ABSTRACT

BEST PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING CHURCHES AND THEIR

LEADERSHIP OF NEW CHURCH STARTS

by

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Many United States churches are actively involved with new church starts as a practical solution to dwindling membership within existing churches. Asbury Theological Seminary added 21st Century Church Planting to its curriculum to help facilitate and equip leaders to accomplish dynamic church planting within those churches. Traditional, large denominational churches are no exception to this trend with many local churches involved in new church planting. The Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church developed "New Church Start" into its conference structure by funding and staffing the Mission Vitality Center (MVC). The MVC funds, develops, and oversees New Church Starts and other developmental growth programs.

With seminaries teaching and conferences maneuvering, funding, recruiting, and supporting 21st century church planters, there is a need to discover best practices toward New Church Starts within supporting churches.

Senior Pastors can get overwhelmed with ideas and change. They are not against growth from new church starts. Yet it is not clear what a normal response from supporting church leadership should look like for church planters as they present new ideas. It is also not clear whether the attitude of the supporting church and its leadership should be considered when selecting a church to support new church starts.

This work explores supporting-churches' attitudes towards new plants and best practices of supporting churches and their leadership for new church starts in San Antonio, Texas. This research surveyed pastors and church leaders in Texas and found that supporting churches should focus on compatibility, their commitment to the end goal, and not micromanage when supporting new church plants.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING CHURCHES AND THEIR

LEADERSHIP OF NEW CHURCH STARTS

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by

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CHAPTER 1

NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter will establish the foundation for researching best practices of supporting churches and their leadership teams regarding new church starts in San Antonio, Texas. It begins with the researcher's personal connection to this research and includes a rationale for the project. In addition, research questions and process are established as are methods for gathering and analyzing post research data.

Personal Introduction

"Why can't we just focus on more worship," was the response I received from the Senior Pastor of the supporting Church that I was appointed to work through for the Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. "Your proposal has left me worn out and frustrated," said the Pastor. "I'm really just wondering if this nonsense is ever going to end, it feels like a bait and switch to me," he concluded. I realized that though I had been appointed to plant this new church by the Bishops Cabinet and was funded for a four-year period to achieve that reality, I was encountering a type of passive-aggressive, resistant, attitude that would forbid me from making a formal presentation to the supporting church leadership boards that I needed for development approval on the property that we already owned. I was being forced to make a decision to spend unbudgeted funds on obtaining and developing leased facilities so that we could charter and then develop the already-owned property or begin a long-term fight that would not go well for me or the new plant at the cabinet level. I was frustrated that one person had the power to stop progress on the new church plant. We already had the land donated, had

gained state approval to develop the access right of way, found a building to be donated

by a local contractor, identified an architect and civil engineer, had the land topographed

and surveyed for the groundbreaking, established and had approved the mandated storm

drainage for the state, had created forward momentum, and had contagious excitement

within the community with good press. Simply put, we had gained traction, and we were

rolling forward.

       I complained to my District Superintendent who decided that maybe after some

time and initial development of leased property, I could eventually readdress the

supporting church leadership at a better time.

       I complained louder to the Director of New Church Development and was told

that the United Methodist Discipline was clear on chartering before development and that

I should understand that this was the way that other plants had been done in the past. It

was their rule, and it would continue to be enforced if I planned to continue the new

plant.

       This outcome left me frustrated and confused. I had to consider basic questions:

Why had we spent the enormous amount of time and money to formally train a new

church planter through a dynamic Seminary in post-graduate education? Why had we

spent enormous time and energy raising the necessary operating budget to achieve the

goal of a successful new church plant, if we were never going to allow the new church

plant to utilize those dynamics? This barrier caused me to realize that research needed to

be done on supporting churches and their team as to their ability to comprehend new

visions and their influence on the outcome of new church starts. This work explores best

practices for supporting churches and their leadership for new church plants in San

Antonio, Texas.

Statement of the Problem

If a large denomination has made church planting a priority by funding a growth

program, training the church planter, and appointing that planter and a supporting church

to develop the assigned area, it should then be a unified effort to gain the market and

numbers necessary to start the church plant when God opens doors and opportunities

develop. It is not possible to maintain traction and excitement if the opportunity is

discouraged by another entity that has not experienced traction or excitement in any of its

recent history.

It is possible for a supporting church to lose interest in the New Church Start as

time moves forward. Attitudes can change towards supporting the new church planting.

The supporting church should consider best practices before appointing and joining a new

church plant.

New church planting is a large and precarious undertaking that requires a strong,

dynamic, diversified team that will work together. Gaining traction, acceptance, and

excitement for a new church start is difficult and cannot accurately be decided by a pre-

determined time, an assembly belt style of movement, or by a certain dollar amount

invested. It begins when that new church plant reaches its audience, and that audience

responds with excitement about the growth and wants to become part of it. Traction is

gained when that new audience brings in more people and adds to the dynamic team.

Traction will magnify growth exponentially. If growth is stalled, excitement wains and

traction is lost. Supporting churches need best practices to keep this from happening.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study is to discover best practices for the supporting church and its leadership regarding new church planting in San Antonio, Texas.

Research Questions

Research Question #1

What practices of supporting churches and their leadership contribute to the success of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas?

Research Question #2

What obstacles do supporting churches and their leadership present to new church starts that hinder their success in San Antonio, Texas?

Research Question #3

What additional practices should have been included to ensure a successful new church plant in San Antonio, Texas?

Rationale for the Project

Christians are instructed to create disciples by Jesus Christ (Matt 28:16-20). If the current church is declining, discipleship making is declining also. If new church starts are an answer to existing church decline and will make disciples for Christ, then new church starts should be supported and helped by all Christians. Supporting churches should not hinder new church planting.

Jesus told his apostles to go and make disciples of all the world, not just the ones who might come into an existing church (Matt. 28:19-20, Mk. 16:15, Luke 24:47). Jesus told his apostles that once they received power from the Holy Spirit, they will witness to Him throughout the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Jesus sent his disciples into the world to

do God's will just as God had sent Jesus (John 17:18). Christians are meant to grow

Kingdom on earth. Church plants are one way to do that and should be supported in their

efforts.

After his encounter with Christ (Acts 9:1-6), the apostle Paul became tasked with

developing new churches in areas that had not been developed by the model of temple

worship. Paul responded to the power of the Holy Spirit and utilized the model of

preaching to responsive people (Matt 10:11-16). Paul recruited Lydia and her house (Acts

16:12-15) to help gain traction for that growth. Paul continued this technique in Roman

controlled areas utilizing crossroad locations and converts from those cities to help

magnify traction for the growing church (Acts 13). Paul's model of growth continued

further with smaller home churches with the jailor and his house (Acts 16:32-34), Crispus

and Stephanas (Acts 18:8), and other houses that he preached in (Luke 5:29-32; 19:1-10).

Paul's model of growth clearly shows the need for new church planting and the dynamic

ability that traction has on that growth.

Governments, people, and circumstances could not stop the traction Paul began

with his model of new church planting. The book of Acts describes how many tried to

stop Paul and new church planting.

Paul is described as the obstacle. Paul, then Sual, is doing harm to the Christian

church as he petitions for more authority to hunt for Christians to be persecuted (Acts

9:2). After the stoning of Stephen, Paul encounters Christ, has a conversion experience on

the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-9) and begins Christian preaching in the synagogues

(Acts 9:19-20).

Governments and leadership are also described as obstacles. In Arabia, Paul's Christian preaching makes him a wanted man by the King, he narrowly escapes through a window and is lowed over the wall in a basket (Acts 9:25) only to encounter more Jewish hostility as they want to slay him (Acts 9:29). King Herod caused much trouble for the expanding Christian Church by beheading James, the brother of John and had Peter arrested (Acts 12:1-4). Paul and Barnabas are challenged by a Jewish Leader, Bar Jesus, while talking with the Governor of Cyprus (Acts 12:6-7) and are later stoned near to death in Lystra (Acts 14:15-20). Paul became at odds with the Jewish Leadership of Antioch over circumcision for salvation (Acts 15-7-19). The Philippian Government Leadership ordered Paul beaten and imprisoned for his removal of demons from a local slave girl (Acts 16:17-24). Paul was rioted against and ordered out of Thessalonica as his host was fined for housing him (Acts 17:5-9). In Athens the intellectual elites rejected Paul's Christian presentation and had him removed from town (Acts 17:18-32). After being dragged out of the Synagogue in Jerusalem and nearly killed, Paul was arrested, ordered to a beating, and detained by a Roman Commander (Acts 22:31-34). After winning the argument against beating a Roman citizen, Paul was ordered to stand trial before the High Council (Acts 23:1-11). After learning of a plot to kill Paul, the Commander sent Paul to Felix the Governor (Acts 23:23). Paul is accused by Ananias, the High Priest, and other leaders and is kept imprisoned for years without a conviction (Ch 24). After learning of another plot to kill him, Paul petitions the Governor to let him be tried by the Roman Emperor and is later heard by King Ananias and found not guilty, but because of his request to be tried by the emperor he is not set free (Acts 26:30-32). Paul was moved to Rome and remained under house arrest for years (Acts 28:16-30).

People are other obstacles. Paul and Barnabas were separated from future planting work together after an argument over John Mark (Acts 11:26). Jews came from Judea to teach circumcision salvation against Paul's teaching of Christ' salvation in Antioch causing trouble for future church planting (Acts 15:1-2). Jewish troublemakers were sent to Thessalonica to start a riot and make things difficult for church planting (Acts 17:5-7). A silver smith coerced people to create a riot in Ephesus over their support of having silver models of other Gods (Acts 19:21-34). Forty Jewish people planned for Paul's execution if sent to Jerusalem for trial (Acts 21:27-31).

From the context of failing to stop traction, God developed new church planting models through Paul and others that cannot be stopped. Just as many tried to stop the spread of Christianity through church planting then, many will continue to stand in the way of church planting now. If nothing could then stop the traction Paul and others had created, nothing will stop current and future progress either, further validating that new church planting is of God. New church planting is a means for dynamic and effective Kingdom growth and a means of support for evangelism (Pete Wagner 1990:11). New church planting is much more than the evangelism of bringing in new converts to the local church. New church planting is about bringing the Kingdom of God to places not being reached by traditional church, much like Paul's model. Paul took the church to the people, rather than bring people to the local church.

New church planting is designed and developed by God to grow Kingdom on earth. Paul and team were able to effectively grow church through the model of bringing church to places outside the reach of the traditional church. Man, governments, entities, and enemies were not able to stop the traction of that growth. Therefore, it is not of God

for a supporting church to stop Kingdom growth either. Best practices for supporting

churches and its leadership in San Antonio, Texas must be found.

Definition of Key Terms

Rio Texas Conference is the name for a geographically specific group of

approximately 600 active United Methodist Churches located in South Texas as of this

research date. This term is used to describe one of the conferences within the United

Methodist Church located within America.

San Antonio, Texas area is a geographic term of approximately 412 square miles

(Britannica.com) with 825 Christian churches within its defined area (Church

Angel.com).

Best practices are defined by what things supporting churches and their leadership

could do, or have done, to be useful in supporting a good outcome for new church starts.

Sustainability is the measure of whether a church can be self-supporting

financially to afford a pastor full-time and maintain its structures, ministries, and staff. If

a church can be self-governing with all leadership positions filled from within the church

itself, it will have the ability to grow and multiply.

Delimitations

To find best practices for supporting churches and their leadership teams of new

church plants in San Antonio, Texas, only Christian churches located in the geographic

area of San Antonio, Texas that are listed by Google were petitioned with an emailed

request to participate in this study. Consideration was given to those that responded and

had planted churches; non-planting Christian churches in the San Antonio, Texas area

were also included. Churches that were non-Christian were not petitioned or consulted.

Review of Relevant Literature

This project consulted a large variety of literature to research best practices for a supporting church of new church plants. It was difficult to find specific information written for the sole-benefit of the supporting church. However, it was possible to find what others had to say about new church planting, problems, obstacles, and things to avoid, primarily from a church planters' perspective. There was a large amount of work consulted from the biblical narrative as well as consultation with writings from various theologians to make the case for the necessity of supporting a new church plant and barriers that developed from within that support. Various church planters were consulted as were many studies and reports from church planting organizations and others to better understand the current state of the American Christian Church.

In the support context for church planting and earlier Kingdom growth before the early Christian Church of Jerusalem began, the bible and early authors of Christian history were the heavy contributors. Much of the book of Acts was consulted as were Chapters 13-14 from the book of Numbers. Genesis was also consulted to show the theological differences that developed within the early Christian church, and some of Paul's letters and other scriptures were consulted to show the obstacles that were faced while planting new churches. This was to help gain an understanding of the support needed and how that support benefited church expansion.

Many authors, web pages, studies, and reports were consulted to help gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the human attitudes that were modeled from within the biblical narrative in relation to church expansion and Kingdom growth. Other authors and studies were consulted to show how psychology affected attitude and how

attitude affected church planting and earlier Kingdom growth. This helped this writer understand and present how the right attitude should be considered and possibly better developed for supporting churches of new church plants. Web sites were consulted for psychology and other terminology to help describe problems that human attitudes might contribute for a church planting and supporting church context.

The most notable person explored was the Apostle Paul because of his church planting biblical narrative and his ability to overcome countless barriers. John Wesley was also chosen because of his experience in planting new churches and expanding Kingdom, as he overcame obstacles with his evangelical focus. Ed Stetzer was consulted as an author, a church planter, and as a church planting organization to gain a twenty-first century perspective of supporting churches for new church plants. Alan Hirsch was consulted several times for his experience in church planting issues. Strong's concordance and Brown Driver Briggs' Lexicon helped show that human attitude will influence human actions and how that connects to Old Testament Kingdom growth.

Research Methodology

Type of Research

The type of research utilized was pre-intervention, as the purpose of this project was discovery. A mixed methods approach was used to gain a deeper understanding than just emailed surveys. This offered some solutions to the obstacles that supporting churches of new church plants can utilize.

Participants

The participants for this project are Christian church pastors and church leaders that responded to the emailed invite to participate, returned an informed consent form, are

or were recently in the San Antonio, Texas area, and were listed on Google as being associated with Christian Churches. One church leader had just moved from the San Antoinio, Texas area and had not begun his new ministry. Another had just retired from a church in San Antonio, Texas. Both participants answered the survey with experience based solely in San Antonio, Texas.

