death was on a

cross, one of the most humiliating and brutal modes humankind could invent. As a result, the Father exalted him to the highest place. Since he is in the highest place, when people hear the name of Jesus, everyone will bow their knees and confess with their tongues that Jesus is Lord.

Before Jesus came to earth the possibility of man and God being one in the same was not even considered. Even today, this reality is still beyond full understanding and comprehension. Never has such a man existed on earth. The word *incarnation* has helped the Church to give at least a partial definition to this event. The mystery of the incarnation is the fact that God took on flesh. At the birth of Christ, God's divinity and man's humanity powerfully intersected. The technical definition of the *incarnation* is "in the flesh." Much about God is beyond human understanding and definition, the incarnation fits into this category. The incarnation was this incredible state of dependence and obedience between the Son and the Father. In the incarnation, Jesus fought the temptations of man in his humanity and yet committed no sin. Jesus in the incarnation identified fully with the human condition without the loss of fellowship with the Father. The *incarnation* is an attempt to define a state that holds in tension the juxtaposed positions of man and God. In the incarnation, Jesus takes on all of the qualities of the flesh: its weakness, felt needs, and constraints, yet he never ceased being God in power and strength. Jesus was able to identify with humankind—emotions, struggles, and limitations. Most importantly, in being fully God and man, Jesus became the bridge of salvation. The incarnation has profound and powerful implications for church planting. Incarnational ministry is taking the same journey Jesus did in Philippians 2.

The incarnation and the *missio Dei* are related in that the incarnation defines the means by which the Father sent the Son. The incarnation was the wonderful tool of the *missio Dei*. Therefore, just as the incarnation was the method by which the Father sent the Son, so incarnational ministry is the method by which the Jesus sends the Church. Jesus, motivated by love, made himself nothing and identified with human need to the point of even coming to where they were, on earth. Doing incarnational ministry means being motivated in love to set aside rights, comforts, and needs, and setting out to share the love of Christ with others. Incarnational ministry calls people to make many sacrifices every day to reconcile people to the Father. The incarnation beckons the Church to go to the people who need him. It puts the burden on those who follow Christ to go and not on those in the community to come to the church. The incarnation calls believers to embody the good news. Those who follow Jesus Christ are a new incarnation. Those who have the Holy Spirit are a present-day intersection of heaven and earth. Ultimately, the Word needed flesh, which took place in Jesus, to communicate the love of God to man.

The gospel still needs flesh to communicate and embody it today. Stuart Murray states the key of incarnating the gospel: “Church planting can not be equated with participation in *missio Dei* unless these churches are communicating good news to the wider community and incarnating the good news that they are proclaiming” (45). The ministry of Jesus was always this dynamic interaction between the proclamation and presence of God’s word. This combination of hearing and experiencing of God led many to follow Jesus. This combination is certainly the pattern in Acts 2. Here Peter proclaimed the gospel of Christ and in the next text outlines the new church experience (2:42-47). A key similarity between the incarnation of Christ and the churches’

incarnational ministry is the ultimate goal. At the resurrection, Jesus was glorified and seated at the right hand of the Father. The Church's incarnational ministry at its best exalts Jesus. Incarnational ministry is a way of being, not just a new church program:

The issue is not simply one of ecclesiastical reengineering. Rather we are talking about a radically different way of being the Church. For the incarnational presence of the church in the world demands our dying to self—to our self-reliance, self-centered promotion and selfish concerns—in order for Christ to be glorified among his people. (Gibbs 219)

The implications for the incarnation are as important today as they were for the early Church. Webber explains them this way:

This early church apologetic may be rightly called an incarnational apology. The church is the continuation of the incarnation. It is the earthed reality of the presence of Jesus in and to the world. Herein lies the ancient apologetic. The church by its very existence is a witness to the presence of God in history (Eph. 3:10). There is only one actual incarnation of God and that is in Jesus Christ, but the church, being his body, sustains an incarnational dimension. The church is a witness to the presence of Jesus in the world as it embodies and lives out the faith. (95)

The early Church had no book on which to rely for the communication of the good news. The people communicated the message salvation through spoken word. Today the Church needs to read the Word as well as become the embodiment of the Word. A church plant must both proclaim and be the Word of God in its community and world.

The first leg of the stool of theological foundations is the *missio Dei*, the realization that God is a sending God. The Father has sent the Son; the Son has sent the Church. Christ is the example for the Church. The second leg is the incarnation where the Church becomes the embodiment of the Word. The Church, motivated in love, surrenders all rights, comforts, and needs to go to those who do not know Jesus Christ. In a church plant, its existence has to be rooted in the mission of God and its mode has to be rooted in the incarnation. The third leg of the theological foundational stool is the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God. For a mother congregation to birth a new church takes a great commitment to the kingdom of God. A kingdom of God mentality is crucial for the new church plant to be motivated to reach a community and a necessity if a mother congregation is going to hive off and create a new church. This mind-set is to consider what is best for the kingdom of God, even over the perceived betterment of the church. When a church intentionally sends people with a church planter, attendance and resources of the mother congregation are impacted. Without understanding and focus on the kingdom of God, such an endeavor makes no common sense. When properly motivated, churches plant churches through multiplication to further the kingdom.

The kingdom concept is not only important for a missional understanding of the Church. It is even more important because it is central to the teachings of Jesus. As was shown in the biblical foundations section, church planting was a logical conclusion to the explosion of the gospel and the sending of the Church into the world. The subject of church planting was more peripheral in the New Testament. Nevertheless, the kingdom of God was central to the teachings of Jesus and the new church development throughout the New Testament. The relationship between the kingdom and the church needs to be clearly defined if it is to be properly understood:

If they are functioning properly, churches will be agents of the kingdom, signposts to the kingdom, sacraments of the kingdom, provisional representations of the kingdom, proclaiming the demonstrating the kingdom, pointing to what is coming when the kingdom is fully established, but they can never be equated with the kingdom. (Murray 47)

The Church functions at its best when it represents and points to the kingdom in its fullness. This relationship is worked out in three specific ways.

First, the Church is a community and the kingdom of God is its activity. Church is the gathering of people around the central person of Jesus Christ. The kingdom, nevertheless, is the best Christianity has to offer in activity. *Kingdom of God* properly defined is not the gathering of people, but the activity of God in the world. The Church becomes a natural extension and context of kingdom activity, but it is not the activity of the kingdom in itself. The Church is God's agent to build the kingdom, but not the only way God works. To think of the Church as an extension of the activity of God is key to the theological framework; however, assuming the Church is an automatic advancement of the kingdom is false. Churches may be planted without advancement of the kingdom. In addition, the kingdom can be advanced without the church.

Second, the kingdom exists in a broader sense than just through the Church. This point is inferred from the previous section but is important enough to state explicitly. To think of the kingdom as being larger than the Church is to remember that God is at work outside the Church as well as in and through it. The kingdom of God is contained in the work of the Holy Spirit, not merely the work of the Church. The work of the kingdom of God is not solely found in the work of the Church, but, more importantly, the work of the Church is part of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is manifest in the sharing of the gospel from one person to another. The Church is not the kingdom of God but instead is an arm of the kingdom activity.

Third, the kingdom defines the mission of God. The mission of God has to be defined and contextualized in the kingdom of God rather than the work of the Church. If misunderstood, the kingdom of God might only be explained in terms of church planting, winning souls, or evangelizing. These are all good things but not the ultimate goal. The

goal is not the accomplishment of these events but the advancement of the kingdom of God. The distinction between church planting being a matter of eschatology rather than ecclesiology is vital. Church planting needs to be viewed as a channel of God's work in the world and not the end goal. The church may be viewed as a principal agent of the mission, but not the mission itself. The kingdom of God is fulfilled when the mission of God is accomplished. Therefore, the definition of success in the Church is the fulfillment of the *missio Dei* and is best understood in these terms. "The mission of God is what God is doing in the world through the church, and even without the church, to bring his creation to its consummation: unity and fullness in Jesus Christ" (Stevens 193).

The *missio Dei*, incarnation, and kingdom of God are the threefold development of a properly understood missiology. The second segment of the theological foundations is found in the topic of ecclesiology. The purpose of the church and how it grows is important to consider, but the "why" of church formation also needs to be defined.

Ecclesiology

Along with a solid definition of a theology of mission, a theology of the church is important to the project. Identity is important to understand when considering the church.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul compares the church and the body:

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ...But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (vv. 12, 24-27)

Paul uses the analogy of the body for his communication of the nature of the body of Christ. In humans, DNA stands for deoxyribonucleic acid. DNA carries such information

as family history and how cells are to operate in order for people to function. DNA is made up of two strands called the double helix, which looks like a spiral staircase. These strands are held together by hydrogen bonds. What is essential for all congregations new and established, is to discover their individual DNA:

How can a congregation discern its own special DNA? This happens by a Spirit-guided discernment process. It happens not so much by looking at and studying other churches, though that may help at times, but by asking questions such as: How has God led us in the past? What “charism” or genetic endowment have we received from our forebears (including, perhaps, from our particular denominational tradition)? What special gifts and calling has God given our congregation? What does the Holy Spirit want to do through us that he will not do through any other church? Complexity theory and genetic models together help us to understand that each local congregation is unique and important. This should give us hope! My church is not called to be a clone or a weak imitation of some other church. It is called to live according to its own DNA and to fulfill its own God-given mission for the sake of God’s kingdom. (Snyder and Runyon 41-42)

When the answers to the questions posed by Snyder and Runyon are understood, a key is unlocked to the DNA of the church. This understanding of the DNA leads a church to discover its God-given purpose and mission.

In their book, Richard Southern and Robert Norton write, “Your congregation’s double helix is made up of two spiraling strands. One strand represents the mission of your congregation. The other represents your vision. They are bonded together by your values” (3). A church’s identity is found in its mission, vision, and core values. These elements allow a person to map a church’s genetic makeup. The importance of mission, vision, and core values is further articulated in the Total Quality Management and the Church Planting Process. Similarly to the way the DNA carries the information for cells to know how to act and function, the mission, vision, and core values inform a congregation the same way. A congregation needs to have an articulated identity that

consists of an easily comprehended mission, vision, and core values. These should be tied to the life of Christ. “The great identification is that we are his body, share his spiritual DNA, and must follow in his steps” (Snyder and Runyon 22).

Historical Foundations

Church planting has been taking place ever since the first century, yet many Christians have no idea how their own congregation was started. A new church can appear to be a brand new venture; nevertheless, understanding church planting through the centuries gives the congregation the background of two thousand years. The basic outline of the historical foundations section is found in Murray’s Church Planting: Laying Foundations. This text is enhanced through interaction with the works of George Hunter, III as it relates to the Apostolic, Celtic, and Wesleyan church planting. The historical foundation is established in the apostolic, pioneering, replacement, sectarian, saturation and multiplication church planting.

Apostolic Church Planting

The call of Jesus to the Church is clear as Hunter states, “Jesus Christ calls his churches to love, believe in, serve, reach out to, welcome, and receive those people and populations that society’s establishment regards as unlikely or even hopeless, and to deploy their converts in witness and ministry” (Radical Outreach 41). The most obvious quality of the call of Jesus is the sense of being sent. The sending of the apostles serves as the foundation of their name and purpose. They are by definition those who take the gospel and are sent to people who do not know Jesus. The other important point is that the apostles’ ministry includes, but is not inclusive to, the preaching of the Word. Jesus sends the apostles with the additional purposes to cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the

lepers, and cast out demons (Matt. 10:7-8). The third worthy notation of the apostolic ministry is their work with difficult prospects. Hunter notes in that “a number of the apostolic legends report apostles reaching such peoples as barbarians and cannibals” (55). The apostles went everywhere they could; to anyone they could to share the gospel of Christ.

Pioneer Church Planting

Following the New Testament for the next three hundred years, the Church grew while the Roman Empire declined. During Constantine’s reign, imperial resources became available to the Church. In many different locations and ways, the gospel was spread through the pioneering work of many people to many portions of the world.

The ministry of John Wesley is one example of the pioneering work that took place through the centuries. Though not successful in his own missionary efforts in America, a number of features of John and Charles Wesley’s works apply to pioneering endeavors. The first feature would be indigenous ministries:

They felt called to reach the working peoples of England, who never went to church, whom the established church had written off. The Wesleys demonstrated that forms of outreach that “fit” a people make it more possible for them to respond than do alien or “superior” cultural forms. (Hunter, To Spread the Power 53)

One of the ways John and Charles ministered in indigenous forms was through the writing and preaching in common rhetoric. They spoke in a way that was understood by the common people. John especially made the principle of clarity a great priority when speaking. In fact, on a number of occasions, Wesley encouraged his preachers to speak in a way that was common for the people. Charles Wesley wrote hymnody easily recognized and followed by the people. John published many tracts that plainly explained

the gospel. He also wrote on various topics and published them in tracts to provide not only spiritual but also practical help to people as well. John also studied the people to whom he ministered. He became very familiar with a variety of cultures and contexts and communicated accordingly.

A second feature of John Wesley's ministry is the variety of groups he created for the people's spiritual growth:

He was instrumental in spawning many hundreds of classes, bands, societies, and other groups with distinct agendas, and he labored to develop the indigenous lay leadership that this growing vast network of groups would need. He was driven to multiplying "classes", for these served best as recruiting groups, as ports of entry for new people, and for involving awakened people with the gospel and its power. (Hunter, To Spread the Power 56)

John Wesley was fully aware that in order for his field preaching to stay with people he would have to give them other opportunities to grow in their faith. These many units also provided ways that people could get involved and be able to share and grow in Christ while in community. Laity ministered to many through these groups. This small group creation brought tremendous width and breadth to the ministry of Wesley. The church-planting strategy of Wesley has many present-day applications. One of these applications is the attraction of a crowd in a new area. Another key application is the ministry of small groups. These do not take large buildings to accomplish, and they are often the best atmosphere for life transformation.

Replacement Church Planting

At different times through the centuries, the Church has taken part in replacement planting. "Replacement planting has to do with the practice of establishing churches in areas where churches had previously been planted, but no longer exist, due to factors

such as persecution or decline” (Murray 88). One of the best examples of replacement planting was St. Patrick. In the late fourth century or early fifth, Patrick grows up in northeast England. As Hunter notes a number of principles of Patrick’s ministry for church planting today. First, St. Patrick sent his missionaries in groups to interact with the people of Ireland. Second, they took a wholistic or incarnational ministry approach to the people. Third, they invited the people into their community and then invited them to a gospel decision, rather than the other way around. The formula may be understood as establishing a community with the unchurched, engaging in conversation, discovering what they believe, and inviting commitment to Jesus. One of the best reasons to highlight the ministry of St. Patrick is the similarities between the culture to which he ministered and the culture of today. Hunter notes three distinct similarities. “Less and less people have ever been substantially influenced by religion, more suspicious of people and institutions that claim authority, more churches assuming the unchurched are beyond reach” (Celtic Way 96-97).

Sectarian Church Planting

The focus, work, and intention of such people such as Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin was the creation of new churches. Nevertheless, many churches have been planted based on a deeply held conviction of doctrinal and ecclesiological matters. “The Anabaptist movement is the classic example of the search for the New Testament Church life which has motivated many church planting movements and led to the emergence of many denominations” (Murray 96). Sectarian church plants receive the most criticism of all other forms because the primary focus is not renewal of the existing church. A sectarian church plant requires strong leadership to keep growing after the initial transfer of people.

Saturation Church Planting

Saturation is a term more familiar to contemporary church planting-circles. It is a method made popular around in the late 1900s. The idea is to saturate an area with new churches in hopes of softening an area toward the gospel. This movement is the planting of churches based on cultural and not doctrinal distinctives. It is a realization that the Great Commission requires strategies to enable “Christ to become incarnate in the life of a vital, witnessing congregation among every group of 500 to 1000 people of every class, kind, and condition of mankind” (Bush 21). Offering church in a variety of cultural expressions provides the opportunity for many people to respond to the gospel. Since saturation is such a new expression of church planting, research has not been done as to its validity.

Multiplication (Hiving Off) Church Planting

The particular context of this study, a mother church planting a daughter congregation, is an example of church multiplication planting. A definition of church multiplication or hiving off is defined by George Patterson and Richard Scoggins:

An obedient church, in which our God-given gifts harmonized in love by the power of the Holy Spirit, has an inherent, God-given power to multiply itself indefinitely, just as all other living things do that God has created. Growth by addition is seen in Acts 2:41, when 3,000 converts were added by baptism to the new church in Jerusalem. Growth by multiplication appears in Acts 8, 10, 13, 14, and 16, where daughter churches are born.
(12)

Patterson and Scoggins note that church multiplication has been around since the New Testament. Nevertheless, for many Christians today it is a new concept. Most Christians today would associate church planting with the idea of a pastor coming to a community and starting a church. One of the best ways is for a group of people to move out from an

existing healthy congregation to start a new church. In a technical definition, hiving off is the breaking away from an existing group. C. Peter Wagner applies the term to church planting and defines “hiving off” as follows:

Hiving off is the most common way of planting a daughter church. It simply means that the members of a local congregation are challenged to form a nucleus and at a predetermined time, these people will move out under the leadership of a church planter and become the charter members of a new congregation. This usually assumes that the new church will be in the same general geographical area so that the nucleus members will not be expected to make a residential move. (60-61)

Successful church multiplication is often initiated by a charismatic leader but is not a project for the leader alone. It needs to become a congregational burden. Church multiplication is the strategic sending of a group of individuals to reach a region more effectively. The daughter congregation is often a different expression of ministry from the mother church to meet the needs of different individuals. Different types of churches are needed to reach different kinds of people groups and generations.

Hermeneutical Community with Critical Contextualization

This project stands on the foundational value of the ability of a group to discern the direction for that group. It may be expressed as the ability of those within the culture to determine the most appropriate application of biblical norms to that culture. Equally important are the theological and anthropological dynamics of such a process. The best way of stating these dynamics is *hermeneutical community with critical contextualization*. This phrase is best understood through the dissection and definition of its two parts.

Hermeneutical Community

The hermeneutical community might be framed in three ways. First, the Bible is the final authority. When culture and the biblical text are juxtaposed, the biblical text is given precedence. Second, the priesthood of all believers is faithful to having the Holy Spirit guide them. As Robert N. Bellah et al. explain, “Individualism lies at the very core of American culture” (142). Community becomes difficult to value. Third, there is a constant check of the church. As Paul G. Hiebert points out, “The contextualization of the gospel is ultimately the task not of individuals and leaders, but of the church as a discerning community” (202-03).

In the early studies of church planting, two missionary leaders, Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn, proposed a process by which young churches would be independent. First is self-propagation or the ability to evangelize others in their community. Second is self-support or the ability to support their work financially without additional outside aid. Third is self-governance, which is the ability to govern themselves. Based on this study, Hiebert proposes a fourth self that needs to be realized. This fourth self is that of “self-theologizing” (196). Self-theologizing is when the particular theology is not Absolute truth, but the human descriptions and explanations of reality that arise out of study of the Bible. To encourage the development of this fourth self takes a great deal of understanding and security on behalf of the missionary. It takes a conviction that theology is best determined in the context of culture by those of the culture:

As priests in the kingdom of God, we have a right to interpret God’s Word. As members of the body of Christ, we are responsible for listening to one another. Thus the Scripture can find its proper meaning as witness only within a community of interpretation. Principles of interpretation are important, but secondary. There needs to be an authentic correspondence between gospel announcement and a “new order” embodied in community

for Scripture to play its proper role as a part of the original witness. The authentic community is the hermeneutical community. It determines the actual enculturated meaning of Scripture. We in the West, with our extreme forms of individualism, need to rediscover the corporate nature of the church, whereby the body checks the errors of the individual and the community of churches checks the errors of the individual congregation. Just as others see our sins more clearly than we do, so also do others see our heresies more clearly. (202-03)

If the missionary is intentional in instructing the people to do the work of exegesis of Scripture and culture, the community will develop genuine expressions. For instance, in Acts 15 the Jerusalem council determines Gentiles do not have to become Jews, but instead have parameters within which to live. The solution was for them to pray. After a time of prayer they would then wait and discern what was right to them and the Holy Spirit. Similarly, new communities of faith, or new churches, need to have parameters. The guidelines of prayer and then follow through with what seems right to them and the Holy Spirit is a proper way to proceed.

