

ABSTRACT

INSTITUTING A MISSIONAL WORSHIP STYLE IN A LOCAL CHURCH

DEVELOPED FROM AN ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURE

by

Stanley G. Parris

I felt like a missionary when I was called to pastor Vansant Baptist Church in 1995. The culture was unique, certainly different than any culture I had previously experienced. Vansant Baptist Church is located in southwest Virginia, in the Appalachian Mountains. The community is known for its coal mines, friendly people, and Appalachian roots. When I arrived in Vansant from Fort Worth, Texas, I was immediately aware of a cultural difference in these two different places. The language, dialogue, mannerisms, and viewpoints of the people in rural Virginia, were obviously different from the urban culture of the Metroplex in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

When I moved to Vansant, I realized that I could not do ministry in the same manner as I did in Fort Worth. The preaching, visiting, worship services, and programs would have to be designed specifically for the culture of Vansant. The problem became more pertinent when the church considered developing a worship style that is biblically pure and relevant to the culture of Vansant. Certainly, a single biblical style is not commanded in Scripture; therefore, the worship style will vary in form in Fort Worth and other metropolitan areas. The biblical message will remain pure.

Specific biblical teachings examined in this study show the need for the church to understand the culture as a means of reaching pre-Christians with the biblical message

rather than duplicating the latest trend. This study focused specifically on developing a culturally relevant and missional worship lifestyle.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
INSTITUTING A MISSIONAL WORSHIP STYLE IN A LOCAL CHURCH
DEVELOPED FROM AN ANALYSIS OF THE CUTLURE

presented by

Stanley Glenn Parris

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at
Asbury Theological Seminary

Mentor

April 9, 2008

Date

Internal Reader

April 9, 2008

Date

Representative, Doctor of Ministry Program

April 9, 2008

Date

Dean, Doctor of Ministry Program

April 9, 2008

Date

INSTITUTING A MISSIONAL WORSHIP STYLE IN A LOCAL CHURCH
DEVELOPED FROM AN ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURE

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

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

Stanley Glenn Parris

May 2008

© 2008

Stanley G. Parris

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures.....	ix
Acknowledgements.....	xi
Chapter	
1. Problem.....	1
Background	1
Context of Study.....	6
The Statement of the Problem.....	8
Purpose.....	11
Research Questions.....	11
Research Question # 1.....	12
Research Question # 2.....	12
Definition of Terms.....	12
Ministry Intervention.....	13
Methodology.....	14
Delimitations and Generalizability.....	14
Participants.....	15
Variables.....	15
Biblical and Theological Foundations.....	15
Biblical Foundation.....	16
Historical Foundation.....	19

Missional Worship.....	24
Overview of the Dissertation.....	29
2. Literature.....	30
Overview.....	30
Transforming Church.....	34
Church and Culture.....	36
The Enduring Problem.....	36
Postmodern Culture.....	38
The Emerging Church Movement.....	43
Contextualization.....	44
The Incarnation.....	55
Holism.....	59
Social Subsystem.....	61
Economic Subsystem.....	66
Religion Subsystem.....	68
Communication Subsystem.....	71
Summary.....	73
3. Methodology.....	76
Research Questions.....	77
Research Question # 1.....	78
Research Question # 2.....	79
Participants.....	80
Instrumentation.....	81

Reliability.....	82
The Curriculum.....	83
Variables.....	83
Data Collection.....	84
Data Analysis.....	84
Delimitations and Generalizability.....	85
4. Findings.....	86
Profile of Participants.....	86
Research Questions Findings.....	90
Research Question #1 Findings.....	91
Church’s Relative Strengths.....	91
Church’s Relative Opportunities for Improvement.....	92
The Five Key Indicators.....	93
Research Question #2 Findings.....	113
Church’s Relative Strengths (Second Survey).....	114
Church’s Relative Opportunities for Improvement (Second Survey).....	115
The Five Key Indicators.....	115
Key Indicator Comparison of Survey #1 and Survey #2.....	130
Summary of Major Findings.....	134
5. Discussion.....	135
Background.....	135
Surprising Observation.....	135
Transforming/Missional Church.....	136

1. Consumerism/Community.....	137
2. Incongruence/Code.....	137
3. Autocracy/Shared Leadership.....	138
4. Cloister/Missional.....	141
5. Inertia/Reinvention.....	141
Postmodern Culture.....	143
Limitations of the Study.....	145
Curriculum.....	145
Data Collection.....	146
Participants.....	146
Follow-Up Study.....	147
Serendipitous Observations.....	148
Further Study.....	150
Code versus Incongruence.....	150
Leadership.....	151
Postscript.....	151
Appendixes	
A. Pre-Curriculum and Post-Curriculum Transforming Church Index.....	152
B. A Lifestyle, Not an Hour Small Group Curriculum.....	172
Works Cited.....	177

LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Sunday School and Sunday Morning Worship Attendance 1963-2006.....	7
2.1 Education Levels in Buchanan County, VA.....	63
4.1 Age of Participants.....	87
4.2 Length of Church Involvement.....	88
4.3 Role in the Church of Participants in this Study.....	88
4.4 Marital Status.....	89
4.5 Travel Time.....	90
4.6 Low and High Cluster Statements for Purpose Connections Concept... ..	96
4.7 Low and High Cluster Statements for Social Connections.....	97
4.8 Low and High Cluster Statements for Caring Relationships.....	98
4.9 Low and High Cluster Statements for Church Excitement.....	100
4.10 Low and High Cluster Statements for Unique Focus.....	101
4.11 Low and High Cluster Statements for Personal Growth.....	101
4.12 Low and High Cluster Statements for Raising Issues.....	103
4.13 Low and High Cluster Statements for Trust in Leadership.....	104
4.14 Low and High Cluster Statements for Financial Leadership.....	105
4.15 Low and High Statements for Effective Management.....	106
4.16 Low and High Cluster Statements for Meets Needs.....	107
4.17 Low and High Cluster Statements for Local Impact.....	108
4.18 Low and High Cluster Statements for Communication about Change.....	110
4.19 Low and High Cluster Statements for Embracing Change.....	111
4.20 Low and High Cluster Statements for Innovation and Creativity.....	112

4.21 Low and High Cluster Statements for Worship Evaluation.....	113
4.22 Low and High Cluster Statements for Purpose Connections Concept... ..	117
4.23 Low and High Cluster Statements for Social Connections.....	117
4.24 Low and High Cluster Statements for Caring Relationships.....	118
4.25 Low and High Cluster Statements for Church Excitement.....	119
4.26 Low and High Cluster Statements for Unique Focus.....	120
4.27 Low and High Cluster Statements for Personal Growth.....	120
4.28 Low and High Cluster Statements for Raising Issues.....	122
4.29 Low and High Cluster Statements for Trust in Leadership.....	122
4.30 Low and High Cluster Statements for Financial Leadership.....	123
4.31 Low and High Cluster Statements for Effective Management... ..	124
4.32 Low and High Cluster Statements for Meets Needs.....	125
4.33 Low and High Cluster Statements for Local Impact.....	126
4.34 Low and High Cluster Statements for Communication about Change.....	127
4.35 Low and High Cluster Statements for Embracing Change.....	128
4.36 Low and High Cluster Statements for Innovation and Creativity.....	129
4.37 Low and High Cluster Statements for Worship Evaluation.....	130
4.38 Change in Inertia/Reinvention Cluster Statements from Survey #1 to Survey #2.....	134

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1. Crabtree and Weese’s Four Church Cultures with Examples.....	33
Figure 2.2. Schreiter’s Common Outreach Model.....	46
Figure 2.3. Schreiter’s Steps Toward Evangelism.....	47
Figure 3.1 Steps in Study Implementation.....	81
Figure 4.1. Consumerism/Community Overall Summary.....	95
Figure 4.2. Overall Summary Incongruence/Code.....	99
Figure 4.3. Overall Summary Autocracy/Shared Leadership.....	102
Figure 4.4. Overall Summary Cloister/Mission.....	107
Figure 4.5. Overall Summary Inertia/Reinvention.....	109
Figure 4.6. Consumerism/Community Overall Summary (Second Survey).....	116
Figure 4.7. Overall Summary Incongruence/Code (Second Survey).....	119
Figure 4.8. Overall Summary Autocracy/Shared Leadership.....	121
Figure 4.9. Overall Summary Cloister/Mission.....	125
Figure 4.10. Overall Summary Inertia Reinvention (Second Survey).....	127
Figure 4.11. Key Indicator 1: Comparison: Consumerism/Community.....	131
Figure 4.12. Key Indicator 2: Comparison: Incongruence/Code.....	131
Figure 4.13. Key Indicator 3: Comparison: Autocracy/Shared Leadership.....	132
Figure 4.14. Key Indicator 4: Cloister/Mission.....	132
Figure 4.15. Key Indicator 5: Inertia/Reinvention.....	133
Figure 5.1. Change in Key Indicator #3 Subgroups from Survey #1 to Survey #2.....	139
Figure 5.2. Percentile Change in Subgroup Change Communication from Survey #1 to Survey #2.....	142

Figure 5.3 Raw Score Comparison of Age Subgroup.....148

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Life is a journey. I am grateful to God for those people He placed in my life to share the walk with me.

To my wife, Susan, thank you for your encouragement, support, and determined spirit. You used your diagnosis of cancer during this project as a platform to glorify God-- “Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe even if you were told” (Habakkuk 1:5). I simply wrote an academic dissertation. You wrote a dissertation on how to live life. To God be the glory for the amazing things He has done and promises to do.

To Briggs and Glenn, my two sons, God has great plans for your lives. Dream God’s dreams and have the courage to live for Jesus. I can’t wait to see the amazing things He does in your lives. I thank God daily that He has allowed me the opportunity to be your father. But, for now, bring it!

To Mom and Dad, you taught me about Jesus and planted in my heart the value of His church. Your sacrifices to raise me and send me to college started this journey, and, because of them, I am able to live God’s dream for my life. I will pay you back when we all get to heaven!

To my in-laws, Bruce and Peggy Briggs, thank you for your support and for helping with the grandchildren the times I had to be away.

To Alice Cox, a good friend, you are an educator who reminded me of the value of learning and achieving. Thank you for the inspiration to keep going and finish.

To Lamar Cox, a generous brother in Christ. Lamar, you graduated and went to heaven before I graduated from Asbury. You got a great deal. Thanks for your generosity, encouragement, and friendship.

To Dr. Rynkiewich, my mentor a special thank you for your academic challenges filtered through Christlike compassion. I especially want to thank you for your prayers, patience, and understanding of my family situation.

To Dr. Goold, my second reader, your challenge in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida to write a curriculum about worship was the inspiration for this dissertation. Thank you for helping me see the majesty of God and challenging me to live my greatest calling in life—to worship Him.

To Vansant Baptist Church, you are the greatest. I am eternally grateful for your support, generosity, and, most of all, your friendship. Thank you for being a church that cares about reaching lost people and sharing Christ’s love.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Background

I felt like a missionary when I was called to pastor Vansant Baptist Church in 1995. The culture was unique, certainly different than any culture I had previously experienced. Vansant Baptist Church is located in southwest Virginia, in the Appalachian Mountains. The community is known for its coal mines, friendly people, and its Appalachian roots. When I arrived in Vansant from Fort Worth, Texas, I was immediately aware of a cultural difference in these two different places. The language, dialogue, mannerisms, and viewpoints of the people in rural Virginia, were obviously different from the urban culture of the Metroplex in the Dallas and Fort Worth areas.

While I was living in Fort Worth, I pastored a small, inner city church called Oakcrest Baptist Church. The congregation was composed primarily of children from broken homes and a small group of elderly women. The constituents of Oakcrest Baptist Church were from different racial and religious backgrounds. Nearly every attender at Oakcrest Baptist Church was part of a dysfunctional family, dependant upon government assistance, and many suffered from physical and emotional abuse or alcoholism at some point in their lives. The community that surrounds the church was composed of people and businesses that were ambivalent toward the church and religion in general.

The culture of Oakcrest Baptist Church in Fort Worth was a lot different from the culture in Vansant, Virginia. Vansant Baptist Church, located in Buchanan County, is a middle to upper middle-class congregation for the area. The racial makeup of the church is totally Caucasian, which matches the Vansant community. The majority of the

congregation has completed high school, while nearly half have a college degree. The constituents of Vansant Baptist Church place high value on family, relationships, and community. The Vansant community continues to hold religion and ministers in high regard. The local country club still celebrates “pastor’s day” every Friday and allows the local pastors to play for free.

The two communities I described are dramatically different culturally, socially, and economically. One of the few characteristics that these two communities share is that most of the people who live there are unchurched. In 1998, the Virginia Baptist Resource Center published a study of the number of people who attended any church in southwest Virginia. Their findings were published in the “Bristol Herald Courier” of Bristol, Virginia. In that study, they found that only 24.1 percent of the people in Buchanan County attend church on any given Sunday regardless of denomination or affiliation.

When I moved to Vansant in 1995, I realized that I could not minister in the same manner as I did in Fort Worth. The preaching, visiting, worship services, and programs would have to be designed specifically for the culture of Vansant. The problem became more pertinent when the church considered developing a worship style that is biblically pure and relevant to the culture of Vansant. A single biblical style is not commanded in Scripture; therefore, the worship style will vary in form in Fort Worth and other metropolitan areas. The biblical message remains pure.

The need to develop a biblically appropriate, culturally relevant, missional worship style was magnified as I have traveled to churches around the United States and participated in conferences through the Beeson Modules for Advanced Church Leadership in the Doctor of Ministry Program at Asbury Theological Seminary. I

recognized that the “one-size-fits-all” mentality would not work in my cultural setting. The present-day church seems to believe that growth happens when traditional components of worship are exchanged for a contemporary style. The terminology in use in today’s churches point to this mentality with concepts such as seeker-sensitive, casual atmosphere, and “not church as usual” being very popular. I have discovered, along with others that every church has different resources, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that create a unique culture that cannot be molded into any particular “style.” Missional worship, or worship that produces kingdom-oriented disciples, cannot be induced by the trendiest megachurch recipe.

The mission field of today consists of a wide range of diverse people who are not attracted to a “canned” approach to religion. A formulaic approach to ministry, particularly worship, has been proven to be a great temptation in American churches. Many churches have a fast-food approach to ministry. Because a happy meal can look and taste the same in Chicago, Houston, and Vansant, the church believes it can use the same sermons, music, drama, and marketing campaigns and be as effective in these different places. Alan J. Roxburgh points out the need for the church to move from a generalized approach to a mission strategy:

Mission and evangelism in a pluralistic society must move beyond generalized, pragmatic strategies developed in a denominational head office. The mission strategy for each congregation must, increasingly, be shaped by the values, needs and style of its context. In pluralistic cultures there are a wide variety of values which can change from neighborhood to neighborhood. (65)

The temptation to reproduce results without consideration of the uniqueness of the church and the cultural context causes frustration and pain. Many churches and pastors have experienced severe conflict because of this common mistake.

The reality of this one-size-fits-all mentality became apparent when change began to be introduced in the worship services at Vansant Baptist Church. The expected resistance to change, in general, was not something unique to Vansant. What seemed to be unique was the disinterest in some of the areas that were changed. The normal anti-change attitude was not evident; however, the changes did not fit the church or the culture. The latest, trendiest, megachurch models did not fit the people of Vansant.

The tension between the one-size-fits-all mentality and congregational culture can be recognized by the growing number of conflicts between the staff and the congregation. History has proven that conflict is a part of church life, particularly in the area of church/staff relations. Terminations are increasing due to the failure to exercise elementary relationship skills within the Southern Baptist Convention.

Vansant Baptist Church cooperates with the Southern Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptist Convention is comprised of 16.3 million people attending over 42,000 churches ("About Us," 2005). Vansant Baptist is located in the state of Virginia. Virginia ranks thirteenth in the United States in Southern Baptist population with 742,860 people, comprising 12.01 percent of the population ("Largest Southern Baptist Communities").

A compelling problem has developed within some Southern Baptist churches. A significant number of staff members are terminated each year. D. Scott Barfoot reports that one in four pastors experience a forced termination in America's evangelical church (1). The increase in forced terminations in the Southern Baptist Convention rose 400 percent from 1984 to 1996 (1). In 2005 a total of 1,302 staff members were terminated. This total was the highest number of terminations in over ten years. The terminations included 314 bivocational pastors, 655 full-time pastors, and 333 full-time staff (Turner).

The terminations were categorized into fifteen areas:

1. Control issues,
2. Poor people skills,
3. Church's resistance to change,
4. Pastor's leadership style (too strong),
5. Church already conflicted when the pastor arrived,
6. Decline in attendance,
7. Pastor's leadership style (too weak),
8. Administrative incompetence,
9. Sexual misconduct,
10. Conflict with other staff,
11. Ethical misconduct,
12. Disagreement over doctrine,
13. Tenure,
14. Rapid growth,
15. Pastor vs. deacons. (Turner)

The top five most common reasons for pastoral terminations were all relational issues. In fact, disagreement over doctrine was relegated to twelfth on the list. While all of the issues are important, the pastor or staff member must be culturally educated so that relationships within the congregation can be strong and healthy. All relationship problems do not stem from cultural differences, but they play a key role.

The Bible is clear that God's intention is to work with humanity within their cultural framework. Anthropologist Charles Kraft points out an example of the Apostle Paul using this approach to ministry:

He (God) always worked in terms of Jewish culture to reach Jews. Through Paul, He states what is illustrated in the book of Acts—that He wants to accept Gentiles within their cultures also, without the necessity of their changing cultures in order to do things in a way that is acceptable to Him. (23)

The context of Vansant requires that in order to develop a missional worship style an understanding of the culture needs to be the foundation of the methodology.

Context of Study

Vansant Baptist Church began as a mission church in the spring of 1955 in a school building. The property for the present church building was purchased in 1957 for \$5,000. On 27 October 1957, a ground breaking ceremony was held, and construction was completed 21 December 1958.

The current membership of Vansant Baptist Church stands at 605 with an average worship attendance of 225. The records of church attendance have not been maintained consistently over the years. Table 1.1 is a breakdown of the available statistical data of Vansant Baptist Church.

Table 1.1 Sunday School and Sunday Morning Worship Attendance 1963-2006

Year	Sunday School Attendance	Worship Attendance
1963	162	No Record
1964	129	No Record
1965	125	No Record
1966	No Record	No Record
1967	No Record	No Record
1968	93	No Record
1969	101	No Record
1970	75	No Record
1971	92	No Record
1972	No Record	No Record
1973	99	No Record
1974	110	No Record
1975	95	No Record
1976	87	No Record
1977	68	No Record
1978	68	No Record
1979	73	No Record
1980	80	No Record
1981	No Record	No Record
1982	69	No Record
1983-1985	No Record	No Record
1986	86	No Record
1987	75	No Record
1988	74	No Record
1989	80	No Record
1990	78	No Record
1991	96	No Record
1992-1994	No Record	No Record
1995	60	75
1996	69	90
1997	78	105
1998	84	120
1999	87	135
2000	87	148
2001	88	160
2002	104	180
2003	109	210
2004	128	225
2005	120	230
2006	118	220

Vansant Baptist Church is experiencing its largest worship attendance in its history. Because the records of worship attendance before 1995 are deficient, this evaluation is based on the anecdotal memory of some charter members. Many of the current leaders have been members of Vansant Baptist Church for ten to twenty years, though in the last two years that statistic is beginning to change as many younger families have become active in the ministries of the church. Some conflict between the newer members and the long time members of the church is evident. The leadership style, ideas, and outlook are very different.

The church views itself as a small church in a small town with small ideas. The ministries of the church, caring for the needs of the congregation, and leadership responsibilities have always been the role of the pastor. The church statistical data represents the passive attitudes of the congregation throughout much of its history. The new generation of members has been confronted and seems to accept the responsibility of being kingdom builders rather than just consumers of the product.

The Statement of the Problem

The description of Vansant Baptist Church is a picture of many churches in America. According to George Barna, approximately 320,000 Protestant and Catholic churches exist in America with nearly one million full-time pastors and ministers (“Evangelism That Works” 23). Nevertheless, the church in America is declining and is being challenged by secularism and tolerance. Barna indicates that nine out of ten people in America cannot define the Great Commission and nearly seven out of ten people in America have no understanding of the term “John 3:16” (35). The problem becomes more apparent when consideration is given to the fact that 88 percent of Americans label

themselves as “Christian” (37). The problem for today’s church is complicated further by the stark reality that just about everyone believes in God and most consider themselves spiritual. Erwin Raphael McManus describes the cultural characteristic:

While our nation systematically eliminates overt Christian influences from the public arena, America’s new grass-roots religion is not atheism but pantheism. Even with the public schools advocating evolution and removing creation science, belief in God is nearly 100 percent. Even with the bombardment of modernity’s materialism, rationalism, existentialism, and empiricism, our society continues its spiritual quest. America is an extraordinarily spiritual society. (29)

The cultural shift toward tolerance and secularism has created the postmodern mind-set that truth is only relevant to an individual, and any attempt to convey these convictions to others is rude and offensive. In contrast, for Jesus Christ, truth is always more important than tolerance, and necessary to be a part of his kingdom. Jesus had a passion for those who were not believers and was criticized by the religious leaders for associating with them (Luke 15:2; 7:39; Matt. 9:10-11). He did not in any scriptural account condone their behavior but confronted them with truth (Matt. 19:16-30; Luke 19:1-10).

The worldview for a postmodern mind-set is a dramatic shift from the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry. E Stanley Jones described this shift in worldview:

The kingdom of God is the most astoundingly radical proposal ever presented to the human race. It means nothing less than the replacing of the present world-order by the kingdom of God. It is the endeavor to call men back from the present unnatural, unworkable world-order to a new one based on new principles, embodying a new spirit and led by a new Person. (90)

The issue for the church is how truth can be effectively communicated to a culture that is defensive about absolutes and accepting of a pluralistic, tolerant mind-set.

As the church seeks to understand the cultural and religious shift in America, the response is vital. Diana L. Eck, a Harvard religion professor, mistakenly says that

Christians should build a “culture of pluralism,” so that the present generation would have a lasting influence on the world:

It is critical to hear and value the many new ways in which the variety of American peoples bring life and vibrancy to the whole of our society. Today we have the unparalleled opportunity to build, intentionally and actively, a culture of pluralism among the people of many cultures and faiths in America. (77)

The church should listen and find common ground among the different cultures in America. The calling of the church is not to build a culture of pluralism, but the calling is to build a Christ-like culture. In fact, the church exists as an independent culture, speaking counter to the popular culture. William H. Willimon suggests that the church speaks counter to the culture by offering an alternative to the “ways of the world.”

The pressure to push the evangelical church to be more tolerant and pluralistic has led to its own internal wars, and the focus has shifted away from its redemptive nature. Eck’s conclusion (77) adds to the trend that the modern church is a “dispenser of religious goods and services” rather than a “body of people sent on a mission who gather in community for worship, encouragement, and teaching from the Word” (Kimball 95). In dismissing the missional function of the church, this type of evaluation of religion promotes the status quo of world conflict, poverty, and religious segregation. Jurgen Moltmann provides insight into the necessity of the church being apostolic in nature:

The historical church must be called “apostolic” in a double sense: its gospel and its doctrine are founded on the testimony of the first apostles, the eyewitnesses of the risen Christ, and it exists in the carrying out of the apostolic proclamation, the missionary charge. The expression “apostolic” therefore denotes both the church’s foundation and its commission. (358)

The well-intentioned programming of the church has led to a one-size-fits-all mentality, according to Sally Morgenthaler:

Thus, there is an increasing tendency toward methodological abuse—taking certain market-driven approaches to extremes. In the age of the quick fix, it is simply faster and easier to take the fix without the foundation. Not surprisingly, many evangelical pastors and worship leaders have been doing just that, tossing out their old worship models to make room for this year's trend. (19)

Sterile duplications are not effective. Apostolic worship grows out of a cultural understanding and out of the church's scriptural understanding of worship.

Specific biblical teachings will be examined in this study that makes the case for understanding the culture as a means of reaching pre-Christians with the biblical message rather than duplicating the latest trend. This study focused specifically on developing a worship style that is culturally relevant and missional in nature. Without doubt, the church consists of much more than a particular style of worship. After all, biblical worship is a lifestyle, not an hour in church on Sunday. At the same time, I have a personal conviction that worship shapes everything Christians do in the church. The importance of a weekly gathering for worship cannot be overstated. If the church can understand and implement biblical, culturally relevant, missional worship, the church will be transformed into an apostolic or missional church.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop and measure the impact of a worship curriculum based on an analysis of the culture to be used by the members and attenders of Vansant Baptist Church to lead to biblical, culturally relevant missional worship and a missional church.

Research Questions

In order to address the research problem, two research questions have been identified.

Research Question #1

What concepts did the subjects of this study have of a biblical, culturally relevant missional worship style prior to their exposure to the worship curriculum?

Research Question #2

What changes occur in the participants' understanding and practices of biblical, missional worship as a result of the implemented researcher-designed curriculum?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are frequently and consistently used.

The term **culture** is defined as “the total life way of a people” (Kraft 38.) The way a person interacts with others, the “mechanism” developed to cope with an environment, and the concepts expressed that lead to regular behaviors and patterns (39). The use of the term “culture” in this study will be used to identify the regular patterns and behavior or the “way of life” of the people in Vansant, Virginia.

Missional worship produces kingdom-oriented disciples. The Church is intended to be apostolic in nature. Every church has a unique culture that influences style and method. The church functions to create cultural change by being missional in nature. The typical American church judges the effectiveness of a worship service and church on the number of people who attend it and the size of the budget. The Thessalonian church was a model to all the believers, not because of their size or budget but because they “turned to God from idols,” “served the living and true God,” “and their faith became known

everywhere” (1 Thess. 1:7-10). In the case of this particular study, the intended goal was to lead Vansant Baptist Church to missional worship based on a cultural understanding and biblical theology that is communicated through a created worship curriculum (Guder; Hunter, *Church for the Unchurched*; Roxburgh; Van Gelder).

Worship style is the format or pattern of worship that is used so the individual can experience God in the context of a larger community (church). Included in the worship format could be elements such as liturgy, music, Scripture reading and proclamation, media and technology, prayer and meditation, opportunity for commitment, and singing. The worship style is the vehicle used to communicate the gospel in an understandable context for the participants. The study does not advocate that one style is better than another. Instead, this study sought to advocate that a one-size-fits-all mentality is neither biblical nor wise.

Members are those persons who have publicly professed Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, been baptized by immersion, and have been officially recognized and received into the congregation of Vansant Baptist Church.