Instrumentation

Mixed-design

Quantitative:

The quantitative instrument for this project was an emailed ten question survey. It began generally to gauge attitude about supporting new church plants and moved into more detailed questions. Each participant was asked to list their most important best practice, their biggest obstacle, and offer something that should have been considered before supporting a new church plant in San Antonio, Texas.

Qualitative:

The qualitative instrument was a one-on-one video interview that followed the survey responses to gain a deeper understanding of the best practice offered in the survey and to discover two more best practices for supporting churches of new church plants.

Both instruments were research designed. The research was designed to move from general to more specific through the investigation of perceived best practices in church planting by the supporting churches. It then examined how those practices helped or hurt the church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

Data Collection

This research was pre-intervention. This project measured and described best practices for successful church planting in San Antonio, Texas from the perspective of a supporting church. It describes the best practices and begins to develop a strategic plan to address planting new churches in San Antonio, Texas. The project does not entail the development and engagement of a tool or measurement for post-intervention results.

This project is designed to gather quantitative research through an emailed survey that will help lead the qualitative interview questions to gain a deeper understanding of best practices and obstacles for the supporting church of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Surveys

An emailed survey was designed to discover best practices used within the supporting churches for new church plants with ten questions. The survey was divided into five sections to move from general to more detailed questions. Section 1 gauged the attitude for a new church planting to grow from the local church. Section 2 discovered the respondent's role and authority within the local church. Section 3 discovered their approval of some best practices for supporting churches of new church plants. Section 4 allowed them to define some obstacles for supporting churches of new church plants, and section 5 allowed them to define things that should have been considered before supporting a new church plant. The surveys were emailed to respondents from Christian Churches found in Google, in San Antonio Texas that responded to an emailed invitation to complete a two-minute survey and had returned the initial informed consent form on twenty-first century church planting.

Qualitative Interviews

A group of 10% percent of the respondents that completed the quantitative emailed survey were then invited to complete an online-video interview. One participant was chosen from each group of ten emailed surveys that responded. A fifteen-question interview was used, divided into four main sections. Section 1 defined the respondent's attitude towards supporting new church planting and clarified their position and authority within the local church. Section 2 further defined the best practice offered on the emailed survey and asked them to list two more. Section 3 further defined the obstacle offered on the emailed survey and asked them to list two more. Section 4 offered suggestions that should be considered for supporting churches of new church plants.

The results of the surveys were analyzed and compared to determine the best practices in San Antonio, Texas for supporting churches of new church plants. A list of three best practices was developed that reflects those findings. Transcripts from the interviews were examined, named, and organized in the same manner as the surveys to compare the results and to add any additional best practices that were not on the survey lists.

Generalizability

This project can transfer and is applicable to any supporting church of new church plants anywhere in the world. Support is a major consideration when planting new churches; utilizing existing churches for that support makes good sense. There is a need for best practices that supporting churches can consider before supporting a new church plant. Supporting churches do influence the new church plant and should be aware of the issues and have some suggestions to help maintain a right attitude during the entire

process of new church planting. This project will contribute to any supporting Christian

churches and their leadership teams that are supporting new church starts in their

geographic area. It will likely not be applicable to other religions, as it is written from a

Christian perspective and understanding.

This project followed the suggestions of the researcher's D.Min. coach, the

committee at Asbury Theological Seminary, and researcher Tim Sensing. The material,

research, methodology, and structure conform to the highest standards of the D.Min.

traditions.

The research and writing have also been to the highest level of D.-Min. traditions.

The need for best practices of supporting churches for new church plants is a practical

and immediate need for new church planting.

Project Overview

Chapter 1 addresses the reason for the project based on a real ministry application

of the current time. It is not written from a nineteenth or twentieth century perspective.

Real-context created real need. The project aimed to discover best practices for

supporting churches and their leadership teams for new church plants in San Antonio,

Texas.

Chapter 2 is a literature review of what others have to say about best practices for

supporting churches and their leadership team in San Antonio, Texas. There is not much

written exclusively for the supporting church, but much can be found on support and

barriers. This can be viewed as intended, or should be included, as best practices for

supporting churches of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas and obstacles that may

be avoided for supporting churches of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

Chapter 3 addresses the method that was used to survey churches and their leadership teams in San Antonio, Texas. A mixed-methods approach was used to gain a deeper understanding of best practices for supporting churches of new church plants and possible barriers to be avoided by supporting churches of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

Chapter 4 addresses how the information gathered from surveys and interviews was compiled and reviewed to provide a clear understanding for best practices for supporting churches and their leadership teams for new church plants in San Antonio, Texas, and possible barriers to avoid for supporting churches of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

Chapter 5 addresses the researcher's personal understanding of what the research and the project findings say as to best practices of supporting churches and their leadership teams in San Antonio, Texas. He also offers some suggestions about those best practices and offers some possible barriers and obstacles that can be avoided by the supporting church of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The goal of this project was to discover the best practices used and recommended for supporting churches of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas. Much has been written about new church plants by various authors, churches, and church planters, but there has been less written about the church that is supporting the new church plant.

Assigning a supporting church to a new church plant makes good sense and has been used in many denominations. Most familiar to this writer, the United Methodist model of supporting a new church plant is through an assigned, existing local church. The existing church already has trained staff in place, established finances, non-profit status, active committees, and has used that structure to weather storms of the past. It has an accomplished, proven model. This research project will help address whether the United Methodist model helps or hurts and how to determine if the appointment selection of the existing church was the best choice of support for the new church plant.

This chapter will investigate what is written about supporting churches and their best practices. While best practices of supporting churches are the thrust of this project, some attention must be spent on church planting itself, primarily in the context of what others have to say about supporting churches. Some models do not use a supporting church at all, while others may use committees or other means of support not involving an existing church. The United Methodist church planting organization, Path 1, does mention the danger of possible conflict between an existing church and a new church plant for the planter, but few criteria are listed for the supporting church.

The attitudes of the supporting church and its team members towards new church plants also need to be considered. Attitudes can change and will affect relationships, amount of support, and the success or failure of a new church plant. To say that new church planting is difficult and riddled with potential problems, conflicts, and turmoil, would be a massive understatement. This must be anticipated and planned for in whatever planting system the denominations use to plant new churches. Once the theological foundation was laid for new church plants within Acts, it has become necessary to explore best practices that work for the cultural times that new church plants are being born into and for this project, best practices for supporting churches of the new church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

Very few articles, and no complete books found by this writer, are written exclusively for the supporting church of new church plants. Barriers and best practices to new church planting from the context of church planters have been explored and are well documented by authors, writers, students, and accomplished new church planters. There are mentions of support in many church planting writings, but there is no focused work for the supporting church. What has not been thoroughly investigated are the best practices exclusively for the supporting church of new church plants. This chapter will conduct a survey of the literature identifying best practices for supporting churches of new church plants. That survey will conclude with a brief overview of major findings and some proposals for the project design.

Biblical Foundations

The purpose of this section is to discover best practices for supporting churches of new church plants from a biblical perspective. This discovery will lay the foundation for this project.

New Testament on Supporting New Church Plants

The entire book of Acts (Hayford) delineates the journey of church expansion through the means of new church planting. It begins with local expansion within Jerusalem (Ch 1-7), continues with expansion into Samaria and among the Gentiles (Ch 8-12), then moves further into expansion into Roman controlled areas and concludes with Rome (Ch 13-28). These readings demonstrate that new church planting is extreme and next to impossible to accomplish, especially from Paul's adventures.

After being told to wait in the upper room (Acts 1:4) and then receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13), new church expansion began in Jerusalem with about three thousand converts (Acts 2:40). Support for that expansion came from the early members selling all they had and combining the revenue to be shared by all (Acts 4:32-37), effectively supporting themselves and the new church expansion.

While they were in Antioch converting non-Jews through new church expansion, the issue of circumcision for conversion became challenged by those in Jerusalem that were supporting new church expansion into Antioch (Gal 2:2-4). Paul, Barnabas, and Titus travel back to Jerusalem to discuss the issue with the supporting leaders, whom Paul described as "Pillars" (Gal 2:9). It was agreed that Paul and Barnabus would continue to evangelize the Non-Jews and Peter would continue with the Jews. In an interesting twist, Paul felt compelled to raise money above the agreed one-time collection

for the poor (Gal 2:10) in support of the Jews that no longer supported him. Paul

continued to raise money from new church starts to support Jerusalem, effectively

changing those from giving support to those who would be receiving support (Rom

15:27).

Paul worked as a tent maker while in Corinth for over eighteen months (Acts

18:3) helping to support that expansion effort. Paul writes that he worked night and day,

calling it "labor and toil" within his trade to have the chance to evangelize his customers

(1 Thess 2:9; 1 Cor 4:12; 2 Cor 11:27). In a sense, Paul used his occupational setting as a

foundation to expand new church growth.

From financial support through logistical issues, to the question of authority to

expand, all areas of new church expansion are writ with barriers, conflict, and human

interference. The book of Acts could be read from the perspective of needing support, to

support created barriers. From the beginning of the first Christian church after the death

and resurrection of Jesus Christ with a total gathering of one hundred and twenty (Acts

1:15), the church began to move forward with expansion as instructed by Jesus Christ.

The Christian church in Jerusalem that began in the upper room expanded through new

church development. The members were instructed to expand the church, to evangelize

into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the whole world (Acts 1:8). This began the need

for support.

Needing Support. The Christian believers in Jerusalem fell into a tough time

after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The persecution of Christians was

growing. Paul had been one of the worst of the persecutors of the early Christians (Acts

26:11), and that time of persecution did not end with Paul's conversion; it continued and

grew stronger. Many Christians and Jewish converts had to flee Jerusalem (*History of the Church of Jerusalem*) to keep from being killed. The Jewish temple in Jerusalem played a large roll in everyday life in Jerusalem. It was more than a place of worship; it was a meeting place during the week where laborers could find work (*Temple of Jerusalem*). By not being able to go to the temple for fear of persecution and rejection, work became more difficult to find for the Christian. The persecuted Christians needed financial support. With the agreement that non-Jewish believers need not keep the Mosaic law, the break between the church and the synagogue magnified (McManners 24-25). The new Christian church in Jerusalem, apart from the synagogue, needed support. The ready acceptance of the Gentiles to Christianity created growth, but that growth created more need for support:

> The followers of Jesus first took their message to the synagogue communities of Jews in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. Many Jews did not believe that Jesus was the expected Messiah, but to the surprise of the apostles, Gentiles wanted to join the movement. This unexpected occurrence raised questions of inclusion: should these pagans become Jews first, entailing circumcision, dietary laws, and Sabbath observance? At a meeting in Jerusalem, The Apostolic Council, decided that pagans could join without becoming Jews. However, they had to observe some Jewish principles such as draining blood from meat, sexual morality, and the cessation of all idolatry. (*Early Christianity - World History Encyclopedia*)

As the tension continued to build within the expanding church from the Jerusalem Council decision (Acts 15), the Apostles and their teams found themselves in many

difficult situations including rejection, stoning, near death escapes, prison, persecution and ultimately death. They needed support.

The Christian understanding and apostles' preaching created new tensions within the Roman Government. The apostles taught that salvation and conversion was available to all. This was an incredible concept from the Greco-Roman belief, conversion to another religion ran counter to their culture:

> In Greco-Roman culture people claimed ethnic identity from ancestors; you were literally born into your customs and beliefs. Conversion (moving from one religious' worldview to another) was not common as your religion was in the blood. Christianity taught that ancestry and bloodlines were no longer relevant. According to Paul, faith in Christ was all that was needed for salvation. This new idea resulted in a religious movement no longer confined to a geographic area or an ethnic group. Christianity became a portable religion available to all. (*Early Christianity - World History Encyclopedia*)

This brief look into the cultures in that time of early church expansion, especially with the Romans controlling much of the area, gives higher meaning to the term "difficult times." It might be better described as "impossible times" for Christian church expansion. All Christians, apostles included, needed more than financial support; they needed support to survive.

Support Created Barriers. As the first Christian church began self-funding, with all contributing within their community, they self-funded the new Christian church of Jerusalem (Acts 4:32-37). The new community had found a way to flourish during the difficult times, until some withheld their proceeds from a land sale and ended up dying

over their deceit (Acts 5:1-10). That deceit was instrumental in creating "great fear"

within the entire church (Acts 5:11). The word *phobos* is used by Luke for fear. Strong's

5401: "From a primary *phebomal* (to be put in fear); alarm, or fright: - be afraid,-

+exceedingly, fear, terror" (Strong 96). In this sense, it is explained that Apostolic

authority was being reinforced by the act of death for their deceit (Hayford 1633). It begs

the question: Are people willingly following and contributing, or doing so out of fear?

Fear could become a support-created barrier as it is not possible for one to do their best

when exceedingly fearful. Fear is defined as:

> Fear is a human emotion that is triggered by a perceived threat. It is a basic
>
> survival mechanism that signals our bodies to respond to danger with a fight or
>
> flight response. As such, it is an essential part of keeping us safe. However, when
>
> people live in constant fear, whether from physical dangers in their environment
>
> or threats they perceive, they can experience negative impacts in all areas of their
>
> lives and even become incapacitated. (*Impact of Fear and Anxiety | Taking*
>
> *Charge of Your Health & Wellbeing*)

Fear can help someone survive with the human fight or flight instinct. In a sense it can

supercharge them. Fear is also a good motivator to get it right, right now, but this fear,

described as "great fear of all the church," is the type of fear that could incapacitate. Paul

explains in his last letter to Timothy that God does not give people a spirit of fear, but a

spirit of power and love, a sound mind (2 Tim 1:7). In that context, living with an

incapacitating fear creates an un-sound mind. This is then a barrier to church planting and

counter to support.

Paul's promise to not forget the poor in Jerusalem by raising financial support for Jerusalem (Gal 2:10) created many barriers for him in Corinth (2 Cor 11:9). What may be overlooked is during that time of expansion into Corinth, financial support came from Macedonia (Acts 18:5-6). With the persecution and fleeing of Christians from Jerusalem, the Jerusalem church needed support. Macedonia, enjoying non-persecution and receiving many Christians that could work, was prospering and was able to support Paul's church planting in Corinth. In that sense, the financial support from Macedonia contributed to barriers that Paul faced in Corinth while explaining that support from Macedonia and petitioning for their support for Jerusalem.