Christian theology developed in Christian community is the most culturally relevant approach but is also the way of the future. Loren Mead writes about the importance of laity:

In the new ecclesia the primary theologians have to be the laity because they are on the missionary frontier. They will need to be the theologians for two reasons: First, because as our primary mission officers they will be engaging the world, making judgments, and seeking God's direction. Second, because it is on that frontier that God will be revealing God's nature, opening doors to the new theologies of tomorrow's world. The laity will be on the front lines of theology as well as mission. (56-57)

The hermeneutical community takes seriously the task of exegesis of Scripture and culture to create a church that effectively spreads the gospel. This task is best described as critical contextualization described in the next section.

Critical Contextualization

To minister effectively in a community, any missionary or community has to determine a direction for engaging culture. No community of people exists in a cultural vacuum. As missionaries engage people, they engage culture as well. Hiebert defines *culture* as “made up of systems of beliefs and practices that are built upon the implicit assumptions that people make about themselves, about the world around them, and about ultimate realities” (171).

In missionary work, three possible approaches to contextualizing present and future cultural practices and beliefs exist. First, all customs and cultures can be dismissed as pagan. Nevertheless, problems exist with such an approach. The greatest difficulty is the creation of cultural vacuum, suppression of cultural ways underground, and thwarting of the community’s ability to discern its own direction.

The second possible approach is one of uncritical contextualization, defined as the uncritical acceptance of cultural customs into the church. The problems of such an approach is the overlooking of the corporate and cultural nature of sin and the merging of beliefs also known as syncretism.

The third and best approach to culture is critical contextualization, “whereby old beliefs and customs are neither rejected nor accepted without examination. They are first studied with regard to the meanings and places they have within their cultural setting and then evaluated in the light of biblical norms” (Hiebert 186). Darrell L. Whiteman defines proper contextualization:

To communicate the Gospel in word and deed and to establish the church in ways that make sense to people within their local cultural context, presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people’s deepest needs

and penetrates their worldview, thus allowing them to follow Christ and remain with in their own culture. (2)

This project was a demonstration of hermeneutical community with critical contextualization. The daughter church-planting group gathers together to discern the most appropriate ways to communicate biblical norms to a particular community. The church has one hand firmly on the Bible and the centrality of the gospel while the other hand is in the culture discerning the most meaningful expressions of biblical truth into the culture.

Innovation and Church Planting

Everett M. Rogers discusses a number of principles concerning the change process that relate to the church-planting process. These principles are critical mass, opinion leaders, and communication networks. Critical mass “occurs at the point at which enough individuals in a system have adopted an innovation so that the innovation’s further rate of adoption becomes self-sustaining” (343). Critical mass is important for the adoption of the conclusions of the retreat. Reaching a critical mass is key to the process’s success. Another key principle is opinion leadership. Opinion leadership, according to Rogers, “is the degree to which an individual is able to influence other individuals’ attitudes or overt behavior in a desired way with a relatively high frequency” (388). Opinion leaders are important to the process to get people involved and spread the information about the new church process. People spread information over their communication network. A communication network “consists of interconnected individuals who are linked by patterned flows of information” (337). These aspects have an important role in the success of the process.

Total Quality Management in the Church-Planting Process

A birthing metaphor is often used when referring to a church plant. As in human birth, a gestation period exists in church planting when the essential qualities of the church are developed. Stetzer describes this process:

This pre-launch stage resembles the period of human prenatal maturation during which a fetus develops systems to enable it to function after birth. A baby born without all of these systems developed and functional will not thrive. Similarly, certain operational systems must be fully functional by the time the church has its first public worship service. Otherwise, the church will be born prematurely and will not have the necessary parts to achieve success for the kingdom of God. (96)

One of the tools used to develop essential qualities were the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM). TQM principles were the basis for selecting the instrument of ChurchSmart Refocusing as the strategic planning outline. The following describes the principles of TQM that led to its selection to enhance the research project. Organizational culture, strategic planning, role of leadership, and mission, vision, and core values are qualities of TQM that inform the process of creating a daughter church. This research project is not a full TQM program but did consider some principles that add value to the church-planting process.

Organizational Culture

In both the business and church worlds, there is a great deal in print about the tools and technique of leadership. Nevertheless, more important than either of these is the development of a healthy church culture. TQM is more than a new way of thinking. Properly applied, it becomes an organizational way of life. The important quality of TQM is its ability to define not only process and product, but also the culture of an organization. The theological foundations of *missio Dei*, incarnation, and the kingdom of

God outlined earlier in this chapter provide an injection into the goal of the culture. These theological foundations become the heart of the church because TQM is a process that informs culture as well as the focuses and evaluates of the corporation. Doing the process of TQM is void of any significant, or certainly any eternal, consequence if it is detached from a desire to affect the culture of the church. Refocusing was chosen as the strategic planning instrument because of its impact on church culture. Refocusing is not only a process for ministry development, but of identity articulation and cultural influence.

The best aspects of TQM's organizational culture are those of empowerment, teamwork, and ownership. Marshall Sashkin and Kenneth J. Kiser define empowerment as it relates to TQM:

That is, job design aims to create tasks that are coherent and complete, that provide people with a feeling of accomplishment. Good job design also gives employees greater control over their work actions. Control over decisions about how to do the job and how to solve work-related problems is especially important. It generally means that authority is commensurate with responsibility. (118)

TQM views employees as much more than people with a job to do. It gives each employee a meaningful task and the power to make decisions around the job, including solving problems and making improvements. It provides a system of responsibility for an important task, but the authority to make decisions to improve performance.

Empowerment is a great way to view ministry. This project from the beginning makes it a value to empower people at every level of the church, not only assigning ministry but delegating authority to do the best they can in the ministry.

Another important aspect of the organizational culture of TQM is teamwork. All people in the organization see themselves as a part of a team. Teams work together in units to solve problems, distribute work, make operating decisions, and interview and

hire new team members. The tools and techniques of TQM are designed to be carried out by teams. Teams are better than individuals to define, collect, and use information for improvement and are able to pool resources and knowledge to solve problems. For all of these reasons, teams work best in ministry as well. Teams in ministry are the best vehicle to accomplish improvement and problem solving. Certainly, Jesus was no stranger to the power of teams in ministry. He was able to work through and with his twelve disciples to accomplish a great deal of significant ministry while on earth.

A result of empowerment and teamwork is a sense of ownership. When people feel valued in an organization, they naturally begin to respond positively to the organization. When participants in the organization feel valued, there is a healthy identification with the output and accomplishment of the organization. The people appropriately understand their role in the organization as vital to its success.

Strategic Planning

Along with organizational culture, strategic planning is a key principle of TQM. Strategic planning is an intentional effort on behalf of all members of the organization to work on both the how and the why of the organization. Strategic planning may also be described as the determination of steps that need to be taken from the present status to a desired future. Malphurs defines *strategic planning* as “the process of thinking and acting. It involves thinking through and then doing the church’s ministry. It is a process, not something you do one time and then abandon” (11). Strategic planning is like a spearhead that leads the organization into the future. It determines the future it wants to create and then designs the plan for accomplishing that future. Strategic planning not only allows an organization to discern the end goal but, if properly done, will also lay out the

means to the end. In this way, strategic planning is like a map that allows the organization to see not only the destination but also to determine the best way to get there:

The function of strategic planning in the new management model is to align all the efforts of the organization to customer satisfaction, quality, and operational performance goals. Deployed to its fullest, a world-class planning process would make it possible for all employees to match their tasks to specific company objectives. (George and Wimerskirch 45)

Strategic planning and organizational culture go hand in hand. Organizational culture empowers the people, facilitates teamwork, and fosters ownership. Strategic planning takes the next step in aligning the tasks to accomplish objectives. It is impossible to have one without the other and be able to operate at maximum potential. The four basic steps of a strategic planning process are plan, implement, review, and correct. Strategic planning has to be initiated by leadership, but include all levels of the organization to be effective. The most effective plan would be implemented so that each task performed by every employee would support one or more organizational objectives. The true value of a strategic plan is found not only in its abilities to align the organization, but also to create a process of easy review to facilitate continual improvement. “The best strategic plans include specific measures for achieving every objective, a means for gathering and publishing data on these measures, and a process for timely review by management” (56).

The Role of Leadership

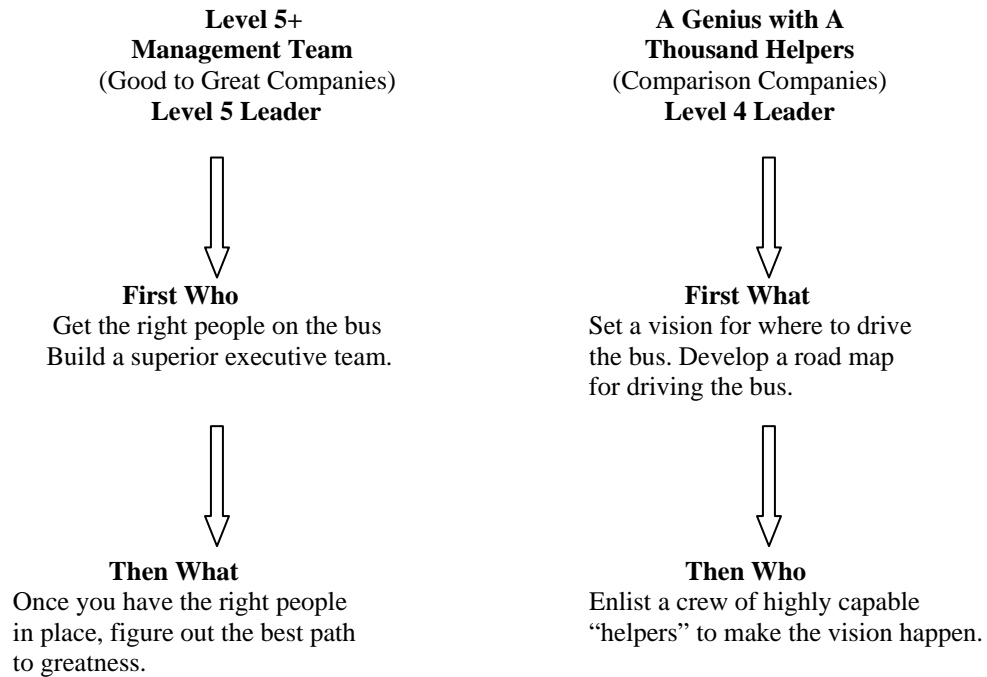
Leadership is vital to the effectiveness of both the TQM process and church planting. The leadership of the organization has to implement the process. After all, people have difficulty making profitable changes or determining a course of action if the leadership does not allow their implementation. “Leadership holds the key to the door of continuous improvement. If the key stays in the pocket, the organization has no chance of

becoming a quality leader” (George and Wimerskirch 12). The only way to implement the TQM process successfully is to have leaders who are totally dedicated to its success through continuous improvement of the entire organization. Continuous improvement takes a long-term commitment and a relentless, all-consuming desire and dedication to make the company the best it can be.

Leadership is exhibited in four aspects in the TQM process. The first step is committing to the process. The commitment has to be obvious and evident to the whole organization. Second, the leader has the responsibility to define reality. To define reality, the leadership clearly and factually states where the organization presently stands as well as its future projections. Third, the leader has to know the company’s systems and values. They study the company to determine what it values. The leadership understands fully the company’s strengths and weakness. The leader should understand every level of the operation and what the company stands for and aspires to achieve. Fourth, the leader must participate in the process. Leadership participation ensures the company’s perseverance to it. “You can get the amount of quality in an organization that the leader is capable of and disposed of leading” (Jones 45).

Organizations that desire quality require tremendous leadership. Jim Collins outlines the developments that need to take place. He defines top leaders as Level 5 leaders: “Level 5 leaders embody a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will. They are ambitious, to be sure, but ambitious first and foremost for the company, not themselves” (39). When Level 5 leaders begin in an organization, they start by gathering the right people, and then together they determine the direction of the company.

Other leaders determine the direction and then enlist a crew to see it accomplished (see Figure 2.1).



Source: Collins 47.

Figure 2.1. Two ways to develop leadership team and set organizational vision.

Level 5 leaders of good to great companies build a great team and then assemble the best path for the organization. This study explored whether this idea of level 5 leaders is a profitable way to proceed with a daughter church plant as well.

Mission, Vision, and Core Values

The purpose of TQM is to help identify and define the vision and mission of the organization. This project focused the new church upon these very factors. The mission defines the present nature and purpose of the organization. “I define a mission as a broad, brief, biblical statement of what the ministry is supposed to be doing” (Malphurs 105). A

major component of the project was defining the mission of the church. People need think the same in order to operate in the present, as well as chart the future. The mission is unashamedly linked to the biblical text. Based on the theological foundations earlier in the chapter, the mission is to fulfill the *missio Dei*, to minister incarnationally, and to expand the kingdom of God. TQM provided the means by which these concepts were understood and defined in the church plant. “The quality church has a clearly defined mission, and it aligns all its activities toward achieving that mission” (Jones 17).

Vision is also a vital component of TQM and, more importantly, an effective church plant. The process of developing and identifying the vision is the other process in the project. According to William Duncan, a vision “describes a compelling way where the company is going to be at some future point” (182). While the mission is focused on the present, the vision is focused on the future. Vision is a preferred picture of the church in the next few years. One way to approach vision is to describe the desired outcomes of the church in five years. The vision should be stated in terms not attainable in the next month, but rather should have a future orientation. It has to be realistic enough so that it is not discouraging, but attainable enough to have strong motivational characteristic. A clear vision is important for seven reasons: it encourages unity, creates energy, provides purpose, fosters risk taking, enhances leadership, promotes excellence, and sustains ministry (Malphurs 135-37). For all these reasons, defining vision in the incubation period of the church plant became imperative. One of the exciting qualities of TQM is the participation in the vision development from all the people. When a vision is developed as a church, it may foster a greater commitment to the vision.

Overview of Methodology

The basic outline of the process consists of all-church retreats, one pretest focus group and follow up focus group meetings after each retreat. During the all-church retreats, individuals are organized into small groups of six to eight people to facilitate participation from each person. The overall format was an adaptation of the *Refocusing* by Church Resource Ministries. The overall process consists of the following components: biblical purpose, time line, mission focus, values, vision, ministry model, strategic initiatives, and action plan. This *Refocusing* process is designed for the use of an established church to define or redefine its identity—mission, vision, and core values. Therefore, many adaptations were made to the Refocusing resource in order to be used as a church creation process. During the first retreat, to assist with values identification, a Core Values Audit was used developed by Malphurs, which was not original to the *Refocusing* process.

The first action of the process was the administration of a focus group pretest. The pretest was administered in an initial meeting of the group. The pretest provided a baseline with which to begin. The next step was the first retreat called New Church Foundations, which focused on three aspects. The first was the story of Eastern Hills, articulating its history, purpose, and vision. The second aspect of the New Church Foundations retreat was the biblical and theological foundations of church planting. This portion discussed the importance of the *missio Dei*, incarnational ministry, and the kingdom of God as they relate to the church plant. This foundation prepared the soil where the conversations grew as we talked about the church plant. The third aspect of the New Church foundations retreat was personal and corporate prayer. A focus group

meeting followed the New Church Foundations Retreat that evaluated the retreat and clarified its conclusions.

The second retreat (R^2) was called Identity Definition. This retreat focused on the accomplishment of three goals. The first task was to define the three mission focus groups. The second task was to identify the core values of this new church plant. The third task was new church vision development and articulation. After the Identity Definition retreat was completed, the focus group met once again to evaluate the second retreat and clarified conclusions drawn.

The third retreat (R^3) was called Next Steps, which had four main purposes. First, the ministry model that best accomplished the determined mission and vision was discovered. The ministry model articulated how the ministries will work together to facilitate the assimilation and mobilization of people. Second was to do an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (S.W.O.T.) of the created ministry model. The next step was determining the strategic initiatives. Once the strategic initiatives were determined, they were then prioritized. The initiatives were then translated into S.M.A.R.T. goals, defined as follows:

- Specific enough to provide detail to create good decision making,
- Measurable so that when it is finished there is tangible evidence of its completion,
- Acceptable to the whole team,
- Realistic to plan things that one is likely to follow through,
- Timely so that the goals are worked on and accomplished in a suitable manner.

After the completion of the third retreat, a third focus group retreat took place to evaluate the summit and clarify conclusions made. This process is the implementation of TQM principles into the church plant through the instrument of ChurchSmart Refocusing. It facilitates the development and articulation of the essential qualities of the church. This process built momentum in the church plant up to and through the launch day.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Problem Restated

In this study the church-planting process was a shared journey of identity development. The desired reality was for a shared identity of all attendees to emerge in the church-planting process. Much in the same way DNA serves the human body as the most basic element and identity, the same could be said of the DNA of the church body (Snyder and Runyon 14). Similar to the body's DNA with double helix and hydrogen bonds, the essential qualities of the church body is its mission, vision, and core values of the church (Southern and Norton 3). The journey toward this shared vision and identity creates a culture of teamwork and collaboration that serves the church well in future days.

The possible tension of a daughter congregation is between two elements. One side originates with those desiring to be a smaller version of the mother church. The other comes from a desire to be very different from the mother church. A process to articulate clearly the mission, vision, and core values serves the new church well.

Purpose Restated

The goal of the study was to evaluate the process for its ability to create an identity for a new daughter church from a mother congregation. This research project outlines a process of three all-church retreats for the intended purpose of constructing a new identity. This is an evaluative study using descriptive method. The evaluation was accomplished through focus groups, a research journal, and retreat conclusions.

Research Questions

1. Did the process develop a shared and cohesive church identity (vision, mission, and core values)? What factors seemed to contribute to this end? What elements detracted from this goal?
2. What ways do people exhibit and/or articulate identity with the new church?

Methodology

The purpose of this study is the evaluation of a process developed to articulate a shared church identity in a new church start. The methodology section outlines the evaluation of the project. The first step of the methodology was the administration of the pretest to the focus groups which happened on 28 July 2004, at my home, with six people present. The meeting created a baseline of knowledge, values, and feelings for the study. The content of the focus group pretest is found in Appendix C and the questions were as follows:

- What should be the mission focus (people we desire to reach) of our church?
- What should be the core values of our new church plant?
- What should be the vision of our new church plant?
- What kind of ministry model would be most effective for the church plant?

The first all-church event (R¹), called the New Church Foundations, happened on Friday, 15 October 2004 at 7:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday, 16 October 2004 at 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (see Appendix B).

The next step in the process was conducting our focus group (F¹) for R¹ reflection and evaluation. This focus group consisted of the video recording of the discussion around the following questions:

- Is there a general understanding of the retreat process and why we are experiencing it?
- Was the foundation of church planting (*missio Dei*, incarnational ministry, and kingdom of God) helpful?
- What were the strengths of the retreat?
- What were the potential difficulties?
- Did we get anywhere? Why? Why not?
- What could be done better to improve the next two retreats?

I made a video recording of the conversation. Later, I made an audio recording from the video and transcribed the conversation into notes. Then I assigned codes to the notes in order to draw observations and conclusions.

The next step in the process was the Identity Definition retreat (R²). This retreat took place on Friday, 12 November 2004 at 7:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday, 13 November 2004 at 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. on the campus of Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church. This retreat focused on the accomplishment of three goals. First, we determined our mission focus group, clarified our core values, and then participated in an exercise of vision discovery. The retreat began with a review of the retreat process, which gave us a context for the second retreat.

The second focus group (F²) took place at the home of Joe and Amy Zaccaria on Thursday, 2 December 2005 at 7:00 pm. Eight people attended. The following is the list of questions considered:

Are the conclusions drawn about Lancaster Larry and Lucy correct?

What deletions should be made?

What is missing?

What was the best part of the Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise?

What do you think of the core values?

What corrections would you make?

What would you identify as

Foundational?

Behavioral?

Ministerial?

What were some of the themes running through the purpose statements?

What were some of the themes of the vision pictures?

What were the strengths of the retreat?

What improvements could be made for the next retreat?

I made a video recording of the conversation. Later, I made an audio recording from the video and transcribed the conversation into notes. Then I assigned codes to the notes in order to draw observations and conclusions.

The next part of the process was the third and final retreat called Next Steps or R³. This retreat took place at the campus of Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church on 15 January 2005 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. The retreat had four main aspects, adapted from the *Refocusing* process. These main aspects included: ministry model determination, S.W.O.T. (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis), strategic initiatives, and S.M.A.R.T. goals.

