

2013

Implementation of a Conference-Wide Church Planting Strategy Within the Texas Conference

Tom L. Evans

Andrews University

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Doctor of Ministry DMin](#) at Andrews University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin>

Recommended Citation

Evans, Tom L., "Implementation of a Conference-Wide Church Planting Strategy Within the Texas Conference" (2013). *Project Documents*. 44.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/44>

This Project Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Project Documents by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.



Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

Thank you for your interest in the

**Andrews University Digital Library
of Dissertations and Theses.**

*Please honor the copyright of this document by
not duplicating or distributing additional copies
in any form without the author's express written
permission. Thanks for your cooperation.*

ABSTRACT

IMPLEMENTATION OF A CONFERENCE-WIDE
CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY WITHIN
THE TEXAS CONFERENCE

by

Tom L. Evans

Adviser: Russell Burrill

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: IMPLEMENTATION OF A CONFERENCE-WIDE CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY WITHIN THE TEXAS CONFERENCE

Name of researcher: Tom L. Evans

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Russell Burrill, DMin

Date completed: June 2013

Problem

Recent statistics reveal that Texas has eight of the 15 most rapidly growing large cities in the United States. Annual growth rates for Texas are double the average for the rest of the United States. Due to a strong economy and a reasonable cost of living, both documented and undocumented immigration is on the rise. People in transition are more open to the gospel, but there needs to be a plan to reach them. Between 1995 and 2001, Texas added 18 churches (an average of only 2.6 churches per year). Based on 200 churches and companies, the average increase was only 1.3 percent per year. The addition of churches is not keeping pace with the population growth. This project seeks to develop a church planting strategy to reach Texas' growing population.

Method

A strategy for church planting was initiated in the Texas Conference with an emphasis on lay-led churches that were pastor coached. Various methods of vision-casting were utilized to inspire church planting conference-wide. Support systems were developed to meet the needs of church planters and the church plants. The effectiveness of the project was evaluated through tracking growth trends, church plant survivability, and Natural Church Development (NCD) survey results.

Results

From 2002 to 2010, 114 new churches were planted in the Texas Conference. These church plants were worshipping every Sabbath at the close of the project in 2010. In 2010, a study was done of the churches started from 2002 to 2006. The survival rate was 87 percent. This exceeds the average of other denominations, which is 68 percent after four years. Healthy mother churches and consistent, quality coaching contributed to the high survivability. In 2009, new church plants (excluding groups in development) produced \$3,669,548 in tithe and baptized 482 people. Extensive research was conducted by NCD International in Germany of established churches compared to church plants in the Texas Conference. Established churches had a cumulative average score of 50.8, which is slightly above the average of 50, while church plants had a cumulative average score of 66.7. A score above 65 places the level of health in the top 15 percent of all churches surveyed in the United States.

Conclusion

Church planting is evangelism at its best. It brings out the pioneering spirit and

creates within those involved a greater dependency on God. Taking territory for God will incite enemy attack. These obstacles become an opportunity to witness God working powerfully. Strategy is good and necessary, but God-dependence is better. As a conference, the most important role is to provide a support system for those engaged in this frontline work. Ensuring the involvement of a mother church, providing a consistent coaching relationship with a supportive pastor, offering ongoing training, and expressing appreciation, all go a long way to show church planters that they are well supported. This partnership of conference, pastor, and lay leaders can and will result in great advances for God's kingdom.

Future Development

Following the close of this project in 2010, further resources were developed to enhance the support of church planting. In 2011, I completed a church planting manual entitled *Steps to Church Planting: From Inception to Launch*. This tool assists core groups during their incubation period, as they develop their church plant strategy ahead of their opening Sabbath. In 2012, a training program for church plant coaches was introduced: "Church Plant Coaching Certification." The certification involves a six-month follow-up in the local field coaching a church planter and church plant. Further resources are yet to be developed, including a workshop on bi-vocational church planting and church-planter assessment. Visit nadei.org for the latest developments.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

IMPLEMENTATION OF A CONFERENCE-WIDE
CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY WITHIN
THE TEXAS CONFERENCE

A Project Document
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Tom L. Evans
June 2013

© Copyright by Tom L. Evans 2013
All Rights Reserved

IMPLEMENTATION OF A CONFERENCE-WIDE
CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY WITHIN
THE TEXAS CONFERENCE

A project document
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Ministry

by

Tom L. Evans

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Adviser,
Russell Burrill

Director, DMin Program
Skip Bell

Eduard Schmidt

Dean, SDA Theological Seminary
Denis Fortin

Hyveth Williams

Date approved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	viii
Chapter		
1.	PROJECT INTRODUCTION	1
	Statement of the Problem.....	2
	Case Study: Austin.....	3
	The Challenge of Immigrant Groups	5
	The Challenge of Small Towns.....	6
	Justification	8
	Methodology	9
	Definition of Terms.....	10
	Limitations	12
	Summary	13
2.	NEW TESTAMENT STRATEGIC CHURCH PLANTING MODELS ...	14
	Jesus’ Strategic Ministry.....	15
	The Receptivity Factor.....	17
	An Expanded Mission and Strategy.....	18
	Mandate for the Early Church.....	19
	Tarry in Jerusalem Until... ..	23
	Case Study #1: Samaria	24
	Case Study #2: Antioch	28
	Case Study #3: Philippi.....	31
	Case Study #4: Ephesus	35
	Summary	36
3.	CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGIES LITERATURE REVIEW.....	39
	Adventist Church Planting.....	40
	Fast-Growing and Slowing-Growing Conferences.....	43
	Seventh-day Adventist World Statistics	44
	Adventist Churches Grow Differently	46
	Keep it Simple.....	48
	Movements in the United States	49
	Networks	50
	Movement Characteristics	54

	Prayer	55
	Abundant Gospel Sowing	57
	Intentional Church Planting	58
	Scriptural Authority	59
	Local Leadership.....	61
	Lay Leadership.....	62
	Cell or House Churches	64
	Churches Planting Churches	66
	Rapid Reproduction	68
	Healthy Churches.....	69
	Conclusion	70
4.	PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	72
	Established Church Apathy for Planting.....	74
	Breakthrough.....	75
	Gaining Pastoral Support	77
	Models of Planting	79
	Lay-led, Pastor Coached	81
	The Conference Role	85
	Quantity and Quality.....	88
	Deeply Investing	89
	Summary.....	91
5.	PROJECT EVALUATION AND REFLECTION	93
	North Dallas Growth.....	94
	Tithe Impact	96
	Reflections from North Dallas	98
	Conference-wide Statistics.....	101
	Church Plant Survivability.....	105
	Church Plant Leadership.....	107
	Church Health	112
	Conclusion	118
6.	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	119
	Strengths of Texas Planting Model.....	120
	Strong Biblical, Spirit of Prophecy, Early Adventism, and World Field Endorsement	120
	Multi-faceted Approach	122
	Simplicity.....	123
	Partnership with Pastors.....	124
	Greatly Expanded Opportunities.....	124
	Healthy Churches.....	125
	Conference Network	125

Valuable Insights Gained Through my Experience: Areas to Consider Before you Plant	126
Established Churches Tend to Resist Church Planting.....	126
Pastor-Dependent Mind-set	127
Church Planting is Messy	128
The Challenge of Reaching Anglos	129
Valuable Insights Gained Through my Experience: Ongoing Challenges to Address After Planting.....	131
Coach Training and Accountability	131
The Need for Continual Support for lay Planter and Plant.....	133
Dealing with Divisive People	135
Recommendations for Church Organizations.....	136
Local Church.....	136
Conference	137
Union and Division and General Conference	139
Seminary	139
Expanding Influence	140
Where to Start	143

Appendix

A. POTENTIAL MULTIPLICATION OF CHURCHES IN AUSTIN	144
B. METRO IMPACT CHURCH PLANTING RALLIES-SAMPLE	145
C. AREA CHURCH PLANTING COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION	150
D. COACHING CONTRACT.....	151
E. LAY PLANTER AND COACHES APPRECIATION BANQUET.....	153
F. CONFERENCE CHURCH PLANTING COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION	155
G. PERCEPT DEMOGRAPHICS SAMPLE PAGE.....	156
H. CHURCH PLANT REQUIREMENTS FOR GROUP, COMPANY, AND CHURCH.....	157
I. NORTH DALLAS CORRIDOR BAPTISMS, 2002-2010	159
J. NORTH DALLAS CORRIDOR MEMBERSHIP, 2000-2010.....	160
K. NORTH DALLAS CORRIDOR TITHE GAINS, 2002-2010.....	161

L.	NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT CHURCH PLANTS AND ESTABLISHED CHURCHES COMPARISON.....	162
M.	CHURCH PLANT COACHING CERTIFICATION.....	182
	REFERENCE LIST	185
	VITA.....	194

LIST OF TABLES

1. Metropolitan Statistical Areas—Austin, Texas	4
2. Adventist Presence in Texas Conference.....	7
3. Top Five and Bottom Five Growing Conferences.....	44
4. Seventh-day Adventist Church Division Growth	45
5. Top 10 Questions for Church Plants.....	116
6. World Division Year End Statistics for 2010	122

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Comparison Growth Rate of Austin, Texas.....	4
2. Number of Baptisms by Year	94
3. Percent of Annual Baptism Growth (Accessions).....	95
4. North Dallas Membership Growth.....	96
5. North Dallas Tithe Growth	98
6. Church Planting Between 1995 and 2001.....	101
7. Church Planting Between 2002 and 2010.....	103
8. Percent Church Plants Survived by Year, All Denominations	106

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:5-6).

God has given me opportunities in life and ministry for which I am truly grateful. His grace and patience with me has been remarkable.

My first thanks goes to my family. My children have endured countless road trips to visit church plants. The bonding time has been tremendous. My wife, Mara, is a true spiritual partner. Her consistent devotional life and prayers for me as her husband have been a great source of strength.

My eternal gratitude goes to those who have deeply invested in my life during my formative years:

My parents. They sacrificed to pay for Adventist education for my sister and me. I remember well driving 40 minutes (one way) to help with a small country church every Sabbath. Gladstone camp meeting (with my mom and sister) in Portland, Oregon, is where I gave my life to Jesus.

Opal Epperly (my “adopted” grandmother--who has passed away). While I was still a young boy, she was convinced God had called me to be a pastor.

Beverly Thompson (my second mom). As a returning missionary from the Middle East, her passion for the mission of the church was contagious. She showed me the world.

Dwayne Boyer (my academy Bible teacher). He believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself. He gave me opportunities to be involved in ministry at a pivotal time in my life.

Gordon Pifher (my summer camp director). The opportunity to develop leadership skills and express my creativity at Camp Mivoden shaped my life.

I would also like to acknowledge those who have shaped my ministry:

Russell Burrill. Your classes during my time in the Seminary fueled a fire within me for church planting. Your subsequent personal interest in my ministry blessed me in countless ways. Thank you for being my adviser and for your excellent input into this project.

Ed Schmidt. Your class on personal evangelism was so practical. My experience with “Harry and Mary” (as a class assignment) had a profound impact on my passion for lost people. Thank you for being my second reader.

Steve Gifford and Leighton Holley (conference presidents while I worked in Texas). You put church planting on the map in Texas. Your influence and leadership in church planting was invaluable. Lives have been saved for eternity because of your vision.

A special thanks to the Texas church planting team. You are a “dream team.” God continues to use each of you in powerful ways.

Sheri Denny (my administrative assistant in Texas). You kept me organized and brought a level of excellence to the church planting program that I could not have accomplished alone.

Ron Clouzet. You had the vision and initiative to give church planting a broader platform in North America and took a risk that I would finish my DMin project.

Candy Clark (administrative assistant for me and for the North American Division Evangelism Institute). I’m grateful that you make your job a personal ministry passion.

NADEI staff and spouses. Thank you for welcoming me and making me feel a part of the team. It is a blessing to work among such passionate and gifted colleagues.

CHAPTER 1

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

“Upon all who believe God has placed the burden of raising up churches” (White, 1932, p. 315). This powerful statement serves as a clarion call for Adventists to return to their pioneering roots: not to be content with the 99 in the fold, but to expand into new territories in search of the lost; to break free from institutional Adventism and once again become a movement; to answer the call of God, “Here am I, send me.” I have come to see church planting, not as an option, but as a calling for every believer, local church, and conference. This project reflects my experiences in the Texas Conference—entering new territories, reaching out to new peoples groups, and joining God in an adventure.

The project report is comprised of six chapters. Chapter one awakens awareness to the tremendous need for the multiplication of churches in Texas. Chapter two explores the biblical foundation for church planting, highlighting the strategic methods of Jesus and Paul in particular. Chapter three is a survey of current literature on church plant multiplication. A review of recent Seventh-day Adventist engagement in church planting in North America is included. Chapter four details the lay-led, pastor-coached model of church planting that was developed and implemented in the Texas Conference. Chapter five provides an analysis of the results of the church planting initiative. Chapter six concludes by focusing on the strengths of the planting model, highlights valuable insights gained, and offers recommendations for moving forward.

Statement of the Problem

The Texas Conference comprises the populous eastern two-thirds of the state of Texas, which includes the major metro areas of Dallas-Ft. Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston. An evaluation of demographics reveals that population trends are on the move upward throughout the state and especially surrounding metro areas.

Texas had eight of the 15 most rapidly growing large cities between Census Day (April 1, 2010) and July 1, 2011, according to population estimates for all of the nation's incorporated cities and towns and minor civil divisions released today by the U.S. Census Bureau. "These estimates provide our first look at how much the total population has changed in each of our nation's cities since we conducted the 2010 Census," Census Bureau Director Robert Groves said. "These numbers provide further evidence of a continuation of the trend of rapid population growth in Texas we observed between the 2000 and 2010 censuses." (United States Census Bureau, 2012)

At the close of 2001, the Texas Conference was comprised of 198 churches and 25 companies (www.adventiststatistics.org). The US Census records the 2000 population of Texas as being 20,851,820 (Texas Health and Human Services Commission, 2005).

When evaluating the church to population ratio, some variables are present.

1. The US Census number is for the entire state of Texas. The western 1/3 of the state is part of the Texico Conference (the population is much more sparse). The towns of significant size include Abilene, Amarillo, El Paso, Lubbock, Midland, Odessa, and San Angelo. These cities have a combined population of just over 1.5 million people (Jorge, 2010).

2. There are many unregistered immigrants in Texas (primarily from Mexico) who are not counted in the US Census. It is estimated that this number is somewhere around 1.7 million people (Zarazua, 2011).

3. The Southwest Regional Conference layers over the Texas Conference and adds an additional 27 churches and companies to the total number of Adventist churches

within this territory as of the year 2000 (General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2012a).

4. Based on the above variables, both the Texas Conference and the Southwest Region Conference had a total number of 250 churches and companies in the year 2000, with a conference territory population of approximately 20,851,820 people. This represents one church for every 83,407 people.

Claerbaut, in *Urban Ministry*, states, “Christianity has failed to make an impact on three major areas: The Hindu culture, the Islamic society, and the major cities” (1993, p. 15). One of the challenges that God placed on my heart was to create an intentional strategy to plant churches in the four major metro areas of the Texas Conference: Dallas-Ft. Worth, Houston, San Antonio, and Austin. The first three find themselves on the top 10 list of the most populous cities in the United States. For these numbers to take on a little more tangible meaning, we will take a look at the fourth largest city in Texas, Austin.

Case Study: Austin

The Adventist work in the city of Austin began in the 1890s. How long did it take for another church to be planted? Close to 50 years. The Southwest Region Conference started the Alpha church in 1943. The Texas Conference did not start another church for almost a century. In 1980 and 1981, under the direction of Conference President Cyril Miller, the Texas conference planted two churches —Austin South and Austin Spanish. Based on information gathered from the Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA),

represented in Table 1, the population of Austin was 585,051 in 1980. Notice below in Figure 1 the comparison growth rate of Austin during the time frame I served as church planting coordinator.

Table 1

Metropolitan Statistical Areas—Austin, Texas

Year	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
Population	585,051	846,227	1,249,763	1,712,647	2,292,737	3,030,478	3,958,933
Percent growth by decade	---	45%	47%	37%	34%	32%	31%

(Austin Chamber of Commerce, 2012)

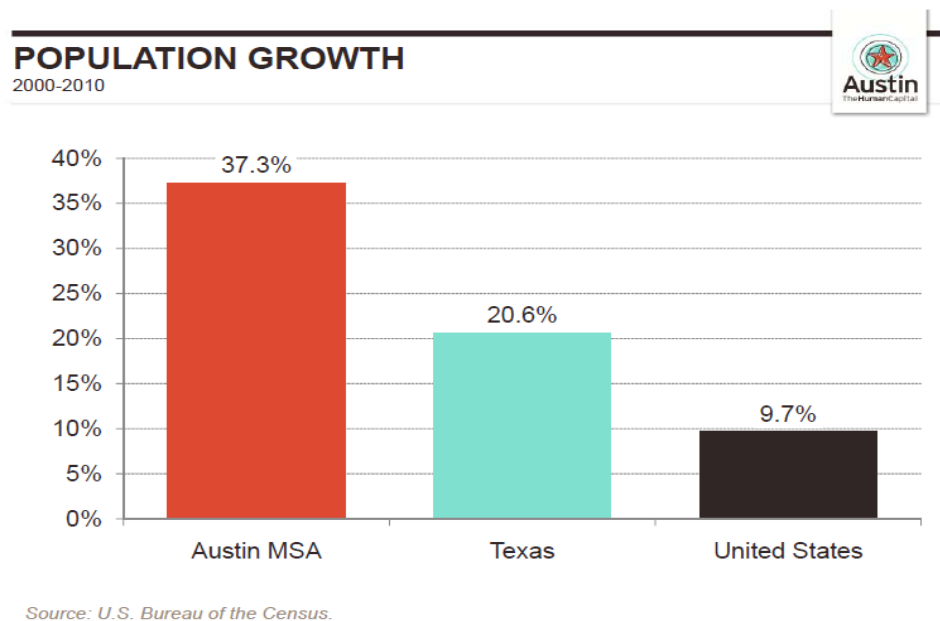


Figure 1. Comparison growth rate of Austin, Texas. (Porter, D., 2011).

The MSA of Austin includes Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson counties (counties with at least 50,000 urban residents). Three other small churches in outlying areas could be included with this expanded area as being present in 1980. With

a population of 585,051 people, there were seven Seventh-day Adventist churches in 1981. This represents one church for every 83,579 people. An excellent ratio of Adventist churches to the population would be one for every 25,000 people. Based on one church for every 25,000 people, there should have been at least 23 churches in Austin by 1980. With only eight churches in the year 2000, the ratio had increased to one church for every 156,220 people. By the year 2000, there should have been 50 Adventist churches. We were losing ground.

Is it unrealistic to think that an established congregation can start one church every ten years? Imagine if the original church in Austin, established around 1890, had committed to plant one church every 10 years. What if the original church also placed church planting into the DNA of their daughter congregations and they also started one church every 10 years? If this happened, the multiplication impact would be phenomenal (see Appendix A).

The Challenge of Immigrant Groups

One of the challenges in reaching the cities is the large number of immigrant groups. “Naturalizations grew at a record pace between 2006 and 2008 with a total of 2.4 million immigrants becoming new citizens in the United States” (Baker, 2009).

Identifying these individuals and creating opportunities for them to hear the gospel is a responsibility God has placed on every believer.

A vision to reach these populations has been clearly laid before us.

As I have testified for years, if we were quick in discerning the opening providences of God, we should be able to see in the multiplying opportunities to reach many foreigners in America a divinely appointed means of rapidly extending the third angel’s message into all the nations of earth. (White, 1946, p. 570)

The vastness of this work is also emphasized: “God desires His servants to do their full duty toward the unwarmed millions of the cities, and especially toward those who have come to these cities in our land from the nations of the earth” (White, 1946, p. 570).

The Challenge of Small Towns

This profound statement from White challenges me to the very core:

I saw jets of light shining from cities and villages, and from high places and low places of the earth. God’s word was obeyed, and as a result there were memorials for Him in every city and village. His truth was proclaimed throughout the world. (White, 1902, p. 105)

We have already briefly explored the need of the cities. However, the vision White had extends beyond that to “villages.” Let us try to understand the vastness of the vision that revealed there would be memorials to God in every city and village.

In 1900, the population of Houston and Dallas was less than 50,000 (US Census Bureau). Perhaps these population centers could be considered “cities.” I chose an arbitrary number of a population of 20,000 people or less to constitute a “village.” A demographic company, Percept (Percept Group, 2012), divided the entire Texas Conference territory into 5 mile radiuses. Using their data, I conducted a study on the Adventist presence in communities comprising less than 20,000 people (see Table 2).

Table 2

Adventist Presence in Texas Conference

Population	# of 5 mile radiuses	# with SDA Churches
1120-2000	209	5
2000-4000	171	14
4000-6000	92	10
6000-8000	70	7
8000-10,000	41	1
10,000-15,000	67	12
15,000-20,000	33	10
TOTALS:	683	59

This study revealed that Seventh-day Adventist churches were present in only 8.6 percent of communities with a population of less than 20,000. In the category of populations between 8,000 and 10,000 people, there is only one Adventist church (with 41 such population centers). Let us bring a real life scenario into view in order to understand the need better. The city of Mexia, Texas has a population of close to 10,000. Most people in Texas had never heard of Mexia until it made national news at the untimely death of Anna Nicole Smith. This was her home town during high school. She lived with her aunt, failed ninth grade, and worked at Jim’s Krispy Fried Chicken where she met her first husband and was married at age 17 (he was 16) (“Anna Nicole Smith,” n.d.). Her experience is not unlike many others in Mexia: 36 percent of homes are single parent and only 12 percent of the population has completed college. It is not surprising that the household income is \$20,000 less than the national average. The “village” of Mexia is isolated from any Adventist church. The closest church is more than a 40-minute drive to the north in Corsicana. To the west, the Waco church is almost an hour away. A newly-planted church to the east in Palestine is just over an hour’s drive.

Super-Walmart has taken an interest in the city of Mexia, but what about the Adventist Church? How many more years will this city be without a “jet of light”? When will there be a “memorial” of God’s truth in this community?

This brief overview has demonstrated the need for an aggressive church planting strategy in the Texas Conference. There is clearly a challenge when the Adventist church is not being proactive enough with opportunities to expand and continues to lose ground to population increases.

Justification

Pilot projects are important. Not only can they serve to inspire, but they also provide an opportunity to work through issues to improve future efforts. With the birth of the North American Division SEEDS Conferences in 1996, there has been a raised awareness and interest in church planting across the division. Unfortunately, many enthusiastic SEEDS attendees would return to their local conference and discover no strategy or support system in place to encourage church planting. A conference pilot project was needed that could provide a model for the division. The project should demonstrate a systematic way of planting numerous churches. A system for ongoing support and development of the church plants would be crucial. In addition, these church plants must not simply rearrange the saints through attracting already committed Adventists, but make a significant harvest impact.

Other justifications for the project include:

- The need for a model that is low cost. Most conferences struggle to meet current financial commitments. Adding church planting budgets would not be realistic.

- The need for a model that involves full-time pastors, utilizing their training and experience in ministry.
- The need for a model that values the local established church, forging a partnership.
- The need for a model that produces healthy church plants that support the conference.
- The need for a model that demonstrates long-term sustainability and growth.
- The need for a model that enables rapid expansion of God's work.
- The need for statistical research to encourage other conferences to engage in church planting.
- The need for a model that fits the culture of the Adventist church.

Methodology

While senior pastor at the Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church in North Dallas, we planted two very vibrant and successful churches in 2000 and 2001. This was motivation for conference administration to invite me to coordinate church planting for the entire Texas Conference. It seemed logical to incorporate the best practices from these two church plants. They could serve as pilot projects to learn from. I could also employ the principles for mother church preparation utilized in Richardson to engage established churches in the planting process. My first-hand experiences with church planting significantly shaped my methodology. Some of the major guiding principles included the necessity of a mother church, cooperation vs. competition, core group incubation, healthy mothers creating healthy daughters (DNA passes from mother to daughter), utilizing Natural Church Development principles, and the potential of lay

people to plant churches. Chapter four will highlight these experiences in more detail.

The shift from a local church pastor to a conference departmental director position required the development of a methodology concerning the role of the conference with church planting. Not having served in this capacity before, the two guiding principles that were formed were primarily biblically-based, rather than experientially-based. First, the role of the conference was to cast the vision for church planting. This was not going to be a top-down, heavy-handed initiative. I would seek every opportunity to inspire pastors and lay leaders to become engaged in church planting. The decision was ultimately left to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The goal was to join the Holy Spirit where He was already at work. Second, the conference was to provide support systems to help strengthen church planters and church plants. As the church planting coordinator, my role was clear: cast the vision and provide support systems. This project highlights how vision casting was done most effectively and what support systems were the most helpful.

Finally, as has been true throughout my ministry, developing other leaders is one of my highest priorities. My goal was to identify a team of individuals who shared a passion for church planting, who could partner with me as catalysts for a movement, not only in Texas, but also for North America and around the world.

Definition of Terms

Mother Church: An established church that gives of their members and resources to launch a church plant.

Sponsor Church: A church that adopts an isolated church plant and takes on the role of a mother church.

Coach: A full-time pastor employed by the conference who accepts the responsibility of working with a church planter and his/her church plant in a supportive role.

Coaching: Through the use of powerful questions, a coaching relationship reflects on recent experiences to deepen understanding and focuses on future priorities in order to forward the progress toward a determined goal (in this context, a successful church plant).

Lay Pastor: The term “lay” is chosen as an adjective to “pastor” as it is a familiar term in the context of the church today (the New Testament does not contain such a distinction). A lay pastor is a committed and gifted disciple of Jesus who feels called to lead a church or church plant and is assigned to this role by the local conference. In most cases, this individual receives no salary from the conference and has no ambitions for employment as a salaried pastor. The term pastor is used to designate the role of leading a church or church plant. Based on this definition, a lay person can serve as a pastor.

Lay-led Plant: A church plant that is led by a lay person.

DNA: The values, positive or negative, which are inherent within a church. These values are passed from mother church to daughter plant.

Core Group: A nucleus of individuals who are the catalyst for starting a church plant.

Incubation: A period of time (usually from 6-12 months) when a core group meets for the purpose of laying the ground work and establishing the “DNA” of a church plant. This is typically a weekly meeting. Public worship services are delayed until the core group has incubated.

Natural Church Development/NCD: An evaluation tool based on eight quality characteristics of healthy churches as developed by Christian Schwarz.

Limitations

Due to the significant influence of the pilot church planting projects in North Dallas (2000 and 2001) and the preparation of the mother church for planting, they are reflected on as part of this project. The majority of the project, however, is limited to my time as the church planting coordinator in the Texas Conference, which spanned from the fall of 2001 to the end of 2010. Statistical analysis reflects those churches planted from 2002-2010. I joined the Evangelism Cohort of the Doctor of Ministry program in 2006. As will be demonstrated, the most productive years for church planting in Texas were the final three years of the project (2008-2010). Evaluating the longer time period, however, lends more credibility to the project, as trends can be analyzed.

A significant limitation was the selection of a specific church planting method. There are many methods of church planting that could have been implemented. The scope of this project is primarily focused on lay-led church plants with a pastor assigned as a coach. The geographical limitation of the study is the Texas Conference. Evaluation tools were limited to conference and General Conference statistical data, Natural Church Development Survey results, and personal observations and analysis.

Summary

This chapter has analyzed the need for the multiplication of church plants in the Texas Conference. This need is based on tremendous population growth in metro areas, steady immigration, and hundreds of isolated “villages” without an Adventist presence. The intended project to address this challenge had been outlined as well.

CHAPTER 2

NEW TESTAMENT STRATEGIC CHURCH PLANTING MODELS

The word “strategy” is immediately associated with the business world. Strategic planning involves the development of projections, graphs, flow charts, and models for building a successful company. Specific goals are set and tangible steps to reach those objectives are put in place. Note this generally accepted definition, ““In short, strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. (Adapted from Bryson’s Strategic Planning in Public and Nonprofit Organizations)’ *From the Alliance for Nonprofit Management*” (Faust, 2003).

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus made a number of statements that indicated clear intentionality regarding His mission. The book of Acts further demonstrates a very intentional process that was followed for the proclamation of the gospel and the planting of churches. In order to develop a modern model for strategic church planting, it is important to understand the biblical process that resulted in Christianity’s rapid expansion in the first century. First, we will briefly examine the words of Jesus that served as a foundation for the disciples and Paul as they launched a movement, as recorded in the book of Acts. Second, we will examine four dynamic church plants in the books of Acts in an effort to ascertain principles that can be applied

today. The four churches included in this study are: Philip's plant in Samaria, Antioch, Philippi, and Ephesus.

Jesus' Strategic Ministry

Jesus' mission to planet Earth is summarized by the words of Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." The initial phase of Jesus' ministry was clearly strategic. Matthew 10:5, 6 records, "These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying, 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'" A clear mission for the lost is emphasized, but the primary focus of that mission is clarified to be Israel. When a woman from Canaan appealed to Jesus on behalf of her demon-possessed daughter, Jesus again reiterates His clear focus: "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24). Aside from a handful of brief detours into Samaritan territory, Jesus earthly ministry was primarily focused within the region of Galilee.

As Jesus' popularity as a religious teacher increased, large crowds numbering in the thousands would gather to hear Him. Jesus clearly determined to have an itinerant ministry even if the masses would gladly come to His locality. Matthew 9:35 emphasizes that Jesus "went about all the cities and villages." Mark 6:6 gives a parallel account, "Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching." The word translated here as "circuit" comes from the Greek word *kyklos* which literally means circle (Kyklos, 2012). The English word "horizon" is derived from *kyklos*, indicating the broader meaning of completeness and scope (Horizon, 2012). Note this interchange in Luke 4:42, 43, "And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; but

He said to them, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.’” Jesus indicated that His was a mission on the move.

Mark records the disciples trying to locate Jesus, “Everyone is looking for You. But He said to them; Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth” (Mark 1:37, 38). It was not permissible, based on His clear mission, for Jesus to set up camp in one location and erect a magnificent synagogue, allowing the crowds to come to Him.

Praying before Gethsemane, Jesus emphasized that He had also sent the disciples during His earthly mission. “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (John 17:18). Jesus was setting a pattern for His disciples and future generations, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21). The theme of sending and going rather than congregating and staying was consistent throughout the ministry of Jesus and is given as a model to the disciples effective to the end of time, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19, 20).

The initial sending of Jesus focused on the lost of Israel, in particular within the region of Galilee. This was clearly the instruction given to the twelve as recorded in Matthew 10:5, 6. When the seventy were sent out, they went “two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go” (Luke 10:1). Although not clearly enunciated in this passage, Jesus’ circuit of towns was restricted to the area of Galilee.

Jesus was serving an area forty miles wide and seventy miles long, roughly the size of Puerto Rico. The ancient historian Josephus tells us that there were some two hundred cities and villages in this area, and that the minimum population of a village there and then was fifteen thousand. This means Jesus was ministering to at least three million people at this time. (MacArthur, 1987, p. 103)

The Receptivity Factor

Initial contact with a new city or village was through a receptive person, referred to in Luke 10:6 as a “son of peace.” The common practice was for the two disciples entering a city to find a home to lodge in. It is not clear as to how this home was selected. Was there special divine guidance? Was the leading family of influence in the community selected? Regardless of the selection process, if this household welcomed them, they would remain there as they shared in that village, “Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart” (Luke 9:4). Jesus further instructed the disciples, “And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them” (Luke 9:5). The seventy received similar directions, “But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, ‘The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you’” (Luke 10:10, 11).

Two contrasting experiences with Samaritan villages underscore the importance of receptivity and how Jesus related to it. In John chapter 4, we are introduced to the woman at the well and the Samaritan village of Sychar. Jesus introduces Himself to the woman as “living water” and reveals His knowledge of her life experiences. In amazement, she shares with her fellow villagers her newfound faith. John records, “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman” (John 4:39). Desiring to hear more, they urge Jesus to stay with them for a couple of

days, which He accepts. In contrast, Luke 9 records a visit by Jesus to a Samaritan village that rejected Him. The disciples, James and John, are ready to call down fire from heaven on them. Jesus calmly responds, “For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them. And they went to another village” (Luke 9:56). When met with resistance or rejection, the natural response was to move on to more receptive towns and villages.

Yet another illustration bears mentioning. Jesus was rebuffed by His hometown of Nazareth. He marvels at their rejection and the lack of faith. Mark adds, “Now He could do no mighty work there” (Mark 6:5). The response of Jesus was consistent, “And He marveled at their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching” (Mark 6:6).

A strategic pattern emerges from the approach recommended by Jesus to the 12 disciples, the 70, and personally practiced by Himself. New centers for ministry begin through a receptive person and potentially their household. They become witnesses to the transformational power of the gospel. Their influence enables rapid expansion within the city/village and gives immediate credibility to the message. The “person of peace” provided a safe haven in their home for the itinerant missionary. Receptivity to the messenger, first, and then the message was essential for continued work in a particular community.

An Expanded Mission and Strategy

During Jesus’ earthly ministry, there were glimpses of a broader mission; the Samaritan village that was “ripe for harvest” as recorded in John 4; the demoniac from the Gadarenes who was “on the other side of the sea” (Mark 5:1); the Greek woman who

was originally from Syro-Phoenicia whose demon-possessed daughter was granted healing; and Jairus, a Roman centurion who was declared to have greater faith than anyone in Israel. Additionally, the parable of the Good Samaritan stretches Jesus' listeners to look beyond racial lines and recognize that a neighbor is one who acts with love. Despite these momentary snapshots, it is not until the rejection of Jesus as Messiah is complete that a broader mission is officially proclaimed by Jesus.

In a private conversation with His disciples, Jesus revealed the signs of His coming. The global impact of the gospel is emphasized: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt 24:14). How this reality is to be accomplished is not detailed until post-resurrection. The broad impact of the gospel is repeated after the resurrection, with the new challenge to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt 28:19). Mark recounts the Great Commission with the same appeal from Jesus: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:16). The book of Luke, which continues in the book of Acts, provides more specific direction as to how this should be accomplished, "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). A strategy for Jesus' followers was beginning to emerge. The proclamation of the gospel is to be global, it requires current disciples taking initiative and "going" and, finally, it is to start in Jerusalem.

Mandate for the Early Church

Jesus final recorded words in scripture, become the Magna Carta for the fledgling church: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the

earth” (Acts 1:8). It is significant that these are Jesus’ parting words, His last chance to cast a vision for the future.

Acts 1:8 is often viewed as the key verse in the history of the Early Church. It began in Jerusalem (chaps. 1-7), reached beyond into Judea and Samaria (chaps. 8-12), and then reached farther to the boundaries of the known world (chaps. 13-28). (Towns & Porter, 2003, p. 35)

Unfortunately, it took the church being persecuted in Jerusalem for the expansion to take place as Jesus outlined.

The role of the Holy Spirit cannot be bypassed in the interest of strategy. The power the early church experienced in spreading the gospel came when they had received the Holy Spirit. The integral relationship between church multiplication and the powerful working of the Holy Spirit must remain connected. “It was the Holy Spirit that was in control in Acts. We have misnamed the book by calling it the Acts of the Apostles. The Holy Spirit is referred to at least fifty-seven times in twenty-eight chapters” (Cole, 2005, p. 52). Ott and Wilson share the same sentiment, “If there is anything that stands out in the spread and growth of the church in the book of Acts, it is the dynamic working of the Holy Spirit” (2011, p. 73).

Ordinary disciples were able to do extraordinary things through the power of the Holy Spirit working in them. Many of the churches planted in the New Testament were started by unnamed individuals who responded to Jesus mandate to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Even training was not enough to accomplish the mission of Jesus, “Despite three years of personal night-and-day, seven-day-a-week training by Jesus, these men were not equipped for any ministry without the Holy Spirit” (Cole, 2005, p. 52). A power not of human origin helped set in motion and perpetuate the rapid planting of churches.

Jesus' Acts 1:8 mission strategy immediately broadened the focus beyond the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." Still included in His scope, Jerusalem would be the center point with a ripple effect in reaching Judea, Samaria, and then the world. The obvious implication was that the disciples were to begin where they were, yet they should not be content to stay there.

The Day of Pentecost is notable in the context of Jesus' Acts 1:8 strategy in that there were "dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). Verses 9-11 of Acts 2 identify 15 specific countries and regions that were present for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Bruce notes, "The Jews who were resident in Jerusalem on this occasion were to a large extent pilgrims from various lands of the dispersion who had come to the holy city to celebrate the festival of Pentecost" (1988, p. 53). He further points out that the word "Jews" was added to the original text, indicating that the "devout men" were both Jews and proselytes (Bruce, 1988, p. 53). At the conclusion of Peter's impassioned sermon, Acts records, "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:42).

The initial expansion of the gospel beyond Jerusalem undoubtedly was a result of the diverse crowd present at Pentecost. As they returned to their native countries as recently baptized converts of Jesus, the proclamation of their newfound faith was fresh on their lips. Abundant evidence exists throughout Acts that believers were present in these countries upon the arrival of an "official" church planter. In some cases, churches were already developed by the time Paul or one of the apostles visited that region. Even the church in Rome may trace its origins to pilgrims present at Pentecost,

It is at least a possibility that the Roman church, whose origins are so obscure, may go back to some of the 'visitors from Rome' who heard the gospel in Jerusalem that day and carried it home when they returned. (Bruce, 1988, p. 57)

A very important principle emerges from the initial expansion of the gospel at Pentecost. The timing of the Holy Spirit being poured out was not designated by any human being. "He (Jesus) commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). The disciples did not know how long this waiting period would be. The Acts 1:8 strategy was clearly outlined, but they were dependant on the action of God to move forward. God's impeccable timing is recorded this way in Acts 2:1, "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come." The optimal historic moment in God's design was selected. The divine intentionality that resulted in men from every nation being present in Jerusalem is unmistakable. God's role in the strategic expansion of the gospel through proclamation and church planting is paramount. The providence and movement of God must be forefront and supersede any human strategy.

The growth of the church in Jerusalem was very rapid. Act 4:4 says, "The number of men came to be about five thousand." Acts 5:14 indicates that exponential growth began to take place: "And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, *multitudes* (emphasis added) of both men and women. . . ." In fact, it seems that the impact on Jerusalem reached saturation, "And look, you have *filled* (emphasis added) Jerusalem with your doctrine" (Acts 5:28). Acts 6:7 reiterates, "Then the word of God spread, and the number of disciples *multiplied greatly* (emphasis added) in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith." Jerusalem had become the center of the Jesus movement: "Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem" (Act 5:16). The first step of Acts 1:8 in Jesus' strategic commission had been

accomplished. The gospel had been proclaimed with power and success in Jerusalem.

Tarry in Jerusalem Until...

The prelude to Jesus' strategic command in Acts 1:8 is found in Luke 24:27, "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, was the fulfillment of this promise. The time of waiting was over and the time of action had begun. Filled with the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, the rapid expansion of the gospel to regions beyond Jerusalem was imminent. However, the next step in expanding the gospel to Samaria and Judea does not initially seem to receive any urgent focus from the disciples. Ironically, Acts 5:16 records that people from the surrounding cities were coming to Jerusalem, which is in direct contrast to the words of Jesus, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt 28:19). The lack of urgency for sharing the gospel outside the confines of Jerusalem is notable and insightful. Comfort can lull the saints to sleep as the world languishes in need of the gospel.