From the few examples given above, it is possible to view Acts from a needing support to a support creating barriers theme. This is not to imply that church planting should be without barriers, quite the contrary. Barriers should be anticipated and expected. It is empirically known that obstacles will always present when trying to accomplish anything; church planting is not an exception to that reality. Quite the opposite is true as Jesus warned the disciples that rejection, barriers, and harm are very real and will be experienced (Matt 5:10-12, 44; 10:23). Paul warns Timothy to expect problems and obstacles (2 Tim 3:12), and Christians are told to endure, to fight the good fight of faith, and to run their race (1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7). There are many scriptures that model endurance to draw from (Acts 15:1-11, Rom 3:19-20, Gal 2:16, Eph 2:8-9). This ability to endure is a sign of salvation (Rom 8:29-30; John 2:19). What matters is that nobody can separate believers from God (Rom 8:38-39). Even church planting with all its obstacles cannot separate them from their source of sustenance. But it does beg another question: Is human support for church planting necessary? The above shows the

conflict of new church plants, the existing church, and those supporting the expansion efforts.

New Testament about Support Created Barriers

As the apostles began new church expansion in Jerusalem their support came from self-funding by everybody contributing all to the new church (Acts 4:34-35). Every member of that community sold all their possessions and contributed all they had or gained by their sale into the church. Nobody went without, all needs were met, and nobody had a need that was not taken care of. This is a magnificent concept and appealing in a time of difficulty as in a time of famine, like Jerusalem was facing. In that glorious concept of all giving all, for the benefit of all, the fallen human nature will eventually take hold of somebody. In this case it was Ananias and his wife Sapphira. They sold their land and then lied about what they had received. Ananias held back part of the proceeds as he presented to the Apostles (Acts 5:1-4). Peter confronted him about lying to God, and Ananias fell dead and was buried (Acts 5:5-6). His wife came three hours later, not knowing what had happened to her husband, and Peter asked her if she had sold the land for the amount the husband had presented. She answered him with a yes, knowing that she and Ananias had agreed to hold some back. Peter confronted her about lying to the Holy Spirit and explained that the people that had buried her husband were now at the door, ready to carry her out for burial. She also fell dead and was buried next to her husband (Acts 5:7-10). Though the concept of all being provided for all in a time of difficulty was appealing, being part of that church could not overcome the human condition of greed and the fear of having too little. Ananias and his wife Sapphira became

the first example of the early Christian church to test the Holy Spirit by deceit. The new

church's support of all, by all, created an insurmountable barrier for those two.

As Paul worked in Corinth to support church expansion, some became angry that

he worked at all. It was Jewish practice for the rabbis to work as needed to support their

ministry, but not so in the Greek and Roman culture of Corinth. Work was done by

slaves; Paul was criticized and forced to defend his decision to work: "Work was a means

to offer the gospel message," he wrote (1 Cor 9:15-18; 2 Cor 11:7-10; 2 Cor 12:14-18).

Timothy and Silas' arrival in Corinth and the rejection by the Jews in the synagogue

caused a change in Paul's support, and he began full-time expansion into the Gentiles

located in Corinth (Acts 18:5-6). Silas had arrived with a large financial gift from

Phillipi. The church in Macedonia supported Paul's church expansion (2 Cor 11:9; Phil

4:15). Paul explained to new converts that he took support from other churches, not from

those he evangelized (2 Cor 11:7-9).

At the meeting with the heads of the early church in Jerusalem, Paul described

them as pillars (Gal 2:9), and in agreement about circumcision-salvation, a division of

new church expansion began. Paul would evangelize the non-Jews, and Peter would

evangelize the Jews (Acts 15:22; Gal 2:6). Later, Barnabas sided with Peter when Peter

and Paul debated the Jerusalem decision in Antioch (Gal 2:13). Paul ended up separating

from Barnabas (Acts 15:39) and left Antioch to focus on new church expansion to the

west. In a sense, a double splitting of the new church. Another issue was that part of the

Jerusalem decree ordered Paul to not forget the poor in Jerusalem (Acts 2:10). Paul then

encountered more problems as the new churches did not like the idea of paying support to

Jerusalem. Some in Corinth even suggested that Paul was stealing their "hard-earned

money," and Paul was forced to defend himself (2 Cor 12:16-18). Later though, the raising of that funding was a success as Paul brought the collection back to Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-26) but remained very concerned that the "Pillars of Jerusalem" would not accept it (Rom 15:31).

From those few examples, it is possible to see that support created barriers for new church planting. The opposition was not specifically about the expansion of new churches, it was more about how to properly join people to the church. That tension created opposition as Paul became challenged again and again as he continued to expand new church plants from the early church. Paul tried hard to sustain his ministry and held true to his call to expand the church. Because of that drive, Paul had created barriers by working in a culture that did not understand physical labor as a good thing, thereby not anticipating cultural differences. This created a tension within the group that he was trying to evangelize. Many of Paul's other barriers were caused by those who believed that conversion was only possible by following the Old Testament Law (Gen 17:10-14). In the new covenant with Abram, circumcision was necessary, and salvation came from becoming Jewish (Gen 17:10; Acts 15:1). Paul realized that salvation came from the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through that act of resurrection, all that would repent and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior could have salvation (Rom 10:9). Circumcision was not needed. This created a divide among the early church. The Jews rejected the idea of Jesus as God, and some of the new Christian Jews believed that circumcision was still necessary for salvation. In many areas that Paul expanded the gospel he encountered circumcision-salvation barriers that created problems, both before and after the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:22-21). That council issued a decree:

To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled

you with words, unsettling your souls, [h]saying, "You must be circumcised and

keep the law"—to whom we gave no such commandment— it seemed good to us,

being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved

Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the

same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to

lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from

things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual

immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. (Acts

15:22-29)

Pre-decree obstacles. Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem in response to reports

from Antioch (Acts 11:22). He reported magnificent growth and had Paul join him (Acts

11:26). They stayed for a year and converted many new Christians (Acts 11:26) but

eventually ended up being challenged by the Jews. The Jews stirred up trouble with the

prominent folks of the city and had them persecuted and removed from the region (Acts

13:50). Barnabas and Paul went to Iconium to preach in the synagogues. The unbelieving

Jews began to stir trouble for them, and the city became divided over Paul's preaching

and the Jews. The Jews and some Gentiles, along with their city rulers, made a violent

attempt to stone them. Paul and team fled to Lycaonia (Acts 14:5-6). In Lystra after

healing a crippled man (Acts 14:8-10), Paul and Barnabus encountered the same Jews

from Antioch and Iconium that stirred trouble before; this time the Jews had them stoned

near to death and dragged out of the city where they were left for dead (Acts 14:19-20).

Post decree obstacles intensified. In Philippi, Paul removed an evil spirit from a

slave girl, costing her master money. The master took them before the authorities who

had Paul and Barnabas beaten with rods and imprisoned (Acts 16:22-24). In

Thessalonica, Jews gathered a mob to attack the house where Paul and Silas had stayed,

hoping to bring them in. Not finding them, they drug Jason, the owner of the house, back

with them and had him fined (Acts 17:5-9). After hearing that Paul and Barnabas were

preaching in Berea, those same Thessalonian Jews came after him and Barnabas again.

Paul and Barnabas were sent away before harm was done to them (Acts 17:10-14). Paul

and Barnabas witnessed strong conversions in Corinth and preached there for eighteen

months. Eventually the Jews had Paul arrested (Acts 18:12). Gallio, proconsul of Achaia,

heard charges that the Jews of Corinth had brought against Paul for his preaching of

salvation. Gallio refused to render judgement over Jewish law and released Paul (Acts

17:12-17). Though warned by many not go to Jerusalem, Paul went to report new church

growth, was taken by a mob of Jews, dragged out of the temple to be killed, and was

saved by a Roman Commander (Acts 21:27-37). This resulted in future imprisonment,

and he concluded his ministry years later in Rome after many hearings and trials (Acts

Ch 22- Ch 28).

These barriers began with the Jewish belief of circumcision-salvation and were

intensified by the Jerusalem decree in response to the Jerusalem church's support for new

church expansion. That tension began in the early church of Jerusalem concerning two

groups of Jews: "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying,

there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were

neglected in the daily distribution" (Acts 6:1).

Justo González writes that from the early church in Jerusalem diversity began

between the Hellenistic Jews and the Hebrew Jews. This tension slowly grew from the

early church in Jerusalem into the new church plants. He explains that this tension does

not refer to a conflict between the Gentiles and the Jews because the book of Acts makes

it clear that no Gentiles were involved in the early church yet:

> "It was rather a conflict between the two groups of Jews: Those who kept
>
> the customs and language of their ancestors, and those that who were more open
>
> to Hellenistic influences. In Acts, the people of the first group are called Hebrews,
>
> and the others are Hellenists" (González 25).

A barrier was created when the supporting church had tension about beliefs. The

Hebrew Jews believed differently than Paul and the new church plants. At the very least,

tensions grew to unmanageable proportions as small differences continued growing. This

also happens with new church plantings today that are contextual with their presentation,

in contrast to a traditional church that presents with an organ and three-part sermon. The

churches may agree on polity and theology, including salvation, but when paired as a

parent-daughter, the traditional supporting church develops tension from the contextual

approach of the new plant. The more the new church plant uses contextualization; the

more the tension magnifies within the supporting church. Even when the contextualized

presentation nets positive, and growth has begun, tension grows between the supporting

church and the new church plant. Paul experienced this tension. There were barriers from

the Hebrew Jewish traditional belief of salvation through circumcision in comparison to

his belief of salvation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This grew into a huge obstacle that followed him throughout his church planting.

Can Attitude create obstacles?

Obstacles are things that create barriers. In new church planting, obstacles are those things that make new church planting difficult and can stop new growth. Attitudes are discussed in the bible. If support from an existing church is necessary for new church planting, then the right attitude is something that must be considered for supporting churches of new church plants.

Old Testament on attitude

The book of Judges tells a story of attitudes and how they affected Kingdom growth. New church planting, described as Kingdom growth, was accomplished through conquest and war. God made it clear from the start that His Kingdom would expand. In the Old Testament context, God's Kingdom is defined as the Nation of Israel. Nations were expanded or lost by force. Israel is God's chosen (Gen 12:3). God's people, the nation of Israel, were rescued from Egyptian oppression and were made a distinct people by God, tempered through the wilderness journey of forty years. Kingdom growth flourished with right attitude and was stopped with wrong attitude. Old Testament Kingdom growth is connected to current church planting growth. God picked his people, beginning with Abram (Gen 12:3), and made it clear that His people would grow Kingdom by expanding the Nation of Israel and would thus be blessed (Gen 17:2-8). Then God established the Abraham covenant, redemption through the blood of the lamb, (Gal 3:19-29) which was understood by Paul and used with his church planting to overcome wrong attitude. This was further expanded and foretold by the prophets

Jeremiah and Ezekiel as the new covenant (Jer 31:31-33; Eze 36:27) with the in-dwelling

of the Holy Spirit to come as described in (Acts 2:1-4), for the purpose of growing

Kingdom. These are connected and best described as Old Testament, Children of Israel,

and New Testament, Children of God. From Israelites growing Kingdom then to new

church planting today there is a continuum of God's Kingdom growth. A connection

described by Paul to the Romans:

> "Who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the
>
> covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom
>
> are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over
>
> all, the eternally blessed God. Amen" (Romans 9:4-5).

Believers now are firmly connected to the Old Testament Nation of Israel and are to

continue that Kingdom growth. This means growth initiated by God and validated by

Christ with the Great Commission. Attitude played a key role in early Kingdom growth

and will surely continue to play a key role in the future of church planting. The attitude of

not just the church planter, but also the attitude of the supporting church, will influence

the outcome of future Kingdom growth.

      Wrong attitude. The book of Judges describes God's reactions to wrong attitude.

When wrong attitude prevailed, Kingdom growth was stopped by God, as delineated

below. God had already shown his reaction to wrong attitude with a forty-year desert

extension until the death of that previous generation (Num 14:33-34). The immediate

children of that condemned generation certainly understood the results of wrong attitude,

translated from the Hebrew word לוּן luwn or לִין liyn. Strong's H3885 defines:

1. To lodge, stop over, pass the night, abide. 2. to grumble, complain, murmur.

A primitive root; to stop (usually overnight); by implication to stay permanently; hence (in a bad sense) to be obstinate (especially in words, to complain):—abide (all night), continue, dwell, endure, grudge, be left, lie all night, (cause to) lodge (all night, in, -ing, this night), (make to) murmur, remain, tarry (all night, that night). (Strong 69)

In comparison, like a stubborn child, they complain and want their own way. They are not mature enough to make a solid decision based on past experiences or knowledge. They are simply a wayward, little person doing what is right in their own mind without any regard for consequences. The book of Judges builds from that description to explain the attitude of the Children of Israel as doing evil in the sight of the Lord. This is a significant word that describes intent or actions that are unpleasant and disagreeable. Strong's H7451 defines:

1. Bad, evil. 2. Evil, distress, misery, injury, calamity, distress, adversity, wrong. 3. Evil, misery, distress, injury, evil (ethical). From H7489; bad or (as noun) evil (naturally or morally). This includes the second (feminine) form; as adjective or noun:—adversity, affliction, bad, calamity, + displease (-ure), distress, evil ([-f avouredness], man, thing), + exceedingly, X great, grief (-vous), harm, heavy, hurt (-ful), ill (favoured), + mark, mischief, (-vous), misery, naught (-ty), noisome, + not please, sad (-ly), sore, sorrow, trouble, vex, wicked (-ly, -ness, one), worse (-st) wretchedness, wrong. [Including feminine ra'ah; as adjective or noun.]. (Strong 133)

The Children's of Israel have progressed beyond the wrong attitude of the previous generation. They were now doing "Bad or Evil" in the sight of the Lord. They were choosing to be hurtful, knowing that God does not approve. Their attitudes were worse than their parents: "And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way." (Judges 2:19) .