The third focus group (F³) met at the Zaccaria home. Ten people attended. The questions considered were

What improvements can be made to our current mission, vision, and core values?

What do you think about the ministry model that was determined?

What did we think of the strategic initiatives presented?

I made a video recording of the conversation. Later, I made an audio recording from the video and transcribed the conversation into notes. Then I assigned codes to the notes in order to draw observations and conclusions. The process of the focus groups built momentum in the church plant up to and through the launch day.

Subjects

Eastern Hills Wesleyan Church (mother) made the decision to start a church in Lancaster, New York, which became known as The Vine Church (daughter). Eastern Hills made a generous provision of people, finances, and resources to make it happen. The Vine is located in Lancaster, New York. Both churches are a part of the Western New York district of the Wesleyan Church. The total number of people who came from Eastern Hills to the Vine was 108. The sample however was strictly defined as retreat participants who numbered 18, 20, and 21 over the three retreats.

The focus groups consisted of eight individuals. I selected the focus group participants based on their experience and representation of the new church. They represented the various ages and communities in the population.

Instrumentation

Three instruments evaluated the project: semi-structured focus group interviews, a field researcher's journal, and the retreat conclusions themselves. The focus group research was semi-structured, self-contained, multistage focus group. David L. Morgan outlines the qualities of focus groups that make them so effective. He notes the two

principal means of collecting qualitative research data in the social sciences: participant observation of groups and open-ended interviews with individuals. Focus groups are a great combination of both. They provide the dynamics of group interaction and the direction of content of open-ended interviews. Important in this study was both the content of the discussion and the group interaction with content.

Morgan describes the weaknesses and strengths of focus groups. The weaknesses of focus groups are categorized in two areas: the researcher's focus and the focus of the group's interaction. The researcher creating and directing the group, makes them distinctly less naturalistic than participant observation. Another weakness is the difficulty in determining how natural the interactions are. Another difficulty with focus groups is the possibility of group conformity or group polarization. Because the interaction is unpredictable, such an occurrence is difficult to prevent.

A number of strengths exist for the use of focus groups as well, especially their use in this project. One of the reasons for the selection of focus groups is how actively and easily participants may discuss the content of the retreats. Because the topic is based on a neutral entity, the new church, the discussion was easy and interactive for the participants. Focus groups provide a great deal of data in a relatively short amount of time. Clear and concise data collection and analysis are vital, as they do provide a lot of data in a short time period. Another reason focus groups are a great combination of principal qualitative methods is that they are more controlled than group observation and less controlled than individual interview. The weakness of the group observation and personal interviews are the strengths of focus groups since they operate across traditional boundaries (Morgan 10-17).

The instrument was semi-structured because a basic outline of five questions guided the time but did not dictate all content. It is a self-contained tool; the focus group was not used in combination with any other research. The focus group was multistage; it consisted of a pretest and three retreat reviews. The focus group was the best tool for this qualitative research project. The focus group allowed for participant observation and open-ended interviews. Focus groups were a case of enhanced participant observation because, as an observer, I was also able to facilitate the discussion. The focus group provided dynamic feedback of the new church creation identity process.

The time was semi-structured where a guide outlining approximately five topics was covered. Each focus group was given one hour to interact through the guide. I acted as moderator, with medium involvement in the process. I provided the tests with the questions, which guided the discussion for each table. The site of group interaction was a classroom in the mother church, which was a safe, comfortable space that allowed for ease of interaction. The classroom was a neutral location for both me and focus group participants. The focus group interactions from pretest to three retreat reflections were video and audio recorded. The focus groups recordings were transcribed and coded.

The first step in the methodology was a pretest (see Appendix E). After the first all-church retreat (see Appendix B), the focus group participated in the first retreat review (see Appendix F). Next, the second all-church retreat (see Appendix C) occurred. After the second all-church retreat, the focus group did the retreat review (see Appendix G). After the focus group, the third and final all-church retreat was held (see Appendix D). After the third all-church retreat, the final focus group meeting took place (see Appendix H).

Throughout the study a field researcher's journal was kept. These were weekly and event reflections throughout the time of church creation, launch, and ministry development.

The third tool used was the retreat conclusions themselves. During the final stages of the retreat process the focus became the application of the articulated church identity. This application was written in forms of goals and initiatives. It was these conclusions that factored into the overall study conclusions. The conclusions of the retreat that were articulated in forms of initiatives and goals were considered where they served as an appropriate response to the research questions.

Variables and Controls

The church identity process was the dependent variable because it was what could change dependent on the church planting process. The district superintendent of Western New York reviewed the process with me. The dissertation committee provided the level of expertise to verify or challenge validity.

For the purpose of the study, church identity defined the elements of the mission, vision, and core values of the church. The retreat process was the independent variable; it was one of the causes of church identity. The control of the study was the focus group pretest and retreat posttests. The focus group pretest and posttests evaluated the church planting process that emphasized identity formation.

Data Collection

The collection of data took place during the focus group interactions with the pretest, each focus group retreat review, and through the researcher's field journal. The focus group conversation was video recorded. An audio copy was made of the

conversation. The content was then transcribed into written form and then coded. The codes were then analyzed for patterns, cause and effect relationships, and frequency and intensity of comment. The journal was also coded and these codes were analyzed for patterns, cause and effect relationship, and frequency and intensity of comment.

Confidentiality

Each participant signed a consent form since each group interaction was videotaped. The consent recognized what was said in the focus group will be heard by others. The consent also stated knowledge that the videotape recorded all content and interaction. The research team only viewed the videos of the focus groups.

Administration of Focus Groups

The focus group consisted of eight members who accounted for possible no-shows without compromise of test. Each test consisted of about five topics. I facilitated each step but did not influence the discussion on each topic.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data of a focus group was determined largely by the focus of the project. The project looked to understand the degree to which the adapted process, Ministry Development and Evaluation, constituted the development of church identity and vision. The identity was reflected in the group's ability to articulate the mission, vision, and core values of the new church, which was reflected in how strongly the group felt about the church and how much they were able to comprehend. Therefore, once the focus groups were videotaped, the videos were then transcribed into documents. The content of the documents transcribed was coded. The code was based on the major elements of each retreat and the overall process. The code for the pretest was mission

focus, core values, vision, and ministry model. The code for the focus group meeting following the New Church Foundations retreat was Eastern Hills, church-planting foundations, and reasons to plant a church. The code for the focus group meeting following the Identity Definition retreat was mission focus, core values, and vision. The code for the focus group meeting following the Next Steps retreat was ministry model, initiatives, and goals. The videos were retained for regular review of group interaction and relational review. The data was analyzed for patterns, cause and effect relationships, frequency, and intensity of comment. The data was analyzed along three lines of inquiry: how often the group mentioned the item, how many different people mentioned it, and subjective interpretation of the interaction and energy. The writing of the results was a balance of direct quotations of the participants and summaries of their discussions.

Significance of Study

An important factor for a new church created out of a mother church was identity. The goal of the study was to evaluate the process for its ability to create a new church identity of a daughter church. This new identity was defined through the development and articulation of the mission, vision, and core values of the new church. This project consisted of the creation and evaluation of a process that defined these essential elements. The process created is titled Ministry Development and Evaluation. The process used was an adaptation of the ChurchSmart Refocusing Retreat using principles of Total Quality Management. The study was done to make the Vine Wesleyan Church plant as successful as possible, as well as benefit future church plants of Eastern Hills, the Western New York District of the Wesleyan Church, and the Wesleyan Church at large.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The most tangible measure of the effectiveness of the retreat process might be the attendance at the launch of the church; however, this number is representative of the end product and more quantitative than qualitative. Many more significant findings can be discovered with the evaluation of the retreats through focus groups. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the retreat process in forming the mission, vision, and core values in the new congregation. Analysis of the coded text of focus groups and the field journal helped accomplish this goal.

Two research questions guided the research project. The first question was, Did the process develop a shared and cohesive church identity (vision, mission, core values)? What factors seemed to contribute to this end? What elements detracted from the goal? The second question was, In what ways do people exhibit and/or articulate identity with the new church?

This chapter outlines how the code was constructed based on the focus group discussions and field journal. It defines in greater detail the ten most frequent categories, analyzes the data collected, and articulates conclusions drawn from the data.

Focus Group

The texts of the focus group discussions were coded, including the accounts of a pretest focus group that met before the first retreat and the focus groups that met after each of the three retreats. The content of the focus groups was video and audio recorded. The text was then transcribed to written form. After reading and rereading the text, each paragraph was coded using the categories listed below. The focus group participants were

some of the first individuals to commit to the new church and leaders in the initial ministry stages.

Field Journal

The field journal was a way of recording personal observations and thoughts throughout the church plant process. The field journal began 31 May 2004, the evening before my first day of work on the new church. It ended with observations of our worship service on 14 August 2005. Each entry was coded with categories listed below.

Research Code

The texts of the focus group meetings and field journal were coded. The following list shows the categories that emerged from the reading and re-reading of the text. Each category is listed with a simple definition and then explained further (see Table 4.1) .

Table 4.1. List of Code Categories

Core Values	The Most Important Aspects of Church Life or Ministry
Perception	The shared understandings of those who are a part of the new church and those attending the retreats
Vision	The preferred picture of the church in years ahead
Relationships	The social links of people within the church and to the community
Identity	Definition of who the church is
Planting Process	The steps in starting one church out of another
People of the community	Definition of the average person or family in Lancaster
Commitment	The willingness of people to contribute to the church and process
Integrating	The connecting of people in church life and ministry
Leadership	The identity and role of core team and leadership in the church
Building	A physical structure for ministry
Mission	A statement summarizing the purpose of church. Often a succinct restatement of the great commandment and great commission.
Eastern Hills	The mother congregation of The Vine
Communication	The delivery of information about the retreat process
Focus	The direction of the ministry
Worship	The main corporate gathering
Unexpected	Unanticipated results of conclusions of the process
Fringe	Those who were spectators during the church plant process, but begin to participate after launch
Finances	The monies throughout the church plant process
Prayer	The role of communication with God in the church planting process
Scripture	The reference to the Biblical foundation in the church-planting process
Commonality	The degree of consensus during the retreat

Table 4.2 shows the ranking of these topics based upon their frequency in the focus group discussion and field journal.

Table 4.2. Ranking of Core Values Based on Frequency

Code Topics	Focus Group	Field Journal	Total
Core Values	41	7	48
Perception	19	1	20
Vision	15	4	19
Relationships	14	4	18
Identity	11	7	18
Planting process	6	11	17
People of the community	11	4	15
Commitment	6	8	14
Integrating	13	0	13
Leadership	4	8	12
Building	8	2	10
Mission	5	4	9
Eastern Hills	1	7	8
Communication	6	1	7
Focus	1	3	4
Worship	3	0	3
Unexpected	1	2	3
Fringe	3	0	3
Finances	0	3	3
Prayer	2	0	2
Scripture	2	0	2
Commonality	2	0	2

The following is an explanation of the ten most frequent categories, followed by further analysis in the significant findings section.

Core Values

The topic of core values was the most significant theme of the focus group and field journal content. The core value discussion at the retreats revolved around what we thought was most important to our church.

We began the core values discussion in R¹ with a tool called the Core Values Audit by Malphurs. The Core Values Audit was a list of fifty-one possible core values. The intention was to use the audit to facilitate core value discussion. During F¹ we discussed the Core Values Audit and its role in the retreat. The focus group decided to clarify the exercise for the retreat participants.

I proposed to the group that we do an exercise called Lancaster Larry and Lucy, and they agreed. We began R² with this exercise, which discussed the identity of a typical person or family in Lancaster. At the end of this exercise, the table groups had a number of similar observations (see Table 4.3); each table group came to similar conclusions about the make-up of Lancaster Larry and Lucy. We then considered the next step of what we would have to value as a church in order to minister effectively to this community.

In addition to focus groups and the field journal, as a part of the Doctor of Ministry process, a Research Reflection Team was formed. The team was an additional group who reviewed the progress of the study on an occasional basis and met nine times. During the Research Reflection Team meeting #6, Donna, a Reflection team member, recommended that we eliminate the foundational values. The foundational values were

already listed in the statement of faith, so the group decided that the behavioral and ministry values would be used and the foundational values were deleted. The Research Reflection Team provided further definition of each core value. The Core Values of the Vine are found in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Core Values of the Vine Wesleyan Church

Core Values	Definition
Behavioral value	Definition*
Life-change	We value every person moving toward Christ and becoming more like him everyday.
Authenticity	We value every person being real with God and others.
Belonging/Relationships	We value people feeling like they belong and connect on a deeper level with God and others.
Ministry value	Definition
Small groups	We value small groups as the main tool for the most essential qualities of ministry (evangelism, discipleship, fellowship).
Ministry to families	We value ministries that are relevant to where people are today.
Relevance	We value ministries that are relevant to where people are today.
Community focused	We value ministry that considers and connects with the community.
Gift-oriented involvement	We value every person being equipped and involved in a ministry that uses his/her gifts and abilities to the fullest potential.

* Definition explains and clarifies the value listed

Perception

The origin of this retreat material was from a Church Resource Ministry called Refocusing that was designed to refocus and renew an established church. The material

was adapted and implemented to a church plant setting to serve as a focusing tool. The material is designed to include a majority of church attendees, especially the influencers. It was designed to gain input from all attendees on the evaluation of present ministry status and to design a plan for the future. The attendance at the three retreats was eighteen, twenty, and twenty-one respectively; however, the launch attendance was 355 with a regular attendance of about two hundred. Through each of the focus group meetings, the group expressed concern over the low attendance at each retreat. A number of factors are involved with the perception of people which are noted below.

Vision

The vision of the church was also a major theme in the analysis of the focus group and field journal content. One of the stated goals of the process was the understanding and articulating the vision for the church. After all the retreat table discussion of the community, mission, and core values of the church, the exercise of identifying the vision started with a diagram. The tables groups were encouraged to draw a picture of what they understood as the vision for the church. The diagrams were creative and a fun exercise. The tables were then encouraged to write statements that best described the drawings and their understanding of the vision of the church. They were encouraged to write descriptive statements of whom we would like to become as a church, as opposed to who we are, and each statement began with “we dream of a church.” These statements are listed below:

“We dream of a church where we individually and corporately are obedient to God.”

“We dream of a church where we see life change because of people encountering a loving God.”

“We dream of a church where we see people being cared for and loved.”

“We dream of a church where our community and culture are met, embraced, and transformed.”

“We dream of a church where the kingdom of God is increased in real ways in the world.”

“We dream of a church where a culture of faith, hope, and love is the context of all life and ministry.”

“We dream of a church that is connected to and serving the global Church.”

“We dream of a church where the worship is vibrant, real, and pleasing to God.”

“We dream of a church where authentic biblical community is the norm.”

The result is a list of statements that describes whom we hope to become or for what we would like to be known. The process articulated statements that would form the vision of the church we hoped to see in the next three to five years.

Relationships

People made statements about relationships quite often. While relationships were not a focus of the retreat at the outset, this concept emerged as a major concern. The statements about relationships revolved around three concepts. First, ministry was more about relationships than programming. Second, close relationships developed during the retreat process. Third, more personal contact with people during the retreats might result in greater attendance at launch.

Identity

The code of identity recognized the portions of discussion focused on the type of church The Vine would become. Much of this discussion centered on the desire to understand who we were as a church and then use the results to guide the ministry. The articulation of the church's identity came in the form of the church calling statement, which outlined the mission, vision, and core values. Southern and Norton note, "Discovering your identity—your unique spiritual DNA—means first understanding your core values (what you stand for), your mission (your reason for being), and your vision (what you see your congregation being in the future)" (3). The subsequent focus group discussions were founded on this premise and worked toward that end.

Planting Process

Another category that surfaced in coding was the planting process. This discussion revolved around people's comprehension of why the church was being planted and how the plant would occur, that is, it would be started with preview services, ministry development and launch. Another observation made by the focus group about the planting process was centered on our ability, or inability, to communicate the process or the importance of it.

People of the Community

The observations made from the Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise were categorized as People of the Community, which was the most unexpected aspect of the process. This exercise was birthed from F¹ discussions regarding the core value exercise that utilized the Core Values Audit. The exercise provided an opportunity for people from Lancaster to talk about the community of Lancaster. Of all the observations made by the

table groups, the list consisted of aspects that were named by a majority of tables, or at least three out of five (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Results of the Lancaster Larry and Lucy Exercise

Lancaster Larry and Lucy (The average person or family in Lancaster)
Family oriented, great deal of schedule revolves around children
Community focus
Enjoys Buffalo sports teams
Volunteer fireman—armed service veteran
All American, patriotic
Catholic religious background
Town of good neighbors
Primary caretaker for his children and his parents
Takes great care and pride in his home
Mix of Lancaster lifers and those new to the community from elsewhere in Western New York
Blended and step-family dynamics
Varied educational backgrounds
Doesn't trust organized church and its leaders
Future economic concerns: jobs for children, taxes
Values are traditional but struggles with transferring these to kids and teens
Church is a very low priority and often perceived as irrelevant
Overextended in areas of time and money

Understanding the Lancaster Larry and Lucy characteristics to be the reality for many in our community helped us as a church to see how we could come alongside others in this community. During F¹ discussion table groups noted that none of these qualities were descriptive of every person in the community; they were qualities that defined a solid percentage.

Commitment

The focus groups and field journal addressed the concern of attendance. This text was coded as commitment. Before the retreat process began, we had about ninety-five written commitments from individuals to be a part of The Vine. Yet, the attendance of the three retreats was eighteen, twenty, and twenty-one respectively. The focus groups discussed the commitment level of people to the process and/or church. The group wrestled with commitment to the church and its relation, if any, to commitment to the process.

Integrating

The discussion coded as integrating focused on the practices of welcoming, inviting, and encouraging people to get involved in the church. Much of the discussion was based on how we would accomplish three goals. First, we wanted to learn how we could create a ministry model that gave people many points of entry into the church (i.e., worship service, small group, student ministry). The second goal focused on how we would be a church that welcomed all kinds of people, not just those we were comfortable with or people who were most like us. The third goal focused on how we were going to encourage people to make a significant ministry contribution.

Leadership

Text coded as Leadership was the discussion of the role of leaders in the retreat process. The ministry directors of the church during the ministry development phase included John Bradford (worship), Nate Lennon (Student), Tammy Baldwin (Family), and Scott Stockton (Community Life). The discussion often focused on the importance of leadership participation in the retreat process:

We need to be the models for the core values. We need to be loving, listening. It takes a lot of energy, but we need to do it so our leaders and people know what it looks like and how to do it. (Scott)

The participation of the leaders encouraged the participation of others and provided the leaders with insight into how to lead their ministries.

Significant Findings

This section is the analysis of the data collected from the coded focus group discussion and field journal. The analysis registered significant findings based on the top ten categories listed above. This analysis is later organized into major themes that answer the guiding research questions.

Core Values

The discussion of core values had three subsets. The first was the construction of core values. In other words, where do core values come from, and how do we discover them? The second subset category of core values was articulation. This discussion focused on how core values are defined and written. The third subset was communication. We asked, Once the core values are articulated, how are they communicated to the congregation or community?

The first subset, the construction of core values, began with the Core Values Audit. The Core Values Audit seemed to confuse the process for the participants. They were overwhelmed and unable to choose, for instance, evangelism over discipleship or missions over prayer. The other difficulty I observed was that the audit only led to discussion of the kind of church we wanted instead of one that was focused on meeting the needs of the community. All the members of the focus group sensed the frustration that was experienced after doing the Core Values Audit. So in F¹ I offered the idea of

doing a Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise in R². I did not know doing this exercise would change the core value discussion profoundly. As I observed the tables, participants had a great deal of fun describing the people of the community—thinking about themselves and their neighbors. The observations and definitions from each of the tables were very similar. The Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise gave greater clarity to everyone. Once the observations were listed in R², I then asked the question, What would we need to value as a church to reach Lancaster Larry, Lucy, and their family? The whole discussion shifted from creating the kind of church we wanted, which was the direction of the audit, to the kind of church that would be need meeting and community focused: “It seems like at the last retreat, people were thinking about themselves, not the community around them, and it seemed like this retreat people started thinking more about the people around them, not just themselves” (Tammy). The result of answering that question created an exciting list of values. As much as the Core Value Audit discouraged the participants, the creation of values in response to our community understanding seemed to energize the retreat.