Attendees are those persons who are not members of Vansant Baptist Church but who regularly attend the weekly worship service on Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

Ministry Intervention

The focus of the ministry intervention was the development and implementation of a curriculum designed to equip Vansant Baptist Church, Vansant, Virginia, to develop culturally relevant, biblically sound missional worship. The curriculum consisted of eight weekly sessions lasting approximately sixty minutes per session. The goal of the curriculum was to equip the members and constituents to understand their cultural

context and biblical worship. Once an understanding of biblical worship can be developed and an identity of the cultural context can be established, the church can be transformed into a missional church. Each of the eight sessions attempted to focus on a particular cultural and worship aspect. Lecture, group discussion, and action assignments were among the various teaching methods used.

Methodology

The primary research tool was a questionnaire administered by me and completed by those attending the classes that utilized the instructor-designed curriculum. The subjects who attended completed the questionnaires on two occasions: prior to and upon completion of the study. This project's methodology and design is known as a quasi-experimental single group interrupted time-series design (Wiersma 128-56). The data from the questionnaire was collected, analyzed, and summarized in a way that provided a basis of determining whether or not a designed curriculum based on a cultural analysis is effective in leading a church to develop a more missional worship style and determine if an understanding of worship and cultural relevance affects the total mission of the church.

The questionnaires administered before participation in the worship study and at the conclusion of the worship study, and completed by the subjects of the study, provided the necessary data for the project.

Delimitations and Generalizability

The motivation for this study came from an existing need within the context of Vansant Baptist Church. The declining level of worship participation, the challenge to transition the worship style, and the cultural characteristics of the community were all

motivating factors. This study focused on the effects of a curriculum I designed and implemented with a group who voluntarily chose to participate. The project is, therefore, limited, and the findings represent only the church and group that participated. To the extent that the findings are generalizable, this study adds to the existing research and literature in the area of cultural analysis, worship, worship transition, and missional transformation. I assumed similar questions and results in churches of similar size, demographic makeup, and leadership structure would be apparent.

Participants

The participants of this study were members or attenders of Vansant Baptist Church who voluntarily participated in a curriculum developed and implemented by me.

Variables

The independent variable of this study was the researcher-designed worship curriculum that was presented to the subjects of this study. The study involved two separate dependent variables. The dependent variables were the (1) changes in the concepts and (2) practices of the subjects as a result of their exposure to a worship curriculum.

Biblical and Theological Foundations

Cultural anthropologist Paul Hiebert says that missionaries make two mistakes when they are attempting to build a bridge to pre-Christians: a misunderstanding of the people and a misunderstanding of the culture (93). In order to overcome these often made mistakes, an agent of the gospel must be a learner of the culture so the gospel can be presented in a way the people can understand (93).

Biblical Foundation

This study is grounded in some significant biblical and theological concepts. Because this study is directed to the specific area of worship, particularly apostolic or missional worship, a general sense of missional worship should be understood. The word worship means to declare “one worthy of reverence and honor” (Segler 5). When authentic worship takes place, God is revered and honored, or his worth is declared. The Scripture says, “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise” (Rev. 5:12, NIV). Morgenthaler says that all relationships revolve around response. She also says, “Christian worship is the spirit and truth interaction between God and God’s people. It is an exchange” (47).

The Hebrew word *shachah*, which is generally translated “worship” in the Old Testament, means to “bow down” or to “prostrate” oneself. Similarly, the New Testament uses the Greek word *proskuneo* most often to refer to worship. *Proskuneo* means to “kiss the hand towards one” or to “prostrate oneself” (Segler 5). These words further illustrate that the worship of God is reverencing him and the lowering of oneself. The Christian begins to worship God for who he is and not just for what he does. Franklin M. Segler says that the church is founded on the principle of worship:

There is no possibility of the church’s being Christian without worship. Worship is in its essence the self-portrayal of the congregation, whom God has called to be his people in the world. In fact, worship is the power from God that enables the church to be the church. (11)

God is worthy of worship and reverence. God took the initiative to create humanity so he could be worshipped by his creation. Humanity is invited by God himself into his presence. This invitation is a gift from God to his creation and an opportunity to

encounter his presence (Pecklers 23). He desires to have fellowship with his creation. The Bible reflects this idea in Acts 17:27-28a: “God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being.”

Humans must be careful in defining worship only as bestowing worth on God. This type of worship theology becomes dangerous because it could allow the worshipper to determine God’s worth or the object being worshipped. This type of worship would seemingly reflect the mood and circumstances of the worshipper rather than the actual worth of God. David Peterson comments on this subject and says, “It leaves open the possibility of people making their own assessment of God’s worth and the response which they consider to be adequate” (17). Instead, worship is theocentric. Frederick W. Schroeder points out the relational aspect of worship:

Christian worship is man’s recognition of God and his awed and joyful response to God. Yet worship is not a street with one-way traffic only. Its movement is not solely from man toward God; simultaneously there is a movement from God toward man. Two words that might be used to describe this aspect of worship are relationship and renewal. (41)

The invitation by God is extended to encounter him in worship; the response to move toward him or away from him exposes humanity’s relationship with God.

In the Old Testament, God seeks out his people to worship him. God asked Adam, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:9). Enoch walked with God, and Noah built an altar unto the Lord. One of the greatest examples of Old Testament worship, and worship in general, is during Isaiah the prophet’s call experience in Isaiah 6. Isaiah is in an established, planned worship service experiencing the presence of God (Segler 15-16).

Isaiah finds himself in the presence of God, and the Seraphs, or heavenly angelic beings, are declaring the glory of God. They say, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3). The word for “glory,” *kabod*, is used of God “in his manifestation of his creatures” (Grogan 56). God revealed his glory in the presence of Isaiah, while his power was illuminated through the shaking of the doorposts and thresholds and the presence of the smoke in the temple. Three times in the first four verses, the Hebrew verb *male* is used. While the sovereignty of God is evident, he is not a distant God. Geoffrey W. Grogan says, “His transcendence is not remoteness, or aloofness but is known through his presence in his created world and temple. Divine transcendence and immanence are always held in balance in biblical theism” (55-56). God is transcendent yet is actively involved with his creation. The Scripture speaks to the active presence of God’s spirit (Job 27:3; Ps. 104:29-30; Matt. 6:25-33). Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson describe this theology as “twin truths” (12). God is beyond the world, yet he is present in the world.

Isaiah’s response to God’s presence is a point of interest for any student of worship. Isaiah saw the seraphs covering their faces in the presence of God. Isaiah himself said, “Woe to me, I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty” (Isa. 6:5). Isaiah, in God’s presence, recognized his own sinfulness and unworthiness to be in the presence of God. True worship clearly illuminates creation as sinful.

True worship does not stop there. When Isaiah found himself in the presence of God, he recognized his sinfulness, but he also became a willing servant of Gods. Isaiah said, “Here am I, send me!” (Isa. 6:8). Isaiah’s response is a grateful reaction to a worthy

God. He is not coerced or pressured but willfully gives himself to the service of God (Grogan 57). The ultimate result of authentic worship is repentance, commitment, and action.

Historical Foundation

The historical analysis of worship of the early Church indicates that the worship was diverse and culturally influenced. The attempt to categorize the Apostolic period into specific linear styles of worship would portray an erroneous picture; worship during the Apostolic period can be defined as multilinear rather than monolinear (Wainwright and Tucker 32). The early Church rooted its worship practices in its Hebrew heritage, relying on the synagogue experiences and the use of Scripture and hymnody to bridge the differing movements (Schroeder 34). As congregations developed that were mostly or exclusively Gentile in composition, new directions were begun.

Deuteronomy 26 is a narrative that describes two liturgical Hebrew worship services in which one should be held annually and the other every three years. The narrative describes unique worship experiences that relate to the harvest and the annual presentation of the “first-fruits” to God (Deut. 26:2). During these Hebrew worship experiences, the worshippers acknowledge the generosity of God, not only during the past year but also his faithfulness throughout the nation of Israel’s history. The narrative reminds the worshippers of the uniqueness of God and that true worship includes elements of a corporate setting, personal accountability, and obedience in how life is lived (Brown 252-62; Wright 483-87). During the narrative the land is referred to as their “inheritance,” reminding the worshipper of the covenant relationship God established with his people (Grogan 155).

The Old Testament details the importance of celebrating worship in response to the generosity and faithfulness of God. In fact, some of the worship structure was developed around celebrating holy days and special festivals to commemorate important historical events in the life of the nation of Israel. Jesus, in the New Testament, also participated in synagogue worship and festival-related pilgrimages to Jerusalem (Gaddy 19).

The early Church built their belief and worship systems on the Old Testament covenant tradition. God had set aside the nation of Israel to be his covenant people. Yahweh established a special covenant with Abram. The Old Testament covenant found in Genesis 12 announces this covenantal relationship:

The Lord 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.”
(vv.1-3)

Christianity became inclusive of Gentile people and established that Jesus Christ was the new source of this covenantal relationship (Hinson 15-16).

Early in the first century, temple worship revolved around the offering of sacrifices and covenant renewal. An informal liturgical calendar was built around events that God miraculously intervened on behalf of his covenantal people. The worship diminished in influence and power and was followed by synagogue worship. The destruction of the Temple took place in CE 70 (Hinson 16-17). Converted Jews did not see the necessity in breaking completely away from their traditional religious heritage. The New Testament indicates that some at first continued to worship in the temple and

synagogue services. These services maintained many of the Old Testament worship elements outside of the sacrificial rites.

The New Testament recounts the occasion that Jesus visited the synagogue following his forty-day temptation experience. The Scripture reveals that Jesus' custom was to attend the synagogue service. The Gospel of Luke indicates that Jesus read Scripture from the Prophet Isaiah and connected the prophetic passage to himself, the Messiah (Luke 4:20). Eventually, the Sabbath day worship was changed to the first day of the week to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Gaddy 19; Stevenson 24-25).

A liturgical connection between Judaism and the New Testament cannot be clearly identified. The influence of early worship seems to be evident in the liturgical recitals used during the offering of sacrifices, particularly when celebrating the Passover, Pentecost, and other special moments. Paul F. Bradshaw contends that this influence was marginal at best:

On the other hand, after the close of the first century, liturgical influence from Judaism to a now predominantly Gentile Church is likely to have been relatively marginal, and any really significant effects must be sought in the earlier formative period. (33)

Because of this influence, and the rise of false Christian teachings, the early Christian Church moved to define themselves in beliefs and practice.

Worship in the New Testament points to a Christological worship. Worship should be a witness to Jesus Christ. Segler says, "In every act of worship the church experiences afresh the miracle of the coming of the Risen Christ" (61). Like Isaiah experiencing the presence of God in the temple, Jesus Christ was the final and definitive manifestation of his presence to his people (Peterson 81). Jesus is "Immanuel," meaning "God with us." Worship is for Immanuel. He lived a life of obedience and commitment to

God the Father. As a result of his obedience to God the Father through his death, burial, and resurrection Christians are commanded to live his lifestyle made possible through his grace (Segler 61).

As God reveals himself to his people, his presence is permeated through the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul points out the necessary role the Holy Spirit plays in authentic worship when he says, “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ” (Rom. 8:9). The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in all aspects of redemptive history. The Holy Spirit convicts and transforms lives. In fact, Jesus said, “It is the Spirit that gives life” (John 6:63). Paul says in Galatians 2:20a, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” The Church can expect power when it approaches worship with the knowledge and acceptance of the Holy Spirit (Segler 65).

Dr. Bill Goold uses the picture of a four-sided building to portray Christian worship. Each side contains a large window, and each yields a distinct view of the room. The scene at each individual window reflects the likeness of Christian worship:

1. Window one is an earthly rehearsal for a future event.
2. Window two is a repeated reminder of sinfulness.
3. Window three is a repeated rediscovery of God’s grace.
4. Window four is a reequipping of God’s people.

Goold contends that each time the church gathers and authentically worships, these four experiences are shared with those who have gathered.

An important component of New Testament worship was the institution and practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper. Some believe that the Lord's Supper was the central act of Christian worship in the New Testament Church (Gaddy 21). The Scripture details four accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:22-24; Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). The institution passages seem to indicate that cultural differences were taken into account, particularly in the Pauline writings concerning the Lord's Supper.

The *Apostolic Tradition*, attributed to the Roman Priest Hippolytus and dated around 215, talks about the orders for the New Testament traditions. The author describes a well-organized community practicing baptism, celebrating the Eucharist, and saying daily prayers. It provides insight to the bridge between the loosely knit house gatherings and a more detailed, orderly, and formal worship setting (Stevenson 18; Wainwright and Tucker 34). The practices of these communities are used by some to argue for the validity of contemporary sacramental practices. Several questions have arisen concerning the *Apostolic Tradition*, including its authorship, date, and context of origin. In fact, theologian John F. Baldovian contends the writing could be possibly attributed to the conservative Hippolytus (542).

Tertullian wrote extensively about the practice of baptism and its connectedness to worship:

As John was our Lord's forerunner, preparing his ways, so also the angel, the mediator of baptism, makes the ways straight for the Holy Spirit who is to come next. He does so by that cancelling of sins which is granted in response to faith signed and sealed in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Evans 15)

The idea of sacrifice and commitment formed the foundation of early worship traditions acted out through the practice of the Eucharist and baptism. Hippolytus and Tertullian condemned the moral decline they determined was happening in their culture; however, inculturation was accepted by both, although only of the elements they believed enriched the worship experience.

Missional Worship

The practice of traditions, though biblical, does not automatically empower the church with God's divine strength. The Apostle Paul told the church in Corinth, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). The Church, God's people, is the sanctuary of God. If the Church is ever going to engage God, the Spirit's presence must be realized and then let the Spirit lead in the worship of God. Rich Nathan and Ken Wilson confirm the power found in this approach:

We should look for God. How God chooses to manifest himself is up to him. But, very often, if we simply permit it, God would come in a way that would be memorable, perhaps extraordinary, and, at times, even awesome. (72)

The Niceno-Constantinople Creed was first regularly used in worship by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Timotheus, in 511 (Chapman 208). The Niceno-Constantinople Creed, sometimes quoted in worship, declares, "And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic church" (Williams 17). The description "apostolic" pictures the intended purpose of the Church in representing Christ to the world. Moltmann recognizes the apostolic and missional relationship found in the Church:

The historical church must be called "apostolic" in a double sense: its gospel and its doctrine are founded on the testimony of the first apostles, the eyewitnesses of the risen Christ, and it exists in the carrying out of the

apostolic proclamation, the missionary charge. The expression “apostolic” therefore denotes both the church’s foundation and its commission. (358)

In the book of Acts 2:42-47, Scripture gives a picture of a missional church:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and 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 a 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.

The word devoted, *proskartereo*, literally means “a steadfast and single-minded fidelity to a certain course of action” (Tenney 289). When the worship of God was a priority and infidelity was not present, the result was missional worship. People were filled with awe and many “wonders and miraculous signs were done” (*terata kai semata*), which points to a powerful expression of God’s presence. The early Church experienced personal repentance and action and as a result the “Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).

St. Augustine recognizes the missional nature of God’s true Church. He points to the calling of the apostles. He describes these men as “humbly born, without honor, unlearned” (Barrow 42). St. Augustine contends that the conversion of one of the apostles from evil is an example of the mission of the Church to sow the “seed of His holy Gospel” and “bear out the cause of truth” (42).

The missional calling of the Church is connected to the Celtic way of evangelism by George G. Hunter, III. The participants in this movement received preparation and training in monastic communities in which they were directed to spend time in isolation, meet with a “soul friend,” meet weekly in a small-group, and engage in ministries

directed toward seekers. The participants were organized into apostolic teams comprised of a dozen people (“Church for the Unchurched Conference”).

These apostolic teams built their credibility in many ways, but two in particular point to the missional calling of a New Testament Church. First, the Celtics were “religion” friendly. They determined that the most effective approach would be to build on what they could. Second, they were culture friendly. They recognized the value of understanding the culture and background and how these values impacted the transferring of their personal beliefs to another individual (Hunter, “Church for the Unchurched Conference”).

The institution of the New Testament Church marked the high point in its history. The powerful expression of the Holy Spirit led to daily conversions and continued empowerment of new missionaries such as the Apostle Paul. The Church contended with varying success and challenges through the centuries. The conversion of Constantine and the Edict of Milan marked the end of years of persecution for Christians. His effect on the church had lasting impact (Gonzalez 1: 113-30).

Eventually, a call for needed reform came in 1500 by Isabella of Castile:

The dissolution is such, that the souls entrusted to the clergy receive great damage for we are told that the majority of the clergy are living in open concubinage, and that if our justice intervenes in order to punish them, they revolt and create a scandal, and that they despise our justice to the point that they are themselves against it. (Gonzalez 2: 6)

The papal corruption had been established and many were longing for reform. Also, the rise of educational advances, increased nationalism, and the discontent of the masses set the stage for Martin Luther and others to initiate the desired reform. The church began to recognize Jesus Christ as the connection to God and the legitimate High Priest.

Furthermore, the Scripture was translated into languages that the common people could understand (38-52).

Greg Ogden contends that the Reformation is just now becoming complete. He says, “[We] live in the generation when the unfinished business of the Reformation may at last be completed” (9). Ogden points out that the completion of what the Reformation started is happening because the church is being released from the barriers of institutionalism and beginning to see itself as a living organism. The debate continues about how far this transition has taken the church. Richard John Neuhaus contends that the leaders of the church should not reject the institutionalism of the church. He argues that while the church is not perfect and has drifted from the redemptive message of the cross, not all is lost with the message of the church. While the sale of the gospel, the superficial relationships, and self-serving rhetoric are unnerving, Neuhaus believes that these three are better than nothing: “No matter how bastardized we may think the form of the gospel is, they are at least brought within the circle of Christian discourse where the understanding of the gospel can be deepened and fulfilled in Christian discipleship” (7). The church becomes missional in nature when the ministry is owned and lived out by the people, and not just the church hierarchy (Ogden 9-26).

The biblical background for missional worship points to the ultimate test of authentic worship: transformation. Missional worship, at its core, leads to action. Rather than the hierarchy owning the ministry of the church, as the historical overview points out, the church is only missional when the people own and live out the mission.

Morganthaler indicates that this type of missional worship will require change:

Worship, in the final analysis, means change. It means we say good-bye to some cherished but toxic behaviors. We ask God to enable us to let go of

the junk. Jesus could not be clearer on this issue. He proclaims, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15). To love God is to worship God. (53)

Missional worship happens in the context of cultural understanding and biblical teaching.

The Bible and history portray many examples of the need for missional churches to be culturally aware. One of the primary passages is found in Paul’s letter to the church at Corinth:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (I though myself, am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. (1 Cor. 9:19-22)

The apostle was a journeyman missionary, asking for no remuneration for his preaching the gospel. He proclaimed to the church that he was not indebted to any person, yet he freely chose to make himself a slave so that some would begin a relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul waived his rights so that he could serve others in their known context. Paul held deep personal convictions, yet he searched for customs and traditions with which he could sympathize in order to place himself in the position to win them to Christ (Briggs, Driver, and Plummer 189-91).

The goal of the church is to interact with or engage the culture, not simply to adapt to the culture, so that the gospel is promoted. This principle of indigenous Christianity provides the church the opportunity to interact and communicate effectively with the culture. A productive church understands the value of cultural understanding but also recognizes the intended goal to transform the individuals in the culture to

uniqueness, mainly Christlikeness. Paul told the church at Rome their need for cultural awareness:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom. 12:1-2)

This goal is not easily accomplished. The present church, whether consciously or subconsciously, seems to expect the culture to adapt to the demands of its own cultural likeness in order to be a true follower of Jesus Christ: “But the church has continually forgotten the lesson of Acts 15. We have continually reverted to the assumption that becoming Christian means becoming like us culturally” (Kraft 2). Perhaps the present church will be more open in the future to have the attitude of the Apostle Paul. The cultural context played a tremendous role in his approach to ministry. If the church would be more faithful to develop missional worship styles, I believe that the number of disciples of Christ would increase dramatically.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 forms a foundation for the study by reviewing the related literature and forming a framework for my cultural setting. Chapter 3 shows the design of the study. In Chapter 4 the findings of the study are reported. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings and their interpretation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

Overview

My interest in developing a worship curriculum to help lead churches to a missional worship style flows out of my belief that authentic, biblical worship is the foundation for transformation. In order for a church to be truly missional, authentic, biblical, and culturally relevant, worship must happen. The spiritual ministry of the church is unmatched by any group, club, or institution in the world. Helping the present-day church realize its calling and potential requires an appreciation for cultural analysis and understanding of the historical patterns of worship evolution. The purpose of this research was to develop and evaluate a worship curriculum based on an analysis of the culture to be used by the members and attenders of Vansant Baptist Church to lead to a biblical, culturally relevant missional worship style.

The church growth movement of the 1960s helped churches focus on outreach campaigns and the process of organizing a church for growth. Up until this time, very little had been written about or researched concerning principles for growing a church. The church growth movement was replaced in the 1990s by what Ed Stetzer calls “The Church Health Movement” (*Comeback Churches* 26). Megachurches exploded in American culture in a new way. Pastors such as Rick Warren and Bill Hybels became popular with church leaders from all backgrounds and denominational affiliations. The church health movement attempted to move churches away from focusing merely on growth, toward being a healthy church.

The healthy church movement was never fulfilled; instead, many pastors across America tried to replicate the methods of popular megachurches and their leaders. The idea of missional church has become a way to recapture the purpose of the church. Stetzer contends that the missional-church philosophy has caused three major shifts in thinking: from programs to people, from demographics to discernment, and from models to mission (“Comeback Churches” 26):

The missional church is not just another phase but a full expression of who the church is and what it’s called to be and to do. The missional church builds on the ideas of Church Growth and Church Health and brings the lessons learned to their mission focus—their local mission field. As a result, such churches are truly missional as they take up the Acts 1:8 challenge. (30)

Biblically sound churches are missional in nature, particularly in the area of worship. The worship service is the main entry point for pre-Christians to experience the church.

The goal of the church is neither just to grow in numbers nor just to be healthy. The goal of the church is to be transformed into a living organism that is missional in nature. Church health is a necessary component, but it is not the target goal. It is one factor that is essential if the church ever becomes missional in nature. The style of worship, its cultural relevancy, and its understanding by the worshippers play key roles in leading the church through this transformation process.

J. Russell Crabtree and Carolyn Weese are church leadership experts who have written extensively about pastoral transitions. The research conducted by Crabtree and Weese discovered four cultures that dominate Western churches. These four cultures are understood by the church and its members, even though they are not necessarily articulated. The agreement connects the church to its members in ways similar to a

contract. If the contract is perceived to be broken, the members respond with an emotional energy that proves detrimental to the church (58-59).

Crabtree and Weese's four culture have certain identifiable values, specific vocabulary, and often unspoken governing rules. The four are identified as a family culture, icon culture, archival culture, and replication culture:

None of these church types is "pure." For example, all church cultures have elements of family. However, family culture is distinct in that the elements of relationship and style drive the decision making of the church and become central to the expectations of the member. In addition, no one church type is superior to another. (62-63)

Each church type or culture has its own strength and weaknesses, but they do represent the churches found in American society.

The family culture is concerned with maintaining the integrity of the traditions that are rooted into the culture of the church. A sense of familiarity is important to this culture even if it is not effective in its mission. The pastoral transition is usually equated with a death that calls for a period of grief before moving forward.

The icon culture is focused on quantitative or qualitative results such as attendance, facilities, attitudes, or finances. The perceived results determine the effectiveness of the church and the leadership. Often the leaders are the focal point and are given decision-making power. Because of the concentration of power, icon cultures are personality driven and falter when the leadership transitions.

The archival culture focuses on the desire to share information so that the church experience can be duplicated no matter where the worship service is conducted. The rules regulate the worship and church experience and adherence to the rules are of utmost importance. The liturgical readings and the policies relating to the sacraments are

regulated so that conformity can be achieved by other local congregations. Results are not as important to the archival culture as the adherence to the church policies, particularly in the area of liturgy and the sacraments.

The replication culture is focused on results. The methods of ministry, church governance, policies, and staff decisions are all based on achieving the desired result. If the results are not achieved, change is implemented:

The knowledge that drives this culture is not generally academic or abstract. Above all else, a replication culture is learning how to connect in ministry today. Leaders are often well networked with other leaders and connected with sources of information on what is working now. (Crabtree and Weese 68)

The replication culture must be cautious about obscuring the need for relationships and communication because of the drive to produce results. Figure 2.1 is a picture of the four cultures with examples.

<p style="text-align: center;">Family Culture</p> <p>Pastor as parent, elder, brother, or sister <i>Examples:</i> Most mainline Protestant churches Smaller community churches</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Icon Culture</p> <p>Pastor as living logo <i>Examples:</i> Media Churches Many megachurches Large mainline Protestant churches</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Archival Culture</p> <p>Pastor as activist curator <i>Examples:</i> Roman Catholic Church Orthodox Church</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Replication Culture</p> <p>Pastor as replicator of ministry <i>Examples:</i> Some megachurches Parachurch organizations</p>

Figure 2.1. Crabtree and Weese’s four church cultures, with examples.

The findings of Crabtree and Weese do not present an exhaustive list of church cultures. Other cultures found in churches can be organized around economic, ethnic or other categories. Crabtree and Weese present a description of how churches evolve and acquire certain characteristics that uniquely shape the culture of the church requiring the leadership to have an understanding in order to lead the church to be missional in nature.

Transforming Church

The key ingredient in determining the effectiveness and healthiness of a church is to see if the church is transforming lives. The missional calling of the church is lived out in churches, communities, and individuals that have been transformed by the gospel. The foundation for transformation is directly related to the development, implementation, and the transforming power of worship, both individually and corporately. The desire for community and the personal need to experience God provides the framework for the importance of missional worship.

Kevin G. Ford developed the Transforming Church Index to help congregations evaluate their churches and determine their missional strengths and weaknesses. He discovered five key indicators that are evaluative of the true mission of the church (10-13).

1. Consumerism/Community. The United States has a consumer culture. The Enlightenment era, leading to the modern way of thinking, planted individualism in the fabric of American culture. The capitalistic economy of the United States feeds the desire to have more and consume more. The church has been impacted by this consumer mentality. The need to have more programs, the best buildings, cutting-edge children's ministry, infomercial sermon presentations, and slick marketing schemes

is a direct result of a consumer-driven culture. The desire to present God's word with excellence is biblical, but many American churches are focused on production rather than community. A missional church is able to move the church from consumerism to a living community.

2. Incongruency/Code. A missional church has a clear sense of purpose, vision, and values. No incongruency exists between what these churches say and what they do. The identity of the church, or code, is clearly established, and the ministries function to support this code rather than having a "canned" approach ministry planning.

3. Autocracy/Shared leadership. American culture defines leadership as the person who has control. Missional churches see the value and productivity of shared leadership. A missional church understands that the leadership is shared so that the mission of the church can be reached.