Mesopotamian (3:7-8). Though instructed by Moses through the commandments, the children of Israel were being tested by God with the remaining nations of the Philistines, the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites. The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, intermarried with the foreign nations, dwelt with them, and then served their Gods. God was angry with their failure to uphold the commandments, and He put them under Mesopotamian control for eight years. They had developed a wrong attitude, doing evil in the sight of the Lord. This cost them their freedom and resulted in their captivity as Kingdom growth was stopped.

Moabite (3:12-14). Again, the children of Israel did רַע, after the death of Othniel and angered God as they persisted in that attitude. God raised up the King of Moab, joined him with the people of Ammon and Amalek to defeat Israel and take possession of the city of Palms. The children of Israel were held in captivity for eighteen years as Kingdom growth was again stopped.

Canaanite (4:1-2). Again, the children of Isael did רַע, after the death of Ehud and angered God as they persisted in that attitude. God let them be humbled and harassed by

Sisera, the Commander of the Canaanite army with nine hundred iron chariots for over twenty years as Kingdom growth was again stopped.

Midianite (6;1-6). Again, the children of Israel did רַע, angering God as they persisted in that attitude. God allowed the Midianites to strengthen with the Amalekites and people of the east. They would come into the Israelite controlled area and consume and destroy the crops and harvest that the Israelites had created. This created famine for the children of Israel that lasted seven years, Kingdom growth was again stopped as the children of Israel became impoverished.

Ammonite (10:6-9). After the remarkable Midianite defeat with Gideon, his death, and all that happened with his children (9:1-57), the children of Israel again did רַע, anger God as they persisted in their attitude by serving other Gods. The anger of God burned hot against Israel (10:7), and God sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the people of Ammon. The children of Israel were harassed and oppressed for eighteen years. All of Israel became severely distressed as Kingdom growth was again stopped and part of their territory remained under attack as the Amorites were crossing the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin, and the house of Ephraim (10:9).

Philistine (13:1). Again, the children of Israel did רַע, angering God by persisting in their attitude by serving other Gods. God delivered the children of Israel to the Philistines for 40 years of oppression as Kingdom growth was again stopped (13:1).

These examples show that with רַע attitude, Kingdom growth is stopped; chaos begins to flourish and multiply, and God becomes angry. The רַע attitude was a definite barrier to Kingdom growth. For the context of this project, church planting in America

for the twenty-first century, God requires right attitude for Kingdom growth; רָע attitude

will continue to mean that Kingdom growth will be negated.

Right-attitude: The book of Judges also describes God's actions when right

attitude prevails. Peace and Kingdom growth are accomplished and flourish. Right

attitude in the book of Judges is described when the Children of Israel cry out to the Lord.

They sought the Lord and asked for help. They did not try to go it alone or through other

idols. God rewarded right attitude and delivered the Children of Israel from their

oppression.

Othniel (3:9-11). After being held captive for eight years, God sent Othniel to

answer the cries of the children of Israel. Othniel defeated the Mesopotamian king. The

children of Israel enjoyed peace and held to their right attitude as Kingdom grew through

the conquering of Mesopotamia.

Ehud (3:15-30). In response to the children of Israel crying out to the Lord, they

developed the right attitude. God raised up a deliverer with Ehud. Ehud privately

executed the fat king of Moab and escaped unseen. Ehud assembled and led the children

of Israel into battle against the King-less Moabites, killing over 10,000 soldiers, they

conquered Moab, accomplished Kingdom growth, and enjoyed peace for eighty years.

Deborah (4:3-5:31). As a judge, Deborah was used by God to deliver the

children of Israel out of oppression by the strengthening the Canaanite army. Deborah

instructed Barak to gather men to defeat Sisera and the iron chariots. Barak agreed, but

only if Deborah went with them. She went, and they defeated the Canaanite army and the

iron chariots. However, Sisera had escaped and was hidden in the tent of Jael, wife to

Heber Kenite. Heber was loyal to the Canaanite King Jabin. Hiding under a blanket and

resting, Sisera felt safe. Jael executed Sisera in his sleep with a tent stake. King Jabin was

subdued without his commander, eventually being destroyed by the strengthening

children of Israel. The children maintained the right attitude and enjoyed peace for forty

years as Kingdom grew.

Gideon (6:7-8:35). God sent an Angel to Gideon who was separating chaff from

wheat in a hidden wine press so that the Midianites would not find the wheat. The angel

instructed Gideon to rise and get ready to defeat the Midianites. Gideon argued that he

was weak and not capable; the angel showed him a sign by consuming his prepared

offering to God with fire out of a rock. Gideon understood the sign, changed his attitude

to a right attitude, and listened to God as he was instructed to destroy the altar of Baal

that night. The destroyed altar angered the city. The Midianites, the Amalekites, and the

people of the East mobilized their armies and encamped in the valley of Jezreel. Gideon

was strengthened by the Spirit of the Lord and assembled his men and called for help

from Asher, Zebulan, and Naphtali. Gideon asked for a sign from the Lord: dew on a

fleece of wool on a dry threshing floor for the next morning. That next morning as

Gideon collected the dew from the fleece of wool, he asked that the fleece of wool

remain dry that night but let the threshing floor become wet with dew by morning. The

next morning the floor was wet, and the fleece was dry. Gideon then gathered the large

army he had assembled and camped just south of the Midianite army, preparing for battle.

God stopped Gideon and helped him to reduce his army by ninety-nine percent so that the

children of Israel would know that God was with them when they had right attitude, and

that God saved them with impossible odds. They could not say they had saved

themselves with superior numbers. Gideon was afraid to fight such a large Army with

only three hundred men, so the Lord had him go listen to what the Midianite Army was saying about him that night. Gideon heard the interpretation of the dream: a loaf of barley was destroying the tents of the large Midianite Army, interpreted to be the sword of Gideon. Gideon gathered his small force, divided them into three companies, and attacked at night, blowing their trumpets, and yelling from three directions, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon" (7:20), forcing the large army to flee in fear. Gideon gathered up his army to pursue and defeat the Midianite army. He asked for provisions along the way for his army but was rejected by the leaders of Succoth and Penuel. He promised on his successful return to exact retribution for their failure to help feed his small army. Gideon caught the Kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, in camp with their armies and attacked them, defeating the army and capturing the Kings. On his return to Succoth, he beat the leaders with briars and thorns and tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the leaders of the city as promised. Gideon then killed both Kings after his son refused. When Gideon was asked to rule the children of Israel, he refused and said the Lord will rule you. He kept the plunder from the Kings, made an Ephod out of the gold, and mounted that Ephod in the city of Ophrah as a reminder of the conquering of the Midianites. The children of Israel maintained their right attitude and enjoyed peace for forty years as the Kingdom grew.

Samson (15:1-16:31). Samson was born to a barren woman. She was informed and instructed by the Angel of the Lord to drink no wine and never eat unclean food. A razor should never touch the head of Samson. The child was to be born a *"Nazirite to God from the womb: and deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines"* (11:5). The Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson many times, creating a superhuman strength in him.

He took a Philistine wife and then let her go to his best man (11:19). Samson became a

judge of Israel for twenty years, slowly defeating the Philistines with one-handed

victories. Samson eventually met Delilah and fell in love with the harlot; her goal was to

find the secret to his strength so that the Philistines could defeat him. She was finally told

the secret and had him shaved. The Philistines captured him and put out his eyes and

planned a big celebration to execute him. It was at that celebration in the temple that

Samson prayed out to the Lord for strength to take vengeance on the Philistines for his

eyes. He collapsed the supporting pillars to the temple, killing all that were there,

including himself. Samson had killed more Philistines with his death than he had with his

life (16:30).

These examples from the book of Judges show the difference that right attitude

makes for Kingdom growth. When believers cry out to the Lord for help, be it through

private prayer or with a public cry, it pleases God, and the Lord will help. On the other

hand, the רַע attitude displeases God, and oppression is likely, Kingdom growth will be

stopped. Church planting in the twenty-first century needs to be aware of how attitude

continues to play a key role and will influence the outcome of new church planting.

Wrong attitude hindered new growth. God taught that Moses differentiated as a

good leader. The people had a wrong attitude and became complainers. Moses was forced

to intercede for the people, proving that God does not like wrong attitude. It is a

complaining attitude that makes God so angry and stops Kingdom growth:

> And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it;
>
> and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them and
>
> consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried

unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched

(Numbers 11:1-2).

Numbers 13 tells the story of the twelve spies sent by God into the promised land.

They were to report back on the situation so that the people would have faith to conquer

that land. Ten came back with a wrong attitude, whining about the size of the army and

other obstacles. Two of the twelve had the right attitude and gave a different report.

Joshua and Caleb gave a report of a good land, a land of milk and honey. They reported

not to fear the giants and that the Lord would provide; they would be victorious with

Kingdom expansion into the promised land. The congregation's response was not to

support those two, it was to stone them. The congregation had a wrong attitude, no faith

in the Lord, and great fear. God does not like wrong attitudes, especially from within a

supporting group:

> And the Lord said unto Moses, how long will this people provoke me? And how
>
> long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among
>
> them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of
>
> thee a greater nation and mightier than they. (Numbers 14:11-12)

Wrong attitude made the Lord so angry that Moses had to plead for the people not to be

smitten. Webster defines smite as an old English word to mean smeared or defiled (*Smite

Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster*). It came to be that smite did not happen, but

the entire generation, excluding Joshua and Caleb, would never see the promised land.

They were turned back to wander the desert until their death. This effectively stopped

Kingdom growth:

> Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did
>
> in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and
>
> have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swore
>
> unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my
>
> servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully,
>
> him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.
>
> (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.) Tomorrow turn, and
>
> move into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea. (Numbers 14:22-25)

That is a serious price to pay for the wrong attitude. In these cases, God does not like, nor is willing to tolerate for long, wrong attitude. Kingdom growth for the Israelites began when they reached the promised land; then wrong attitude stopped Kingdom growth and expansion until an entire generation was dead from wandering the waste land. It could certainly be counter-argued that the wandering was necessary. It was not necessary, but useful in response to their wrong attitude. An extended time of reflection to correct. Had the right attitude initially found in Joshua and Caleb been in the supporting group, all would have entered the promised land and Kingdom growth would likely be further advanced. Wrong attitude hindered church growth in the wilderness just as wrong attitude from a supporting church will hinder a new church plant in the twenty first century.

New Testament on attitude

Jesus Christ modeled and maintained right attitude during his time on earth while expanding Kingdom, giving the Apostles and believers a clear model to follow. When confronted by rejection his attitude was to be in consistent prayer and always strove to please the Father (John 6:38). When confronted with unsurmountable odds, including

certain death, he maintained and modeled right attitude. He went and prayed three times

as the Disciples kept falling asleep at Gethsemane: "Then Jesus went with his disciples to

a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, Sit here while I go over there and pray"

(Matthew 26:36-46).

Jesus never strayed and kept his right attitude through a "trust in Him who judges justly"

(1 Peter 2:23). Jesus taught and modeled right attitude using the mindset described in

Beatitudes, literally, "be-this-attitude," saying:

> And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated
>
> His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:
>
> Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are
>
> those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they
>
> shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
>
> for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
>
> Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers,
>
> for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for
>
> righteousness'' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when
>
> they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My
>
> sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so
>
> they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:2-12)

Jesus modeled right attitude for His followers for the purpose of evangelizing to expand

the Christian church, which makes God pleased. God is happy and blesses right attitude

as Jesus taught to his Disciples. Jesus is modeling: do as I have taught to support and

grow the church, and my Father will be pleased. Therefore, believers must maintain the

right attitude as they seek to grow the church, which means, they also need to maintain the right attitude to support church growth. This makes the Father pleased. Jesus gave His followers the authority to expand the Christian church to all corners of the earth, taught right attitude, and showed that God is pleased with right attitude and His followers will be blessed while seeking to follow the great commandment.

In a contrasting sense, wrong attitude would not be pleasing to God, and will not be blessed. Church planters, supporting churches, and their leadership teams with wrong attitude will likely not succeed. Like the children of Israel with wrong attitude in the wilderness, wrong attitude will create a barrier that will stop church growth. Validated by Jesus Christ, right attitude should be a best practice for supporting churches and their leadership for new church plants in San Antonio, Texas and beyond, to all corners of the earth.

The Apostle Paul provides a reminder that a right attitude is necessary for the work of new church expansion. Paul wrote from a prison in Rome facing imminent death and showed that even in suffering right attitude is from Jesus Christ, nourished and corrected by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and is affirmed in all situations by mannerism and conduct: "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27). Paul is telling his followers in Philippi that conduct is a product of attitude. He reminds them of Jesus Christ's message and asks that their conduct be worthy of Jesus' message and mission. Paul is reminding and modeling right attitude, which is pleasing to God.

Paul further wrote that regardless of circumstances or surroundings it is necessary to have the same right attitude as Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5). He defined the application of that attitude as humbleness and selflessness, even when things are not working out the way one would prefer (Ephesians 5:1). Paul says that a Christ-like attitude is the right attitude for new church growth, and that believers are to be like God in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24). Paul goes further and explains that it is through the renewing of minds that right attitude can be maintained and will be able to test and accept God's will, which is to be Christ-like when expanding Kingdom through new church planting: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

Paul reminds his followers and their supporters of the importance of right attitude for new church planting. As validated by Paul, right attitude should be a best practice for supporting churches and their leadership for new church plants in San Antonio, Texas and beyond.

Theological Foundations

New Church Planting with supporting churches

By understanding the Great Commission, *"Go and make disciples of all the world"* (Matthew 28:19-20), as a direct objective of Jesus physically handed forward to His disciples, believers, as willing disciples, are to go and do just that. If new church planting is an accomplished way to grow church (Acts), then they should continue in that style of expansion, taking church to the un-churched (Acts Ch 10-Ch 28), withstanding the obstacles, and continuing the expansion path. This is the goal and calling of the

church planter. They must deeply understand the reason for the church and by what authority the church can evangelize and continue to expand. Jesus Christ is what the Christian church represents, but not as Jesus himself, the human in physical form as an individual, or an extraordinary believer, though that is significant. The church is about Jesus Christ as Lord, Bryan Stone explains: "It is not Jesus' own valiant faith that serves as the basis for our faith or that constitutes his significance for evangelism. The church's relationship to him, as Kierkegaard said, is not that of admirers. Rather, Jesus is the church's Lord, or as Paul says in Colossians 1:18, it's head" (Stone 75).