At the F³ the focus group worked on the second subset or the articulation of the core values. The group decided to take the core values listed from the retreat and list them into categories of foundational, behavioral, and ministry. After the retreat and focus group process, a Research Reflection Team reviewed the results. These were people separate from the retreat who guided the dissertation process. They observed that the foundational core values were a partial restatement of our Wesleyan Statement of Faith. The Research Reflection Team determined that the definition of core values needed to be clearly understood and observed in behavior and ministry structure. This team decided to

take out the foundational core values and allow them to be articulated in a statement of faith. The behavioral and ministry core values remained. The behavioral core values are the definition of behaviors that the church views as most important. The ministry core values are descriptive of our ministry style and structure. As our core value list stands presently, the concepts could be practically applied to the ministry, rather than being theologically descriptive of our church. Our understanding of the core values can be described this way: Rather than the mere elimination of foundational core values, we understand our core values are built upon the foundation of our statement of faith.

The third subset focused on the discussion about how to communicate the core values. The group suggested making them available to guests, posting them on a sign, and putting them in a membership class. In the final analysis, I decided to make them a part of the Vine 1.0 seminar: Church Chat. The Vine 1.0 is the first of four seminars provided as an opportunity for people to connect with the church in a more significant way. The core values are communicated in the context of increasing people's understanding and connection with the church. They are shared along with the mission and vision statement.

Perception

A number of factors contributed to the lack of attendance by those who seemed committed to the church. While the conclusions were helpful, it was by no means inclusive of a majority of our people. In these formative stages, not enough people were available to draw broad conclusions. I concluded people were not invested enough yet to commit to such a process. Many were spectators to the whole planting process until they

saw more developments and established a relationship with those who were a part of the church:

I thought that perhaps more people would've shown up with this being the first one, not that it would've made a difference, but maybe it wasn't properly communicated to everyone of how important the process really was. (Matt)

Maybe they really don't believe that their input will have any effect on the church too. (Amy)

The result was only about twenty people of the initial two hundred taking part in the process.

One of the factors that served as a barrier to participation for many was the perception of the process. It was perceived by some as unimportant, not critical to the formation of the ministry. Some perceived the larger overarching tasks of the retreats to be a difficult journey, partially due to the way I chose to communicate the process. A number of people also desired to observe the church plant process and make a decision on being a part of the church after it was started. These are my personal conclusions based on subsequent conversations and interactions.

Vision

After working through the table drawings and statements written about the drawings, the vision was less a statement of measurable goals as much as it was meant to be an inspiration to make this kind of a church a reality. The accomplishment of this vision would be realized through the stories of people. The statements were also inspirational in that they would be exhibited in the life of the church, not merely goals that were accomplished. Since the participants were encouraged to visualize the future, the result was that the vision became more than a numerical goal or building: "In all of

these, there isn't a church building. It's more about the people than what a particular building looks like" (Tammy). The statements were descriptive of the kind of church we desired to become and, as a result, the vision served as an inspiration and motivation.

In a typical church plant, people may join in the process of ministry development based on their identification with the vision of the church. In this study, people joined the church before the vision was articulated. Those who did participate in the articulation were very committed to the church after the process.

Relationships

Three main observations were made about relationships from the field journal and focus group discussion. The first is the impact the process had on our relationships with one another. The second was the importance the participants placed on relationships as they related to the ministry of the church. Third, a correlation between our relationships and attendance at the retreat existed.

Relationship-building was an unexpected and valuable by-product of the retreat process. Everyone was encouraged to participate in the process. Most of the work of the retreat and all conclusions came out of table interaction between participants. The people's interaction with one another during the three retreats resulted in a twenty-four hour investment in relationship with others in the church. At the start of the retreat process, the people were virtual strangers, but by the end, individuals were sharing with one another and praying for each other. The focus group concluded that the retreat was not only the process by which we made conclusions about the importance of relationships, it was also a vehicle that accomplished the task as well. The process not only created the identity of the church; it also was where individuals shared life. As the

retreats concluded, not only were people excited about the church, but they had deeper relationships with one another. Those who took part in the retreats made significant connections with others, and therefore, The Vine.

One of the core values that surfaced through the process was relationships, especially relationship-building opportunities and ministries. The participants truly desired to have our church create opportunities and experiences that would foster relationships with others:

Maybe after a few weeks, having people contacted and encouraged. (John)

Helping them feel cared for. (Amy)

So maybe some kind of way, after we're going for a few weeks, of surveying people. Maybe we're getting to know them, but some way of follow-up. (Christopher)

Some way to follow-up with them, pray for them. (John)

The desire of the group was to lay a foundation that was built upon relationship and not programming. The most effective way to build the church would be through the relationships we fostered with each other and the community that emerged from these relationships.

These relationships were directly correlated to the religious characteristic of Lancaster Larry and Lucy. Even though a number of people in Lancaster had not been to church in years, they were still a part of the church. If the church gave them nothing else, it gave them a sense of belonging. The participants in the retreats thought if we were able to offer significant relationships, people who came to the church from the community would experience the same sense of belonging.

Retreat participation was based on the relationships that were built in the church already. After each retreat, the focus group concluded that the team should call each person who had shared interest or commitment in the church thus far:

Do we want to make phone calls again and remind people of this weekend and what we'll be discussing? It's kind of that personal touch again.
(Nate)

I thought at the close of our time on Saturday we were really beginning to gel as a group. People were really starting to feel like they were part of something and some other people. Before we were total strangers when this thing started. There was a lot of comradely and teamwork and just good feelings toward one another by the time we closed on Saturday. All right? Improvements we could make before our next retreat, important for us to do? (Christopher)

The importance of the process and the value of individual input were best communicated through personal interaction and not mass advertising.

Identity

The concept of identity became a major theme of the focus groups. Identity involved the articulation of the mission, vision, and core values. We also discussed the importance of the application and adoption of these concepts. The identity of a church, in a way, served as a map to the future. It provided direction in decision making:

And you have foundational and out of those you can [sic] come behavioral and from your behavioral core values you can gleam [sic] your ministerial core values. So they're all from the top of what you want to do. If something is outside those areas, even though it's important, it's not something to do because our core values are right here. It still keeps us from overextending ourselves in some areas we don't necessarily want to do, can't do, or are unable to do. (Nate)

Yeah. This goes back to when I started talking to people that they'd be great, about doing one thing but your passion in doing it. If we have this list of things that are all important and we try to do them all, then we won't get anything done. But if we have what our passion really is, what we want to do, then we'll stick to that one thing. We'll be on track and accomplish more that counts. (Nate)

Another value to the identity is the way it distinguishes one church from another. Like DNA in humans, identity is the distinct qualities of each organization (Southern and Norton 7). Since we were coming from a strong mother congregation, the ability to articulate a separate and distinct identity was crucial. We tried as a church to determine what was going to be different about us and our ministry.

In a seminar called Church Chat, we shared information about the church, the mission, vision, and core values. A Church Chat is an opportunity to be introduced to the ministry of The Vine and others who attend. Since we began in March, the church has had six Church Chat meetings. The feedback I observed was positive. The people were obviously excited and/or pensive about the content. The best way people have articulated the identity has been through public testimony. About once a month in our worship service, people are given the opportunity to share with the congregation what God is doing in their lives and how the church has affected them.

On 18 September 2005, we had a six-month celebration service, where we celebrated God's faithfulness since our church began. The service included three baptisms of people who gave their lives to Christ, three testimonies of families who have connected once again with the church after not being involved for many years, and an introduction of our first thirty-seven charter members. Between the relationships people have with one another and their identification with the church, the connections for many have grown strong at the six-month mark.

Planting Process

Only one family involved in the process had ever been part of a new church start; therefore, people had little knowledge in how they were going to leave Eastern Hills and

connect with others in the Lancaster community to begin a ministry there. The result of the lack of understanding was one of the factors that contributed to only about twenty people of the first service attendance of 355 taking part in the planning process. “I think it’s important to maybe repeat these ideas as well. Maybe bring it into a preview service or some aspect, so that people who aren’t coming to vision retreats have some idea as to why” (Amy). The focus group observed that the planting process itself was a new concept to most of the people at Eastern Hills, as well as the Lancaster community.

People of the Community

The observations made during the Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise were identified in the code People of the Community. This exercise provided more accurate information and greater understanding than the demographic reports. Demographics gave insight into categories and percentages. This exercise of the identity of Lancaster Larry and Lucy forced us to think about our neighbors. The demographics gave us facts; Lancaster Larry and Lucy gave us understanding and insight into people. It personalized the whole process. Now we knew just why this church was created, to show Lancaster Larry and Lucy who Jesus is. This exercise also made the whole process enjoyable:

I think one of the best parts for me of this Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise was some of this stuff when we saw it up there and we said it, we just inherently laughed because it was so true. Like sports and beer. There was just a roar when they said St. Mary’s or volunteer fire department. Across the board, people thought it was hilarious. (Christopher)

Once we had a consensus on who lived in our community, the direction for the church became clear. Understanding Lancaster Larry and Lucy led to what we would have to value as a church in order to minister to this person. It also shaped what kind of ministries we would offer to be relevant to the community.

Commitment

The implementation of retreat conclusions would have had more ownership in the congregation. The congregation would have expressed more ownership of the retreat conclusions if a greater majority had attended and implemented the retreat conclusions. Because people did not attend the retreats, they were unaware of the mission, vision, and core values discussed:

I don't think they know they have a platform to come in and give their two cents on. I know a lot of people do like to blend in, and those people won't come to this retreat. But I think there are [sic] a significant number of people in churches, associated with us in one way or another, an opportunity to at least bring the idea up for discussion in some format to explain why we can or can't do it or what our mission is or whatever.
(Nate)

At this point in the church plant process, our main mode of communication was a newsletter. Without additional modes it was difficult to garner commitment from a newsletter. When the church attempts the retreat process once again for continual ministry development, there will be worship services, small groups, seminars, and a variety of modes of education and promotion for the next time.

Integrating

The concept of integrating was used to code the text that referred to being an inviting and welcoming church and how we were going to equip people to be involved in the ministry. The conversation about these concepts was still in a conceptual stage at the end of the process. These conversations are worth further discovery and time.

Since the study, I have created a process called the C4 Strategy that consists of Chat, Consider, Contribute, and Connect. These seminars begin with the communication of the church's mission, vision, and core values and then builds upon the concepts to

share the history of denomination and theology, spiritual gift discovery and church membership. The process was designed to encourage attendees to understand the purpose, priorities, and hope for the future of the church and make a significant contribution and connection to the church.

The focus group spent time discussing numerous ways to be involved in the church. There are people who have connected to our church through small groups, through community events, through children's ministry and through student ministry: "Well, one thing is that there are entry points at various places. It's not just the worship service" (Matt).

Leadership

One of the key aspects of the church's ministry has been involvement of the leaders of the church. The leaders of the church were involved in every part of the process. They were some of the first people to commit to the church. What we were lacking in the process was more opinion leaders. A few people, who are now part of the advisory council leadership, or board of directors, were not a part of the retreat process.

Retreat Conclusions

Reported in the next section is the mission, vision, and core values summary that took place as a result of retreat exercises. The final retreat also had components of ministry model, strategic initiatives, and goals.

Ministry Model

The result of the ministry model exercise is in Appendix I. The result of the retreat was a ministry model that was missional and incarnational. The focus of the model was not the worship service. The focus was the development of ministries that would

result in high interaction and relationship building with the community. A second strong component was the development of small groups. Small groups were the main ministry vehicle for the fulfillment of the basic church elements of fellowship, discipleship, and evangelism. The third component of the incarnational model was the ministry focus of felt needs in the community. The result was a ministry model that targeted the needs of the community.

Strategic Initiatives

The final retreat R³ contained an exercise of church-wide initiatives. These were projects for whole church involvement and participation. The initiatives were as follows:

1. Development of a small group ministry,
2. Development of community service projects,
3. Development of community felt-need ministries, and
4. Creation of a coffee shop to encourage relationship building between

congregational members and between the church and community.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

The next step at the R³ retreat was the transitioning of strategic initiatives into S.M.A.R.T. goals. The church was encouraged not only to list great projects but to take the next step of setting goals to work toward the accomplishment of the initiatives. Listed below are the goals that resulted from the retreat exercise:

1. Development of a small group ministry
 - Assign leadership to the small group ministry (part-time paid staff)
 - Develop small groups as line item in budget
 - Develop leadership training for small group leaders and host

- Find kickoff date for small group ministry
2. Development of community service projects
 - Find leadership in key point person and team for community service projects (part-time paid staff)
 - Develop a budget for community service projects
 - Work on once-per-month community service project schedule
 3. Development of community felt-need ministries
 - Find leadership for ministry
 - Develop team of seminar leaders and topics
 - Find location for ministry
 - Kickoff: Fall 2005
 - Advertising strategy for seminars
 - Name the ministry
 4. Creation of a coffee shop to encourage relationship building between congregational members and between the church and community
 - Find location for coffee shop
 - Develop budget of start-up cost and operational expenses
 - Develop management and employment schedule
 - Develop construction team
 - Develop design team
 - Find resource for coffee and supplies.

Major Themes

The following section articulates the major themes of the study as they relate to the research questions.

Research Question #1

The first research question was: Did the process develop a shared and cohesive church identity (vision, mission, core values)? What factors seemed to contribute to this end? What elements detracted from the goal?

The process did provide a way to articulate a church identity. The contributing aspects of the study to this end were relationship, identity, core values, and vision. The retreat process provided a vehicle where the group was able to articulate a church calling statement that consisted of the church's mission, vision, and core values. This church calling statement and summary of the church's mission, core values, and vision in Appendix I.

A catalyst to developing a shared and cohesive vision was the exercise of identifying the people of the community. The Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise had great value. It provided a great deal of clarity to the core value construction. Another value of the Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise was the personalization it brought to the process. The Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise brought realism to the table work, a reminder that what was happening was the creation of a real church to reach real people in a real community. People began to connect the mission, vision, and core values of the church with their neighbors, coworkers, and family who need the Lord in their lives.

Another contributing factor to the church's identity was the vision created. Since the vision was created out of discussion around the tables, many of the participants felt

invested in its creation and thus committed to making it a reality. The process of vision construction created a passion in the participants for the direction of the church. The relationships developed during the retreat served as a catalyst in the communication and excitement of the vision of the church.

The clarity of church identity, people of the community, and vision were the strongest contributors of the process. In other words, knowing what the church was about, recognizing the people for whom we were starting the church, and understanding the direction of the future contributed to the momentum of the ministry that catapulted it from twenty people to 355 at launch over the course of three months.

A number of factors detracted from our ability to articulate a cohesive and shared church identity. One factor was the attendance at the retreats which was eighteen, twenty, and twenty-one persons respectively, which was a small representation of our launch attendance of 355.

Another factor was the perception of the people. Some perceived the process to be too hard or not important. For many, the process had no context because few understood the planting process. The process of starting a new church involved components such as the retreat process, ministry development, and launch. One of the contributing factors was the lack of communication or improper communication of the bigger picture. Codes from the field journal noted that the new church received very limited exposure from the mother church during the retreat process.

Another factor was the vision of the church. The first people who are part of any new church are typically attracted to the vision of the church. These people have a commitment to make the vision of the church a reality. The people who took part in the

process all had a previous relationship with me. The reason for their participation was a result of their relationship, not a compelling vision. Therefore, the lack of vision early in the process was a hindrance, but the shared vision, once articulated after the process, was valuable.

One of the codes used in the study was leadership. A number of aspects of leadership were discussed; however, one of the contributing factors to a low turnout was the leaders who were in place. The ministry leaders were selected based on their competency and ministry experience and not for their level of influence in Lancaster or Eastern Hills. The early ministry leaders came from two other area churches and out of state. The early ministry leaders were not opinion leaders with communication networks in Lancaster or Eastern Hills, the two pools from which our people originated. The leaders during the planting process were not connected to individuals in Lancaster or Eastern Hills, which would have contributed to a greater attendance.

In summary, the lack of understanding of the planting process due to poor communication, vision, and leadership created a faulty perception on behalf of the people and did not garner their commitment to the process. Rogers notes in his book that critical mass is a crucial concept. Critical mass “occurs at the point at which enough individuals in a system have adopted an innovation so that the innovation’s further rate of adoption becomes self-sustaining” (343). With an average attendance of twenty, critical mass was not reached for the launch attendance of 355 or regular attendance of two hundred.

Some factors contributed to and distracted from the construction of a shared and cohesive church identity. The process did articulate a solid and strong identity, but a few improvements can be made to the process.

Research Question #2

The second research question was, What ways do people exhibit and/or articulate identity with the new church?

Even better than being able to articulate a church calling statement is the ability to practice it, especially in the formation of our relationships. In the process, one unexpected discovery was that relationship would be a core value and of great importance to those who participated in the process. Another unexpected result was the opportunity for us to develop relationships as participants. Since the nature of the process involved the people in discussion and interaction, people got to know one another well. People went from being strangers to becoming prayer partners and friends. The core values moved from being concepts on paper to being real life experiences. The relationships that were built not only reinforced the core values, they also infused hope in the participants that the vision could become a reality, especially the part where the dream is to have a church where people feel cared for and loved. The result was not only the creation of a church identity, but a shared and cohesive identity as a result of the relationships developed in the process.

Indeed the relationships that were built contributed to a shared and cohesive church identity, and conversely the identity contributed to the relationships. The identity of the church provided common ground upon which relationships could be formed. While the process was taking place, small groups were formed to provide a setting where people in the church could get to know one another. The participants discussed the mission, vision, and core values as they were being constructed. The healthy discussion over these issues and the creation of the church was the basis for a number of relationships between

the people of the church. The relationships that were created did serve to articulate a church identity, but more than that the relationships were just as valuable, in and of themselves, as the identity itself.

A good measurement of the participant's ability to exhibit and/or articulate identity with the new church was found in the initiatives and goals that were set at the final retreat. As a result of the strategic initiatives and goal-setting exercise of the third retreat, a number of developments were set in motion. The first initiative was development of a small group ministry. Since the retreat, the church has committed a part-time paid staff position to the oversight of small group and developed a healthy small group budget. A leadership training resource was developed and two training seminars held for small group leaders and hosts. The small group ministry started about three months after the retreat in April 2005 and experienced a large ministry kickoff in October 2005. Presently twenty-five small groups are available at the church, and sixty-eight percent of our church is involved in small groups. The second initiative was the development of community service projects. Again, leadership and finances were designated toward the ministry, and in August 2005 a ministry team was developed. The church presently averages one church-wide community service project a month. Also, a number of the small groups in the church do community service projects on their own initiative. The third initiative was the development of community felt-need ministries. Since the time of the final retreat, the Vine Wesleyan Church has launched Mercy Street Ministries. Seminars are offered to minister to the felt-needs of the community according to the experience and skill of the leaders who get involved. Mercy Street ministry meets

in the Trinity Episcopal Church in Lancaster. The ministry kicked off in October 2005 with the following offerings:

Financial Peace— A financial ministry on how to get out of and stay out of debt;

Griefshare— A ministry that encourages those who have recently lost a loved one or are experiencing continued grief;

DivorceCare— A ministry to help those who are presently separated or going through a divorce;

Celebrate Recovery— A ministry that assists those dealing with substance abuse and addiction or are seeking recovery from other difficult circumstances; and

Can Anyone See My Arms Are Empty?— A ministry designed to resource and encourage couples facing infertility.

The final initiative of the retreat was the creation of a coffee shop to develop an atmosphere for relationship building in the community. In this context, a place is available for the church to interact with the community and for small groups and other relationship building to take place for church members. Since the retreat, a lease was signed for a storefront location. The church also acquired the equipment, supplies, and furniture needed. Still to be done is the creation of a construction and design team, the development of a budget, and the hiring of shop employees. The church continues to move closer to the coffee shop being a reality in our community.

The development and implementation of strategic church-wide initiatives and goals is a good measurement of the church's practice and articulation of the identity. The ministry development of small groups, community service projects, Mercy Street ministries, and coffee shop have provided opportunities for the church attendees to

commit time, finances, and energy to the fulfillment of the mission, vision, and core values of the church.

Summary of Major Findings

In review, the following is a list of major findings for clarification. These will be stated in relation to the research question they answer.