4. Cloister/Missional. Missional churches determine that they exist for the people who are outside of the organization. Ford says, "We all tend to take a great thing and institutionalize it" (12). Rather than developing a cloister, a missional church views its mission with a wide lens by focusing on those who are not yet a part of the living community.

5. Inertia/Reinvention. Change is a part of the missional church. Rather than working to maintain status quo, missional churches work hard to discover new, more effective ways to reach their goals. Painful sacrifices are required, but missional churches recognize the value of relevancy and creativity in their context.

Church and Culture

The tensions between church and culture have been recognized for many years and continue to be an important topic for the present church.

The Enduring Problem

The tension between the gospel and culture is nothing new. Richard H. Niebuhr calls the tension the “enduring problem” that has existed since the incarnational days of Jesus when he challenged the prevailing culture of the Pharisees and Sadducees and was accused of bringing “peril to Jewish civilization” (1-2). Niebuhr describes five relationships between Christ and the culture.

Christ against culture. The New Testament authors presented with some qualifying remarks the need to embrace a biblical worldview while rejecting the claims of the Bible. This approach is evident from the writings of the New Testament and, later, the more radical writing of Tertullian.

Christ of culture. This approach views portions of the culture as being acceptable or at least as not rejected by the gospel. The tension between Christ and the culture is minimal. The idea of viewing Christ through the culture led to heretical movements such as Gnosticism.

Christ above culture. The majority of Christianity, according to this view, does not lend itself to accommodate the culture or totally reject the culture. Instead, this view implies that the reception of grace perfects the culture. Niebuhr refers to those in this position as the “church of the center” (37). Karl Barth clearly rejected this model. Many believe that he adhered to the “Christ as transformer of culture” model (Palma 6).

Christ and culture in paradox. Niebuhr loosely groups the Apostle Paul and

Martin Luther into the Christ and culture in paradox group. Niebuhr describes a relationship between Christianity and the culture that is in tension. This dualistic motif formulates the need for grace found through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

Christ as transformer of culture. The problem of Christ and culture, according to this approach, is that humanity is redeemed and the culture is transformed. This view is closely related to the dualistic approach, Christ and culture in paradox, yet with differences. Those adhering to this relationship have a more positive and hopeful attitude toward culture (Retnadas 24-25).

Mary Douglas, in a discussion of a theory of institutions, argues that institutions developed from a cultural setting become the source of thought in ethical decisions. She includes in her argument a story of cannibalism in which four trapped men decided to cannibalize a fifth trapped man. The reaction, including the decision of a futuristic supreme court, was influenced by institutional commitments. Institutions cannot think on their own, but they do confer identity to a cultural context (40).

The Bible speaks to this “enduring problem” and offers insight into the role the church should play in its attempt to build a bridge to pre-Christians. The missional nature of the church has been paralyzed by a lack of understanding and acceptance of its mission. The church today seems more willing to fight a culture war than to initiate a conversation with the culture in order to be an influencer. Rather than being the salt that flavors the culture, the church’s refusal to understand and confront the culture has led to a cultural distrust, irrelevance, and even disdain for the missional church. Robert N. Nash, Jr. describes the present situation as the “Sinking Ship” (8). For instance, Nash notices these insights into the cultural transformation in America:

- The PTO president at the elementary school my children attend opened a recent meeting with a devotional from *A Cherokee Feast of Days*, a book about Native American Spirituality.
- The first two Muslim chaplains were recently appointed for ministry to U. S. military personnel.
- The Buddhist Churches of America now include some sixty independent churches and forty branches scattered from California to New York. Their Sunday school department publishes study guides, lessons, and children's books for use in local Buddhist churches.
- A recent commercial on television portrayed a politically correct football locker room in which a line of priests and preachers and monks and baghwans offered a prayer for the team.
- Mainline Protestant churches continue to decline in membership. Young adults are leaving the church in record numbers, convinced of other pathways to a successful and meaningful life than that offered by Christianity.
- People talk today of a post-Christian world in which the church no longer dominates the cultural scene (8). The missional church conflicts with the pluralistic culture that often has a disdain for mainstream Christianity.

Postmodern Culture

The dramatic change in the American culture has led the church to experiment with different ideas. The popularity of seeker services, the introduction and use of technology, renaming the church, and leaders who discard their suits and ties has been a half-hearted, easy fix solutions to a much broader problem. These changes are trendy, but

do very little to engage the postmodern thinker of the twenty-first century. A more serious effort is needed to understand today's culture. While some churches transition and see significant growth, the majority of churches in America are declining, and indications are the problem is much broader than initially thought. The postmodern culture demands that the missional church be courageous, exciting, and spiritual:

The indictment that we must receive is that the Christian faith as we express it is no longer seen as a viable option. Masses gave the church a try and left wanting. We accuse them of not being willing to surrender to God; they accuse us of not knowing him. People are rejecting Christ because of the church! Once we were called Christians by an unbelieving world, and now we call ourselves Christians and the world calls us hypocrites. Is it possible that it wasn't the nation that was becoming dangerously secular but the church? We were neither relevant nor transcendent. We have become, in the worst of ways, religious. We are the founders of the secular nation. (McManus 29)

The temptation to mass reproduce megachurch success has left many churches deemed irrelevant by many in the postmodern culture.

A key to engaging the postmodern society is understanding some basic characteristics used to describe its identity. George Barna points out that the majority of preaching and teaching in today's church is more suited for an older audience (*Second Coming* 58). However, research indicates 60 percent of the adults who hear a sermon on Sunday are under fifty years old, meaning the church is losing its relevance and influence while the present postmodern culture is tuning out (58).

Edgar V. McKnight seeks to define postmodern thinking:

Postmodern is not merely a new movement that has succeeded modernism. A dialectical relationship exists between the modern and postmodern; the postmodern "advance" utilizes the assumptions and strategies of the modern in order to challenge them. (25)

The premodern age was marked by a belief in the supernatural. Creation and existence could be traced to something beyond human senses and understanding, whether the view originated from mythological paganism, classical rationalism, or biblical revelation (29).

The 1700s brought the Enlightenment, and with it dawned the modern age. The increased awareness of science and technology created a skepticism and rejection of traditional authority and eventually a rejection of Christianity. Gene Edward Veith, Jr. concludes that this period was marked by a desire to distance culture from Christianity:

Enlightenment tradition tried to find ways of doing without the supernatural. Christianity was pushed into the background, and put on the defensive. Many churches compromised, reinterpreting the faith according to Enlightenment dogmas. Liberal theology was invented. Nothing was excluded from the sovereignty of the human intellect. (35)

The modern age enveloped such ideologies as materialism, existentialism, and romanticism but was eventually consumed by the postmodern society (35-39).

Charles Jencks says that the postmodern age began at 3:32 p.m. on 15 July 1972 in St. Louis (Veith 35). The Pruitt-Igoe housing development was the epitome of modern architecture. Veith says that the housing development was a “prize-winning exemplar of high technology, modernistic aesthetics, and functional design” (39), yet the housing development was so impersonal, depressing, and crime ridden that no one lived there. For postmodern thinkers, this image describes the world in which they live. In other words, the world has designed a way of life that is impossible to live in (35).

Postmodern thinkers separated themselves from the modern age by reasoning that absolutes and purpose in life do not exist. Furthermore, no value is found in preparing for the future, no omnipotent deity is in control, and success will come without sacrifice or pain (Barna, *Second Coming* 59). This postmodern society creates a substantial challenge

for developing a missional church through biblically relevant worship; however, a postmodern critique of modern worship is helpful in reflection of the mission of the church. The influence of existentialist thought, combined with influences from relativism and pluralism, has created a vacuum of authority in presenting the Bible as truth (Froehlich 263). While the demand of absolute authority led to modernity, postmodernity has helped the present culture recover the idea of relational truth and relational witness. The claim of Jesus as the “way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) is an absolute. He personally and in relationship with followers is the way, the truth, and the life.

One of the marks of postmodern thought is fear. Leonard Sweet says that the result of this fear is a phenomenon called “cocooning” (25). Postmodern thinkers barricade themselves in the only place where they feel safe—their home. More and more, postmodern thinkers are working out of their homes, home schooling their children, doing their shopping at home over the Internet, and sending e-mail messages all over the world. Having a place of security at home in which to cocoon themselves is as valued to postmodern thinkers as going out was to the baby-boomer generation (21).

Another trademark of the postmodern society is the idea that truth is relative. Postmodern thinkers are not looking for the truth as much as they are searching to discover if truth exists (Miller 55). Values and morals are determined by individual thinking, not by societal norms or expectations. The idea of expressing individual ideology, whether the idea is from a conservative evangelical group or a liberal environmental group, as absolute truth is rejected and feared by the emerging postmodern generation. Individualistic truth is accepted and even sought after, but the idea of proselytizing individual beliefs is viewed as being arrogant, narrow-minded, and bigoted.

Expression is a small part of the expectations of a postmodern thinker. Actions are valued more than words, so for a postmodern thinker words mean nothing unless they are verified by action.

This way of determining values pinpoints a major objective of the postmodern society, being personally happy. Individual happiness is in no way dependant on parental, societal, or cultural norms or connected to what makes others happy. It is an individual pursuit, created by each person in the postmodern society (Miller 62).

The postmodern thinker is attracted to spiritual matters. In a survey conducted by Craig Miller, he discovered that 79 percent of postmodern thinkers considered themselves to be believers and 56 percent “affirmed a belief in prayer” (150-51). The obvious difference in the postmodern society is that postmodern thinkers do not conform to an institutional approach to religion but concentrate on their personal spirituality (152). Daniel Benedicts and Craig Miller recognize the value of experiential worship for a postmodern thinker:

In the Post-modern, information age culture of the twenty-first century, people will go to those churches that offer them an experience of God that lifts them beyond their everyday existence. In an “edu-tainment” world, filled with images and sound-bites, everyday experience will be hard to match, except in one way; the live, hands-on experience of worshipping the living God in a community of faith, and being part of a faithful assembly of people who pray, care, and build a relationship with you in the name of Jesus Christ. (5)

A trip to a local bookstore provides valuable insight into postmodern thinking. The religion section is filled with books about angels, mythological religions, and meditation or prayer. The postmodern culture is highly spiritual yet detached from the local church.

The Emerging Church Movement

One church movement in the postmodern age is the emerging church. This movement seeks to reshape the global church in the postmodern culture. Scott McKnight points out five themes that emerge from this movement:

1. The emerging church uses **prophetic** rhetoric to provoke change within the traditional church paradigm.

2. Some in the movement have a **postmodern** view of truth. Most would argue that evangelicals should embrace some of postmodernity, and such thinking is compatible with traditional Christian principles.

3. The emerging movement seeks to form a new **praxis-oriented** ecclesiology by focusing on three areas: worship, orthopraxy (right living), and missional worship.

4. The emerging movement is opposed to a systematic theology or could be described as **post-evangelical**. Instead, the emerging movement believes one should focus on “conversations” about the truth. They reject the idea of “in versus out” mentality of traditional evangelicalism.

5. The emerging movement is increasingly promoting a **political** agenda, although quite different from the previous conservative evangelical emphasis (1-7).

Paul the Apostle says, “Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (Col. 4:5-6). The Apostle Paul tells the church at Colosse to be wise in their dealings with the secular culture. The phrase “make the most of every opportunity” includes a verb that means “to buy out.” The church is instructed to “buy” every opportunity to share their faith (Vaughn 222). The

church must speak directly to the needs and questions of postmodern listeners, and, as Peter O'Brien points out that speaking should not be done in a way that is "dull or insipid" (242).

This generation of people is steeped in barriers of individualism, and to get them out of their "cocoon" the church must be a place where they are heard and their ideas taken seriously. Any hint of insincerity or falsehood in the service and the postmodern listener turns a deaf ear (Miller 168-69). Rick Warren contends, "One of the most important decisions each pastor must make is whether to impress people or influence them. You can impress people from a distance, but you have to get up close to people to love and influence them" (215). Effective worship in the postmodern culture requires a genuineness in what is communicated and how the listeners relate to the speakers and those on stage.

Contextualization

Since the inception of the Church, contextualization has been one of its main challenges. Stephen B. Bevans, a Catholic missiologist points out the needed dialogue among tradition, cultural change, and theology:

Contextualization points to the fact that theology needs to interact and dialogue not only with traditional cultural value, but with social change, new ethnic identities, and the conflicts that are present as the contemporary phenomenon of globalization encounters the various peoples of the world. (27)

While the term "contextualization" dates back only to the 1970s, the issue has been prevalent since the Great Commission (Whiteman 2). Contextualization focuses on the challenge of relating the biblical text and application to multiple and differing cultures, as well as to successive generations in those cultures.

Darrell Whiteman contends that three functions of contextualization exist. First, contextualization attempts “to communicate the gospel in word and deed and to establish the church in ways that make sense to people with their local cultural context” (2). He argues that a person’s culture and context influences their biblical view in a manner that could cause the person to assume their view is the gospel. Contextualization recognizes that the local context must be understood so that the gospel can be presented in a manner that “penetrates their worldview” (2).

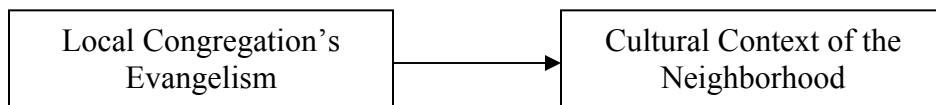
Second, contextualization offends, but for the right reasons. Often, Christianity is presented in a way that offends a person’s culture or context and is deemed as an alien or foreign religion. A poorly contextualized message creates tension and anger toward the presenter and creates a false representation of Jesus Christ and the gospel. Instead, when the gospel offends for the right reasons, it brings to light human sinfulness and the need for God’s forgiveness. Hunter parallels Whiteman’s understanding of this function of contextualization:

When a church employs the language, music, style, architecture, art forms, and other forms of the target population’s culture, Christianity then has a fair chance to become contagious within their ranks. But when the church’s communication forms are alien to the host population, they may never perceive that Christianity’s God is for people like them. (*Radical Outreach* 76)

Frances S. Adeney concurs by pointing out that when the gospel is not contextualized, it is looked upon as being a foreign religion, but it also seen as being foreign to life in society and, therefore, understood to be irrelevant (33). Whiteman credits the success of the Wesleyan revivals in part to their ability to contextualize the gospel and offend for the right reasons (3-4).

Third, contextualization functions to develop expressions of the gospel that will be understood “in ways the universal church has neither experienced nor understood before, thus expanding our understanding of the kingdom of God” (Whiteman 4). The Holy Spirit creates a common bond that supersedes possible divisions based on race, class, gender, or social status.

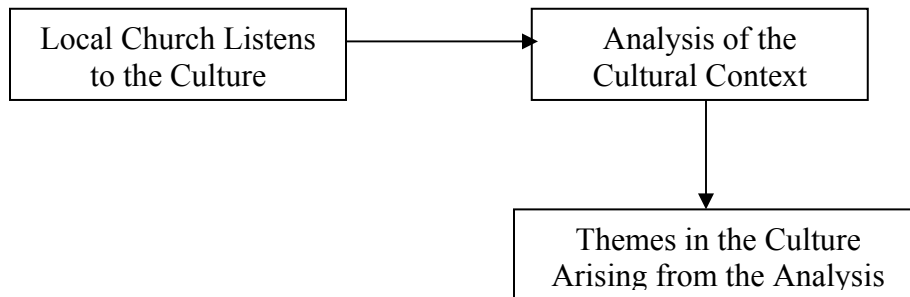
The dean of a Catholic seminary, Robert J. Schreiter, recognizes that importance of contextualization. Particularly in North American cities, he points out the uniqueness and the intermixing of cultural traditions. He contends that the gospel must be directed to a specific place and context, seeking to differentiate between each of the cultural components. Figure 2.2 illustrates what Schreiter believes is the most common way that present congregations do evangelism. The model begins by focusing on the church’s evangelism model.



Source: Roxburgh 70; Schreiter.

Figure 2.2. Schreiter’s common outreach model.

Figure 2.3 demonstrates a contextualized approach whereby the church accepts its own identity, but it also listens to the context or culture.



Source: Roxburgh 71; Schreiter.

Figure 2.3. Schreiter's steps toward evangelism.

Roxburgh contends that this model allows the church to be able to speak to the needs and questions of the culture. He says, "This stops the church from proposing answers to questions that may not be primary, or even present. It guards us from imposing our assumptions on the context before the context has been heard" (71). Schreiter's contextualization strategy does not diminish the identity of the local congregation. Instead, it is a strategy that recognizes the congregational identity but not at the expense of listening to the culture in which it is located.

The biblical account provides a glimpse into the seriousness in which Jesus Christ put into practice contextualization. Jesus preached the same message, but he packaged the message in a manner that hearers could understand based on their cultural and personal backgrounds. Sherwood Lingenfelter details the transition that missionaries have made

since the renewed missionary effort following World War II. The shift was from producing “colonial” churches to producing “indigenous” churches (14-17).

The need for contextualization has become a major theme for modern missionaries and anthropologists:

The idea of contextualization is to frame the gospel message in language and communication forms appropriate and meaningful to the local culture, and to focus the message upon crucial issues in the lives of the people. The contextualized indigenous church is built upon culturally appropriate methods of evangelism; the process of discipling draws upon methods of instruction that are familiar and part of local traditions of learning. The structural and political aspects of leadership are adapted from patterns inherent in national cultures rather than imported from denominational organizations in the home countries of missionaries. (Lingenfelter 15)

The desire to communicate the gospel effectively to diverse cultures has created some approaches that deform the biblical text. The allegorical method, which focuses on symbolic meanings and strays from the historical meaning of the biblical text, and the praxis method, which forms the framework for liberation theology, seems to give preeminence to the culture rather than the biblical teaching and theology (Corley, Lemke, and Lovejoy 294-96).

Bevans considers six models of contextualizing theological teaching but contends that these six are not exhaustive and other approaches could be valid.

In the translation model the message of Christianity is “supra-cultural.” The culture is reduced in significance and the message content is pure and unchanging. The primary concern is the preservation of Christian identity (Bergman 87-88; Bevans 37-54).

The anthropological model places human experience and the preservation of

cultural identity by a person in the Christian faith as the preeminent concern. Human experience is the criteria to determine the genuineness of contextual expression (Bergman 89; Bevans, 54-69)

The praxis model “focuses on the identity of Christians within a context particularly as that context is understood in terms of social change” (Bevans 70). This model is closely identified with liberation theology. A change of praxis, or the method of thinking, is the sought-after goal focusing especially on the liberation of suppressed groups (Bergman 91; Bevans 70-87).

The word *synthetic*, as it is used by Bevans, does not mean “artificial.” Instead, this model seeks to correlate the insights of the past three models and find a synthesis of thought while preserving the gospel message and the context of its presentation. Bevans argues that the translation model is aligned with the gospel while the anthropological and praxis models are aligned with the culture. The synthetic model falls in the middle with four reciprocal actions among the models:

- Gospel/tradition,
- other modes of thinking,
- culture, and
- social change.

The weakness in this model is the ambiguity created by the plurality of thinking found in a postmodern context (Bergman 91-93; Bevans 88-102).

Bevans uses the word *transcendental* to reference Immanuel Kant, the pioneer of the transcendental method:

A fundamental presupposition of the transcendental model is that one begins to theologize contextually not by focusing on the essence of the

gospel message or the content of tradition as such, nor even by trying to thematize, or analyze a particular context or expressions of language in that context. Rather, the starting point is transcendental, concerned with one's own religious experience and one's own experience of oneself. (104)

Something precedes the knowledge of humankind, and once a people recognize this idea they can experience what is within them. Reality does not exist independently of humanity. Instead, reality is in the interior world of the person. The model includes four characteristics:

- The focus is on the subject producing theology.
- The concentration is on an authentic, subjective experience.
- Theology happens only for a person who converts because revelation

occurs in the subjective experience of a human being.

- The model presupposes the existence of universal reason (Bergman 94-95; Bevans 104-07).

The countercultural model recognizes the value of context including experience and culture, but this model says one should always look at the context with suspicion. The gospel, to be genuine in the context, must "purify" the context (Bevans 117). The goal of this model is to confront and engage the culture with the proclamation of the gospel (137).

The account of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, found in the Gospel of John, points to Jesus' willingness to adapt the presentation of the gospel to the needs and background of the hearer. The city of Samaria was populated by individuals of mixed races and of mixed religions. The inhabitants claimed to keep the law of Moses but were hated by the people of Judea. Jesus proclaims that he "has to pass

through Samaria” on his trip from Judea to Galilee although he was not taking the normal route of the Jews of the day. The mission was important enough to cross into a maligned culture. Jesus puts into practice contextualization in several ways. First, his willingness to travel to Samaria and associate with Samaritans was a shift away from his own culture. The Samaritan woman was surprised that Jesus actually spoke to her. The Samaritan woman responded to Jesus by saying, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (John 4:9). The woman understood the cultural idea that a Jew would become ceremonially unclean if she used a drinking cup handled by a Samaritan. Second, his willingness to speak with a woman, especially a woman of the poor reputation as the unnamed Samaritan woman, is surprising but rewarding. Both the Samaritan and Jewish cultures would look at the conversation with the woman with disdain. Hunter recognizes the awkwardness of the encounter: A Jew engaged in a social conversation with a Samaritan was discouraged in Jewish customs. A man and a woman who did not already know each other engaging in social conversation was discouraged in both Jewish and Samaritan customs (*Radical Outreach* 184). The cultural taboos confronted by Jesus at the well were a clear picture of contextualization and would be much maligned by the diverse cultures represented in the account.

Jesus had supernatural insight into the woman’s background, but it did not prevent him from approaching her at the well. The unnamed Samaritan woman had five previous husbands and was living with a man. The culture dictated at the time of the meeting that if a man refused to marry a woman he was living with the woman was then relegated to the bottom of the societal ladder. G. Campbell Morgan points out that Jesus recognized the spiritual thirst the woman had in her soul:

At this point we look at her again, a woman with a background of religion which had long been ignored, with a life in which the fires of passion has burnt themselves out, leaving nothing but ashes, and she herself a water-carrier, a mere slave. He knew, however much she might hide it, that in her life was a thirst that never had been quenched, and to that He made His appeal. (76)

The spiritual thirst the woman was encountering could only be satisfied through the person of Jesus.

Finally, Jesus speaks directly to a topic the woman could understand—water and a well. The woman, despite her character flaws, obviously had a religious background. For centuries the Samaritans had looked at Gerizim as their place of worship. They claimed a relationship with Jacob because Jacob gave this land to Joseph (Morgan 74). The Samaritan woman said to Jesus, “Are you greater than our Father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?” (John 4:12). The Samaritan woman claimed a religious background, yet obviously her religious background did not influence her in the present. She acquired some religious jargon of the Abrahamic faith, but it did not carry over to her personal moral decisions. Jesus’ intentions were not hampered by the religious differences of their past:

Now perhaps the most amazing thing of all in the Lord’s method is revealed. He consented to discuss the question she raised, and in doing so dismissed both Jerusalem and Gerizim as necessary centers of worship. He declared to her that worship consisted in the approach of the soul to God directly and immediately, providing it came in spirit and truth. He thus showed that worship is not a mental matter finally, but a spiritual; but that the condition must be that of ceasing to attempt to hide anything, the very thing, by the way, she was doing at the time. (77)

Jesus was willing to communicate the gospel in a contextual manner to the woman at the well. The message of Jesus was powerful and unwavering from the kingdom message.

Kraft labels this approach as dynamic-equivalence transculturation. As God's ambassadors Christians are called to package the message of Christ into a dynamic-equivalent message. According to Kraft, the dynamic equivalent approach is drawn from three analogies from the New Testament writings. The New Testament compares those who are sharing the incarnational message of Christ as ambassadors, heralds, and witnesses (2 Cor. 5:20; 1 Tim. 2:7; Luke 24:48; Kraft 276-77). Kraft says, "Thus we stand accredited by God as his official representatives to the world from the 'kingdom of God.' And in this we stand 'in the shoes' of the Son of God himself" (277). Kraft recognizes that the Church in the postmodern age must be dynamically equivalent to the New Testament Church.

Kraft's linguistic theory, known as the dynamic equivalent translation and originated by Eugene Nida and Kenneth Pike, is based on several important insights that he suggests allows a person to understand the scriptural analogies:

1. We are to be ambassadors, heralds, and witnesses for Christ, not for ourselves.
2. Our witness is to be to our experience with God.
3. We are not only witnesses for God in terms of our individual perceptions of our interactions with him, we also are to witness for the sake of others.
4. We are to witness persuasively (277-78).

The church is a group of ambassadors who witness to experiences with Jesus Christ. The witness is not for personal gain, but for the benefit of others.

Louis J. Luzbetak points out three forms of contextualization: a translational type, a dialectal type, and a liberational type (79). These three forms "seek to integrate the

Gospel message with the local culture in such a way that the message becomes a part of the cultural system itself” (79).

The translational approach, according to Luzbetak, is related to Kraft’s dynamic equivalence approach. This approach seeks to translate Christ to a culture through a “single, attitudinal, and motivational symbolic system” (79). This approach seeks to translate the gospel message using the local language and symbols of the listening culture. The dialectal approach recognizes the tension between the message and the culture. Luzbetak focuses on “three poles” involved in contextualization, and constant tension exists among the three (81). The three poles are the gospel, the universal tradition of the Church, and the local culture. Luzbetak points out that the local community plays the key role in contextualization:

The triple dialectic must at all times be an honest, collaborative effort on the part of all concerned to solve a common problem, the problem of how best to incarnate Christ in the given time and place for the good of the local community and the whole Body of Christ without compromising a “jot and tittle” or a “single stroke of a letter” of the essentials of the Gospel. Important indeed is respectful listening on the part of all concerned—on the part of the local church and the universal Church, on the part of the receiving church and the sending church, on the part of the local community and the theologians, social scientists, and other experts whom the local community should by no means ignore. We cannot emphasize strongly enough, however, that the most important key to contextualization will always be the soul of the local community—the local ways, values, needs and traditions. As already emphasized, the best evangelizers are not the best preachers but the best listeners. (81)

The need to contextualize the gospel message has become more significant in the last half of the twentieth century. Third world church leaders recognized that many of the sociocultural contexts where the gospel was being proclaimed were being neglected. The approaches to contextualization might vary, but the foundation must be that the preeminence of the message is maintained.