From the church planting perspective, it can be helpful to envision what it must have been like for Peter to walk on water (Matt 14:22-33; Luke 8:22-25). Many times, it may seem as though one is being invited to walk in deep water with Jesus as a new church planter, then one may see the storm or be reminded of it by others. John Ortberg seems to describe it best as he explains that water walkers discern between faith and foolishness (Ortberg 16). They get out of the boat and expect storms (19), accept fear as the price of growth (21), master failure-management (22), see failure as an opportunity to grow (24), learn to wait on the Lord (25), and experience a deeper relationship with God (27). Supporting churches of new church plants need to understand water-walking; they may not want to do it, like the rest of the disciples that remained in the boat, but they should be willing to support it. The goal of the supporting church and their leadership team should be to actively support, not hinder, new church planting.

Issues that supporting churches could learn from

Not much has been written that specifically deals with best practices for supporting churches and their leadership for new church plants, but it was possible to find

what could be considered best practices or their reverse, poor practices. It is easy to say that supporting churches and their leadership should support the new church plant with all things that are needed to grow Kingdom within that local market. They should help to make the new church plant a successful, self-governing, self-sustaining entity that will continue to produce new church plants into all areas. As previously discussed, the book of Acts certainly shows that journey of new church growth through expansion but also clearly shows barriers and obstacles that the church planters encountered. To say that the early Christian church in Jerusalem was a poor supporting church for new church expansion is debatable, but what is clear is that the early church was very aware that new church expansion was necessary for Kingdom growth. Supporting churches should not become an obstacle over authority and theology to the new church plant.

Authority. The authority to expand comes from Jesus through his apostles to believers today (Matt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16; Luke 24:47-48) and is validated by the angels: "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10-11). This reminder to quit standing around and to get busy evangelizing is a practice and understanding that supporting churches could also use. In John 15:8, Jesus said it is the Fathers desire to "produce much fruit," and Luke 6:43-44 explains that a good tree does not produce bad fruit: "a tree is known by its fruit." Steve Stroope references Genesis 9:1, Romans 1:13, and 1 Corinthians 16:15 as the way fruitfulness relates to physical and spiritual reproduction: "A believer is fruitful not simply when Christ's character is visible, but also

when Christ's mission is accomplished" (Stroope 10). Supporting churches need to understand that being Christ-like is simply not enough. To run worship, teach, and appear holy was not the entire mission of Christ. To be Christ-like also entails striving to accomplish His mission of Kingdom growth.

In Paul's case of authority to expand church, consideration to the fact that Paul had been aggressively on the other side of Christianity before his conversion created obstacles for many who believed that a person cannot be changed. The epistle, 2 Corinthians, is a good example of that issue. Paul spends an enormous amount of time defending numerous accusations brought against him by others in Corinth that are trying to discredit him. Paul challenges claims of unprofessionalism in numerous sections of his second letter to the Corinthians while overcoming barriers to his authority to expand church while planting new churches in Corinth (1:6; 5:13; 7:3-7; 11:2; 12:14-15). Paul faces claims of poor conduct as he defends his actions and reason for Christian ministry to the Corinthians (Ch 1- Ch 7). For many in Corinth, this is a near impossible concept when considering a recent Christian persecutor's most likely actions during that time of growing Christian persecution. Paul's drive to raise money from the Corinthians for the poor in Jerusalem shows the depth of the human attempts to confuse, sabotage, and create distrust for Paul's authority to expand anything Christian. Paul confuses his enemies and does not deny that he was a Christian persecutor as was likely expected by his saboteurs. Paul goes further and agrees that he was well suited to that task and was aggressively good at it. He creates interest and speculation as he then explains the mystery and the magnitude of his conversion to Christianity, defining his authority and mission beyond human speculation as Godly ordained. It is here that the understanding to care for the

poor and give abundantly was a Godly principle, not a human one. He leaves no doubt that his character, his method, his purpose, and his change of heart could only come from God through Jesus Christ (Ch 8- Ch 9). Quite simply, Paul was a walking example of the conversion and salvation that was available to all. In this sense, his accusers helped Paul to evangelize and prove his authority by using him as an example; salvation through Jesus Christ was truly available to all, even to the aggressive Christian persecutor. Supporting churches should understand that church planting is completely about conversion and offering salvation to those different than them, to people who will not come into their local church.

After this Paul goes on the offensive and calls out and challenges his accusers for who they really are: false apostles trying to create sabotage and chaos within the new church planting. He simply proves that they are attempting to undermine his previous evangelistic success by discrediting the work of the Holy Spirit and trying to hijack the new church planting efforts. In that sense, they were undermining the work, message, and the mission of Jesus Christ to grow church (Ch 10- Ch 13). Supporting churches should never attempt to hijack new church plants that are reaching the lost, angry, or stubborn. They should let the new plant reach those people without the baggage of a supporting church that has already been rejected by them.

The supporting church and its leadership should be on the same page as to who has authority for expansion. When not in total agreement, even when just a few disagree, obstacles are created to the church planting effort. The early Christian church in Jerusalem and Paul were at odds over whose authority new church expansion was about.

Differences. The main theological difference that some in the early church in Jerusalem had with Paul was salvation. To understand the difference, one first must look at the beginning to get a clear understanding.

Some of the converted Jews in the early church maintained some of their core belief from Judaism: "Judaism, a monotheistic religion developed among the ancient Hebrews. Judaism is characterized by a belief in one transcendent God who revealed himself to Abraham, Moses, and the Hebrew prophets and by a religious life in accordance with Scriptures and rabbinic traditions" (*Judaism | Definition, Origin, History, Beliefs, & Facts | Britannica*). In this case, the Apostles and the Jews converted or not share this belief in principle. It is after this creation understanding that the division begins to develop between the Jews and the Apostles. Some of the converted Jews of the early church maintained their belief that God alone offers salvation, available by converting to Judaism and following the Mosaic law. The Apostles knew that God is Trinity, a three-in-one, validated by their time with Jesus Christ and by his physical teachings. It is within the creation story that God makes man in "our image" that the Trinitarian understanding develops in creation theology:

> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1)

It is here that the principal understanding of creation begins to become an obstacle to those who believe in Judaism. Jesus Christ cannot be God or offer salvation unless one

believes in the Trinity. God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit as separate parts of the one

God. The Trinitarian believer looks to John to describe and validate that us:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was
>
> God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and
>
> without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was
>
> the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not
>
> comprehend it. (John 1-3)

This part of the theological difference is important to the early church as it slowly

developed into the bigger issue. The Hellenistic Christians being evangelized from a

Greek background with support from the Jewish Christians that maintained some Judean

background created tension. The orthodox Jew saw the Christian Jew as slightly different

but still sharing some beliefs. The orthodox Jew saw the Hellenistic Christians as trying

to lay claim to their birth rite by making it their own without following the Mosaic law.

This was quite an obstacle in the early Christian church. It is from the early Christian

Jews and some of the Orthodox Jews that Paul experienced sabotage and discrediting

during his church planting missions with the Gentiles. It became a bigger issue as the

Romans saw the early Christian church as an extension of the Jewish Temple. They later

came to realize that Christianity was a threat all its own, especially to the Pagan cultures

of the Romans in that time. Early Christianity found itself in a spot of not being wanted,

seen as a skewed belief, and eventually needing to be eradicated as a danger to Roman

society. It was not until the fourth century in the days of Constantine that Rome embraced

Christianity. Creation theology begins to play a vital role in this tension. It became a

large obstacle to early church planting in the early church of Jerusalem and contributed to

the separation of the Orthodox Jews within the Temple of Jerusalem from the early

Christian church of Jerusalem, eventually causing massive obstacles with the Roman

government. Basically, it became a three-sided tension of expansion. Brought forward

theological differences will grow into large obstacles between supporting church and the

new planting church. Many church-splits have and are currently happening over this

same tension.

The Messiah. The Apostles came to understand that Jesus came as God, born

through a human virgin and grew to preach the three-in-one as the Messiah. It is here that

the Apostles theology and the Jewish belief begin to fundamentally separate. Jews

believe that Jesus Christ was not the Messiah and are waiting on the Messiah's return.

Jesus taught that salvation was obtained by following Him and was available to all (John

3:16, 18, 14:6; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9; Rom 10:9): "There is salvation in no one else, for

there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved"

(Acts 4:12). Jewish belief is that redemption only comes from being a devout Jew and

following the Old Testament laws, including circumcision. This is where the temple in

Jerusalem, some converted Jews, and Paul's belief really came to odds.

The Crucifixion. Jesus taught the Apostles that His death and resurrection would

be the propitiation of sin: "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may

not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the

righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also

for the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2). Jesus' death and resurrection proved the teachings

that he taught his disciples. Without His resurrection, the redemptive act of dying on the

cross would have no bearing on salvation. It is here that Trinitarian theology becomes

necessary to understand the propitiation of sin. John Stackhouse describes the importance

of understanding Trinitarian doctrine:

> We can now see one important reason why the doctrine of the Trinity -
>
> apparently such an odd, even contradictory, idea- is vital to the Christian
>
> understanding of things. If God and Jesus are different beings, then Jesus on the
>
> cross looks like just one more scapegoat being punished for the sake of other
>
> human's sin. Indeed, now we would have Christianity championing human
>
> sacrifice. And we would have the same conundrum we had before: how can
>
> punishing someone else possibly suffice for my offenses? … If the doctrine of the
>
> Trinity is stoutly affirmed, however, then it is God who hangs on the cross. It is
>
> the one God who bears the rejection of the world. It is the one God who forgives
>
> humanity our sin of ingratitude, who takes it without reprisal, who drinks to the
>
> last drop our poisonous betrayal. (Stackhouse 137)

There are countless writings about the crucifixion of Christ as necessary for the

redemption of all creation. They focus on God as the provider of salvation, which is true,

but Jesus provides knowledge of God. Albert Nolan does a fantastic job of explaining

Jesus as that understanding:

> By His words and practice, Jesus himself changed the content of the word 'God.'
>
> If we do not allow him to change our image of God, we will not be able to say
>
> that He is our Lord and our God. To choose him as our God is to make him the
>
> source of our information about divinity and to refuse to superimpose upon him
>
> our own ideas of divinity… This is the meaning of the traditional assertation that

Jesus is the Word of God. Jesus reveals God to us; God does not reveal Jesus to

us. (Nolan 165–67)

The converted Jews that still maintained some of their Judaism belief saw the crucifixion

of Christ as another false Messiah being dealt with. They continued to wait on the

Messiah and did not see that act as redemptive for anybody. The cross was just a means

for execution. The Apostles saw the cross as a symbol of salvation through Christ's

suffering, death, and resurrection. The Jews and some converted Jews still clung to the

Old Testament writings and laws as the only salvation of God. Simply said, some did not

believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, in the Trinitarian doctrine, that Jesus is God,

that salvation comes through Jesus Christ, or that anybody but a Jew can have salvation

from God. The converted Jews that clung to some of their Judean belief became an

obstacle to the early Christian church expansion. Similar discord can begin in the

supporting church of today's new church plants. The supporting church and its leadership

need to be on the same page fundamentally as to the crucifixion of Christ.

The Resurrection. The Apostles witnessed Jesus' resurrection (Matt 28:1-20, Mk

16:1-20, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:16-17) and later, accession into heaven (Mk 16:19-20,

Luke 24:51). It would be extremely difficult to convince somebody that had seen and

experienced all that the Apostles had that it really did not happen. The thought of all that

happening and then being dismissed as folklore or imagination is beyond comprehension.

The Jews were saying that parts of it may have happened but not as witnessed. They were

saying that the Apostles were wrong. Many have experience with this same type of

disbelief from others.

This section has covered the theological differences that existed between Christians, some converted Jews, and orthodox Jews and how that effected the Roman Government. It has also covered the main theological differences between the temple in Jerusalem, the early Christian church in Jerusalem with its dichotomies, and Paul's church expansion into the Gentiles from within the book of Acts. It is very important that the supporting church and its leadership team are theologically compatible and that they stay that way while joined together. This is currently happening within the United Methodist Church, and other churches.

Overcoming barriers

The New Testament makes it clear that the existing church in Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple created issues that Paul faced; at the very least, they contributed greatly to those obstacles. Theologians also have things to say about church expansion and growth and how to avoid and overcome barriers. There are similarities between Paul's expansion issues that he faced in Acts and issues of others who evangelized and created new church plants while expanding the Kingdom.

John Wesley overcoming barriers. Raised as a Methodist, this researcher has a tendency to filter through the Wesleyan perspective. John Wesley became a favored theologian and made solid sense throughout most of this researcher's lifetime. During the battles themselves, later looking back now in new church tensions, and looking forward, Wesleyanism makes sense. John Wesley was very serious about church expansion within England and into America through difficult times. The time of Wesley's ministry was full of moral decay and church decline in England. A. Skevington Wood in his book, *The Burning Heart: John Wesley: Evangelist,* explains that time of moral decay as needing a

passionate proclaimer of evangelical truth. Richard Pyke writes that Wesley boldly

attacked the moral and faith decline head on: "He knew that the only hope of the corrupt

heart was a new birth" (Pyke 19).

In response to his evangelistic preaching, John Wesley was banned from

preaching inside the established churches of England. He became unwelcome inside the

churches of England after preaching his Salvation by Grace through Faith. The

established churches did not want that doctrine preached, though the people crowded to

hear him in the churches when he did preach. To say that Wesley was not invited back

after that doctrinal preaching was an understatement. The only option left for Wesley was

open air preaching. When J. Henry Martin inquired as to why the Wesley's were banned

from the established churches, the answer came: "In a sentence, it may be stated that the

denial of the parish pulpits was due to their preaching of the Evangelical doctrines"

(Wood 94).