Research Question #1

Did the process develop a shared and cohesive church identity (vision, mission, core values)? What factors seemed to contribute to this end? What elements detracted from the goal?

1. Clarity of church identity, people of the community, and vision were the strongest contributors of the process.
2. Lack of understanding of the planting process due to poor communication, vision, and leadership created a faulty perception on behalf of the people and did not garner their commitment to the process.

Research Question #2

What ways do people exhibit and/or articulate identity with the new church?

1. Relationships built in the process were the greatest exhibition of the identity. Relationships were not only a part of the stated mission, vision, and core values; they were central to the experience and for many the greatest value of the process.
2. Development and implementation of strategic church-wide initiatives and goals are a good measurement of the church's practice and articulation of the identity (small groups, community outreach, felt need seminars, coffee shop).

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a process for its ability to develop a shared and cohesive church identity. Instead of building an identical ministry to the mother church in a different community, the intention was to discover the distinctions of Lancaster and start a ministry that was formed around the needs and priorities of that community. As opposed to a leader who created the mission, vision, and core values of the church, this process was a tool in which these were discovered as a community. The process created a shared identity, allowing all people involved to have input and foster identity with the purpose, future, and priorities of the church.

Both strengths and difficulties existed with the process and its ability to accomplish the goal of a shared and cohesive vision. Overall, the process had value and did accomplish the desired outcome, the evidence of which is seen in the sustained attendance at the church, which is only six months old and is averaging 230 attendees per Sunday. Nevertheless, some adaptations exist to make it a more effective process at a future time. Some unexpected but very helpful initiatives emerged from the process. Though these qualities were unknown at the start, these outcomes proved to enhance the value of the process.

Major Themes

The first major theme was comprised of the three factors that contributed the most to the process: the clarity of church identity, an understanding of the people of the community, and the emergence of a vision from the midst of the people. The church identity that developed was created in community and, therefore, enriched the experience

for those who were involved. The process led to a natural cohesion due to the relationships formed during the retreats. The clarity of the identity served as a catalyst in the commitment of people who joined The Vine since the church launch. The enhanced understanding of our community turned the focus of the retreat outside our church, rather than on what we wanted in a church. All of these qualities served to enhance the process and contribute to its positive review.

A number of leadership weaknesses and strengths were revealed during the process. Another major theme that arose from the research was that the leaders, including myself, were not able to communicate the importance of member participation in the planting process. Perhaps people thought the vision should be developed by the leaders. If so, then a wise approach is to investigate the steps we took to discover where the wrong perception was conveyed. Much of the focus group discussion and some of the field journal entries revealed the fact that of the ninety-five people who filled out a written commitment to the church prior to the retreat process, only an average of twenty people showed up for each retreat. The research would surmise that the planting process, lack of initial vision, leadership, and perception were all contributing factors to the low turnout. These factors lay the foundation for improvements for the future.

I also exhibited some weaknesses and strengths as the planting pastor. One weakness was the focus on incorporating people into the retreat process and not ministry roles. The result was a greater deal of stress on the people and ministry to get people involved in specific ministry tasks. A ministry strategy should have been implemented sooner. Another weakness was the lack of commitment to community involvement in the development phase prior to launch. My schedule was filled with connection with the

people from Eastern Hills, retreat process, and launch details, and not as much community interaction took place as I would have preferred. Some of the strengths of leadership were the ability to draw people throughout the process both with and without an articulated vision. The ability to produce and maintain momentum was a strength of the leadership. Another strength exhibited by the leadership was the ability to adapt the process and steer it in profitable ways in midcourse. For example, after the core values audit did not yield intended results, the ability to create and implement the Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise was key. This was a positive turning point in the process. The ability of the leadership to not share or show others the emotional difficulties resulting from mother church and district relationship kept a positive tone to the whole plant process and all parties involved in the process.

The third major theme related to the second research question. The third major theme focused on the ability of the people to exhibit and/or articulate identity with the new church. One of the best qualities of the project was the relationships concept in three different forms. The first was the unexpected quality were the relationships formed during the process. Another quality was the emphasis on relationships in ministry development and priority of ministry. The third quality was the definition of relationship to the community from the Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise.

One early observation was that relationships were important to the retreat attendees. Relationships become a thread that ran throughout the process. Relationships were the one quality reflected in all three facets of the church calling statement: mission, vision, and core values. Our mission is for people to develop their relationship with God and others. The vision is for a church that connects with its community in relevant ways

and creates a culture where people are cared for and loved. Relationships are a focal point of our core values in the concept of belonging. Relationships were not only a part of the discussion; they were part of the experience. The quality of the relationship quotient was very high at the conclusion of the third retreat.

Relationships were also an emphasis in ministry initiative and development. For example, the coffee shop, small group ministry, felt-need ministry, and community service projects are relationally based ministries. The community service projects and coffee shop are avenues of relationship development with the community and the small group ministry within the church. The felt-need ministry will significantly minister to those both within and outside the church. Each has a strong personal interaction and relationship component.

The fourth major theme, developed in relation to Research Question #2, considers the articulation of strategic initiatives and goals for the ministry. These were the practical applications of the retreat process. The initiatives of small groups, community service, felt-need seminars, and the coffee shop were major developments of the project. These outlined initiatives are the best expressions of the formed identity (mission, vision, and core values) that was developed.

Biblical Reflections

This section of biblical reflection considers the essence of the identity (mission, vision, and core values) created and its connection to the biblical text. As previously stated, one value of the study was its ability to construct a clear church identity and provide an understanding of the community. The study assisted a church in determining its mission, vision, and core values. Scripture clearly states the importance for a body of

believers to understand why they are doing ministry which involves understanding where their ministry is going and what is most important. A clear direction of ministry purpose and direction is a theme throughout Scripture. God's Word was central to the articulated mission of the church. The mission statement that was developed was "Branching Out ... Growing Deep."

The metaphor of "Branching Out" is one way of restating the Great Commission. Jesus commanded us to go into all the world (branch out) and share the good news. In the call of Abram in Genesis 12, the Lord gives Abram instructions to leave:

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
(Gen. 12:1-3)

Here God informs Abram that he has a new direction, vision, and purpose for this existence. For a new church to be clear about its call is of utmost importance. Certainly the ministry of Jesus had a specific purpose and direction:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)

Jesus was clear on why he came to earth. A church honors God when it knows the purpose behind its ministry. Similarly Paul states in 1 Corinthians 2:2, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." Paul desired not to share a great eloquence of wisdom but instead to focus upon the proclamation of Christ. Paul knew the central focus of his time and message was Jesus. From Abraham, to Jesus, to Paul, a clear and focused purpose and direction served them well in ministry.

The other half of our articulated mission statement is "Growing Deep." Our creative restatement of the Great Commandment is based on the metaphor of the Vine Wesleyan Church. The Old Testament in Deuteronomy 6:5 states, "Love the LORD your

God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” Jesus echoes this command in the New Testament and adds the important expression of love toward one’s neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40). Therefore, the mission statement of the church is founded upon God’s Word. Our behavioral core values—life change, authenticity, and belonging—are values throughout the biblical text. The biblical interaction with the core values begins with 2 Corinthians 5:17-21:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Paul reflects upon what God has done in lives. When God enters into experience, he makes everything new and takes away the old. Paul says that God has given a ministry and message of reconciliation to take to others. God makes his appeal through his people. As a result, the Vine Wesleyan Church has sought to value a ministry structure and style that serves as a bridge between God and humankind upon which the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5) can travel. Our stated ministry core values are small groups, relevance, ministry to families, focus on the community, and gift-oriented ministry. Our value on small groups is based on the reflection of ministry in Acts 2. This text is a picture of the early Church’s interaction with one another:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in

their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

While corporate worship brought people to the synagogue, Christianity was expressed in the context of community or small groups in homes. These small groups were tools of discipleship and evangelism as a result of the significant relationships they fostered.

Another value is relevance. Relevance is a desire to offer ministries, sermons, and music meaningful to everyday life. One instance of relevance in Scripture is Acts 17:

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an alter with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.” (Acts 17:22-23)

Paul showed the people of Athens how God was relevant. He took an element of culture and showed how God desires to be fully known. Paul made clear what was a mystery to them. Relevant ministry is making the connection between something that is known or experienced regularly and using it to communicate the gospel. These types of connections for The Vine Wesleyan was the community Fall Festival. This festival is a community event where the church provide a place for families to enjoy. Another relevant connection is Mercy Street ministry for some of life’s deepest hurts and issues. Mercy Street is a ministry that offers seminars for finances, divorce, grief, physical and substance abuse, infertility. These seminars are connecting God with the real issues and seasons of life.

Another value that emerged was ministry to families. The people of the Old Testament were encouraged to impact the generation of their children and their children’s children and to impress a love for God upon the hearts of their children (Deut. 6:2-5). Peter was summoned to join a household in Acts because the person knew he had a

message: “He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved” (Acts 11:14). Then in Acts 15:16, Paul baptizes the “whole household” of Lydia as a result of her response to Paul’s message. The value of family ministry sees the impact that God and his message can make on a whole family. The result is ministry that is only targeted age ranges. The ministry to families brings families together and allows them to interact with one another in healthy ways. For example, we have an advent wreath family celebration. The advent celebration is where families come out together, construct an advent wreath and then are given a devotional book. The wreath and devotional equips them with a way to share in family devotions through the holiday season.

The last stated value is gift-oriented ministry. The biblical basis of this value is Ephesians chapter 4:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4:11-13)

As a church, we value providing people with an opportunity to discover the spiritual gifts God has given them and connect with the church in significant ways. These values serve as the bridge upon which God and the world may be reconciled. The created mission, vision, and core values have a strong biblical foundation and connection. The ministry implication thus far has been the implementation of the C4 strategy. The C4 strategy is a four class or concept process that facilitates people to integrate and connect on a deeper level with The Vine church. A part of this process is to equip people to discover spiritual gifts and then be able to link those gifts to a ministry.

Another aspect of the identity is the vision. The process created a church vision that honors God, which, in turn, makes it motivational and inspirational to the congregation. In each retreat, a time of personal prayer was provided to allow God to guide our hearts and conclusions. The consensus was that the vision of the church was done in partnership with God and now the church asks for the courage to fulfill it.

Relation of Results to Previously Published Studies

A number of valuable resources exists when it comes to church planting and strategic planning. Nevertheless, two stand out as having the most similarities to the process created for this study. The main similarity is the articulation of mission, vision, and core values as the main thrust of the planning process. These are also some of the most well-known and used resources available. The two resources considered are The Church Planter's Toolkit written by Robert E. Logan and Steven L. Ogne and Advanced Strategic Planning written by Malphurs.

Church Planter's Toolkit

The Church Planter's Toolkit is one of the leading resources in church planting strategy. He emphasizes the creation of a church that will be healthy and reproduce itself. The Toolkit is a self-study resource to help the church planter work through the key issues of church planting. The basic format is to review material and then answer questions related to the topic. The outline is as follows:

Section 1. Planter's Perspectives on Church Planting

Section 2. Verifying Roles and Mobilizing Your Team

Section 3. Clarifying Your Church Plant Vision

Section 4. Developing Your Church Planting Strategy

Section 5. Evangelism and Core Group Formation

Section 6. Facilities, Finances and Organizational Issues

Section 7. Getting Your Ministries Ready for Birth

Section 8. Dynamic Worship That's Seeker-Sensitive

Section 9. Expanding Networks of Cell Groups

Section 10. Empowering and Equipping Leaders

Section 11. Lay Mobilization and Ministry Development

Section 12. Starting Churches That Reproduce.

Advanced Strategic Planning

Advanced Strategic Planning is a nine-step strategy to define key ministry concepts and implementation of ministry initiatives. Each of the following stages has a list of questions that are answered to help a pastor, staff, or lay group evaluate present ministry and plan strategically. The Advanced Strategic Planning process is summarized in the following stages:

Ministry analysis,
Mission development,
Environmental scan,
Vision development,
Strategy development,
Ministry contingencies,
and Ministry evaluation.

The following sections of the dissertation are the contributions of study and limitations based on the interaction with the Church Planter's Toolkit and Advanced Strategic Planting.

Contributions of Study

This study makes some valuable contributions to The Church Planter's Toolkit. First, this study can be adapted to a large group of people and applied to a "hiving off" situation. In the church-plant situation where a large group is mobilized from a mother congregation to start a new church, this process provides an inclusive approach to use with a large number of people. In each section of the Toolkit, however, the process was designed for the planter to do the exercises personally. Some examples of these actions are as follows:

Setting aside extended time for reflection and prayer,

Asking God to prepare your heart,

Exposing one's self to needs and opportunities,

Asking God for specific vision, and

Dreaming with others who can help you sharpen your vision.

Therefore, the creation of the mission, vision, and values is an individual exercise. The process developed in this study is designed to discover mission, vision, and core values in community. As a result of the discovery in community, a greater sense of commitment emerged on behalf of the people, rather than needing to convince the core team and others of the mission, vision, and core values. Collins identifies Level 5 leaders and those being able to bring together the right people and then determine a direction and vision. This is exactly what took place and worked well in the process. Another contribution of

the process developed in this study is the relationship-building component. The relationship-building would not happen in the Toolkit as a result of the individualistic nature.

A second advantage to this study over the Toolkit is the understanding of the community. The Toolkit counts on demographic material and the planter's review of the community. Also in the Toolkit the core values exercise is not connected to the process of community understanding. In this study the understanding of the community is an exercise with the retreat participants and proceeds to the next step of asking what the values of the church need to be to reach the community. The results are core values that are not rooted in a church leader's preferences but in the understanding of the community. The result was a more missional ministry mind-set.

A third advantage of the process in this study is the creation and implementation of ministry after the launch. Nearly every new church has a launch, a service with public invitation, and the Toolkit is a helpful strategy for the process leading up to the startup of the church. The process in this study has an important dimension of ministry model, strategic initiatives, and S.M.A.R.T. goals. The strategic next steps extend the process through launch day to ministry development and steps after that day. The steps of small group ministry development, service projects, coffee shop, and felt-need ministries carried through the launch day. They were a catalyst to continuing the momentum of the launch. The Toolkit is a good church-start strategy; the process developed in this study resulted in a good church start and ministry strategy.

The process of this study contributes to the Advanced Strategic Planning process in a number of ways. First, the way each component is discovered is through an audit. An

audit is a list of questions to which the answers help define and articulate various ministry concepts such as mission and vision. For example, to arrive at the mission for the church, Malphurs asks these questions: “What is the church supposed to be doing? Can you articulate your mission in a written statement? Is your mission statement broad but clear? Is the mission statement brief but simple?” (109-12). A number of inherent difficulties exist with Malphurs’ process. For instance, who is answering these questions, the pastor, staff, or laypersons? If more than one person is a part of the process, how does one gauge consensus? The process of this study answers these questions. The groups are open to the whole church, and consensus is often gained through the themes in the conclusions of the study. When family is a core value at every table participating in the process, then family becomes a consensus. Our group attempted the core values audit, and the result was only confusion and frustration.

Another way in which this study contributes to Advanced Strategic Planning process is through a clearer application of conclusions and an increased connection among elements of the study. Since the process is unclear as to who is participating, it is also confusing as to who develops the final product. For instance, who writes the mission statement? How are core values determined? The audit provides a list of responses, but how do these lists eventually define each element? The other difficulty is that the concepts do not connect with one another. For instance, no relationships exist between mission, vision, and core values in the Advanced Strategic Planning process. Each is a separate chapter in the book and not mentioned in relation to one another. In the process of this study, the elements are interrelated. For instance, the core values are based on our understanding of the community (i.e., what must we value as a church to reach our

community?). The strategic initiatives connect with the vision for the church (i.e., what are the next steps we need to take as a church to realize the vision that was articulated?).

Malphurs defines each element but does not make a connection among the elements.

Another contribution of this study is the consideration of a ministry model.

Malphurs does not consider what ministry model will best carry out the mission, vision, and core values of the church. He does not provide a process to think through the ministries in relation to one another. Also, no consideration is given to what ministry model will work best in carrying out the mission, vision, and core values. In addition, implementing ministries in the church is not related to the local community. Malphurs encourages those who do the Advanced Strategic Planning to study what other churches are doing and how their ministry practices can be implemented at the local level. “What leaders and churches should be asking is, What are churches like Willow Creek, Saddleback, and others doing that God might use and bless in our communities given our circumstances” (128). Connecting the church with the local community is an additional way that this study is different than Advanced Strategic Planning. Many of the conclusions drawn from the process of this study are based on the understanding of the community and not other church ministries.

A final contribution of this study to the Advanced Strategic Planning process is the focus group evaluation. The perspective of focus groups was extremely helpful throughout the process. The focus groups were able to evaluate conclusions made during the retreats and make suggestions to improve the process. The focus groups were able to measure how far people came in the process by comparing the focus group pretest and the final product.

Limitation of Study

The Toolkit has a few qualities that have not been considered in the process of this study. One is the role of the new church in reproducing another new congregation. Logan and One write, “The Church Planter’s Toolkit is designed to coach you through the process of starting a church that will thrive and reproduce” (1). The emphasis of Logan is to focus the church on starting other churches. In this study, planting another church was not a strategic initiative but could be in the future. Another important emphasis is the continual equipping and motivating of laypeople: Chapter 2—Verifying Roles and Mobilizing Your Team; Chapter 5—Evangelism and Core Group Formation; Chapter 10—Empowering and Equipping Leaders; Chapter 11—Lay Mobilization and Ministry Development. The development of people into leadership and gift-oriented ministry is an important quality, especially if the church is beginning with only a pastor, spouse, and family. The Toolkit is an excellent resource for individual church planter consideration. Its emphasis upon the planter’s personal motivation, balance of life, passion for the Great Commission, and clarifying ministry calling are all valuable considerations.

Malphurs outlines a few valuable observations that give greater context to the strategic planning and change process. One is the concept of the life cycle of the church. Malphurs explains the life cycle of the church in this way: “Life, people, church have a life cycle. In general, a church is born and over time it grows. Eventually it reaches a plateau, and, if nothing interrupts the decline, it will die” (39). Malphurs states that one of the best ways to help a church break out of the usual life cycle, which is decline, is to recreate new life. The way out is to “implement some, or better, all of the concepts in this

book: discovering your core values, developing mission, a vision, and a strategy; and so forth” (49). Fundamentally, Malphurs states that church turnaround is possible with the identification of key factors: “I believe that the church’s values, mission, and purpose are timeless core ingredients of the ministry” (55).

Another value of Advanced Strategic Planning is the explanation of each component. The chapter on values is outlined as follows: values determine ministry distinctive, dictate personal involvement, communicate what is important, influence overall behavior, inspire people to action, enhance credible leadership, and contribute to ministry success. Before introducing exercises to articulate the different aspects of the process, Malphurs provides a great deal of information on why each piece is important, what it is, what it is not, and questions for discussion and analysis about each aspect. Malphurs states a greater context for the different elements than this study does.

Unexpected Findings and Conclusions

A number of valuable unexpected findings were uncovered in the course of the study. The first was the relationship-building component. The process implemented in this study did assist in identity articulation, much like the Church Planter’s Toolkit and Advanced Strategic Planning; however, a real value to this study was the relationships that were built during the retreat process. Many sensed they were not only constructing the mission, vision, and core values, but they were experiencing them. They worked on the development of a church that would build community but also experienced community in the process. Many of the opportunities during the retreat allowed people to share their lives with one another. Relationships, as a core value, have led to the creation of our own church coffee shop opening this winter in the community. Our own coffee

shop allows our church a place for our people to enhance their relationships and for our church to build relationships with the community.

Another unexpected and valuable finding was the understanding of the community. The exercise of Lancaster Larry and Lucy was not in the original plan; it was birthed out of the frustration of the Core Values Audit. Not only did it provide an opportunity for people from Lancaster to discuss and understand their community; it linked the process and church to their neighbors. After doing the Lancaster Larry and Lucy exercise, many people said my cousin, neighbor, etc., would join this type of church.