The Incarnation

The early New Testament Church was composed of individuals with Jewish backgrounds. The initial thought was that persons with the intention of coming to Jesus would naturally find their way through Jewish customs and context. Paul, himself being educated on this matter, understood that following Christ involved much more than cultural change. In fact, Paul preached the gospel to the Jews using their own feasts and traditions and following their customs. At the same time, he quoted Gentile literature when preaching to Gentiles. Paul is not advocating that all actions and behavior are considered biblically neutral if they are done for the cause of the gospel. Instead, Paul is saying just the opposite. Many actions are morally neutral, but as ministers of the gospel one's personal taste should be set aside and restraint is necessary in order that they might better identify with the culture and win the unsaved to Christ (Briggs, Driver, and Plummer 192-93; Eerdman 85-86). Kraft recognizes the importance of this approach to ministering the gospel:

If we are able to take a scriptural approach, we are to adapt ourselves and our presentation of God's message to the culture of the receiving people. If we demand that they become like us in order to be acceptable to God, we, like most of the early Jewish Christians have misrepresented God. We, the witnesses, are to make the cultural adjustments, not they, the potential respondents. (2)

Cultural change is not a prerequisite for any individual becoming a Christian.

Paul's powerful encounter with the Son of God on the Damascus Road laid the foundation for his ministry of the redemptive power of Christ (1 Cor. 15:8; Gal. 1:11-17). During his ministry, he spoke of the preexistence and post-existence of Christ. He portrayed the human dimension of Christ and its limitations by describing him as

“becoming poor” for people’s sake (2 Cor. 8:9), “emptying himself” and taking the form of a “slave” (Phil. 2:7; O’Collins 22).

The *shema*, found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, presents the Jewish faith in one God. Paul takes this foundational Jewish prayer and inserts the incarnated Christ and develops the understanding of one God as including Jesus Christ: “[Y]et for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live” (1 Cor. 8:6). Paul’s proclamation points to the preexistence of Christ and identifies him as the “Creator” (O’Collins 23).

The culturally relevant gospel that Paul preached brought disagreement with the church hierarchy. Paul and Barnabas’ success on their mission endeavors to the Gentile world had initiated a movement of God among the Gentile people. A problem arose among some of the leaders in the Jerusalem church that insisted a person is saved by faith and, if they keep the law of Moses, which is a cultural requirement. The biblical account in Acts 15 presents Peter, Paul, and James addressing the problem. Peter reminds the audience of the burden of attempting to keep the law:

Now, then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are. (Acts 15:10-11)

Paul and Barnabas testified of “miraculous signs and wonders of God” that they had witnessed and heard about in their missionary journeys (Acts 15:12). James pointed out that the Scripture itself is a testimony of the fact that Gentiles would come to Christ through grace and free from the ceremonial laws (Acts 15:21-31). Paul and the others were not demanding that the Jewish Christians disavow their ancestral religions. Instead,

he and the others made the argument that observing the law and ancestral religious practices has nothing to do with salvation (Eerdman; Briggs, Driver, and Plummer; McKenzie; Fee). John McRay contends that one must make the careful distinction between “doing the Law” and “fulfilling the law” (364). Stephen Westerholm recognizes the need to differentiate between the two:

Thus statements of the law’s “fulfillment” should not be seen as compromising Paul’s claim that the law does not bind believers. Christians serve God, Paul maintains, not in the old way where conduct is prescribed by the law’s “letter,” but in the new way of the Spirit. (205)

The requirement from the early Church to require the Gentiles to be circumcised and obey the Sabbath laws to become a Christian was a stressful moment for the young Christian Church. James, Paul, and Simon Peter deliberated over the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 (Hunter, *Church for the Unchurched* 60). Charles Eerdman points out that the Jerusalem council came to a three-point conclusion concerning the disagreement:

1. Liberty—The Law of Moses is not required for salvation;
2. Purity—Liberty is not a license but a call to a life of holiness; and,
3. Charity—In biblically neutral settings, leaders should not offend those who desire to participate in certain rituals and ceremonies (112).

This momentous decision by the Jerusalem council allowed the Christian movement to spread around the world and not simply remain a Jewish sect. Hunter says that this decision was a picture of the Incarnation: “The decision extended the principle of Incarnation; as Jesus had adapted to Galilean Aramaic-speaking peasant culture, so the Church, his Body, could now become “indigenous” to all the cultures of the earth” (*Church for the Unchurched* 60). The decision to accept Gentiles as followers of Christ

even though cultural requirements had not been met, allowed for the gospel to spread around the world so that all of humanity could have communion with God.

The *incarnatio*, the Son of God being made flesh, presents to humanity the radical desire of God to connect with his creation. Emmanuel, “God with us,” represents a turning point in history. God dwelt in the flesh among his creation for the purpose of redemption. The Scripture points to the cultural significance of the Incarnation and its impact on human history (Heb. 1:1-3; Phil. 2:6-7; John 1:14; 1 John 4:1-3).

The Incarnation has been a theological model for evangelical Christians. Not only has it been recognized as an essential belief, but it has also been a powerful picture of the need to package the gospel in a culturally relevant manner. The Gospel of John presents the *Logos* as being coexistent with God (John 1:1). Later, John pronounces that the *Logos* became *sarx* (John 1:14) or the *Logos* became human. The Scripture is clear that this spoken manifestation, Jesus the *Logos*, was fully divine. Paul declares in Colossians 2:9, “For in him and him alone is permanently at home every single part of the very essence of deity, the state of being God in bodily form.” Jesus, in an encounter with Phillip in the New Testament, also makes a divine claim.

Phillip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”
Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Phillip, even after I have been
among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the
Father.” (John 14:8-9)

The ultimate revelation of God is found in the Incarnation (Hobbs 40; Borchert 117-19).]

God’s physical entrance into the story of humankind allows humanity to see the nature of God. Jesus’ Incarnation allowed him to connect physically with the human condition and thus allowed a deep, cultural connection. Athanasius recognized the connection between God’s love of humanity and his incarnation:

The Savior of us all, the Word of God, in His great love took to Himself a body and moved as Man among men, meeting their senses, so to speak, half way. He became Himself an object for the senses, so that those who were seeking God in sensible things might apprehend the Father through the works which He, the Word of God, did in the body. (43)

The principle of the Incarnation, Jesus adapting to the Galilean culture, firmly establishes the need for the church to be culturally aware and adaptable.

Holism

Insights into human nature provide a context in which the truth of the gospel can be appreciated and accepted. The approach that is taken to understand culture is an integral ingredient for a helpful evaluation. Kathryn Tanner identifies some necessary procedures of analysis. One of those approaches is the idea of “holism.”

Tanner recognizes that within every culture many complex parts constitute the whole. She argues that anthropological study begins first by indentifying the culture as a “single, complex unit” (29):

The distinctiveness of a culture—what makes it different from another and therefore definable as one culture among others—cannot be captured by considering its discrete elements or any enumerative set of these. It can be captured only by getting a sense for what sets apart this group of behaviors and artifacts as a whole, a sense for the distinctive manner or way of living that runs through all its isolatable parts. (29)

A particular culture can be compared the many different sizes, shapes, and pieces of a puzzle, but they all fit together to form a whole. Benedicts and Miller refer to behavior as a “consistent pattern of thought or action” (46). Each culture develops a pattern of behavior, and Benedicts and Miller even go so far as to say that the people become “obedient” to this pattern of expected behavior (46).

Hiebert relates to this distinctive cultural element by referring to this grouping as “societies”:

Order in human relations is created by each community for itself. It is the result of human interactions that, over time, lead to socially acceptable ways of doing things. Patterns emerge as people relate, imitate one another, learn from their parents, or are forced to behave in certain ways by those with power over them. Patterns help people to understand what is going on and how to behave in different situations. Social order makes community life possible and meaningful. (22)

Hiebert understands culture to consist of three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and evaluative. The cognitive dimension focuses on knowledge, logic, and wisdom. Shared knowledge is communicated in each culture and, many times, used as a means of explanation for cultural events. The affective dimension focuses on feelings and aesthetics. The communication of love, feelings, and attitudes forms an identity in the culture that defines its uniqueness. The evaluative dimension involves values and allegiances. Every culture must determine its values, or what is acceptable behavior, in order for that standard to be maintained (38-41).

Each cultural dimension forms the overall worldview of the particular culture:

Worldviews serve several important functions. On the cognitive level our worldview gives us a rational justification for our beliefs and integrates them into a more or less unified view of reality. On the level of feelings, it provides us with emotional security. On the level of values, it validates our deepest cultural norms. In short, our worldview is our basic map of reality, and the map we use for living our lives. (Hiebert 42)

Kraft refers to the idea of holism in a culture as “world-view,” with many subcultures or “subsocieties” developed around this central foundation (30-50). This dynamic of human organization provides a beginning framework for understanding the culture. Kraft developed a model that depicts the internal organization of culture and a subsystem that consists of at least three components: assumptions, habitual (ritual) behavior, and creative

behavior (122-26). Kraft's idea is that a culture's worldview is formed by the following subsystems:

- Social subsystem: family, education, kinship, social control;
- Communicational subsystem: language, arts;
- Religion subsystem;
- Economic subsystem;
- Technology subsystem; and,
- Other.

The "other" subsystem is included because categories could be added for the uniqueness of any particular culture (122-23). Kraft indicates that each of these subsystems includes three assumptions: creative behavior, habitual behavior, and subsystem-specific assumptions (122-23).

In Vansant, Virginia, the worldview seems to be handed down from many generations. The puzzle pieces fit together to form a culture that is marked by some dominant features.

Social Subsystem

The people of Vansant, Virginia, have structured their lives around a certain group of people and look at any person outside the group as an intruder. For example, Jim and Stacy¹ moved into the area nearly four years ago. He has a prominent job in the community as a law professor at a local law school. Recently Tracie explained that they "have never been accepted into the community because they are outsiders." The local

¹ All names have been changed in this document for privacy.

newspaper has articles written by long time residents of certain neighborhoods in the county.

The educational system in Vansant, Virginia, seems to be an anomaly compared to the other systems in the Appalachian area. From 1970 to 1990 the number of high school and college graduates grew at a higher pace than the national figures (Couto 177). Nevertheless, the Appalachian area still lagged far behind the national average for high school and college graduates. Buchanan County, Virginia (Vansant), lags behind most of the Appalachian area. According to the report on economic trends, in 1990 less than 50 percent of the people in Buchanan County had a high school diploma.

The education levels for this Appalachian area continue to struggle. According to the 2000 census, 18,851 people over the age of twenty-five lived in Buchanan County, Virginia. Table 2.1 give the educational levels for this area.

Table 2.1. Education Levels in Buchanan County, Virginia

Education Levels	Total	%
No schooling completed	507	2.7
Nursery to 4 th grade	834	4.4
5 th and 6 th grade	1,155	6.1
7 th and 8 th grade	2,905	15.4
9 th grade	1,000	5.3
10 th grade	1,187	6.3
11 th grade	739	3.9
12 th grade, no diploma	560	3.0
High school graduate	5,188	27.5
Less than 1 year of college	1,109	5.9
1 or more years of college	1,221	6.5
Associate degree	946	5.0
Bachelor's degree	918	4.9
Master's degree	399	2.1
Professional degree	161	0.9
Doctorate degree	22	0.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The statistical data indicates that 52.9 percent of the people in Buchanan County over the age of twenty-five have obtained a high school diploma. This figure is dramatically lower than the average for the state of Virginia. In the state of the Virginia the population of individuals over twenty-five is 4,666, 574. Of this number, 81.5 percent have obtained a high school diploma. The percentage of people in Virginia over twenty-five who have earned a bachelor's degree is 29.5 percent. The number for Buchanan County is only 8.0 percent. The data indicates that the educational level differs between male and female, but only slightly. The percentage of females in Virginia over twenty-

five years old who have obtained a high school diploma is 82.1 percent. In Buchanan County this number falls to 56.9 percent, higher than the male percentage of 48.8 percent. The percentage of females in Virginia who have earned a bachelor's degree over the age of twenty-five is 27.6 percent. This number falls to 10.0 percent in Buchanan County, Virginia, nearly double the 5.9 percent of males.

The statistics point out a cultural dilemma for Vansant Baptist Church. The majority of attenders of Vansant are high school graduates and many are college graduates. For instance, when the leadership of Vansant Baptist is studied, differences are evident in comparison to the culture in general. While one would expect leaders to be more educated and somewhat successful in their secular fields, these differences would create some barriers while attempting to reach the community with a message about Jesus Christ. Vansant Baptist Church has eight active deacons elected by a congregational vote to serve four-year terms. The breakdown of the educational levels are as follows:

- All eight have high school diplomas.
- Three have bachelor's degrees.
- One has a master's degree.

Vansant Baptist Church has eleven Sunday school classes as part of the Sunday Bible study time at 10:00 a.m. The educational levels of the Sunday school teachers are as follows:

- All eleven are high school graduates.
- Seven out of the eleven have a bachelor's degree.
- One has an associate's degree.
- Five out of the eleven have a master's degree.

- One has a professional degree.

This disparity in educational levels and social structure creates a unique culture within the church that varies from the worldview of the other constituents in the community. The categorization of churches by the community as being for only a “certain type of person” poses a challenge for the leadership of Vansant Baptist Church. Patty Lane addresses the influence that authority has in a culture. The perception of authority and the role these authoritarian people play have a direct influence on what their own perceived roles in the culture will be. Lane points out two lenses to look through when dealing with the role of authority. The formal/hierarchical lens treats people differently, depending on their position in the culture:

Cultures with a high degree of hierarchy have rules for much of life and feel no cognitive dissonance with valuing persons differently according to gender, race, caste, and so on. While every culture has its own protocol for certain occasions, hierarchical cultures rigidly adhere to their complex societal structure. For the individual member of a hierarchical society, failure to follow these cultural rules can bring severe consequences. These cultures tend to be high context cultures. (73)

Another lens described by Lane is the egalitarian culture. In an egalitarian culture, each individual person is viewed as having equal value and rights. While some cultures in the world have an egalitarian structure, few if any treat every person equally. The struggle for Vansant Baptist Church is that because of the disparity in cultural norms in areas such as education and economic levels, the church could have the perception that it has a hierarchical structure where only a few have a voice. A perception of limited influence would be very detrimental to the mission and vision of the church.

Economic Subsystem

The predominant industry in Vansant, Virginia, is structured around the coal industry. The younger generation is moving away from the coal industry, but the older generation takes great pride in describing the hardships they endured mining coal. For many, mining coal has been passed down through many generations with families suffering injuries, financial gains and loss, and death due to coal-related accidents.

Stephen, now about 60 years old, began working in the mines when he was a teenager. Proving that he was suited for the job, he was able to open his own coal mine, which was much more lucrative. A rock fell from the roof of the mine and broke Stephen's back, paralyzing him from the shoulders down. After his recovery, Stephen returned to the coal mines to work, pulling himself with his arms on his stomach in the coal mine.

Coal mining is a way of life in Vansant, Virginia. Because of the high amount of coal imported into the United States and the difficulty mining the coal in Southwest Virginia, the coal mining industry is fading away. According to the Report on Economic Trends and Social Issues in Appalachia, Central Appalachia, (in which Vansant is located) has been significantly hurt by the national economic situation. The report says, "Central Appalachia, the core of all definitions based on geography and economic need, had severe decline in its coal industry. This meant a decade of outmigration and increased poverty in the 1980's that was reminiscent of the 1950's" (Couto 7). The report indicated that between 20 and 30 percent of the population of Buchanan County, Virginia, lived below the poverty line (1990), with the average in the United States being 13.1 percent for the same time period (147).

According to the 2000 census, the population of Buchanan County, Virginia, is 26,978. The census found that 7,111 people are employed in Buchanan County. The unemployment rate for Buchanan County in 2003 was 8.0 percent compared to 14.9 percent in 1993. According to the Virginia Employment Commission, in 2003, 1,730 people were employed in the coal-mining industry. The coal industry lost 52 percent of its jobs from 1993 to 2003. The significance of this job loss is seen in the average weekly income of the employed workers in Buchanan County. The average weekly wage for a person employed in the coal industry is \$958. The average weekly wage of a person employed in the manufacturing industry in Buchanan County is \$648. These statistics are even more demonstrative when consideration is given to the fact that the number of people employed in the food service industry increased from 1993 to 2003 by 76.7 percent. The weekly wage earned for these types of jobs, many in the fast food industry, is considerably lower than the weekly wage earned in the mining industry.

One of the cultural characteristics that the transitioning economy produced was a decrease in the middle class and an increase in the gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots.” The coal boom of the 1970s resulted in an economic boom for some. In fact, the United States was the leading coal producer in the world during this boom (Couto 11). Once this economic surge ended, many found themselves in financial need. Richard A. Couto found chronic poverty in Appalachia:

There is not one poverty in Appalachia, there are several. In Central Appalachia, there is chronic poverty greatly reduced in the 1970's, primarily by a boom in coal, and greatly increased in the 1980s by a simultaneous decline in the economy and in public programs. (166)

The decreasing middle class in Central Appalachia creates a strain in relations between the two growing groups, the lower and upper class. One area this strain influences is the

church. Many churches are identified with a certain class of people, and their reputation is known in the community as either being a “rich” or “poor” church. These reputations cross denominational lines and seem to evolve based on the characteristics of individual churches rather than a certain denomination or affiliation.

Religion Subsystem

The mountains area of southwest Virginia is part of what many call the “Bible Belt.” As stated earlier, only one out of four people attend church on any given Sunday. The striking feature about this statistic is just about everyone in the town claims a religious affiliation and most claim a church as their home. Ted, in his 60s, has lived in Vansant his entire life. He occasionally attends Vansant Baptist Church, but he considers himself a Southern Baptist and a part of the church. He often refers to me as his “pastor” when introducing me to someone else. He has never made a public profession of faith or been baptized in any church.

The predominant denomination in Vansant is the Church of Christ. This group, who does not claim to be a denomination, refuses to cooperate with any other church. Instead, they insist that they are the only true church. The second largest denomination in Vansant is Pentecostal-Holiness. This group of people prefers worship that is charismatic in style and prefers to maintain traditions of the past. This group believes that a woman should maintain long hair, and abstain from wearing jewelry or makeup, and they believe that the King James Version of the Bible is the only version allowed. The third most prominent denomination is Southern Baptist, followed by a combination of Old Regular and Primitive Baptists.

A shared characteristic for many people in Vansant from all of these denominations is their heritage from the Old Regular or Primitive Baptist Church. Many can trace their religious heritage to one of these two denominations. This heritage has a prominent impact on the churches today. For many, they were exposed to teachings in their childhood from the Old Regular or Primitive Baptists that still impact their beliefs today:

- Children cannot be converted until they are adults;
- Children should not be taught about the Bible for fear of intervening

in God's will;

- Education for the pastor (preacher) is not biblical;
- Preparation for a sermon is not biblical;
- A pastor accepting a salary is not biblical; and,
- The use of instruments in worship is prohibited.

Many of these churches “line” their music. Lining involves the pastor singing the first phrase of the verse followed by the congregation singing the phrase after the lining.

The beginning of the Primitive Baptists can be traced back to the early 1800s. The Calvinistic beliefs of the group caused them to staunchly oppose missions, Sunday school, and seminary training. Leon McBeth gives a description of the Calvinist views of these groups:

The Primitive churches embrace a strict Calvinism, believing that the elect will inevitably be drawn to salvation, while the nonelect will be left to perish in their sins. Most of the churches are small and generations ago had preaching only once a month. Most of them practice closed communion, and a few practice foot washing. (717)

The theological beliefs of Primitive churches have affected the view of some in Vansant

Baptist Church due to family pressure and influences from childhood.

The role of women in these churches also impacts the views of members in other denominations. The women in Old Regular Baptist, Primitive Baptist, and the predominant group, the Church of Christ, are not allowed to teach, preach, or even stand in the pulpit of the church. In fact, Old Regular Baptists and Primitive Baptists require that women who are on stage to help in the congregational singing sit with their backs to the congregation. The women are required to face the back wall of the church while they are on the stage. One group, Pentecostal-Holiness, has broken many of the past traditions concerning women and allows women to preach, pastor, and be leaders in the church.

Funerals reveal the religious tradition in Vansant. In fact, funerals are one of the most encompassing events in the town. They are based on religious ideas, but for many they are just as important as social functions. Wake services are very prominent in the town. The typical arrangements for a funeral in Vansant are at least one evening service, sometimes two evening services, followed by a funeral service during the day. Each service, regardless of the number of services, contains singing and preaching. Three separate services are not uncommon for the same person, followed by a service at the graveside. Veterans receive a lengthy graveside service provided by the local American Legion. The military service includes a devotional message by the military chaplain, prayer, twenty-one gun salute, presentation of the flag, and taps.

Many of the traditions of funerals have been drawn from the Old Regular and Primitive Baptist backgrounds. These groups believe and teach that the more “saintly” the person has lived the longer their funeral time should span. The most “saintly” members of their churches have two evening services followed by a funeral service that

could last up to three hours, ending with a service at the cemetery. These services usually include singing, extended praying, and using five or six preachers.

The influence of these traditions still impacts many who are part of different denominations. They expect a lengthy funeral service for their family members to present the message to the community that they were “saintly” in their behavior. One of the first funerals that I was asked to conduct after moving to Vansant lasted around forty-five minutes. Afterward, I was approached by a family member inquiring about the funeral asking why the service was so short. The implication was that I must have thought the person was not worthy of a long funeral service.

Communication Subsystem

Cultural understanding is derived from observing communication and language forms. Symbols, art, and language all play a role in defining the communication subsystem. Kraft formulates a definition of language around the idea of societal membership:

[Language is] a system of arbitrary vocal symbols employed by the members of a society of a variety of inter- and intrapersonal purposes such as: formulating and communicating ideas, inducing others to action, attracting pity, instilling fear, and expressing oneself, as in letting off steam, showing off and the like. (238)

Communication symbols are different from culture to culture. Geert Hofstede expresses four dimensions of cultural communication.

The first is the individualism-collectivism dimension. This dimension focuses on the “the integration of individuals into primary groups” (Hofstede 29). Tension exists in the cultural setting between individual freedom and the welfare of the whole group. The distribution of wealth and power in every culture is unequal and mostly unfair. Cynthia

Gallois and Victor J. Callan argue that for most cultures individualism-collectivism is the most important communication dimension:

From many trainers in cross-cultural and intercultural communication, individualism-collectivism is the most important value dimension on which cultures can be compared. Certainly, the role of the individual versus the group cause disagreements between members of different cultures at every level from the large-scale political—consider the debates between countries about the importance of political freedom, for example—to the small-scale individual. Remember, though, that even the most extreme cultures on this dimension recognize the importance of both the individual and the group. (24)

Presently, the tension among members of different political and social groups is evident across many cultures in the world.

The second dimension is power distance. This dimension is “related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality” (Hofstede 29). The relational values that exist in a culture between the powerful and powerless impact the communication symbols and language. The cultural understanding of power distance determines the relationship language between parents and children, employees and employers, and the young and elderly. Gallois and Callan explain the negative aspect of this dimension:

People in cultures with a high power distance believe that more powerful people must be deferred to and not argued with, especially in public. Their status gives them the right to tell others what to do; indeed, in work contexts, their subordinates assume that they will be told what to do by these people. For members of cultures with low power distance, on the other hand, ideas are assumed to be equal, and people are expected to defend their ideas even against less powerful people. This leads to more deference being given to power based on knowledge and expertise, rather than status or position alone.” (28)

The power distance dimension determines the relationship focus of the powerful and the powerless.

The third dimension is the uncertainty avoidance. This dimension concentrates on the amount of ambiguity that is tolerated in that particular culture:

We all have a limit of uncertainty beyond which we feel uncomfortable; in fact, strangers in conversation use a number of strategies, including asking questions, disclosing information about the self, and trying to find common knowledge and experiences with the other person, that help to reduce uncertainty. Nevertheless, some cultures tolerate very little ambiguity and uncertainty in interactions, relative to others (Gallois and Callan 30).

The uncertainty avoidance dimension is very high in Vansant, Virginia. At first, a certain fascination with an “outsider” exists, while at the same time avoidance of letting the new person “get too close.”

The fourth dimension is masculinity-femininity. This dimension deals with the “division of emotional roles between men and women” (Hofstede 29). The cultural expectations of men and women play a prominent role in the communication structure. The United States struggles in this area because of the changing role of males and females in society and the tendency by some to avoid change. Each puzzle piece points to a particular worldview in Vansant, Virginia. The culture is structured around some generational ideas that have created learned behavior. Coal, clans, and religious diversity are all important ingredients that point to the cultural puzzle in Vansant.

Summary

Several components and sources are necessary to the development of a project seeking to develop a worship manual that is based on a cultural understanding and leads the users to develop a missional style of worship. The tendency to seek a style or pattern based on the latest trend might gratify for a time period, but it will not satisfy the spiritual longing that many have in their own cultural uniqueness. The themes of postmodern

culture understanding, contextualization, holism, and cultural dimensions form the foundation for developing a curriculum that seeks to lead a church congregation to transform their worship style to a missional worship style. These themes led to the design and instruction in the curriculum that was implemented for this study. The curriculum, *A Lifestyle, Not an Hour*, is included in Appendix B.

The exposure and understanding of postmodern culture has become an apparent need as it evolves and transforms. The ambivalence toward proselytizing ideological truth, especially in the traditional church setting, has increased the need for the local church to understand the role worship must play in developing a missional church. The postmodern culture has its fingerprints on large cities, small towns, progressive cultures, and traditional cultures alike. Helping churches become aware of the need to understand this emerging culture was a goal and a component of this curriculum.

As God's ambassadors Christians are called to package the message of Christ into a dynamic, equivalent message. The theme of contextualization plays a key role in developing a worship style that is missional in nature. Jesus exemplified this principle in his earthly ministry in episodes such as his encounter with the Samaritan woman drawing water at the well. Although he had the privilege of supernatural understanding, his cultural understanding was the key aspect of the productive encounter with the woman. The attempt to contextualize the gospel message has led to some teaching that is in contradiction to the biblical message. The worship curriculum was developed in such a way that the reader was encouraged to contextualize the worship service without compromising the message.

The curriculum development was centered around a “holistic” approach. This dynamic of human organization provides a beginning framework for understanding the culture. The dimensions found in a complex unit or culture allow for a person or group to gain valuable insights. These dimensions, such as religion, economy, social standing, and communication, form a unique structure that allows for points of entry into cultural understanding. The information the research in this area provides was used to assist in the development and implementation of the worship curriculum, *A Lifestyle, Not an Hour*.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The communities I encountered in Fort Worth, Texas, and Vansant, Virginia, were culturally different. A similar worship style used in both settings would not be feasible. The approach taken by many to copy a prominent church or megachurch style of worship and structure would be foolish in these varying settings. The similarity that these cultures have in common is a large unchurched population.

The need to develop a biblically appropriate, culturally relevant missional worship style has been magnified as I have traveled to churches around the United States and participated in conferences through the Beeson Modules for Advanced Church Leadership in the Doctor of Ministry program at Asbury Theological Seminary. The one-size-fits-all mentality packaged and promoted by megachurches would not work in my cultural setting. Every church has different resources, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that create a unique culture that cannot be molded into any particular style. Missional worship, or worship that produces kingdom-oriented disciples, cannot be induced by the trendiest megachurch recipe.