Wesley took to the street corners, open markets, and places a crowd could gather

to preach. He certainly did not want to preach in that environment, but as his followers

grew, it became an issue of where a space could be found to hold them all. In that sense,

Wesley overcame the English obstacle of nowhere to preach. He was challenged,

heckled, and almost forbidden to continue, but nobody had the authority to stop him from

open air preaching, though they certainly tried. Wesley knew in his heart that the moral

decay and declining faith in England could only be fixed with new church growth from

newly birthed hearts. His evangelical doctrine and theology were well received by the

commoners because it made sense. Charles Yrigoyen writes in his book, *John Wesley;*

Holiness of Heart and Life, that Wesley's theology centered on six main themes:

- The problem of sin: Human beings were originally created in God's image. After the fall, a discrepancy exists between what God intended, and what humans are now. He called this "the loathsome leprosy of sin" (Gen 6:5; Rom 3:23).

- Prevenient Grace: "The Grace that comes before." A preparing Grace that prepares believers for God's forgiveness and a holy life.

- Justification by Faith: The act of Jesus Christ', life, death, and resurrection are actively and intimately related to believers' justification. They are constantly dependent on God's accepting and pardoning love (Rom 5:1-5).

- New Birth: Wesley emphasized the importance of experiencing God's accepting, justifying grace by faith. Justification by faith and new birth are inseparable. Justification is the work God does for believers. New birth (John 3:1-10; 2 Cor 5:17) is the work God does in believers.

- Assurance: Those who by faith receive the accepting grace and are given new life become God's children. They do not have to wonder about their status (Rom 8:16).

- Holiness of Heart and Life: Sometimes called "Sanctification." Living a holy life, from two sides, though always connected. Personal holiness is centering one's life on a total commitment to God. Social holiness is the manner in which they show their love for God in their love for their neighbors. To model and show Christian perfection as living a holy life (Matt 5:48; 1 John 4:18). (Yrigoyen and Daugherty 28–37)

Beginning with the Wesleyan Quadrilateral (Thorsen 5-6). Wesley built upon the foundational theological understanding and practice of earlier apologists: J. A. Fichtner

comments, "Irenaeus, Cyprian, Origen, Tertullian, and other ecclesiastical writers are emphatic in their teachings that the scriptures should be read in the church and that ecclesial tradition is the exposition of the scripture" (Thorsen 12).

Wesley created an understanding that scripture must be considered first and foremost and also must be filtered through tradition, reason, and experience (Thorsen 164). This helped Wesley to expand new church plants beyond the narrow and shallow literal views of deductive preaching. He was bringing a developed, fresh evangelical style of worship to the American frontier, tempered from the corners, alleyways, and open-air spaces of England. He was able to preach relevant, truthful, and appealing messages that considered the American frontier with all its troubles. It helped him to develop broader preachers that encouraged deeper interest in biblical studies. He simply appealed to the frontier minded as well as he did to the commoners of England. As a direct product of rejection from a supporting church, Wesley overcame barriers to expand Kingdom through new church planting in England and America. He used his available means and theological understandings to overcome barriers while growing Kingdom through new church planting. Wesley was developing new, bold preachers that could embrace the frontiers of a rugged America. By that, Wesley overcame another large obstacle that existed with his supporting church in England: the practice that only ordained Priests could administer communion. That Anglican rule created a huge barrier for Wesley in creating traction for new church expansion into America because very few Anglican Priests were in the country. This forced Wesley to reluctantly separate from his original supporter and develop Methodism. John Wesley and his preachers performed open communion for all and explained it as a means of receiving God's grace. John Wesley

gained expansion in America and proved himself over time by living the holiness life. He believed that "grace received must be grace shared" (Campbell and Burns 129), even in conflict. Had Wesley not moved forward with the division from the Anglican church, he would not have created bold, dynamic pastors. Pastors that could serve open communion in a wild and rugged America. Without that, Methodism and Wesleyanism would likely not have grown. At the very least, traction would have been lost in America.

Bonhoeffer overcoming barriers. Bonhoeffer was an amazing practical theologian. He believed in active discipleship and a full-contact type of evangelism. Though forbidden to teach, he taught in an underground seminary during World War II in Nazi controlled Germany. In his time of ministry, he encountered a massive list of obstacles with Hitler's rise to power in Germany. He stood at odds with most of the leadership in the German Evangelical Church. He strongly opposed the Aryan-paragraph that closed the church leadership to any non-Aryans. In response to a Nazi influenced protestant church and the Aryan paragraph he was instrumental in beginning the Confessing Church, free from Nazi involvement (*"Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Opposition")*. He saw the call to discipleship as the call of Christ to "come and die" (Bonhoeffer 12). He was executed at thirty-nine years of age, along with some of his family members for his practice of active-discipleship.

Bonhoeffer has much to say on church expansion and supporting that expansion: He makes the point that church can only really be the church while in Christ. He uses his entire book, *Life Together* to make that main point, but also adds some advice as to overcoming barriers for the current time in church planting:

There arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be the greatest

(Luke 9:46)! We know who it is that sows this thought in Christian community.

But perhaps we do not bear in mind enough that no Christian community ever

comes together without this thought immediately emerging as a seed of discord.

Hence it is vitally necessary that every outset face this dangerous enemy

squarely and eradicate it. (Bonhoeffer and Doberstein, loc.1043)

Bonhoeffer was very aware of that seed of discord. He taught to look for it early and to

defeat it before it spreads into undermining and separation within the church. This

provides a strong and practical example for church planting. Being watchful and

overcoming a barrier early, rather than later, is an important practice.

Bonhoeffer was a man actively involved in church expansion, focused on the

social situation, and immersed within one of the most difficult times in the modern world.

His actions are seen to some as that of a Christian Martyr as he left the safety of America

and returned to Germany, joined the Secret Service, and attempted to kill Hitler. During

his two years in prison, before his execution, Bonhoeffer reflects on his theology:

God lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross. He is weak and

powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is

with us and helps us. [The Bible] … makes quite clear that Christ helps us, not by

virtue of his omnipotence, but by virtue of his weakness and suffering. … The

Bible directs man to God's powerlessness and suffering; only the suffering God

can help. *("Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Christian History")*

To this writer, Bonhoeffer is seen as a highly respected, practical theologian, an

extremely focused and serious church planter, and a supporter of that church plant,

engaged and active in the social realities of his time. Much can be learned from

Bonhoeffer's theology and his life of active holiness, social commitment, and faith from

within terrible conflict. From his example, to not engage in the social situation of the time

is to be seen as cowardly. To not stand up for a hostile takeover of the church by the

government is giving away your faith, or at least, showing a Luke-warm conviction of

indifference. Most extraordinary was Bonhoeffer's composure, faith, and conviction of

his theological understanding during imminent death. The prison doctor who witnessed

his hanging wrote:

> The prisoners … were taken from their cells, and the verdicts of court martial
>
> read out to them. Through the half-open door in one room of the huts, I saw
>
> Pastor Bonhoeffer, before taking off his prison garb, kneeling on the floor praying
>
> fervently to his God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man
>
> prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer. At the place of
>
> execution, he again said a prayer and then climbed the steps to the gallows, brave
>
> and composed. His death ensued in a few seconds. In the almost 50 years that I
>
> have worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive
>
> to the will of God. *("Remembering Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Martyrdom")*

Bonhoeffer was a church planter and a serious supporter for that church plant. He did not

take the easy approach of indifference. He carried his belief and faith to death.

Bonhoeffer is the ideal church planter, but more specifically in this context, he was a

church plant supporter who needed support despite his deep conviction. Church planters

today need to pray for support as strong as Bonhoeffer was to the mission of Jesus Christ.

Right-Attitude overcoming barriers. These teachings demonstrate that a right attitude helps to accomplish, just as surely as a wrong attitude hinders and becomes an obstacle. Paul writes extensively on right attitude, where it comes from, and how to strengthen it within his letters to the Philippians, Romans, Ephesians and Galatians. Peter writes that right attitude is paramount for the communal one-mind (1 Peter 3:8) and John writes that a loveless attitude in not of Christ: " He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8).

Theologically, it is evident that Kingdom growth gains traction from a Christian right attitude.

C.S. Lewis overcoming barriers. C.S. Lewis was best described as a writer that helped prepare people for evangelism, an attitude changer: "It is for that reason that the work of the evangelist must often be preceded by the work of an apologist who, rather than present the gospel, prepares the hearts of post-Christian materialists so they will be receptive to the message of salvation. Among the practitioners of this vital pre-evangelism, the most successful, and the most enduring, has been Lewis" (Markos). He was a pre-evangelistic writer. C.S. Lewis had the unique ability to consider things or situations outside the normal perspective. He wrote *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *Space Trilogy*, among many others, to stretch the constraints of a confined imagination and change preconceived attitudes. His work created room for imaginative consideration in a time when many had become tired of traditionalism and the heavy grind of religion. In his day, many had tired and would not consider an omnipotent God who loved all and wanted redemption for all of humanity through the death of His son, Jesus Christ. In a very real sense, these were individuals with a bad attitude towards organized religion.

Church attendance was declining in Europe, and C.S. Lewis felt compelled to do something about it. His approach worked as many have come to Christ because of his writings. The uniqueness of C.S. Lewis and quite possibly one of the reasons he can relate so well to the un-churched, gaining their attention as he gently leads them into Christianity, is his understanding of salvation:

> What are we to make of this theology of salvation according to C.S. Lewis? It resolves itself to be an interesting middle ground between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism in many ways. It certainly extends far beyond the theology of typical Protestant denominations. Whereas the Roman Catholic Church does maintain a doctrine of Purgatory, most Protestant denominations simply deny its existence. This, of course, is not universally the case, as some Lutheran and Anglican traditions certainly subscribe to some notion of its existence. What path is C.S. Lewis cutting for us? Is this a long road to universalism or a winding path toward a broader understanding of salvation? Ultimately, it appears to be the latter, with some caveats. (Harelson)

C.S. Lewis is a practical apologist, a unique and practical pre-evangelist. He used his unique writing from imaginative perspectives to overcome the obstacle of church decline in post-Christian Europe and continues now in America's time of church decline and post-Christianity to net the same result. From the Wesleyan perspective, he can be described as a contextualized theologian, using prevenient grace for the purpose of evangelism and church expansion. He was a contextualized pre-church planter, using his God gifted skills to overcome obstacles for Kingdon growth. He is helping to overcome

barriers that keep people from considering Christianity, slowly bringing them into the church with an ear for salvation and a changed attitude.

<div align="center">**Beyond the bible**</div>

Supporting Church Best Practices

Though difficult to find sources that specifically deal with best practices of supporting churches and their leadership team for new church planting, it was possible to locate some recommendations by looking at church planting to see what others say about the subject of support for church planting and new church plant failures and what caused them.

Jim Griffin lists ten common barriers in his book *Ten Most Common Mistakes Made by New Church Starts*. All ten are important, but for this writer two really stand out. He explains that neglecting the great commandment while focused on the great commission creates failure (Griffith and Easum 5). Church planting is about growing Kingdom for God, not about growing one church. Jim also explains that in the busy-ness of church planting, evangelism ceases soon after the launch (Griffith and Easum 45). Jim Griffin in a sense, offers best practices for supporting churches by showing mistakes that failed other new church plants. Bryan Collier addresses the question of authority to plant in his book *The Go-To Church* after planting numerous multi-sites: "The general rule is that local authority rests with local leaders and the local site pastor. Big picture authority rests with the leadership-team, the ministry board, and the administrative council that makes decisions about oversight, support, and resources" (Collier 134).

Ott and others consider church multiplication an indigenous movement. They mention that churches should give birth to new churches, as a natural condition of

parenting, but then adds: "Churches often do not. They can grow to maturity, become numerically impressive, but remain sterile. Reproduction must be intentional if the local church is to accomplish the full purpose to which it has been called and created" (Ott et al. 70).

Hirsch reminds church planters from his beginning as a new planter, that all new church plants should consider themselves future parents of future church plants: "We had a missional obligation to those outside of the church. We had no real language for this, but we somehow intuited that we were pregnant with other churches that would reach unreached people groups in our city" (Hirsch 31).

Hirsch explains throughout his book that missional DNA needs to be created and maintained in all new church development. In a sense, he is saying that all can support new church development, from the oldest existing church to the newest, but he also writes extensively in his book that existing structures that support new church expansion hinder the development of the expansion movement: "Most theories about congregational life are flawed from the start because they are based on an institutional and mechanical worldview… their goal is to fix and preserve the institution for as long as possible" (Hirsch 186–87).

Hirsch goes on to explain that the new church plant needs the ability and authority to do anything that needs to be done for its expansion and growth without seeking approval from a supporting church (Hirsch 189). He is not saying that support is bad, but he is saying that control from the supporting church will become an obstacle to new church growth. It will most likely cancel traction by creating a dependent church rather

than an evangelizing church on mission to expand from within itself. He did not list best practices for supporting churches of new church plants.

Bevins writes about a problem that all churches face eventually. He writes that evangelism and expansion will slowly become institutionalism which grows more secular, losing its focus to evangelize and expand (Bevins 168). Bevins also writes that C.S. Lewis warned that every existing church will slowly lose its original purpose, which was to make disciples (Bevins 168)). Using Methodism as a model, Bevins quotes John Wesley as saying: "I am not afraid that the people called Methodist should ever cease to exist in either Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having a form of religion without the power" (Bevins 169).

This would create a problem for supporting churches of new church plants, explain some of the wrong attitude creation, and make it difficult to plant new churches from within the reality of that support and structure.

Dan White writes from the context of a fast-paced new church plant starting a new ministry within a Los Angeles neighborhood. He goes on to explain that support needs to move as fast as opportunity develops. In his case he did not use a supporting church, though authority was given for that ministry from an existing church. He writes that funding was gained by an available city grant as he helped to establish the East Hollywood Neighborhood Council, became appointed as the co-outreach coordinator, and was eligible to receive funding. He explained that to be successful as a new church you must become part of the neighborhood that you are evangelizing into (Woodward et al. 198). He did not mention a supporting church that needed to be addressed before becoming the coordinator, applying for the grant, or beginning the ministry.

Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im write about new church planting. They explain why some supporting churches may not be excited about new church planting in their area. They caution, and then explain the Self-Protection Syndrome. They write in *Planting Missional Churches* that many pastors may not be excited about a new church of their same denomination beginning in their local geographical area: "It could be competition, they reason. Worse, it may make the older church seem tired and out-of-date by comparison" (Stetzer and Im loc 408). This would help to explain some of the reasoning for wrong attitude and less than all-in support or, at the very least, a reason to not be on-fire for a new church plant in their area, but it also shows that supporting church is needed.