The martyrdom of Stephen, which appeared to be a fatal blow to the fledgling church, became the catalyst for the fulfillment of Acts 1:8: "At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:1, 3).

The strategic initiative of the early church must be questioned at this point. It is abundantly clear that Jesus was very intentional regarding His mission. What He modeled for His disciples was repeated in His final words on earth in Acts 1:8. What happened? Why didn't the disciples and new believers keep expanding outward with the

gospel message? It is clear that the Jerusalem believers were devout. Once they were scattered, they immediately began preaching. Their conviction regarding the claims of the risen Christ was strong. The Holy Spirit was able to work powerfully through them. Yet, they remained, until they were forced to flee for fear of their very lives. The apostles, however, remained behind in Jerusalem.

The first problem was that the apostles stayed at the center, when they should have moved out to the cutting edge. The word apostle means ‘one who is sent.’ That means a true apostle must be sent out. Apostles should always be out at the cutting edge of what the Holy Spirit is doing. When apostles sit at the center and give orders and direction, things start to go wrong. They quickly morph into modern day bishops, and the expansion of the church collapses. (Blessed Economist, 2010)

Perhaps this early misstep of the church underscores the point that God is always strategic, while sometimes His church and its leaders are not.

Case Study #1: Samaria

The focus of this study is to identify strategic patterns in the early church that can inform our church planting initiatives today. The church plant highlighted in Acts 8:4-24 in Samaria provides ample insights. For the modern reader, perhaps the most dramatic aspect of this church plant is the identity of the church planter himself, Philip. Philip was not one of the 12 apostles, he was a lay person (by our popular definition today). He was not an elder, rather a deacon.

We are first introduced to Philip in Acts chapter 6. He is identified in Acts 7:5 by name as one of the seven deacons selected to serve tables and aid in the distribution to the widows. “It is significant that among the appointed laymen were Stephen and Philip. Most of the apostles did no outstanding preaching after Pentecost, and yet these two men

who were infinitely better preachers were appointed to serve tables!” (Powell, 1987, p. 120).

Philip had some rather unique attributes. He was a Hellenistic Jew who was not a native of Judea. He is the only individual referred to in Scripture as being an “evangelist” (see Acts 21:8). He successfully mentored his four daughters, who were known to prophesy (see Acts 21:9). Philip did not wait for one of the apostles to baptize the Ethiopian eunuch to whom he explained the Scriptures (see Acts 8:38). Most importantly, his character was evident to all, “Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts 6:5).

Does the identity of this first church planter who ventured outside Jerusalem have a bearing on our strategy today? Who Philip *was not* is significant. He was neither an apostle nor an elder. He lacked formal training for the task at hand. He was simply a “lay person.” And yet, through his efforts a church was planted in a city within the region of Samaria and “multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip” (Acts 8:6). Who Philip *was* also has significance. He was a man of character who was filled with the Holy Spirit. He lived a godly life before his family, the church, and unbelievers. Philip’s calling to ministry was affirmed by the body of believers who were intimately acquainted with him.

The exact city to which Philip carried the gospel to is ambiguous. It is simply referred to as “the city of Samaria” (Acts 8:5). Bruce surmises that the activity of both John the Baptist and Jesus in the region surrounding Shechem “could have provided a foundation on which Philip built” (Bruce, 1988, p. 165). The presence of Simon the

Magician leads Lenski to conclude that it was a prominent city (1934, p. 316). Simon would want to maximize his business and would likely seek a city that would enhance this. The city of Shechem was such a setting. It was located at the foot of Mount Garizim and carried the significance for the Samaritans as Jerusalem did for the Jews. Acts 8:6 notes that “multitudes” responded to Philip’s message, indicating that this was a populous city.

The location selected for this prominent church plant was strategic. Philip clearly passed over certain locations to begin at this point. After Peter and John visited Philip, they returned to Jerusalem and preached the gospel to many other Samaritan villages on the way (see Acts 8:25). Philip himself preached in other villages, “But Philip was found in Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea” (Acts 8:40). A couple of biblical principles should be noted here. First, church plant locations must be Holy Spirit directed. Philip’s sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit is highlighted in the divinely appointed chariot ride with the Ethiopian eunuch. Secondly, church plant locations should initially be selected that have the potential to impact surrounding regions. This Samaritan city became the gateway to many villages in the surrounding region being impacted by the gospel.

The proclamation of the gospel to the Samaritans by Philip was a radical departure from the initial success of the church in Jerusalem. Acts 8 marks a shift in the emphasis of the early church from being centered only in Jerusalem. “His (Philip’s) evangelistic exploits, recounted in Acts 8, represent for Luke genuinely trail-blazing and barrier-breaking steps, not merely transitional and bridge-building efforts, in forwarding the gospel dissemination of the Christian message” (Spencer, 1992, p. 272). Spencer

adds further commentary on the significance of the mission to Samaria:

The dividing wall of hostility between Samaritans and Jews has been officially broken down through Philip's mission. In Lukan terms, this watershed event not only updates Stephen's Shechem reference, but also reaches back to and dramatically inverts the initial Samaritan incident in Luke 9. (2004, p. 96)

Philip encountered two significant challenges while planting this church in the city of Samaria. Although many people responded and were baptized, the baptism was not accompanied by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as experienced at Pentecost. The Scriptural record does not indicate why this dichotomy took place. Philip himself was filled with the Holy Spirit and yet this gift was not bestowed on the new believers. Second, was the insidious presence of Simon the Magician. Simon had significant influence in the city, "And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time" (Acts 8:11). This text gives some indication of a spiritual stronghold within the populous that possibly hindered complete conversion. Simon the Magician himself became convicted of the message and was baptized. However, his motivations were less than pure (see Acts 8:22, 23).

Church planting involves taking territory from the enemy and releasing captives bound by sin. This action is guaranteed to be met with opposition. How did the early church respond? "Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them" (Act 8:14). Peter and John were able to address the spiritual barriers in such a way that the Holy Spirit was poured out (see Acts 8:17). The character of Simon the Magician was clearly revealed and he was strongly rebuked (see Acts 8:22, 23). The more experienced Peter and John were able to support Philip in his work and address significant issues that could have significantly undermined the viability of the church plant. The apostles clearly

understood that their role to oversee the expansion of the gospel was vital.

The following is a summary of the strategies utilized with Philip's church plant in Samaria:

1. The church planter was a lay person who was a man of character and filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. A strategic location was selected that had the potential to influence surrounding areas.
3. Challenges were encountered, but support from the apostles resolved the issues so that the church was able to flourish.

Case Study #2: Antioch

The presence of a group of believers in Antioch preceded the persecution that drove believers from Jerusalem following the stoning of Stephen. The evidence of this is in the list of the seven deacons that were selected by the church in Jerusalem. "And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and *Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch*" (Acts 6:5, emphasis added). Evidently, Nicholas moved to Jerusalem from Antioch where the gospel had already been preached. How did this take place? As highlighted earlier, 14 nations were specifically mentioned as being present at Pentecost. According to Bruce, based on their path of travel, the message of Jesus Christ was most likely carried by those from Cyprus and Cyrene (1988, p. 224). Possible individuals include: Barnabas (Acts 4:36), Simon of Cyrene, and his sons Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15:21), and Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13:1). Again, we see the flame of the gospel being spread by ordinary lay people with a burning passion to share their faith. "It is

significant that unknown preachers were doing what the apostles should have done much earlier” (Powell, 1987, p. 188).

Antioch was a strategic location for church planting. It was the third most populated city in the Greco-Roman world. Located on the trade routes from the east to west, it quickly became an important center for trade and commerce. Located between two different cultures, Antioch became a melting pot of diversity. Hengel highlights the significance to the church,

There are hardly any parallels in the sociology of religion to the astonishing fact that, in the briefest period of time, the Galilean Jesus movement, which to begin with was a purely rural phenomenon, became a predominately urban community in Jerusalem and then took on a decidedly cosmopolitan flavor in Antioch. (1980, p. 99)

The success of the gospel message in Antioch is attested to in Acts 11:21, “And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.” News of the success reached the church leaders in Jerusalem. Their immediate response was to send Barnabas as a representative of the apostles and the church in Jerusalem. The implication is that they desired first hand observation from someone they trusted and anticipated a report back.

Barnabas was an excellent choice for a number of reasons:

1. He was a Jew from the tribe of Levi and was originally from Cyprus. Culturally, he would connect and understand the people of Antioch (Acts 4:36).
2. Barnabas was his nickname, which meant “Son of Encouragement.” By nature, he desired to build others up (Acts 4:36).
3. He was committed to God’s work. He had donated a piece of land and presented the entire proceeds at the apostle’s feet (Act 4:37).

4. He was full of the Holy Spirit. Divine insight would be necessary to evaluate the work of the believers in Antioch (Acts 11:24).

5. He had integrity. Acts 11:24 refers to him as a “good man.”

6. He was full of faith. He believed in the power of the gospel to transform lives. Barnabas was open to God reaching new people in new ways (Acts 11:24).

7. He was a soul winner. As a result of his visit, “a great many people were added to the Lord” (Acts 11:24).

8. He was a connector and resource person. Barnabas recognized the untapped potential in Antioch to become a sending congregation. He sought out Saul of Tarsus (Paul) to come and minister with him in Antioch for an extended period of time (Acts 11:24).

The selection of Barnabas proved to be pivotal to the continued success in Antioch. The influence of his presence should not be underestimated. “When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord” (Acts 11:23). It was in Antioch that Saul (Paul) resurfaced, thanks to Barnabas’ persistence. Here both Saul (Paul) and Barnabas were identified by the Holy Spirit as missionaries and sent out as church planters from the mother church of Antioch (Acts 13:2, 3). The impact was phenomenal, “And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region” (Acts 13:49).

It cannot be passed over that conflict also attended the preaching of the gospel in Antioch. The antagonists in this case were envious Jews. “But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul” (Acts 13:45). The Jews resorted to sinister tactics and

influenced the leading men and women of the city to expel Paul and Barnabas from the region. Undaunted, “they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:51, 52). Strong leaders and a healthy church remained in Antioch to carry forward the work in this influential center.

Several principles emerge from our brief examination of the church plant in Antioch:

1. Lay preachers can be a method to utilize for starting new work in unreached areas.
2. God’s work sometimes is “officially” blessed after it has been initiated.
3. The presence of an encourager, Barnabas, who officially sanctioned the work of the local leaders, served as a catalyst for further growth.
4. A strategic location and healthy sending church can have a ripple effect on a broader region.
5. Persecution/obstacles accompany God’s work.

Case Study #3: Philippi

The circumstances leading to the church plant in Philippi are the most unusual in the biblical record. The instrumental role of the Holy Spirit in guiding the church planting process is uniquely highlighted. Paul and his traveling companions, Silas and Timothy, embark on Paul’s second missionary journey. There is an unmistakable focus to plant churches in unentered areas. Paul’s sites are fixed on expanding the work in Asia Minor. At this point, the Holy Spirit intervenes in an unexpected manner, “Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the

Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them” (Acts 16:6, 7). This illustrious trio must certainly have been perplexed by the closed doors they were encountering at every turn. Eventually, they arrive at the coastal city of Troas, where they are joined by Luke. A vision appears to Paul in the night, “a man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us’” (Acts 16:9).

Barrett exegetes the Greek phrases used here. “Come over” is translated from *diabaino*, which “implies coming from one side of a barrier (here the Thracian Sea, the northern part of Aegean) to the other” (1998, p. 771). The word translated “help” comes from the Greek word *boetheo*, which is a surprising word choice.

One would expect, Come and preach the Gospel to us, or the like. The intention may be to indicate that the Macedonians do not yet know what the Gospel is; they are aware of a need of help, not of the particular help that Paul had to offer. (Barrett, 1998, p. 772)

Nichol adds further insight to the inclusive word, “us.”

The man speaks for all his fellow countrymen in Macedonia. From a more modern viewpoint the appeal may be given an even wider interpretation by realizing that the man stands in Europe, and is calling Paul to enter that great continent with the gospel message. (Nichol, 1978, vol. 6, p. 327)

What is the significance of the “man” who appears in the vision? What is his identity? The fact that Paul identified him specifically as being from Macedonia would indicate that the attire of the individual was consistent with those from this region. If it were Jesus or an angel that appeared to Paul, certainly he would have identified a divine being rather than a human one. The scriptural record provides some clues:

1. Philippi. In response to the vision, Luke records, “Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia concluding that the Lord had called us

to preach the gospel to them” (Acts 16:10). This led Paul and his traveling companions to Philippi. It was not the capitol or the largest city in Macedonia. However, this is where the Holy Spirit was directing.

2. No synagogue present. An initial survey of the town indicated that no synagogue was present. Bruce references Pirque Abot 3:7 in concluding, “That can only mean that there were very few resident Jews; had there been ten Jewish men, they would have sufficed to constitute a synagogue” (1988, p. 310).

3. Only women believers. “And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there” (Acts 16:13).

The identity of the man in the vision comes into clearer focus when we examine Paul’s initial contacts within the city. Scripture gives no indication of any male believers anywhere to be found. The obvious conclusion is that an individual representing the unchurched was making the impassioned appeal for help. The Holy Spirit was at work through the prayers of the women believers. The Holy Spirit closed doors in Asia because the door was swinging wide open in Europe. If we want to specifically identify a person, perhaps the man in the vision was the first male convert in the city of Philippi, the Philippian jailer.

Evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work preceding the arrival of the missionary team is evidenced immediately. Lydia, a wealthy woman from Thyatira (located in the region where Paul had just been forbidden to preach) responded to the message with enthusiasm: “The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul” (Acts 16:14). As a result, Lydia and her household were baptized. Shortly thereafter, a demon possessed slave girl

finds freedom in the name of Jesus Christ. An apparent set-back of being thrown in jail results in the conversion of the Philippian jailor and his family. What happened in the first few days of ministry in Philippi made a broad statement concerning the expansion of the gospel into the Gentile world. Williams argues that those who responded first in Philippi represent the three groups held in contempt by Jews: women, slaves, and Gentiles. In planting the church in Philippi, “all gender, ethnic, and social barriers are crossed” (Bock, 2007, p. 536).

The dynamics surrounding the church plant in Philippi were so healthy that this clearly becomes one of the most vibrant congregations in the New Testament. Paul begins his epistle to the church in Philippi, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil 1:3-5). Paul calls them his “joy and crown” in chapter 4:1. In chapter 4:3, he indicates that his fellow workers in Philippi have their names in the Book of Life. White concurs with Paul’s analysis of the Philippians: “The Philippians were the most loving and truehearted of the apostle’s converts” (2005, p. 390). From such a healthy base, the gospel spread to other cities including Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Beroea, Neapolis, Athens, Corinth, and Cenchreae (Powell, 1987, p. 276).

Several outstanding principles can be extrapolated from the church plant in Philippi:

1. The power of prayer to move the hand of God. The women were faithfully meeting to pray Sabbath after Sabbath (Acts 16:13).
2. Church planting should be a Holy Spirit-directed venture (Acts 16:6-10).

3. The unchurched are calling out for help (Acts 16:9).
4. Work for God will encounter opposition. Paul and Silas were thrown in prison (Acts 16:16-24). 2 Corinthians 7:5 also alludes to this, “For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.”
5. The gospel can break down social, economic, political and religious barriers (i.e., Lydia, the slave girl, the Philippian jailer).
6. Healthy and vibrant church plants have a far-reaching impact.

Case Study #4: Ephesus

Ephesus is a church plant that seems to have had the least potential in the beginning, but ends up having the broadest impact of any church in the New Testament. When Paul arrived, he found 12 disciples. His first question of them was regarding whether they had received the Holy Spirit. Their response was that they had not even heard of the Holy Spirit. They had been baptized into John’s baptism of repentance. In the only case of rebaptism recorded in the New Testament, Paul baptizes them into Jesus Christ and lays his hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit (see Acts 19:1-7).

After three months of boldly preaching in the synagogue, a contingent of opposition began to turn the multitudes against him. Paul’s response was to withdraw with the disciples and meet with them daily in the school of Tyrannus for a period of two years. What was the result of this approach? “And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10). The amazing growth is highlighted again in Acts 19:20, “So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.” Logan notes, “He (Paul) went to Ephesus, took up

residence, and focused entirely on mentoring and multiplying leaders who could be sent out to reach the harvest” (2006, p. 21). Ephesus became the mother church to most of the church plants in Asia Minor.

Paul’s farewell counsel to the Ephesian elders is found in Acts 20:17-38. He requested that the elders travel 30 miles from Ephesus to Miletus in order to meet with him. The distance and time involved to travel for this meeting indicates the high level of commitment from these disciples. Paul summarizes his ministry among them, “I kept nothing back that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). Gaertner (1995) notes that this is the only speech by Paul in Acts to fellow believers. Willimon highlights the powerful dynamics of Paul’s farewell counsel to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-38):

In its interplay between the *action* and the *being* of church leaders, its focus upon the *duties* of the elders for the support, care, and protection of the flock, in its frank admission of the *possibilities for pain* within the Christian ministry it provides us with a model (as Paul himself was a model) for thinking about Christian ministry. (1988, p. 158)

Paul’s and the elders’ emotional responses, knowing this would be the last time he would see them, demonstrate the depth of relationship that had been built during the almost three years of personal mentoring Paul had invested (Acts 20:37, 38).

Summary

Several themes emerge from the analysis of the New Testament strategy for church planting.

1. The Role of the Holy Spirit. The guidance and dependence on the Holy Spirit was essential for the church planting process. Often plans were shifted based on the promptings (voice) of the Holy Spirit. If there is any clear strategy in the book of Acts, it

is that church planting is Spirit-directed. It is a grass roots movement prompted by the Spirit.

It was the Holy Spirit that was in control in Acts. We have misnamed the book by calling it the Acts of the Apostles. The Holy Spirit is referred to at least fifty-seven times in twenty-eight chapters. If we want to experience the book of Acts today, we must yield control to the Holy Spirit. (Cole, 2005, p. 89)

2. Strategic Plants. God often utilized strategically located plants as a means to multiply churches in surrounding regions. The concept of a birthing and sending congregation is a model that was used quite effectively in the early church.

3. Harvest Vision. One church in Jerusalem was not adequate or faithful to the gospel commission. New methods and locations for planting were constantly being pursued.

4. Role of the Laity. The clergy/laity distinction is absent in the church planting strategy of the book of Acts. Both teamed together. Most church plants were lay led. The church in Jerusalem seems to be one exception.

5. Support Systems. The church in Jerusalem was intentional about sending representatives to evaluate and support new churches as they developed. Initial support sometimes took the form of correcting or expanding doctrinal understanding. Other times it involved helping defend the young church plant from opponents. On all occasions, training and mentoring took place. The length of support seemed tailored to the specific circumstance.

6. Perspective. Trials and persecution came hand in hand with church planting in the early church. It was expected. Paul and his companions could sing in prison knowing that God would somehow use their trials for His glory.

7. Deeply Investing. Paul's greatest effectiveness was probably his ability to deeply invest in key individuals. This powerful habit was most notable in Ephesus, where he mentored 12 individuals daily for over two years. Paul had an excellent mentor in Barnabas, who deeply invested in him.

Any 21st century strategy for church plant multiplication should incorporate principles from the rapid expansion of the church in the 1st century. Methods need to be grounded solidly on scriptural principles. This brief survey provides a framework for moving forward.

CHAPTER 3

CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGIES LITERATURE REVIEW

The volume of books, articles, and resources available on the subject of church planting has multiplied significantly over the past 20 years. Church planting training schools, seminary degrees, conferences, boot camps, and assessment programs are abundant. Many denominations are focusing their attention and resources toward planting churches. The influence of George McGavran, Peter Wagner, Lyle Schaller, and others in the “church growth” movement served as a catalyst to move church planting to the front lines of denominational growth strategies. Wagner emphatically states, “Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven” (1987, p. 168). He adds further, “Without exception, the growing denominations have been those that stress church planting” (1990, p. 20).

The focus of this study is not on how to plant a single church, but rather on developing a systematic strategy for a local conference that results in the proliferation of church plants on an ongoing basis. The goal is to move from addition to multiplication. The strategy must be sustainable and easily reproducible in a variety of contexts. The end result must be kingdom impact, which by definition means that disciples are being multiplied.

Adventist Church Planting

Burrill's book on church planting, published in 1999, is aptly titled, *Rekindling a Lost Passion*. Adventism began as a movement, with church planting being a primary passion of the church. There was an urgency shared by lay members, pastors, and church administrators to see the Third Angel's Message proclaimed far and wide. Church planting was at the forefront of that mission. White comments on the significance of church planting as it relates to pastors,

If they cannot raise up churches and friends to sustain them, then certainly the cause of truth has no need of them, and they have the best reasons for concluding that they made a sad mistake when they thought that God called them to teach the third angel's message. (White, J., 1862, p. 156)

The role of the pastor in early Adventism was mobile and evangelistic. In 1912, A. G. Daniels, General Conference President analyzed the astounding growth of the Advent movement and attributed the success to the lack of settled pastors:

I hope this will never cease to be the order of affairs in this denomination; for when we cease our forward movement work and begin to settle over our churches, to stay by them, and do their thinking and their praying and their work that is to be done, then our churches will begin to weaken, and to lose their life and spirit, and become paralyzed and fossilized and our work will be on a retreat. (Daniels, 1912)

The words of A. G. Daniels met their prophetic fulfillment shortly after the death of Ellen G. White in 1915. The trend toward "settled" pastors became the norm within Adventism. Between 1919 and 1930, there was a drop from 2254 churches to 2227 churches, which calculates to a net loss of 27 churches (General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2012b).

Although the rapid growth of early Adventism slowed significantly, churches continued to be added consistently after 1930. However, in 1990, the steady trend began to shift downward dramatically. The year-end reports between 1990 and 1994 show the

following: 1990, gain of 15 churches; 1991, gain of 40 churches; 1992, gain of 12 churches; 1993, gain of 33 churches; 1994, loss of 6 churches. The average for these five years is 18.8 churches per year. In contrast, the previous five years (1985-1989) show an average of 47.2 churches per year (General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2012b). Burrill shares how the revitalization of church planting in the North American Division was initiated:

The same committee that produced the Net programs also prepared a church planting proposal. It was presented at Year End meetings, but nothing concrete was done with the idea. In frustration, I mentioned to Monte Sahlin, then in the Church Ministries Department of the NAD, how disturbed I was over the inaction of the Division regarding church planting. He responded by offering me \$40,000 for the NAD if I would do something to get church planting started. (2007, p. 84)

In 1996, the first SEEDS church planting conference was held on the campus of Andrew's University. Dr. Robert Logan was the featured speaker, with the theme, "Strategies for Church Planting." There were 300 people in attendance and a high level of enthusiasm. The conference ended with pastors and lay members committed to return to their local fields and plant churches. Burrill recounts what followed,

In the fall of 1996, Logan was invited to speak at the NAD Year End meetings and share some of the same material he had shared at SEEDS. The result was an action taken during the council to make church planting the top priority in every conference in North America. (2007, p. 84)

SEEDS continued to gain momentum in the years immediately following: 1997, 400 in attendance with the theme, "Looking for a Bumper Crop as We Approach the 21st Century"; 1998, 400 in attendance with the theme, "A New Way to Look at Ministry...The Pastors Equip...The Laity is Empowered to Minister (Is it Really New?)" ; 1999, 600 in attendance with the theme, "How to Plant and Grow Healthy Churches Through Natural Church Development"; 2000, 600 in attendance with the theme,

“Equipping for Ministry”; 2001, 590 in attendance with the theme, “Plant a Church, Reap a Harvest.” In 2002, a shift began to take place with the SEEDS conferences. For the next four years, the theme changed from church planting to other areas of church life: leadership, change dynamics, church renewal and community service. In addition, regional SEEDS events began to be offered at local unions and conferences. These events were well attended and served to expand the emphasis on church planting across the division. In recent years, SEEDS has transitioned back to a focus exclusively on church planting. An emphasis on providing support for local conferences and their church planting programs has led to the development of an annual “Church Planting Coordinator’s Retreat.”

Was church planting impacted positively across the North American Division? Statistics indicate that progress was certainly made. The low of an average 18.8 churches per year (between 1990 and 1994) trended upward significantly. Between 1997 and 2010, the net increase to organized churches across the division increased to 45.5 annually. It should be noted that this figure represents the net, which means that closed churches were subtracted before arriving at this number. Additionally, there was an increase in the number of companies. In 1997, companies began to be counted each year. The initial count stood at 383 division-wide. By 2010, this number had increased to 765. The net increase in companies averages to 29.4 per year, resulting in a combined average of churches and companies of 74.9. When this average is applied to the 58 conferences comprising the North American Division, the average is just a 1.3 net increase in companies and churches per conference each year (General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2012c). To simply keep up with population growth, a

minimum of 3 percent increase in the number of churches should be realized. In an interview conducted by Scannell (2012, p. 4) of *Outreach Magazine*, Ed Stetzer suggests that “when you have healthy denominations, you can get as high as about a 6 percent planting rate, and that will be about 10 percent of their churches involved.” Based on 6049 companies and churches in the North American Division at the end of 2010, the minimum goal should be to add 181 churches and companies each year based on the 3 percent figure, with upward adjustments as growth occurs. This goal would simply maintain status quo. The annual average between 1997-2010 is currently 41 percent of reaching status quo. Although we can celebrate progress, a vision for church planting must take higher priority.

Fast-Growing and Slow-Growing Conferences

Can church planting be tied to actual conversion growth within a local conference? A study of the North American Division (General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2012b) reveals a stark contrast between the top five growing conferences and the bottom five in terms of growth (see Table 3). The statistics analyzed for ranking purposes was the percentage accession rate (baptisms and professions of faith) averaged between 2001 and 2010. The fastest-growing conferences had a net increase of 131 churches and companies. The slowest-growing conference had a net loss of 18 churches and companies. Excluded from the statistics are groups in development which are not yet officially organized. The correlation between church planting and conversion growth is clearly seen in Table 3. Despite planting efforts of the

five fastest-growing conferences, annual percentages for church plants are only averaging: 1.46, 3.22, 1.33, 2.15, and 2.07, respectively. This is far below the percentages needed to be considered a multiplication movement.

Table 3

Top Five and Bottom Five Growing Conferences

Conference- TOP 5	Annual Accession Rate Average (2001- 2010)	2001 number of churches	2010 number of church	Increase/decrease in number of churches (over 10 years)	Percentage increase/decrease in number of churches (over 10 years)
New Jersey	6.44	82	94	12	14.6
Greater New York	6.22	118	156	48	32.2
Nevada- Utah	6.21	45	51	6	13.3
Texas	5.96	223	271	48	21.5
Arizona	5.59	82	99	17	20.7
Conference- BOTTOM 5					
Dakota	1.97	64	48	-16	-33.3
Montana	2.39	44	44	0	0
Kansas- Nebraska	2.43	108	102	-6	-5.9
Alleghany West	2.46	58	56	-2	-3.6
British Columbia	2.51	94	100	6	4.17

Seventh-day Adventist World Statistics

When analyzing church planting movements, a brief overview of how the Seventh-day Adventist Church is progressing in other world fields would prove insightful. The five fastest-growing world divisions are highlighted in Table 4. The final line reveals the statistics for the North American Division (9th in accession growth of the

13 world divisions). The total number of churches and companies from 2008, 2009, and 2010 are compared to calculate the percentage increase between years (General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2012d):

Table 4

Seventh-day Adventist Church Division Growth

World Division	2008 Number of churches & companies	2009 Number of churches & companies	2010 Number of churches & companies	2008- 2009 % increase	2009- 2010 % increase
South American	20,518	21,147	21,863	3.39	3.07
Southern African-Indian	19,605	19,999	20,635	2.01	3.18
Southern Asia-Pacific	9730	9860	10,096	1.34	2.39
East-Central Africa	20,231	21,386	22,004	5.71	2.89
Inter-American	17,607	18,037	18,400	2.44	2.01
North American	5958	6013	6049	.92	.59

The above table demonstrates the challenge ahead:

1. No world division is making rapid advances in terms of the percentage of church plants being added. The notable exception is from 2008-2009, a time when the East-Central Africa Division experienced a 5.71 percent increase in the number of churches.

2. The South American Division exceeds the 3 percent minimum (status quo) both years analyzed. It is the only division to do so.

3. There is a strong correlation between accession growth and the percentage increase of churches and companies. The North American Division ranks ninth of the 13 divisions in terms of accession growth and has a correlating low percentage of increase in churches and companies.

Adventist Churches Grow Differently

All Christian churches recognize the Great Commission of Jesus in Matthew 28 as containing the words that enunciate the mission of the church. Malphurs (2011, p. 92) observes, “Regardless of how you articulate your mission statement, for it to be biblical, the Great Commission must be at its core.” Seventh-day Adventists heartily embrace the Great Commission as our mission as well. However, it does not fully reflect our unique calling as the remnant church. Revelation 14:6-13 broadens the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to include calling others out of “Babylon” (confusion) to a biblically correct theology, which includes the end time testing truth of Sabbath worship. This theological difference is significant and not only has doctrinal implications, but practical, methodological ones as well. A few unique methods include: health ministry, literature evangelism, and prophecy series.

Many of the best church planting resources are produced by Baptist and non-denominational authors and practitioners. There are a few notable exceptions, such as Ralph Moore, who formed the Hope Chapel network of churches. The challenge in developing a strategy is to identify which methods are principles and can be assimilated within the Adventist context and which are tied to denominational structure, philosophy, and theology. A natural tendency is to quickly gravitate to a new methodology without thoroughly evaluating the compatibility within Adventism. A careful reflection

biblically, based on our unique mission and in the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy, provides a sieve that helps determine which methods can be endorsed and implemented and which should be set aside.

The following areas of focus have been minimized in this literature review chapter, as they demonstrate significant barriers for implementation within the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

1. Funding structure. The tithe for most denominations outside Adventism is retained by the local congregation.

2. Church plant leadership. Before launching a church plant, a minimum of two full time pastoral staff positions, and ideally three or four, is recommended. A common phrase found in church planting literature is “staff for growth.” The recommendation is to add an additional staff member (pastor) for every 150 people attending.

3. Initial growth. Two approaches commonly used to gather a crowd for the opening of a new Sunday church is a flyer/post card in the mail and robo-calling. It is not unusual for 200-300 interested individuals to show up when this advertising is utilized.

4. Mega-church. The goal of growing a mega-church is idealized and strived for by many Evangelical church planters.

5. Additional differences include: priority of doctrine, flexibility of worship times, worship styles, facilities that can be rented, child-care during worship, etc.

Adventist church planting will not likely produce a church plant that has 300 attending on opening Sabbath, retains millions in tithe, grows to 5000 in attendance, and has 40 hired staff members. No such Adventist church exists anywhere in the world. It should be noted that, even within Evangelical circles, this type of church plant is an

anomaly. A church planting strategy based on occasional exceptions would miss the mark in producing a movement.

What follows is an analysis of church planting multiplication principles rather than denomination specific strategies. These Bible-based approaches cross denominational lines and should be seriously considered for any Adventist multiplication initiative.

Keep it Simple

There is universal agreement among thought leaders in the church planting arena that church plant multiplication strategies must be kept simple. Payne (2009, p. 411) states,

For the most part, church planting methods in the United States and Canada are *too* complicated. We must advocate and apply simple methods that are highly reproducible by new kingdom citizens. In light of the billions of nonkingdom citizens on this planet, it is unwise for church planters *not* to think about the reproducibility potential.

Payne emphasizes that we must move away from complex paradigms if we are ever to realize rapid multiplication (2009, p. 12). Payne quotes George Patterson's question: "What is the shortest possible route to plant a church that will spark a spontaneous movement to Christ?" (1981, p. 603).

D. Ferguson and Ferguson began with a vision to reach all of Chicago through planting churches. They comment, "As complexity increases, reproducibility decreases. If you want to lead a movement, make sure that the systems are simple and reproducible" (2010, p. 206). "Denominations and church structures that impose a hierarchy of authority or require bureaucratic decision-making are ill-suited to handle the dynamism of a Church Planting Movement" (Garrison, 2004, p. 40). The tendency to complicate

programs in order to insulate ourselves from potential challenges must be abandoned if a movement is ever to take place.

Movements in the United States

The United States has witnessed only two denominational multiplication movements during its history: the Methodists and the Baptists. The founding of both denominations in the United States highlights the importance of simple and reproducible systems. Logan notes the following about Methodists:

It was Wesley's critics who identified the secret: they were the ones who began calling his followers the Methodists. It was not a compliment, but a derogatory label. Yet they had accurately identified the element that set his ministry apart: a simple, reproducible method- a system that empowered ordinary people to do extraordinary things. (2006, p. 7)

Today, there are no rapid movements of such broad magnitude within the United States. Stetzer and Bird (2010, p. 167) observe, "At present there are thirty-four western industrialized democracies in the world, including the United States. Unfortunately no church planting movements currently exist among the majority peoples in those countries."

An assumption could be made that majority populations in Western culture are perhaps gospel hardened and that such movements are no longer possible. However, the following examples demonstrate the possibility that multiplication in the North American context could happen once again on a large scale:

1. Hope Chapel with Ralph Moore, "To date we can identify more than 700 church plants. Each is a direct relational outgrowth of the original 12 people in a Southern California beach town" (Moore, 2009, p. 240).

2. Community Christian Church in Chicago developed the “NewThing Network” of multi-site churches under the leadership of two brothers, Jon and Dave Ferguson. “NewThing’s dream is to catalyze a movement of reproducing churches - one step at a time, we believe God is doing just that” (Ferguson and Ferguson, 2012). There are now close to 125 churches that are part of the NewThing network.

3. Organic Church with Neil Cole (who has identified his movement by the name Church Multiplication Associates--CMA): “At the time of this writing, there have been close to 800 churches started in thirty states and twenty-three nations around the world, in only six years” (Cole, 2005, p. 26).

4. The Acts 29 Network founded by Mark Driscoll, “Over the last ten years, Acts 29 has emerged from a small band of brothers to over 400 churches in the United States” (Driscoll, 2012).

5. Fellowship Bible Church with Gene Getz which started in 1972 in North Dallas and now includes hundreds of churches (many congregations numbering in the thousands).

Networks

An emerging trend in the United States is the development of “networks” of loosely connected church plants. The following is a listing of some of the more prominent networks: ARC, Forge, CMA, Missio Incarnational Movement, NewSong Global, NewThing, Acts 29, and Stadia. The affiliation within these movements is based on methods and strategies, rather than doctrinal distinctives. Resources, training, and coaching are provided to help new groups who join the network successfully plant churches. For example, church plants that are part of CMA (Church Multiplication

Associates) are organized around Neil Cole's organic church model of multiplying house churches. Cole states clearly, "We are not a denomination but in fact have churches that represent many denominations" (2012). Networks within denominations are less common, but do exist. In the case of Moore, the planting movement he initiated out of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel eventually became a denomination (Hope Chapel) and adheres to a 22 point doctrinal statement (2012).

The trend toward "networks" has had some exposure within the ranks of Adventism. In 2004, Ron Gladden (an Adventist pastor) formed the Mission Catalyst Network. He said,

Some people may label Mission Catalyst as a denomination, but we believe it inaccurately characterizes our ministry. We are, in fact, a network of churches that are loyal to our God-given message and mission and passionate about taking it to the world. Denominations tend to exercise a tighter degree of control or authority over a collection of congregations than do other systems of governance such as associations or networks. The churches we plant are not officially affiliated with any denomination. (Gladden, 2012a)

Gladden's model emphasizes the popular evangelical method of "staffing for growth." The development of a new governance of church by Gladden has been rejected by the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Therefore, the churches that have joined Mission Catalyst are not considered Adventist. The Mission Catalyst web site lists eight churches in the United States and Canada (Gladden, 2012b/2012c).

In 2004, cell churches reached a peak in the North American Division. James of the North American Division Evangelism Institute promoted the concept through SEEDS conferences, seminars, and in the classroom at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. The annual gathering of cell church leaders and the mentoring of Don James provided a support network for this method of church planting. The basic concept was

the division of the entire church into cells that met during the week. Cells multiplied and provided growth for the church body. The findings in 2004 were as follows: 25 Cell Church plants/transitions, 106 cells (average of 6.8 per church), 1005 cell members (Average of 9.5 per cell), 199 Pre-SDA attending cells (average of 1.9 per cell), and 11 percent baptism gain. Unfortunately, only three Adventist cell churches still exist today. Evidently, this model has obstacles hindering multiplication within the Adventist context in North America.

A more recent development is the Simple Church Global Network founded by Adams (2009). This network functions within the Seventh-day Adventist church organization in the North American Division. Like all networks, the planting method is the defining element that fuels the association of churches. The Simple Church planting model is based on house churches and is primarily focused on Western countries. Training and resources are provided (including webinars) to equip those interested in becoming part of the network. After close to four years of development, the network consists of 37 Simple Churches (7 are outside North America) with an attendance of 444 individuals (140 are members) and 26 baptisms. A challenge faced is the multiplication of groups within their local context. To date, six Simple Churches have launched another group within their immediate community (three in North America and three in Europe). Adams shares, “We do not ‘push’ multiplication. We wait for God to bring the idea to someone in the group. Then the group begins to explore how God is inviting them to join Him in His missionary work” (M. Adams, personal communication, October 31, 2012). Time will demonstrate the sustainability and effectiveness of this approach.

Perhaps the idea of networks is not as new to Adventism as it may seem.

Organizations like Adventist Frontier Missions (Vine, 2012), Gospel Outreach (Pangilinan & Stanyer, 2012), and ASAP (Aiken, 2012) have functioned as “networks” facilitating the planting churches for decades. They are referred to as “supportive” ministries of the church. These organizations provide another layer of ministry that can work cooperatively to help extend the Three Angel’s Message. There are a couple of dynamics that are worth noting. First, although these ministries are based in the United States, they are focused on foreign countries. Second, there is a policy within these ministries not to solicit or accept tithe dollars.

Networks can fill an important role for church planters. They provide a support system which includes training, resources, and coaching. Stetzer wrote his Ph.D. dissertation based on research regarding the impact support systems have on church plants. His research included 2000 church plants in the United States, representing 12 denominations. Stetzer concluded,

Church planters who meet with a mentor or coach, plant larger and more effective churches than those who do not. Every group surveyed indicates that having well-designed support systems for the planter improve their survivability. Some groups report that their survival rate has doubled since implementing important systems such as assessment, training, and coaching. (Stetzer, 2012)

A potential challenge with networks as they are currently functioning in the United States is that they typically restrict themselves to one model of planting. For example, in order to be part of the Simple Church Global Network, you follow a prescribed method of planting that involves a house church with a CORE4 front-line missionary team. In reality, there are numerous models of planting to effectively reach the harvest. A support system that is not exclusive to one model seems to be lacking in North America across all denominations.