The problem this study addressed is whether a worship curriculum based on a cultural understanding and analysis leads a local congregation to develop a missional worship style, and to outreach through a transformed life. My project was to design a worship curriculum and to determine if such a curriculum offered a positive impact on the constituents of Vansant Baptist Church and led them to develop a missional worship style. Research indicates that each culture is unique and contextualization of the message is needed in order for maximum impact and for true missional worship to be experienced.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of a curriculum designed and implemented to lead members or constituents of Vansant Baptist Church, Vansant, Virginia, in developing a missional worship style and missional church.

Research Questions

The present worship style at Vansant Baptist Church would be considered traditional. A “traditional” description would mean the following about the worship style at Vansant. First, structure, worship elements, and style are basically the same since the church was started in September 1955. The service includes the use of traditional hymns, Scripture readings, the use of an organ and piano, choir music, and the sermon. In fact, until recently, the bulletins from 1960 looked very similar to the present bulletins. The service begins at 11:00 a.m. and ends approximately at 12:00 noon.

Two broad themes emerged from the literature research done for this project in relation to this research question. First, the cultural transition that is taking place in society is being attacked and condemned by the present-day church rather than the church trying to understand it better and communicating in a language and style that can be understood. A cultural transition that is evident in the present era resulting in a cultural clash is in the worship wars. Secondly, worship is a lifestyle rather than just something done on Sunday mornings at church. This theological concept must be understood and applied in order for the Sunday morning corporate worship time to have real and significant meaning. An individual’s personal understanding of worship shapes the expectations of corporate worship.

This study investigated the following research questions.

The culture of the Vansant community has been heavily impacted by several influences. First, the economic decline over the last twenty-five years has had a dramatic influence on the culture. The population decreased by 13 percent from 1990 to 2000, the average income per family has dropped sharply, and the number of people relying on government assistance has climbed. These economic and demographic changes have resulted in fear. The only change that happens in the Vansant culture is usually negative, so the desire to maintain the status quo is at an all-time high.

Second, the worship style has been influenced by the religious traditions of some religious groups that are not mainline denominations. These religious groups include Old Regular Baptists and Primitive Baptists. Historically, these religious groups are anchored in traditional beliefs and practices. The influence of these groups can be seen in the desire by some to maintain an informal style so the Holy Spirit will not be hampered, the use of musical styles of past generations, and the need for “hard-preaching” as it is referred to by these groups. A large portion of the members of Vansant Baptist Church has been influenced by these tradition-based religions.

Third, the congregation of Vansant Baptist Church has not been taught the scriptural teachings concerning worship. The questionnaire determined the level of understanding the participants have of missional worship and how they perceive the church is living out this calling. The lack of understanding of true biblical worship was confronted in the researcher-designed curriculum.

Research Question #1

What concepts did the subjects of this study have of a biblical, culturally relevant missional worship style prior to their exposure to the worship curriculum?

The answer to this research question could only be determined by a survey of the congregation prior to the introduction of the independent variable, which for this study is the eight-week researcher-designed curriculum. Without this survey determining the amount of change, if any, in the congregation's understanding of missional worship would be impossible.

Research Question #2

What changes occur in the participants' understanding and practices of biblical, missional worship as a result of the implemented researcher-designed curriculum?

This research project was designed around the premise that a eight-week worship curriculum, based on biblical worship teachings, can lead the participants to understand biblical, missional worship and to review the present worship style of Vansant Baptist Church so that the missional style can be better utilized. The eight-week curriculum concentrated on understanding biblical worship, becoming aware of the participants' present worship style, understanding the role cultural awareness plays in worship style, and learning to develop culturally relevant worship styles that are missional in nature.

The main focus was to determine whether a worship curriculum based on cultural analysis could lead a congregation to develop a missional worship style and its influence on the mission of the church. The curriculum incorporated some biblical expositions concerning worship theology and the need for an understanding of these passages by the congregation in order to develop a missional worship style. Furthermore, the concept of contextualization was interwoven into each chapter so that the subjects participating in the curriculum study would come to a comprehension of this concept.

The answers to the research questions provided a basis for evaluating the impact of the curriculum in leading the subjects to develop a missional worship style. More specifically, the answers to the research questions measured the changes that occurred in the understanding the participants had of missional worship and how it related to their particular culture. Two questionnaires were developed that attempted to measure the subjects' understanding of missional worship and how they viewed their present worship structure in their church.

Participants

The project involved individuals who are members or attenders of the adult Sunday school of Vansant Baptist Church, Vansant, Virginia. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 75. The individuals were expected to be regular attenders of the Sunday morning worship service at Vansant Baptist Church. A regular attender would be considered a person that attends at least three worship services a month at Vansant Baptist Church. The method used to determine who would participate was not random selection but was random self-selection. People were invited to participate, some chose to do so, and they were the participants. The researcher-designed curriculum was used during the regular, weekly Sunday school on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. and was implemented in the existing Sunday school classes. No new classes were formed for the study. Eight Sunday school classes participated in the study. The leaders of these classes were trained by me prior to the beginning of the study. The training was held on Sunday afternoon and teaching methods, information on how to use the manual, guidelines for the pre- and post-survey, and the goals of each lesson were discussed. Periodic meetings were held individually and corporately with the leaders during the eight week study and the material

was reviewed and questions were answered by me (see Figure 3.1).

Step One	Select Sunday School Classes that would participate in the study (Eight Selected)
Step Two	Train leaders for each class and give instructions concerning weekly lessons and pre and post surveys.
Step Three	Begin study in the Sunday School classes (4 November 2007); Pre-Survey Completed.
Step Four	Participate in private and corporate training as study is on-going.
Step Five	Complete study (16 Dec. 2007); Complete post survey.

Figure 3.1. Steps in study implementation.

The method I used for acquiring participants was to make verbal (Sunday morning worship, adult Sunday school classes, Wednesday night Bible study meeting) and published announcements (church bulletin, newsletter, e-mail). All persons who agreed to participate in the entire eight-week curriculum and were willing to complete the researcher-designed questionnaires were accepted as subjects for the project. The decision to use the Sunday school format was reasonable considering that Vansant Baptist Church uses this time for Bible study.

Instrumentation

The first instrument used for this study was the Transforming Church Index developed by TAG, a corporate consulting service. TAG is a management consulting firm that specializes in strategic planning, leadership development, conflict resolution, marketing, and organizational development. The inventory was originally designed to measure the health of secular businesses but was modified to measure the missional nature of a local church. The Transforming Church Index is built around 110 questions

plus twenty adjectives used to describe the church. Appendix A is an example of the inventory used for this research. The Transforming Church Index was presented both before the researcher-designed curriculum was taught in the Sunday school classes and after the curriculum was presented.

Reliability

The Transforming Church Index (TCI) was developed by a research group. The group researched churches in America resulting in 7,773 records of information. The information was analyzed by a statistician. A cluster analysis resulted in five clusters that forms the basis of the index (Ford 211). The five clusters are

- Consumerism/Community,
- Incongruence/Code,
- Autocracy/Shared leadership,
- Cloister/Missional, and
- Inertia/Reinvention.

Three mathematical methods were used to analyze the index items (212):

- Principal component analysis, with varimax rotation,
- Principal factor analysis, with varimax rotation, and
- Homogenous keying, based on software developed by Brekke Associates,

Inc.

In addition, each of the three analyses was run on three Transforming Church Index datasets:

- The full file (mainline and nonmainline denominations) of TCI respondents ($n = 13, 588$),

- Small congregations (TCI $n \leq 60$), and
- Large congregations (TCI $n > 60$) (212).

The Curriculum

The focus of this study was to develop and implement a worship curriculum designed for use in a group format. I used knowledge gained from a cultural analysis to develop the curriculum. The curriculum was designed for a group setting that incorporated elements of teaching, sharing, group interaction, and participatory assignments. The curriculum was titled, *Worship: A Lifestyle, Not an Hour*.

The curriculum was implemented over the course of eight sessions from 4 November 2007 to 16 December 2007. During these eight sessions, topics were presented that were relevant to the intended outcome of leading the subjects to gain an understanding of missional worship that will lead them to become a missional church. Appendix B is an example of the eight-week curriculum *A Lifestyle: Not an Hour* used in this study.

With the exception of the first session (Introduction), each lesson focused on a worship principle that sought to confront the participant about the true meaning of worship, why the worship service is structured the way it is, and the importance of understanding the audience the congregation is seeking so that the church can be a missional church.

Variables

Potential intervening variables in this study include age, education, church heritage, if any, and the amount of time an individual has been attending Vansant Baptist Church. The independent variable of this study is the worship curriculum that I designed

and presented to the subjects. The study involved two separate dependent variables. The first group of dependent variables included the changes in the concepts and practices of the subjects as a result of their exposure to a worship curriculum. The second group of dependent variables included the changes in the subjects' understanding of the needed correlation between worship structure, cultural awareness, and being a missional church.

Data Collection

The solicited participants from the congregation attended an overview of the research in order to develop an understanding of the project. The participants completed the Transforming Church Index the week before the curriculum study started and it was collected immediately. Each Sunday school teacher participated in a training session before the study began. The training consisted of an overview of the curriculum, teaching methods, and teaching ideas. The participants completed the Transforming Church Index when the eight-week curriculum study was over.

Data Analysis

The Transforming Church Index was completed confidentially by the participants prior to and following the worship curriculum. The TCI was developed by a management consulting firm as an instrument to examine the key dimensions of church health. Through a comprehensive study, fifteen significant scales of church health were organized conceptually around five key indicators.

The TCI analyzed the data in several ways. First, the characteristics of the survey respondents and the general level of statistical accuracy of the participants were analyzed. Second, a summary of the fifteen scales and the composite score (the average of the

fifteen scales) were figured. The responses of the participants in the study were compared to the national norm, and the demographic subgroups of the participants were compared.

Delimitations and Generalizability

The motivation for this study came from an existing need within the context of Vansant Baptist Church. The declining level of worship participation, the challenge to transition the worship style, and the cultural characteristics of the community were all motivating factors. This study focused on the effects of a curriculum designed by me and was implemented to a group who voluntarily chose to participate. The project is, therefore, limited, and the findings represent only the church and group that participated. To the extent that the findings are generalizable, this study adds to the existing research and literature in the area of cultural analysis, worship, worship transition, and missional transformation. I assume similar questions and results in churches of similar size, demographic makeup, and leadership structure. The findings of this study are summarized in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to develop and measure the impact of a worship curriculum based on an analysis of the culture to be used by the members and attenders of Vansant Baptist Church to lead to a biblical, culturally relevant missional worship and a missional church. Some churches approach worship and their mission with a narrow view, depending on the latest trend or formula to determine their calling. I have found that every church has different resources, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that create a unique culture that cannot be molded into just any particular style. Instead, each church can be transformed in its particular ministries.

The following research questions guided the study: (1) What concepts did the subjects of this study have of a biblical, culturally relevant missional worship style prior to their exposure to the worship curriculum? (2) What changes occur in the participants' understanding and practices of biblical, missional worship as a result of the implemented researcher-designed curriculum?

Profile of Participants

At least fifty-nine members or attendees of the Sunday school of Vansant Baptist Church participated in the study. The number of people who participated in the study represents 26 percent of the average worship attendance of Vansant Baptist Church.

The participants were categorized by five demographic questions. The questions allowed me to determine the general make up of the individuals who participated in the study. The results of the study were compared to that national norm as well as to the demographic subgroups within the congregation. The fifty-nine participants ranged in age

from 15 to 18 years old. Eight of the participants were between the age of 0-18 (14 percent), zero between the ages of 19-25 (0 percent), six between 26-40 (11 percent); sixteen between 41-55 (28 percent); eighteen between 56-69 (32 percent), and nine over the age of 70 (10 percent; see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Age of Participants (N=59)

Age Range	n	%
0-18	8	14
19-25	0	0
26-40	6	11
41-55	16	28
56-69	18	32
70+	9	16

The church involvement of the participants was information needed to get an accurate profile. When asked about how long they had been involved at Vansant Baptist Church two responded less than two years, four between two to four years, twelve between five to ten years, and forty-one more than ten years (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Length of Church Involvement (N=59)

Number of Years	n	% of Participants
Less than two years	2	3
Two-four years	4	7
Five to ten years	12	20
More than ten years	41	69

The role of the participants in the church provided needed information on the profile of the participants. When asked to report their role in the church, one participant (2 percent) responded, “Paid Staff,” sixteen (27 percent) responded, “Volunteer Leader,” forty (68 percent) responded, “Church Member,” two (3 percent) responded, “Nonmember” (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Role in the Church of Participants in this Study (N=59)

Role	n	%
Paid staff	1	2
Volunteer leader	16	27
Church member	40	68
Non-member	2	3

The marital status of the participants was important to the demographic profile of the participants. When asked to report their marital status, eleven (19 percent)

responded single, never married, six (10 percent) responded divorced or widowed, five (8 percent) responded married, no children, and thirty-seven (63 percent) responded married with children (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Marital Status (N=59)

Status	n	%
Single, never married	11	19
Divorced or widowed	6	10
Married, no children	5	8
Married with children	37	63

When asked to report how many minutes of travel time they take to get to the worship service, twenty-eight (48 percent) reported 0-10 minutes, seventeen (29 percent) 11-20 minutes, nine (16 percent) reported 21-30 minutes, and four (7 percent) reported 31 plus minutes (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Travel Time (N=59)

Time	n	%
0-10 Minutes	28	48
11-20 Minutes	17	29
21-30 Minutes	9	16
31+ Minutes	4	7

The participants' composite scores by subgroup present insights into the cultural personality of Vansant Baptist Church. The age group of 41-55 years old scored the lowest raw score (3.73) of any group in any category or subgroup. The age group 56-69 years old scored the highest raw score (4.61) of any category or subgroup.

Research Question Findings

Research Question #1 was answered by the participants responding to the Transforming Church Index prior to the introduction of the researcher-designed worship curriculum. The Transforming Church Index measured the participants' understanding of missional church ideas and practices. The participants rated the objective questions on a five-point Likert scale. One exception to the five-point Likert scale was scale thirteen, which measured the participants' perception of the church. An eight-point Likert scale was used to measure the response in this category. Research Question #2 was answered by repeating the Transforming Church Index at the conclusion of the study. The results of the second Transforming Church Index were connected to the participants' completion of the worship curriculum. Attendance at a

minimum of five sessions was required by the participants to be eligible to complete the index at the conclusion of the study.

Research Question #1 Findings

The study, prior to the completion of the worship curriculum, included fifty-nine respondents to the Transforming Church Index, which would be 26.2 percent of the average Sunday morning worship attendance. The margin of error for the raw composite score (1-5 scale) is ± 0.17 points.

Vasant Baptist Church scored above the national average at the beginning of the study. The church's top three percentile scores were on the following scales: meets needs, excitement about the church, and local impact. The church's lowest three percentile scores were on the following scales: trust in leadership, innovation and creativity, and financial leadership. I have been the pastor of Vasant Baptist for twelve years, the longest tenured pastor in its history. The above-average results of the study could have been impacted because of the length of my ministry.

Church's Relative Strengths

The church's relative strengths were higher when compared to the national norm:

- This church makes effective use of various communication methods.
- If our church were to close down, our contribution to the community would be sorely missed.
- Our church's programs and ministries are effectively promoted in our community.
- I have participated in an outreach event sponsored by this church within the last twelve months.

- Our church effectively meets goals.
- This church effectively meets the needs of its families.
- We set the standard for other churches to follow when it comes to

community involvement.

- I am satisfied with the church's programs and services outside our regular worship service.

- When people decide to leave the church, they are cared for in the process.

- I love telling my friends about my church.

Church's Relative Opportunities for Improvement

The church's relative opportunities for improvement were found in the answers to the following statements. Vansant Baptist Church scored the lowest in these areas:

- I help support our church financially.
- The leaders of the church have the best interest of the church in mind at

all times.

- Our leaders practice what they expect others to do.
- I am aware of the church's financial condition.
- My church is contemporary.
- I am important around here.
- I have a clearly defined role in the church.
- Our committees effectively contribute to the overall success of this

church.

The Five Key Indicators

The Transforming Church Index was developed by a research group. The group researched churches in America resulting in 7,773 records of information. A cluster analysis resulted in five key indicators that form the basis of the index. The five clusters are

- Consumerism/Community,
- Incongruence/Code,
- Autocracy/Shared leadership,
- Cloister/Missional, and
- Inertia/Reinvention.

The following results were found by the Transforming Church Index based on the responses of the participants at Vansant Baptist Church that is evaluative of the mission of the church. The results reported in this section were obtained from a survey completed by the participants of the study prior to completing the eight-week worship curriculum.

The Transforming Church Index has recorded 23,000 surveys and analyzed and recorded the responses in a database. National norms have been created to give each study a relative benchmark. “Percentile scores” are relative to the national norm. The norm is based on all churches who have participated in the survey.

The score marked as “low” indicates the lowest score(s) marked by the participants in the study for the particular cluster statement(s) in the subgroup. The score marked as “high” indicates the highest score(s) marked by the participants for the particular cluster statement(s) in the subgroup. The “% Negative” indicates that the

respondent to the survey scored the cluster statement below three. According to the Transforming Church Index leaders, most people when taking the survey will provide a score of three or higher, where one equals “strongly disagree” and five equals “strongly agree.” A score marked below “3” on the survey was viewed as a negative response.

The scales in the survey measure particular concepts that are related to church transformation. Because each of these concepts is complex, each uses a specific set or “cluster” of survey statements to capture the breadth and depth of the concept. The cluster of questions, rather than a single question, presents a more reliable picture of the participants’ understanding of the church culture. The scales on the individual scores give a clearer picture as to where the church is in its understanding and practice as a missional church. The two lowest scoring cluster statements and the two highest scoring statements for the consumerism/community indicator are presented in Tables 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8.

Key indicator 1: consumerism / community. A healthy community is one where people experience a combination of several things. In a healthy community members experience social connections and caring relationships, and feel personally connected to the church’s overarching purpose. This Key Indicator was measured by three scales. These scales help identify whether or not people are “consumers” or “partners in ministry.” They help to identify the level of relational commitment to the church and how much relational community they experience. Compared to national norms, Vansant Baptist Church has a fairly normal sense of connection to the church’s purpose, an exceptional atmosphere of fellowship and belonging, and individuals feel extremely valued and loved (see Figure 4.1).

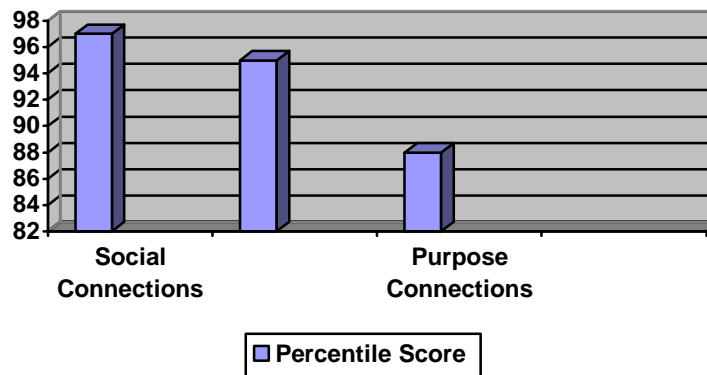


Figure 4.1. Consumerism/community overall summary.

The percentage of the participants that feel a personal connection is well above the national norm. The participants ranked in the 97th percentile, compared to the national norm. However, 16 percent of the participants gave a negative response to this indicator, which means that they responded below a 3.00 on the Likert scale. The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest composite raw score of 3.54, with fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest composite raw score with a 4.65, and ten negative responses.

Table 4.6 provides data concerning the connection the participants have to the purpose of the church. The scale measured whether the participants believed they were making a difference and that they mattered to the church.

Table 4.6. Low and High Cluster Statements for Purpose Connections Concept (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“I have a clearly defined role in the church.”	68 (Low)	15
“I am important around here.”	67 (Low)	18
“I am cooperative around here.”	96 (High)	2
“I have a clear understanding of my role in fulfilling the church’s mission.”	96 (High)	10

The raw score represents the average of the scores given by the participants in each subgroup. The raw score is the average of the responses on the five-point Likert scale for the subgroup in which the cluster statements were asked. The “Purpose Connections” concept indicated that the age category of 41-55 year-olds had the lowest raw score of 3.54, while the age group 70 and above had the highest at 4.26.

Table 4.7 provided data on the participants’ social connections. This scale measured the members’ perception of the church’s fellowship, close-knit friendships, and loving environment.

Table 4.7. Low and High Cluster Statements for Social Connections (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Our church enjoys a healthy sense of fellowship and community.”	90 (Low)	3
“My Church is ... warm.”	92 (Low)	3
“My church is ... close knit.”	99 (High)	2
“My church is ... fellowship.”	98 (High)	2

The participants perception of the church fellowship and social connections is significantly higher than that of the national average. The age group of 41-51 year- olds had the lowest raw score (4.16). The age group of 56-69-year-olds had the highest raw score (4.78).

Table 4.8 provided data on the participants’ perception of caring relationships in the church. The scale measures the degree to which members feel cared for by the leaders and how well the church ministers to hurting people. This scale evaluates whether or not the church cares more about people than they do programs.

Table 4.8. Low and High Cluster Statements for Caring Relationships (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“If I need counseling or advice I know who to go to in the church.”	80 (Low)	12
“This church addresses the practical.” needs of its members.	91 (Low)	5
“I feel care for by a leader within this church.”	95 (High)	10
“The church cares as much about is members as it does it programs.”	94 (High)	10

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds had the lowest raw score of 3.61. The subgroup of 70 years old and older had the highest raw score of 4.67. The subgroups 56-69 and those who were divorced or widowed was a close second with a raw score of 4.69.

Key indicator 2: incongruence/code. A church’s code is its identity, or personality. The survey determined if the people had a connection to the personality and vision of the church. This key indicator was measured by three scales. These scales measured respondents’ general sense of excitement and enthusiasm about the church, their personal growth through the church, and whether or not they think the church has a unique sense of focus. Compared to national norms, the participants were excited about the church; they have a clear sense of identity and focus and believe the church has done a very effective job in emphasizing personal spiritual growth (see Figure 4.2).

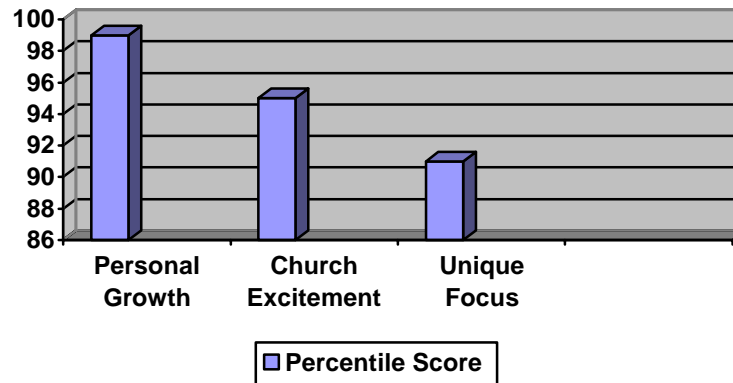


Figure 4.2. Overall summary incongruence/code.

The lowest scoring cluster statements and the highest scoring statements for the Incongruence/Code indicator are presented in Tables 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11.

Table 4.9 provides data about the participants' attitudes toward the church. The scale measures the belief on the part of the participants that the church is moving in the right direction, if they like telling others about the church, and whether or not they are satisfied with the church's primary worship services and leadership.

Table 4.9. Low and High Cluster Statements for Church Excitement (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Overall, I am satisfied with the way that the leadership of this church is performing its job.”	92 (Low)	7
“I am excited about where our church is headed in the next few years.”	94 (Low)	2
“I love telling my friends about my church.”	99 (High)	0
“I am satisfied with our church’s worship services.”	96 (High)	5

The age group of 41-55 years-old had the lowest raw score of 4.04. The divorced or widowed subgroup had the highest raw score of 4.77 with those who had been at the church between and five to ten years scoring 4.75.

Table 4.10 provides data on the uniqueness of Vansant Baptist Church. The scale measures how well the church has differentiated itself from other church and whether or not the church has a clearly defined target group of people that is the focus of the outreach.

Table 4.10. Low and High Cluster Statements for Unique Focus (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“This church has clearly differentiated itself from other churches in effective ways.”	76 (Low)	5
“Our church has a clearly defined Group of people that we are trying to reach and serve.”	94 (High)	10

The age group 0-18 years old had the lowest raw score of 3.88. The subgroup of divorced or widowed had the highest raw score of 4.80.

Table 4.11 provides data in the area of the participants personal spiritual growth. The scale measured whether or not the participants believed the church was making a difference in the lives of its members, if they are growing spiritually, and how well the church prepares its members to minister to others.

Table 4.11. Low and High Cluster Statements for Personal Growth (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“This church stressed the importance of personal growth and spiritual maturity.”	87 (Low)	3
“This church has helped me be more effective in my everyday life.”	98 (High)	2

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest with a 3.94 raw score. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest with a raw score of 4.85.

Key indicator 3: autocracy/shared leadership. Compared to national norms, the participants believe that Vansant Baptist Church does an above average job in handling conflicted issues, has an average trust in the leadership of the church, believes the church does an average job in financial communication, and the does an excellent job in establishing the church’s direction, accomplishing goals, and communicating major issues with members. The indicator discovered that “trust in leadership” scored the lowest of any other category in the study (see Figure 4.3).

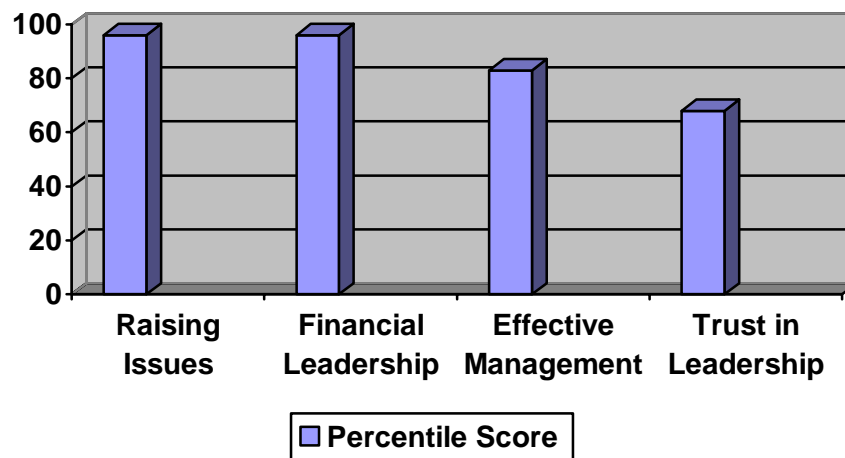


Figure 4.3. Overall summary autocracy/shared leadership.