Garrison adds an interesting thought for the supporting church as he explains that many developed church models think a good foundation to new church planting takes time. He counters that time is not linear and goes on to explain that time is more like a wrinkle for the church planter. The new church planter must be able to combine opportune times with forward motion as they develop, not in a methodical step-by-step process. Time invested is not a measure of a good foundation, he says "sound doctrine and sound practice are." He also added that slowing the progress actually communicates the wrong message to folks that want to respond to new church growth" (Garrison, loc 3927–3946). Traction should not be slowed once established.

Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im remind the new church planter and the supporting church to keep the vision that started the new plant, not to wander or change it during the busy-ness of planting. They use an example from their book, *Multiplication Today, Movements Tomorrow* when the founding CEO of Starbucks who was asked to go back

after he had retired and rekindle the struggling operation. Shultz reported that Starbucks did not need a new heart; it would take more than a facelift as they had wandered from their original intent, "success had derailed their vision!" (Stetzer and Im 12). They went on to add, "If not checked, success has a way of covering up small failures, and when many of us at Starbucks became swept up in the company's success, it had unintended effects. We ignored, or maybe we just failed to notice the shortcomings" (Stetzer and Im 13). This is much like gaining traction with a new church plant; in the excitement of success, vision and support can change and get derailed.

Steve Stroope writes extensively on many different models of church planting and funding, from individual churches to campus and satellite models within his book, *Tribal Church*. He began as a small, sixty-member church pastor in 1979. He says that it is through God's grace and lots of hard work that Lake Pointe Church has grown into nearly 10,000 in worship on an average weekend. They run sixteen services in two languages on six different campuses. In addition to those campuses, Lake Pointe has helped to develop and partially fund new church plants in Las Vegas, Portland, Tampa, Boca Raton, Fort Smith, and Fort Worth as well as two churches in New York and three in San Francisco (Stroope 2). He explains that this growth is not a by-product of trying to be a big church as they have never set attendance goals, instead they have stayed focused on the little details and to the smaller "tribes" that make up the Lake Pointe Church. They made the little things about supporting the smaller groups of the growing church a top priority. He writes, "Lake Pointe is a tribal church that focuses on leading small to have a big impact for His Kingdom. The truth is that we have never considered ourselves to be a large church but rather a beautiful mosaic or collection of small tribes" (Stroope 2).

Stroope explains funding for their Manhattan location as coming from a group of alliance churches, rather than from an individual supporting church. He also makes self-funding a priority (Stroope 154). They are validated by the over thirty years that Lake Pointe has grown and been able to overcome barriers by remaining focused on staying in smaller pieces, rather than adopting the single, large mega-church mentality. This researcher has personally met some of the Lake Pointe team at various New Church Planting conferences and has been fortunate to spend quality time with them, asking really hard questions, and learning about their style of church planting. They are definitely a good resource to have for new church planting and did offer a few things to consider as best practices for supporting churches of new church plants. During a Zoom meeting in 2017, they offered advice: "Begin small so that you can be supported well, begin self-funding immediately, remain focused on the little details of the new church plant, and build and foster a supportive heart within the new church to continue to multiply."

Fresh Expressions is a name that describes new church starts that are formed for an indigenous community that do not use the traditional form of church. Many times, a fresh expression does not resemble a church at all, meeting in bars, restaurants, or prisons. Bevins explains that these types of new church starts do not require the funding of a supporting church, they require less funding than a traditional church plant. They use active laity and practical-contextualization as they engage a community within their community that was not priorly engaged and likely did not want to engage with a traditional form of church (Long and Moon 148).

Clint Clifton wrote an article about demystifying new church plant funding. He

does a good job of saying why a supporting church is recommended, and also adds a tip

on selecting that supporting church, which he calls a sending church:

Your first and most important partnership is with your Sending Church. Your

Sending Church is the organization taking primary responsibility for your new

church until it is self-sustaining, self-governing, and self-propagating. Your

Sending Church will serve as the collection point for all monies and is responsible

for your general oversight provision and accountability as a church planter.

Tip: Ideally, your Sending Church knows you and your family well. They believe

in your ministry and are willing to stick with you until your new church is up and

running. When deciding on what church will serve in this role, it's important that

you not simply choose the church willing to contribute the greatest amount of

money but the church with the highest level of commitment to the success of your

new church. (Clifton sec 1).

Sean Benesh comes at funding from supporting churches for new church plants

from a different angle. He has helped start many secular businesses and wonders what

would happen if funding for new church starts was handled like a new business is funded.

He explains that most new church starts go through their money in a few years because

they are fully funded up front. He suggests funding as needed, taking little up front, and

waiting until later to draw more:

I've now created several startups myself. The thought is never about how much

I'm going to make from the beginning. I'm playing the long game. That usually

means I take no salary for the first couple of years. All profits go back into

building and funding my startup. Then at some point, I begin drawing a salary.

Usually, it is ever so slight. That also means I need to be fully funded from Day

One, so I'm working full-time elsewhere. That also means my startup is

sustainable from the get-go. There's no pressure and flurry (or fury). Just one step

at a time. Build it as it grows. ("What If We Funded Church Plants Like New

Startups?")

Within the Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church, funding came

from a supporting church and sources from outside the local district, primarily through

the conference and some grant funding. In the researcher's case, a budget was developed

for four years that had to be approved by the Director of New Church Development.

Once approved, that budget was funded for a period of four years based on the approved

budget needs per year. Other times the funding was allocated over a four-year period and

was reduced annually: usually 100% for the first year, 75% the second, 50% the third,

and finally 25% for the fourth. The idea was to begin self-funding from the beginning.

Metrics were established and had to be met annually to continue funding for the four-year

period. This is similar to what Sean Benesh is suggesting, except pastoral salaries had to

be at least the minimum of the conference rate established each year.

Obstacles that hindered new church plants

Gary Nelson lists many things in his book, *Borderland Churches: A*

Congregation's Introduction to Ministry, that create obstacles for new church planting,

The most surprising was his mention of existing pastor's:

David Watson was, at that time, the leader of the Anglican Charismatic Renewal.

He placed a transparency on an overhead with a picture that displayed a bottle

with a stopper in its opening. Within bold capitalized letters on the stopper was

the word PASTOR. The implications were clear. The pastor is often the stopper in

the bottle, restricting the work of Spirit and the possibilities of renewal in the

church of Jesus Christ. (Nelson, loc.943)

Steve Addison describes the relationship between new church plants and the

supporting church as the "creative tension of partnership." He goes on to explain that two

errors are in place. On the one side, a party tries to dominate and control the other. On the

other side, one party or both seek independence. He explains that interdependence is the

solution to this tension (Addison 70). He also explains that the new plant needs financial

support and people from the supporting church: "They need the financial support and

people, but deep down they regard the church as a second-best option for making

disciples" (Addison 72). He goes on to explain that the church that is making disciples

without planting churches is a concept that is foreign to scripture.

Moynagh writes that many new church plants that tried to contextualize have

failed to exist or remain as small weak gatherings that make little impact. He describes

the reason as a "dominant gene:"

However, many of these church plants suffered from having a dominant gene that

saw church primarily in terms of Sunday worship, albeit done differently. They

started down the contextual road but did not travel far enough to reach people

who were outside the church. Largely for this reason, a number of these plants

were short lived, while others had little effect on the surrounding community.

(Moynagh, loc.115)

Alan Hirsch has written and contributed to many books and research about church planting and obstacles to church planting. He offers practical solutions about overcoming barriers. He does not specifically mention supporting church as an obstacle to church planting but does reference the growing problem of church decline in the Western world. He specifically lists religion as one of the primary contributors to that decline and goes on to show that a large portion of the unchurched are people that believe in God yet do not want to deal with the practice of religion. He describes religion as a type of drug that leaves them in a trancelike, ineffective sleep: "Morphine or heroin is an opiate. Ever seen a person taking a hit of heroin? I have, and they effectively go into a deep, trancelike sleep. Religion does that to us… it dulls us and puts us to sleep. We become ineffective" (Hirsch and Ford 237). In this sense, a supporting church, that locals do not want to experience will create a barrier for a new church plant in the same area.

Stetzer reveals in *Multiplication Today, Movements Tomorrow* that every church has their share of "Debbie Downers," a group of members that consistently bring bad news, bad attitude, and negative feelings that sour the mood of everyone around them (Stetzer and Im 39). It would not be much of a stretch to realize that some of the members from the supporting church will also be "Debbie Downers."

Jim Griffin has much to say about obstacles that hinder new church planting. He does not explicitly name the supporting church as a barrier but does warn about the new church plant trying to do all things for all people. Griffin warns that new church plants should act their age, and their size rather than be pushed to be like the bigger churches too soon (Griffith and Easum 95). Many supporting churches want to see ministries in the new church plant developed to their level quickly.

Ed Stetzer makes the case that new church planters should be equipped and prepared for the project before attempting new church planting. Much has been written about this subject by others, and though not the focus of this project, it is mentioned here because he shows the reality that many existing churches are not in support of new church planting! Stetzer builds from J.D Payne's research to compare his own findings. JD Payne writes that he discovered three things that keep existing churches from supporting new church plants from his research: "Ignorance; turf-ism and lack of Kingdom vision" (Payne 3). Stetzer builds from Payne's findings in *Multiplication today, Movements Tomorrow* and shows that 22% of churches that had begun in 2012 or earlier had started at least one daughter church, while 73% had not (Stetzer and Im 14). This may hint to the reality that many existing churches, though newly planted, have lost Kingdom vision.

Marks writes about conversion of self, the default settings becoming changed with conversion. He explains that poor leadership skills, attitude and drive can become massive obstacles. Marks explains, "When you're a hammer, everything looks like a nail" (Marks 100). Pastor's and team members within a supporting church with this personality can become definite obstacles to the new church plant.

Stroope writes with experience and from a long friendship with Rick Warren, founder of Saddleback Mega Church. They have both successfully planted new churches in many areas and are very strategic in their planting models and practices. They find and equip planting pastors and use their church alliances to raise capital for their new church plants. Though the crux of their writing is aimed at new church planting pastors, some info can be gleaned from their model of support. Stroope explains that for their

Manhattan plant, they raised enough money to cover the expenses of the new church plant for 100% of the first-year budget, then they continued that level of funding for at least three more years without decreasing it annually. They explain that the new church budget for the second year should be 200% of the funding provided, and in the third year 400% of the funding provided. In a very practical sense, they are saying that the new church must expand its budget and increase self-funding as it continues. It is not allowed to maintain its beginning budget; it is forced to grow beyond that annually (Stroope 154). This is in stark contrast to many of the denominations that have declining annual support: first year at 100% then decline 25% per year for four years. They are saying that many of the new church plants are being under-funded for practical growth and Kingdom-building vision. This begs the question: Are supporting churches under-funding, creating financial barriers, while expecting dynamic growth through Kingdom expansion?

Missional Challenge offers advice and help to many church planting organizations. They list six obstacles with equal emphasis, but interestingly they list the traditional church as a contributing obstacle: "Many believe that the biggest obstacle to CPMs is the traditional church model. While God has used traditional-model churches, traditionalism can be a significant obstacle to embracing more effective methods that would accelerate disciple making" ("*6 Obstacles to Church Planting Movements – Missional Challenge"*).

Obstacle avoidance

A right attitude is important for supporting churches, leadership teams, and new church plants to have, but it is not automatically corrected. Craig, within his dissertation defines attitude:

Attitude: (1) A relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events, or symbols. (2) A general feeling or evaluation – positive or negative – about some person, object or issue. (Hogg and Vaughan Ch 5)

McLeod writes in an article that cognizant dissonance is a result of attitude: "Cognitive dissonance refers to a situation involving conflicting attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. This produces a feeling of mental discomfort leading to an alteration in one of the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors to reduce the discomfort and restore balance" *("Cognitive Dissonance").*

Attitude should be carefully considered, checked, and discarded, if necessary, before appointing a support church to a new church plant. Attitude, gifting, work experience, ability to sustain, and emotional state are thoroughly checked for a new church planter. In this writer's case, entire boards were convened, complete with formal interviews at all levels along the way for satisfactory review from the local congregation to the district and finally at the bishop's cabinet level. Supporting churches should be considered and reviewed with this same intensity. From the United Methodist model, the itinerant nature may further affect staff, pastors, and bishops. Many are moved and new leaders assume their positions, though the new church planter continues. This may cause new attitudes to enter leadership and supportive positions that could contribute to an attitude change.

James MacDonald writes about attitude change. He explains that "attitudes are patterns of thinking, formed over a long period of time" (MacDonald 36). He uses the early Israelites to validate that reality. The complaining attitude of the Israelites did not

begin with their time in the desert (Num Ch 11). They are complaining while making bricks in Egypt without straw (Ex Ch 5). His point is that a pattern is followed until it is changed. Attitude should be carefully considered before selecting a supporting church.

The above has focused primarily on practices for supporting churches and barriers that could hinder new church plants. It is important to briefly address whether support is necessary and the reason for planting new churches.

The Necessity of Support from the Local Church

Support from the early Christian church in Jerusalem for the expansion of the church in Acts created barriers to that expansion. Support can cause obstacles. It is important to determine if there is a necessity of support from an existing church for expansion.

The new church that began expanding after receiving the Holy Spirit in Acts (Ch 2), used itself to support expansion (Acts 4:32-37) and not an existing church. In a sense, the beginning church continued supporting the churches after that and would be considered a supporting church. This kept the expansion supported from within but through the existing churches planned from the very beginning. The United Methodists were attempting this with existing churches supporting new church plants. They were of the same belief and structure and planned to work from within to expand themselves. This might be where some of the obstacles begin. Path 1 offers the United Methodists some advice as to the use of partnering for new church plants: "Always seek to plant with a well-developed connectional partnership – a partnering congregation, a partnering group of congregations or some other dependable resources (people and seed funding) to help begin an effective launch team quickly" (Path 1 3).