Movement Characteristics

Despite some advances in North America among church planting networks, a widespread multiplication movement does not exist. Many networks quickly venture outside of the United States to more receptive fields. Garrison conducted significant research globally to identify and study church multiplication movements. He defines a movement as follows, “a rapid and multiplicative increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment” (2004, p. 7). A key feature of a multiplication movement is that the growth significantly outpaces population increases.

Some of Garrison’s findings included:

-Southeast Asia: 3 churches multiplying to 550 in 4 years.

-A city in China: planted 500 new churches in 4 years.

-Two regions of Latin America: grew from 235 churches to more than 3200 in 8 years.

-Ethiopia: 65 cell churches started in 9 months. (Garrison, 2004, pp. 3, 4).

Garrison was able to identify 10 common characteristics of these church plant multiplication movements:

1. Prayer
2. Abundant gospel sowing
3. Intentional church planting
4. Scriptural authority
5. Local leadership
6. Lay leadership

7. Cell or house churches
8. Churches planting churches
9. Rapid reproduction
10. Healthy churches

(2004, pp. 33-36).

Garrison's research provides an excellent framework to help us understand what components are necessary to establish a system with the potential for rapid multiplication. If these 10 characteristics are truly universal in scope, then an adaptation of them carries the potential of impacting North America dramatically. Many of these components are present within planting networks in North America, others are mostly nonexistent. Do contemporary thought leaders in church planting within the North American context recognize the validity of Garrison's list? Are they placing a high priority on replicating these principles? Why are some components apparently missing from the strategies of networks and denominations?

Prayer

The position of prayer among the 10 characteristics of church planting movements is not surprising. It finds solid biblical backing, "Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you" (2 Thess 3:1). The rapid expansion of the early church was bathed in prayer.

Missiologist Payne (2009, p. 84) concurs with Garrison. "The multiplication of disciples, leaders and churches is connected to the prayers of the righteous on behalf of the lost. Prayer has played a major part in the birth of all confirmed global church planting movements." He further adds, "Strategies void of seeking the face of the Lord

are strategies that are doomed to failure” (Payne, 2009, p. 144). Cole, who had led one of the most prolific planting efforts in the United States, testifies regarding the power of prayer in the planting process:

It is when we are in deep intercession for freedom of souls that we are closest to the heart of God. This is the spiritual intimacy that tears down strongholds of the enemy and builds new life in its place. This is the first step in starting churches that reproduce. Pray first, pray last, and in between pray hard. (2005, p. 174)

Virtually all church planting literature emphasizes that the most qualified church planters are those who possess an entrepreneurial spirit. Stetzer (2006, p. 47), who is currently the leading voice for church planting in North America, emphatically states, “Effective church planters always demonstrate entrepreneurial leadership skills.” There are many positive attributes with this gift cluster, however, when it comes to spirituality there can be some challenges. Entrepreneurial leaders can be a fairly self-sufficient group of people. By nature they are “doers.” Sometimes talent is relied on rather than a deep and abiding relationship with God. The rigors of church planting will stretch the most gifted to the point of burnout. The result is an empty tank with nothing left to give. Church planters desperately need a daily refreshing of God’s presence in their lives. As important as having the right “gift set” and leadership skills are to church planting, the foundation will crumble when the devotional life is neglected.

Too much of church planting today is more of an entrepreneurial quest than a spiritual experience. It’s driven by leadership, which can be good, but not if the leader’s prayer and spiritual devotion is running on empty. Too many church planters are weak prayer warriors. (Stetzer & Bird, 2010, p. 204)

Church planting and prayer are inseparable. However, it is not the natural inclination of church planters and movement leaders. It must be intentionally and persistently pursued. Paul challenges in 1 Timothy 4:7, “Exercise yourself toward

godliness.” Whitney (1997, p. 15) comments, “I’ve never known a man or woman who came to spiritual maturity except through discipline.” The author points out that individuals will discipline themselves to improve in their career or to learn to play an instrument, but not for godliness. Many Christians profess a passion for God but “spiritually they are a mile wide and an inch deep” (Whitney, 1997, p. 19).

Although prayer is widely recognized as essential to church planting success, perhaps it has received more verbal commendation than actual practical application. Without a doubt, the practice of fervent prayer must accompany any strategy that will ever experience rapid multiplication.

Abundant Gospel Sowing

The phrase “abundant gospel sowing” is synonymous with evangelism. Warren’s experience with planting churches has led him to conclude, “Starting new congregations is the fastest way to fulfill the Great Commission” (Warren, 1995, p. 180). Garrison (2004, p. 33), states emphatically, “We have yet to see a Church Planting Movement emerge where evangelism is rare or absent.” Multiplication movements engage in both mass media/public evangelism and personal evangelism. Testimonies of changed lives provide fuel to fan the flames of rapid multiplication.

The interplay between church planting and evangelism has long been recognized by church growth thought leaders. In 1990, Wagner (p. 11) made this bold and often quoted statement, “the single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.” Statistics seem to support Wagner’s assertion. A study conducted among Southern Baptists revealed that in a newly planted church there are 14.4 baptisms per year for every 100 people in regular attendance in worship. When a

church has been in existence sixteen years or more, the baptism rate is half that: Only 7.3 baptisms per year for every 100 people in attendance (Stetzer, 2003, p. 23). The goal of planting a church is not to simply shuffle the saints from one part of town to another; it is to see lives changed for eternity. Church planting is truly all about being more effective evangelistically and expanding God's kingdom.

One evangelistic component of church planting is that it effectively addresses the challenge of a commuter church. A long-time Adventist may be willing to drive 30 minutes to church, but this is not a reasonable expectation to place on the unchurched. Church planting provides an opportunity to plant churches in various locations. In this way, members can effectively evangelize their neighbors and invite new converts to a church that is demographically accessible to them. In addition, cultural groups often cluster together in metro areas. An astute evangelist will recognize within these groups opportunities for sharing the gospel. A culturally relevant church plant will be the most effective approach to reach these people groups for Christ.

Intentional Church Planting

Church planting can happen without intentionality. It is known as a church split. Church splits are painful and carry with them harmful DNA. Unfortunately, when there isn't a strategic plan in place, these are the only kinds of church plants that will emerge. Healthy new churches don't spontaneously start, intentionality is required.

Resistance factors to planting are present within every established church. Barriers to the mother church include: loss of finances, loss of friends/fellowship, and loss ministry leaders. Churches that have a growth mind-set seem more concerned about expanding their own membership. Church planting is often viewed as a betrayal of the

mother church. Research shows a poor track record with established churches:

According to a study conducted by a prominent Christian denomination in the United States, only 4% of Christian churches in the United States will sponsor the planting of a new (“daughter”) congregation. If those figures are accurate, this means that 96% of the conventional Christian churches in America will *never give birth*. (Ruhl, 2007)

Another study conducted by Vaughn and cited by Harrison, Cheney, and Overstreet in *Spin-Off Churches: How One Church Successfully Plants Another* cites that less than one percent of Southern Baptist Churches had any plans to give birth (2008, p. 65). The above statistics would lead us to believe that most plants are unplanned (two out of three) and therefore probably lack vitality and kingdom focus.

Based on the tremendous resistance factors to planting within a local congregation, great intentionality is required. Malphurs understands this necessity well,

A church will never rise above its leadership. If the leadership of the church isn’t committed to church planting, the membership will not be committed. If the leadership doesn’t pray for daughter churches, the membership will not pray for daughter churches. The leadership must set an example for the congregation. (1998, p. 388)

Denominations also require intentionality when it comes to church planting. “Show me a denomination in decline and I will show you a denomination without a church planting vision” (Vermeulen, 2008). Administrators have different passions. Some are into renewal, while others are into public evangelism, or Christian education, etc. But in order for church planting to become a reality, it must be an intentional focus and priority.

Scriptural Authority

The importance of Scripture being translated in the “heart language” of the people was an essential element of any church planting movement that Garrison studied.

“Scripture became the foundation for doctrine, church polity, and practical godly living (Garrison, 2004, 37).” The emphasis on the study of God’s word and doctrinal truths is largely absent from church plant multiplication literature. Cole summarizes the challenge well,

Many Western Christians have been deluded into thinking that a verse a day keeps the devil away. For many, their entire intake of God’s Word consists of reading a daily verse off a calendar and listening to a Biblical sermon once a week. We should not wonder why the Kingdom is not growing in the West. (2005, p. 67)

As part of his training for Life Transformation Groups, Cole recommends reading about 30 chapters per week. Perhaps part of the success of the planting movement Cole is leading is found in the priority given to this universal principle.

The question of doctrine appears to be a challenge in the development of a planting movement in North America. Any attempt at multiplication has been through the formation of networks (as discussed earlier). These networks tend to be centered on methods, rather than doctrinal tenets. Each local congregation is encouraged to develop their own list of adhered to doctrines. Networks have been a bright spot for church planting in North America, but may have inherent challenges due to the lack of focus on clear doctrinal positions. Based on Garrison’s findings, a denomination that has a strong emphasis on the authority of Scripture and applies biblical principles to daily life could be well positioned to develop a movement.

Newly released data show Seventh-day Adventism growing by 2.5% in North America, a rapid clip for this part of the world, where Southern Baptists and mainline denominations, as well as other church groups are declining. Adventists are even growing 75% faster than Mormons (1.4 percent), who prioritize numeric growth. . . . “You’ve got a denomination that is basically going back to basics . . . saying, ‘What did God mean by all these rules and regulations and how can we fit in to be what God wants us to be?’” said Daniel Shaw, an expert on Christian missionary outreach at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. “That’s just totally contrary to anything that’s happening in American culture. So I’m saying, ‘Whoa! That’s very interesting.’ And I can’t answer it.” (MacDonald, 2011)

Strong biblical teaching is not enough to develop a movement, but it fulfills this important principle that is found in planting movements globally. The challenge for denominations is to make the other structural changes necessary to develop a movement. “Denominations and church structures that impose a hierarchy of authority are ill-suited to handle the dynamism of a Church Planting Movement” (Garrison, 2004, p. 43). It must be remembered that all 10 principles are present in movements and, although Adventism may easily align when it comes to scriptural authority, some other characteristics could prove challenging.

Local Leadership

The concept of local leadership is a bright spot in the network trend in North America. Ralph Moore raises up leaders through his “mini-church” system. Dave and Jon Ferguson identify, develop, and deploy leaders from within their own congregation to start new campuses in their multi-site model. Neil Cole works with a house church model that focuses on raising up leaders from within the group itself. Logan (2006, p. 38) recognizes the need for local leadership when it comes to multiplication, “Church multiplication movements- those that reproduce quickly and spread among people- can be best led by grassroots movements of ordinary believers doing what Jesus called them to do.” Stetzer and Bird (2010, p. 52) concur, “We believe that a movement *could* occur today and that one vital ingredient is lay empowerment at a local church level.”

Planting cross-culturally brings many challenges, not the least of which is significant time invested by the missionary/planter to learn the culture. This process can slow down rapid multiplication. Strategically investing in local leadership is a significant growth factor as noted by Robinson (2006, pp. 144, 145), “Church leaders that have

spotted the potential for church planting among ethnic groups and are willing to take indigenous leadership seriously are already seeing a significant difference in the overall growth of their denomination.”

A common recommended practice in church planting literature is to develop leaders from the harvest. The advantages are many:

1. The leaders are well known and trusted within the local congregations.
2. The leaders are networked within the community as it has likely been their home for many years.
3. The leaders understand the dynamics of the community and the mind-set of the people who live there as it is also their culture.
4. It is good stewardship -- as an expensive transition for someone coming from the “outside” is not required.
5. More rapid multiplication is possible as numerous individuals can be developed at the same time.

Logan (2006, p. 36) is very clear that leadership must come from the harvest if multiplication is ever to be realized, “Nothing will handicap a movement and prevent ownership faster than leadership imported from the outside.”

Lay Leadership

The biggest perceived challenge to rapid church plant multiplication is the cost of hiring pastors. With economic downturns and an uncertain financial future, fewer risks are being taken within the church. Those denominations/movements who feel called to plant churches have turned to models that involve lay leadership. In the Western world, where pastor dependency is deeply ingrained, this move has been one of necessity rather

than based on vision or biblical injunctions. Payne makes an astute observation,

The Church cannot rely only on fully funded church planters for fulfilling the Great Commission. We have always known this to be the case, both biblically and practically, but in many church planting circles the ideology exists that without money, churches cannot be planted. Though there is nothing wrong with having a pragmatic response to this real and present need, my concern is that many will fail to see that there is a model in the Scriptures that should be the primary reason that the Church considers the value of tentmaking, especially for the Western nations. (2009, pp. 362, 363)

Recognizing that lay leadership is a biblical model that we are called to adapt out of faithfulness to scripture is an important step toward multiplication.

Dependence on lay church planting has always been the method of raising up churches among developing nations. Garrison (2004, p. 38) observes, “As the movement unfolds, paid clergy often emerge. However, the majority—and growth edge of the movement—continue to be led by lay or bivocational leaders.” Momentum is based on deploying an army of lay planters as noted by Ott and Wilson (2011, p. 74),

Movement impact is directly proportionate to the degree of determined and enthusiastic grassroots participation and lay involvement. Church planting movements are disciple-making movements that empower ordinary people to make a kingdom difference in the world as they rely on the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The plethora of support toward lay movements in North America is significant. Moore (2009, p. 28), who is himself a trained clergy, makes the following dramatic statement, “If we want to see massive multiplication of congregations and Christians, we need to sacrifice one of our most sacred cows- a professionally trained clergy.” Cole (2005, p. 215) has a similar observation,

I believe we are leaving the day of the ordained and ushering in the day of the ordinary. It is a time when common Christians will do uncommon deeds because God delights in using the weak and foolish things to shame the world.

Stetzer (2006, p. 9), who is the leading researcher on church planting trends in North America adds his voice, “One of the greatest hindrances to church planting in North America is the notion that all churches must have seminary-trained pastors to be legitimate.”

These dramatic statements sound an alarm to denominational headquarters and seminaries. A shift that began to take place based on economic necessity is now being identified as essential to the rapid multiplication of God’s kingdom. Such a striking transition impacts full-time, ordained, professional clergy. The residual impact on institutions such as seminaries and denominational headquarters cannot be ignored. Church planting literature (particularly related to movements) fails to address whether there is a valuable role for seminary trained/paid clergy. Perhaps this is why any attempt at a movement in North America has been based on networks or local churches and not led by denominations. The threats are too great! Despite the biblical imperative for lay leadership, the practical implications give rise to immediate rejection. The result has been partial implementation, which has led to minimal advances. Is there a way to forge partnerships between full-time, seminary-trained clergy and lay church planters? Could this be a mutually beneficial relationship? Could a combined effort produce a win/win situation and actually result in greater effectiveness?

Cell or House Churches

North America has been enamored by the mega church for decades. Willow Creek, Saddleback, Fellowship Church, Lakewood, Potter’s House, North Point Community, Lifechurch.tv, The Crystal Cathedral, and others, have captured the attention of church growth enthusiasts. The reality is that these “super churches” are an anomaly.

Research by McIntosh (1999, p. 128) revealed that “the average American church numbers around seventy-five attendees.” The concept of smaller doesn’t elicit the same level of enthusiasm that bigger and “better” does. Mega churches offer fantastic programs with first rate preaching, music, and children’s programming. The ensuing consumer mind-set that pervades such ministries becomes a tolerated by-product.

Garrison (2004) cites “cell or house churches” as one of the common characteristics of all rapidly expanding church planting movements. Based on his research, this is not optional to the multiplication package. The house church concept, also referred to as “simple church” or “organic church,” was clearly the pattern followed by the early church. Keener (1994, p. 356) notes, “Believers met in homes rather than church buildings for the first three centuries of the church.” Simson adds in his work, *Houses that Change the World*, “Until the rule of Severus around AD 225-35, church buildings had not even been allowed by the government, and house churches were the only way for Christians to meet” (1999, p. 58). Oetting concurs,

If you had asked, ‘Where is the church?’ in any important city of the ancient world where Christianity had penetrated in the first century, you would have been directed to a group of worshiping people gathered in a house. There was no special building or other tangible wealth with which to associate ‘church’, only people! (1964, p. 25)

Advocates of cell/house churches highlight the priority of making disciples. This is what Christ commanded believers to do in Matthew 28:19, 20, and a church building certainly is not a prerequisite for that to take place. Life transformation most naturally happens in relationships. Sitting in a pew looking at the back of someone’s head is not the most effective method of producing a disciple. Zens comments, as cited in Smith,

The early church had no clergy and no sacred buildings, and in this regard was radically different from all other religions, including Judaism. The proliferation of expensive church buildings constitutes a fundamental compromise of what Christ

intended to build. Thus, believers gathering in informal settings [in] homes, rented store-fronts, outdoors and apartments apparently provides the best context for the 58 'one anothers' [in the Bible] to be fleshed out. (Smith, 2012)

House churches help resolve a number of challenges to multiplication including:

1. The expense of purchasing a church facility.
2. The leadership skills required to lead a large number of people.
3. The time involved in "programming" for church.
4. Facility upkeep and overhead.
5. Staffing expenses.

Comiskey (2009, p. 141) summarizes, "One reason why house churches are reproducible is because they lack a hierarchical structure. The house church movement focuses on simple, reproducible strategies that release common Christians for uncommon work."

Churches Planting Churches

It was noted earlier that "96% of conventional churches in America will not plant a church" (Ruhl, 2007). Cole (2005, p. 92) draws a stark analogy,

Imagine the headlines if it were suddenly discovered that 96 percent of the women in America were no longer fertile and could not have babies. We would instantly know two things: First, this is not natural, so there is something wrong with their health. Second, we would also know that the future is in serious jeopardy. This is the state of the church in America right now. It is that serious, and we need to take heed.

The concept of church plants being birthed from established churches is one that receives strong endorsement in current literature. "Multiplication is the tithe of the local church. By that I mean it's just simple obedience. God has called churches to multiply. Living things reproduce; dead things don't!" (Roberts, 2008, p. 58). The book *Spin-off Churches* (Harrison, Cheyney, & Overstreet, 2008, p. 4), which is dedicated entirely to the concept of birthing congregations, emphasizes that "a healthy mother-church sponsor

and adequate support will help to ensure the new church grows to viability.” Murray (2010) notes,

The most popular model of church planting involves a local church (the “mother church”) deploying a group of its members to plant somewhere in the vicinity a new congregation (a “daughter church”) with the expectation that in due course this will become a church that is no longer dependent on the planting church. (Murray, 2010, p. 54)

Stetzer (2006, p. 79) adds his voice: “The most effective church planting occurs when a sponsor/mother church is actively involved, a model historically called ‘church extension’ where a mother church ‘extends’ itself into another location.”

The enthusiastic endorsement of mother churches giving birth is universal in church planting literature. “Next to God, the existing church is the greatest resource for church planting” (Harrison, Cheyney, & Overstreet, 2008, p. 4). And yet, less than four percent of churches ever become involved in church planting, with over half of these forced into it as the result of a split. What appears to be the most effective method of planting is almost entirely untapped. Stevenson challenges,

A few courageous leaders have done what few in the twenty-first century are willing to do. They have turned their focus outward, planting new churches rather than simply gathering more people into existing ones. These ripple churches have become points of impact for a movement that is spreading around the world. (2004, p. 208)

Saddleback Church, with Pastor Rick Warren, is one such example: “We’ve started at least one new church a year for the past thirty years, and have started as many as seventeen in a single year out of our church” (Stetzer & Bird, 2010, p. xii). Saddleback planted their first church when they only had 130 people attending.

What would happen if there were more “ripple” churches? A movement could start! Such a movement will take courageous leaders who can address the obstacles to planting within their local context. It may also take a new generation of churches that are

planted with multiplication in their DNA. Logan (2006, p. 23) shares this insight,

A general rule of thumb is that new churches should plan to plant another church within the first three years of their life as a church. The likelihood of a new church planting another church diminishes significantly after three years.

Planting in such a short time creates a dependence on God rather than methods and money. Such faith will trust God for His blessings, rather than rely on the strength of manmade strategies.

Rapid Reproduction

Any reference to rapid reproduction in North America seems to come from the domain of nature, rather than the reality of the church. We don't even know what it looks like! While living in Texas, my travels often took me through an area where an insect "experiment" at Texas A & M University had gone terribly wrong. Somehow, genetically manipulated bugs had escaped and began reproducing. This pest has become infamously known as the "love bug." It is actually two bugs that are fused together, but face opposite directions. My windshield would be covered with these odd creatures. I noticed that their domain continued to increase, as they spread far beyond their original locale, rapidly multiplying. Lessons from nature must be applied to the church!

The contrast is drawn by many authors between addition and multiplication. Addition can be controlled. We can wrap our minds around it. In fact, many times we resist moving forward rapidly. Stetzer and Bird point out, "Well-intentioned people will slow or squelch a multiplication movement by pursuing 'quality,' waiting for 'maturity,' or insisting on adherence to the existing organizational structure" (2010, p. 41).

Multiplication involves reproduction that leads to reproduction...from one to two to four to eight to sixteen and so on. Moore (2009, p. 63) challenges, "Multiply your current

goals by 100. If you do not have ministry structure or systems to reach that new goal in a relatively short time, you are not set up for rapid multiplication.”

Healthy Churches

The concept of church health is the most subjective on the list of 10 characteristics of planting movements. Garrison seems to suggest that this is based on adherence to the five biblical purposes/core functions of a church (as popularized by Rick Warren). Garrison cites that in all movements studied, these core functions were practiced (2004, p. 36). I am attracted to the phrase “healthy churches,” but a more objective analysis should be applied. The presence of a practice does not mean that it is functioning with excellence.

Natural Church Development is a powerful resource that enables a more thorough evaluation of the health of a church. Developed by Christian Schwartz in Germany, eight universal quality characteristics are evaluated in an objective manner. The categories include:

1. Empowering Leadership
2. Gift-oriented Ministry
3. Passionate Spirituality
4. Effective Structures
5. Inspiring Worship Service
6. Holistic Small Groups
7. Need Oriented Evangelism
8. Loving Relationships

A score is assigned in each characteristic with average being 50. Scores above 50 would be considered healthier than average and scores below 50 would be considered more unhealthy than average. It is possible for churches to improve their score through working on the minimum factor (the lowest characteristic of the eight). As a church becomes healthier, it can more easily be led toward planting a church. The multiplication principle of Natural Church Development asserts that healthy organisms do not keep growing larger and larger, rather, they reproduce. Schwarz cites a familiar McGavran illustration from nature, stating that the true fruit of an apple tree is not another apple, but another tree (2005, p. 95). Warren (1995, p. 32) concurs: “I believe that you measure the health or strength of a church by its *sending* capacity rather than its *seating* capacity” (italics original).

Conclusion

Garrison’s list of 10 characteristics of multiplication movements is mostly well supported by current literature, but not consistently practiced in North America.

1. Positive momentum is happening in that there is growing recognition that local/lay planters are the way forward in the Western world. The key is for this to be embraced from a biblical/theological mandate rather than simply the reaction to financial constraints. Advancing lay church planting from a biblical perspective will produce greater passion and dramatically improve sustainability.

2. The primary importance of prayer is widely lauded, but rarely practiced. Scriptural authority is being compromised by planting networks that don’t have a defined doctrinal stance.

3. House churches and mother churches that reproduce are recognized as an excellent way forward. For these methods to be embraced, increased awareness and practical methods must be promoted.

North America has fallen short of implementing Garrison's 10 characteristics with consistency. As a result, there are some bright spots, but none that could be defined as a movement. The challenge is to develop a working model that replicates these principles and demonstrates that multiplication is also possible in North America and within the Adventist context!

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

“I don’t want to hear another word about church planting!” These words, emphatically stated by an influential church elder, startled me. It was 1998 and I had just arrived at the Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church with the expectation that I would be starting a church plant in the city of Plano, Texas (immediately north of Richardson). The need was great and I felt certain the church leaders were passionate and anxious to begin. What I encountered could certainly be described as passion, but it was in opposition to planting. Somehow, through the interview process, my eyes had been veiled to the true sentiments toward the idea of giving birth to a church plant.

Fast forward 14 months. We had just concluded an elders’ meeting. The topic was church planting. As I greeted the elders on the way out, I was met by the elder who had voiced the negative opinion toward planting upon my arrival. With a smile on his face, he commented, “This will be the first of many church plants this church will lead out in.” The shift in perspective was dramatic. His words became reality, when on January 1 of 2000, the Metro North Seventh-day Adventist Church was launched with 550 people attending the opening Sabbath. Richardson had generously supported the plant with 90 of their members. How, then, was the attendance 550 on opening Sabbath? As the mother church, Richardson closed down to celebrate the birth of their daughter. That afternoon, the church plant returned to the mother church to celebrate the burning of

the mortgage (which those planting helped to pay off before launching the plant). Three weeks after the opening Sabbath, the Metro North church plant began evangelistic meetings, which resulted in 37 precious souls being added to the church. The immediate impact in the harvest was cause for celebration!

Fast forward 12 months to January, 2001. For many years, the Richardson church had offered a Spanish Sabbath School class in the choir loft of the church. On a good Sabbath, the attendance was around 15 individuals. No one asked the question as to whether there was greater potential within the community until Victor Jaeger arrived. Victor was a successful engineer who felt called to ministry and had begun work on his theology degree as an extension student. He approached me about the possibility of starting a Spanish church. God had begun to place this burden on my heart, so his request seemed to be confirmation of God's leading. My suggestion was that we offer a worship service in the fellowship hall one time per month. On the opening Sabbath, the attendance swelled from 15 to 40. By February, they were meeting every week and growth began to multiply. At the end of May 2001, there were 100 individuals worshipping every Sabbath. Through miraculous events, a Sunday church for rent was located just two blocks from the Richardson Church. On their first Sabbath in the new facility, 150 people attended. Shortly thereafter, Victor was hired by the conference as a full-time church planter. In his first three years of full-time ministry, 261 people were baptized. From 15 people in the choir loft, this was certainly a blessing none of us had anticipated!

This was the background of a church planting strategy being developed for the Texas Conference. I learned that a successful pilot project is a significant motivational

factor for conference leaders. Logan (2006, p. 92) said, “Some initial success in church planting will almost certainly generate new interest from people in your group or denomination.” In addition, the successful planting projects provided a model that could be utilized in other settings within Texas. We were not citing examples of what was taking place in Brazil, Zimbabwe, or even in another state. This was living proof, right in our own back yard, that church planting works. In September of 2001, I received an invitation from the conference president, Elder Steve Gifford, to become Assistant to the President. My roles included Church Planting, Communications, and Stewardship.

Established Church Apathy for Planting

The experience of planting two vibrant churches out of a mother church in a period of less than two years greatly influenced my initial thought processes. My strategy was simply to find a few strategically located mother churches with a passion for planting. These churches could regularly “tithes” from their membership for the purpose of reaching the communities and people groups within their territory (their Judea and Samaria). I discovered that such a vision simply was not in the DNA of established churches. The following experience spoke volumes concerning the task ahead.

My first appointment as an “official” conference departmental director was at a church in a suburb northeast of Dallas. As I stepped up to the pulpit to speak, I observed that the small sanctuary was completely full with some standing in the back. This was not due to a guest speaker being in the pulpit. It seemed that this was a regular occurrence. I decided to challenge the members by asking a question. “What would you do if God decided to bless you with 50 new people over this coming year?” Some looked back at me with a blank stare. Others looked around at their crowded sanctuary with a

puzzled look on their faces. This church had no specific plan for the future. They had unwittingly settled into maintenance mode. The members took the challenge seriously and constructed a larger worship center and turned the original location into a fellowship hall. Eight years later, I was invited to speak at this church again. As I stepped to the pulpit in their new sanctuary, I noticed that every seat was taken and that someone was even sitting on the steps up to the P.A. booth. Again, I posed the question, “If God were to bless you with 50 new people over this next year, what would you do?” Someone volunteered an “Amen.” I followed with the question, “Where would you put them?” Blank looks met me. This church, once again, had no plan for God’s potential blessing.

It bewildered me how, year after year and decade after decade, churches carry out ministry without a vision for raising up new churches. Why was it that leaders of these churches did not initiate strategic plans for establishing additional churches in their city and neighboring towns? What was hindering the rapid multiplication of churches in Texas?

Breakthrough

The answer to my dilemma of how to move forward with church planting in Texas had met a dead end very quickly with the idea of recruiting mother churches. No one was signing up. It could perhaps be argued that the churches simply were not healthy enough. Logan (2006, p. 27) wrote, “Healthy churches multiply and multiplying churches become healthier.” My initial experiences led me to question the first part of Logan’s premise that healthy churches multiply. I was discovering that neither sick nor healthy churches had any interest in church planting. What was the solution?

As I recalled my experiences at Richardson, it became clear that most churches

were having a similar response as that of the influential elder who said, “I don’t want to hear another word about church planting.” The concept of planting was threatening to them. The obstacles were very real. At first glance, there were no perceived benefits. What made the difference at Richardson? God had aligned the circumstances of my life in such a way that I had an unwavering passion to plant a church. Despite obstacles and objections, I was determined to lead the church toward greater health, plant a church as soon as possible, and then do it again. I was beginning to understand that leadership was the key. The pastor was the gate keeper for church planting in the local congregation. Although there would be initial resistance to planting from within the congregation, if the pastor was committed and regularly reminded the church of their mission, church planting could move forward with strength.

My friend, Pastor Bill McClendon, provided more anecdotal evidence regarding my developing conviction. He had planted South Tulsa Adventist Fellowship. It had quickly become the fastest growing and most vibrant Adventist Church in North America, baptizing literally hundreds of people since their inception. The Natural Church Development score for the church was an amazing average of 79, with none of the eight quality characteristics scoring below 65. Only 15 percent of churches worldwide score above 65. This was a healthy congregation! When Pastor Bill approached his church board with the idea of planting a church, their first reaction was to unanimously vote it down. He was startled, but rather than move on to the next agenda item, the board was asked to reflect on their history and the blessings they had received because they had planted a church. Pastor Bill then encouraged them to pass this blessing on by planting a church to reach another area of the city. The result of the few minutes of

reflection was a unanimous vote to move forward with church planting. The key was Pastor Bill's leadership.

Gaining Pastoral Support

As I reflected on the task ahead, it became clear that I must garner the support of the maximum number of pastors. The following approaches were used to develop an ever expanding coalition among the pastors:

1. Focus on church planting during gatherings where pastors were present:
 - a. Worker's meetings
 - b. Monthly parish meetings
 - c. Annual president's day meetings
 - d. Executive committee
 - e. Constituency meeting
2. Organize conference-wide and regional church planting events, expanding the vision for church planting among the pastors. (see Appendix B for sample poster and program)
3. Identify and develop church planting coordinators (one Spanish and one English) for each of the major metro areas of Texas. These individuals would be full-time pastors who would serve in this role in addition to their current pastoral assignment. (see Appendix C for the job description of an area church planting coordinator).
4. Intentionally hire full-time church planters as the conference budget would allow.
5. When pastoral vacancies arose in established districts, encourage the hiring of pastors who have a vision for birthing daughter congregations. This required a close

working relationship with the Conference President, Ministerial Secretary, and Personnel Director (who was the Conference Secretary).

6. Provide resources for pastors in order to expand their understanding and increase their passion for church planting. Signed copies of Burrill's book, *Rekindling a Lost Passion*, were provided as an initial resource.

7. Write church planting articles to be published in *The Record* (the Southwestern Union magazine) and *The Flame* (Texas Conference magazine).

8. Personally meet one-on-one with pastors over a meal to discuss their district and church planting possibilities.

There were three key concepts I hoped pastors would embrace regarding their relationship to church planting:

First, church planting provides job security. It is helpful for pastors to recognize that they have a job because someone planted a church. There are conferences, unions, and a division in North America because churches were planted. There are elementary schools, academies, and universities because churches were planted. There are a multitude of ministries: hospital, radio, television, literature, etc. because people from churches that have been planted support them. We owe the privilege of working in ministry to the fact that someone planted a church! When we are tempted to shoot arrows or criticize new work that we feel is infringing on "our territory," we would do well to remember this.

Second, an abundance mentality is essential. The most important frame of mind for pastors to have when it comes to supporting church planting is an abundance mentality. In other words, they are not threatened by the best and brightest of their

members stepping forward to launch a new church. In fact, they encourage such people to get on board. They are not concerned about losing members, but rather, about expanding God's work to new areas. Even if a neighboring pastor is leading a project, they will encourage their members who live in the area to be supportive. They will make every effort to communicate with those leading the plant to discover ways in which they can be helpful. I have observed some pastors who will inform a newcomer about the new church in the area where they live (just in case they had not heard about it). Others have encouraged the church planter to come and share with their church the progress of the church plant. Some have collected special offerings to support the plant. When Jesus says "the harvest is truly plentiful" (Matthew 9:37), they believe it. They recognize that there are plenty of people to go around, so there is no need to be territorial about the "lost" OR the "saved."

Third, the pastor needs to take the lead if church planting is to become a reality. Most churches can be navigated through the preparation process. It is not enough to simply give tacit support. Proactive leadership is required. Even if the new church is to be lay-led, the pastor's role as coach is essential for a healthy experience for the mother and daughter churches.

Models of Planting

During the 1990s, I observed a model of church planting being promoted within the North Pacific Union and the Mid-America Union. It involved hiring two full-time church planters to plant a church as a team. Additional start-up costs were also heavily financed by the local conference. This model of planting was very expensive and high risk. If the plant failed, the conference would naturally become hesitant to pursue other

planting projects. This model also negated the possibility of rapid expansion. Due to the high costs involved, most conferences could at best take on one project at a time. If a church closed during the time the new church was being raised up, the net result would be zero new churches. The model seemed flawed to me on several levels. I was convinced that Adventist churches grew differently and Evangelical models were not necessarily reproducible within our context. One of the unions involved with this model eventually abandoned church planting altogether.

An alternate approach to church planting was being passionately promoted by Burrill. He believed the biblical model involved empowering lay people to plant churches. In addition, lay people could lead established congregations and free up their pastor to plant churches, as well. Rather than become pastor-dependent, these church plants would be lay-driven. Burrill stated,

It should be the goal of every congregation to plant a new church...However, these churches must not be established in the present pastor-dependency model, or we will create a financial nightmare in the Adventist church. A whole new church planting strategy is called for—one based on the Great Commission, which will make disciples who can exist without a nurturing pastor. (1996, pp. 64, 65)

Burrill cited the rapid growth of early Adventism when a more biblical approach to church planting and the role of the pastor existed (See *Rekindling a Lost Passion*, pp. 52, 53). I was completely convinced that the model of lay empowerment was the path forward. It was clearly working in other regions of the Adventist work outside North America. How could this model be adapted in the affluent, pastor-dependent, North American context?

It should be noted that although lay-led church planting was the primary model being promoted, other options were also encouraged. A goal of hiring one full-time

church planter per year was requested of the conference president. He responded favorably, based on obvious budgetary considerations. These planters could be placed in rapidly growing areas or where there is no Adventist presence to form a core group. In addition, a number of pastors indicated an interest in adding a church plant to their district that they would lead themselves.

Lay-led, Pastor Coached

In the late 1990s, I met Dr. Rod and Donna Willey. They were lay people who had successfully planted a church in Peoria, Illinois. They were pioneers in North America. Lay church planting, which had been the norm in early Adventism, had long been eclipsed by settled/salaried pastors. As I began regularly attending the annual SEEDS Conference at Andrews University, I was inspired by the passion and amazing miracle stories that the Willeys' shared. Every year, I would take time to visit with them and deepen our friendship. It became clear that something was missing. They felt isolated and sometimes struggled with discouragement. They longed for someone who would consistently journey with them as they navigated the treacherous waters of church planting. They needed a coach!

Burrill wrote, "Currently, the biggest obstacle to church planting is not the finances, but finding the right people to serve as coaches" (1999, p. 242). I believed that full-time pastors could be equipped to coach lay-led church plants. In my thinking, they were ideally suited for a number of reasons:

1. Pastors are fulfilling their biblical calling to "equip" when they invest in a lay church planter (Eph 4:11-12).

2. Pastors have both formal training and practical experience in ministry. They can become a “mini-seminary” as they help develop the lay planter.

3. Pastors become the link to the conference. They are able to keep the lay church planter “in the loop” regarding conference programs and policies. Examples include evangelism budgets, processes for purchasing land/facilities, training opportunities, progress necessary to become a company/church, and so on.

4. Pastors can help the planters stay focused on the mission of the church through encouraging regular evangelistic activities.

Early on, a lively discussion took place regarding the goal of the relationship between the pastor-coach and the lay planter. A strong argument was made that the lay planter needed a safe place to share challenges and receive encouragement. However, what if the church plant was in plateau or decline? What if the lay planter did not make efforts to grow as a leader? The clear consensus was that the goal of the relationship must be the success of the church plant. The growth, spiritually and numerically, of the church plant was essential. If the lay planter could not lead the church in that direction, after being given opportunities to grow, a new leader must be selected.

One of the challenges I anticipated was the possibility that some pastors might take over the church plant, intentionally or unintentionally. The pastor-dependent mindset is so engrained in North American Adventism that this could easily take place. If the pastor-coach began visiting the members, preaching too often, or showed up for too many functions of the church, the pendulum could swing quickly from lay-led to pastor-led. Some safeguards were put in place from the beginning.

As the church planting coordinator, I would personally introduce the pastor-coach

to the church plant as their coach. The lay pastor would be present on the platform as well. The introduction proceeded as follows:

I would like to introduce to you someone who will be a blessing to your church plant. This is Pastor James (insert relevant name) and he has agreed to be the coach for this church plant. His primary role will be to help your pastor (name of lay planter) lead this church plant effectively. Pastor James and your pastor (name of lay planter) will meet on a regular basis. You will also see Pastor James from time to time at your church plant. As a member of this church plant, if you need a visit from a pastor, whom should you call? Pastor James? No. He already has a full-time assignment with the conference. You would call your pastor (name of lay planter). I'd like to thank you for your commitment to being a lay-led church plant. We cannot depend on full-time paid pastors to finish this work. There are too many locations and people groups yet to be reached. I also want you to know that your faithfulness enables the conference to enter new territories where there is no Adventist presence. Thank you! To close I'd like to invite the church forward for a special dedication prayer as we lay hands on your pastor (name of lay planter).

This process was essential in helping develop clear expectations regarding the involvement of the pastor-coach. Perhaps the most important safeguard had to do with preaching. We insisted that the pastor-coach not preach more than one time per quarter in the church plant they were coaching. Invariably, the members would love the sermon and would express a desire that the pastor-coach preach more often. In this model, the appropriate response of the pastor-coach was to train the lay planter and any other lay preachers in the techniques of preaching so that they would become more effective preachers themselves. The pastor-coach was also encouraged to hold a reaping evangelistic meeting one time per year in the church plant as this was an affordable option for the church, and due to their coaching relationship, they could ensure that the church was well prepared for the meetings.

Baptisms were another opportunity to empower the lay planter. As an ordained elder, the lay planter could gain permission to conduct baptisms with the authorization of the conference president. As a minimum step, we encouraged the pastor-coach to have

the lay planter join them in the baptistery so that both could immerse the individual. The reward of participating in such a profoundly joyful and significant event fueled the flames of passion for ministry within the lay planters.