The lowest scoring cluster statements and the highest scoring statements for the incongruence/code indicator are presented in Tables 4.12, 4.13, 4.14, and 4.15. Table 4.12 provides data on how effective the leaders of the church are in providing an atmosphere that values input. The scale measures how free people feel to discuss big

issues at the church, how well conflicts are handled, and whether or not leaders listen to the members.

Table 4.12. Low and High Cluster Statements for Raising Issues (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Difficult issues or subjects are addressed in helpful ways.”	82 (Low)	7
“Great efforts are made to understand various points of view.”	90 (Low)	7
“When people decide to leave the church, they are cared for in the process.”	100 (High)	8
“When unpopular changes occur, people who disagree are still cared for in this church.”	98 (High)	5

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds had the lowest raw score of 3.39. The subgroup of people who had been at the church between five and ten years had the highest raw score of 4.33.

The lowest cluster scoring came in the “Trust in Leadership” subgroup. The score ranked consistent with the national average yet was significantly lower than the other scores for the participants at Vansant Baptist Church (see Table 4.13). The scale measured how much trust exists or how much trust needs to be built before making any major decisions.

Table 4.13. Low and High Cluster Statements for Trust in Leadership (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“The leaders of the church have the best interest of the church in mind at all times.”	57 (Low)	9
“Our leaders practice what they expect others to do.”	59 (Low)	5
“In my church involvement, I know that I can count on the full support from the leaders.”	84 (High)	5
“Messages from the leadership of church can be taken at face value.”	73 (High)	7

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest raw score of 3.60. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest with a raw score of 4.65, and the subgroup 70 years old and older scored a 4.62.

Table 4.14 provides data on the financial leadership of the church. The scale measured the perception of the participants of the church’s financial management and condition.

Table 4.14. Low and High Cluster Statements for Financial Leadership (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“I am aware of our church’s financial condition.”	60 (Low)	5
“Our church effectively manages its financial resources.”	83 (High)	3

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest raw score of 3.77. The subgroup of those who traveled eleven to twenty minutes to attend worship scored the highest with a raw score of 4.44. The subgroup of married with no children scored the second highest with a raw score of 4.40.

Table 4.15 provides data on the effectiveness of the church’s leadership. The scale measured what was considered building blocks of leadership: communicating information, establishing direction, mentoring people, meeting goals, clarifying responsibilities, and celebrating achievements. The scale also measured how well the church’s leadership structure (i.e., committees, teams) are working.

Table 4.15. Low and High Cluster Statements for Effective Management (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Our committees or task forces effectively contribute to the overall success of this church.”	69 (Low)	8
“Our leaders effectively establish the church’s direction, purpose, and vision.”	84 (Low)	3
“This church makes effective use of various communication methods.”	100 (High)	2
“Our church effectively meets goals.”	100 (High)	2

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest with a raw score of 3.76. The subgroup of 70 years old and older scored the highest with a 4.64.

Key indicator 4: cloister/missional. The missional indicator focused questions on meeting the needs of various demographic segments (children, seniors, and singles). It also evaluated whether or not the church was making a contribution to the local community based on the views of the participants. The participants of the study gave this the highest percentile score of any key indicator category. Compared to national norms, the participants believed that the church’s programming for various age groups is above average, and the church is doing an excellent job at making a difference in the lives of people in their community (see Figure 4.4).

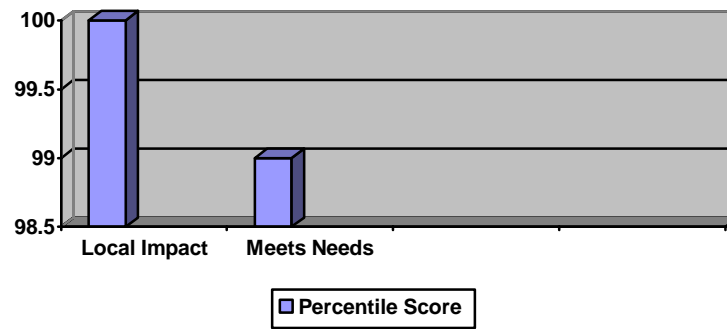


Figure 4.4. Overall summary cloister/mission.

This scale measures how well the church meets the needs of all age groups and ministry programming outside of the regular worship services. The lowest scoring cluster statements and the highest scoring statements for the cloister/mission indicator are presented in Tables 4.16 and 4.17.

Table 4.16. Low and High Cluster Statements for Meets Needs (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“This church effectively meets the needs of senior citizens.”	89 (Low)	12
“Our church effectively meets the needs of its single adults.”	96 (Low)	10
“This church effectively meets the needs of its families.”	100 (High)	5
“I am satisfied with the church’s programs and services outside of our regular worship service.”	100 (High)	3

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest with a 3.92 raw score. The subgroup of divorced and widowed scored the highest with a raw score of 4.78, followed closely by the subgroup of those who had attended five to ten years with a raw score of 4.76.

Table 4.17 provides data on the local impact of the church. The scale used measured how effective the church is in keeping up with the changing needs in the community, promoting ministries to the community, and encouraging members to reach out to their neighbors. It also measures how members perceive the difference the church is actually making in the community and whether or not the church has a positive reputation locally.

Table 4.17. Low and High Cluster Statements for Local Impact (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Our church strives to make a difference in people’s lives outside of our own church.”	89	3
“Our ministries and programs reflect the felt needs of our community.”	91 (Low)	5
“If our church were to close down, our contribution to the community would be sorely missed.”	100 (High)	0
“Our church’s programs and ministries are effectively promoted in our community.”	100 (High)	5

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest with a raw score of 3.99. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest with a raw score of 4.77.

Key indicator 5: inertia/reinvention. These scales examine the communication surrounding change, whether or not the church's members embrace change, and how innovative or creative the church is in its approach. Compared to national norms, including people in discussions about change, Vansant Baptist Church is doing an above average job, the members perceive that the church is moving in the right direction and they embrace the changes that are necessary, and the church is in the upper tier of all churches in the areas of innovation and creativity (see Figure 4.5).

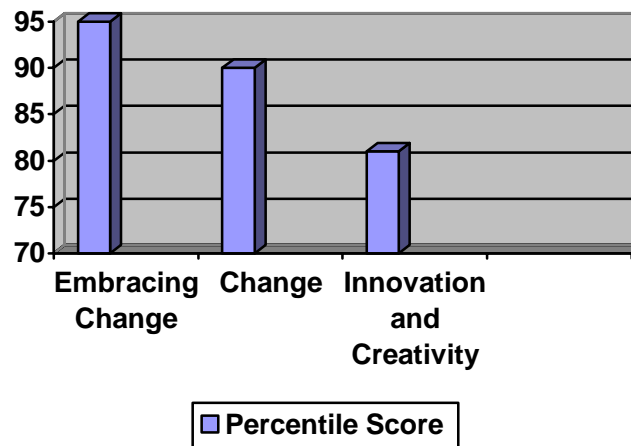


Figure 4.5. Overall summary inertia/reinvention.

The cluster questions concerning change measured the effectiveness of the communication to the church concerning change. The lowest scoring cluster statements and the highest scoring statements for the inertia/reinvention indicator are presented in Tables 4.18, 4.19, and 4.20. The raw scores for this indicator, when averaged as a whole, were lower than the other four indicators.

Table 4.18. Low and High Cluster Statements for Communication about Change (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Our leaders accept constructive feedback.”	67 (Low)	12
“Leaders keep me informed about new things that concern me at the church.”	85 (Low)	14
“When concerns are voiced to leadership, those concerns are taken seriously.”	96 (High)	7
“When big decisions are made, many people are included in the decision-making process.”	94 (High)	8

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest with a raw score of 3.38. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest with a raw score of 4.48, and the subgroup of 70 years old and older scored a 4.47.

Table 4.19 presents data about the participants' perception of the church's ability to embrace change. The scale measured whether or not the church retains its members, even in the midst of change. Also, it measured whether or not the participants were motivated by the vision of the church and if the vision was clear.

Table 4.19. Low and High Cluster Statements for Embracing Change (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Changes are readily embraced by our congregation.”	82 (Low)	12
“Our church effectively closes down programs or ministries that are no longer effective.”	83 (Low)	20
“Everyone is motivated by the vision for the future.”	97 (High)	10
“Each individual member feels connected to the big picture of what the church is trying to accomplish.”	95 (High)	12

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest with a raw score of 3.28. The subgroup of 70 years old and older scored the highest with a raw score of 4.43.

Table 4.20 presents data concerning the innovation and creativity of the church. The scales measured the members’ perception of the church as being creative, innovative, upbeat, contemporary, and cutting edge.

Table 4.20. Low and High Cluster Statements for Innovation and Creativity (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“My church is ... contemporary.”	62 (Low)	10
“My church is ... upbeat.”	72 (Low)	3
“My church is ... innovative.”	92 (High)	3
“My church is ... cutting edge.”	88 (High)	16

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest with a 3.74 raw score. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest with a 4.57 raw score.

Specific questions were asked to help determine the views of the participants concerning the worship and worship services of the church. Cluster questions were asked to evaluate the participants on their perceived effectiveness of the worship services. Table 4.21 presents the lowest scoring cluster statements and highest scoring cluster statements for the worship section of the survey. The raw score indicates the average of the responses by the participants based on a five-point Likert scale. The raw scores marked “low” indicate the two lowest scoring cluster questions in the subgroup. The raw scores marked “high” indicate the two highest scoring cluster questions in the subgroup. The “% Negative” indicates the percentage of participants that scored the cluster statement below a three on the Likert scale. A cluster statement marked below three by the participants was considered to be a negative response.

Table 4.21. Low and High Cluster Statements for Worship Evaluation (N=59)

Statement	Raw Score of Participants	% Negative
“Our worship services attract new people to our church.”	4.31 (Low)	3
“People really like our church’s music.”	4.32 (Low)	3
“Our minister’s sermons are helpful to me in my every day life.”	4.71 (High)	0
“I look forward to attending Worship every week.”	4.64 (High)	2

Research Question #2 Findings

At the conclusion of the eight-week study that I wrote, the participants were given the opportunity to complete the Transforming Church Index a second time so that changes, if any, could be measured. To help maintain the validity of the study, participants who completed at least five of the worship study sessions were allowed to participate in the second survey. The second survey included fifty-eight respondents to the Transforming Church Index, which was 25.8 percent of the average Sunday morning worship attendance. The margin of error for the raw composite score (1-5 scale) is ± 0.20 points.

The participants, of which all but two were members of Vansant Baptist Church, scored statistically higher than the national average. The top three percentile scores were on the following scales: local impact, meets needs, and social connections. The lowest three percentile scores were on the following scales: trust in leadership, communication about change, and personal connection to church’s purpose.

Church's Relative Strengths (Second Survey)

Compared to the national norm, the participants of the survey scored the highest on the following questions:

- I have participated in an outreach event sponsored by this church within the last twelve months.
- Our church's programs and ministries are effectively promoted in our community.
- I have received training from this church in some form of outreach, evangelism, or missions work.
- This church's buildings and facilities are effective in supporting our ministries.
- We set the standard for other churches to follow when it comes to community involvement.
- I am satisfied with the church's programs and services outside of our regular worship service.
- Our local community (or neighborhood) knows what our church stands for.
- When people decide to leave the church, they are cared for in the process.
- This church makes effective use of various communication methods (bulletins, newsletters, telephone, e-mail).
- If our church were to close down, our contribution to the community would be sorely missed.

Church's Relative Opportunities for Improvement (Second Survey)

Compared to the national norm, the participants scored the lowest on the following questions:

- All members are encouraged to discuss their opinions about change.
- I am valuable around here.
- I am taken seriously around here.
- Our leaders practice what they expect others to do.
- The leaders of the church have the best interest of the church in mind at

all times.

- My church is ... upbeat.
- Our leaders are unified in purpose and direction.
- Our leaders effectively establish the church's direction, purpose, and

objectives.

- Everyone is free to speak his or her mind here.
- I am trusted around here.

The Five Key Indicators

The following results were found by the Transforming Church Index based on the responses of the participants at Vasant Baptist Church that is evaluative of the mission of the church. The results reported in this section were obtained from a survey completed by the participants of the study after completing the eight-week worship curriculum. Figures 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10 present the overall summary of the scores of each of the five key indicators.

Key indicator #1: consumerism/community. The key indicator consumerism/community was measured by three scales. The scales used help identify whether or not the people are “consumers” or “partners in ministry” (see Figure 4.6).

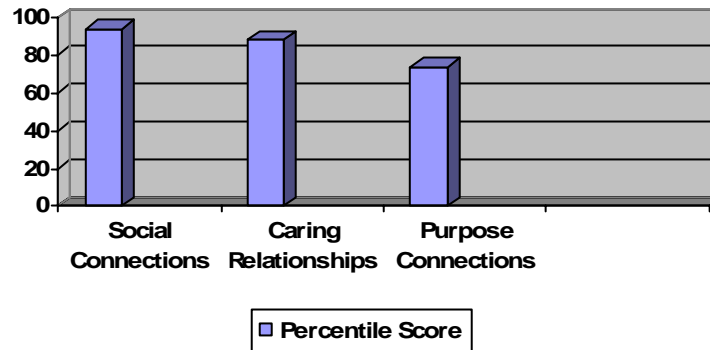


Figure 4.6. Consumerism/community overall summary (second survey)

The scales on the individual scores give a clearer picture as to where the church is in its understanding and practice as a missional church. The lowest scoring cluster statements and the highest scoring statements for the consumerism/community indicator are presented in Tables 4.22, 4.23, and 4.24.

Table 4.22. Low and High Cluster Statements for Purpose Connections Concept (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“I am valuable around here.”	50 (Low)	9
“I am taken seriously around here.”	51 (Low)	7
“I am efficient around here.”	90 (High)	4
“I have a clear understanding of my role in fulfilling the church’s mission.”	89 (High)	10

The subgroup of 41-55-years-old had the lowest raw score of 3.61 with 15 percent negative scores. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds had the highest score of 4.45.

Table 4.23. Low and High Cluster Statements for Social Connections (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“My church is friendly.”	85 (Low)	4
“My Church is ... warm.”	86 (Low)	4
“My church is ... close-knit.”	97 (High)	2
“My church is ... fellowship.”	94 (High)	2

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds had the lowest raw score of 3.84, with fourteen negative responses. The subgroup of 70 year olds and older had the highest score of 4.90, with eight negative responses.

Table 4.24. Low and High Cluster Statements for Caring Relationships (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“I feel cared for by a leader within this church.”	80 (Low)	11
“This church cares as much about its members as it does about its programs.”	83 (Low)	9
“If I need counseling or advice, I know who to go to in the church.”	89 (High)	9
“This church addresses the practical needs of its members.”	88 (High)	7

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds had the lowest raw score of 3.49, with fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 56-59-year-olds had the highest raw score of 3.82 with ten negative responses.

Key indicator #2: incongruence/code. A church’s code is its identity or personality. The indicator used measured the participants’ connection to the personality of the church. Three scales were used to measure this indicator. The scales were personal growth, excitement about the church, and the sense of focus (see Figure 4.7).

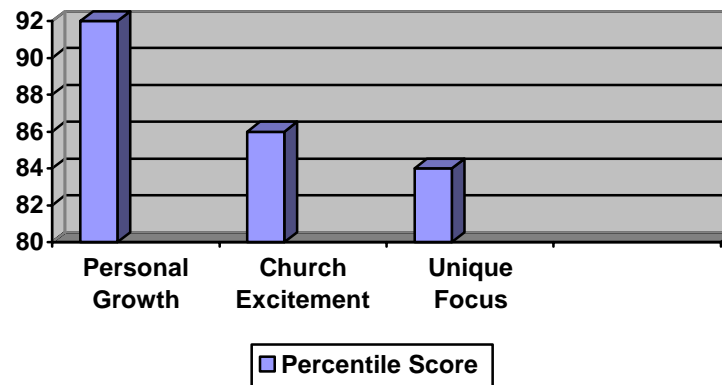


Figure 4.7. Overall summary incongruence/code (second survey)

The lowest scoring cluster statements and the highest scoring statements for the Incongruence/Code indicator are presented in Tables 4.25, 4.26, and 4.27.

Table 4.25. Low and High Cluster Statements for Church Excitement (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Overall, I am satisfied with the way that the leadership of this church is performing its job.”	84 (Low)	7
“I believe our church is heading in the right direction.”	85 (Low)	7
“I am satisfied with our church’s worship services.”	89 (High)	5
“I love telling my friends about my church.”	86 (High)	4

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest raw score of 3.79, with fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 0-18-year-olds scored the highest raw score of 4.63, with six negative responses.

Table 4.26. Low and High Cluster Statements for Unique Focus (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Our church has a clearly defined group(s) of people that we are trying to reach and serve.”	79 (Low)	7
“This church has a clearly defined vision of the future.”	87 (High)	2

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds had the lowest raw score of 3.57, with fourteen negative responses. The subgroup of 0-18-year-olds had the highest score of 4.73, with five negative responses.

Table 4.27. Low and High Cluster Statements for Personal Growth (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“This church stressed the importance of personal growth and spiritual maturity.”	74 (Low)	4
“As a result of attending this church, I feel more prepared to minister to others than I would have otherwise.”	95 (High)	4

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds had the lowest score of 3.83, with fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds had the highest score of 4.88.

Key indicator #3: autocracy/shared leadership. The indicator used in this portion of the survey measures the effectiveness of the church in dealing with financial

issues and conflict. The participants were asked to express their perception of the effectiveness of the leadership of the church (see Figure 4.8).

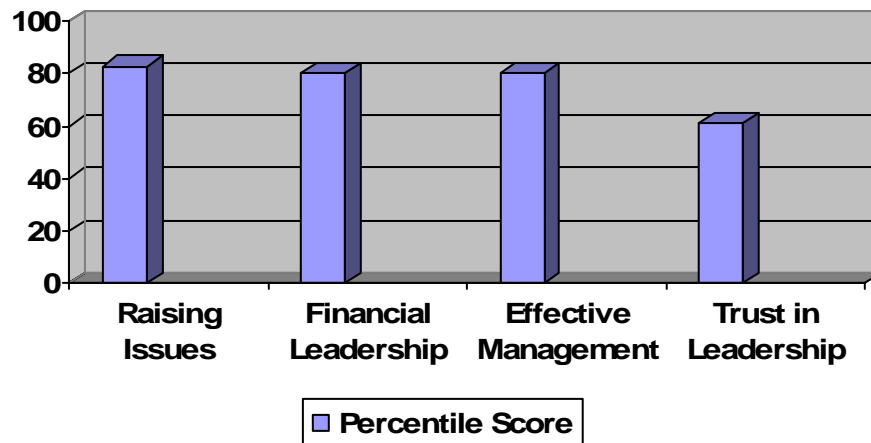


Figure 4.8. Overall summary autocracy/shared leadership

The lowest scoring cluster statements and the highest scoring statements for the Incongruence/Code indicator are presented in Tables 4.28, 4.29, and 4.30.

Table 4.28. Low and High Cluster Statements for Raising Issues (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“All members are encouraged to discuss their opinions about change.”	48 (Low)	16
“Everyone is free to speak his or mind here.”	57 (Low)	9
“When people decide to leave the Church, they are cared for in the Process.”	98 (High)	9
“Conflicts are handled well by leadership.”	93 (High)	13

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest raw score of 3.16, with fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest with a 4.65.

Table 4.29. Low and High Cluster Statements for Trust in Leadership (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“The leaders of the church have the Best interest of the church in mind at all times.”	51 (Low)	7
“Our leaders practice what they expect others to do.”	51 (Low)	5
“In my church involvement, I know that I can count on the full support from the leaders.”	75 (High)	5
“Messages from the leadership of church can be taken at face value.”	68 (High)	7

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest raw score of 3.48, with fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest with a score of 4.72, with ten negative responses.

Table 4.30. Low and High Cluster Statements for Financial Leadership (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“I am aware of our church’s financial condition.”	61 (Low)	9
“Our church effectively manages its financial resources.”	83 (High)	7

The subgroup of those who traveled over thirty minutes to church scored the lowest score of 3.50, with six negative responses. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest score of 4.75 with ten negative responses.

Table 4.31. Low and High Cluster Statements for Effective Management (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Our committees or task forces effectively contribute to the overall success of this church.	57 (Low)	9
“New information is effectively communicated to a large number of church members.”	64 (Low)	16
“This church makes effective use of various communication methods.”	97 (High)	2
“Our church effectively meets goals.	96 (High)	4

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest raw score of 3.47, with fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest score of 4.53, with eight negative responses.

Key indicator #4: cloister/missional. The Cloister/Missional indicator measures the success of the church in meeting the needs of various demographic segments (children, seniors, singles, families, etc.). Two scales were used to collect data for this indicator. The scales were focused on the local impact of the church and the ability of the church to meet the needs of the congregation and community (see Figure 4.9).

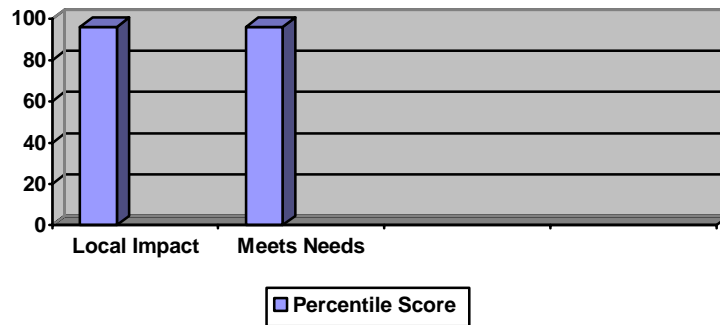


Figure 4.9. Overall summary cloister/mission (second survey)

The lowest scoring cluster statements and the highest scoring statements for the incongruence/code indicator are presented in Tables 4.31 and 4.32.

Table 4.32. Low and High Cluster Statements for Meets Needs (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“This church effectively meets the needs of teenage youth.”	72 (Low)	11
“Our church effectively meets the needs of its senior citizens.”	84 (Low)	9
“I am satisfied with the church’s programs and services outside of our regular worship service.”	98 (High)	4
“This church effectively meets the needs of its children.”	93 (High)	4

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest raw score of 3.60, with fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 70-year-olds and older had the highest score of 4.67, with nine negative responses.

Table 4.33. Low and High Cluster Statements for Local Impact (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Our church strives to make a difference in people’s lives outside of our own church.”	80 (Low)	7
“Our church keeps up with the Changing needs of our community.”	83 (Low)	7
“Our church’s programs and ministries are effectively promoted in our community.”	99 (High)	4
“Our church’s programs and ministries are effectively promoted in our community.”	98 (High)	4

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest score of 3.73, with fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds had the highest score of 4.73, with ten negative responses.

Key indicator #5: inertia/reinvention. The inertia/reinvention indicator measures the factors involved in the change process of the church. Three scales were used to collect data for this indicator. The scales were focused on embracing change, innovation and creativity, and communication about change (see Figure 4.10).

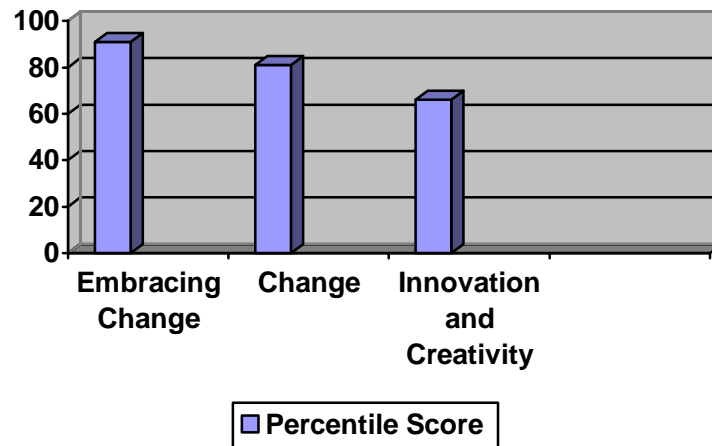


Figure 4.10. Overall summary inertia/reinvention (second survey).

The lowest scoring cluster statements and the highest scoring statements for the Incongruence/Code indicator are presented in Tables 4.33, 4.34, and 4.35.

Table 4.34. Low and High Cluster Statements for Communication about Change (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Leaders keep me informed about new things that concern me at the church.”	59 (Low)	14
“When big decisions are made, many people are included in the decision-making process.”	62 (Low)	17
“When concerns are voiced to leadership, those concerns are taken seriously.”	81 (High)	13
“Our leaders accept constructive feedback.”	64 (High)	12

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest with a raw score of 3.10, with fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest with a raw score of 4.44, with eight negative responses.

Table 4.35. Low and High Cluster Statements for Embracing Change (N=59)

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“Changes are readily embrace by our congregation.”	74 (Low)	18
“Visitors quickly experience what Our church is all about.”	85 (Low)	9
“Our church effectively closes down programs and ministries that are no longer effective.”	97 (High)	11
“Each individual member feels connected to the big picture of what the church is trying to accomplish.”	96 (High)	13

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest with a raw score of 3.14, including fifteen negative responses. The subgroup of 56-69-year-olds scored the highest with a raw score of 4.43, including ten negative responses.

**Table 4.36. Low and High Cluster Statements for Innovation and Creativity
(N=59)**

Statement	Percentile Score	% Negative
“My church is ... upbeat.”	55 (Low)	9
“My church is ... contemporary.”	66 (Low)	7
“My church is ... innovative.”	87 (High)	4
“My church is ... cutting edge.”	84 (High)	13

The subgroup of 41-55 year-olds scored the lowest with a 3.71 raw score, including fourteen negative responses. The subgroup of 70 years old and older had the highest score of 4.63, with eight negative responses.

Specific questions were asked to help determine the views of the participants concerning the worship and worship services of the church. Cluster questions were asked to evaluate the participants on their perceived effectiveness of the worship services. Table 4.21 presents the lowest scoring cluster statements and highest scoring cluster statements for the worship section of the survey.

Table 4.37. Low and High Cluster Statements for Worship Evaluation (N=59)

Statement	Raw Score	% Negative
“Our worship service services attracts new people to our church.”	4.19 (Low)	5
“People really like our church’s music.”	4.21 (Low)	2
“Our minister’s sermons are helpful to me in my every day life.”	4.63 (High)	2
“I look forward to attending Worship every week.”	4.60 (High)	2

Key Indicator Comparison of Survey #1 and Survey #2

The overall summary provides insight into the missional nature of Vansant Baptist Church, as perceived by the participants of this study. *A comparison of the before and after surveys indicate that the percentile score decreased for every key indicator and for every subgroup for each indicator.* Figures 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, 4.14, and 4.15 present a comparison of the percentile scores for the before and after surveys.