The process not only gave us a greater understanding of the community, but it helped us realize what we would need to value as a church to reach the people in it. The question, “what do we need to value as a church to reach Lancaster Larry and Lucy?” was a direct bridge from the process to the community. This question connected the exercises and conclusions to the people who lived next door. The exercise of answering this question was when people began to understand why this church was being created. They began to make the connection between what their neighbors needed and how the church could provide for that need. For instance, the exercise made the participants consider the strong Roman Catholic connection for many in Lancaster. Even people who have not been to church in thirty years still believe they belong to the church. For many their faith connection has nothing to do with their present church attendance or life in Christ, but is based on their infant baptism in the Roman Catholic church. When belonging surfaced as a core value at the retreat and Catholicism as a part of the make up of Lancaster Larry and Lucy, we knew our church needed to make people from the

Catholic Church feel like they belonged. Another example is that typically in Lancaster, the family is the most important part of people's lives. Their schedule revolves around their children. As a result, one of our core values as a church is ministry to families. One final example is the community orientation. A great deal of activity is focused around community events that happen downtown. As a result, a core value for The Vine is community focus. Out of this core value, we offer a free Kid zone to the families of Lancaster at the community Fall Festival.

Application of Study

There are still some remaining questions to be considered in the application of this process in other settings. The setting of this study is a Wesleyan church in Western New York. This is not only the context, but has large implications and ramifications on the success of the study. The core values that were determined in the study were based on the community reflections, especially the consideration of Lancaster Larry and Lucy. These core values were built upon the strong biblical foundation of guiding beliefs already in place in the Discipline of the Wesleyan Church. The transformation and eternal life through Jesus, authority of Scripture, essence of God, are not issues up for debate but the building blocks of every Wesleyan Church. These issues were not debated, but instead served as the foundation of the relationship with God for everyone present. Also contributing to the study was the ethos of the district and mother church. The district was monetarily supportive without being overbearing or disruptive of the process. The process was not disrupted by either the district or the mother congregation. Their confidence in the leadership of the church resulted from a prior relationship spanning approximately eight years. One of the less tangible, but significant contribution of the

mother church was providing people who passionately worship and expect God to work in their lives, in the church, and in the community. Having approximately 50% of our people believing God was going to do something spiritually significant with this new church was a great asset in our start. Not all new churches are started with people who have this kind of positive view of God and the church. Also the demographic of our community and core team was almost exclusively Caucasian. This project may or may not be the best approach for a more culturally diverse core team. There was also a great deal of denominational support. During the process I received calls from General Superintendents and General officials at headquarters to see how we were doing and encourage us along the way. There are many churches started in America with no larger denominational support and encouragement. These are aspects distinctive of our church plant situation. Not all church plants begin with the support and people resource we had. These factors uniquely contributed to the success of our church and this project. It would be nearly impossible to totally replicate in another church plant situation. These aspects are unique to our situation as a Wesleyan church in the Western New York district.

Practically, this model provides a way for a large core team to interact, participate, and contribute to the construction of a new church identity. The result is a greater identification and commitment from those who participate in the process. It allows the formation of the church to be shared with a much larger group.

As a result of the process and the articulation of the mission, vision, and core values, the church recently decided to open a coffee shop in the community. The decision to create a coffee shop was made for a number of reasons, but most of all because it is a natural extension of who we are and what we are trying to do in this community. A coffee

shop may be a difficult endeavor for many churches, but it was a natural conclusion from the work we did at the retreat.

Another ministry application is the creation of Mercy Street ministry. This ministry is a collection of seminars that meet felt needs in the community. Mercy Street consists of groups in the following areas: grief, divorce, infertility, finances, and recovery. These are natural ministry applications in light of the needs of the community discerned during the retreat.

Design of Project

One of the keys to this project was that people were able to commit themselves enough to take part in exercises that articulated the mission, vision, and core values of the church. The instruments used had to be tools to draw out and relay the input of the participants. For the most part, the instruments did just that. The retreat formats did not draw people to come and listen to a speaker; they were participatory. They were exercises and questions to gain the input of each person present. Again the focus groups were made up of people who were a part of the retreat and then able to clarify the conclusions of each retreat. Again the focus groups were facilitated and their content was once again the discussion of the people and not leader. These instruments served the purposes well.

Another tool that might have been used was a survey of the participants. It is possible an entry survey and a concluding survey would have been another effective mode of feedback and participation. This would be worthwhile in future applications of this project. This process worked well for the approximately twenty we had participate. The project maybe limited as far as its effectiveness if a core team is much smaller, eight or less, or much larger, seventy or higher. In a church plant situation where most of the first

core team members were not Christians, this process would be limited in those circumstances. The encouragement and monetary support provided to our church is not the same for every church start situation. These contributed in allowing the core leadership to focus on the aspects of the retreat instead of having to spend a greater amount of time in fund-raising endeavors. Depending upon another church situation, having some of these factors involved in its start will inform the generalizability of this project.

Further Studies or Models

A number of aspects of this study are worthy of future investigation and study. One would be the value of relationship building through the church plant process. In the planting process there are many aspects to the ministry: leadership development, ministry development, location, balancing life, prayer, finding location, worship planning, event coordination, and strategic planning. Beginning the ministry at the size we did, relationships are difficult to keep as a high priority or to facilitate opportunities for relationship building for people involved in the new church. Studying how and when relationship building could take place is a worthwhile endeavor since it was more of an unexpected outcome of this study.

Another aspect worth further study is the timing of the construction of the mission, vision, and core values. This study was built upon the assumption that the articulation of the mission, vision, and core values can happen in the church-formation process and will inform and guide church ministry and life. The question is whether these aspects of the church can be constructed to shape community or whether they are better identified through the observance of community. Some of both took place during the

retreat process. In this study, the aspects constructed have been of great value to the church ministry. They have been the guidelines of ministry development and direction. Different outcomes are possible if the ministry was started and then an attempt was made to articulate the mission, vision, and core values based on observations of what was taking place. Further study on the origin and articulation of the church identity would be valuable.

The circumstances of each new church is unique, certainly that was true in this case. This process was effective in a large core group; use with a smaller core group is worth consideration.

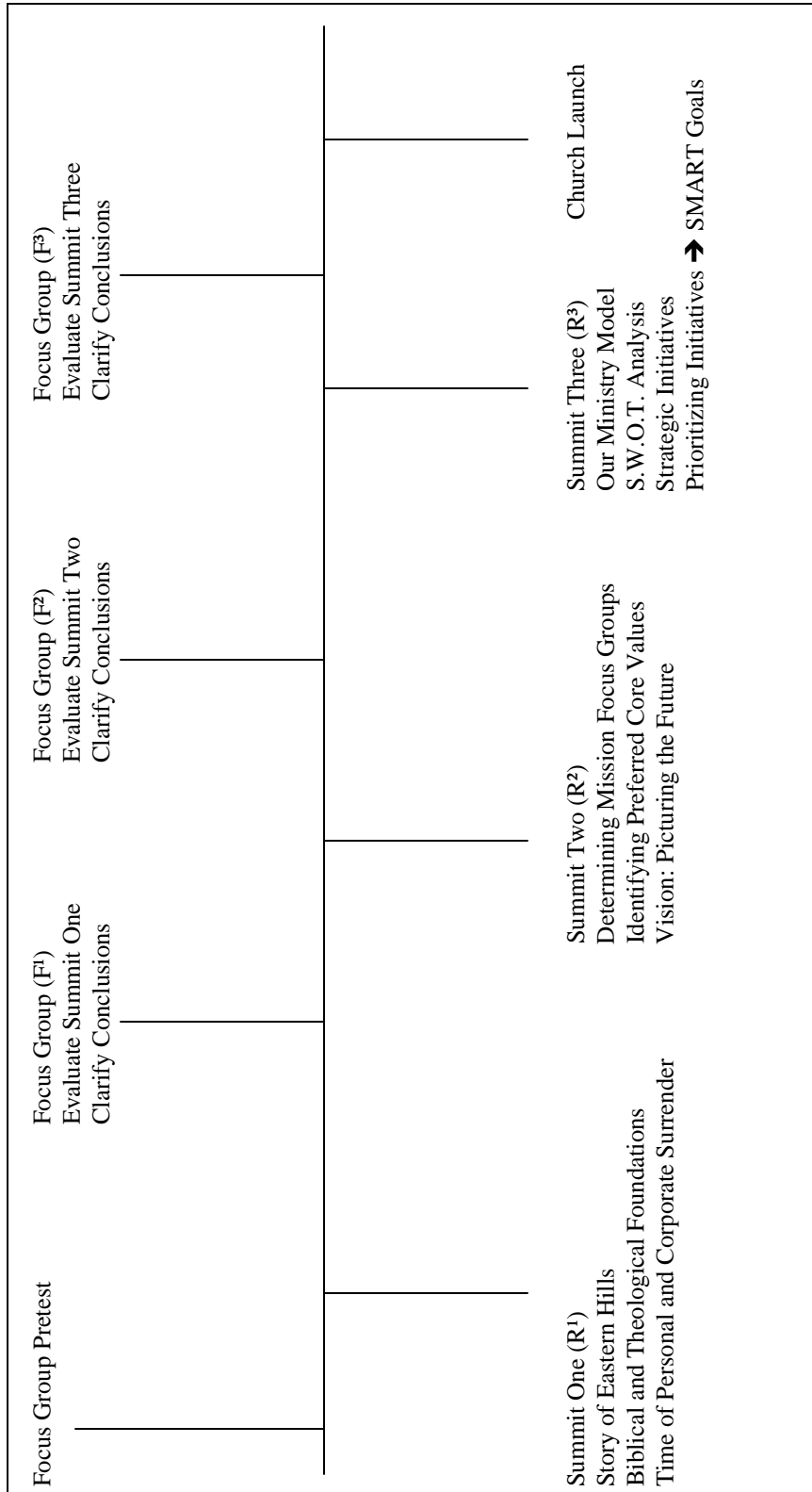
Another aspect worthy of further investigation is the connection made between community identification and core value identification. The connection was an unexpected and valuable contribution. In the course of this study, after the community reflection, the next step was discovering what we would have value to minister meaningfully to this community. In other words, our core values were discovered from our understanding of the community and not a random list. What is the validity and value of approaching core values in this way as opposed to someone else's values for the church?

The final possibility for further study would be the next step, or the ongoing nature of this process. This process has a continuous quality component and is designed to revisit at a later date. In the future, a valuable continuation of the study would get more people involved and update the core values and vision based on changes in the community, culture, or church. Possibly some study of the next implementation of this process would be helpful. This study has proven to be of great value to the start of The

Vine church in Lancaster. A clear understanding of who we are, why we exist, and where we are going has led to a ministry that has made an impact in the lives of individuals, families, and the community during and since its start.

APPENDIX A

Church Plant Retreats



APPENDIX B

New Church Foundations Retreat #1

**Vision Retreat #1
Participant Packet**

Vision Retreat #1
15 and 16 October 2004

Welcome to the first Vision Retreat for The Vine Wesleyan Church. The leading reason church plants fail is a lack of agenda harmony. Therefore, key to the success of this church plant endeavor is discovering a common path we can take together. This will happen throughout the three retreats. Although I cannot guarantee what the final outcome will be, I can assure you that you will have fun and will be excited about the part you played in creating this new church. Thanks for joining us and sharing the journey.

Assessing Our Past Experiences

What events in my history, both positive and negative, have shaped me into who I am today?

Brainstorm:

Significant People

Circumstances

Events

...that has [sic] influenced me a great deal

In other words...

Spiritual High Points...

Real Valley Experiences...

Positive Church Experiences...

Negative Church Experiences...

What I appreciate most about _____ church is...

What concerns me most about _____ church is...

Assessing our Past: Lessons

What are the lessons we learned from the items on the list?

Brainstorming...

The Heart of Church Planting

Missio Dei

John 17:18; 20:21

Incarnational Ministry

Philippians 2: 5-11

Kingdom of God

Matthew 6:10

**10 Generational Facts
About the people in
14086 – Lancaster, NY**

Percentage of Current Year Population by Birth Years:	14086	U.S.
1. Millennials (1982 to 2001)	28%	29.6%
2. Survivors (1961 to 1981)	24%	26.3%
3. Boomers (1943 to 1960)	30%	27.0%
4. Silents (1925 to 1942)	11%	11.1%
5. Builders (before 1925)	7%	6.1%
Percentage of Projected 5-Year Population:		
6. Gen Z (born after 2001)	7%	6.7%
7. Millennials	25%	27.6%
8. Survivors	28%	26.8%
9. Boomers	27%	25.7%
10. Silents*	12%	11.5%

* Builders are less than 2% of five-year U.S. projection.

10 Generational Facts
About the people in
14086 – Lancaster, NY
 BASED ON 2000 CENSUS DATA

**Percentage of Current Year
Households with:**

1. No faith Involvement	39%	35%
2. Moderate Faith Involvement	33%	30%
3. Strong Faith Involvement	28%	35%
4. Preference for “Historic Christian” Tradition	74%	77%
5. Preference for a Non-Historic Christian Tradition	12%	8%
6. No Religious Affiliation Preference	14%	15%
7. Overall Faith Receptivity Level	Somewhat low	Average
8. Overall Church Program Preference Category	Recreation	Recreation
9. Overall Church Style Preference (Traditional vs. Contemporary)	Both	Both
10. Households Contributing \$500 or more/year to Churches	33%	31%

10 Generational Facts
About the people in
14086 – Lancaster, NY
 BASED ON 2000 CENSUS DATA

	14086	U.S.
1. Current Population	30,660	284 mil.
2. Projected 5 Year Population Change	2.0%	4.3%
3. Largest Lifestyles Group	Middle American Families	Middle American Families
4. Non-Anglo Population	3%	30%
5. Fastest Growing Racial/Ethnic Group*	Native Am. & Other	Asians
6. Households with No Faith Involvement	39%	35%
7. Average Age	38.0	36.7
8. Average Household	\$63,060	\$61,904
9. Single Parent	15%	26%
10. College Graduates	23%	20%

10 Generational Facts
About the people in
14086 – Lancaster, NY
 BASED ON 2000 CENSUS DATA

Percentage of Current Year Population:	14086	U.S.
1. Anglo	97.4%	69.7%
2. African-American	0.8%	12.3%
3. Hispanic/Latino	0.7%	12.7%
4. Asian	0.4%	4.1%
5. Native American/Other	0.6%	1.1%
 Projected 5-Year Percentage Increase or Decrease:		
6. Anglo	+1.7%	+2.2%
7. African American	+15.6%	+5.2%
8. Hispanic/Latino	+14.6%	+11.8%
9. Asian	+9.2%	+12.2%
10. Native American/Other	+17.6%	+9.8%

Area Highlights

- Note Population Doubled 2x Over Past Two Decades
- Note Projected Percentage Increases (2001-6)
 - Median Adults (55-64) +54%
 - Senior Adults (65-up) +41%
 - Median Adults (45-54) +30%
 - Young Adults (18-24) +30%
- No Projected Percentage Decreases (2001-6)
- Note One Predominant Racial Group
- Note Low Average/High Median Income Level
 - High Concentration Between \$40-100K
- Note High Percentage of Couples with Children
 - Notably Low Percentage of Single Parents
- Note Only Two PRIZM Lifestyles in Area

The PRIZM Lifestyle Cluster System

PRIZM Lifestyle Clusters represent 62 socio-economic categories corresponding to today's lifestyles.

<p>Blue-Chip Blues Upscale, Blue-Collar, Families</p>	<p>Percent of U.S. Households Predominant Adult Age Range Key Education Level Predominant Employment Key Housing Type Socio-Economic Rank Race/Ethnicity</p>	<p>1.93% 35-64 High School/Some College Blue-Collar/White-Collar Owners, Single Units Middle White</p>
<p>PRODUCTS & SERVICES</p> <p>Own a Plymouth Bug a ceramic tile flooring Own a giant screen TV Drink Coke/Caffeine-Free Coke Bug \$250+drapes/curtains Buy \$1000+carpeting Install their own spark plugs Shop at Lane Bryant</p>	<p>More likely to . . . LIFESTYLE</p> <p>Visit Eastern Europe Shop online Belong to a veterans club Belong to a religious club Contribute \$50+ to public broadcasting Travel by car with camping equipment Contract home remodeling</p>	<p>PRINT & RADIO/TV</p> <p>Read <i>Elle</i>, <i>Car Craft</i> Read <i>Chicago Tribune Magazine</i> Read <i>Runner's World</i> Read <i>Popular Science</i> Read <i>Muscle & Fitness</i> Read <i>Bride's</i>, <i>Inside Sports</i> Listen to easy listening radio Listen to classical radio Listen to classic rock radio Watch <i>Frontline</i> Watch <i>Late Night with Conan O'Brien</i> Watch <i>Showtime at the Apollo</i> Watch <i>Days of Our Lives</i> Watch <i>This Old House</i> Watch NBC Sportsworld Watch NBC NCAA Basketball</p>
<p align="right">© PRIZM 2003</p>		

The PRIZM Lifestyle Cluster System

PRIZM Lifestyle Clusters represent 62 socio-economic categories corresponding to today's lifestyles.

<p>Boomers & Babies</p> <p>Young, White-Collar, Suburban Families</p>	<p>Percent of U.S. Households Predominant Adult Age Range Key Education Level Predominant Employment Key Housing Type Socio-Economic Rank Race/Ethnicity</p>	<p>1.11% 25-44 Some College White-Collar/Professional Owners, Single Units Upper Middle White, Asian, Hispanic</p>
<p>PRODUCTS & SERVICES</p> <p>Own utilities software Own a giant screen TV Shop at Sports Authority Use Quaker Puffed Rice Own a Mercury bought new Own a water purifier/conditioner Buy vinyl floor sheeting Use microwave entrees</p>	<p>More likely to . . .</p> <p>LIFESTYLE</p> <p>Shop online Use a stair walking machine Use pipe tobacco Buy contemporary rock music Work as a political volunteer Work as a political volunteer Go horseback riding Play racquetball</p>	<p>PRINT & RADIO/TV</p> <p>Read <i>USA Today</i> Read <i>Consumer's Digest</i> Read <i>Working Mother</i> Read <i>Inc.</i> Read <i>Business Week</i> Read <i>Allure</i> Read <i>Metropolitan Home</i> Listen to classic rock radio Listen to all sports radio Watch <i>Dateline Tuesday</i> Watch <i>The Simpsons</i> Watch <i>Friends</i> Watch <i>One Life to Live</i> Watch HBO Watch the NBA All-Star Game Watch the NCAA Men's Soccer Championship</p>
<p>© PRIZM 2003</p>		

Identifying Core Values

**Core values are the constant, passionate, biblical core beliefs
that drive a ministry**

Values Audit

What do we want to be the core values of this ministry? Rate each of the core values below from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest). You need not be overly analytical. Work your way through the list quickly, going with your first impression. Try to give as few 5s as possible.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>___ 1. godly leadership</p> <p>___ 2. a well-mobilized laity</p> <p>___ 3. Bible – centered preach/teach</p> <p>___ 4. the poor and disenfranchised</p> <p>___ 5. creativity and innovation</p> <p>___ 6. world missions</p> <p>___ 7. people</p> <p>___ 8. attractive grounds and facilities</p> <p>___ 9. financially responsible</p> <p>___ 10. the status quo</p> <p>___ 11. guests</p> <p>___ 12. cultural relevance</p> <p>___ 13. prayer</p> <p>___ 14. sustained excellence/quality</p> <p>___ 15. community</p> <p>___ 16. evangelism</p> <p>___ 17. family</p> <p>___ 18. God's grace</p> <p>___ 19. praise and worship</p> <p>___ 20. a Christian self-image</p> <p>___ 21. social justice</p> <p>___ 22. commitment</p> <p>___ 23. giving/tithing</p> <p>___ 24. counseling</p> <p>___ 25. civil rights</p> | <p>___ 26. Christian education (all ages)</p> <p>___ 27. the sacraments (baptism, communion)</p> <p>___ 28. equal rights</p> <p>___ 29. compassion</p> <p>___ 30. growth</p> <p>___ 31. community outreach</p> <p>___ 32. the environment</p> <p>___ 33. responsibility</p> <p>___ 34. the lordship of Christ</p> <p>___ 35. dignity</p> <p>___ 36. loyalty</p> <p>___ 37. fairness and equity</p> <p>___ 38. high tech</p> <p>___ 39. efficiency</p> <p>___ 40. cultural diversity</p> <p>___ 41. enthusiasm</p> <p>___ 42. discipline</p> <p>___ 43. teamwork</p> <p>___ 44. life (pro-life)</p> <p>___ 45. authenticity</p> <p>___ 46. life-change</p> <p>___ 47. Great Commission</p> <p>___ 48. humor</p> <p>___ 49. optimism</p> <p>___ 50. flexibility</p> <p>___ 51. fellowship</p> |
|--|---|

Other: _____

Time Alone...