The concept of lay planting with a pastor-coach required some formalization. What exactly was expected of the pastor-coach? A formal contract was created (see Appendix D) to outline the nature of the relationship. The basics were as follows:

1. The pastor-coach and the lay planter met once a month to share a meal together. The conference provided \$20 reimbursement toward the cost of the meal. This required the option of a buffet in order to stay in budget. During this meeting, three basic coaching questions were encouraged:

- a. What can we celebrate since last time we met?
- b. What challenges have you faced since last time we met?
- c. How can I pray for you?

2. The pastor-coach met with the church plant group one time per month. In most cases, this was not on a Sabbath morning (as the pastors-coaches have responsibilities in their own districts). Interactions could include a board or business meeting, a church social, fellowship meal, Pathfinder meeting, and so on. The pastor-coach did not lead out in these events, but rather observed and supported. On rare occasions, if the church was facing a major crisis, at the request of the lay planter, the coach would take a more proactive role.

These two basic assignments were considered essential to a healthy coaching relationship. The pastor-coach was asked to initiate these meetings and be sure they took place. Other activities could include reading a book between coaching meetings and

discussing it together (resourcing), attending the annual pastor-coach and lay planter appreciation banquet (See Appendix E), attending the “Metro Impact” church planting rally, and the pastor-coach hold an annual reaping evangelistic meeting for the church plant. These events all enhanced the success of the lay planter and the church plant, but were not required.

The Conference Role

The conference role in the church planting strategy could be summarized as follows: cast the vision and provide support. It was determined that a grassroots movement was the best way forward. In this way, the local church and planter would take ownership for the success of the project, rather than the conference. During the late 1970s and 1980s, an aggressive church planting initiative had been launched in Texas. The protocol was for the conference president to mandate to a local church that they must plant a church. Many of the established churches in Texas trace their roots to this program. The only English-speaking church in the Texas Conference in the city of Austin planted an English-speaking church in 1980 and a Spanish-speaking one in 1981 at the direction of the conference. Both churches are functioning today (albeit the health of the church has room for improvement). In some cases, this top-down approach failed miserably, when disgruntled members volunteered to be part of church plants that ultimately closed down. Even the churches that planted churches which survived seemed to avoid future planting initiatives.

A grassroots approach meant that the conference would cast a vision for church planting, but allow the Holy Spirit to open doors. The first major vision casting event took place early in 2002 when I invited Russell Burrill to present church planting as the

major topic for the pastors' meeting. At the end of his presentations, a decision card was handed out. The pastors were asked to indicate their interest in becoming involved in church planting and to identify where a church plant was needed in the area surrounding their district. Over 40 pastors responded to the appeal. I was elated with the response and began the process of coming alongside these pastors to help them chart the way forward for launching church plants.

A major method of continued vision casting were church planting rallies held in various regions of the conference. Annual rallies in English and Spanish were held in the Hill Country Area (San Antonio or Austin), Dallas-Ft. Worth, and Houston. In 2006, East Texas and the Valley Area (near the Mexico border) were also added. These events typically began on Friday night with inspirational testimonies. On Sabbath, I would often speak for Sabbath School and a featured speaker would preach. In the afternoon, we would begin with a general session, followed by various break-out seminars which were presented by area pastors. The goal was to establish local buy-in to the concept of church planting. If the local pastors were involved, they would not only attend, but also encourage their members to attend. I typically concluded the rally on Sabbath evening with an appeal for church planters. In 2006, the Texas Conference hosted a SEEDS event in Austin. This was attended by all pastors and a large number of lay people. The conference president cast his vision for church planting, further ingraining it into the DNA of the Texas Conference. Beginning in 2008, rather than smaller regional rallies, a larger event entitled "Metro Impact" was planned for the entire conference. Metro Impact became an annual event and rotated between the major metro areas.

The second significant area of conference involvement was providing support.

There were three major support areas the conference provided:

1. Funding for my role as church planting coordinator. I was empowered to develop my own job description (see Appendix F).
2. Ensuring that every church plant had a mother church.
3. Ensuring that every church plant had a coach.

Other support included the following:

1. Providing the demographic resource “Link2Lead” for all churches at no cost. This was especially beneficial to church plants, as it helped them be very intentional about their primary focus group. A 27-page report, providing a wealth of information, could be produced for any zip code, radius, or even polygon within the Texas Conference territory (see Appendix G for a sample page of the report).
2. The conference administration voted to provide 100 percent funding for the first evangelistic meeting held by a church plant. The cap was between \$4000-\$6000 for this 100 percent funding; however, larger budgets could be requested with the church participating with the conference beyond the cap amount.
3. The first Natural Church Development Survey was provided at no cost.
4. Visitation of the church plant by conference administrators or departmental directors. Every church plant was encouraged to schedule someone from the conference to preach/provide a seminar at their church twice a year.
5. Annual Appreciation Banquet (see Appendix E). Once a year, beginning in 2007, all lay church planters and their spouses (or another key leader from their church) and all pastor-coaches (and their spouses, if applicable) were invited to attend a banquet

in their honor (on a Sunday from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.). A hotel room was provided on Saturday night for those traveling from out-of-town. The purpose of the banquet was to provide support and express appreciation for their ministry. Beginning in 2009, the Appreciation Banquet took place on the Sunday following the Metro Impact Rally.

Quantity and Quality

My intent upon accepting the role in September of 2001 as Church Planting Coordinator in Texas was to serve in this position for approximately five years. My goal was for Texas Conference to plant 100 churches during that time. This goal was quite visionary since Texas had only planted 18 churches in the seven years between 1995 and 2001. During a retreat in 2006, I felt a clear indication from God that I should continue several years more. The total time I served in this role ended up being just over nine years.

It quickly became apparent that not all church plants had equal potential for long-term viability. In an effort to improve the quality and intentionality of church planting, a set of guidelines was developed and then voted by the Texas Conference executive committee (see Appendix H). Key recommendations for forming a church plant group included verification of demographic viability, mother church endorsement, and a six-month incubation period for the church plant core group.

To become a company, the typical requirements for membership and tithe were included. In addition, requirements were incorporated that emphasized attendance, trained treasurers, an assigned coach, and a commitment to complete the Natural Church Development Survey.

The bar for church status was set very high. Once church status was achieved, the

desired outcome was for the church to be vibrant and be set up for long-term success. Requirements beyond membership, tithe, and attendance included 10 baptisms since being organized as a company, involvement in a public evangelistic series, a certified treasurer, strategy and timeline for building acquisition (certain church planting models require flexibility with this requirement), voted support for Adventist education, completion of a review with the Church Planting Coordinator, an assigned coach, and a minimum average score of 50 on the Natural Church Development survey.

Perhaps the most significant quality indicator was the required score on the Natural Church Development survey. There was a strong conviction that a plant should be at least considered “average” in order to qualify for church status. In order to increase the probability of producing healthy church plants conference-wide, the focus of healthy established churches was also promoted. The concept that healthy mothers produce health daughters and that the DNA of the mother passes to the daughter was an undergirding principle adapted for our church planting strategy.

Deeply Investing

Early in my ministry, I had discovered the importance of deeply investing in others. I define this concept as going deep with a few in order to go wide with many. Maxwell has observed a great irony of leadership: “If you want to do something really big that involves a lot of people, you need to narrow your focus to a few people” (2000, p. 335). Moore illustrates this same principle from the life of Jesus: “Jesus had a team of three, and you must emulate Him if you are ever to build anything solid enough to outlast your lifetime” (2002, p. 175). It was clear to me that a team was needed to carry the planting vision forward in Texas. These carefully selected individuals would be

mentored to become church planting experts whose influence would begin in Texas, but expand far beyond to bless God's work worldwide.

Since my capacity to invest deeply was limited, how would I determine on whom to focus? There were several qualities that surfaced:

1. **Passion.** These individuals must have an excitement for church planting. They light up when in conversation about expanding God's work through the multiplication of church plants.
2. **Urgency.** These individuals want to see something happen now. They are uneasy with the status quo. The slow growth of the church in North America is unacceptable to them and they believe something can be done about it.
3. **High Spirituality.** These individuals have a growing and dynamic relationship with God. What stirs the heart of God also stirs their heart.
4. **Leadership Capacity.** These individuals have a high leadership lid. With coaching and training, they are capable of leading leaders and having an ever broadening influence for God's work.
5. **Ability to Multiply.** Second Timothy 2:2 speaks of the importance of teaching individuals who will also teach others. This is the ripple effect of leadership and the way multiplication can happen.

Jesus selected 12 disciples in whom He invested deeply. Paul followed Jesus' model in Ephesus by selecting 12 disciples. The first place to look was among those whom I had designated as church planting coordinators for the various regions of the conference. I also felt it was important to select a lay person, due to the heavy emphasis on lay-led churches within the planting strategy. This was not a "published" list.

However, I began a very intentional process of developing these individuals for broad-based influence. The following were some of the ways I invested:

- Share life together—spend time socially.
- Take them out for meals—share my vision.
- Plan and lead out in events together.
- Travel out of state and out of the country doing ministry together. Grow relationally and professionally.
- Give affirmation—verbal and written.
- Gifts—shirt with logo, gift basket when presenters were with me, and so on.
- Provide resources—books, CDs, DVDs, Power Points.
- Support one another. Learn to be vulnerable. Share life events.
- Empower with ministry opportunities.
- Create materials together and solicit input.
- Constantly evaluate for improvement.
- Make them the heroes. Believe in them 100 percent.

The purpose of this investment was to see the church planting vision permeate the culture of the Texas Conference. My vision also encompassed North America. If these leaders could be effectively mentored and make significant ministry impact in Texas, they would be prime candidates for other conferences to employ as Church Planting Coordinators.

Summary

My goal was to establish a multiplication of church plants within the framework of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Rather than become frustrated by trying

evangelical methods that would meet with significant resistance, a decidedly Adventist approach was developed. Although pastor-dependency is deeply engrained within North American Adventism, a call to our pioneering roots, the counsel of Scripture, and the Spirit of Prophecy provided a solid methodology.

The system must be simple enough to reproduce in other settings. Synthesized, the basics of the strategy were as follows:

1. Lay-led church plants
2. Pastors as coaches
3. Healthy mother churches

There were many uncertainties heading forward. Would lay churches begin asking for a pastor? How large could they grow? Would pastors embrace the model? What concerns would conference administrators voice? Could the strategy be sustained over many years? Would lay people be willing to step up to plant churches?

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION AND REFLECTION

This chapter will focus on analyzing the results of the church planting initiative in the Texas Conference. Much of what was implemented was of a pioneering nature for North American Adventism. As such, the strategy developed over time. Some approaches were abandoned, while others were modified. This summary will reflect on the end result and highlight those methods that were ultimately retained.

The initial pilot project in the North Dallas area will be emphasized at the beginning of the chapter as it served as ongoing motivation for church planting throughout the rest of the Texas Conference. The study includes the number of churches added, baptisms, membership, tithe, and additional impact. Growth rates will be analyzed and compared to other parts of the world field. Following that will be an analysis of the broader church planting impact in the Texas Conference. A comparison will be drawn between planting before and after a strategy was implemented, as well as an evaluation of trends. Church-plant survivability will be compared to national averages across all denominations. Contributing factors as to whether a church plant thrived or failed will be highlighted. Leadership will be carefully studied as this can be the limiting factor to church-plant multiplication. Finally, a comparative study of established churches and church plants in the Texas Conference utilizing Natural Church Development will provide a qualitative analysis of the church planting program.

North Dallas Growth

The two flourishing pilot projects that were birthed out of Richardson in 2000 and 2001 provided motivation for continued church planting in the North Dallas corridor. Between 2000 and 2010, a total of 11 church plants (inclusive of the two pilot projects) were launched in the immediate area: four multi-ethnic English, four Spanish, two African and one Brazilian. One African church closed after a few years, bringing the total of churches in the North Dallas corridor to 11 (inclusive of Richardson). An analysis at the end of 2010 demonstrates the effectiveness of church planting in this immediate area, as reflected in Figure 2 showing number of baptisms by year, and Figure 3 displaying percent of annual baptism growth.

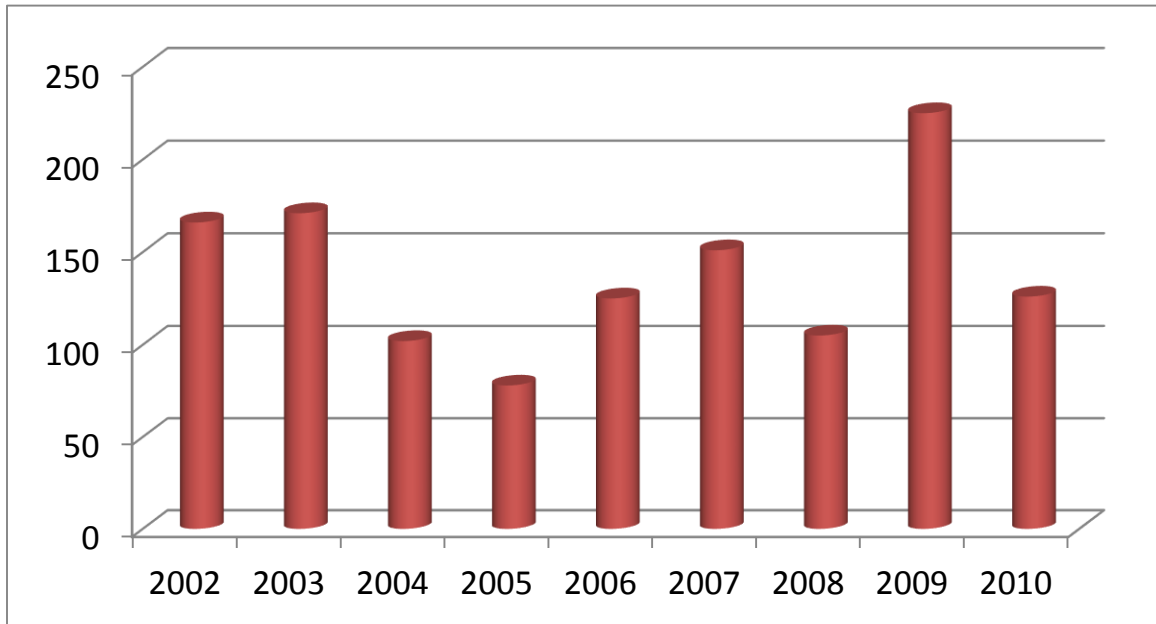


Figure 2. Number of baptisms by year.

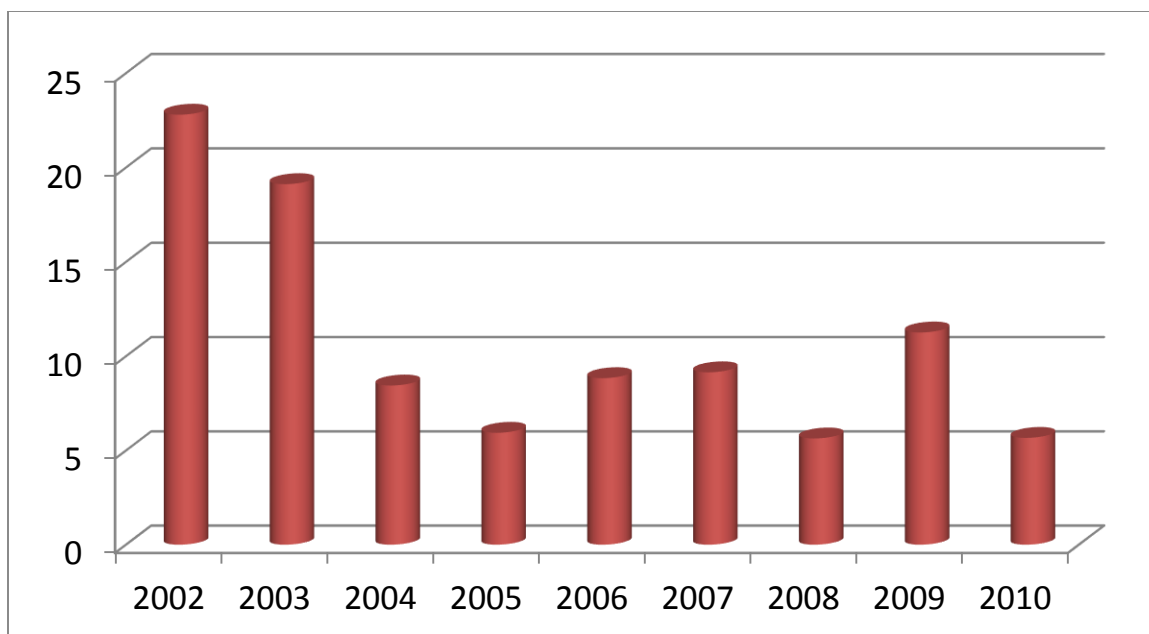


Figure 3. Percent of annual baptism growth (accessions).

The total number of baptisms/professions of faith in the North Dallas corridor between 2002 and 2010 totaled 1,257 (see Appendix I). The watermark year was 2009, which was designated by the General Conference as the year of evangelism, with 225 baptisms. Based on percentages, the average conversion growth rate (accessions) between 2002 and 2010 was 10.76 percent annually. The highest rate of accessions for the Seventh-day Adventist world field in 2009 (the year of evangelism) was the South American Division with a percentage increase of 9.79 percent. During 2009, the accession rate for the North Dallas corridor was 11.26 percent. This is remarkable considering that the North American Division accession rate is one of the slowest in the world field and stood at 4.19 percent in 2009. The fact that an affluent area in North America can outpace growth anywhere in the world (when compared to Division growth totals) should capture the attention of denominational leaders. Note also the increase in

membership between 2002 and 2010 within the North Dallas corridor. The beginning membership in 2002 stood at 728, reflected in Figure 4. The beginning membership in 2010 totaled 2224 (see Appendix J). In just 9 years, the membership more than tripled! A study of North Dallas affirms that church planting, combined with evangelism, is a highly effective combination for rapid growth.

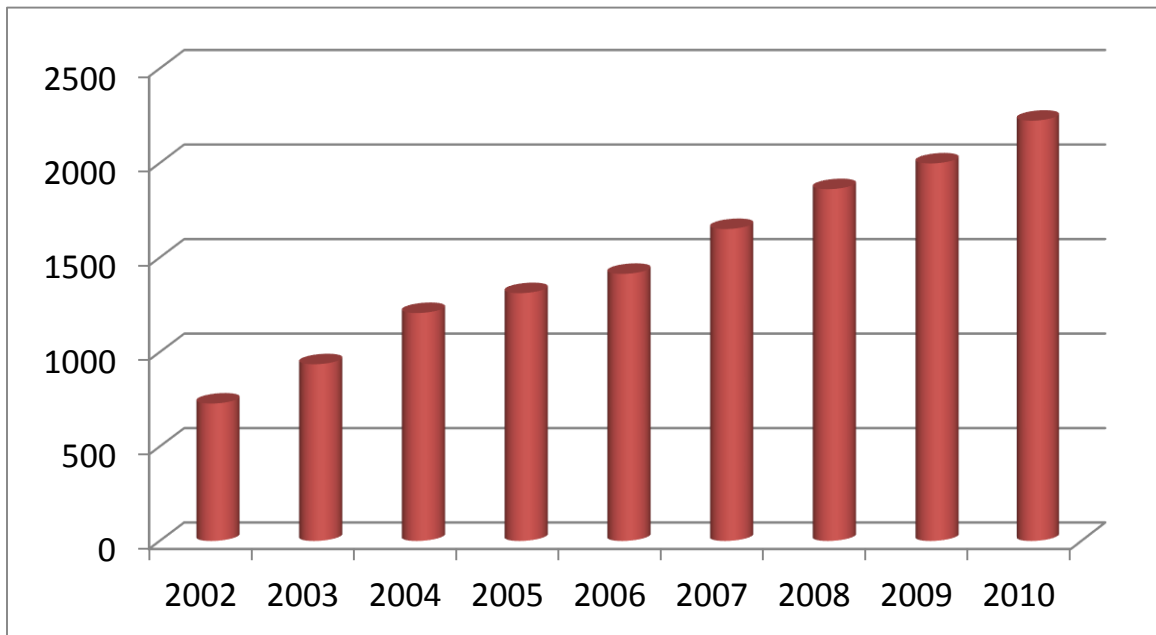


Figure 4. North Dallas membership growth.

Tithe Impact

The tithe growth for the North Dallas corridor was significant during this time. The annual average from 2000-2010 was 11.4 percent. Before planting, in 1999, the tithe of Richardson was \$688,253.00. After combining the North Dallas church plants with Richardson, the tithe at the end of 2010 totaled \$2,110,843.00. This represents more than a triple increase in tithe in just 11 years.

There are several observations that should be noted. During the first year of the church plant, the combined tithe of Richardson and her daughter church (Metro North) totaled \$1,006,006.00. This total represented an increase of 46.2 percent. The next year, the combined tithe dropped to \$940,527.00—a loss of 7 percent from the previous year. Why was the tithe so high the first year of the church plant? One mysterious donor gave over \$180,000.00 in tithe the first year of the church plant (2000). He anonymously attended Richardson for just a few months and then quietly moved on. I had one interaction with the man over lunch when he gave me his year-end tithe check for \$93,000.00. I believe this was God’s way of blessing the church planting effort and giving it favor in the eyes of the conference. Not long after that, I was invited to coordinate church planting conference-wide.

Another observation is the small gain in 2008 of 1.5 percent and the drop in 2009 of 5.3 percent. A recession hit the United States in 2008. This downturn in the economy impacted tithe throughout the entire division. Interestingly, there was a significant rebound in tithe by 2010 with an increase of 11 percent, as displayed in Figure 5, and a new all time high (see Appendix K).

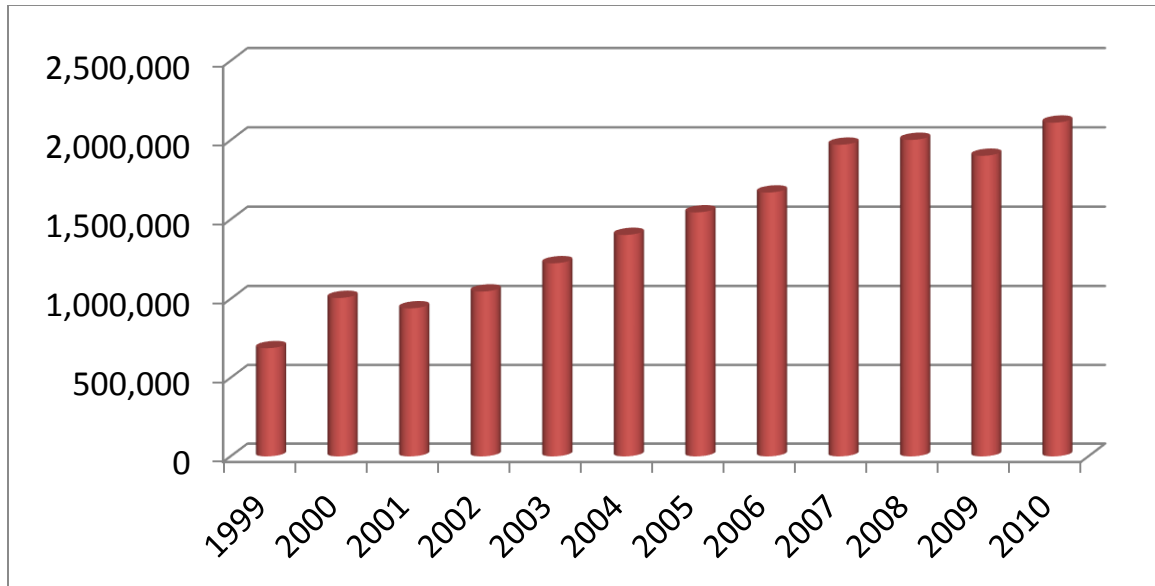


Figure 5. North Dallas tithe growth.

There were a number of other developments in the North Dallas corridor worth noting:

1. Attendance grew from one church in 1999 with 450 in attendance (there was another church, Dallas Brazilian, that later relocated out of the area which is not included in the study) to 11 churches with close to 2000 in attendance.
2. A new K-12 school (North Dallas Academy) was purchased off-site and has an attendance of over 200 students.
3. The Texas Conference designated a new parish of the conference in the North Dallas area due to the growth.
4. Six full-time and one stipend pastoral positions were created.

Reflections from North Dallas

Of the 11 church plants, four were birthed directly from the Richardson church (2000, 2001, 2006, 2010). Upon reflection, it seems realistic that Richardson is capable

of planting one church every two years. Based on their growth and the surrounding demographics, this intensity of planting would be quite sustainable. Despite positive experiences with planting, this vision is difficult to instill in an established church. A strategically located birthing congregation is a significant piece to a planting movement within a conference (especially if their daughter churches are committed to planting). However, the lead pastor must be committed to an ongoing strategy for planting. The conference must also be committed, at the time of pastoral transition, to place a pastor who is passionately committed to continue multiplying from the established congregation. The Richardson church and the surrounding area provide a snapshot of what can happen when an established church is willing to give people resources for the sake of the harvest. Their efforts and the souls saved for God's kingdom as a result are certainly to be commended.

The Richardson Spanish Church, birthed in 2001, wasted no time in becoming engaged with church planting. In less than two years, they began to incubate a Brazilian Sabbath School class in their facility. Once a leader was clearly identified and the group showed steady growth, a Brazilian church plant was birthed in the immediate area. Within two years of the first plant, it was announced at a business meeting that the time had come to start another Spanish church to the north. Volunteers were requested. With minimal incubation, 40 individuals started worshipping in the northern suburb of Plano. Victor Jaeger soon transitioned to the new church plant and another pastor was brought into the Richardson Spanish Church. Both pastors became engaged in working on the next church plants. In 2009, Richardson Spanish gave birth to the Spring Valley Spanish plant. This church plant was started by an active lay person who had been experiencing

phenomenal growth with the small group he was leading in a home. Meanwhile, Victor Jaeger had his eyes set on McKinney (the next major suburb north of Plano). He started a small group in his home that began to flourish with over 20 individuals attending. In an effort to find a place to rent, a church that was for sale was located. Recognizing that a group of 20 could not purchase such a beautiful facility, the Plano Spanish group was approached about joining efforts with the fledgling McKinney group. In a combined effort, the church was acquired. The result was an immediate burst of growth and the development of an English Sabbath School class in the new facility. Although it is outside the scope of this study, the English group grew and, in 2012, rented a place to worship. They have a current attendance of 75 people.

The series of Spanish plants demonstrates how quickly multiplication can take place. Richardson Spanish planted Plano Spanish, which planted McKinney Spanish, which planted McKinney English. The Richardson English church became a great-great grandmother in 11 years! Some cultural groups are accustomed to success with planting and can unwittingly take short-cuts that hinder effectiveness. The “anyone who is interested” approach sounds good, but can attract people who are not committed to work or have varied expectations. In addition, without an incubation period, critical decisions can unintentionally be delayed until a time of crisis. Another lesson from these church plants is that rapid growth requires that a solid discipleship program be in place. The need for this was recognized after persistent moral and Adventist lifestyle challenges surfaced. It is not enough to simply baptize people and plant churches. We need to be systematically prepared to help the new believers grow in Christ.

Conference-wide Statistics

Without a comprehensive church planting strategy, the only type of church plants that will happen in a local conference are church splits that result in a “plant” and an occasional ethnically-based church plant. Between the years of 1995 and 2001, the Texas Conference lacked an intentional strategy for church planting. During this time, 18 churches were started (see Figure 6). Two of these plants were the ones launched from Richardson while I was the senior pastor.

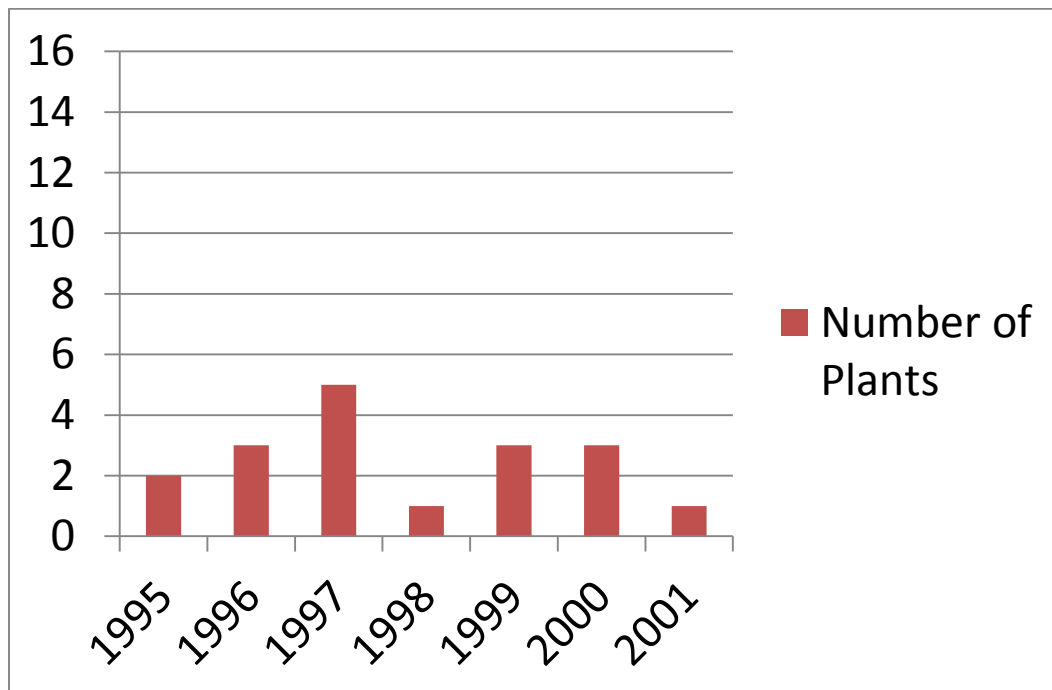


Figure 6. Church planting between 1995 and 2001.

Whether 18 church plants is a good gain or not depends on what percentage increase this represents. How many churches and companies were part of the Texas Conference in 1994? The exact number is a challenge, as companies were not recorded until 1997. In 1994, there were 193 churches and when companies started being counted

in 1997, the starting number was 17 (General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2010). The total number of companies and churches in 1994 could safely be projected to be at least 200. Based on a total of 200, the number of church plants represents a 9.17 percent increase in 7 years. The average annual increase was 1.31 percent. With this information, we can conclude that this increase is very poor. An average of three percent would simply maintain the status quo and six percent would be considered excellent.

The first full year of an intentional church planting program in the Texas Conference was 2002. The initial surge of enthusiasm followed a conference workers' meeting dedicated largely to church planting. The response cards filled out by the pastors during that meeting became my interest list to follow through on. Area church planting rallies generated additional commitments for church plants. The following chart (Figure 7) demonstrates the effectiveness of becoming strategic about church planting:

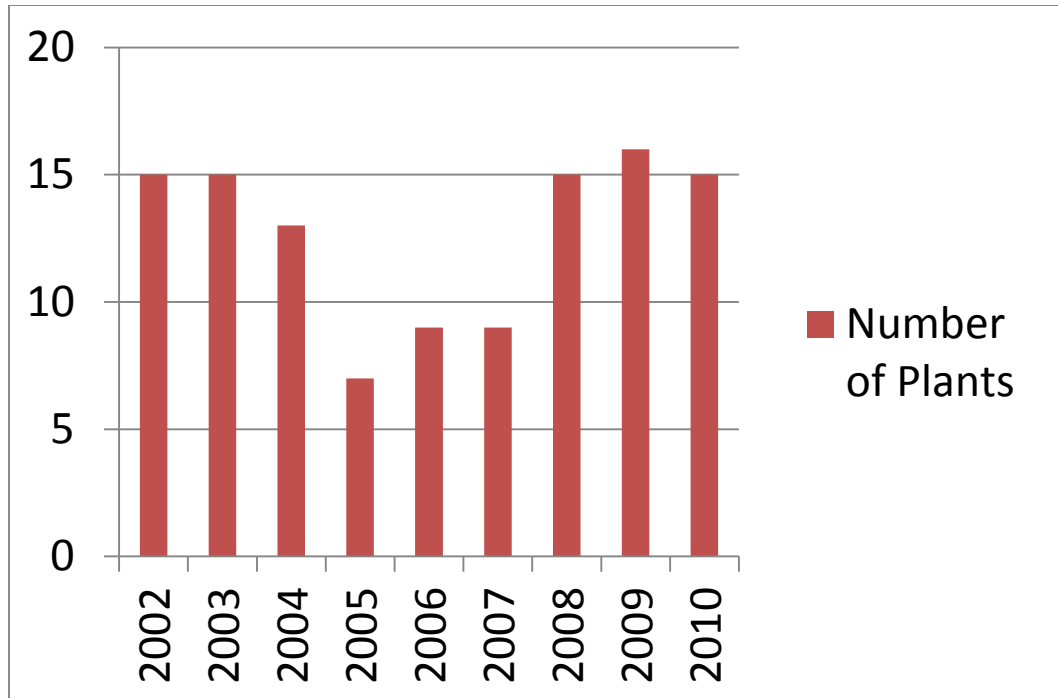


Figure 7. Church planting between 2002 and 2010.

Between 2002-2010, a total of 114 churches were planted. At the end of 2010, all of these church plants were active. Any church plants that were attempted, but ultimately closed down, are not included in the total. Does this rate of church planting reflect rapid growth? Again, we need to know the starting number for churches and companies. In 2001, there were 223 churches and companies in the Texas Conference. The 114 plants represent a 51.1 percent increase over a period of 9 years. The annual rate of planting averages 5.78 percent. This rate of planting outpaces the status quo (three percent) and approaches what is considered a healthy rate of planting (six percent).

The graph above shows an initial spike in planting for the first three years, followed by a dip for three years (still far above previous years), and then another spike between 2008 and 2010. The initial rapid increase in church plants can be attributed to

picking ripe fruit. We discovered that many pastors and churches were receptive to the church planting vision. They simply needed the spark ignited by the conference. The president, Steve Gifford, was instrumental in promoting church planting at every available opportunity. In addition, the conference secretary, Leighton Holley, played a key role. He worked to free up resources for the purpose of planting churches.

Following the initial planting momentum, there was a slight drop in planting for three years. During this time, structures were being developed to provide support for the newly-initiated church plants. Vision-casting events continued, but the efforts did not produce fruit as rapidly. During the first three years of rapid growth, both evangelism and church planting were agenda items for every executive committee meeting. During the three-year drop in planting, the reports were less frequent, so that other departments had an opportunity to share information about their ministries.

The final three years on the graph are somewhat surprising as they are the most productive for church planting. Beginning in 2008, an intentional focus on moving church plants to their next organizational level was initiated. The objective was to move groups to companies and companies to churches. A goal was set to bring two church plants to every executive committee. This was not an easy task, as there were six requirements for company status and 11 requirements for church status (see Appendix H). My assistant, Sheri Denny, was very helpful in communicating with church plants to see where they were in the process and find out what steps still needed to be accomplished. In 2008, there were 13 transitions to the next level; in 2009, there were 22 transitions; and in 2010, there were 11 transitions. This focus seemed to put church planting back on the front burner of the Conference agenda. The continual reminder that

church plants were developing and growing served to inspire more churches to be planted. In retrospect, the regular focus on church planting at the Conference Executive Committee was a critical component for momentum. An additional shift, beginning in 2008, was a Conference-wide church planting rally titled “Metro Impact” and an annual Lay Church Planter’s appreciation banquet.

It should be clarified that not all 114 church plants reached company or church status by the close of 2010. A total of 46 churches had been planted since the beginning of 2008 and were obviously still in development. The great majority of church plants started before 2008 had moved to company or church status. In 2001, there were 198 churches and 25 companies in the Texas Conference. By the end of 2010, there were 227 churches and 44 companies. This growth represented a net gain of 48 organized companies and churches over nine years.

A final set of statistics again demonstrates the effectiveness of the church planting initiative. During the 2009 North American Division Year of Evangelism, the church plants launched since 2002 produced an annual total of 482 baptisms and \$3,669,548 in tithe. This baptism total exceeded that of 23 conferences in the NAD (General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2010).

Church Plant Survivability

A major study was conducted in 2006 by Ed Stetzer and Philip Connor (Stetzer & Connor, 2007) to determine church plant survivability and health. Church planting had been generally viewed as a high-risk venture with an excessive mortality rate. The study surveyed 12 denominations and 2000 church plants. The results were quite encouraging! Sixty-eight percent of church plants survived more than four years (as seen in Figure 8).

Figure 7— Percent church plants survived by year, all denominations

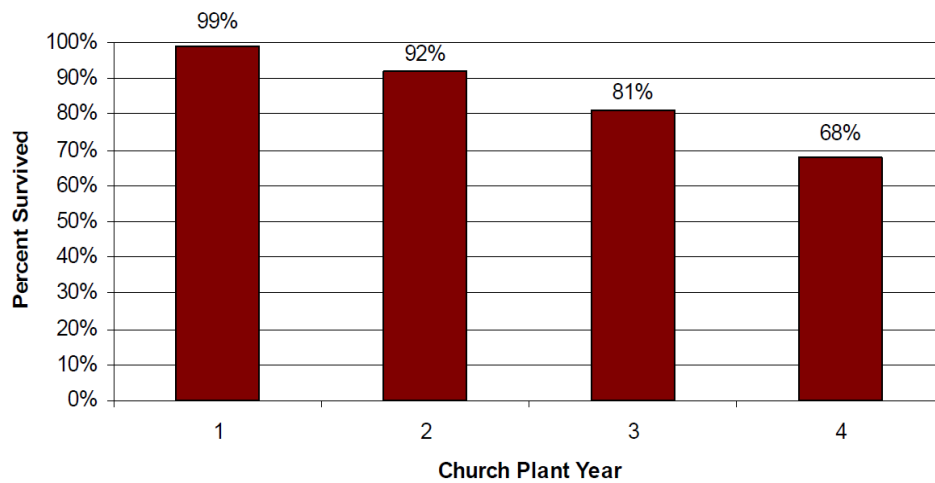


Figure 8. Percent church plants survived by year, all denominations. (Setzer & Conner, 2007, p. 13).

After reviewing the Stetzer and Conner study, I decided it would prove interesting to do my own research on church plant survivability within the church planting initiative in Texas. Using the same parameter of having survived more than four years, I narrowed my focus to plants started between 2002 and 2006. By the end of 2010, the church plants that survived would have done so for between four and eight years. Fortunately, my administrative assistant had created a file of failed church plants. According to our calculations, 69 church plants were attempted in the Texas Conference between 2002 and 2006. By the end of 2010, 60 of these were still functioning. The survival rate was 87 percent! Needless to say, this finding was highly encouraging!

In an attempt to gain further insights, I decided to compare the nine failed church plants to the nine most successful church plants out of the 60 that survived. The evaluation produced the following observations:

Of the nine failed plants,

- Six were led (in four cases) or strongly influenced (in two cases) by someone who was emotionally and/or doctrinally imbalanced.
- Six did not meet regularly with their coach.
- Seven did not have a healthy mother church.
- All nine met significant obstacles, but ultimately did not survive them.