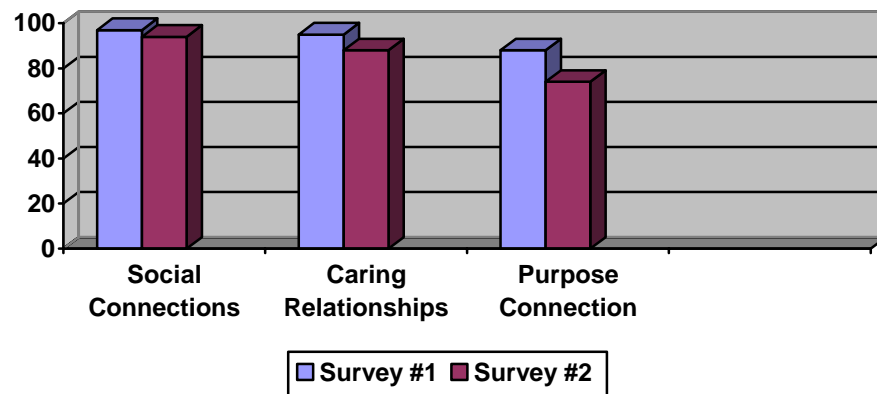


Figure 4.11. Key indicator 1 comparison: consumerism/community

The largest change in the consumerism/community category happened in the subgroup of “Personal Connection to Church’s Purpose,” which decreased from the 88th percentile to the 74th percentile.

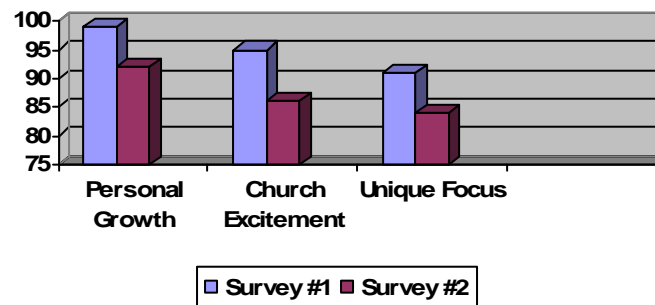


Figure 4.12. Key indicator 2 comparison: incongruence/code.

The largest change in the incongruence/code category happened in the subgroup of “Excitement about the Church,” which decreased from the 95th percentile to the 86th percentile. The cluster statements that presented the largest change in this subgroup was

the statement, “I am satisfied with our church’s worship service,” and, “I love telling my friends about my church.”

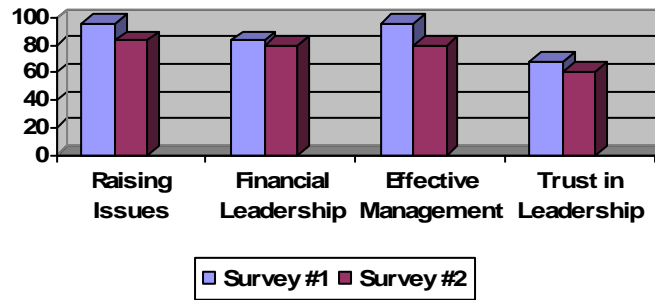


Figure 4.13. Key indicator 3 comparison: autocracy/shared leadership.

The largest change in the autocracy/shared leadership category was in the subgroup of “Effective Management,” which decreased from the 96th percentile to the 80th percentile. The cluster statement that represented the greatest change in this subgroup was, “Our leaders effectively establish the church’s direction, purpose, and objective.”

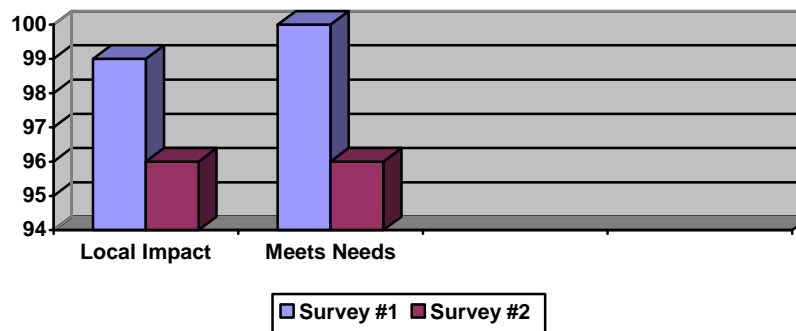


Figure 4.14. Key indicator 4: cloister/mission.

The largest change in the cloister/mission category was the “Meets Needs” subgroup, which decreased from the 100th percentile to the 96th percentile. The change for the category is not that significant; however, one change in the cluster statements was more dramatic. The score for the statement, “This church effectively meets the needs of its teenage youth,” dropped from the 98th percentile to the 72nd percentile. The negative responses changed from 2 percent to 11 percent.

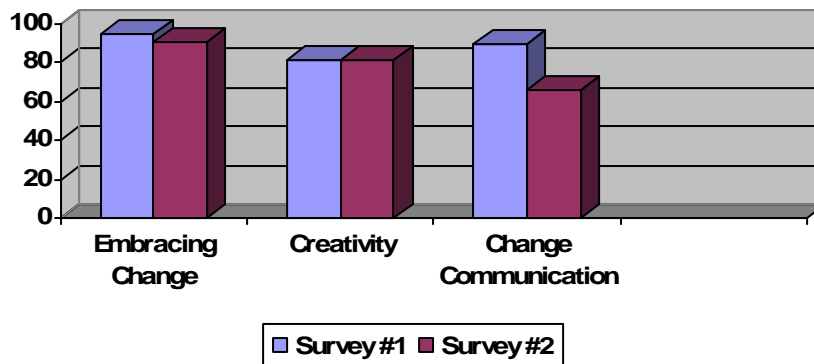


Figure 4.15. Key indicator 5: inertia/reinvention.

The largest change in the inertia/reinvention category came in the “Change Communication” subgroup, which decreased from the 90th percentile to the 66th percentile. Two cluster statements saw particularly high changes from survey #1 to survey #2. The statement, “When big decisions are made, many people are included in the decision-making process” dropped from the 94th percentile to the 62nd percentile. The statement, “leaders keep me informed about new things that concern me at the church,” dropped from the 85th percentile to the 59th percentile. (see Table 4.38)

Table 4.38. Change in Inertia/Reinvention Cluster Statements from Survey #1 to Survey #2 (N=59)

Statement	Survey #1 Percentile	Survey #2 Percentile
“When big decisions are made, many people are included in the decision-making process.”	94	62
“Leaders keep me informed about new things that concern me at the church.”	85	59

Summary of Major Findings

Measurable changes occurred in the participants’ perception of Vansant Baptist Church following the completion of the eight-week worship curriculum that was completed. The cultural context of Vansant Baptist Church, which was examined by the participants, seemed to have played a role in their understanding of worship and its relation to the mission of the church. The results were different than I anticipated and surprising to me even though I had been the pastor of Vansant Baptist Church for over twelve years. Chapter 5 explores these issues.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Background

The motivation for this research project was a concern over the influence of megachurch recipes and canned approaches to leading a local church to become a missional church. The cultural differences I experienced in Fort Worth, Texas, and Vansant, Virginia, were dramatic and warranted unique approaches to the church realizing its biblical mission. The small, inner-city church I pastored in Fort Worth was quite different than the rural, small-town church I pastored in Vansant. The language, dialogue, mannerisms, and viewpoints were all unique to each of these cultures. The common characteristic that these two cultures shared was that most of the people living in each community were not followers of Christ.

The temptation to reproduce the results of popular churches without consideration for the uniqueness of the church and the cultural context causes frustration and pain. Many churches and pastors have experienced severe conflict because of this common mistake. The Bible is clear that God's intention is to work with humanity within their cultural framework to reach people for Jesus Christ rather than trying to duplicate the latest fad or church-growth trend.

Surprising Observation

A surprising observation from the research is that the average percentile score dropped in every category from survey #1 to survey #2. The anticipated result on my part was that the scores would go up. The data proved that theory inadequate. The scores of the participants in survey #1 were higher than the national average. A reasonable

observation is that the participants were self-deluded concerning the missional nature of Vansant Baptist Church. The participants thought they were a biblical and missional church because they did not really know what such a church would look like. The worship curriculum showed the participants that they were not a missional church. The results of survey #2 indicate that the participants now question the vision and programs of the church in relation to its missional calling.

The effect of the curriculum caused the participants to be more critical of the effectiveness of the church. In other words, an honest evaluation occurred after the participants studied the true meaning of worship, cultural awareness, missional worship, and evangelism. A recognition developed among the participants that the church was not being as effective in transforming lives as they had originally thought. In fact, close to the end of the eight-week curriculum, the chairperson of the deacons began to discuss the impact the study was having on the church. During the discussion the chair person remarked, "The study opened my eyes and reminded me of what I am supposed to be doing." The remark made by the chairperson was echoed by other deacons in the meeting. The participants learned that church was not about personal preferences but about honoring God through authentic worship and being missional in nature. The goal of the church after completing the study is to be doers of the word, and not hearers only.

Transforming/Missional Church

Transformed lives are a key ingredient in determining the effectiveness of a local church. The missional calling of the church is lived out in churches, communities, and individuals that have been transformed by the gospel. The Transforming Church Index evaluates the effectiveness of a local church in reaching its missional calling. The

index was used to measure whether or not Vansant Baptist Church was truly effective in transforming its local community and members through the power of God.

Consumerism/Community

The church has been impacted by the consumer mentality of the American culture. Production has in some cases replaced community. A healthy community is one where people experience a combination of several things. In a healthy community, members experience social connections, caring relationships, and feel personally connected to the church's overarching purpose. Vansant Baptist Church scored above average for this indicator, which is not surprising considering the cultural framework of the Vansant community.

The surveys completed by the participants revealed that they have strong ties to the church through social connections and caring relationships. The connection to the purpose of the church was much weaker. The impact of the worship curriculum, once completed by the participants, was to reduce their understanding of a personal connection to the church's purpose and increase a communal understanding. A clear vision and purpose helps drive the church to fulfill its calling as a missional church.

Incongruence/Code

A church's code is its identity or personality. A missional church has a clear sense of purpose, vision, and values. No incongruency exists between what these churches say and what they do. Code shapes the church's culture, values, and mission. Division and pain occur when the church acts outside of its cultural code or, in other words, when the church's behavior is incongruent with its stated values.

A missional church must understand its cultural code. One of the ways understanding is gained is through discovering its uniqueness. The participants' perception of the uniqueness of Vansant was the lowest in this key indicator section. The overall scale score was in the 84th percentile, with 7 percent negative responses. Incongruency exists in the understanding of the participants in the group or groups that the church is seeking to reach. The lowest percentile score came on the following statement: "Our church has a clearly defined group(s) of people that we are trying to reach and serve." Also, the incongruency is magnified in this area because the participants scored lower than average on the following cluster statement in this subgroup: "This church has clearly differentiated itself from other churches in effective ways."

The overall percentile scores dropped in these areas after the participants completed the worship curriculum. The project curriculum addressed the need for cultural understanding, worship services that are directed toward Generation Y, and the role that media and music play in worship. The participants seemed to have acknowledged a deficiency in the church in the incongruency/code indicator section. The negative change in the measure of "Unique Focus" encourages further teaching and leadership in this area in order for the church to become missional in its nature.

Autocracy/Shared Leadership

The American culture tends to view leadership as the person who has control. Missional churches see the value and productivity of shared leadership. Ford argues for a differentiation among power, authority, and leadership (95):

- Power zone leadership: relies on punishment and consequence.

- Authority zone leadership: delivers what people want and desire.
- Leadership zone leaders: raise conflicted but important issues, even if those cause distress among the people (95-97).

The participants scored in the lowest percentile in this key indicator, lower than any of the others following the completion of the worship curriculum. In fact, two of the biggest subgroups experienced the greatest decrease in scores in this area. The subgroup of “Effective Management” and “Raising Issues” dropped from the 96th percentile to the 80th percentile (see Figure 5.1).

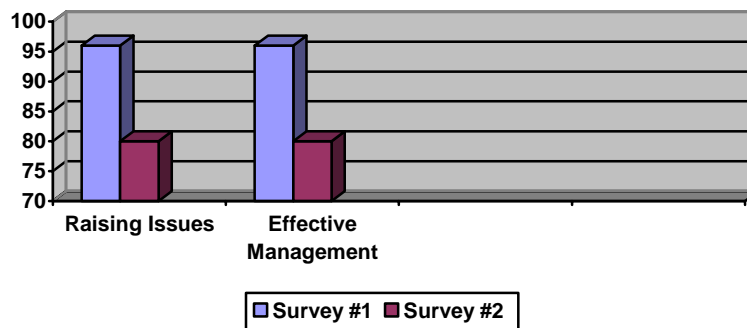


Figure 5.1. Change in key indicator 3 subgroups from survey #1 to Survey #2.

The “Raising Issues” subgroup measures the perception that the input of the people in the church is valuable. Even if leaders make unpopular decisions, this subgroup seeks to identify whether or not the leaders value the input of the people during the process. The “Effective Management” subgroup measures what the index

calls the “building blocks” of leadership: communicating information, establishing direction, mentoring people, meeting goals, clarifying responsibilities, and celebrating achievements. The most troubling cluster statement in this section from survey #2 that is directly related to becoming a missional church is the following: “Our leaders effectively establish the church’s direction, purpose, and objectives.” The lowest score in the study occurred in this section on survey #2. The subgroup “Trust in Leadership” scored in the 61st percentile.

The decrease in these two subgroups identifies that the participants want to voice their opinions and concerns about the direction of the church. The participants do perceive a lack of trust when dealing with the leadership of the church. The worship curriculum addressed the need for open discussion concerning change and the value of contextualizing the gospel presentation to appeal to the local community. In fact, one exercise in the curriculum dealt with a church board unwilling to change its outreach methods to have a better appeal to the community.

A possible explanation for the decrease in this key indicator, and specifically the two subgroups, raising issues, and effective management, is the emphasis of the worship curriculum on the value of contextualization. The issues of leadership, contextualization, and change forced the participants to focus on the leadership style of the leaders and whether they were exemplifying power, authority, or true leadership. True leadership evolves from trust, and this issue must be addressed by Vansant Baptist Church if it truly desires to become a missional church.

Cloister/Missional

An outward focus is evident when a church meets a variety of needs. The needs of a community are diverse and challenging. The needs vary in demographic groups (children, seniors, singles, married, divorced), age, ethnic groups, and economic status. The church must meet the needs of its community in order to be defined as a missional church. The participants of this study perceived Vansant Baptist to excel in this area, although a slight decrease in the subgroups from survey #1 to survey #2 appeared. However, a major decrease happened for the following cluster statement: “Our church keeps up with the changing needs of our community.” The participants perceived Vansant Baptist Church to be in the 95th percentile in survey #1, while on survey #2 their perception dropped to the 83rd percentile. The worship curriculum I designed focused an entire chapter on “Understanding the Church and the Culture” (see Appendix B). Also, chapter six of the curriculum, titled “Worship for a New Generation,” focused on the need to better understand Generation Y and how a church could develop a worship service that would appeal to this group (See Appendix B). The significant percentile change in the cluster statement signifies that the curriculum helped the participants of the church recognize a calling to focus more on the needs of the community than on personal needs. If Vansant Baptist Church is going to become a missional church, the needs of the community must be a priority.

Inertia/Reinvention

Change is one of the essential factors needed in the church if it becomes a missional church. The process that a church uses to introduce change, how the church

handles the change, and the communication about change are critical in its overall effect on the missional nature.

One of the most significant changes occurred in this key indicator. The subgroup of “Communication about Change” decreased from survey #1 to survey #2 by 24 percentile points (see Figure 5.2).

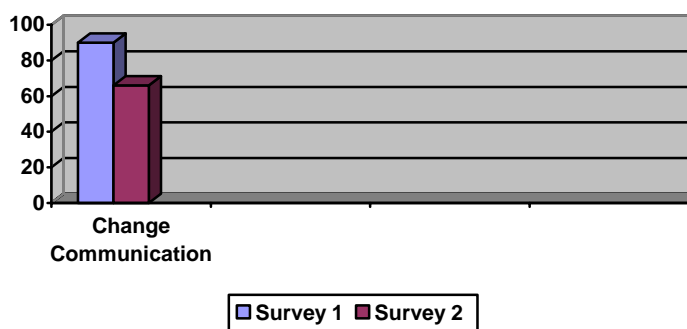


Figure 5.2. Percentile change in subgroup change communication from survey #1 to survey #2.

The significant change in this subgroup is magnified by two particular cluster statements. The two cluster statements decreased significantly from survey #1 to survey #2. The two cluster statements were the following:

- “When big decisions are made, many people are included in the decision-making process.”
- “Leaders keep me informed about new things that concern me at the Church” (see Table 4.38).

The participants perceived that their voice was not being heard in the decision making process of the church. The awareness of these issues was brought to their

attention through the curriculum and its emphasis on missional worship and cultural understanding. The leadership must develop a clear path of communication between the congregation and themselves in order for the church to become a missional church.

Postmodern Culture

The temptation to reproduce megachurch success *en masse* has left many churches deemed irrelevant by many in the postmodern culture. The idea of an “infomercial” presentation during worship has created a deepened cynicism by a postmodern culture. The low tolerance for hypocrisy has elevated the importance of a lifestyle of worship. The curriculum for this study and the instrument that measured the data pinpointed some key areas that Vansant Baptist Church needs to address that have been influenced by the postmodern culture. The areas that will be discussed in this section were all areas that Vansant Baptist Church needed to see improvement in order to reach its goal of becoming a missional church.

First, the lack of trust in the leadership is a key area for postmodern culture. The scandals of the megachurch pastors and television evangelists have heightened the lack of trust. Southern Baptists are not immune to these types of scandal. Recent revelations have been reported involving Southern Baptist pastors connected to sexual abuse, tax evasion, and marital infidelity scandals. The impact of these scandals has disillusioned the postmodern culture to an unprecedented level. The serious scandals have not happened at Vansant Baptist Church, but the postmodern culture inherently has a lack of trust in the leadership.

Second, the postmodern thinker is attracted to spiritual matters but not necessarily church. An institutional approach to religion would generally be discarded,

but an attention focused on personal spirituality would seem to be a starting point with the postmodern culture. The worship curriculum and the Transforming Church Index identified the need to change the approach to evangelism and discipleship. The focus of the church should shift from just trying to get people to come to church to hear the gospel, to equipping those already coming and release them with the gospel to the culture. The personal desires of the participants are diverse and can never be fully met by the church. The focus must shift from personal satisfaction to a mission. The postmodern culture is steeped in barriers of individualism. Therefore, the church must be a place where they are heard and their ideas taken seriously. Effective worship is measured by not only what happens on the stage, but by the actions of the church in fulfilling its mission.

The curriculum and instrument that measured the data focused on the culture and code of the church. A church's code is its identity or personality. A popular method of evangelism and church growth is to imitate certain models, such as these from Willowcreek or Saddleback. The attempt to clone or borrow methods and visions of other models leaves the church detached from its own culture, gifts, strengths, and context. Ford points out the necessity of the attachment to the church code by the congregation:

In our postmodern world, the primacy of autonomy and reason as the twin arbiters of reality continues to fade, while the primacy of relationship continues to rise. Code emerges from those relationships. We can think of code as the collective identity of a given culture and as the shared norms adopted by groups within the culture. In other words, code exists at both macro and micro levels. (63)

A postmodern culture includes individuals who are seeking to be connected in relationships, not clever marketing or mimicry of the latest fad.

Limitations of the Study

The curriculum I designed titled “Worship: A Lifestyle, Not an Hour” and the instrument used to measure the results were effective means of gaining insight into the connection between cultural understanding, worship, and the mission of the church. Nonetheless, changes could make the study stronger.

Curriculum

The eight-week Bible study curriculum was adequate. An additional chapter on a biblical model of a true missional church would have added important content to the study. The curriculum discussed the issue of the purpose of the church, but an entire chapter dedicated to the topic would have been helpful. Eight weeks seem to be an adequate amount of time to spend on the subject and maintain continuity within the church in relation to other necessary Bible studies that were scheduled.

A limitation of the curriculum was its presentation. I held training sessions for each individual facilitator of the study. However, because the curriculum was presented in multiple settings with multiple facilitators, I had limited control over what content of the curriculum became the focus of the group. The information covered and the conclusions drawn by each group could have had an impact on data that was received at the completion of the study.

Finally, I was interested in missional preaching and worship several years before the study was conducted. I began preaching missional sermons and leading the church to a missional church understanding around 2001. Therefore, I influenced many of the participants years before the study. The intervention, particularly the pre-survey, could have been skewed because of my interest and preaching that focused on the topic. Prior

to 2001, I did very little preaching missional worship and it is my understanding that previous pastors did not focus on the topic.

Data Collection

With regard to data collection, the use of focus groups at the end of the study could have strengthened the information. The concern was that my personal relationship with the participants would have influenced the discussion. The topics that were discussed and the information gathered could be interpreted by some of the participants to be a personal evaluation of me as the senior pastor. Particularly, because the topics involved worship, worship planning, outreach, congregational satisfaction, and community perception of the church, the participants would normally feel uncomfortable discussing them in a public setting in which I am the facilitator. The confidentiality of the index used to measure the data ensured openness. Focus groups could have provided more depth to the data gathered. Many of the participants finished the curriculum with significant questions that must be addressed in the future. Several of the participants noted the extended length of time that was needed to complete the index. Finally, if the study is replicated, the information gathered could be separated by class so that the results from each individual class could be contrasted and compared.

Participants

The participants of the study provided a diverse group that represented most demographic segments of the church congregation. The study utilized twenty-five percent of the congregation. The size of the group suggests that more evaluation is needed to ensure that all ages, genders, races, and personality types are included in the study. The study is limited because it was conducted during the time allotted for

Sunday school. The average Sunday school attendance is about 40 percent of the average worship attendance. Since the study involved many areas of worship and worship evaluation, it was limited to those who attended Sunday school. A study could be done that presented the seven-week curriculum at other times besides Sunday school to help with the inclusion of an even more diverse group.

Follow-Up Study

The post-application instrument was an immediate response to the program. The significant impact of this study will be seen six months to a year at Vansant Baptist Church. Eight weeks is a limited time to expect consistent theological and behavioral changes. A follow-up instrument should be used in the future to measure the impact of the curriculum in the future. The changes in the church in the next year should be more easily measured. The expectations of change that I have are the following:

- A clear and more accessible path of communication between the congregation and the leadership.
- A deeper understanding of the worship of God, as opposed to a focus on personal style.
- A missional depth to the worship because of its increased purity.
- A love for the community that leads to outreach, innovation, and creativity.
- An increase in worship attendance.
- An increase in small group attendance.
- Clearly identified group(s) of people that Vansant Baptist is committed to reaching with the message of Jesus Christ.

- A worship service that is designed around the unique culture of Vansant with the target outreach group in mind.

Serendipitous Observations

The curriculum and the data collection provided surprising information about the subject group. The curriculum was designed for a wide audience with diverse backgrounds. The curriculum was intended to be used by groups who preferred a variety of worship styles.

The age group 41-55 scored the lowest on every key indicator, subgroup, and every cluster question but one. The raw score for this age group was 3.54, lower than any other age group. In other words, the age group of 41-55 had more negative responses to the survey questions than other subgroup category in the study. The 41-55 year old subgroup, overall, had the lowest average score of any subgroup. The conclusion is that the subgroup of 41-55 year-olds has the most negative perception of the church being missional than any other subgroup (see Figure 5.3).

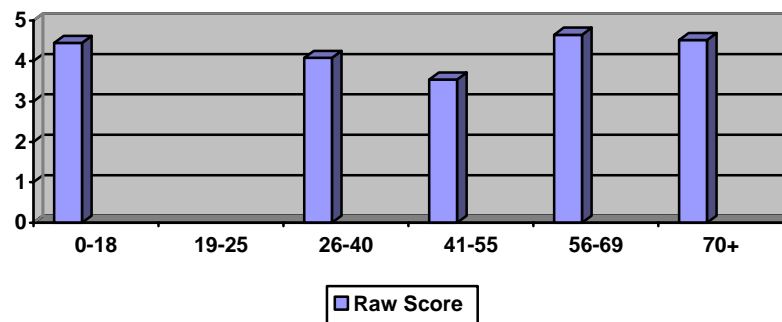


Figure 5.3. Raw score comparison of age subgroup.

The age group of 41-55 year-olds also had fifteen negative responses, which means that at least fifteen people had a raw score lower than 3.00. The church must address this age group for several reasons. First, 41-55 year-olds are the parents of teenagers. Teenagers are a group that needs to be influenced by a positive church experience at a vulnerable age. Second, 41-55 year-olds have skills and resources needed by the church to reach its goal of being a missional church. A positive observation is that the 70 and older subgroup had a high score that translates into a high regard for the church. Often, the senior adult age group rebels because of a feeling of neglect when change is implemented to lead to a missional church environment.

A positive observation that should be made is that the curriculum and instrument used to collect data created an atmosphere of discussion concerning the nature of Vansant Baptist Church. Several long time members and small group facilitators expressed to me that the Sunday school classes participating in the study had powerful discussion. Also, the facilitators expressed that some of the individuals who participated in the discussion had never done so in the past. A challenge for the leadership has thus evolved from these discussions. The church has identified weaknesses and areas of improvement that must be addressed in order for the church to become a missional church. Developing a vision, creating an atmosphere of teamwork, and authenticity of leadership will be needed to see the goal come to fruition.

An observation that the data exposed was the fact that thirty-six of the fifty-six participants had attended Vansant Baptist Church for ten years or more. Only two of the participants had been at Vansant Baptist Church for less than two years. The church is not connecting new members to a Sunday school class. The worship service has shown

significant growth the last five years, but the Sunday school has lagged behind. The call to be a missional church will require that Vansant Baptist connect individuals into smaller groups to build relationships and provide an environment where the vision can be communicated verbally and through actions.

The data indicates that only three people who participated in the study were married with no children. The participants who were married with children constituted the highest group with 38. The data points out that eight singles and six divorced or widowed individuals participated. A demographic study should be done by Vansant Baptist to determine if these results reflect the makeup of the community or if the church is failing to reach one of these demographic segments. I believe from a personal evaluation and no substantial data that a large number of divorced individuals are among the demographics of the Vansant community who are not being reached by the church.

Further Study

As a result of the research, several new studies have been identified that would be helpful in leading church to be missional in nature.

Code versus Incongruence

A related study should examine the role that misunderstanding the code of the church plays in developing a missional approach to worship. Many churches have done demographic studies of their community and implemented programs as a result of the study; however, the programs were incongruent to the code of the church and, therefore, ultimately failed. Crabtree and Weese's work on church cultures raises interesting questions concerning the church culture within the community culture.