What does God value and what does he think of our values?

Of all the things we have seen about our experiences in churches past and present

- What do we rejoice over?
- What should we release?

What is God trying to say to us?

What I personally need to surrender for this process to be effective?

APPENDIX C

New Church Foundations Retreat #2

**Vision Retreat #2
Participant Packet**

Vision Retreat #2
12 and 13 November 2004

Lancaster Larry

What are the characteristics of the typical individual or family living in Lancaster?

Identifying Core Values

What would we need to value as a church to reach people of Mission Focus 1 & 2?

Foundational Values (Values of Christian Faith):

Ministry Values (Values of Ministry Practice)
Values in the Bible

Creating Our Future: Vision

Reflecting on the first two retreats, draw a picture of a vision of our church in 3-5 years.

What are the common themes to the Vision drawings:

APPENDIX D

New Church Foundations Retreat #3

**Vision Retreat #3
Participant Packet**

Vision Retreat #3
15 January 2005

The Vine Wesleyan Church
Church Calling Statement
(Please note this is still under construction)

Mission (Daily purpose of the church)

Branching Out (Great Commission)
... Growing Deep (Great Commandment)

Core Values (Those values most important to our church)

Foundational

Faith in the Holy Trinity
Authority of Scripture
Role of Repentance and Justification
Resurrection and Second Coming of Christ
Salvation through Christ
Etc...
Founded on the Bible and Discipline of the Wesleyan Church

Behavioral

Life-change
Gift-oriented ministry
Community service
Authenticity
Belonging/Community
Intimacy
Relationships

Ministerial

Small Groups
Ministry to Families
Relevance
Equipping for Ministry and Spiritual Health
Involved in the Community

Train 'em up, Send 'em out
Church Planting Church

Vision (A preferred picture of our church in the future)

We dream of a church where we individually and corporately are obedient to God.

We dream of a church where we see life change because of people encountering a loving God.

We dream of a church where we see people being cared for and loved. This will happen primarily through the relationships we foster as a congregation with one another and the invitation of belonging is extended to everyone.

We dream of a church where our community and culture are met, embraced, and transformed.

We dream of a church where the kingdom of God is increased in real ways in the world.

We dream of a church where a culture of faith, hope, and love is the context of all life and ministry.

We dream of a church that is connected to and serving the global Church.

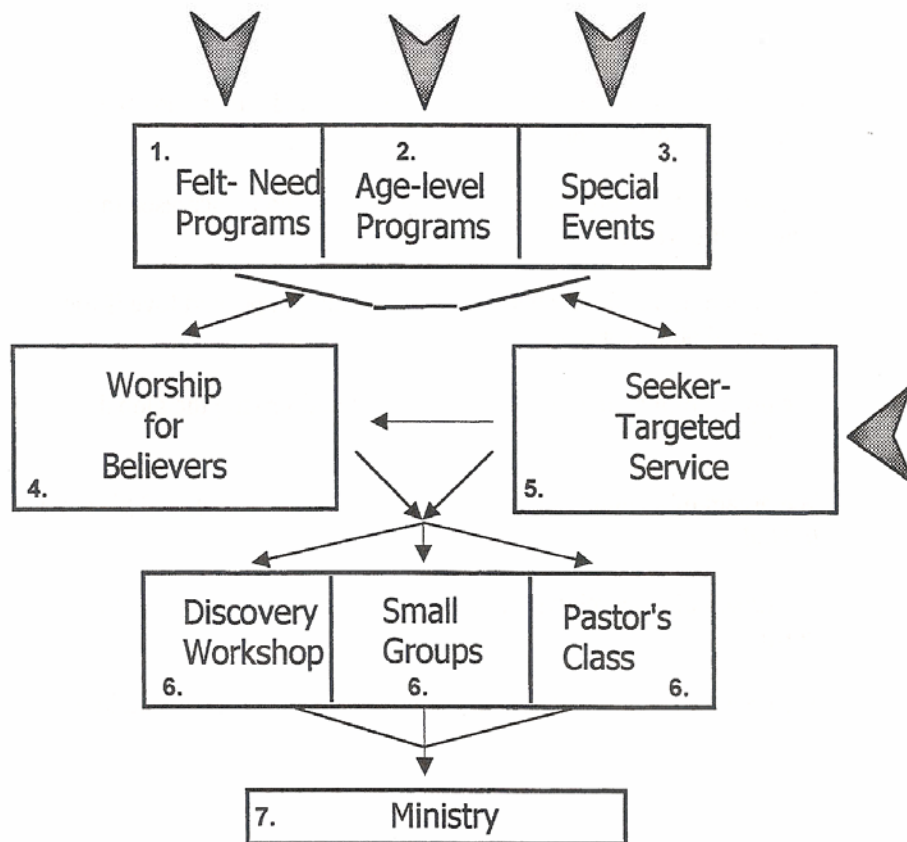
We dream of a church where the worship is vibrant, real, and pleasing to God.

We dream of a church where authentic biblical community is the norm.

We dream of a church that is known for its ability to listen and love.