Of the nine most successful church plants,

- Coaching played an instrumental role in eight. One church plant received a coach later in the process.
- Eight had a supportive and healthy mother church.
- All nine were very healthy, as indicated by the Natural Church Development survey (the lowest average score was 61).
- All nine met significant obstacles, but overcame them.

The key support systems of a mother church and a coach seemed to play a significant role in church plant survivability. Not only did the nine strongest plants survive, they thrived. This study convinced me of the key role that coaching and mother churches play in the success of church plants. Strengthening these two components is one of the best ways to ensure the success of any church planting strategy.

Church Plant Leadership

It does not take long working in a conference office setting to recognize the pressures that come to bear on administration related to pastoral staffing. At every personnel committee, challenges of how best to appropriate the limited funds available for salaries were encountered. Being a growing conference, many of the requests (and

sometimes “demands”) were legitimate. At other times, I noted the deep-seated pastor-dependency mind-set that is so prevalent in North American Adventism. I realized that the visionary desire to plant more churches would quickly collide with the pressure felt from already established churches. For church planting to move forward, a lay-led model was clearly needed.

Rather than focus on only one approach to planting, I attempted a multi-faceted approach. Lay-led plants would generate tithe income that would not be committed to a pastoral salary. The lay-led plants could feel part of a bigger mission if some of the resources they gave were utilized by the conference to enter new areas with full-time church planters. My goal was to add one full-time planter every year. The focus would be on rapidly growing metro areas with no other Adventist churches. As a result of this vision, we were able to plant churches in four affluent, predominantly Anglo communities that were experiencing rapid population growth: Cedar Park (North Austin), North San Antonio, Frisco (North Dallas), and The Woodlands (North Houston).

In addition, we were able to utilize Global Mission funding in a shared partnership with the Union, Division, and General Conference to hire a church planter to reach out to one of the most isolated metro areas (not close to any other Adventist church). This church plant was in Keller (North Ft. Worth). Another plant that involved a salary investment was to reach the Vietnamese in Houston. It was recognized from the beginning that the tithe base of the Vietnamese church plant would probably never justify the salary investment. A catalytic church planter, Victor Jaeger, was allowed to focus full-time on church planting among the Spanish population in North Dallas. The intention was for Victor to establish one church plant and then move to the next. With

this approach, Victor planted directly or helped strengthen numerous church plants. By the end of 2010, there were a total of 10 FTEs (Full-time Equivalencies) dedicated to church planting. All of the church plants, with the exception of the one in North San Antonio, had succeeded at some level. Most were flourishing. Due to the significant resources at risk, I personally committed to coaching all full-time church planters. This investment by the Conference gave me a powerful argument for lay-led church plants, that their resources enabled new areas to be reached with the gospel.

Another aspect of the multi-faceted approach to church planting was a commitment that I began to ask of pastors. I challenged them to pledge to plant a church in every district they pastor until Jesus comes. In my mind, this was a very practical way to see the vision for church planting spread not only in Texas, but around the entire division. If only 50 percent of pastors took this pledge, we could double the number of churches in the North American Division in a period of ten years. A number of pastors in Texas stepped forward to this challenge. One such pastor was Brad Cauley. He was assigned as an associate pastor in Burleson, Texas. The immediate area had numerous Adventist churches since it was close to Southwestern Adventist University and the Union and Conference offices. Brad began to carefully study demographics and discovered that there was a need for a Spanish church in Burleson. Although Brad did not speak Spanish, he was able to pull a core group together, identify a leader, and launch a Spanish church plant that is thriving today. Many pastors who committed to plant churches did so through lay leadership. However, there were others who simply added the church to their current district. Of the 114 church plants, 33 were the result of a pastor's increasing the size of his district to accomplish a church plant.

The major emphasis of the church planting strategy was lay-led church plants. Of the 114 church plants from 2002 to 2010, 61 were led by lay people. One of the initial concerns was that these church plants would want to “graduate” and have their own pastor. The conference treasury department was worried that delegations would be knocking on their door begging for a pastor. Although I cannot say that this never took place, it did not become a major challenge. Those church plants that were well-coached were quite content with the lay-led model. On one occasion, the conference did not know where to place a pastor for a period of time. Against my counsel, they assigned him to a lay-led church plant in the area. He was not strong at empowering others and immediately took over the church plant. Within a couple of months, the church plant was in crisis mode. The leaders and members were very discontented. The Conference Secretary intervened and asked the congregation to choose between their lay leader and the pastor. Without hesitation, they selected their lay leader.

Being able to identify qualified lay people to plant churches was an important task. A number of missteps provided a clearer picture of what the essential traits of a lay church planter are:

1. *Spiritual and emotional maturity.* Church planting is not for someone who shows “potential.” It is not a time to ignore “red flags” and hope everything works out. EQ (Emotional Quotient) is perhaps more important than IQ (Intelligence Quotient).

2. *Empowering of others.* For a lay church plant to flourish, broad-based involvement is essential. The leader has a full-time secular job and must be able to develop a team for successful ministry to take place.

3. *Influence.* The leader must be able to attract others to join the church plant. They have spiritual authority that attracts others to join them.

4. *Entrepreneurial spirit.* Outside of a spiritual foundation, this characteristic is the most important. The ability to visualize something, to start it, and then to make necessary adjustments to grow it are skills that are invaluable for a church planter. Someone who needs a job is usually not a good selection.

5. *Passion for expanding God's work.* The motivation for planting must be the harvest. Mixed motivations ultimately create challenges.

6. *Able to create time for ministry.* Despite having a busy schedule, a lay planter must be able to make ministry a priority.

7. *Teachable attitude.* We discovered that this area was one that needed growth for most lay church planters; nevertheless, it is an essential quality. Having a coaching relationship is a valuable resource to the church planter.

When launching the lay-led initiative within the North American context, we were not fully aware of what dynamics we would encounter: How large would the church plants grow? How healthy would they be? How would the paid pastors react? Would the church plants all want a pastor eventually? Who would step forward to plant? Would certain groups be more difficult to reach with lay planters? The following is a summary of some of the insights gained:

- Lay plants typically grow to between 60-100 people in attendance. The ability to create time for ministry is a limiting factor for the planter. Rather than assign a pastor when the church reaches this attendance, it would be better to plant another church. The role of the coach is essential in this process.

- Of the 158 NCD surveys taken by churches and church plants in the Texas Conference (through 2010), only seven scored above 65 in all eight quality characteristics. Five of the seven were lay-led.

- The most willing lay planters are recent immigrants who have come from countries where ministry is largely run by lay people. It was much easier to find Hispanic, African, Filipino, etc. church planters than American Anglos.

- It is important to hire full time church planters intentionally to enter highly populated new territories focused on Anglo populations. A time frame of three years for self-sufficiency is highly encouraged. If this is not accomplished within three years, the church plant should be added to a district.

- Lay church planters can be effective in rural areas among all population groups. Lay-led ethnic planting also does well in Metro areas.

Finding leaders is the single most limiting factor to church-plant multiplication. It is easy to identify many metro areas, rural settings, population segments, or ethnic groups that need a church. That is good, but the necessary ingredient is leadership. Without leadership, we only have wishful thinking.

Church Health

Natural Church Development is a tool that I have been engaged with since early 1999. I was one of the first pastors in the North American Division to utilize NCD within the Adventist Church. I have personally interacted with over 200 churches regarding their results. There are a number of reasons why I feel this evaluation tool is of great benefit to the local church:

1. It is based on principles that are solidly grounded in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.
2. Our emphasis as a church on health ministry makes NCD easy to understand and apply.
3. It gives a church an objective view of where they are currently, so that reality can be faced.
4. It gives a church hope. There is something practical that can be done to improve their church.
5. It is not a one-time program. Used properly, it becomes part of the life of the church. An annual “check-up” is a great way to go.
6. Healthy churches find success in retaining new members who join through evangelist meetings. Being healthy helps close the “back door.”
7. The natural end result is a church that more effectively reaches the harvest and multiplies daughter churches.

When establishing the requirements to become an organized church in the Texas Conference, I felt church health should be a determining factor. The standard measures of reaching a certain threshold for tithe and membership fell short of predicting long-term success. It was determined that a church plant should reach at least an average health score with a result of 50 or greater on the NCD survey. Texas Conference was the first to implement this requirement. A number of other conferences have now added the NCD score requirement for church status.

One clear lesson from the Richardson church planting experience was that healthy mothers produce healthy daughters. Working the Natural Church Development process

was like taking pre-natal vitamins. The first survey result for Richardson in April of 1999 was an average of 47. Sixteen months later, and just before planting, the average had risen to 59. That increase in health had a direct benefit for the church plant. The daughter church (Metro North, later Fairview Mosaic) scored an average of 61 on her first survey. These scores were solidly on the side of health, 50 being an average score. Another mother/daughter combination showed a similar experience. The mother church scored an average of 44 and the daughter church showed the same below average health with exactly the same score of 44. However, we noticed a key difference for church plants. In the case of the average score of 44, the church plant was able to improve its health to 61 in nine months. This improvement required excellent coaching. Church plants seemed to be able to make adjustments toward health much more rapidly and see dramatic improvements in a short period of time. In another case, a church plant improved from an average of 45 to an average of 71 in just over seven months. The changes required were significant, but the church plant was able to navigate through them.

In an effort to understand better the strengths and weaknesses of the Texas Conference church planting initiative from a church health perspective, an in-depth study was requested of NCD International. The study has an extensive enough data base to provide excellent research value (see Appendix L). Ian Campbell, NCD consultant and advisory board member, shares the significance of the report:

What can be said is that if the fundamental DNA issues are identified and addressed in Texas Conference church plants – both in terms of addressing the issues in existing church plants and in ways churches are planted in future – the potential applicability and value of that knowledge in other parts of the Adventist world is enormous. (I. Campbell, personal communication, November 28, 2012)

The difference in the overall average between established churches and church plants in Texas is greater than 15, which is a full standard deviation. Established churches averaged 50.8, with a high of 59 in Passionate Spirituality and a low of 43 in Holistic Small Groups, while church plants averaged 66.7, with a high of 77 in Need-Oriented Evangelism and a low of 60 in Holistic Small Groups. This finding indicates that church plants have a significantly higher level of health. Further analysis shows that church plants scored higher on 88 of the 91 survey questions (see Table 5). The three questions that are lower are only by one to three points (statistically no real difference). In addition, while established churches scored below 50 on 40 of the 91 questions on the survey, church plants only scored below 50 on six questions. Texas Conference church plants scored 65 or higher on 35 questions while established churches scored only 65 or higher on six questions. A score 65 or higher places a church in the top 15 percent of all churches in the country.

Table 5

Top 10 Questions for Church Plants

Score	Question
81	We encourage new Christians in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately. (Need-Oriented Evangelism)
78	I feel my task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith. (Gift-Based Ministry)
77	I know of a number of individuals in our church who have the gift of evangelism. (Need-Oriented Evangelism)
77	I try to deepen my relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus Christ. (Need-Oriented Evangelism)
74	I clearly understand what is expected from me when fulfilling my task in our church. (Gift-Based Ministry)
74	I prepare myself to participate in the worship service. (Inspiring Worship Service)
73	When new people come to church events, we approach them openly and lovingly. (Need-Oriented Evangelism)
73	New Christians find friends in our church quickly. (Need-Oriented Evangelism)
72	Times of prayer are an inspiring experience for me. (Passionate Spirituality)
72	I pray that my friends, colleagues, and relatives who do not yet know Jesus Christ will come to faith. (Need-Oriented Evangelism)

One immediate observation is that six of the top ten questions for church plants are in the category of “Need-Oriented Evangelism.” Established churches have three of their top ten questions from “Need-Oriented Evangelism,” with much lower scores. Texas church plants obviously place a high priority on evangelism, which can also be demonstrated by statistics shared earlier in this chapter. Most church plants in Texas contribute at least 25 percent of their local church budget for evangelism. In addition, as Stewardship Director, I noted that most established churches allocate less than five percent of their budget to evangelism. Wagner’s quote takes on added significance based on the findings of NCD: “Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic

methodology known under heaven (1987, p. 168).”

The question where church plants showed the greatest gain over established churches was question number 66: “I experience the benefits of working on a team in our church.” The average for church plants was 66 on this question, while established churches averaged 45. The national study of Seventh-day Adventist churches indicates that this particular area is a cultural weakness for our denomination. Texas church plants broke new ground in the area of teamwork within the church. Another significant finding is that of the eight quality characteristics, Empowering Leadership had the largest gains for church plants over established churches. Established churches scored well below average with a 46, while church plants scored significantly above average with a 69. Perhaps the emphasis on lay leadership impacted this quality characteristic positively.

There are certainly areas for improvement in the area of church health. The difference between the high and low characteristics (the min-max) for established churches was 16 points, while church plants had a difference of 17 points. This result needs to be improved. The more balanced the eight quality characteristics are, the more sustainable the health and the less strain on the church body. A min-max difference of less than 15 would bring a greater degree of sustainable health. In addition, on most questions of the survey, church plants mirror established churches, but the scores are higher. This indicates that the Adventist culture in church plants is strong and the trend could be to settle into the same cultural weaknesses of established churches over time.

There is a wealth of knowledge to be gained through the study that has been presented by NCD International. There is much to be encouraged about. Church plants in Texas demonstrate vibrant health and an evangelistic fervor. At the same time,

vigilance is needed regarding trends that could cause a decline in health.

Conclusion

As interesting and important as statistics are, the big picture is that lives were saved for eternity. Because churches were planted in new areas and among new ethnic groups, the gospel was proclaimed. Church planters and core teams had the courage to step out in faith and plant churches for God's glory. As a result, an impact was made for God's kingdom.

I cannot help but reflect on cities and areas yet to be reached such as Carrollton, Grapevine, Humble, Kyle, Mexia, north San Antonio, west Austin, the I-59 corridor in Houston (this list could fill pages!). WalMart and McDonald's think these places are important. Why do we not think so? I think of people groups hardly touched by the Adventist message: single moms (the largest unchurched group in North America), Muslims, secular university students, homeless, addicts, the affluent (again, the list could fill pages!). I am convinced that church planting will help us reach these populations. I pray that the statistics highlighted in this chapter will motivate other conferences to make church planting a top priority moving forward. It will take courage, but lives are at stake!

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When I became church planting coordinator in Texas in the fall of 2001, I didn't foresee remaining in the same role for over nine years. A significant benefit of this length of time is that I was able to further develop many aspects of the church planting initiative. The final three years of my time in Texas proved to be the most productive. Lessons learned early on could be applied. I was able to observe challenges that developed in church plants and work on ways to address them. Church plants gave birth to daughter congregations. The church planting team expanded and increased their level of expertise and effectiveness. The annual Lay Church Planter and Pastor-Coach Appreciation banquet (See Appendix E) was launched during this time and proved to be the single most effective way to communicate gratitude to those who gave so generously of their time. The Metro Impact church planting rally became a major conference event with many presenters and an excellent attendance. Leaders from other conferences began visiting Texas to tour the church plants or attend our training events. Numerous requests to share the Texas experience came from other NAD conferences and from around the world. My administrative assistant, Sheri Denny, established an effective database and began a more detailed tracking system of church plants toward their next level of development. We witnessed church plants and church planters mature to greater effectiveness.

Conference leaders desire to see God’s work expand in their territory. New methods that show potential can sometimes be adopted in the hopes that they will produce results. When the results are less fruitful than hoped for, leaders may feel disheartened and less willing to adopt other more proven methods. New ideas and approaches must be tried. Making use of pilot projects that can demonstrate longer-term trends and alleviate potential pitfalls. Those methods that have proven effective by sufficient field testing should be the ones that are promoted and financially supported on a broader scale. After five years of planting churches, we had learned many things. However, the improvements made between years five and nine were significant. I learned that pilot projects are not only important for providing inspiration for others, but can also help work the “bugs” out for future implementation.

In this chapter, I will first highlight the strengths of the church planting model as it was implemented in Texas. Second, I will underscore valuable insights gained through my experience. Third, recommendations will be made for relevant entities: the local church, conference, union, division, and seminary. Finally, the impact of the Texas church planting initiative on a broader scale will be summarized.

Strengths of Texas Planting Model

Strong Biblical, Spirit of Prophecy, Early Adventism,
and World Field Endorsement

Unnamed lay people planted most of the churches in the book of Acts. The primary roles of Paul and the other apostles involved strengthening the churches and providing doctrinal/moral oversight. All believers were commissioned to make disciples and to evangelize.

Since Adventist churches grow differently, it is important to seek counsel from the writings of Ellen G. White regarding evangelistic methods. White warned against “hovering” over the churches:

The lay members of our churches can accomplish a work which, as yet, they have scarcely begun. None should move into new places merely for the sake of worldly advantage; but where there is an opening to obtain a livelihood, let families that are well grounded in the truth enter, one or two families in a place, to work as missionaries. (White, 1904, p. 245)

She further challenged,

The churches that have not life in themselves, that have lost their spiritual discernment, call for ministers to come to their help, to bring them the breath of life. But the ministers have other work to do. They must carry the message of truth to those who know it not. (White, 1981-1993, p. 65)

Based on the counsel above, 21st century Adventism in North America is off the mark.

We have created weak churches with low evangelistic motivation. Why? We have assigned pastors to “hover” over the churches and to perform the work of ministry for the members.

A study of world division year end statistics for 2010, seen at Table 6, is quite insightful:

Table 6

World Division Year End Statistics for 2010

Division	Churches per minister	Members per minister	Accession growth rate
South American	2.89	567	10.39
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean	6.16	1969	8.86
Southern Asia-Pacific	3.07	506	6.98
East-Central Africa	5.53	1267	6.16
Inter-American	3.43	1089	5.93
Southern Asia	4.38	1686	4.61
West-Central Africa	3.00	789	4.25
South-Pacific	1.84	412	4.22
Euro-Asia	1.58	112	3.71
North American	1.34	285	3.63
Trans-European	2.04	170	3.53
Northern Asia-Pacific	1.6	503	2.99
Euro-Africa	2.19	154	2.7

(General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2012d)

The six slowest growing divisions range between 1.34 and 2.19 churches per minister, whereas the seven fastest growing divisions range between 3.00 and 6.16 churches per minister. The more rapidly-growing divisions also have more members per minister. The contrast is astounding. The second fastest growing division (Southern Africa-Indian Ocean) has 1969 members per minister, while the slowest growing division (Euro-Africa) has 154 members per minister. Adding paid clergy does not necessarily equate with church growth. These statistics challenge the pastor dependency model and would lend support to a lay-led church planting strategy, where the role of the pastor is as an equipper/coach.

Multi-faceted Approach

Although lay church planting was the primary method promoted in Texas, there

were other avenues for planting churches that were also encouraged. Several full-time church planters were hired over the nine-year span to plant churches in the most urgent areas of the conference (in terms of populations without a church). Many pastors planted churches and simply expanded their district. During the final two to three years of the project, multi-site planting and house churches were experimented with. They were being field tested when I received the call to the North American Division Evangelism Institute. Not every planting model was endorsed. Texas never tried cell churches or staffing for growth (mega church) models of planting. Other conferences tested these models with mixed results. Field testing within the Adventist context with a pilot project or two was essential before I would give broad-based endorsement. Whatever model was utilized, the two cornerstone elements of a mother church and a pastor as coach were required. This brought consistency, while allowing for creativity.

Simplicity

The church planting strategy in Texas could be summarized by two key components: mother churches and pastors serving as coaches. These two core anchors were the essential elements of the planting strategy. If a group of people approached me about planting a church, one of the first questions I asked was “Who is your mother church?” If a relationship with a mother church was untenable, due to distance or severed relationships (in the case of a church split), we would typically require that a sponsor church be willing to adopt the church plant. We believed in cooperation, rather than competition. This mind-set was also promoted among the pastoral staff. The presence of a coach was a non-negotiable. Even the most experienced were required to meet regularly with their coach. If the coach/lay planter relationship was not working,

the coach or the leader had to change. As coordinator, I made this decision based on the dynamics that were transpiring.

Partnership with Pastors

This model of planting does not sideline pastors; rather, it enhances their influence and is a fulfillment of their biblical calling. The seminary-trained pastor is a key component for successful implementation. In his book, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the Laity*, Ogden quotes Elton Trueblood,

The ministry is for all who are called to share in Christ's life, the pastorate is for those possessing the peculiar gift of being able to help other men and women to practice any other ministry to which they have been called. (2003, p. 133)

What a privilege for a pastor to journey with a lay planter who has a passion to serve God and see His kingdom expand.

Greatly Expanded Opportunities

The model of lay-led planting largely eliminated budgetary considerations when planting. Financial constraints find most conferences struggling to provide pastoral support for already established congregations. Lay planting allows visionary expansion without the limitations demanded by conference budgets.

Lay-led church planting enabled new churches to be started among groups with little giving potential. Most of the people Jesus ministered to were impoverished and, in today's context, would never be able to "afford a pastor." Lay church planting provides opportunities to reach out to groups such as the homeless, first generation immigrants, refugees, single moms, students, depressed inner city populations, inmates, and so on.

Lay-led planting enhanced opportunities to reach rural areas, where the population is small. Three of my elderly aunts live in the small town of Wolfe City, Texas, where the population is 1,594. It is a depressed community with run-down shacks and abandoned homes. There is very little tithing potential and no chance of an Adventist church, based on a pastor-led model. However, a group of lay people planted a church there and within a few weeks had ten Bible studies in the community. They opened up a thrift store to minister to Wolfe City, which the lady who was baptized first manages. One of my aunts has visited the church and accepted Bible studies! There are thousands of such towns dotting the landscape of North America. Lay church planting can reach them.

Healthy Churches

Pastor-dependency is unhealthy. Lay church planting moves members from the sidelines to the frontline. Lay plants have broad-based engagement in ministry and a high degree of ownership by each member. Ministry is done as a team. It is not surprising that five of the seven churches that scored over 65 in all eight categories on the NCD survey were lay-led. When well-coached, lay plants make a significant impact on the harvest.

Conference Network

The local conference became the support network for church plants. Established churches and church plants worked cooperatively together as part of the same system. It was demonstrated that it is not necessary to separate church plants from existing structures in order for them to be successful. In fact, the local conference is best

positioned to provide exactly what church plants need, namely support. Additionally, the conference has many avenues to raise the awareness for church planting and continually cast vision.

Valuable Insights Gained Through my Experience: Areas to Consider Before you Plant

Established Churches Tend to Resist Church Planting

The vast majority of established churches have no interest in planting. The potential loss of finances, fellowship, and ministry leaders is enough to shut the idea down at the onset. In addition, many churches have become internally focused and lack vibrant health and a kingdom perspective. Even very healthy churches (with NCD scores averaging over 65) will not put church planting on the radar screen.

Insights:

I learned that it is important to start with the pastors. They are the gate-keepers for church planting. When districts opened, we made an effort to assign pastors who had an interest in expanding God's work through church planting. Most churches can be led toward planting. The key is for the pastor to take the initiative and move the church in that direction. Mannoia (2005, p. 24) underscores,

If the leader is growth-minded and committed to expanding the Kingdom through church planting, the district will follow suit and become like minded. Conversely, if the leader is by his or her actions more interested in the maintenance of the institution and status quo, then the district will find itself growing in its committee structures and bureaucracies but not accomplishing much in terms of mission.

In 2007, I was invited to present a week-long training on church planting for lay people at a Conference camp meeting. The Conference wanted 25 lay-led church plants as a result of that training. Quite an ambitious vision! I began collecting decision cards

the first day and by the end of the week, there were 27 commitments. Unfortunately, I was only given five minutes with the pastors. Needless to say, not much happened as a result.

Pastor-Dependent Mind-set

Pastor-dependency pervades all levels of the Adventist Church in North America. This is a challenge for members, pastors, and administrators. The concept of a lay person somehow being a “pastor” goes against the grain of our Adventist culture. Members of lay-led churches wonder when they will get a “real” pastor. Conference leaders anticipate that lay-led churches will be asking for a “pastor.”

Insights:

1. By introducing the lay person as the “pastor” of the church plant, we validated his/her role. I learned that that it was helpful to tie the word “pastor” to the role, rather than to a salary.

2. I learned that some pastor-coaches were inclined to “take over” the lay church plant, thus undermining the role of the lay church planter and setting up long-term pastor dependency for the church plant. We asked our coaches to preach no more than one time per quarter at the church plant. The role of the coach is to help the lay church planter succeed in the ministry God has called them to. It was important for the coach to make clear to the congregation their role as being one of support.

3. I recognized the value of the lay planter conducting baptisms. A first step was for the coach and planter to be in the baptistery together to conduct a baptism (one on each side of the candidate). It was important for the conference to have confidence in the

lay planter (as with any hired pastor), but nothing biblically hindered a lay planter from conducting baptisms.

Church Planting is Messy

By nature, church planting is messy. Every church plant and planter brings a new set of unforeseen difficulties since this is pioneering work. The natural reaction is to regulate church planting by developing policies and guidelines to minimize problems. However, for church planting to gain momentum within a conference, flexibility is important. As an illustration, one policy that I constantly bumped into was a requirement that land purchases for church buildings must be at least three acres. The idea was to acquire one acre for every 100 in projected attendance, with a projected minimum goal of 300. High quality, used church buildings at excellent prices were passed over because they were not located on enough land. With the average size of lay-led churches being 60-100 in attendance, this rigid position was untenable. One group was even lost to the conference because they were located in a small community and felt their choice of land was acceptable for their context. This unwillingness to make exceptions (for fear of creating a precedent) hindered God's work on occasion.

Insights:

I learned to expect messes. There was no way to prevent them when planting churches. Having babies is messy, but doing so creates a legacy. No amount of structure can eliminate messes. Too much structure creates a mess of its own.

I learned the importance of establishing reasonable guidelines and field testing them. We had to avoid making processes overcomplicated and be willing to adjust if necessary.

The Challenge of Reaching Anglos

Early on in the church planting initiative, it became evident that finding lay church planters among immigrant groups was much easier than among the Anglo population. My initial analysis led me to believe that Adventists from other parts of the world were more accustomed to lay people planting and leading churches. For them, it was normal. On the other hand, Anglo Americans have had pastors whose theological education emphasized pastoral nurture. The generational repetition of this model has deeply ingrained this in the psyche of North American Adventism. Incidentally, the model seems to be the contributing factor, rather than the ethnicity. Immigrant groups with a long standing history in the United States also struggle with the same challenges.

Despite tremendous ethnic growth in Texas, the majority population is still Anglo. There are many communities, particularly in the suburbs, with high Anglo populations and no Seventh-day Adventist church. How could these population centers be reached? At the SEEDS conference at Andrews University in 2005, I approached Bob Logan with the dilemma. He simply stated, “You will have to invest some financial resources” (B. Logan, personal communication, June 25, 2005).

Insights:

Texas addressed the challenge of reaching the Anglo population in the following ways:

1. Hiring full-time Anglo church planters. These planters were assigned to the areas of greatest need, based on demographic research. Through this approach, we were able to plant churches in Cedar Park (Austin area), North San Antonio (this one closed), Frisco (Dallas area), Keller (Ft. Worth area), and The Woodlands (Houston area). These

church plants all became multi-ethnic, but reflected the community and were effective in reaching the majority Anglo population.

2. Anglo lay church planters in rural communities. Although it was highly challenging to find Anglo lay church planters in Metro areas, the task was much easier in rural settings.

3. Plant multi-ethnic churches. We found that multi-ethnic churches have a broad appeal. If the church planter was a “multi-cultural person” (not pushing his/her own cultural norms), he/she could find success at reaching people from very diverse backgrounds. Diversity is increasingly embraced by the younger population segment in the United States:

According to the Pew report, more than 25 percent of Hispanics and Asians who married in 2010 had a spouse of a different race. That’s compared to 17.1 percent of blacks and 9.4 percent of whites. Of the 275,500 new interracial marriages in 2010, 43 percent were white-Hispanic couples, 14.4 percent were white-Asian, 11.9 percent were white-black, and the remainder were other combinations. (Yen, 2012)

We encouraged core groups to be diverse in their ethnic make-up. In fact, this was found to be essential! Doing so enabled the church plant to reach a broader population segment. Lay church planters from a variety of ethnic backgrounds could lead these multi-ethnic church plants.

Some ethnic groups are easier to reach than others. We should harvest wherever the field is ripe and praise God for the receptivity. At the same time, we must develop strategies to reach populations that are not as readily responsive. As the lay-led model becomes more pervasive across North America, my prayer is that many Anglos will step up and become lay church planters.

Valuable Insights Gained Through my Experience: Ongoing Challenges to Address After Planting

Coach Training and Accountability

Consistency in coaching became a significant challenge in Texas. Generally speaking, coaches were meeting with the lay leader sporadically and were rarely interacting with the church plant group. This lack of consistent coaching limited the development of some church plants. In contrast, those churches and planters that received consistent coaching benefitted greatly:

- They did not feel isolated.
- They felt supported by the conference.
- They were less critical.
- They navigated challenges more smoothly.
- They grew more consistently.
- They were healthier (based on NCD).
- They typically did not “knock down the door” of the conference asking for a pastor.

Despite recognizing the challenge with consistent coaching, I was unable to address it successfully. The requests were made and favorably acknowledged, but no action was taken. Why? Money was involved. With tight conference budgets, it was hard to squeeze anything else in.

Insights:

Insight:

Meal reimbursement for the coaching sessions helped increase consistency of coaching for some pastor-coaches. This should be offered, but by itself is not sufficient.

Further considerations:

Offer pastor-coaches an extra church travel budget if they accept coaching a church plant. The expectation would be two interactions per month (one with the planter and one with the church plant). By placing this in the salary of the pastor, the ability to hold them accountable for their commitment increases dramatically. I personally like this approach better than mileage reimbursement. The added cost for the conference is less than \$100 per month for each lay led church. The return on this investment will be outstanding!

After coming to this conviction, I noticed that others concurred:

Movement leadership must require a reporting system and see that regular contact with their coaches takes place. One way to bring about accountability is to have some sort of payoff for coaches doing their jobs. In some contexts a small amount of pay helps to assure that this happens. When coaches move from the realm of being volunteers to being employees, movement leaders have a stronger leverage point in requiring faithfulness to the job. (Nebel, 2002, p. 110)

Logan added, “Benefits, recognition and encouragement will provide a necessary balance to reporting requirements and will help keep your coaches motivated” (2006, p. 144).

My time in Texas convinced me that a training program specifically for church plant coaches was a high priority. In 2012, Walter Allred (a pastor in Texas) and I developed the “Church Plant Coaching Certification” training (see Appendix M). Along with 15 hours of classroom interactive instruction, there are six months of follow-up coaching in the pastor’s local field (in order to be certified). This program is available for local conferences and is also being taught as a class at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. The initial responses to the training have been very positive.

The Need for Continual Support for Lay Planter and Plant

There is a mind-set among church members that a certain threshold of annual tithe generated by the local congregation is equal to having a paid pastor. In the case of lay-led churches, those tithe funds do not result in a pastor being assigned to the church plant. From time to time, members of lay-led church plants would query, “What’s in it for us?” Although the tithe is holy and belongs to God (not us), this is a reality that has to be addressed.

Because of the faithfulness of lay church plants, God’s work was advanced in other areas of Texas. There are no tithe dollars (only potential) when planting a new church. The resources the lay plants gave enabled new areas and people groups to be reached. By the end of 2010, Texas had ten full-time pastors working with church plants. In very few of these plants had the tithe yet reached a level to justify the full salary. I explained to lay-led church plants that if the conference staffed to the maximum (based on tithe dollars), we would never be able to start new work. Their generosity was making this possible.

Ultimately, most lay led churches were not concerned about having their own paid pastor. They responded very well to other types of support that the conference was able to provide. When these support systems were in place, the lay plants were able to flourish.

Support provided:

1. Every lay-led church planter and plant was assigned a coach.
2. The first Natural Church Development survey was paid for by the Conference.

3. The first evangelistic series for the church plant was covered 100 percent. No church portion was required to receive these funds. The cap was somewhere from \$4000-\$6000, depending on the proposal and the size of the community. Additional funds could be available beyond this based on the formula for all churches.

4. The Texas Conference contracted with Percept Group to provide demographic studies at no cost for the entire Conference. This was especially beneficial to church plants.

5. First-rate training events were offered on an annual basis specifically for church plants. Other Conference training events were also of benefit to church plants.

6. An annual Lay Church Planter/Coach appreciation banquet was held. Hotel rooms were provided the night before for participants who traveled from out of town.

Further considerations:

Upon reflection, the following additional support would prove beneficial:

1. Provide a free copy of the church planting manual, *Steps to Church Planting: From Inception to Launch*, for all core group members of developing church plants. This will help ensure the development of a solid foundation for the new group.

2. Provide an NCD survey *annually* at no cost to the church plant (Texas Conference only covered the first one). The coach should be trained on how to debrief the church and how to help them develop a strategic plan for moving forward. An added benefit to the conference is that healthy churches cause less problems.

3. Develop an ongoing plan to provide additional evangelism funding/support for lay-led church plants. One idea we looked at (and tried on a limited basis) was asking the coach to hold a two-weekend reaping evangelistic meeting in the church plant (six

meetings). Perhaps this type of evangelistic reaping event could be funded 100 percent on an annual basis. Conference administrators and departmental directors could also hold short reaping meetings of this nature. This was done in 2009 (NAD Year of Evangelism) in the Texas Conference. I coordinated the appointments for the administrators and departmental directors in order to assign these meetings to church plants. We all had a tremendous experience and God blessed with a harvest for His church. This is a fantastic way to communicate support for lay-led churches!

4. Invite lay church planters to attend pastor's meetings (ideally when families are invited). The Texas Conference allowed this, but did not promote it. This initial invitation should be sent at least six months in advance, from the office of the President. Lay planters work full-time jobs (typically) and need to request vacation time in order to attend. They will be happy to do so if their presence is desired.

Dealing With Divisive People

The number one cause of church-plant failure is divisive people. This statement is not entirely true. The failure is the result of the leader(s) not dealing appropriately with the divisive individual(s)! Moore summarized the challenge in this way:

A new church can be a magnet that attracts disgruntled Christians who have a history of conflict in other churches. My observations over the years tell me that more new churches fold from an inability to confront disruptive people than from any other cause. My own life was miserable until I learned to confront in love. I would avoid talking to difficult people. This failure on my part inadvertently gave them free reign over the church. (2002, p. 37)

Divisive people will find your church plant. In fact, they make the rounds of new churches, looking for an opportunity to push forward their agenda. These individuals are imbalanced, but due to their deep convictions and sometimes dynamic personalities, they

can quickly gain a foothold. New members and first-time visitors are among the most vulnerable. If unchecked, these divisive people will ultimately cause the demise of the church plant.

Insight:

The coach must visit the church plant on a monthly basis. It will be easier for the coach (as an outside observer) to notice someone who is gaining unhealthy sway within the church plant. The coach can process the concern with the leaders and work with them toward solutions to address the problem proactively. Training the leaders to protect the church and confront problems early on will safeguard the church from untold damage.

Recommendations for Church Organizations

What follows is a wish list. I return to White's vision:

I saw jets of light shining from cities and villages, and from high places and low places of the earth. God's word was obeyed, and as a result there were memorials for Him in every city and village. His truth was proclaimed throughout the world. (White, 1909, pp. 28, 29)

For these "jets of light" to become a reality, some dramatic shifts must take place. The Seventh-day Adventist Church will need to function as a movement at every level.

Local Church

- Members, take ownership for the ministry of the local church. Free up three-fourths of your pastor's time to engage in evangelism and plant churches.

The greatest cause of our spiritual feebleness as a people, is the lack of real faith in Spiritual Gifts. If they all received this kind of testimony in full faith, they would put from them those things which displease God, and would everywhere stand in union and in strength. And three-fourths of the ministerial labor now expended to help the churches could then be spared to the work of raising up churches in new fields. (J. White & White, 1868)

- Commit to becoming a sending congregation. Send a “tithes” of your membership for the purpose of reaching the harvest in new territories and among unreached people groups. Plant new churches as God opens opportunities before you. Set an attendance goal as a “trigger” for your next church plant.

- Dedicate a minimum of 25 percent of your budget for evangelism (which includes “seed money” for church planting).

- Become engaged in financially supporting church planting in other regions of the world. Get involved with organizations like ASAP ministries or Adventist Frontier Missions. In conjunction with ShareHim, become involved first hand in holding evangelistic meeting overseas (especially ones focused on church planting projects).

- Be a supportive mother church for your daughter congregations as they develop and grow.

Conference

- The influence of the President will be the catalyst for a movement in your conference.

- Assign someone to coordinate church planting for the conference. Analyze your current departmental staffing to determine if priorities have been placed elsewhere and should be shifted in order to put church planting on the front burner. If this simply is not feasible, assign the responsibility to a pastor who can manage this as part of his/her ministry assignment. In this way, you can avoid adding an FTE immediately. They will need some time freed up to visit church plants and cast the vision in local congregations. Perhaps a percentage of tithes funds from lay-led church plants could be allocated for hiring an individual to serve in this role.

- When growth of an established church would justify an additional pastor (or an associate pastor leaves for seminary or to another assignment), add a church planter to the district instead.

- Work in cooperation with the senior pastors to identify congregations that will become multiple birth mother churches. These churches should be able to send a sizeable group to launch a church plant that will become self-sustaining within three years. Once those members are replenished, the church would plant again.

- Conduct the “Church Plant Coaching Certification” training for all of your pastoral staff. This will raise awareness for church planting and provide the tools necessary for an excellent support system when new churches are planted.

- Hold a “SEEDS” conference or “Metro Impact” training event every year. This will help cast the vision for planting as well as provide ongoing equipping for already planted churches.

- When pastoral vacancies arise, fill them with individuals who will be proactive with church planting.

- Commit to hire one full-time church planter per year (as budget allows).

- Subscribe to Percept demographics (see Appendix G for a sample page of the report), so that strategic planting can take place (www.perceptgroup.com). Vista Online is their advanced tool. A contract for this tool will result in an analysis of your entire conference in five-mile radiuses.

- Use every public opportunity to cast the vision for church planting: pastors’ meetings, camp meeting, executive committee, conference session, officer trainings, festival of the laity, etc.

Union and Division and General Conference

- Strengthen and support the church planting program of the local conference.

Encourage conferences to develop a departmental position for a church planting coordinator. Provide a financial incentive for the first couple of years to help establish this position.

- When there is a change in conference presidents, place church planting on the table as a priority in the selection of the new president.

- Continue to provide funding through Global Mission. Work closely with NADEI to determine the most effective way to allocate these valuable resources.

- Regularly highlight church planting in all church publications.

- Regularly produce and distribute video stories of church plants for viewing in local churches. Run these stories on Hope Channel, as well.

- Send someone in your office to the “Church Planting Coordinators” retreat held at NADEI each year.

- Encourage support of church planting initiatives in other divisions of the world field.

Seminary

- Require “Techniques in Church Planting” as a core class for seminary graduation.

- Offer church planting as an emphasis.

- Expand the number of classes taught on church planting.

-Established classes when I arrived at NADEI in 2010 were Techniques in Church Planting and SEEDS.

-Classes added since 2010: Church Plant Coaching, Advanced SEEDS.