Leadership

A related study should also be done on the role of the leadership in the church becoming missional. The structure and style of leadership could have a direct influence on the nature of the church. The personality of the leadership and its relational history to the church also play a part. Many studies have been done in the area of leadership. For this study, research on the connection of the cultural identification, missional worship understanding, and personal leadership style would be helpful.

Postscript

The project used in the study helped change my attitude toward ministry. The goal of being “successful” as defined by many inside and outside the church has been redefined for me. Numbers, perception, style, and programs do not give an adequate picture of God’s work being done for his kingdom. God has called persons to a specific place at a specific time so that they can be used to help transform that place into the image of Christ. No place is better or more important than the other. They are all unique yet all the same. Each place is unique in its culture, but they are all the same in need. Each place is in need of being transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. An understanding of biblical worship, diffused to the people through the lens of cultural understanding, can lead to a great movement of God.

APPENDIX A
PRE-CURRICULUM AND POST-CURRICULUM TRANSFORMING
CHURCH INDEX

Vasant Baptist Church
Vasant VA

September 2007

Developed by TAG
www.transformingchurch.net

Introduction to the Transforming Church Index

Thank you for taking the time to complete the Transforming Church Index. We have developed this survey instrument as a tool to help you and your church assess its organizational competencies. The results of the Transforming Church Index will assist your church in fulfilling its mission. The survey will take you about 20-30 minutes to complete. Please do not labor over your choices for any one question. Usually your first response is the most accurate. Please be assured that your personal survey results will be kept **completely confidential**. **Your individual responses will only be seen by the outside consulting firm who is conducting the survey.**

**Please seal your completed survey in an envelope and return it to your church office
(survey administrator) no later than (date filled in here).**

1: Church Code

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. This church has a clearly defined vision of the future.	1	2	3	4	5
2. This church has clearly differentiated itself from other churches in effective ways.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am excited about where our church is headed in the next few years.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I love telling my friends about my church.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Our church has a clearly defined group(s) of people that we are trying to reach and serve.	1	2	3	4	5
6. This church's goals and direction are clear to me.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Visitors quickly experience what our church is all about.	1	2	3	4	5

Instructions: The following statements address how you perceive the church's culture. The culture represents the general atmosphere of your church (what it stands for, where it is going, what is truly important to it). For each statement, circle the number that best reflects your perceptions about your church.

2: Boundaries

Instructions: The following statements address how you perceive your church's expectations. These are the responsibilities surrounding your membership. For each statement, please circle the number that best describes what you believe is true at your church.

	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I have a clear sense of how decisions are made in the church.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Our pastors and leaders do an excellent job of communicating expectations to members.	1	2	3	4	5
3. When concerns are voiced to leadership, those concerns are taken seriously.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The church promotes a healthy balance between work, home, and church responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Lines of authority and responsibility are clear in this church.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When big decisions are made, many people are included in the decision-making process.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Our church effectively meets goals (deadlines, results, and budgets).	1	2	3	4	5
8. Our church takes time to celebrate achievements and accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5

3: Shared Leadership

Instructions: The following statements address how you perceive both the formal leadership (whether pastors or pastors and laity) and opportunity for informal leadership at your church. For each statement, circle the number that best describes your observations and experience.

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Our leaders effectively establish the church's direction, purpose, and objectives.					
2. Our leaders are unified in purpose and direction.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I have a clearly defined role in the church.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Our leaders accept constructive feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am involved in a regular smaller group within the church.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Our leaders effectively mentor other people in leadership roles.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel cared for by a leader within this church.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Our leaders practice what they expect others to do.	1	2	3	4	5

4: Managing Change

Instructions: The following statements address how your church deals with change. For each statement, circle the number that best describes your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
1. This church retains its members.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When unpopular changes occur, people who disagree are still cared for in this church.	1	2	3	4	5
3. All members are encouraged to discuss their opinions about change.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Our church keeps up with the changing needs of our community.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Changes at the church rarely catch me by surprise.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Our church effectively closes down programs or ministries that are no longer effective.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Changes are readily embraced by our congregation.	1	2	3	4	5
8. When people decide to leave the church, they are cared for in the process.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Our ministries and programs reflect the felt needs of our community.	1	2	3	4	5

5: Healthy Communication

Instructions: The following statements address how your church communicates and exchanges information. For each statement, circle the number that best reflects your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. New information is effectively communicated to a large number of church members.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Everyone is free to speak his or her mind here.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Our local community (or neighborhood) knows what our church stands for.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Great efforts are made to understand various points of view.	1	2	3	4	5
5. In most conversations in this church, people are treated with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Difficult issues or subjects are addressed in helpful ways.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Messages from the leadership of this church can be taken at face value.	1	2	3	4	5
8. This church makes effective use of various communication methods (bulletins, newsletters, telephone, e-mail).	1	2	3	4	5
9. Conflicts are handled well by leadership.	1	2	3	4	5

10. Our church's programs and ministries are effectively promoted in our community.	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

6: Equipping the Members

Instructions: The following statements address the effectiveness in equipping and developing members of your church. Please circle the number that best reflects your opinion and experience.

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
1. The church does a good job of helping members identify their gifts and talents.	1	2	3	4	5
2. This church has helped me grow spiritually.	1	2	3	4	5
3. This church has helped me be more effective in my every-day life.	1	2	3	4	5
4. If I need counseling or advice, I know who to go to in the church.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The church cares as much about its members as it does about its programs.	1	2	3	4	5
6. As a result of attending this church, I feel more prepared to minister to others than I would have otherwise.	1	2	3	4	5
7. This church stressed the importance of personal growth and spiritual maturity.	1	2	3	4	5
8. This church addresses the practical needs of its members.	1	2	3	4	5

7: Outreach and Impact

Instructions: The following statements address your church's outward focus: involvement and support of needs outside of your church's leadership and members. This may include your local community, your investment in national concerns, or even your church's help to other countries. Please circle the number that best describes your beliefs about your church.

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Our church strives to make a difference in people's lives outside of our own church.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Our church has a reputation as a "good citizen" in our community.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I have been encouraged by this church to reach out to my neighbors.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have received training from this church in some form of outreach, evangelism, or missions work.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Our church is as interested in "making a difference" in our community as we are in growing our own membership.	1	2	3	4	5
6. We set the standard for other churches to follow when it comes to community involvement.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I have participated in an outreach event sponsored by this church within the last twelve months.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Our church has an effective follow-up program for those who have visited our church.	1	2	3	4	5
9. If our church were to close down, our contribution to the community would be sorely missed.	1	2	3	4	5

8: Trust in Church's Direction

Instructions: The following statements address your beliefs about how much you trust your church and its leadership. For each statement, circle the number that best reflects your personal beliefs.

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
1. When our leaders tell us where we are heading, I can confidently trust in what they have said.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I believe our church is heading in the right direction.	1	2	3	4	5
3. In my church involvement, I know that I can count on full support from the leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Leaders keep me informed about new things that concern me at the church.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The leaders of the church have the best interest of the church in mind at all times.	1	2	3	4	5

9: Trust in Church's Financials

Instructions: The following statements address aspects of how you perceive the church to manage and discuss financial issues. Answer the questions according to your own experience.

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
1. I help support the church financially.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Our church effectively manages its financial resources.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Our leaders publicly discuss financial issues about the right amount of time (not too much, not too little).	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am aware of our church's financial condition.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Our church discusses financial issues in an appropriate manner.	1	2	3	4	5

10: Church as Community

Instructions: Healthy churches understand that they are a community of interconnected relationships. Please circle the answer that best corresponds to your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
1. I have a clear understanding of my role in fulfilling the church's mission.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Our church enjoys a healthy sense of fellowship and community.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My actions influence the church.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Our committees or task forces effectively contribute to the overall success of this church.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Each individual member feels connected to the big picture of what the church is trying to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Everyone is motivated by the church's vision for the future.	1	2	3	4	5
7. When one person is hurting around here, we effectively minister to that person.	1	2	3	4	5

11: Member Satisfaction

Instructions: The following questions reflect your level of satisfaction with various aspects of your church. Please circle the answer that best corresponds to your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. I am satisfied with our church's worship services.	1	2	3	4	5
2. This church effectively meets the needs of children.	1	2	3	4	5
3. This church effectively meets the needs of its teenage youth.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Our church effectively meets the needs of its single adults.	1	2	3	4	5
5. This church effectively meets the needs of its families.	1	2	3	4	5
6. This church effectively meets the needs of senior citizens.	1	2	3	4	5
7. This church's buildings and facilities are effective in supporting our ministries.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am satisfied with the church's programs and services outside of our regular worship service.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Overall, I am satisfied with the way that the leadership of this church is performing its job.	1	2	3	4	5

12: Member Input

Instructions: The following questions address your beliefs about yourself and your Role in the church. Using the scale provided, assess the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Place the number which best represents your response in the space provided to the left of each statement.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. I count around here.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am taken seriously around here.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am important around here.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am trusted around here.	1	2	3	4	5
5. There is faith in me around here.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I can make a difference around here.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am valuable around here.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am helpful around here.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am efficient around here.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am cooperative around here.	1	2	3	4	5

13: Your Church

Instructions: The following adjectives refer to ways that you might perceive your church. Using the scale provided, indicate the extent to which each word describes how you perceive your church. Circle the number which best represents your response.

	Disagree						Agree
1. Creative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Warm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Contemporary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Loving	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Upbeat	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Fellowship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Relational	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Cutting edge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Close-knit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Outreaching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14: Worship

Instructions: The following statements address aspects of your church's worship service. Using the scale provided, assess the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement, and circle the number which best represents your response.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. I feel inspired by our church's worship services.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Our worship services attract new people to the church.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The music in our worship services lifts my spirit.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I look forward to attending worship every week.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Our minister's sermons are helpful to me in my every day life.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am growing deeper in my relationship with God through our worship services.	1	2	3	4	5
7. People really like our church's music.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I can enthusiastically recommend our worship service to friends outside our church.	1	2	3	4	5
9. After attending worship, I am better able to deal with life.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Our minister's sermons draw people to this church.	1	2	3	4	5

15: Christian Education

Instructions: The following statements address aspects of your church's education programs. Using the scale provided, assess the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement, and circle the number which best represents your response.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. Our church provides excellent Christian education for children.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Our church provides excellent Christian education for teenagers.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Our church provides excellent Christian education for adults.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Our church effectively teaches the core elements of our faith.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Our church's Christian education is relevant to my everyday life.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My understanding of faith has grown through our church's educational programs.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The Christian education I have received from our church has prepared me well to minister to others.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My knowledge of the Bible is growing as a result of attending this church.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Our church's Christian education has made a significant difference in my life.	1	2	3	4	5

16: Buildings and Facilities

Instructions: The following statements address your church's buildings and facilities. Using the scale provided, assess the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement, and circle the number which best represents your response.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. Our buildings and property are visually appealing from the outside.	1	2	3	4	5		
2. Our church's buildings are highly visible to people in the local community.	1	2	3	4	5		
3. Because of our location, newcomers can easily find our church.	1	2	3	4	5		
4. Our buildings feel welcoming.	1	2	3	4	5		
5. Our facilities promote mingling and fellowship.	1	2	3	4	5		
6. Our buildings and facilities are effective in supporting our children's ministries.	1	2	3	4	5		
7. Our buildings and facilities are effective in supporting our teen ministries.	1	2	3	4	5		
8. Our buildings and facilities are effective in supporting our young adult ministries.	1	2	3	4	5		

9. Our buildings and facilities are effective in supporting our ministries for middle-aged adults. 1 2 3 4 5

10. Our buildings and facilities are effective in supporting our senior ministries. 1 2 3 4 5

11. Our education programs are better because of our facilities. 1 2 3 4 5

12. Our worship services are better because of our facilities. 1 2 3 4 5

Instructions: Please enter your personal information. In each category, please circle the number that most closely relates to you.

Length of Involvement: I have been attending this church for:

1. Less than two years
2. Between 2-4 years
3. Between 5-10 years
4. More than 10 years

Age Group: I am between the ages of:

1. 0-18
2. 19-25
3. 26-40
4. 41-55
5. 55-69
6. 70+

Church Position: My position with the church is:

1. Pastor/Paid Staff
2. Volunteer Leader
3. Church Member (not a volunteer leader)
4. Nonmember

Marital Status: I am:

1. Single, never married
2. Divorced or widowed
3. Married, no children
4. Married with children

Travel Time to Worship: To get from my home to the worship service, it generally takes me:

1. 0-10 Minutes
2. 11-20 Minutes
3. 21-30 Minutes
4. 31+ Minutes

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

APPENDIX B

A LIFESTYLE, NOT AN HOUR SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM

Session I Introduction: The subjects were welcomed to the session and thanked for their participation. The first questionnaire was administered to the subjects. The leader of the session gave an introduction to the study and discussed the format, expectations, and goals for the study. An overview of the remaining seven sessions were given. The subjects were reminded that they would be given questionnaires at the halfway point of the study and at the conclusion of the study.

Session 2 What Is Worship?

Overview: The biblical text used in this session was Psalm 96:8. In this session participants will encounter and discuss passages, terms, and theological concepts related to Biblical worship and their personal understanding of how worship is defined in the Bible. The participants were asked to define worship at the beginning and ending of the session.

Outcomes: As a result of this session, the participants will

1. Define biblical worship
2. Learn and be able to identify theological concepts taught in the Scripture regarding biblical worship and how it is acted out in their life.
3. Explore and discuss with each other how an understanding of biblical worship can transform their lifestyle.
4. Discuss and seek to identify what the present worship “style” of Vansant Baptist Church portrays about the congregation’s understanding of worship.

Session 3 Understanding Your Church and the Culture

Overview: The Scripture used in this session was 1 Corinthians 9:19-22. In this session the participants will see the need to develop a cultural understanding and to determine the cultural characteristics of their church’s neighborhood. This session will be guided by the Apostle

Paul's call for the Church to be missional in nature through cultural adaptation without compromising the message.

Outcomes: As a result of this session, participants will

1. Be able to recognize the Apostle Paul's call for cultural adaptation without compromising.
2. Be able to identify the cultural makeup of their church and community.
3. Recognize that Jesus was a student of cultural adaptation.
4. Develop an outline of the target group for their church.

Session 4 What Happens When You Worship?

Overview: The Scripture used in this session was Isaiah 6:3. In this session the participants will see that authentic worship leads to transformation and action. The participants will also discuss the difference between "feelings" and "action" as it relates to authentic worship.

Outcomes: As a result of this session, participants will

1. Study and understand the worship experience of the Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 6.
2. Discuss and share meaningful worship experiences and what made the worship experience meaningful.
3. Study and understand the worship experience of the early New Testament Church in Acts 2:42-47 and the outcome of this worship experience.
4. Recognize that when the church authentically worships in the presence of God, their lives are transformed and called to action.

Session 5 Is It Worship?

Overview: In this session the Scripture passage used was 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. The participants were asked to evaluate a Sunday morning worship service using a worship critique and review given to them by the instructor. Each participant evaluated the same worship

service using the provided guide. The participants will use their critique and review forms to determine what elements in the worship service were biblical, effective, meaningful, insignificant, or not appropriate.

Outcomes: As a result of this session, participants will:

1. Discuss their findings from the worship critique of the Sunday morning service.
2. Study and recognize the elements of worship found in the theophany of Isaiah 6.
3. Discuss as a group the elements they feel should be a part of a weekly worship service and why. The leader of the group provided a list of possible elements.
4. Discover that authentic worship is not completing the assigned tasks in the bulletin. Instead, the service should be designed in such a way as to allow everyone to experience God.
5. Discuss as a group things they would change about the worship service.
6. Complete the questionnaire administered at this session.

Session 6 Should Worship Be Evangelistic?

Overview: In this session the participants will wrestle with the question of whether or not the worship service should be an evangelistic event? The group will confront and interact with Sally Morgenthaler's four essentials needed in order to nourish a relationship with God as we encounter his presence in worship.

Outcomes: As a result of this session, the participants will

1. Will know and interact with the four elements that Sally Morgenthaler believes are essentials in order to nourish our relationship with God as we encounter his presence in worship.
2. Consider whether the Sunday morning worship service should be planned for Christians or pre-Christians.
3. Discuss and determine if there is a balance in the worship service of Vansant Baptist Church of worship and evangelism.

4. Discuss and evaluate the shared characteristics of 20 vital churches evaluated by Thomas G. Long.
5. Understand that authentic worship is in itself evangelistic. The real seeker in worship is God himself.
6. Discuss and evaluate whether it is a positive or a negative for the church to have different services geared toward reaching a certain group of people?

Session 7 Media and Music in Worship

Overview: The Scripture used for this session is Colossians 3:16. This session will seek to gain a deeper understanding of what determines the “sacredness” of music and the role music and media play in worship. The participants will be confronted with P.T. Forsyth’s assertion that music has the power to reflect and shape the human experience.

Outcomes: As a result of this session, the participants will

1. Be able to identify the biblical references and occurrences of music used in worship found in the biblical text.
2. Identify the six principles of music found in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3.
3. Discuss the characteristics Sally Morgenthaler thought should be present in worship music that will appeal to Christians and pre-Christians.
4. Evaluate the music used in the Sunday morning worship service of Vansant Baptist Church and determine what it says about the church.
5. View video segments designed to be used in worship settings and discuss within the group whether or not these types of media are useful or harmful for authentic worship.
6. Be confronted with the question of whether the new styles of worship constitute authentic worship or if it is simply entertainment.

Session 8 Worship for a New Generation

Overview: The participants will develop a deeper understanding of the postmodern generation, particularly Generation Y, and will develop a relevant worship service for Generation Y as a group project. The participants will read two recent articles found in *USA Today* concerning the postmodern culture and specifically Generation Y (born between 1977 and 1994).

Outcomes: As a result of this session, participants will

1. Be able to identify some of the characteristics of Generation Y.
2. Be confronted with the fact that Generation Y's view of culture is significantly different from those found in the Baby Boomer and Baby Buster generations.
3. Be charged with developing a worship service that would be appealing to Gen Y.
4. Complete the questionnaire administered at this session.

With the exception of the first session (Introduction), each session focused on a worship principle that sought to confront the participant about the true meaning of worship, why worship is done the way it is, and the importance of understanding the audience you are seeking to reach in your church.

WORKS CITED

- “About Us—Meet Southern Baptists.” *Southern Baptist Convention*. 19 March 2008.
 <<http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/default.asp>>.
- Adeney, Francis S. “Contextualizing Universal Values: A Method for Christian Mission.” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* Jan. 2007: 33-37.
- Athanasius. *The Incarnation of the Word of God: Being the Treatise of St. Athanasius, De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*. New York: Macmillan, 1946.
- Baldovian, John F. “Hippolytus and the Apostolic Tradition: Recent Research and Commentary.” *Theological Studies* Sept. 2003: 542.
- Barfoot, D. Scott. *Forced Pastoral Exits: An Exploratory Study*. 10 April 2008
 < <http://www.pastorinresidence.net/newsletter/SurveyPIR.pdf>> 1pp.
- Barna, George. *Evangelism That Works*. Ventura, California: Regal, 1995.
- . *The Second Coming of the Church*. Nashville: Word, 1998.
- Barrow, R. H. *Introduction to St. Augustine’s The City of God*. London: Faber and Faber, 1871.
- Benedicts, Daniel, and Craig Miller. *Contemporary Worship for the 21st Century*. Nashville. Discipleship Resources, 1995.
- Bergman, Sigurd. *God in Context*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003.
- Bevans, Stephen B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. New York: Orbis, 1992.
- Borchert, Gerald L. *John 1-11*. Nashville: Broadman, 1996.
- Bradshaw, Paul F. *The Background of Early Christian Worship*. Oxford, MA: Oxford, 2002.
- Briggs, C. A, S. R. Driver, and A. Plummer, eds. “1 Corinthians.” *The International*

- Critical Commentary*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1914.
- Brown, Raymond. *The Message of Deuteronomy*. Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1993.
- Chapman, Mark D. "Why Do We Still Recite the Nicene Creed at the Eucharist?"
Anglican Theological Review Spring 2005: 207-23.
- Corley, Bruce, Steve Lemke, and Mark Lovejoy, eds. *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture*. Nashville: Broadman, 2002.
- Couto, Richard A. *An American Challenge: Report on Economic Trends and Social Issues in Appalachia*. Dubuque, IA: Kendal-Hunt, 1994.
- Crabtree, J. Russell, and Carolyn Weese. *The Elephant in the Boardroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
- Douglas, Mary. *How Institutions Think*. Syracuse: Syracuse U, 1986.
- Eck, Diana L. *A New Religious America*. San Francisco: Harper, 2001.
- Eerdman, Charles. *The Acts*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966.
- Evans, Ernest. *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism*. London: SPCK, 1964.
- Fee, Gordon. *First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Ford, Kevin G. *Transforming Church*. Nashville: Tyndale, 2007.
- Froehlich, Karl. "Aminidab's Chariot: The Predicament of Biblical Interpretation."
The Princeton Seminary Bulletin 18.3 (1997): 263.
- Gaddy, C. Welton. *The Gift of Worship*. Nashville: Broadman, 1992.
- Gallois, Cynthia, and Victor J. Callan. *Communication and Culture: A Guide for Practice*. New York: Wiley, 1997.
- Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity*. San Francisco: Harper, 1984-85. 2 vols.

- Goold, Bill. Class Lecture. Florida Beeson Module. Fort Lauderdale, FL. 10 Feb. 2002.
- Grenz, Stanley J., and Roger E. Olson. *20th Century Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992.
- Grogan, Geoffrey W. "Isaiah." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Ed. Frank E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. 6: 3-354.
- Guder, Darrell L., ed. *Missional Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Hiebert, Paul. *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985.
- Hinson, Glenn E. *The Early Church*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- Hobbs, Herschel H. *The Baptist Faith and Message*. Nashville: Convention, 1971.
- Hofstede, Geert. *Cultures Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations*. San Francisco: Sage, 2001.
- Hunter, George G., III. *Church for the Unchurched: The Rebirth of Apostolic Congregations across the North American Mission Fields*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- . "Church for the Unchurched Conference. The Revised Story of St. Patrick." Willowcreek Community Church. Chicago, IL. 19 Oct. 2000.
- . *Radical Outreach*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.
- Jones, E. Stanley. *Christ at the Round Table*. New York: Abingdon, 1928.
- Kimball, Dan. *The Merging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- Kraft, Charles. *Anthropology for Christian Witness*. New York: Orbis, 1998.
- Lane, Patty. *A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multi-Cultural World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002.

- “The Largest Southern Baptist Communities.” *Adherents.com*. 30 Sept. 2005. 15 Jan. 2007 <http://www.adherents.com/largecom/com_sbc.html>.
- Lingenfelter, Sherwood. *Transforming Culture*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
- Luzbetak, Louis J. *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*. New York: Orbis, 1988.
- McBeth, Leon. *The Baptist Heritage*. Nashville: Broadman, 1987.
- McKenzie, John L. *The Power and the Wisdom: An Interpretation of the New Testament*. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1965.
- McKnight, Edgar V. *Postmodern Use of the Bible: The Emergence of Reader-Oriented Criticism*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1988.
- McKnight, Scott. “Five Streams of the Emerging Church.” *Christianity Today* 20 Jan. 2007: 1-7.
- McManus, Erwin Raphael. *An Unstoppable Force*. Loveland, CO: Group, 2001.
- McRay, John. *Paul: His Life and Teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Miller, Craig. *Postmoderns: The Beliefs, Hopes, and Fears of Young Americans*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1996.
- Moltmann, Jurgen. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- Morgan, G. Campbell. *The Great Physician: The Method of Jesus with Individuals*. New York: Revell, 1937.
- Morganthaler, Sally. *Worship Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- Nash, Robert N., Jr. *An 8-Track Church in a CD World*. Atlanta: Smyth and Helwys, 1997.

- Nathan, Rich, and Ken Wilson. *Empowered Evangelicals*. Michigan: Servant, 1995.
- Neuhaus, Richard John. *Freedom for Ministry*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979.
- Niebuhr, Richard H. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951.
- O'Brien, Peter. *Colossians, Philemon*. Dallas: Word, 1982.
- O'Collins, Gerald. *Incarnation/New Century Theology*. London: Continuum, 2002.
- Ogden, Greg. *The New Reformation*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1990.
- Palma, Robert J. *Karl Barth's Theology of Culture*. Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1983.
- Pecklers, Keith F. *Worship/New Century Theology*. New York: Continuum, 2003.
- Peterson, David. *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Retnadas, C. *Incarnation and Contextual Communication*. Tiruvalla, India: Christiava, Sahitya, Samity, 2000.
- Roxburgh, Alan J. *Reaching a New Generation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993.
- Schreiter, Robert J. *Constructing Local Theologies*. New York: Orbis, 1996.
- Schroeder, Frederick W. *Worship in the Reformed Tradition*. Philadelphia: United Church, 1966.
- Segler, Franklin M. *Christian Worship, Its Theology and Practice*. Nashville: Broadman, 1967.
- Stetzer, Ed. "Church Growth: When the Formulas Don't Work." *OnMission Magazine* Summer 2004: 23-30.
- . *Comeback Churches*. Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2007.
- Stevenson, Kenneth. *The First Rites*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1989.

- Sweet, Leonard. *Faithquakes*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.
- Tanner, Kathryn. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
- Tenney, Merrill C. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.
- Turner, Chris. "More Than 1,300 Staff Dismissed in 2005; Relationship Issues Again Take First Five Spots." *Lifeway: Biblical Solutions for Life*. 2 Oct. 2006. 15 Jan. 2007. <http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/rd_article_content/02815,A%253D163471%2526X%253D1>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. "Table P37 2000 Census." 25 Sept. 2002.
- Van Gelder, Craig. *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.
- Vaughn, Curtis. "Colossians." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978. 11: 161-226.
- Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. Wheaton, IL; Crossway, 1994.
- Wainwright, Geoffrey, and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, eds. *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.
- Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.
- Westerholm, Stephen. *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Whiteman, Darrell. "Contextualization: The Theory, the Gap, the Challenge." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* Jan. 1997: 2-7.
- Wiersma, William. *Research Methods in Education*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn, 2000.

Williams, D. H. "Christian History and Biography." *Christianity Today*. (Winter 2005);,
Pg. 17-27.

Willimon, William H. "Pulpit Resource Sample Week." *MediaCom Education Inc.* 6 Jan.
2002. 1 Jan. 2007 <[http://mediacom.mediacomonline.org.au/
vmenu/index.php?vmItem=pw11.html](http://mediacom.mediacomonline.org.au/vmenu/index.php?vmItem=pw11.html)>.

Wright, G. Ernest. *The Interpreter's Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1981.