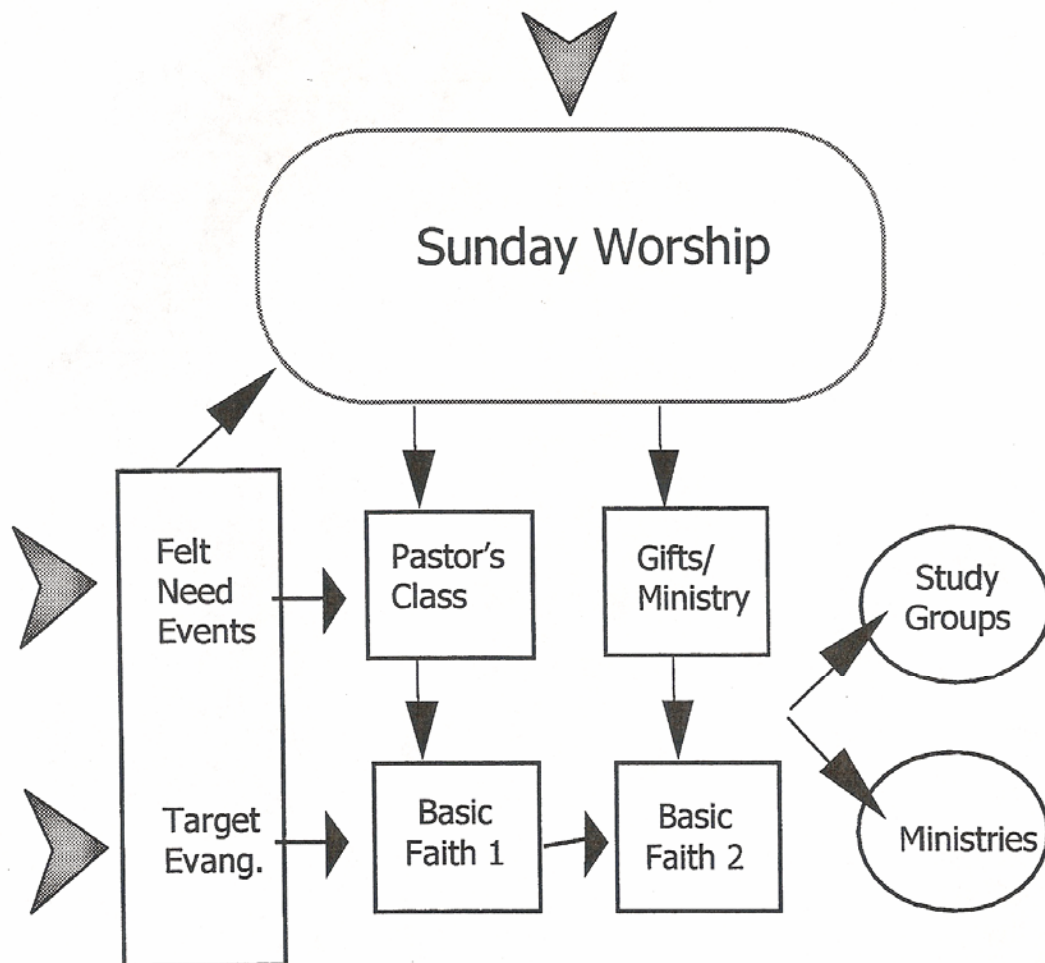


One Church's Ministry Model



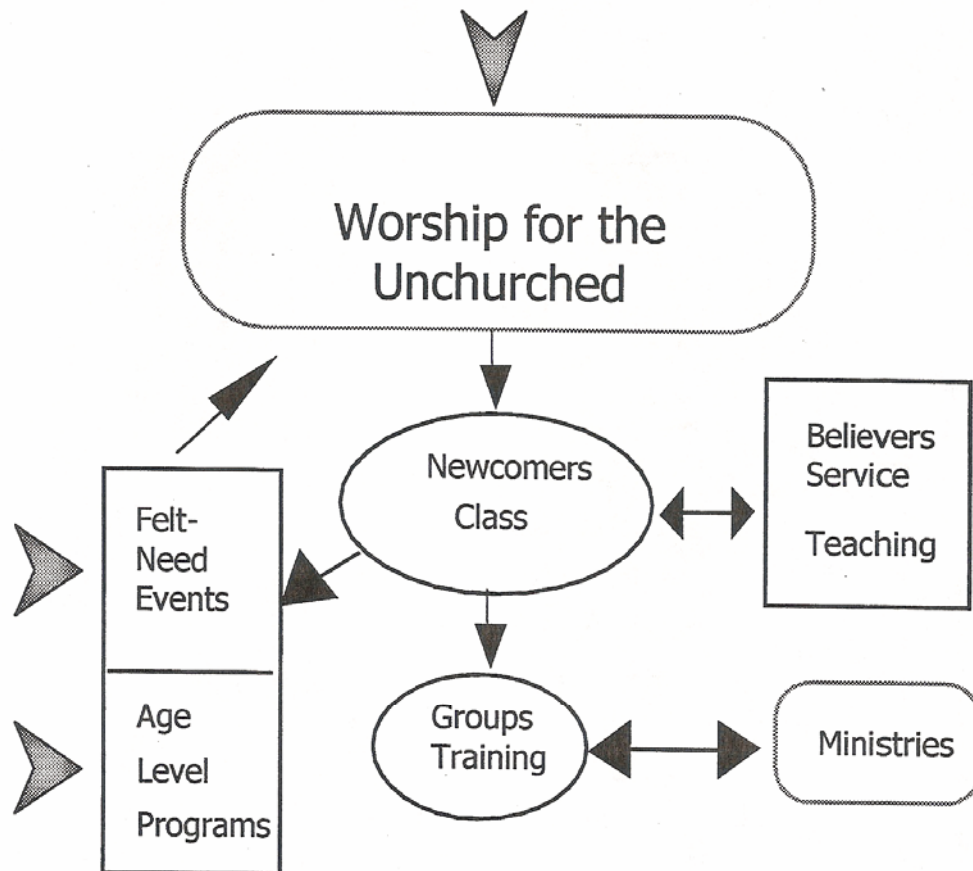


MODEL #1: The Seeker Sensitive Church



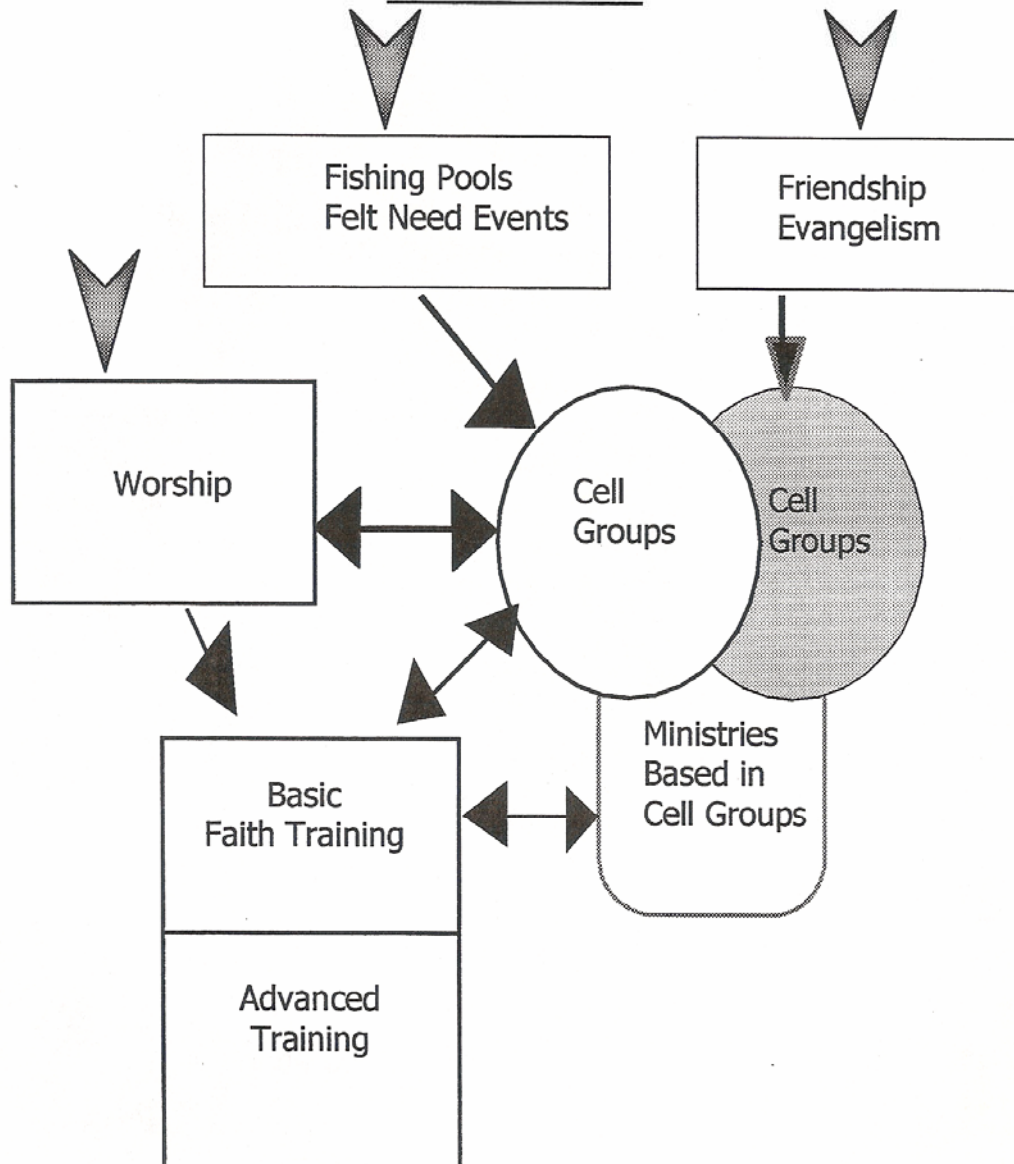


MODEL #2: The Seeker Driven Church



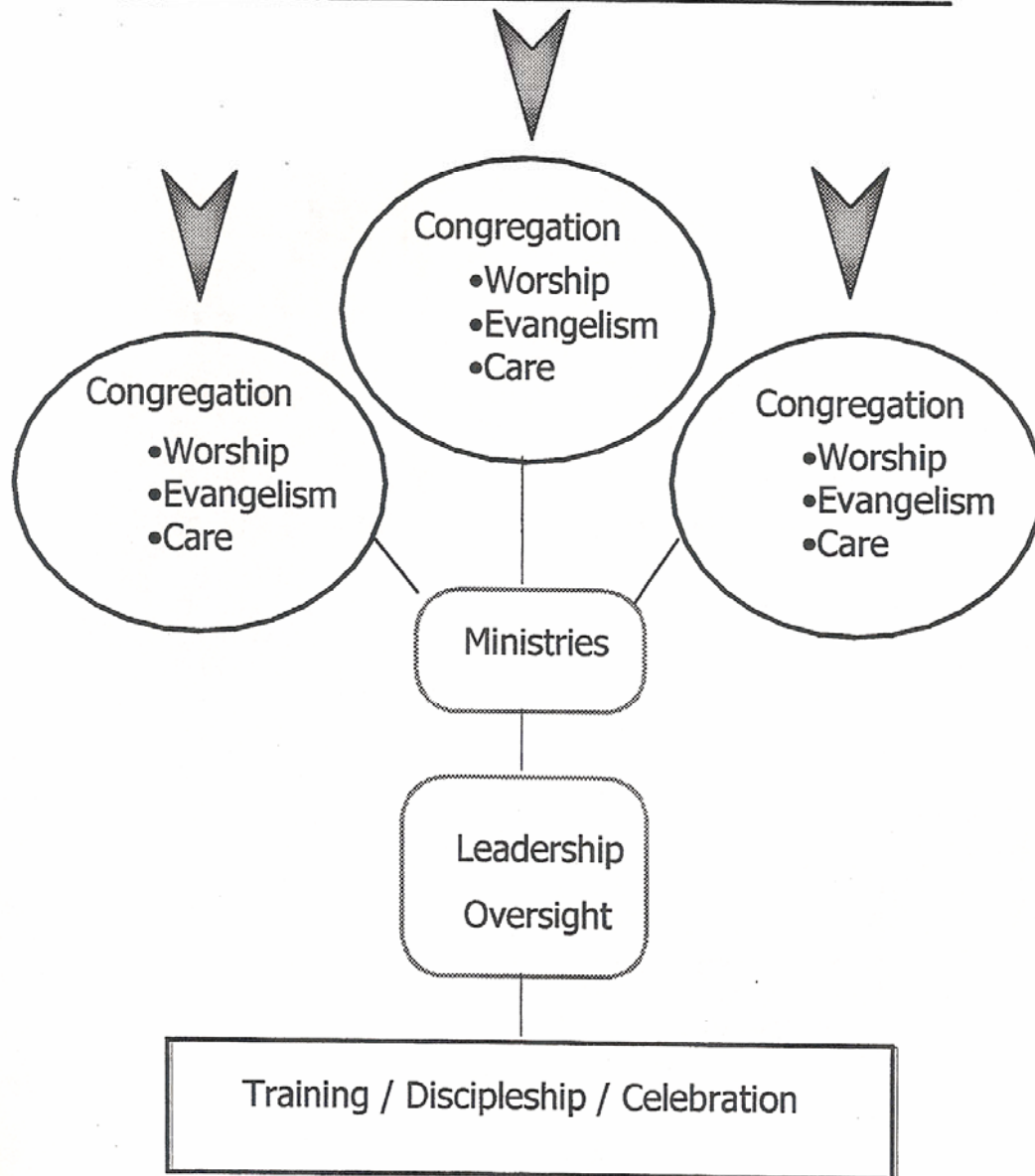


MODEL #3: The Cell Group Church



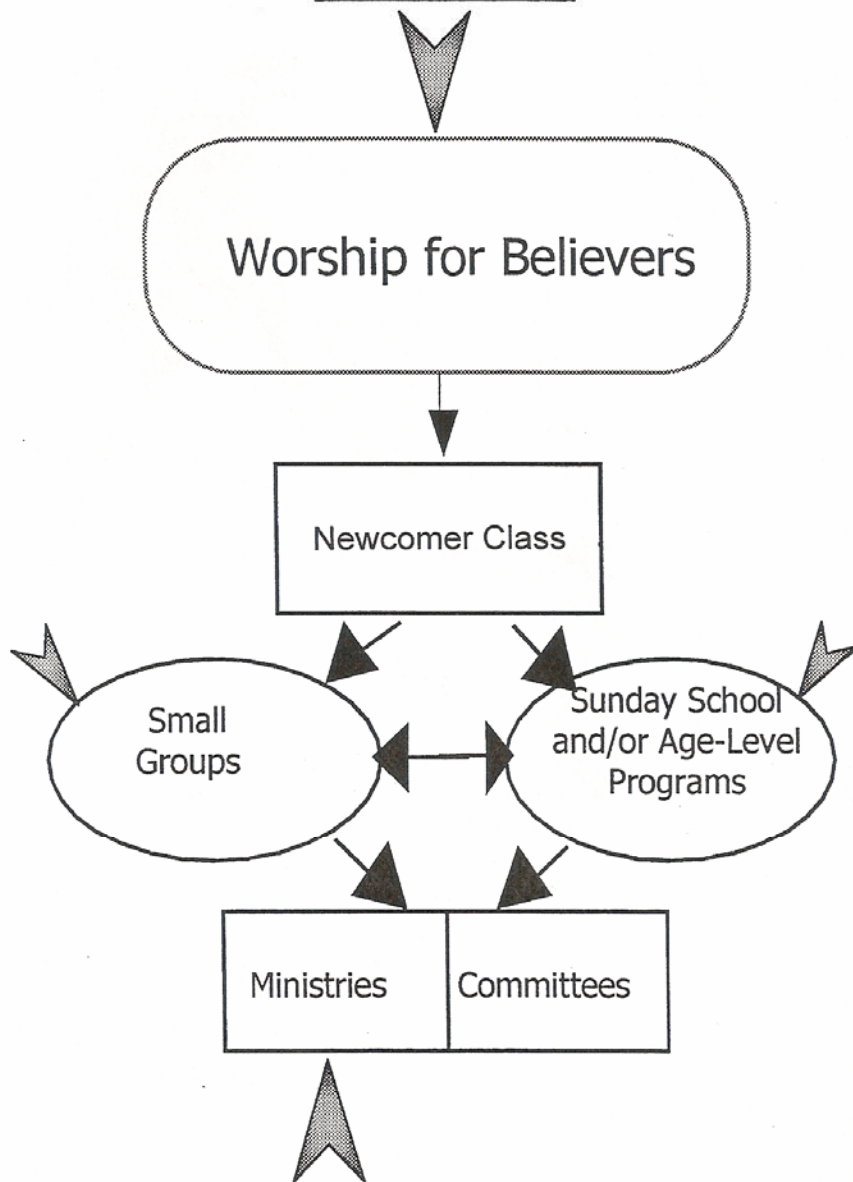


MODEL #4: The Multiple Congregation Church





MODEL #5: The Classroom Church



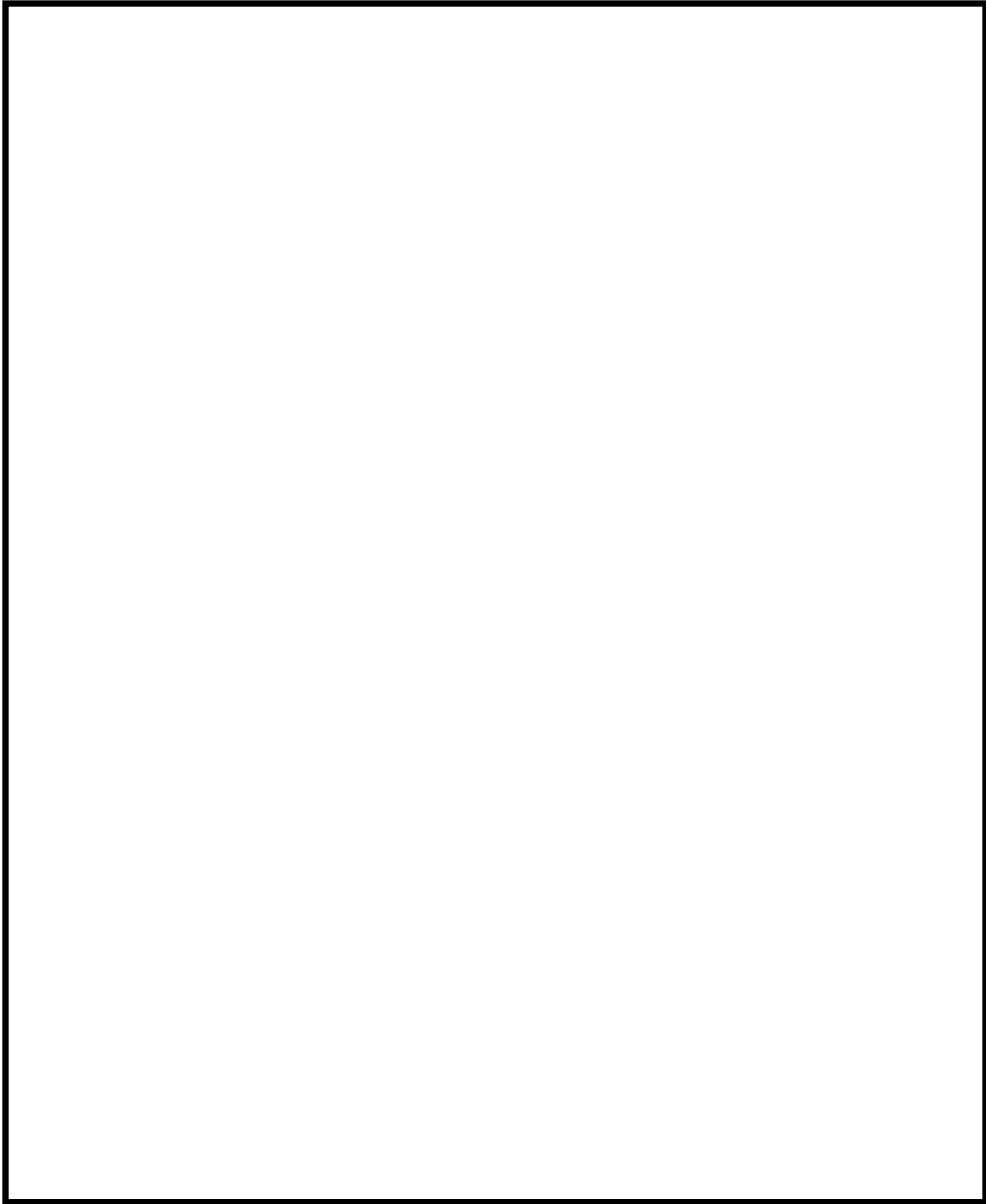


MODEL #6: The Incarnational Church



Ministry Model Worksheet

**Draw a ministry model that you think best fulfills our mission, vision,
and core values.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a ministry model. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the document.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths:

In what ways does this model help us accomplish our vision and strengthen/reinforce our values?

Weakness:

In what ways does this model hinder the accomplishment of our vision and sidetrack us from our values?

Opportunities:

In what ways does living out this model create ways to express our vision and values?

Threats:

In what ways is [sic] our vision and values short-circuited by living out this model?

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Write out the possible Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to your ministry model.

A large rectangular frame containing a 2x2 grid. The grid is formed by a vertical line and a horizontal line intersecting at the center. In the top-left corner, there is a small square box containing the letter 'S'. In the top-right corner, there is a small square box containing the letter 'W'. In the bottom-left corner, there is a small square box containing the letter 'O'. In the bottom-right corner, there is a small square box containing the letter 'T'. The rest of the grid is empty, intended for handwritten notes.

Strategic Initiatives

strategic initiatives (def.): major developments which become church-wide priorities. They are the big things we **must** do.

What two or three strategic initiatives will we need to launch in the next three years?

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Related to Vision and Values
Time-Framed

What are some of the SMART Goals connected with each initiative?

Initiative #1: _____

SMART Goals:

Initiative #2: _____

SMART Goals:

Initiative #3: _____

SMART Goals:

APPENDIX E

Focus Group Pretest

Who should be the mission focus of our new church?

What should be the core values of our new church plant?

What should be the vision of our new church plant?

What kind of ministry model would be most effective for the church plant?

Focus Group Pre-Test Responses

July 28, 2004

Location: The Baldwin Home (85 Woodlawn, Lancaster)

Focus Group Pretest Members:

Christopher Baldwin

Nate Lennon

Robin Eubanks

Matt Eubanks

Tammy Baldwin

John Bradford

What should be the mission focus (people we desire to reach) of our church?

Everyone

The young families of Lancaster

Lancaster/Depew

Western New York

What should be the core values of our new church plant?

Bible

Caring for people

Salvation

What should be the vision of our new church plant?

Relationship-based ministry

For people who “don’t fit” in other churches

Where others can “safely struggle” with God

A church that extends outside its walls into the community

A place where people feel valued

What kind of ministry model would be most effective for the church plant?

Baseball Diamond classes

Ministries that “meet people where they are at”—Divorce help, Cancer, Parenting, etc...

APPENDIX F

Focus Group First Retreat Reflection

**Vision Retreat #1
Reflection
Focus Group Content**

Meeting: 11 November 2004
Vision Retreat (15 and 16 October) Reflection/Evaluation

Format for Retreat #1

- Overview of three retreat process
- Overview of Retreat #1
- Getting to know you exercise
- Assessing our past experiences
- The biblical foundations of church planting
 - *Missio Dei*, incarnational ministry, kingdom of God
- The demographics of Lancaster
 - Table work and discussion
- Core values
 - Values audit
 - Table work and discussion

1. Is there a general understanding of the retreat process and why we are experiencing it?

2. Was the foundations of church planting (*missio Dei*, incarnational ministry, and kingdom of God) helpful?

3. What were the strengths of the retreat?

4. What are the potential difficulties?

5. Did we get anywhere? Why? Why not?

6. What could be done better to improve the next two retreats?

APPENDIX G

Focus Group Second Retreat Refection

**Vision Retreat #2
Reflection
Focus Group Content**

Meeting: 6 December 2004
Vision Retreat (12 and 13 November) Reflection/Evaluation

1. Are the conclusions drawn about Lancaster Larry correct?
What deletions should be made?
What is missing?
What was the best part of the Lancaster Larry exercise?

2. What do you think of the core values?
What corrections would you make?
What would you identify as
 Foundational

Behavioral

Ministerial

3. What are some of the themes running through the purpose statements?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.

4. What are some of the themes of the vision pictures?

5. What were the strengths of the retreat?

6. What improvements could be made for the next retreat?

**Vision Retreat
12 and 13 November 2004**

Review of Retreat

- Identifying Lancaster Larry
- Values Identification
- (Sister Act—movie clip)
- Purpose Statements
- Vision of the Church (Preferred Picture of 3-5 years)

Lancaster Larry

Rather be at sports event vs. church (3) “Sports and beer”

All American/Patriotic (hot dogs, apple pie, etc.) (3)

Catholic (2)

Overextended in time and money; always on go, busy (2)

Pride in home

Sandwich generation (raising children and taking care of parents)

Remarried with kids

Doesn't trust organized church and its leaders

Future economic concerns (i.e., jobs for kids, will they be able to live here or move)

Native WNYorker but is newer to Lancaster area

Town of good neighbors

Variety of educated backgrounds (2)

Family and community orientation (2)

Life revolves around kids

St. Mary's or volunteer fire dept

Traditional values, struggles with transferring these to kids and teens

Core Values

Foundational

Authenticity
Refuge/Safety
Significance
Service
Bible/Christ centered
God's grace
Authority of Scripture
Worship
Prayer
Missions (outward focus, local and world)
Love

Behavioral

Life change (2)
Relevance
Stability
Service
Belonging/Celebration
Community
Authenticity— open and accepting
Small groups
Prayer
Praise/Worship
Relationships

Ministerial

Equipping all/education (2)
Family
Small Groups
Youth
Community Evangelism
Small groups
Discipleship
Serving and meeting needs
Cultural relevance

APPENDIX H

Focus Group Third Retreat Reflection

**Vision Retreat #3
Reflection
Focus Group Content**

The Vine Wesleyan Church
Church Calling Statement
(Please note; ... this is still under construction)

Mission (Daily purpose of the church)

Branching Out (Great Commission)
... Growing Deep (Great Commandment)

Core Values (Those values most important to our church)

Foundational

Faith in the Holy Trinity
Authority of Scripture
Role of Repentance and Justification
Resurrection and Second Coming of Christ
Salvation through Christ
Etc....

Founded on the Bible and Discipline of the Wesleyan Church

Behavioral

Life change
Gift-oriented ministry
Community service
Authenticity
Belonging/Community
Intimacy
Relationships

Ministerial

Small Groups
Ministry to Families
Relevance
Equipping for Ministry and Spiritual health
Involved in the Community
Train 'em up, Send 'em out
Church Planting Church

Vision (A preferred picture of our church in the future)

We dream of a church where we individually and corporately are obedient to God.

We dream of a church where we see life change because of people encountering a loving God.

We dream of a church where we see people being cared for and loved. This will happen primarily through the relationships we foster as a congregation with one another and the invitation of belonging is extended to everyone.

We dream of a church where our community and culture are met, embraced, and transformed.

We dream of a church where the kingdom of God is increased in real ways in the world.

We dream of a church where a culture of faith, hope, and love is the context of all life and ministry.

We dream of a church that is connected to and serving the global Church.

We dream of a church where the worship is vibrant, real, and pleasing to God.

We dream of a church where authentic biblical community is the norm.

We dream of a church that is known for its ability to listen and love.

Strategic Initiative #1 - Small Group Ministry

SMART Goals

- Assign leadership to the Small Group Ministry (part-time paid staff)
- Develop small groups as line item in budget
- Develop leadership training for small group leaders and host
- Find kickoff date for small group ministry

Strategic Initiative #2 - Development of Community Service Projects

SMART Goals

- Find leadership in key point person and team for Community Service Projects (part-time paid staff)
- Develop a budget for Community Service Projects
- Work on once per month Community Service Project Schedule

Strategic Initiative #3 - Development of Community Felt Need Ministries

SMART Goals

- Find leadership for Ministry
- Develop team of seminar leaders and topics
- Find location for ministry
- Kickoff: Fall 2005
- Advertising Strategy for seminars
- Name the Ministry

Strategic Initiative #4 - Creation of a Coffee Shop to Encourage Relationship Building among Congregational Members and between the Church and Community

SMART Goals

- Find location for Coffee Shop
- Develop budget of start-up cost and operational expenses
- Develop Management and Employment Schedule
- Develop Construction Team
- Develop Design Team
- Find Resource for Coffee and Supplies

Appendix I

Church Calling Statement

The Vine Wesleyan Church *Summary of Mission, Vision, and Core Values*

Mission (Daily purpose of the church)

Branching Out (Great Commission)
...Growing Deep (Great Commandment)

Core Values (Those values most important to our church)

Behavioral (Behaviors we value and desire to see take place)

Life change
We value every person moving toward Christ and becoming more like him everyday.

Authenticity
We value every person “being real” with God and others.

Belonging/Relationships
We value people feeling like they belong and connect on a deeper level with God and others.

Ministerial (Components of ministry we value)

Small Groups
We value small groups as the main tool for the most essential qualities of ministry. (evangelism, discipleship, fellowship)

Ministry to Families
We value ministries that bring the family together and allow interaction to take place between multiple generations.

Relevance
We value ministries that are relevant to where people are today.

Community Focused
We value ministry that considers and connects with the community in relevant ways.

Gift-oriented involvement

We value every person being involved in a ministry that uses their gifts and abilities to the fullest potential.

Vision (A preferred picture of our church in the future)

“We dream of a church where we individually and corporately are obedient to God.”

“We dream of a church where we see life change because of people encountering a loving God.”

“We dream of a church where we see people being cared for and loved.”

“We dream of a church where our community and culture are met, embraced, and transformed.”

“We dream of a church where the kingdom of God is increased in real ways in the world.”

“We dream of a church where a culture of faith, hope, and love is the context of all life and ministry.”

“We dream of a church that is connected to and serving the global Church.”

“We dream of a church where the worship is vibrant, real, and pleasing to God.”

“We dream of a church where authentic biblical community is the norm.”

Appendix J

Study Timeline

Timeline	
The Research: (evaluation)	Focus group pretest
The Project: (description)	Start working at Eastern Hills Eastern Hills - selected as church planter
Time: (events)	July 2003 July 2004 August September
	Informational meetings re: church plant
	Officially begin work on church plant
	1 st Preview service

		Timeline				
		Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3	Focus	
The Research: (evaluation)						
The Project: (description)	First Retreat	Monthly preview service	Monthly preview service	Monthly preview service	Monthly preview service	Weekly preview service
	Preview service cancelled	Community Outreach Project			Retreat 3	1 st public service March 20
	Small groups begin	Retreat 2				Church Chats
Time: (events)	October 2004	November	December 2005	January	February	March
						April
						May

WORKS CITED

- Bellah, Robert N., et al. Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life. Berkley, CA: U of California P, 1996.
- Bosch, David J. Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991.
- Bush, Luis. AD 2000 and Beyond Handbook. Colorado Springs, CO: AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, 1993.
- Collins, Jim. Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't. New York: Harper, 2001.
- Duncan, William. Total Quality: Key Terms and Concepts. New York: Amacom, 1995.
- George, Stephen, and Arnold Wimerskirch. Total Quality Management: Strategies and Techniques Proven at Today's Most Successful Companies. New York: Wiley, 1994.
- Gibbs, Eddie. ChurchNext: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Guder, Darrell L., et al. The Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Hiebert, Paul G. Anthropological Insights for Missionaries. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985.
- Hunter, George, III. Radical Outreach: The Recovery of Apostolic Ministry and Evangelism. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.
- . The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West ... Again. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000.

- . To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit. Nashville: Abingdon, 1987.
- Jones, Ezra E. Quest for Quality in the Church. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1993.
- Logan, Robert E., and Steven L. Ogne. The Church Planter's Toolkit. Alta Loma, CA: CRM New Church Development, 1991.
- Malphurs, Aubrey. Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- Mead, Loren. The Once and Future Church: Reinventing the Congregation for a New Mission Frontier. N.p.: Alban Institute, 1991.
- Morgan, David L. Focus Groups as Qualitative Research. London: Sage, 1997.
- Murray, Stuart. Church Planting: Laying Foundations. Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 2001.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. The Gospel in a Pluralist Society. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- . The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- Patterson, George, and Richard Scoggins. Church Multiplication Guide. Pasadena, CA: Carey, 1993.
- Percept Group, Inc. Percept, Claritas/NDS, Census Bureau. 27 Aug. 2003
<<http://www.link2lead.com/L2L/MyCommunity/10Facts.asp?m=SUMMARY&r=R>>.
- Rogers, Everett M. Diffusion of Innovations. New York: Free, 2003.
- Sashkin, Marshall, and Kenneth J. Kiser. Putting Total Quality Management to Work. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1993.

- Snyder, Howard, and Daniel Runyon. Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- Southern, Richard, and Robert Norton. Cracking Your Congregations Code. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- Stetzer, Ed. Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age. Nashville: Broadman, 2003.
- Stevens, R. Paul. The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Vaughan, John N. America's Megachurches 2004. CD-ROM. Boliver, MO: Church Growth Today, 2004.
- Wagner, C. Peter. Church Planting for a Greater Harvest. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 1990.
- Walling, Terry. Refocusing Your Church. Anaheim, CA: Church Resource Ministries, 1999.
- Webber, Robert E. The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- Whiteman, Darrell L. "Contextualization: The Theory, the Gap, the Challenge." International Bulletin of Missionary Research 1997: 2-7.

WORKS CONSULTED

- Creech, William. The Five Pillars of TQM: How to Make Total Quality Management Work for You. New York: Truman, 1994.
- Deming, W. Edwards. Out of Crisis. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1982.
- DePree, Max. Leadership Is an Art. New York: Dell, 1989.
- Haines, Lee M., and Paul William Thomas. An Outline History of the Wesleyan Church. Indianapolis IN: Wesley, 1990.
- Hunter, George, III. How to Reach Secular People. Nashville: Abingdon, 1992.
- McBirnie, William S. The Search for the Early Church. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1978.
- McManus, Erwin. An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind. Loveland, CO: Group, 2001.
- Moore, Ralph. Starting a New Church: The Church Planter's Guide to Success. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2002.
- Packer, J. I. Knowing God. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973.
- Robinson, Anthony. Transforming Congregational Culture. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Sjogren, Steve, ed. Seeing beyond Church Walls: Action Plans for Touching Your Community. Loveland, CO: Group, 2002.
- . The Perfectly Imperfect Church: Redefining the Ideal Church. Loveland, CO: Group, 2002.
- Sjogren, Steve, and Rob Lewin. Community of Kindness: A Refreshing New Approach to Planting and Growing a Church. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003.
- Sullivan, William M. Starting Strong New Churches. Kansas City: NewStart, 1997.

Towns, Elmer. Getting a Church Started. Lynchburg, VA: Impact, 1993.

Walton, Mary. The Deming Management Method. New York: Putnam, 1986

Warren, Rick. The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your
Message and Mission. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.