-Classes to be added in the near future: Bi-vocational Church Planting (specifically focused on unsponsored students) and Church Planter Assessment.

Although this is a “wish list,” I truly believe that if these steps were employed at the various levels of our denomination, our church would become a movement again. North America would become the head and not the tail in church expansion and growth.

Expanding Influence

The first part of my personal calling statement is a vision for my family. The second part (included below) relates to God’s call for my life related to church planting:

- To influence increasing numbers of pastors to be committed to planting churches wherever they are called for the rest of their ministry.
- To plant a variety of churches, many of which focus on previously unreached groups.
- To establish church plants that utilize Natural Church Development principles in order to achieve a holistic ministry of excellence and that multiply by giving birth to daughter congregations.
- To ensure that the influence of the church planting initiative in Texas spreads to other conferences throughout North America and the world so that many lives are transformed by the gospel and are saved for eternity.

God has allowed this vision to become an ever expanding reality. While still in Texas, I began receiving invitations to give presentations in other conferences, both within the United States and abroad. For many years, the Texas Conference team had

presented the basic church planting track for the North American Division SEEDS Conference. This platform further expanded opportunities for sharing this passion outside of Texas. One of my highest priorities is to develop other leaders. When accepting appointments, I asked that one or two others from our team in Texas join me. I desired for the passion I had to burn strongly and deeply inside of them as well. Today, NADEI has a SEEDS presenter list of over 50 individuals, each uniquely qualified to share.

The following are a few of the conferences that engaged the most significantly:

Wisconsin: Under the leadership of Don Corkum, the conference president, church planting became a top priority for Wisconsin. Lisa Isensee was elected to serve part-time as the church planting coordinator. Every year, a different city was selected to focus on (Milwaukie, Green Bay, Eau Claire, Madison). A team of three from Texas was invited to be the presenters.

Alberta: Don Corkum decided to return to his Canadian roots and retire in the Alberta Conference. He had no intention of sitting idle and was soon assigned as church planting coordinator. Under Don's leadership, the Alberta Conference held their first city-wide church plant training in Edmonton, with an excellent attendance. Don has already scheduled a weekend next fall in Calgary. I would like to commend this man of God who has carried the church planting banner throughout his ministry!

Carolina Conference: I was invited to take an entire worker's meeting and focus on church planting. A pastor whom I mentored in Texas, Brad Cauley, has been asked to serve as the church planting coordinator (while also pastoring a small church). Brad has hit the ground running and is modeling many of the programs in Texas. One church he

recently visited committed to plant three churches! Brad is harvesting a lot of ripe fruit.

North New South Wales, Australia: Justin Lawman, Conference President, is committed to church planting and church health. I have taken two trips to train in church planting and will be going back with the “Church Plant Coaching Certification” training. Most of the conference membership attends “Big Camp.” I spoke at the main adult tent for a full week, encouraging the growth of God’s church through church planting. Elder Lawman requires all churches in the conference to be engaged in the NCD cycle. Those involved in church planting must reach a threshold of 50, so that healthy DNA is passed to their daughter church.

North and South England, Great Britain: These two conferences have dynamic church planting coordinators who work in cooperation with each other. Since 2007, I have been to South England, North England, and the British Union seven times, speaking on church planting and NCD. Events have included camp meetings, pastors’ meetings, church planter’s exchange, and the pilot launch of the “Church Plant Coaching Certification” training. These men are trailblazers and have influenced the planting of many innovative lay-led churches. Their programs are more developed than most conferences in the United States. God is blessing them with fruitfulness!

Other areas I have been involved with at varying levels include Alleghany West, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Florida, Washington, Mountain View, Oklahoma, Indiana, Southern New England, New York, British Columbia, Ontario, Manitoba-Saskatchewan, the Baltic Union (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia), and the Trans-European Division. My calendar is full of upcoming presentations around the division (and occasionally the world) to share the vision for church planting and church health. I praise God for the

opportunity to share this passion with others. I pray this flame will spread and become “jets of light in every city and village.”

Where to Start

During the nine years of this project, I was living an adventure. Church planting is hard work and there are many obstacles, but I was able to see God work miracles on a continuous basis. If you want to supercharge your enthusiasm for God and His work, church planting might be the remedy. Here are some first steps to take to help a dream become a reality for your conference:

1. Schedule a SEEDS, Metro Impact (city-wide focus), or dedicate a workers’ Meeting to church planting. Visit NADEI’s web site for more information:

www.nadei.org.

2. Begin praying about a pilot project or two that could serve to inspire the rest of your conference.

3. Assign someone to coordinate church planting for your conference (even if it is only part-time at the beginning). Perhaps you, the reader, are that person.

APPENDIX A

POTENTIAL MULTIPLICATION OF CHURCHES IN AUSTIN

If the original church started in the 1890s in Austin, Texas, planted just one church every ten years and their daughter churches did the same, there would be no shortage of Adventist churches in Austin.

1890- 1 church
1900- 2 churches
1910- 4 churches
1920- 8 churches
1930- 16 churches
1940- 32 churches
1950- 64 churches
1960- 128 churches
1970- 256 churches
1980- 512 churches
1990- 1024 churches
2000- 2048 churches
2010- 4096 churches

Obviously, at some point saturation would be reached. This exercise demonstrates the tremendous lost opportunities for expanding God's work. The Adventist church to population disparity is prevalent in practically all major cities of the United States.

APPENDIX B

METRO IMPACT CHURCH PLANTING RALLIES-SAMPLE



By this My Father is glorified,
that you bear much fruit...
John 15:8

Musicians:
Brazilian Lighthouse Fellowship
and Alpha International
Church Plants

TEXAS CONFERENCE CHURCH PLANTING RALLY
METRO IMPACT
NOVEMBER 6 - 7 Friday, November 6 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 7 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with optional activities following*

PRESENTERS:

 **Michael Coe,**
Pastor and Church Planter, Florida Conference
Life-Changing Christian Centers (SDA), Mt. Dora, Florida;
7 church campuses (plants), 1 restaurant, 2 thrift stores
and a preK -10 SDA school

 **Dr. S. Joseph Kidder,**
Andrew's University Theological Seminary
Church Growth Expert and Consultant
Just Released Book:
"Majesty: Experiencing Authentic Worship"

 **Dr. Rod and Donna Willey,**
Pioneer lay church planters from Peoria, Illinois

14 BREAKOUT SESSIONS FEATURING EXPERIENCED CHURCH PLANTERS
TOPICS INCLUDE:

- IMPORTANT FIRST STEPS IN PLANTING
- BUILDING A WORSHIP TEAM
- ORGANIZED FOR GROWTH – A TEAM APPROACH
- REACHING YOUNGER GENERATIONS
- SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS: FINDING BIBLE STUDIES
- CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF LAY CHURCH PLANTING

LOCATION: HOUSTON WEST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
2390 W SAM HOUSTON PARKWAY N

*Lunch and dinner
will be provided.*

*SATURDAY NIGHT AT 6:30 p.m. : Adventist Book Center Open in Fellowship Hall—book signing by Dr. S. Joseph Kidder
Indoor Soccer Tournament- to register a team of ten contact sdenny@tssda.org

For more information contact: sdenny@tssda.org, 817-790-2255 x142

Texas Conference Metro Impact Church Planting Rally- English

DATE: November 6-7, 2009

TIME: Friday, 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m., Sabbath 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Houston West Seventh-day Adventist Church

Prayer Coordinator: Rick McEdward

FRIDAY EVENING (English & Spanish):

7:00 p.m.	Praise & Worship	The Woodlands Team
7:10 p.m.	Special Music	Montana Family
7:15 p.m.	4 minute testimony from Texas Conference Church Plants Rick McEdward and Edgar Chavez coordinators	
	Platform Coord. – Walter Allred	

SABBATH FIRST SERVICE: Platform Coord. – Ben Guerrero

9:00 a.m.	Praise & Worship	Brazilian Team
9:15 a.m.	Welcome & Prayer	Ashwin Somasundram
9:18 a.m.	Vocal Number	Montana Family
9:25 a.m.	Morning Prayer Instrumental as people come forward	Ben Guerrero Brazilian Team
9:30 a.m.	Testimony	David & Nicole Butcher
9:35 a.m.	Special Music	Alpha International
9:40 a.m.	Sermon- Recognizing Opportunities to Expand God's Kingdom	Michael Coe
10:08 a.m.	Tithes & Offerings	Billy Gager
10:10 a.m.	Instrumental	Brazilian Team
10:15 a.m.	Benediction	Andrew Gradzikiewicz

BREAK

SABBATH SCHOOL: Platform Coord. – Ashwin Somasundram

10:25 a.m.	Introduction of Speaker	Tom Evans
10:28 a.m.	Sabbath School Presentation	Joseph Kidder
	“What We Learned About Adventist Churches That Grow”	

11:00 a.m. BREAK

SABBATH SECOND SERVICE: Platform Coord. – Ben Guerrero

11:15 a.m.	Praise & Worship	Brazilian Praise Team
11:30 a.m.	Welcome & Invocation	Tom Evans
11:35 a.m.	Vocal Number	Montana Family
11:42 a.m.	Morning Prayer	Rick McEdward
	Vocal as people come forward	Brazilian Team
	Instrumental after prayer (sax)	
11:50 a.m.	Testimony	Rod & Donna Willey
12:00 p.m.	Special Music (2x)	Alpha International
12:10 p.m.	Sermon	Michael Coe
	“A Passion for the Harvest”	
12:45 p.m.	Tithes & Offering	Ashwin Somasundram
12:46 a.m.	Instrumental	Brazilian Team
12:50	Benediction & Instructions for Afternoon	Ashwin Somasundram
12:45 p.m.	LUNCH	

SABBATH AFTERNOON: Platform Coord. – Ben Guerrero

2:00 p.m.	Praise & Worship	Brazilian Team
2:10 p.m.	Special Music	Alpha International
2:15 p.m.	Challenges and Opportunities of Lay Church Planting	Rod & Donna Willey
2:45 p.m.	Questions related to message	Dr. S. Joseph Kidder
2:55 p.m.	Orientation for Seminars	Tom Evans
3:00 p.m.	Seminar Sessions A:	
	Raising Your Leadership Lid	Walter Allred
	Campus and House Church Models	Tom Evans
		Rick McEdward
		Michael Coe
	Church Planting & Spiritual Warfare	Michael Cauley
	Increasing Your Church Health-NCD	Paul LeBlanc
	Win More Souls, Have More Fun— Lessons from our first two years.	Sam Ngaruiya & Team
	Achieving Excellence in Preaching	Joseph Kidder
	Leading Your Church in Evangelism	Evgeni Kovachev
4:00 p.m.	Seminar Sessions B:	
	Building a Worship Team	Brazilian Praise Team
	Organized for Growth—A Team Approach	Sam Ngaruiya & Team
	Spiritual Conversations—Finding Bible Studies	Paul LeBlanc with David/Nicole Butcher
	Small Numbers, Big Vision, Big Results	Andrew Gradzikiewicz

	Church Planting & Important Relationships	Rick Peterson Family, mentors, local pastors, conference, etc.
	Reaching Younger Generations	Billy Gager
	Church Planting and Finances	Roland Hill
5:00 p.m.	Praise & Worship	Brazilian Team
5:15 p.m.	Spiritual Connection & Leadership	Joseph Kidder
5:45 p.m.	A Vision for Houston & Beyond	Rick McEdward
6:00 p.m.	Supper	
	Adventist Book Center in Lobby	Open after Supper
	With book signing by Dr. S. Joseph Kidder	
7:00 p.m.	Social & Indoor Soccer Tournament— Coordinator- Ashwin Somasundram	TEAMS by Region

APPENDIX C

AREA CHURCH PLANTING COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Note: This person is a local full-time pastor. This is done in addition to their regular assignment.

- Promote church planting at monthly parish meetings (A regular 10-15 minute segment would be fantastic!)
- Monthly review of the church planting data base for your area. Provide updates as you become aware.
- Occasional review of a company for church status as requested.
- Significant involvement in the annual church planting rally hosted in your area once a year.
- One speaking appointment outside your area for another rally in Texas.
- Presentations for the conference-wide rally and attendance at the lay planter's appreciation event once a year.
- Two advisory meetings per year (one in Houston, one at the conference office).
- Find ways to support local church planters (working with conference to be sure that each lay plant is assigned a coach). Visit with a group if needed. Training/support meeting on a monthly basis, etc. Use your creativity in this area.

APPENDIX D
COACHING CONTRACT

Coaching Contract
Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

It is the desire of the Texas Conference to plant vibrant, growing and multiplying churches. The role of lay leadership in the process of church planting is crucial. The Texas Conference Church Planting Department has developed a pastor-coach model that helps lay leaders and church plants maximize their potential. The following outlines the nature of the pastor-coach relationship as well as the role of the Texas Conference Church Planting Department in the process:

1. **The pastor-coach is trained either through Phase I & II NCD or locally by Pastor Paul LeBlanc in the skills of coaching.** The coach is provided with a copy of “*Coaching 101*” by Bob Logan and Sherilyn Carlton.
2. **Monthly coaching meeting between pastor-coach and lay leader.**

Purpose: listening, prayer, reporting, visioning, accountability, development of long range planning.
Pastor-coach gives monthly assignment for lay leader.
Time: 1 ½-2 hours monthly for as long as the church is lay led. Interaction by phone or e-mail available as needed between meetings.
Location: Restaurant on most occasions. Church Planting Department will reimburse expenses up to \$20.00.
Who Initiates: Pastor-coach
3. **Monthly interaction between pastor-coach and church plant group.**

Purpose: observation, training, support.
Time: Once a month. Length varies based on event. Interaction takes place for as long as the church is lay led.
Location: Various options can include church board meeting, elder’s meeting, social, prayer meeting, business meeting, baptism, church service, retreat, pathfinders, etc. Coach should plan to attend company and church organizations. Note: Sabbath morning preaching should not be more than 1x per quarter.
Who Initiates: Pastor-coach determines, based on their own schedule, what event they are able to attend. Lay leader communicates requests—emphasis on special events that are being planned.
4. **Annual evangelistic reaping meeting by pastor-coach with church plant group.**

Purpose: Growth of the church plant spiritually and numerically.
Time: 2 week meeting.
Location: Church
Who Initiates: Pastor-coach in consultation with lay leader and church.
5. **Annual metro church planting rally for all church plants, all pastor-coaches, and all lay leaders.**

Purpose: Specialized training seminars by church planting experts, visioning regarding strategy for the entire area, inspiration.
Time: Designated weekend one time per year.
Location: Central to area and large enough to accommodate attendance.
Who Initiates: Conference coordinator and area church planting coordinator.
6. **Annual conference-wide rally and pastor-coach/lay leader appreciation brunch.**

Purpose: Inspiration, training, networking, providing resources for the upcoming year and expressing appreciation.
Time: Friday evening through Sunday at 4 pm in November of each year.
Location: Rotates between DFW, San Antonio, and Houston each year.
Who Initiates: Conference coordinator.

COACHING AGREEMENT

Name of Church Plant: _____

Address Meeting at: _____

Times of services: _____

Metro Area: _____

Lay Leader: _____

Address: _____

Contact Info: Phone #s: _____

E-mail: _____

Pastor-Coach: _____

Address: _____

Contact Info: Phone #s: _____

E-mail: _____

Area Church Planting Coordinator: _____

Texas Conference Coordinator: _____

Coaching agreement entered into on: _____

Lay Leader

Pastor-Coach

Tom Evans

Revised 5/28/08

"I absolutely believe that people, unless coached, never reach their maximum capabilities."
Bob Nardelli, *CEO Home Depot*

APPENDIX E

LAY PLANTER AND COACHES APPRECIATION BANQUET



PROGRAM

- PRAISE SERVICE (ABC OPEN)
BRAZILIAN WORSHIP TEAM
- WELCOME PRAYER & SPEAKER INTRO
GARY BRADY
- DEVOTIONAL
BILL MCCLENDON
- INTRODUCTIONS & COACH'S PRAYER
- MUSICAL SPECIAL
YUMI CASTOR
- INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER
ELTON DEMORAES
- "A VISION FOR NORTH AMERICA"
RUSSELL BURRILL
- WHAT CAN YOU PRAISE GOD FOR IN YOUR CHURCH PLANT THIS PAST YEAR?
- TESTIMONY: WOLFE CITY ADVENT GOSPEL PLANT
TOM EVANS & ROBBIN CRAWFORD
- TESTIMONY: S.A. LIFETIME SABBATH FELLOWSHIP HOUSE CHURCH
MITCH & KARON JONAKIN
- WHAT WAS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE YOU FACED IN YOUR CHURCH PLANT THIS PAST YEAR?
- PRAYER IN PAIRS
- MUSICAL SPECIAL
BRAZILIAN WORSHIP TEAM
- SPECIAL APPEAL-GLOBAL CHURCH PLANTING PROJECT
TOM & MARA EVANS
- MUSIC
BRAZILIAN WORSHIP TEAM
- OFFERING COLLECTED W/ MUSIC
BRAZILIAN WORSHIP TEAM
- WEST TEXAS VISION
GARY BLANCHARD
- ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYER FOR LUNCH
TOM EVANS
- 12:00 P.M. LUNCH (ABC OPEN)
- PRAISE SERVICE
BRAZILIAN WORSHIP TEAM
- COACHING FOR EXCELLENCE
PAUL LEBLANC
- WEEKEND IMPACT
ROGER HERNANDEZ, ROD & DONNA WILLEY, WALTER CASTRO
- WEEKEND IMPACT SHARING & PRAYER
- VIDEO CLIP: "WHAT TYPE OF SHIP IS YOUR CHURCH?"
ABRAHAM JULES ON VIDEO
- CONCLUSION & PRAYER (ABC OPEN)
TOM EVANS

PAUL CONEVE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR INDIVIDUAL PRAYER & COUNSELING APPOINTMENTS THROUGHOUT THE DAY

APPENDIX F

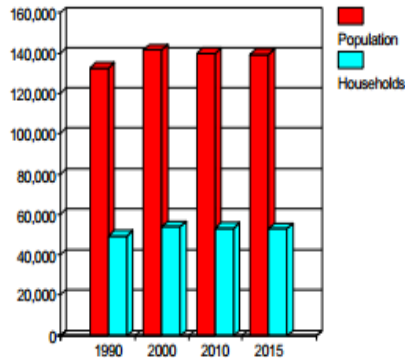
CONFERENCE CHURCH PLANTING COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Vision Casting.
 - a. Regularly cast a vision for church planting
 - i. 6 reports per year to the executive committee.
 - ii. Worker's Meeting- Initial major focus (75% of the meeting) to gain support among the pastors. Regular presentations ensuing years.
 - iii. Constituency meeting.
 - iv. All Conference publications.
 - v. City-wide church planting rallies.
 - vi. Local church preaching.
 - vii. Annual lay church planter/coaches brunch
2. Training.
 - a. Provide coaching and training for church planters and plants.
 - i. City-wide rallies.
 - ii. Training at local plants.
 - iii. Provide materials.
 - iv. Training of pastor-coaches. Offer NADEI church plant coach certification.
 - v. Provide every lay-led plant with a pastor-coach. Ensure that all lay plants have a coach assigned that is functioning effectively.
 - vi. Encourage the use of Percept demographic resource for all churches.
 - vii. Work with established churches and church plants utilizing Natural Church Development.
3. Monitor Progress.
 - i. Encourage movement through the various stages of organization: group, company, church, and multiplying church.
 - ii. Review with church plants in business session to help them reach the next level.
 - iii. Report to administration progress and challenges.
 - iv. Help process decisions by church plants regarding facilities to rent or buy.
 - v. Be involved in leadership transitions if needed.
 - vi. Be available to work through tough spots and challenges with plants.
4. Leadership Development.
 - i. Develop 4-7 individuals to assist in the vision casting and training. Utilize these individuals to represent church planting in the field.
 - ii. Personally coach any full-time church planters.
 - iii. Be on the constant look out for lay people who have excellent potential as church planters.
 - iv. Personal development through reading, seminars, and relationships with other successful church plant leaders throughout North America.

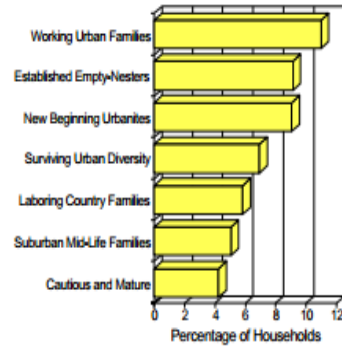
APPENDIX G

PERCEPT DEMOGRAPHICS SAMPLE PAGE

Population and Households

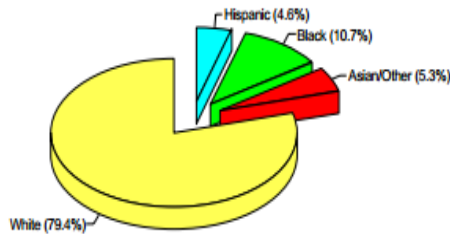


Primary U.S. Lifestyles Segments-2010

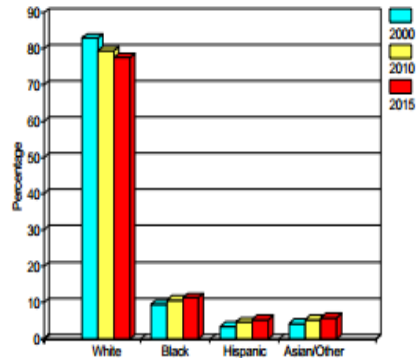


The population in the study area has decreased by 1815 persons, or 1.3% since 2000 and is projected to decrease by 268 persons, or 0.2% between 2010 and 2015. The number of households has decreased by 602, or 1.1% since 2000 and is projected to decrease by 68, or 0.1% between 2010 and 2015.

Population By Race/Ethnicity-2010

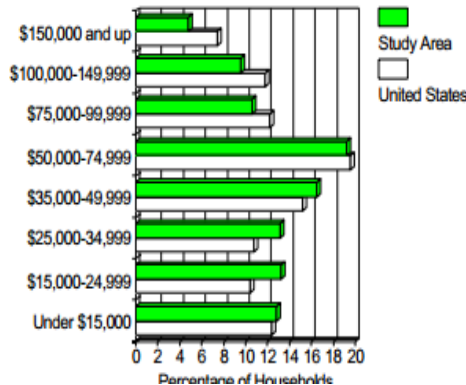


Population By Race/Ethnicity Trend

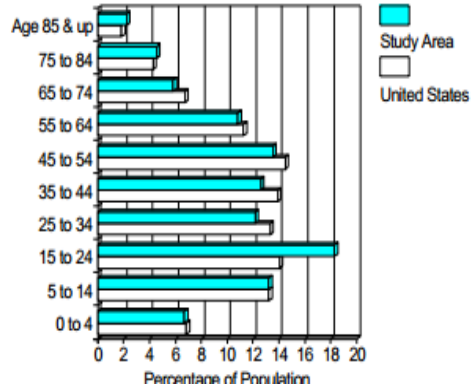


Between 2010 and 2015, the White population is projected to decrease by 2756 persons and to decrease from 79.4% to 77.5% of the total population. The Black population is projected to increase by 751 persons and to increase from 10.7% to 11.3% of the total. The Hispanic/Latino population is projected to increase by 896 persons and to increase from 4.6% to 5.3% of the total. The Asian/Other population is projected to increase by 841 persons and to increase from 5.3% to 5.9% of the total population.

Households By Income-2010



Population by Age-2010



APPENDIX H

CHURCH PLANT REQUIREMENTS FOR GROUP, COMPANY, AND CHURCH

Recommendations for becoming a CHURCH PLANT GROUP in the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists:

1. Demographic viability is confirmed by the Texas Conference church planting department.
2. Mother church or conference administration has voted support for the group to meet weekly and begin planning toward a plant.
3. Weekly meeting for the purpose of spiritual fellowship and strategic church plant planning. The “incubation” period should continue for a minimum of six months before group begins Sabbath worship services.
4. Recommended study for group: *Rekindling a Lost Passion* and *ABC’s of Natural Church Development* by Russell Burrill, and the book of Acts. Order by calling NADEI at 269-471-8303.
5. Financial giving is run through the mother church. A separate line item is set up for donations made by group members toward their planting project. The funds are available to the group as needs arise.

Requirements for obtaining COMPANY STATUS in the Texas Conference:

1. 30 baptized members.
2. 30+ average attendance for the previous 3 months.
3. \$25,000 in projected annual tithe.
4. Local Church Finances:
Once company status is voted, the group is to set up a bank account in consultation with the Conference Undertreasurer. The Conference auditor should also be contacted to receive accounting software to set it up.
The group agrees to establish a line item in their budget for a building fund. This fund will receive a monthly allocation from the combined budget.
5. Date set to complete the Natural Church Development survey. The Conference will cover the cost of the first survey.
6. Assigned pastor or pastor-coach if group is lay led.

Requirements for obtaining CHURCH STATUS in the Texas Conference:

1. 55 baptized members.
2. 60+ average attendance for previous 3 months.
3. 10+ individuals have joined by baptism or profession of faith since the company was organized.
4. Company has held at least one public evangelistic series.
5. \$50,000 in projected annual tithe.
6. A strategy and timeline have been established for fund raising and the eventual acquisition of a church facility.
7. Treasurer has completed certification process with the Texas Conference treasury department. Treasurer and pastor cannot be from the same household.
8. Completion of the Natural Church Development survey with minimum average score of 50.
9. Voted commitment to support Adventist education:
Option #1 - A monthly subsidy for members' children to attend an Adventist church school.
Option #2 - A constituent relationship with an Adventist church school. Once the subsidy reaches an acceptable level, voting representation on the school board is to be expected.
10. Completion of a review with the Conference church planting director or another designated individual.
11. Assigned pastor or pastor-coach if the church is lay led.

APPENDIX I

NORTH DALLAS CORRIDOR BAPTISMS, 2002-2010

Church:	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Richardson	18	23	11	25	13	29	9	22	42
Metro North/ Mosaic	23	9	1	14	49	17	18	31	4
Richardson Spanish	111	103	54	17	29	54	40	63	20
New Life African	14	36	25	1	8	8	0	1	0
Plano/McKinney Spanish	-	-	-	1	8	17	24	46	11
Frisco Crosswalk Fellowship	-	-	-	-	-	15	3	4	4
Dallas Metroplex Zimbabwean	-	-	9	18	4	0	8	Closed	Closed
North Dallas/Lighthouse Brazilian	-	8	2	2	4	5	2	9	7
Little Elm/The Colony Spanish	-	-	-	-	10	6	1	8	9
Richardson Spring Valley Company	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38	29
Acts Two	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Start
McKinney English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Start
TOTAL BAPTISMS	166	179	102	78	125	151	105	225	126

Total baptisms 2002-2010= 1257

APPENDIX J

NORTH DALLAS CORRIDOR MEMBERSHIP, 2002-2010
(NUMBERS BASED ON JAN. 1 OF EACH YEAR)

Church:	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Richardson	610	591	574	598	647	669	683	688	708
Metro North/ Mosaic	118	178	202	200	222	282	313	338	388
Richardson Spanish		144	277	345	332	338	377	415	472
New Life African		23	72	99	98	101	108	108	107
Plano/McKinney Spanish					24	55	94	121	145
Frisco Crosswalk Fellowship							41	56	72
Dallas Metroplex Zimbabwean			19	33	50	52	51	62	-----
North Dallas/Lighthouse Brazilian			38	37	33	76	119	124	119
Little Elm/The Colony Spanish						78	76	76	175
Richardson Spring Valley Company									38
Acts Two									-----
McKinney English									-----
Combined Membership	728	936	1182	1306	1412	1651	1862	1988	2224
Percent Growth	-----	28.6%	26.3%	10.5%	8.1%	16.9%	12.8%	6.8%	11.9%

APPENDIX K

NORTH DALLAS CORRIDOR TITHE GAINS, 2000-2010

Church:	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Richardson	855,005	647,395	670,984	682,834	854,887	930,636	953,413	987,367	966,036	866,023	808,229
Metro North/ Mosaic	151,001	263,149	230,666	225,558	229,431	250,997	261,184	299,607	284,493	266,998	263,208
Richardson Spanish		29,983 start	123,242	199,591	197,092	188,567	198,173	192,877	225,187	214,926	214,083
New Life African			17,881 start	61,455	55,554	52,626	88,019	84,426	70,238	77,108	126,946
Plano/McKinney Spanish						16,463 start	49,271	63,234	87,947	80,226	75,300
Frisco Crosswalk Fellowship								93,930 start	143,825	178,107	222,139
Dallas Metroplex Zimbabwean				5,012 start	21,196	17,957	11,004	20,176	1,144	5,037	3,050 closed
North Dallas/Lighthouse Brazilian			3,788 start	50,101	24,571	28,623	31,544	51,944 merger	161,993	155,150	198,607
Little Elm/The Colony Spanish					20,434	59,524	77,833	78,171	61,282	58,358 merger	48,574
Richardson Spring Valley Company											63,609 start
Acts Two			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	87,098 start
McKinney English			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	start
TOTAL TITHE	1,006,006	940,527	1,046,561	1,224,551	1,403,165	1,545,393	1,670,441	1,971,732	2,002,145	1,901,933	2,110,843
PERCENT INCREASE	46.2%	-7.0%	11.3	17.0%	14.6%	10.1%	8.1%	18.0%	1.5%	-5.3%	11%

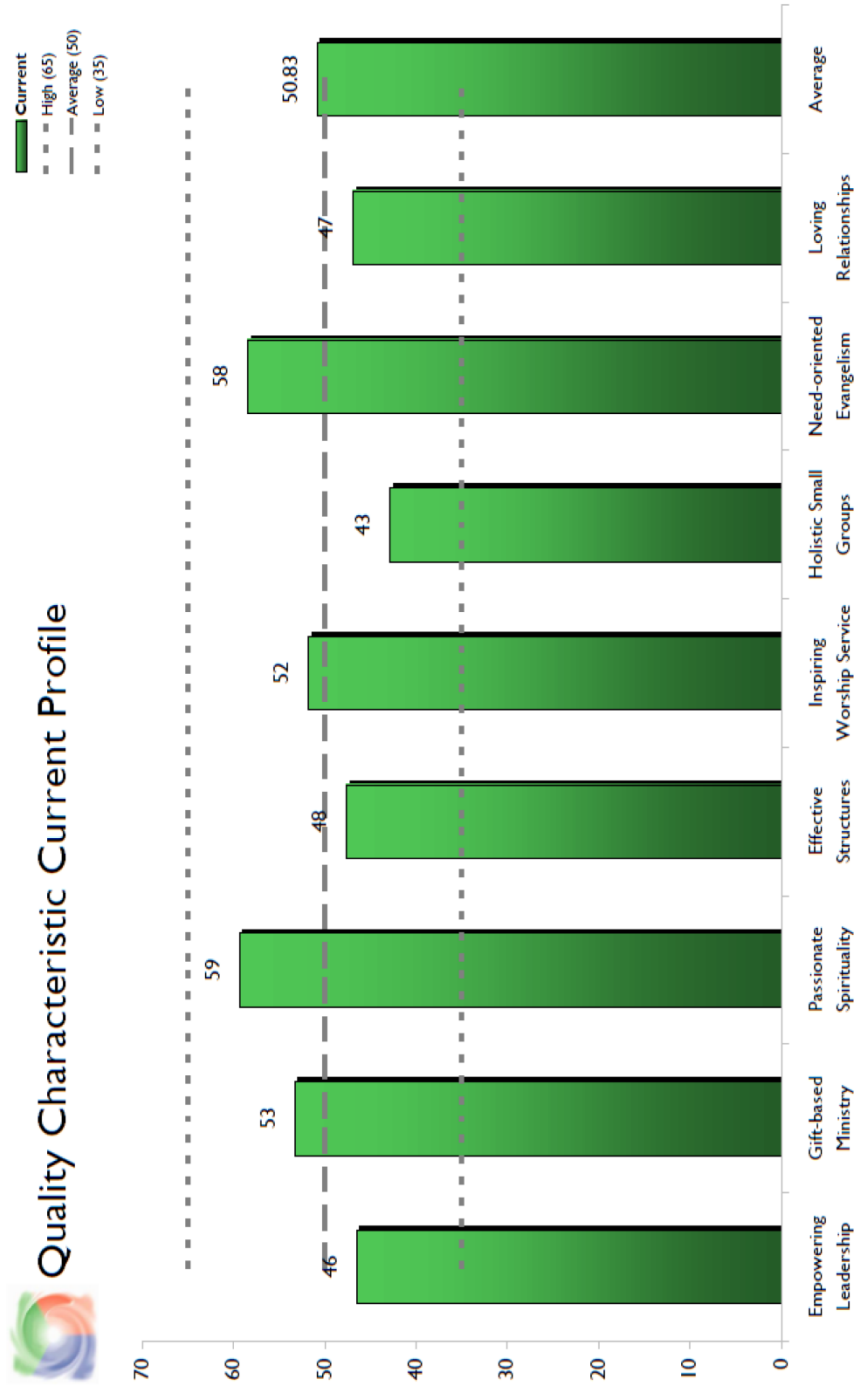
Richardson tithe in 1999 before planting in the North Dallas corridor began: \$688,253.

Total baptisms 2002-2010= 1257

APPENDIX L

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT CHURCH PLANTS
AND ESTABLISHED CHURCHES COMPARISON

Texas Established Churches Average Scores
45 Established Churches in Database

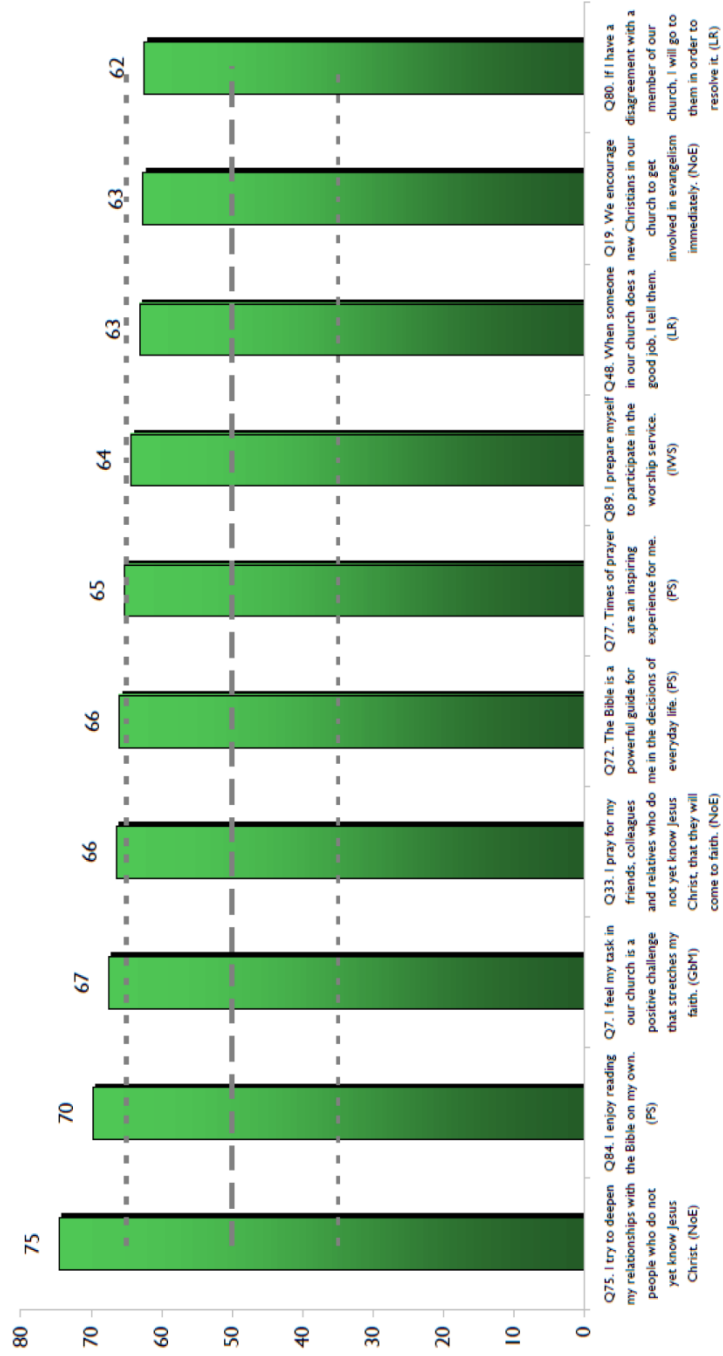


Texas Established Churches Highest 10 Questions

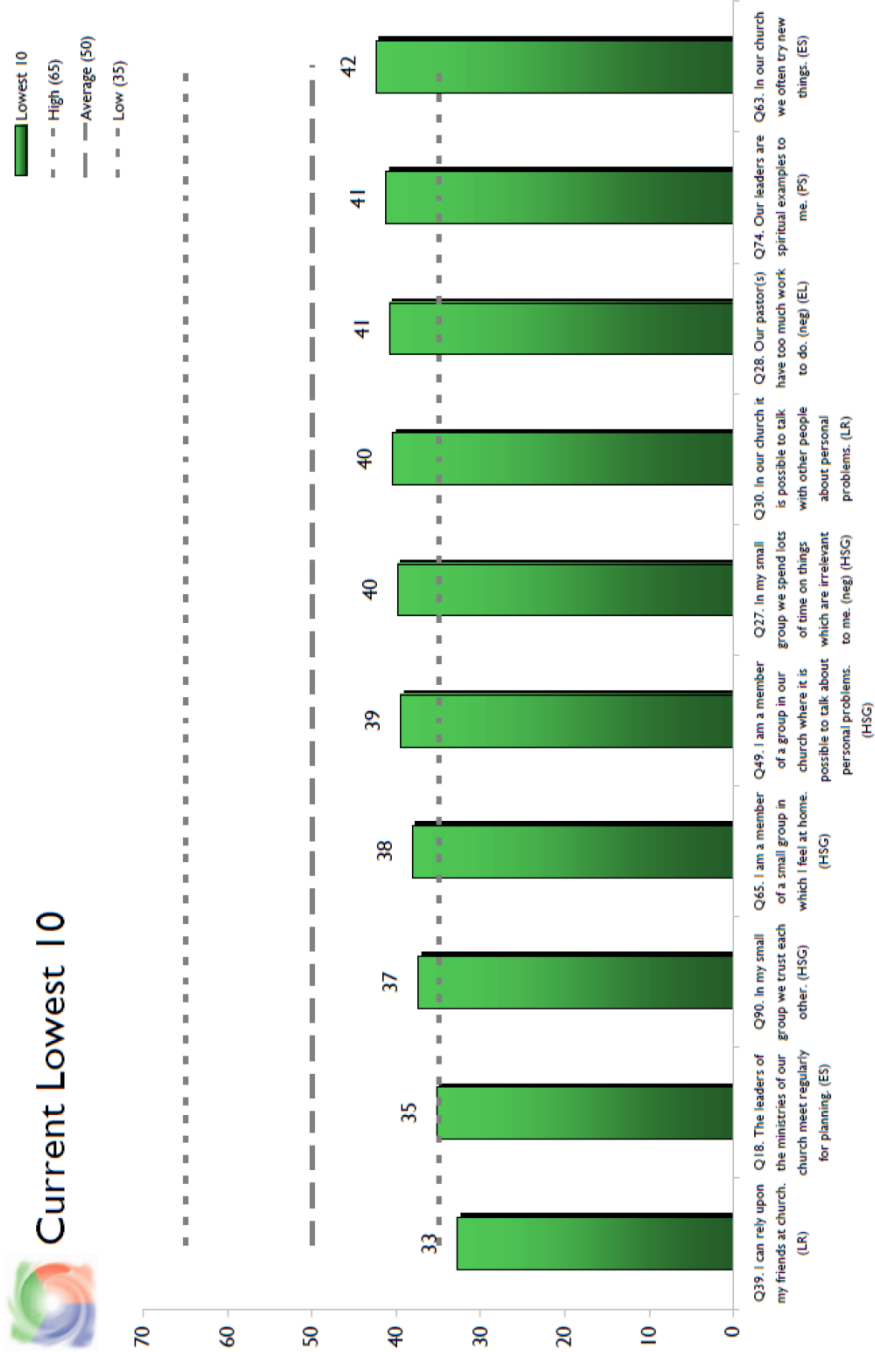


Current Highest 10

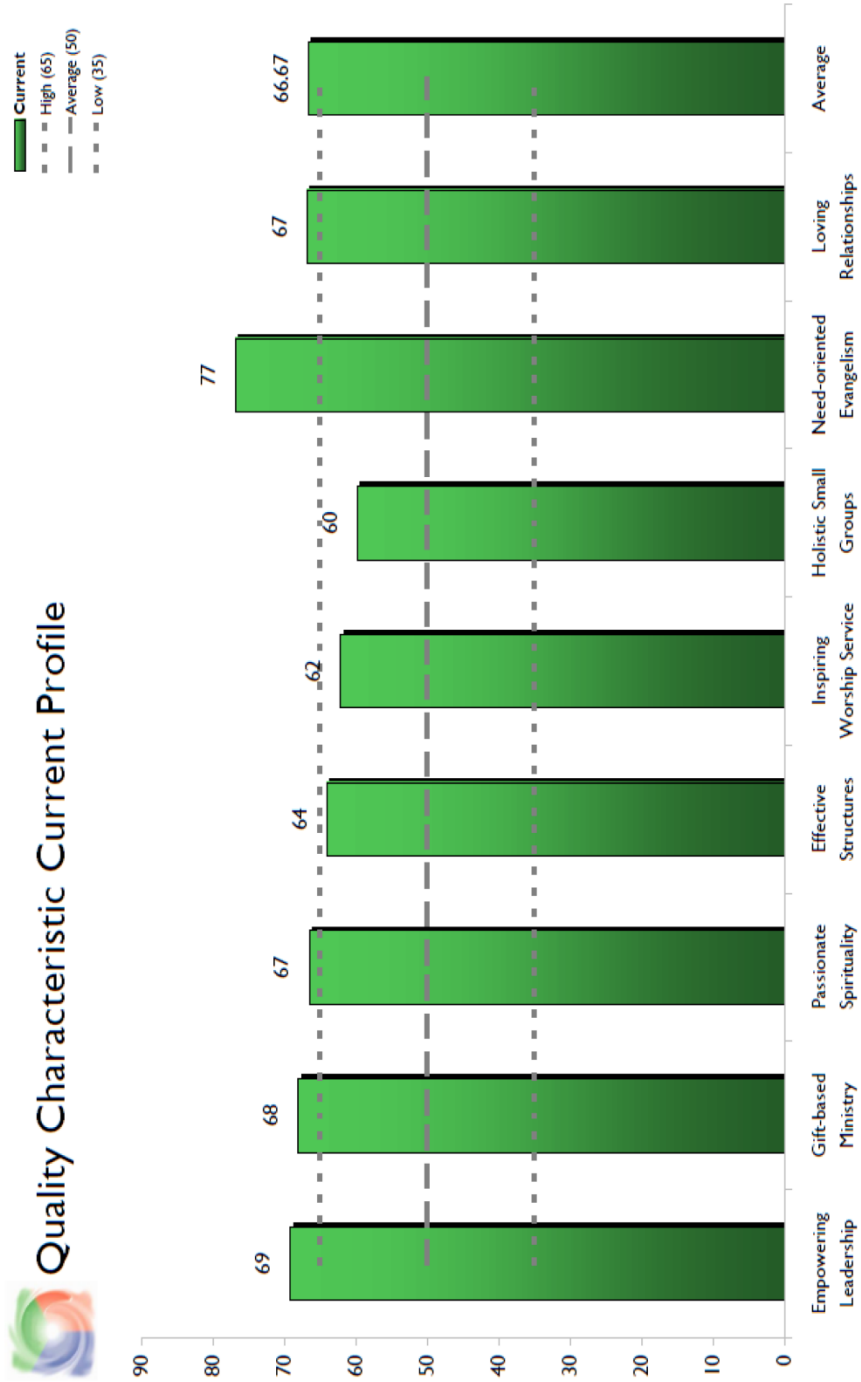
- Highest 10
- - - High (65)
- - - Average (50)
- - - Low (35)



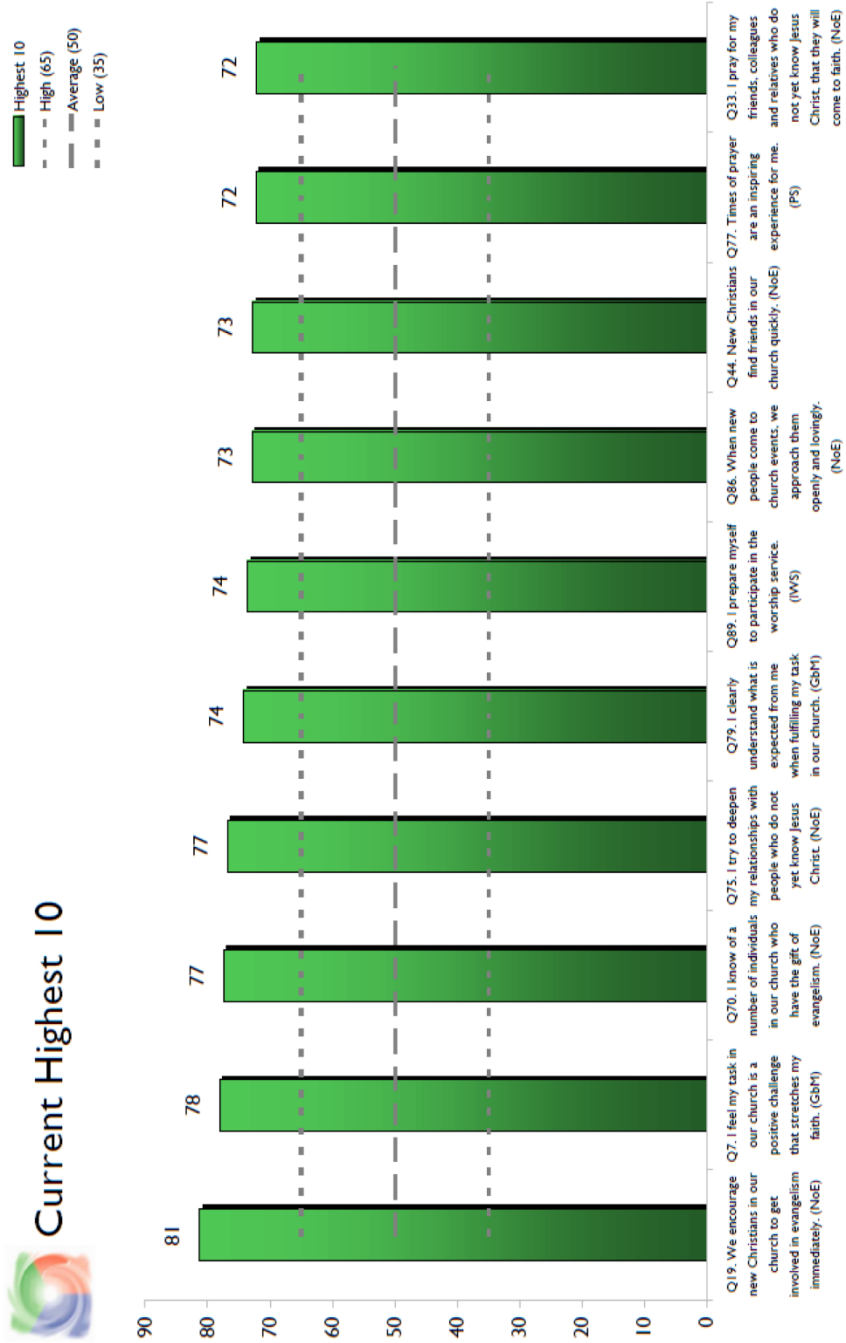
Texas Established Churches Lowest 10 Questions



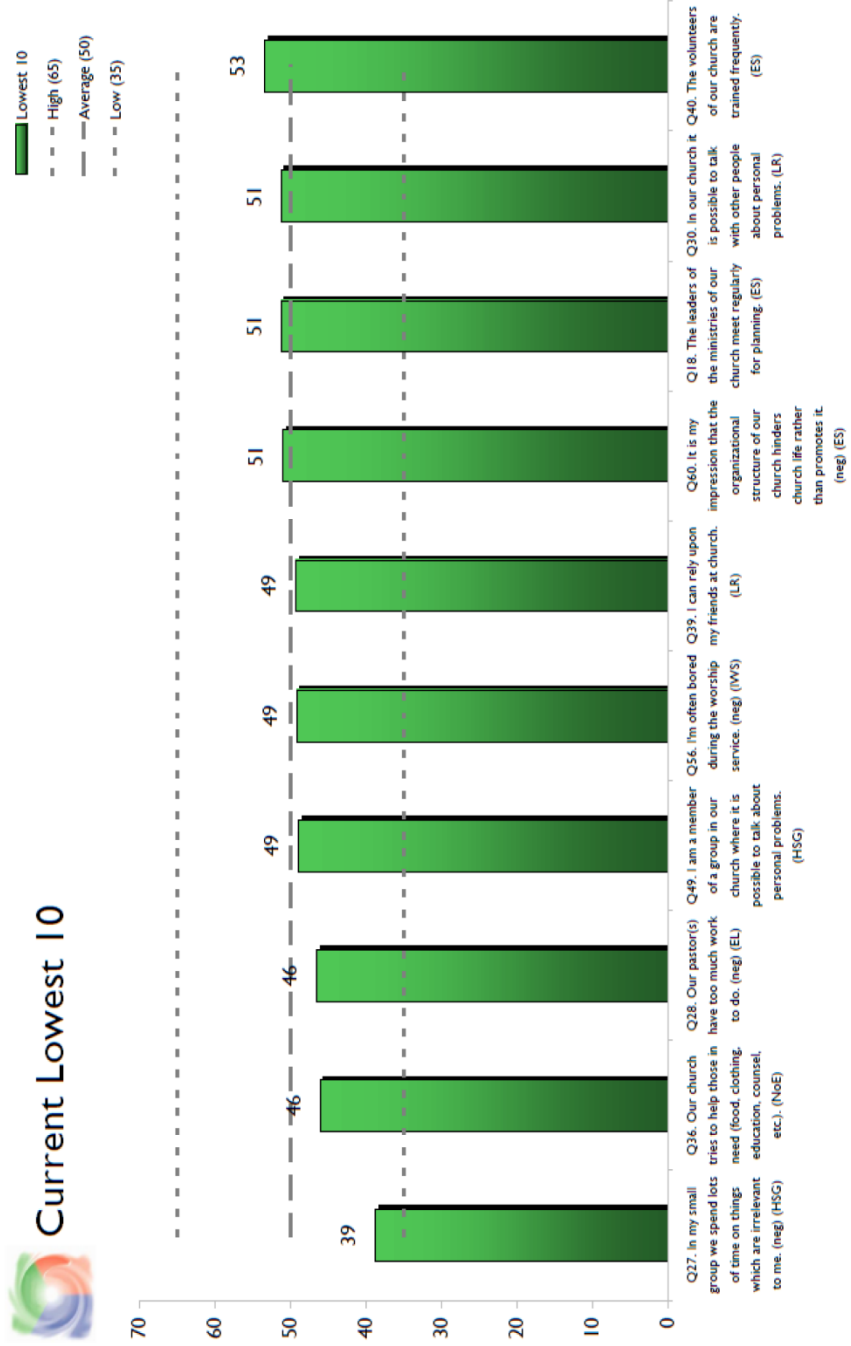
Texas Church Plants Average Scores
27 Church Plants in Database



Texas Church Plants Highest 10 Questions



Texas Church Plants Lowest 10 Questions

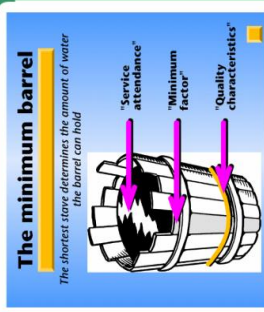


Profile *Plus*

Quality Characteristic Analysis & Trends
for the Natural Church Development Journey of

SDA Texas Conference

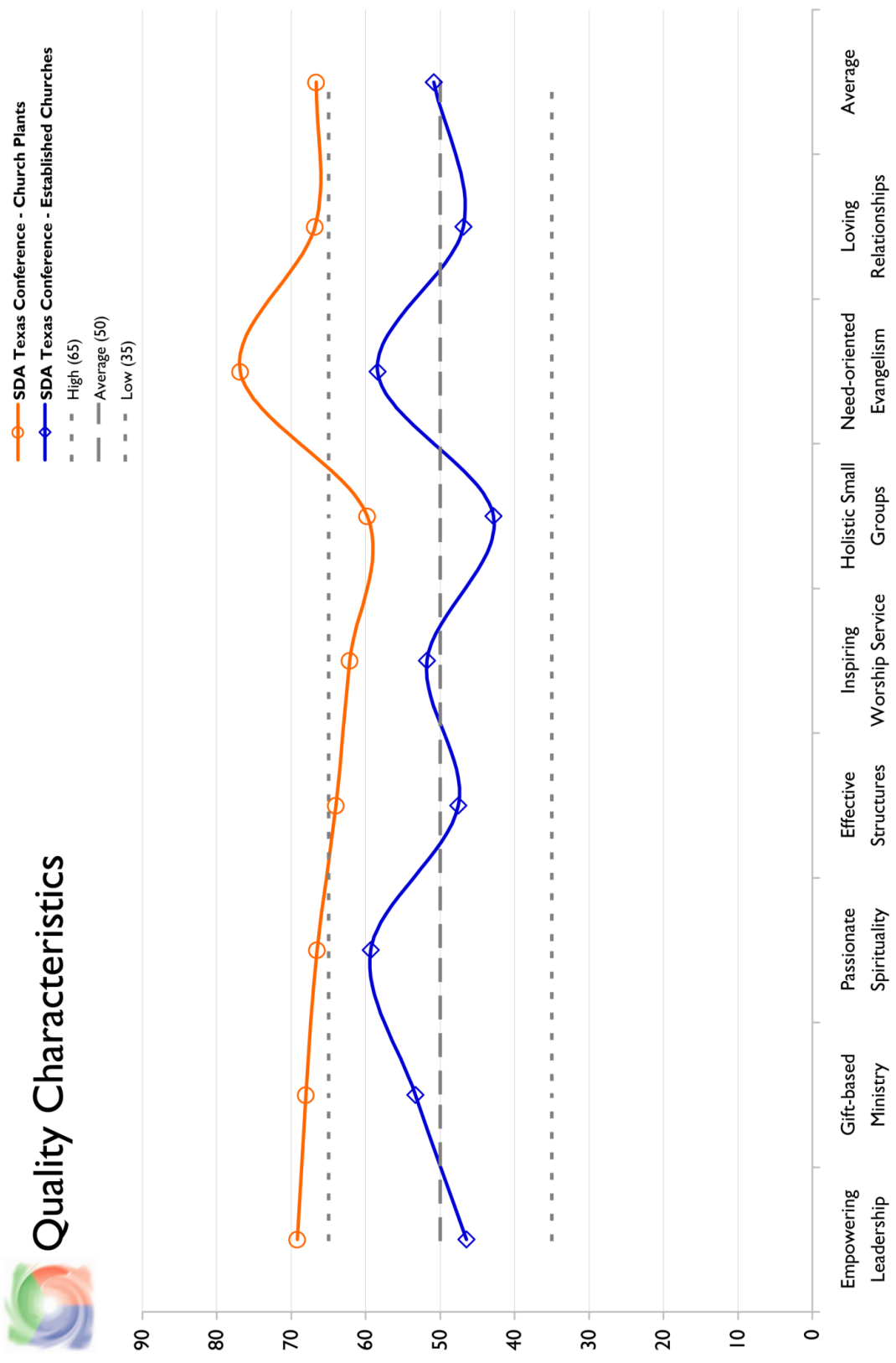
Date: November-12



Church	Minimum Factor	Maximum Factor	Min - Max Difference	Average
SDA Texas Conference - Church Plants	60 Holistic Small Groups	77 Need-oriented Evangelism	17	66.67
SDA Texas Conference - Established Churches	43 Holistic Small Groups	59 Passionate Spirituality	16	50.83



Quality Characteristics

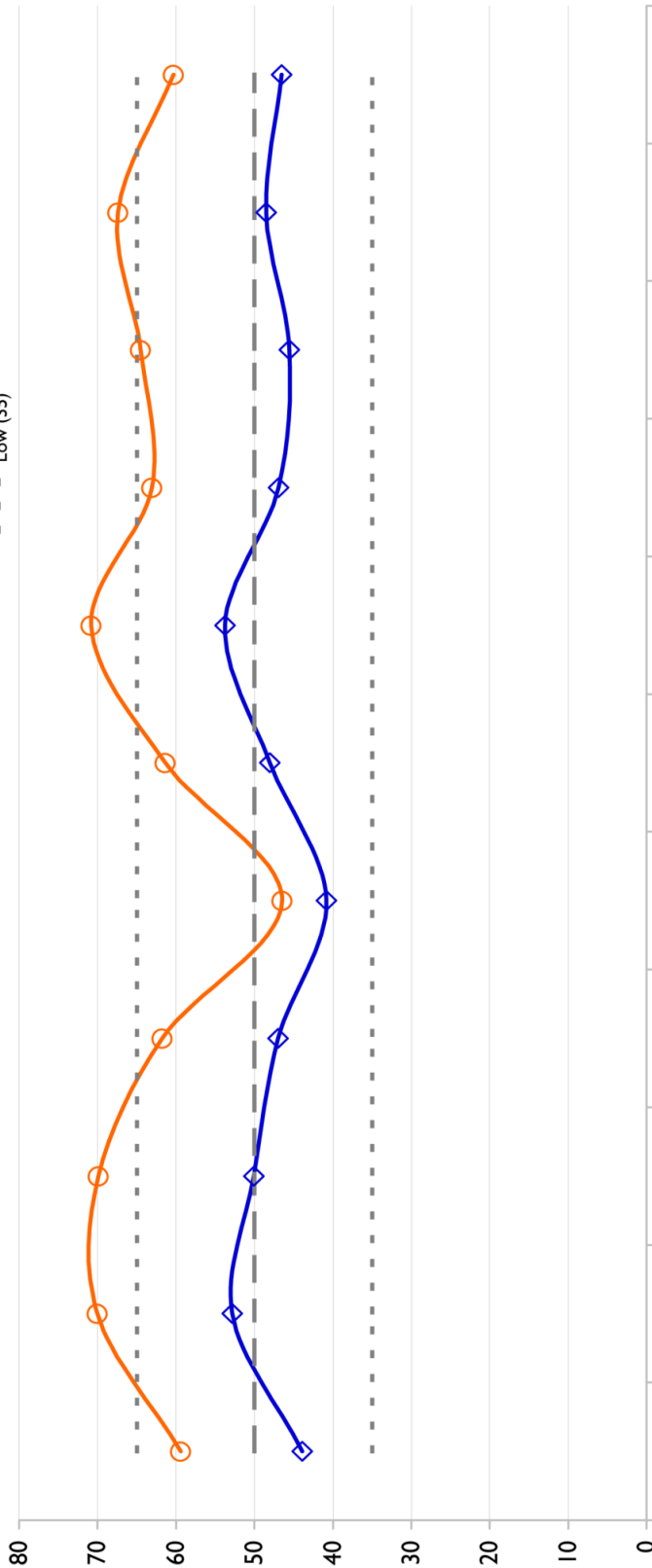




Empowering Leadership

○ SDA Texas Conference - Church Plants
◇ SDA Texas Conference - Established Churches

- - - High (65)
 — Average (50)
 - - - Low (35)

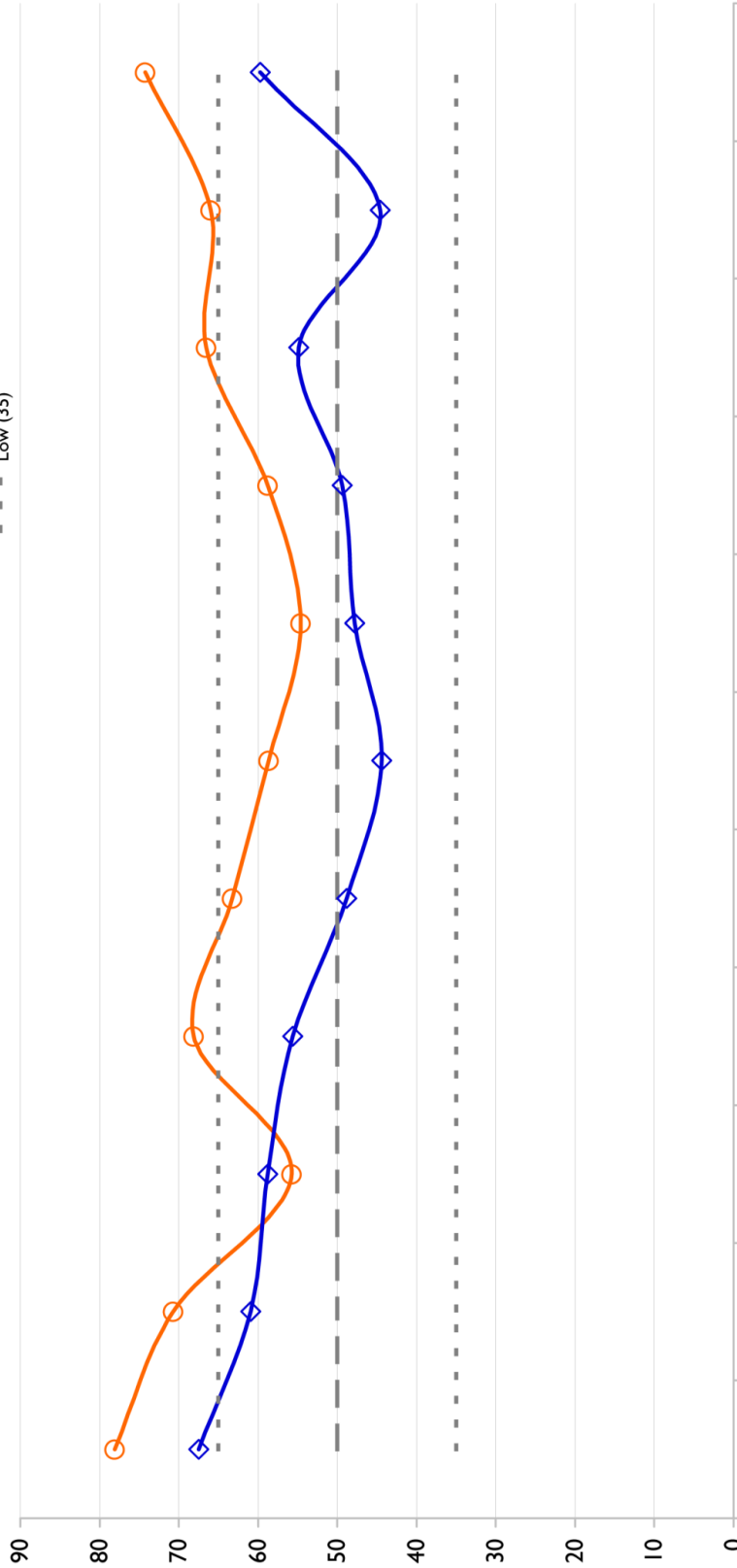




Gift-based Ministry

○ SDA Texas Conference - Church Plants
◇ SDA Texas Conference - Established Churches

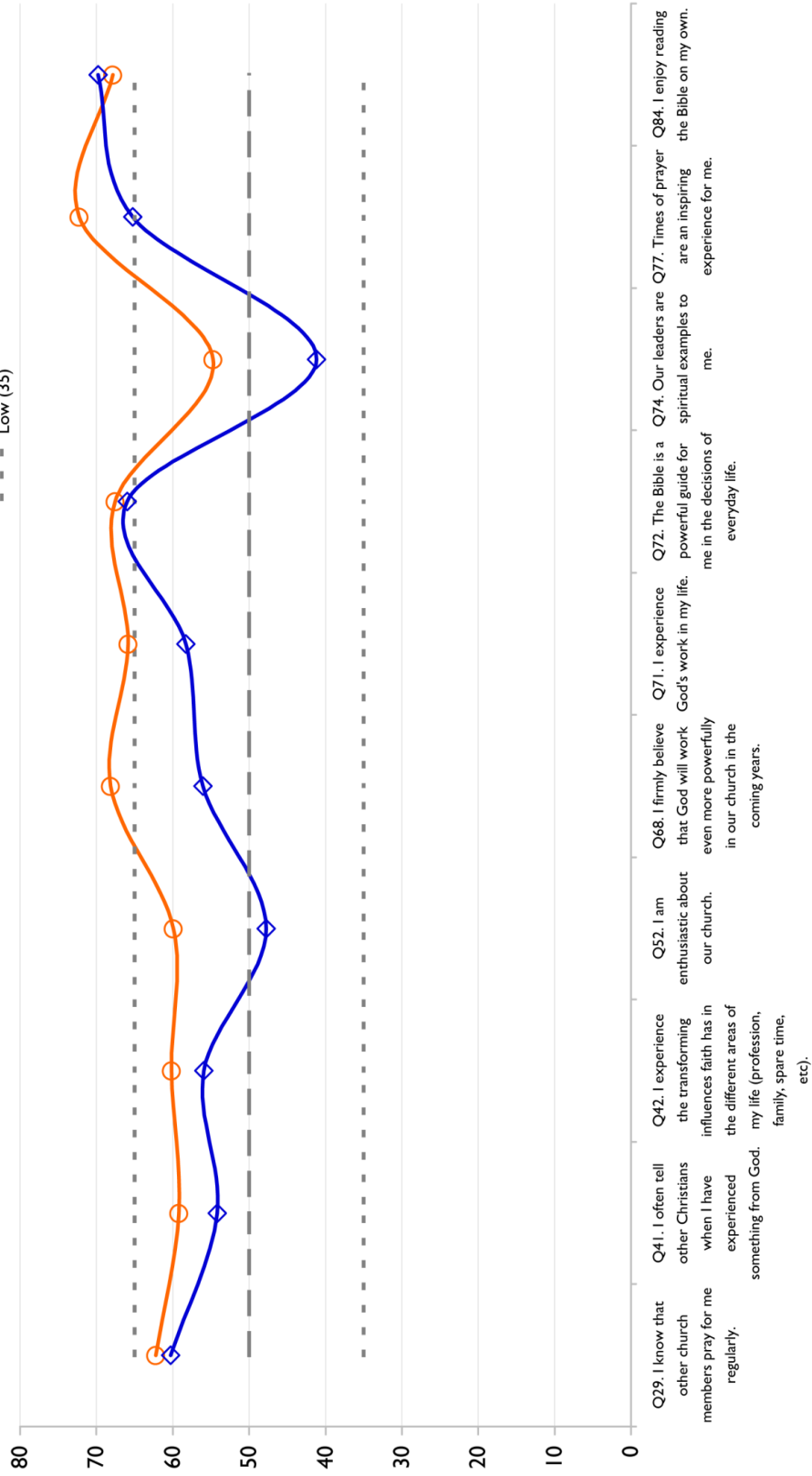
- - - High (65)
 - - - Average (50)
 - - - Low (35)





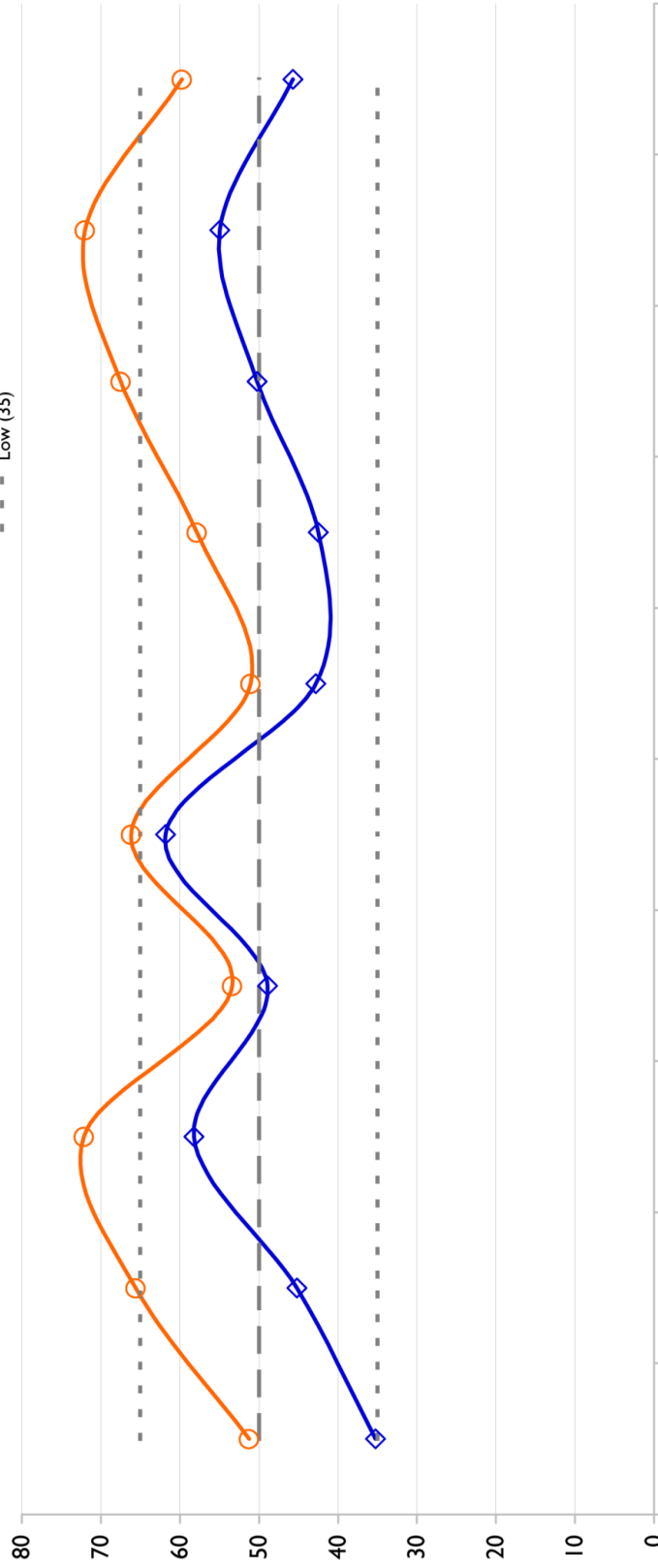
Passionate Spirituality

- SDA Texas Conference - Church Plants
- ◇ SDA Texas Conference - Established Churches
- - - High (65)
- Average (50)
- - - Low (35)





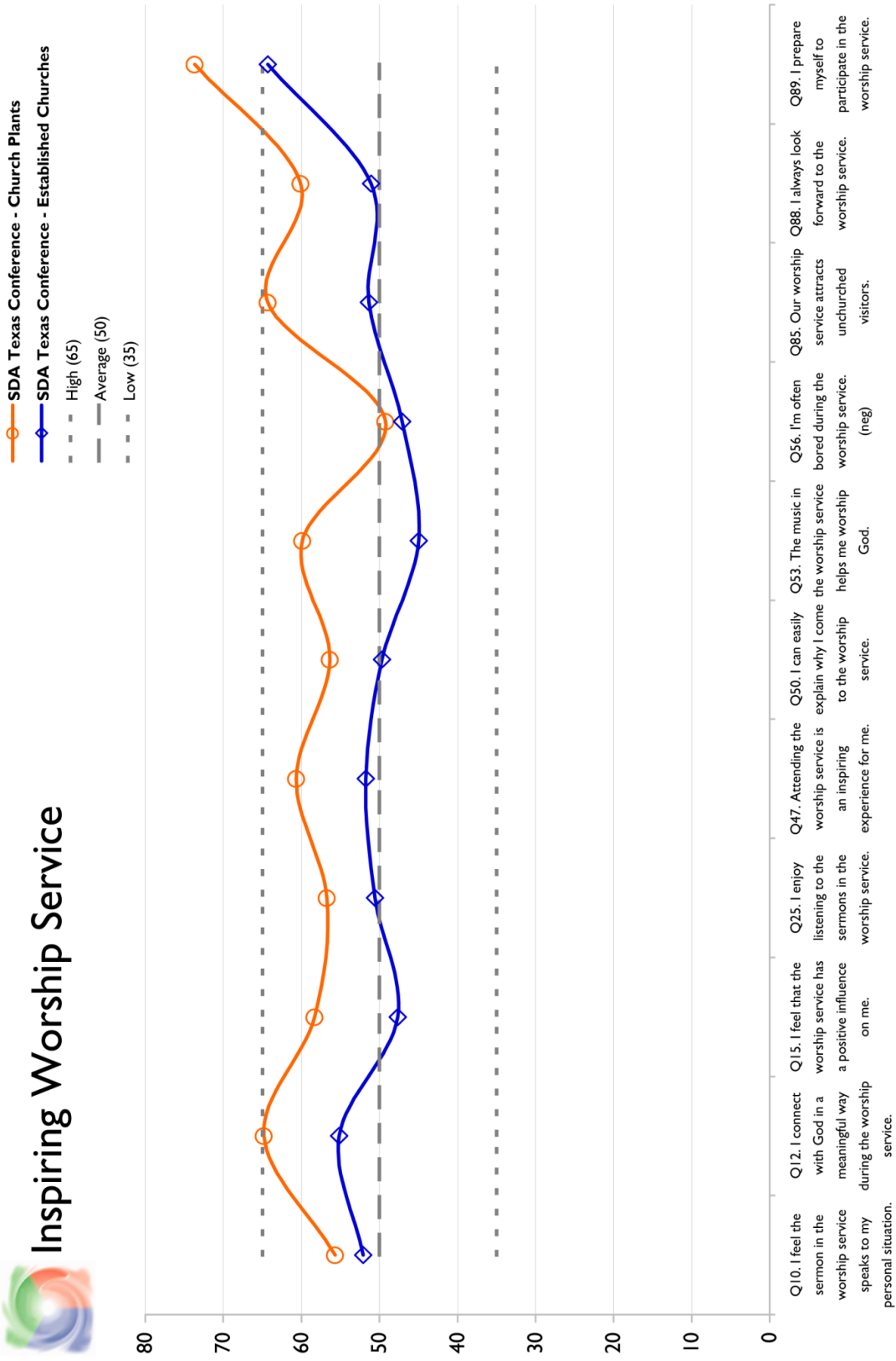
Effective Structures



Q18. The leaders of the ministries of our church meet regularly for planning.
 Q23. Our leaders actively support church development.
 Q24. My contributions to church life are reviewed regularly.
 Q40. The volunteers of our church are trained frequently.
 Q57. I understand clearly how the different parts of our church work together.
 Q60. It is my impression that the organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it. (neg)
 Q63. In our church we often try new things.
 Q64. The small group and ministry leaders in our church each mentor at least one other person.
 Q67. I know the goals we are working towards as a church.
 Q91. The activities of our church are well planned and organized.



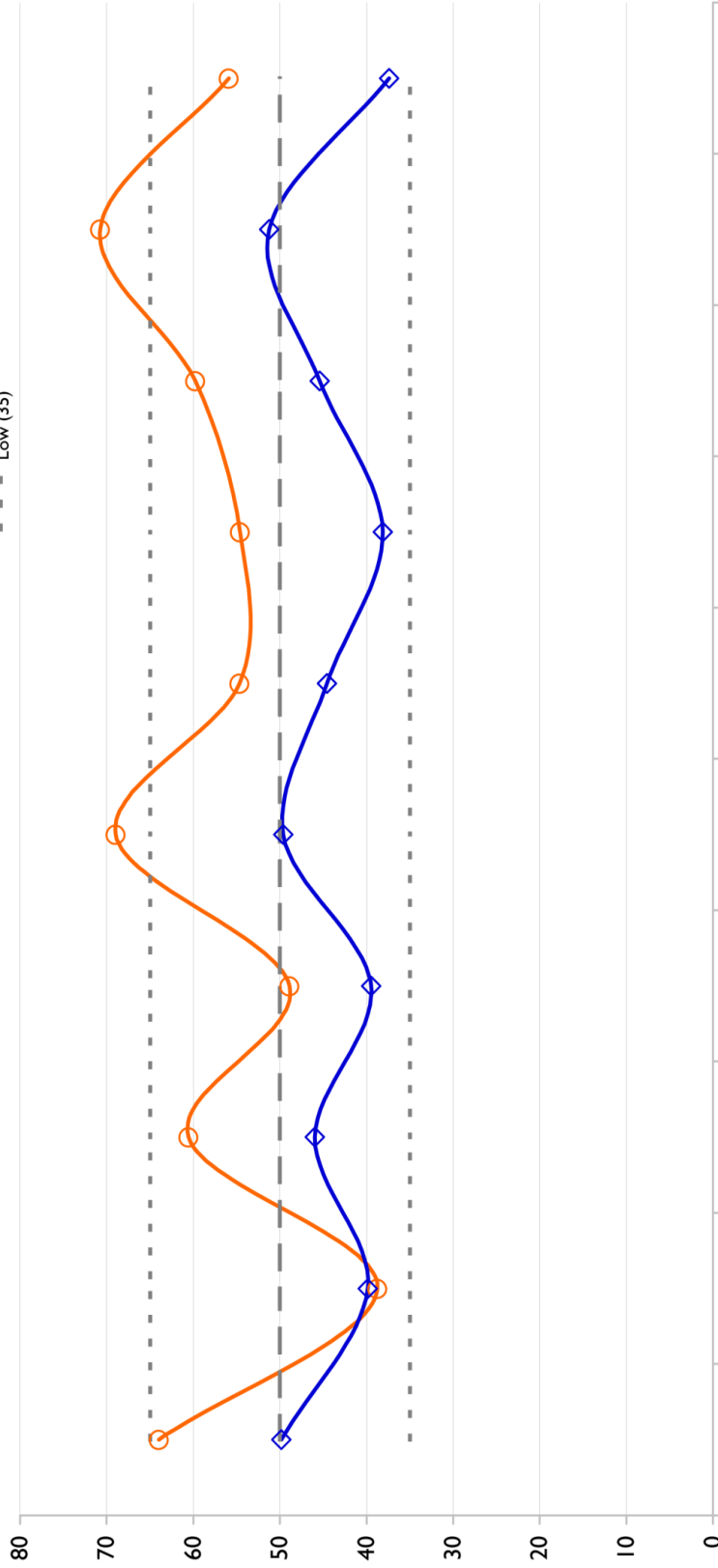
Inspiring Worship Service





Holistic Small Groups

- SDA Texas Conference - Church Plants
- ◇ SDA Texas Conference - Established Churches
- - - High (65)
- Average (50)
- - - Low (35)



Q1. My small group helps me with the challenges of my life.
 Q27. In my small group we spend lots of time on things which are irrelevant to me. (neg)

Q34. My small group helps me to grow in my spiritual life.

Q49. I am a member of a group in our church where it is possible to talk about personal problems.

Q54. In the groups I belong to it is easy for newcomers to be integrated.

Q55. I am a member of a group in our church where others will pray with me if I need it.

Q65. I am a member of a small group in which I feel at home.

Q76. The leaders of our small groups are trained for their tasks.

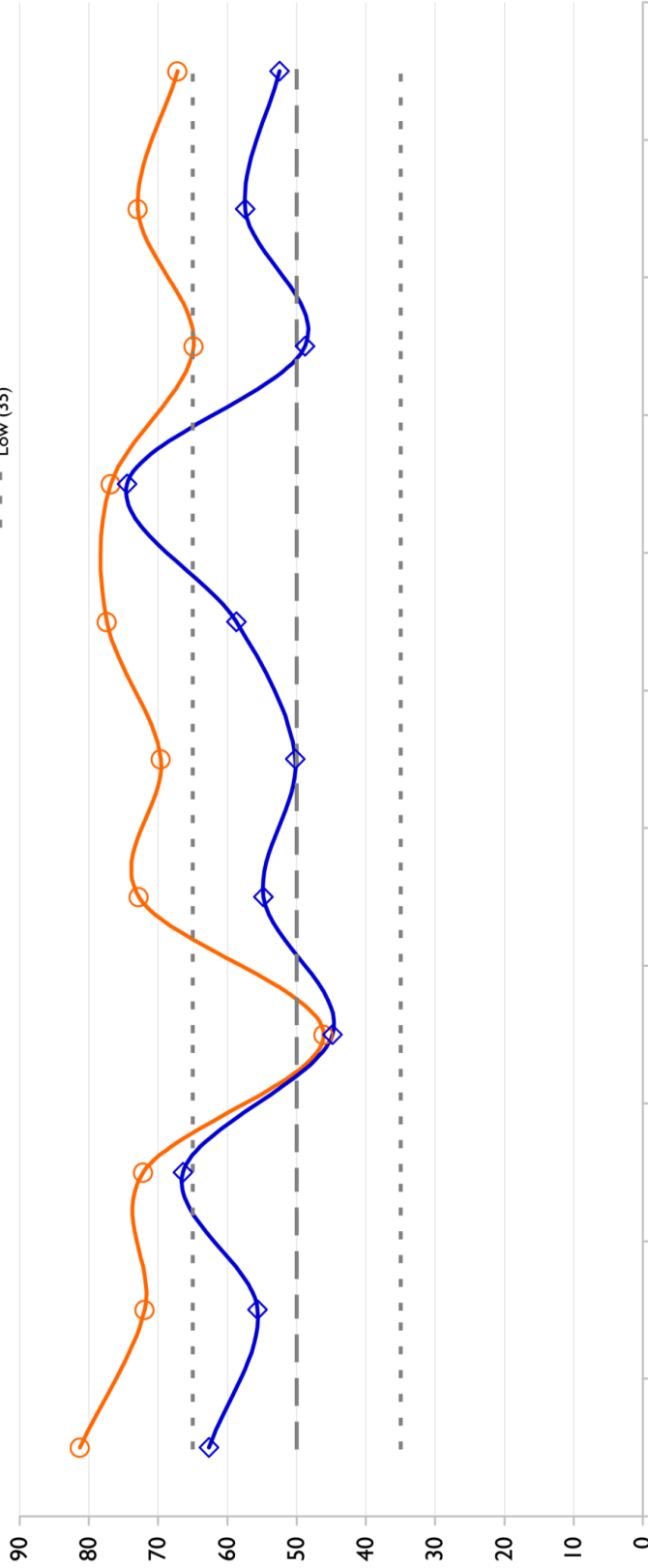
Q78. Our small groups actively seek to multiply themselves.

Q90. In my small group we trust each other.



Need-oriented Evangelism

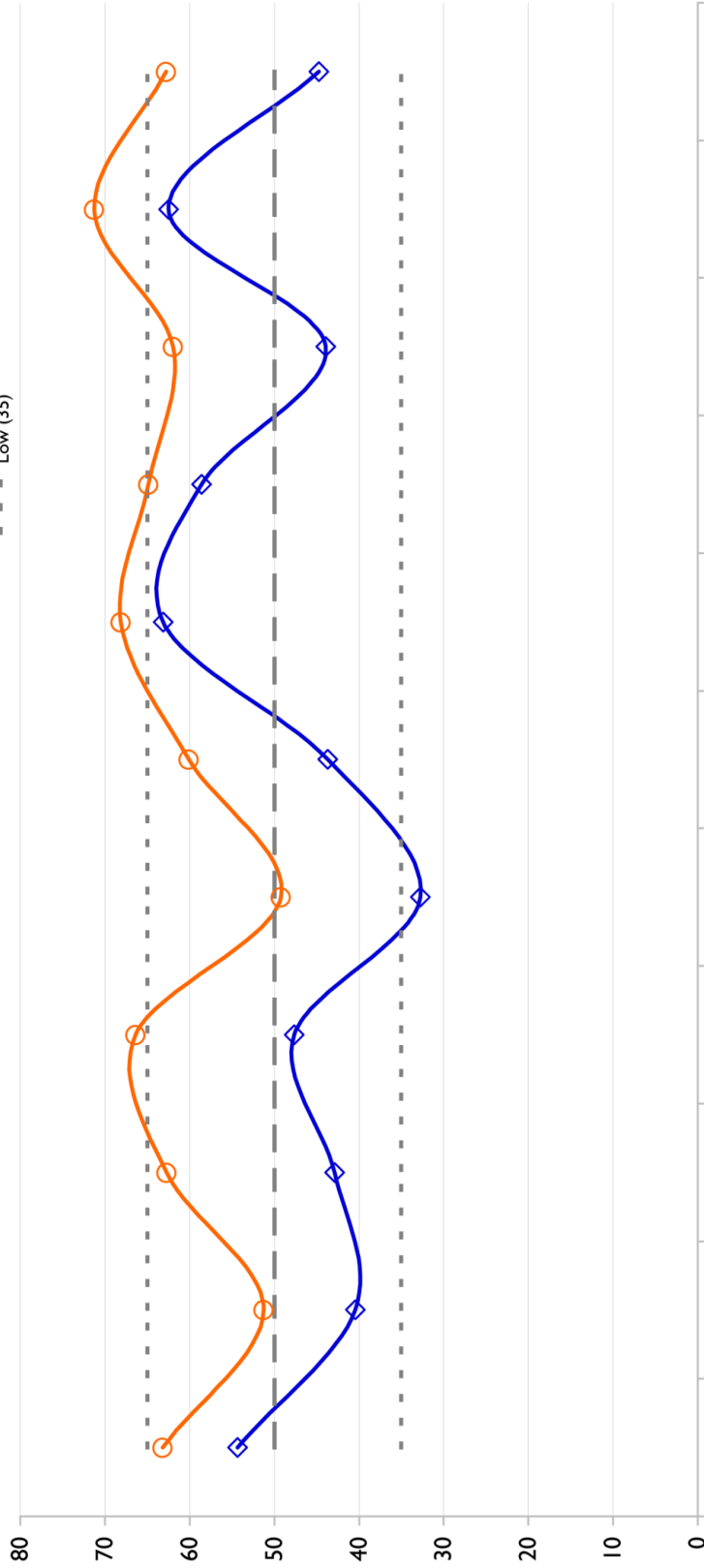
○ SDA Texas Conference - Church Plants
◇ SDA Texas Conference - Established Churches
 - - - High (65)
 - - - Average (50)
 - - - Low (35)





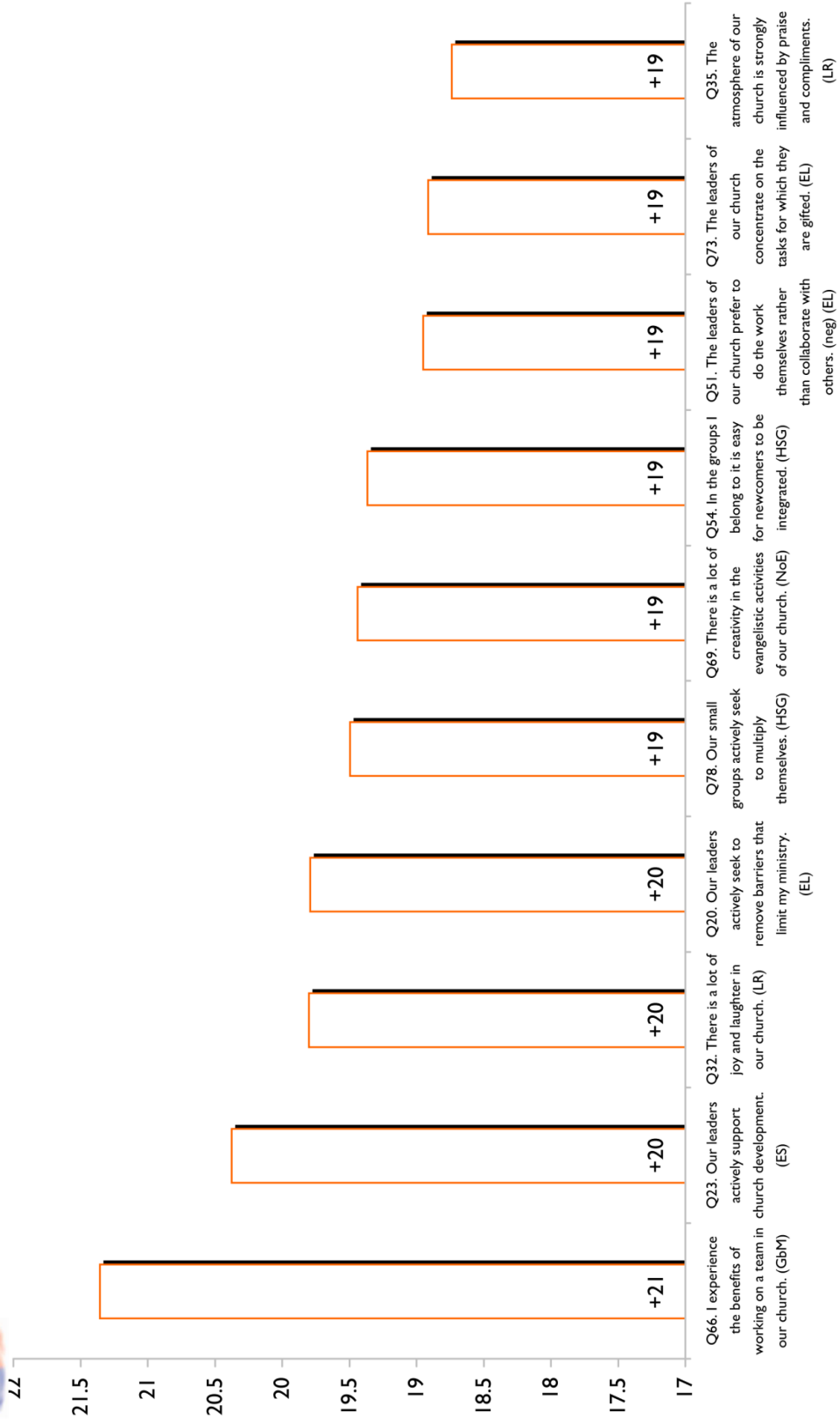
Loving Relationships

- SDA Texas Conference - Church Plants
- ◇ SDA Texas Conference - Established Churches
- - - High (65)
- - - Average (50)
- - - Low (35)



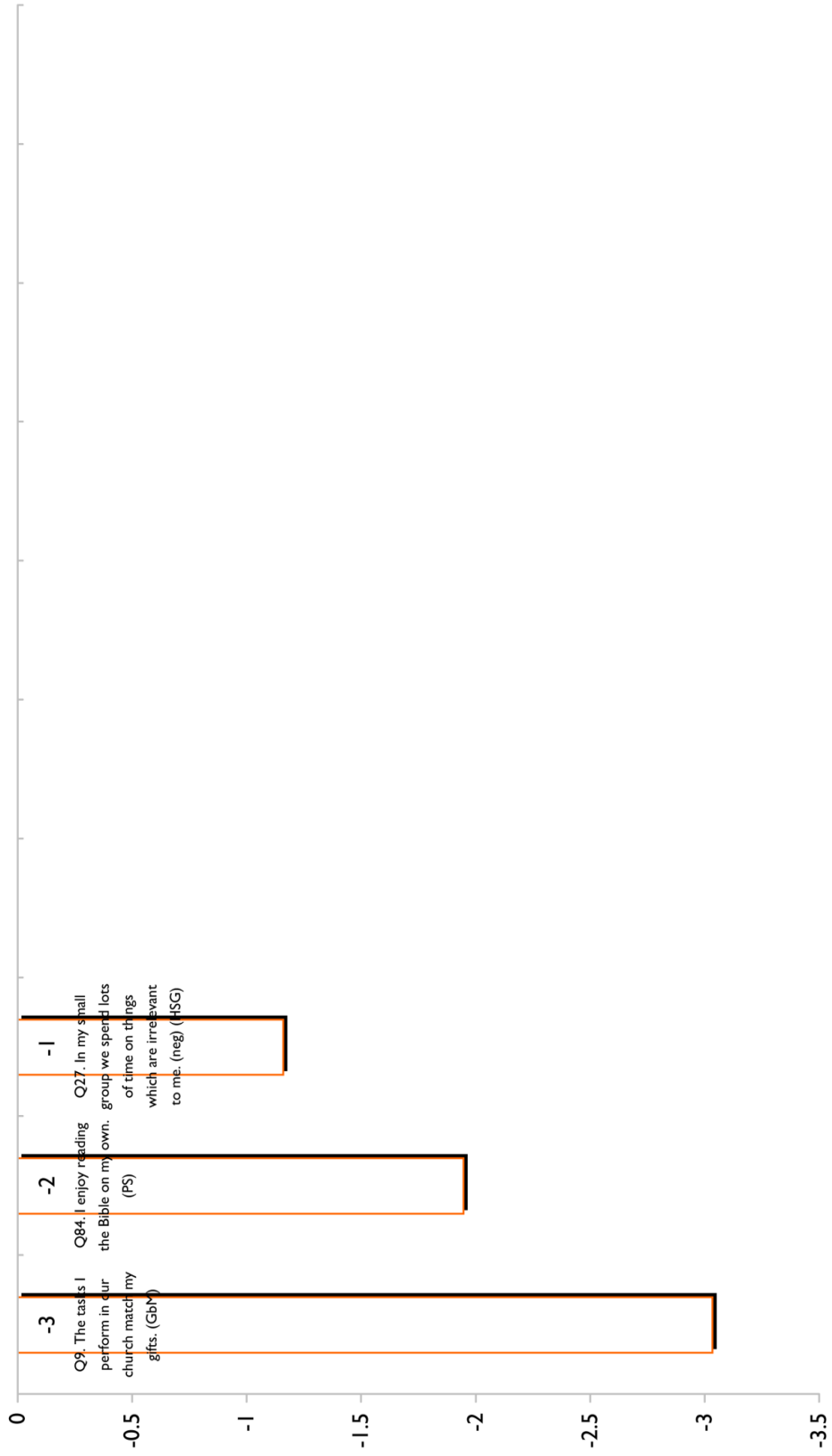


SDA Texas Conference - Church Plants is more developed than the other congregation in...





SDA Texas Conference - Church Plants is less developed than the other congregation in...



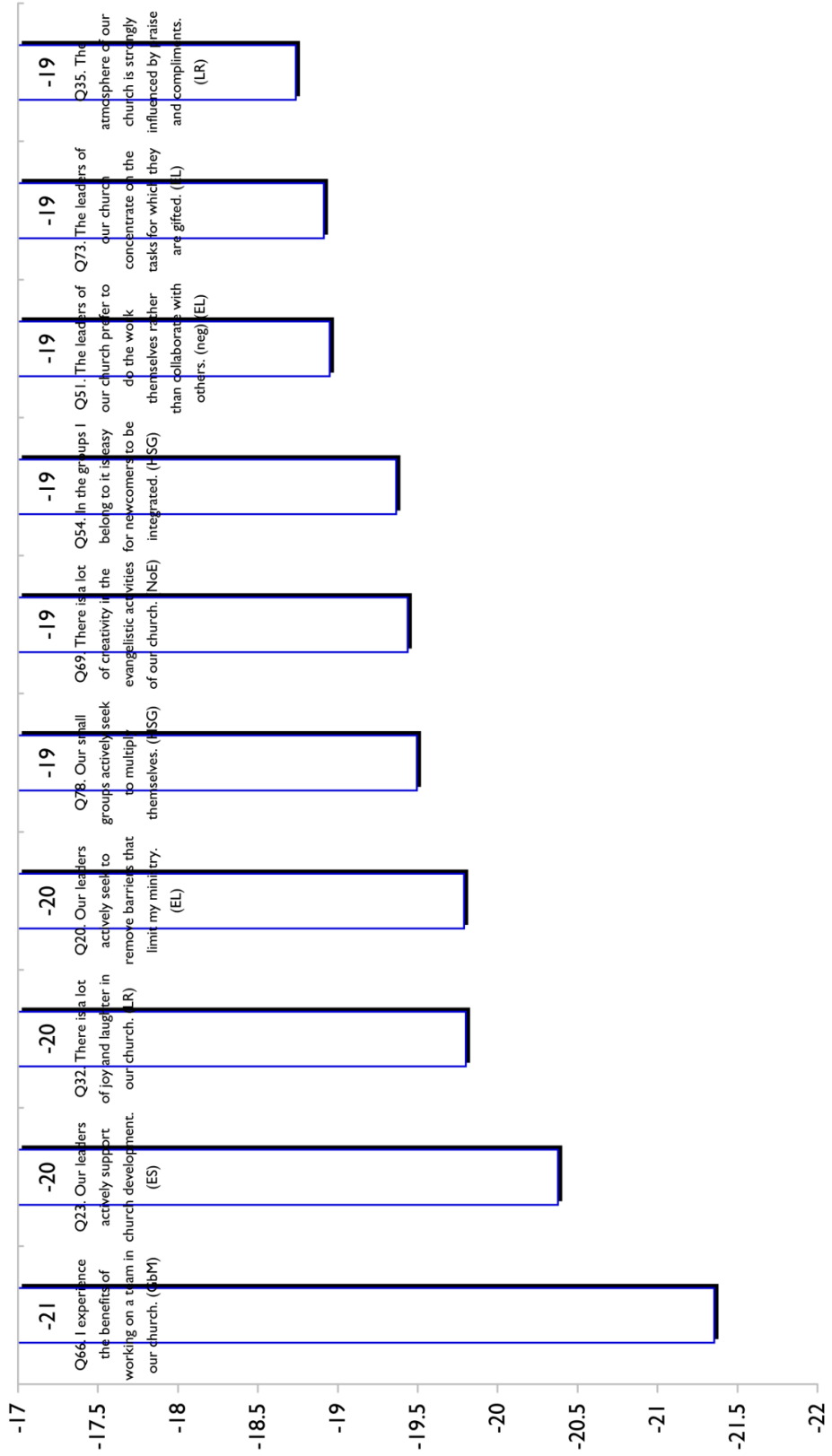


SDA Texas Conference - Established Churches is more developed than the other congregation in...





SDA Texas Conference - Established Churches is less developed than the other congregation in...



APPENDIX M

CHURCH PLANT COACHING CERTIFICATION

Church Plant Coaching Certification

Time Required: 60 hours. Certification is bestowed by a local conference, unless there is union or division endorsement prior to training commencing. NADEI provides the certification within the North American Division.

1. Classroom training: 15 hours.

Instructor: Tom L. Evans and team

Topics include: Biblical Foundation for Coaching, Empowering Leadership, Deeply Investing, Coaching Skills, Resourcing Church Planters, Evaluation Tools, Support Systems, and Coaching for Growth. Case studies and peer interaction with coaching practice will be included in the curriculum.

2. Reading: 12 hours.

Creswell, Jane. *Christ-Centered Coaching*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2006. Available at NADEI.org or by calling Andrea at 269-471-8303.

Three-page written report reflecting on the content of Creswell's book and personal application to current ministry context. Report to be submitted on first day of training.

3. Perception Assessment Survey of coach, planter and church plant: 1 hour

Survey given to coach on first day of class. Survey given to church planter at the beginning of the first coaching session. Survey given to three key leaders and returned to the coach at the second coaching session.

Same survey filled out by coach, church planter, and three key leaders at the conclusion of the six-month program before certification.

Please scan surveys and e-mail to NADEI: clarkc@andrews.edu.

4. Monthly in-person interaction with the church planter: 12 hours.

Six monthly coaching sessions with the church planter and brief e-mail report to conference church planting director (Two hours allocated for each coaching session/reporting). E-mail report to conference church planting director includes:

- i. Something that has worked well for the church planter in the last month
- ii. A challenge faced by the church planter in the last month
- iii. One action step identified by the church planter
- iv. Result of implementing the action step between coaching appointments

5. Monthly interaction with church plant group: 18 hours.

Six monthly interactions with the church plant group (Three hours allocated for each interaction on average). Note that category one and two events will take less time than category three events. Each event should be processed with the church planter at the monthly coaching sessions. **Select 2 options from each category:**

Category 1: Attend (select two)

1. Church Social
2. Fellowship Meal
3. Business Meeting
4. Pathfinder Outing
5. Youth Vespers
6. Worship Service (not to preach, this is for observation)

Note: The events attended need to be processed with the church planter in your coaching session.

Category 2: Evaluate (select two)

1. Administer the NCD survey (if this option is selected, #2 on this list is required). Be sure the church also orders "Profile Plus."
2. Process the results of the NCD survey and Profile Plus with the congregation (see category 3, #1).
3. Implement an ongoing sermon evaluation plan.
4. Ask the planter and board to fill out the "Lay-Pastor Review" available at www.nadei.org. Compile and discuss results in your coaching session and with the church board.
5. Invite a "mystery" guest to attend the plant and provide an evaluation instrument for them to give feedback.
6. Conduct a post-it note feedback session (affinity exercise) with the entire church plant.
7. Demographic study with evaluation of ministries and their relevance to needs within the community (see category 3, #6).
8. Conduct and share the results of the Discipleship Survey, available at www.nadei.org.
9. Church planter completes the IDAK Talent Discovery Guide at www.idakgroup.com (cost is \$27). Discuss in your coaching session.

Category 3: Train (select two)

1. Training in area of NCD minimum factor or intervention focused on Profile Plus low questions if average church score is below 35.
2. Lay preaching seminar
3. Conduct an elder’s retreat
4. Stewardship seminar
5. Spiritual gifts inventory and guidance for implementation
6. Initiation of new ministry based on demographic study (see category 2, #6)
7. Conflict resolution seminar
8. Evangelism preparation

Note: Preaching in the church plant should not exceed 1x per quarter. More often can tip the congregation toward expectations regarding getting the “own pastor.” Your once a quarter preaching appointment with the church plant could be utilized as a training weekend.

6. Debrief and Certificate Presentation: 2 hours.

Phone, Skype, or in-person debrief (determined by conference church planter director). All perception assessment surveys must be turned in. Public presentation of certification certificate. Certificate to be signed by local conference president, church planting director, and coaching trainer.

Public testimony to inspire other pastors to become certified may be requested.

Church Planter Assigned: _____

Church Plant Assigned: _____

Church Planting Director Pastor/Coach Church Planter

Note: Coaches may be encouraged to continue an ongoing relationship with the church planter and plant as outlined above. These relationships should be clarified during the debrief.

REFERENCE LIST

- Adams, M. (2009). Simple church. Retrieved from www.simplechurchathome.com
- Aiken, J. (2012). Adventist Southeast Asia Projects. Retrieved from <http://asadministries.org/about/about-founder/>
- Allen, R. (1962). *Missionary methods: St. Paul's or ours?* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Anna Nicole Smith. (2013, January 2). In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved from www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Nicole_Smith
- Austin Chamber of Commerce. (2012). *Economic Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.austinchamber.com/do-business/data-research/area-profile/population.php>
- Baker, B. C. (2009, June). Trends in naturalization rates: 2008 update. *Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois_natztrends_fs_2008.pdf
- Barrett, C. K. (1998). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark.
- Blackaby, H. T., & King, C. V. (1994). *Experiencing God*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.
- Blessed Economist. (2010, March 28). Problems in Jerusalem (1) apostles at the centre. [Web log message]. Retrieved from <http://getrad2.blogspot.com/2010/03/problems-in-jerusalem-1-apostles-at.html>
- Bock, D. L. (2007). *Acts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Bosch, D. (1991). *Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Bradley, J., & Carty, J. (1991). *Unlocking your sixth suitcase*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress.
- Bruce, F. F. (1988). *The book of the Acts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

- Burrill, R. (1993). *Revolution in the church*. Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center.
- Burrill, R. (1996). *Radical disciples for revolutionary churches*. Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center.
- Burrill, R. (1997). *The revolutionized church for the 21st century*. Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center.
- Burrill, R. (1999). *Rekindling a lost passion: Recreating a church planting movement*. Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center.
- Burrill, R. (2007). *Reaping the harvest*. Fallbrook, CA: Hart Books.
- Claerbaut, D. (1984). *Urban ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Clouzet, R. E. M. (2011). *Adventism's greatest need*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press.
- Cole, N. (2005). *Organic church*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Cole, N. (2012). *CMAResources.org*. Retrieved from <http://www.cmresources.org/about>
- Comiskey, J. (2009). *Planting churches that reproduce: Starting a network of simple churches*. Moreno Valley, CA: CCS.
- Conn, H. (Ed.). (1997). *Planting and growing urban churches*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Creswell, J. (2006). *Christ-centered coaching*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice.
- Daniels, A. G. (1912, March). Address at *Ministerial Institute*. Los Angeles, CA.
- Driscoll, M. (2012). *Acts 29 Network*. Retrieved from www.acts29network.org/about
- Faust, J. (2003, August 21). *Strategic planning: A very short workshop for fundraising professionals*. Retrieved from <http://ualr.edu/jkfaust/afpnotes.htm>
- Ferguson, D., & Ferguson, J. (2010). *Exponential*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Ferguson, D., & Ferguson, J. (2012). About New Thing. *The NewThing Network*. Podcast retrieved from <http://www.newthing.org>
- Folkenberg, R. Jr. (2002). *Health for the harvest*. Berrien Springs, MI: North American Division Evangelism Institute.
- Fox, M. J. (2008). *Planting a family-integrated church*. Retrieved from xulonpress.com

- Gaertner, D. (1995). *Acts*. Joplin, MO: College Press.
- Garrison, D. V. (2004). *Church planting movements*. Richmond, VA: International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.
- George, C. (1993). *How to break growth barriers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. (2010). Southwest Region Conference: Congregations. *Seventh-day Adventist On-line Yearbook*. Retrieved from [http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary .asp?FieldInstID=2025772](http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=2025772)
- General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. (2012a). Southwest Region Conference: Congregations. *Seventh-day Adventist On-line Yearbook*. Retrieved from [http://www.adventistyearbook.org/default.aspx?page=ViewAdmFieldSubEntities &AdmFieldID=SWRC&EntityType=C&ShowContained=0&OffSrc=-1](http://www.adventistyearbook.org/default.aspx?page=ViewAdmFieldSubEntities&AdmFieldID=SWRC&EntityType=C&ShowContained=0&OffSrc=-1)
- General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. (2012b). World Church Statistics. Retrieved from http://adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldInstID=2028317
- General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. (2012c). North American Division Statistics. http://www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=D_NAD#AnnualStats
- General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. (2012d). Adventist World Division Statistics. <http://www.adventiststatistics.org/>
- Gladden, R. (2012a). Frequently asked questions. *Mission Catalyst Network*. Retrieved from <http://www.missioncatalyst.org/article/23/our-vision/frequently-asked-questions>
- Gladden, R. (2012b). Network churches in the United States. *Mission Catalyst Network*. Retrieved from <http://www.missioncatalyst.org/article/225/our-churches/network-churches-in-the-united-states>
- Gladden, R. (2012c). Network churches in Canada. *Mission Catalyst Network*. Retrieved from <http://www.missioncatalyst.org/article/224/our-churches/network-churches-in-canada>
- Gray, S. (2007). *Planting fast-growing churches*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart.
- Gray, S., Smith, B., & Short, T. (2009). *Full disclosure: Exposing church planting blind spots*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart.

- Harkavy, D. (2007). *Becoming a coaching leader*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Harrison, R., Cheyney, T., & Overstreet, D. (2008). *Spin-off churches*. Nashville, TN: B & H.
- Hengel, M. (1980). *Acts and the history of earliest Christianity*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press.
- Herrington, J., Bonem, M., & Furr, J. H. (2002). *Leading congregational change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Boss.
- Herrington, J., Creech, R. R., & Taylor, T. (2003). *A leader's journey: Accepting the call to personal and congregational transformation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Hesselgrave, D. J. (2000). *Planting churches cross-culturally*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Horizon. (2012). In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/horizon>
- Hunter, G. (1992). *How to reach secular people*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Johnston, T., & Perkinson, M. C. (2007). *The kingdom quest*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart.
- Jones, T. (2004). *Church planting from the ground up*. Joplin, MO: College Press.
- Jorge. (2010, June 5). Top 5,000 U.S. cities by population. [Web EZlocal blog]. Retrieved from <http://ezlocal.com/blog/post/Top-5000-US-Cities-by-Population.aspx>
- Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Kyklos. (2012, March 27). In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyklos>
- Lenski, R. C. H. (1934). *The interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.
- Logan, R. E. (1989). *Beyond church growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell.
- Logan, R. E. (2006). *Be fruitful and multiply*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart.
- Logan, R. E., & Carlton, S. (2003). *Coaching 101*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart.

- Long, J. (1997). *Generation hope: A strategy for reaching the postmodern generation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- MacArthur, J. (1987). *The MacArthur New Testament commentary: Matthew 8-15*. Chicago, IL: Moody.
- MacDonald, G. J. (2011, March 17). Adventists' back-to-basics faith is fastest growing U.S. church. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2011-03-18-Adventists_17_ST_N.htm
- Malphurs, A. (1998). *Planting growing churches for the 21st century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Malphurs, A. (2011). *The nuts and bolts of church planting*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Mannoia, K. (2005). *Church planting, the next generation: Introducing the century 21 church planting system*. Indianapolis, IN: Light and Life Press.
- Maxwell, J. (2000). *The 21 most powerful minutes in a leader's day*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Maxwell, J. (2001). *The 17 indisputable laws of teamwork*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- McIntosh, G. L. (1999). *One size doesn't fit all: Bringing out the best in any size church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell.
- McNeal, R. (2003). *The present future: Six tough questions for the church*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mittelberg, M. (2007). *Becoming a contagious church* (Rev. ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Moore, R. (2002). *Starting a new church*. Ventura, CA: Regal.
- Moore, R. (2009). *How to multiply your church*. Ventura, CA: Regal.
- Moore, R. (2012). *Hope Chapel*. Retrieved from <http://hopechapel.org/ws/abouthc/2012-02-27-22-40-01/ourbeliefs>
- Murray, S. (2004). *Church after Christendom*. Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media.
- Murray, S. (2010). *Planting churches in the 21st century*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald.

- Nebel, T. P. (2002). *Big dreams in small places: Church planting in smaller communities*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart.
- Nebel, T. P., & Rohrmayer, G. (2005). *Church planting landmines*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart.
- Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1976-80). *Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary* (Vols. 1-7). Washington, DC: Review and Herald.
- Oetting, W. (1963). *The church of the catacombs*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia.
- Ogden, G. (2003). *Unfinished business: Returning the ministry to the laity*. (Rev. ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Ott, C., & Wilson, G. (2011). *Global church planting: Biblical principles and best practices for multiplication*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Pangilinan, E., & Stanyer, F. (2012). Gospel Outreach. Retrieved from <http://goaim.org/we/>
- Patterson, G., & Scoggins, R. (1993). *Church multiplication guide: Helping churches reproduce locally and abroad*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.
- Payne, J. D. (2009). *Discovering church planting: An introduction to the whats, whys, and hows of global church planting*. Colorado Springs, CO: Authentic.
- Percept Group. (2012). [Graph illustration of Texas Conference territory]. Retrieved from <http://www.perceptgroup.com/>
- Porter, D. (2011). *Austin Overview*. Retrieved from http://www.ccimtexas.com/images/website243/austin_overview_by_dave_porter_912011.pdf
- Powell, I. (1987). *The amazing Acts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel.
- Roberts, B. (2008). *The multiplying church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Robinson, M. (2006). *Planting mission-shaped churches today*. Peabody, MA: Monarch Books.
- Ruhl, M. (2007, March 9). Micro to macro: The call for churches to plant churches. *Mission Movements Newsletter*. Irvine, CA: Center for U. S. Missions. Retrieved from www.centerforusmissions.org
- Rutz, J. H. (1992). *The open church: How to bring back the exciting life of the first century church*. Sargent, GA: SeedSowers.

- Scannell, C. (2012, July/August). Plant the church—better. *Outreach Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.outreachmagazine.com/features/4852-plant-the-church-better.html?p=4>
- Schwarz, C. A. (1998). *Natural church development*. Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart.
- Schwarz, C. A. (2005). *Color your world with natural church development*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources.
- Schwarz, C. A., & Schalk, C. (1998). *Implementation guide to natural church development*. Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart.
- Searcy, N., & Thomas, K. (2006). *Launch: Starting a new church from scratch*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.
- Simson, W. (1999). *Houses that change the world*. Emmelsbull, Germany: C & P Publishing.
- Smith, L. (n.d.). *The house church movement*. House Church Basics. Retrieved from http://www.housechurch.org/basics/lorin_smith.html
- Spencer, F. S. (1992). *The portrait of Philip in Acts: A study of roles and relations*. Sheffield, England: JSOT Press.
- Spencer, F. S. (2004). *Journeying through Acts: A literary-cultural reading*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Stetzer, E. (2003). *Church planting as an effective evangelistic strategy*. Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board.
- Stetzer, E. (2006). *Planting missional churches*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.
- Stetzer, E. (2009, Fall). Equipping church planters for success. *Enrichment Journal*. Retrieved from http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200904/200904_036_equipping.cfm
- Stetzer, E., & Bird, W. (2010). *Viral churches*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Stetzer, E. & Connor, P. (2007). *Research report: Church plant survivability and health study 2007*. Retrieved from <http://www.newchurches.com/mediafiles/churchplantsurvivabilityandhealthstudy2007report.pdf>
- Stevenson, P. (2004). *The ripple church: Multiply your ministry by parenting new churches*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan.

- Stoltzfus, T. (2005). *Leadership coaching: The disciplines, skills and heart of a christian coach*. North Charleston, SC: BookSurge.
- Surratt, G., Ligon, G., & Bird, W. (2009). *Multi-site road trip*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Sweet, L. (2000). *Post-modern pilgrims*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission. (2005). *Population Migration Growth Scenario 2000-2002* (Texas State Data Center at UT San Antonio). Retrieved from http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/research/dssi/PopStats/ProjectionsTX_GenderRace.html
- Towns, E. L., & Porter, D. (2003). *Churches that multiply: A Bible study on church planting*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill.
- United States Census Bureau. (2012, June 28). Texas dominates list of fastest-growing large cities since 2010 census, Census Bureau reports. *Newsroom* (Census Bureau Release No. CB12-117). Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb12-117.html>
- Vermeulen, D. (2008). *The strategic value of saturation church planting*. Retrieved from http://www.dawnministries.org/assets/files/pdf/other-resources/strategic_value_of_SCP.pdf
- Vine, C. (2012). Adventist Frontier Missions. Retrieved from <http://afmonline.org/about/index.php>
- Wagner, C. P. (1987). *Strategies for church growth*. Ventura, CA: Regal.
- Wagner, C. P. (1990). *Planting churches for a greater harvest*. Ventura, CA: Regal.
- Warren, R. (1995). *The purpose driven church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Werning, W. J. (2003). *The seed-planting church*. St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart.
- White, E. G. (1904). *Testimonies for the church* (Vol. 8). Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1905). *The Acts of the apostles*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1909). *Testimonies for the church* (Vol. 9). Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1932). *Medical ministry*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.

- White, E. G. (1946). *Evangelism*. Washington, DC: Review & Herald.
- White, E. G. (1981-1993). *Manuscript releases: From the files of the letters and manuscripts* (Vol. 6). Washington, DC: E. G. White Estate.
- White, J. (1862, April 15). "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." *Review and Herald*, 19(20), 156-157.
- White, J., & White, E. G. (1868, January 14). An appeal to the friends of truth. *Review and Herald*, 31(5), 72.
- Whitesel, B. (2004). *Growth by accident, death by planning: How not to kill a growing congregation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Whitney, D. S. (1997). *Spiritual disciplines for the christian life*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
- Whitworth, L., Kimsey-House, H., & Sandahl, P. (1998). *Co-active coaching*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.
- Willimon, W. H. (1988). *Acts*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press.
- Yen, H. (2012, February 16). Interracial marriage in US hits new high: 1 in 12. *Life on NBC News.com*. Retrieved from http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46409832/ns/us_news-life/t/interracial-marriage-us-hits-new-high
- Zarazua, J. (2011, February 11). More-illegal-immigrants-finding-way-to-Texas. *San Antonio Express News*. Retrieved from http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/More-illegal-immigrants-finding-way-to-Texas-990654.php

VITA

Name: Tommy L. Evans

Background: I was born on July 9, 1968 in Fort Worth, Texas. I am a fifth generation Seventh-day Adventist on my mother's side. A "vision" led my family into the Adventist church. My grandparents were church planters among the Native American Indians in Mission, Oregon. My 6th grade teacher predicted that I would be a pastor someday. My wife has two brothers who are also pastors.

Family: I am married to Silmara Evans (originally from Brazil). God has blessed me with five children: three girls and two boys. We also raise golden retrievers.

Education:

1983-1987 High School Diploma from Walla Walla Valley Academy, Walla Walla, WA.
1987-1988 Student at Newbold College, Bracknell, England
1988-1990 Walla Walla College
BA in Theology
BA in Speech Communications
1992-1995 MDiv, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University

Ordination:

1998 Ordained by the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Experience:

2011- Associate Director at the North American Division Evangelism Institute
2001-2010 Departmental Director, Church Planting and Stewardship, Texas Conference
1998-2001 Senior Pastor, Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church, Texas Conference
1995-1998 Associate Pastor, Wenatchee Seventh-day Adventist Church, Upper Columbia Conference
1993-1994 Interim Youth Director, South New South Wales Conference, Australia
1990-1992 Intern Pastor, Spokane Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church, Upper Columbia Conference