Path 1 also offers some warnings: "The planter may end up with too many chefs in the kitchen, essentially navigating competing visions among the partners. Partner church leadership may seek to limit how many members go to the new church or to backtrack on promises made" (Path 1 7).

Regardless of how support is obtained for new church starts, support is necessary and can create barriers. Even with the self-funding of the early church expansion in Acts (4:32-37), there were those who did not give all they had. In their case it was a fatal decision that ended with their deaths (Acts 5:1-11).

Stetzer and Bird performed a quantitative study on church planting entities in the United States and came up with some interesting results. On the issue of support for new church plants they discovered: "Several significant church-planting factors that relate to financing the work by denominations were uncovered. Church-planting emphasis, including funding, is shifting from the initiative and oversight of a national or regional agency to that of local church and church planter initiation" (Stetzer and Bird 23). Stetzer and Bird report in their analysis based in part on these discoveries from supporting churches, that although denominations are using parent churches to support new church plants, there are very few parents:

> It appears that although denominations are reporting a marked overall increase in church planting and in parent churches, regional leaders indicate that there are still only 15% of that denomination's local churches who are parenting churches. The majority of church-planting is being done by a very small percentage of that denomination's churches, or the parent church only participating from a distance. (Stetzer and Bird 25)

The Necessity of New Church Planting

      To discuss the necessity of new church planting, the overall picture of the Christian church in America needs to be discussed. There are many reports about the current state of the Christian church in America and speculation as to what the future may hold if nothing changes for those churches. Earls reports in his study that 4500 churches closed in 2019, while only 3000 were started in that same timeframe (Earls no.9). One survey reports that 24% of mainline protestants and 21% of Catholics have become unaffiliated with any religion ("Generation Z and the Future of Faith in America"). Another article reports that less people are in church, and that reality will continue because on-line worship is increasing post Covid-19:

      Before the pandemic, frequency of worship attendance was already declining. A frequent attender was one who attended 2–3 times per month. Now what we're seeing is that people are attending in person once or twice per month and online once or twice per month. It would be a mistake to look at the 50-50 split between in-person and online attendance and interpret that as half the people not being interested in the in-person community that is important to the life of a congregation. ("Empty Pews Are Here to Stay")

In 2019, Gallup reported that only 36% of Americans view organized religion with "a great deal of confidence," down from 68% in 1975 (Case). That's a near 50% decline. The above reports show the Christian Church decline in America. Many people that have grown up in church can see the decline and are experiencing that reality. They can also feel the negative attitude that is projected towards the Christian church in America. Pastors that once enjoyed a sense of belonging and had communities that wanted their

input are encountering a much different mindset. What was once a respected profession is now being treated as inferior by many communities. A Barna study conducted in 2020 shows how pastors feel about the state of the local church:

> Among pastors' main worries for the Christian Church in the U.S. is their chief concern for their own local churches: "reaching a younger audience" (56%). When paired with data about aging pastors, the growing group of atheists, agnostics and "nones" and declining church attendance among younger generations, faith leaders may well be getting a glimpse of the next generation's tenuous relationship to the Church. (*What's on the Minds of America's Pastors - Barna Group*)

Much of American political indifferences now involves religious practices and beliefs at the core of the issue. Public schools are no longer allowed to publicly pray before class. United States Military Chaplains are not allowed to serve Christian communion or mention Jesus Christ except during their preaching on Sunday. Prison Chaplains are not allowed to focus on Jesus Christ; they must bring in outside teams to teach about Christ and allow other religions to also teach in the prison units. Barna reports that many young adults see a leadership crisis in America and have distrust for institutions, including church:

> Globally, 82 percent of young adults say society is in a leadership crisis; while this data point refers specifically to leadership on a broad scale, Barna research consistently paints a picture of 18–35-year-olds' distrust of institutions, religious and otherwise—something that the Church must overcome if these maturing

generations are to help lead the Church in the future. (*What's on the Minds of*

America's Pastors - Barna Group)

Christianity is declining in America, church membership is declining in America, and

trust for Christian leaders is also declining, but to speculate that Christianity will soon be

over is a stretch. God has done things in the past that were considered impossible like

parting the Red Sea, parting the Jordan river, defeating tens of thousands of better-armed

soldiers with a mere three hundred, and stopping an superior advancing army with a

twelve-year-old boy and a sling shot. God can, and will, do what is needed to see God's

plan of salvation and redemption completed. Christianity in America is not doomed at all.

Church planters see through the lens of hope, redemption, and bright future. Rejection

proves the scripture true, and they cannot wait to see what God is going to do next. They

feel as though they are living the new New Testament. Church planting is what God used

in the past to grow Kingdom, what John Wesley used to grow Kingdom for God in the

past, was so important to Bonhoeffer that he came back into harm's way to support it.

The answer to church decline in America is church planting. God changes things beyond

what human minds can understand or even imagine.

Bryan Collier has extensive experience with practiced application of expanding

church through new church planting while overcoming obstacles. He writes of beginning

the Orchard Church as a United Methodist new church start. He experienced obstacles

along that journey. He leads the reader into the reality that new church planting is the act

of stepping out with full faith and understanding deeply that God will lead, provide, and

sustain the vision that God has provided. In explaining that vision to others, especially to

traditional church, Bryan writes, "Taking risks for the advancement of the gospel should

not be countercultural in the Church, but it seems too often that it is. Mainline church has been in decline for four decades while churches that are nimble enough to respond to cultural changes and focused enough to remember why they exist thrive" (Collier 9). Collier also writes on the benefits of multi-site church planting. He and his team went on to create a successful, multi-site one-church. They have many locations that are continuously reaching the un-churched and remain joined together as one church. Collier proves that church planting obstacles are never rare or calm; they seem to come when they can create the most mayhem, forcing the faithful to stand strong. This is validated by the fact that of this writing, The Orchard and the United Methodist are no longer affiliated. Like John Wesley with the Anglican Church, the Orchard had to separate to be able to continue in its original vision of continuous reaching for the un-churched. Collier explains many things with his writings but has proven why new church planting is critical to Kingdom growth.

Research Design Literature

The literature review show that little has been written to help supporting churches discover best practices of supporting churches and their leadership teams in San Antonio, Texas for new church plants. More research is needed.

Tim Sensing defines research as: "A family of methods that share common characteristics of disciplined inquiry. Research methods contain data, arguments, and rationales that are capable of withstanding scrutiny by members of an associated guild. Research prompts us to understand problems, as questions, and pursue specialized modes of inquiry" (Sensing 51).

John Creswell defines mixed methods research as: "A methodology and method to research in the social behavioral, and health sciences in which the investigator gathers both quantitative and qualitative data, integrates or combines the two, and then draws inferences from the integration that provides insight beyond what can be learned from the quantitative or qualitative data" (Creswell 1).

The literature review shows that a project-developed tool for testing supporting church barriers is needed. An initial survey questionnaire allowed the researcher to test the theory that barriers from supporting churches exist in the world of church planting in San Antonio, Texas and that they can affect the outcome of the new church plant. Once the survey was complete, a follow-up questionnaire for select participants was done to understand those barriers and to determine what may have caused them. These tools, used together, are a good means to understand some strategies that can help to create best practices for supporting churches and their leadership teams in San Antonio, Texas for new church plants.

Research into the development of the survey tool was taken from Tim Sensing's book, *Qualitative Research: A multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Thesis.* Sensing describes twelve "Purposive Samples" to select participants with awareness and understanding for the questionnaire (Sensing 83). Lincoln and Guba further suggest a broad sampling that they call "maximum variation sampling" as the best method for selecting interviewees (Lincoln and Guba 202). Sensing has fourteen types of questions that will help to guide the researcher through the interview process (Sensing 87). John Creswell's *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research* helped to further define the steps of a mixed methods project:

- Collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data in response to research questions.

- Use rigorous qualitative and quantitative methods.

- Incorporate procedures within a mixed method design.

- Integrate qualitative and quantitative data in the design.

- Draw Meta inferences from this integration.

- Include a worldview and a theory. (Creswell 4)

The primary purpose of this project is to discover best practices for supporting churches and their leadership teams for New Church Starts in San Antonio Texas. As the focus is discovery of a potential problem, the pre-intervention model of research was utilized.

Quantitative research is necessary to gather numbers from responding active churches in the San Antonio, Texas area. A qualitative element was administered to gather a complete understanding of what was considered successful for the supporting church of a new church plant and what was considered not successful in the San Antonio area of Texas. For this project the mixed design was the best method for gathering complete information from active supporting churches of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas that responded to the initial survey.

Summary of Literature

The literature review proves that new church planting is necessary to reach the unchurched in the changing culture of America. The older ways that worked so well in the nineteenth century are failing in the twenty-first century. Existing church attendance is trending down, and American churches are closing faster than new churches are

starting. New Church planting is necessary for dynamic growth and needs support but does not need to be controlled by the aged attitude of the existing church.

Attitude must be considered and likely worked on to keep forward traction and excitement for the new church plant. A right attitude may be difficult to maintain in the fast-paced life of new church planting. In a sense, right attitude may even be counter-cultural to the demand and pace of new church starts. It may be impossible to keep a team, especially from different churches with different goals, in a right and willing attitude. New church plants require a fast paced, change as you try, adjust on-the-fly, type of method of operation. The existing church likely prefers a steady and slower adjustment method of operation. Considering the age of ordained United Methodist pastors at 55-72, making an average age of 56 for the clergy ("Church Continues to See Clergy Aging Trend"), and realizing that new church planters are considerably younger, may reveal further reasons for attitude dissonance.

All of this makes it clear that new church planting, though fraught with difficulties and obstacles, should be practiced, accelerated, and supported by all Christians. Church Planting is necessary for expanding growth of the existing church. It must be supported and not handled or manipulated as a dangerous attempt to maintain numbers for the existing church. As new ideas and concepts surface for the changing culture, it is more important than ever to offer a balanced, well-presented Christ to the emerging population. The times are changing, but Christ is the answer for the balance and the solution to the problems, considered radical in His time of physical ministry, and still radical in this time of ministry. Radical balance is what is missing in this time of far-right and far-left extremism. Christ came to earth because of an imbalance and extremism in

the biblical time. It is now the church's job to remind the world of that, not to

infight

and split over human issues.

If support is the fastest way to gain new church expansion, then support must be gained and utilized so that it does not inhibit or become an obstacle to new church growth. Maybe it is humanly impossible to just get along. The church is not about humanity, though it certainly involves it. The church is about God as known through Jesus Christ. When people make the church about themselves, they create a dissonance. There are many examples of times when that happened. It is human nature to not get along. Allowances must be made for that as a way to keep a right attitude and support new church starts. The people who went before surely had their share of obstacles and times of wrong attitude, but they managed to continue. The work of new church expansion continues today. Each believer needs to understand that they are all part of the expansion and do all that they can to further that reality. If God's plan is to expand His church on earth, then it will expand with or without them. Many in the biblical stories were shown as not doing their part to support the church expansion, but in those stories, they still added to the reality of that expansion. Every person decides how they are going to contribute and be remembered, for or against. Regardless, their contribution will still add to the reality of Christian church expansion.

There is a need to develop best practices for the supporting churches of new church plants. Support can cause harm to the new church plants through wrong attitude, lack of trying, or trying to stop traction.

Best practices for supporting churches of new church plants and their leadership teams are necessary to help new church plantings prosper and grow.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this project. After a brief review of the project, the research questions are presented along with the instrumentation models used. The context of the project is then presented, followed by specifics on the participants, the instrumentation used, and the process for data analysis.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

The topic of this dissertation is discerning best practices for supporting churches and their leadership team for new church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

Church planting is very specialized and requires a rapidly adjusting ministry. Much has been written in other projects showing that planting new churches requires exceptional gifts and tenacity, extreme strategy, and amazing leadership abilities; it also requires serious support and funding from a strong and serious team to succeed and eventually become self-sufficient.

The purpose of this study is to discover the best practices within supporting churches and their leadership teams and determine their effect on new church planting in San Antonio, Texas.

By using survey questions addressed to Christian churches in the San Antonio, Texas area, responding churches provided the data used to help move the research from quantitative surveys to qualitative interviews. A representative number of the church leaders who responded were asked interview questions to determine best practices for

new church plants and to additionally explore attitudes of the supporting church for

consideration as a best practice for new church planting.

Research Questions

RQ #1. What practices of supporting churches and their leadership contribute to the success of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas?

This question was asked to gain an understanding into the supporting church

perspective on best practices for a successful new church plant. A mixed method

approach was used. Within the quantitative survey, questions five, nine, and ten were

asked to solicit the participants agreement with the listed practice and determine its level

of importance to the success of new church planting. Tables 4.2, 4.4, and 4.5 show those

results. Question six asked for additional practices that should have been listed as

successful for church plants. Table 4.7 shows those results. The qualitative interview

revealed three practices as most important: clear communication, compatibility, and

prayer. This is reported in Chapter 4.

RQ #2. What obstacles do supporting churches and their leadership present to new church starts that hinder their success in San Antonio, Texas?

This question addressed things that supporting church leadership anticipated as

obstacles to new church plants within their ministry area. A mixed method consisting of a

quantitative survey and a qualitative interview was utilized. The quantitative survey

question six was asked to determine if the supporting church considered sending existing

members to join new church plants a hinderance or a help. Question eight asked the

participants to list the biggest obstacles that had hindered the new church plant. Table 4.4

and 4.6 show those results. The qualitative interview revealed that micro-management by

the supporting church was the biggest issue, and question eleven revealed that a bad attitude within the supporting church had hindered the new church plant. These results are shown in Chapter 4.

RQ #3. What additional practices should have been included to ensure a successful new church plant in San Antonio, Texas?

This question was asked to discover additional practices that may not have been originally considered as important to best practices. A mixed method approach was utilized through a quantitative survey and a qualitative interview. Question six of the quantitative survey asked for suggestions of the most important practice for supporting a new church plant. Table 4.7 shows those results. The qualitative interview revealed three practices as most important, reported in Chapter 4.

Ministry Context

San Antonio, Texas is a blended culture with a set of unique underlying beliefs and traditions described as South Texas. It maintains an older-German culture, pre-USA, from settlers that came and settled the southwest for a chance at a better future, primarily through agriculture and farming. San Antonio also has an older-Vaccaro, pre-USA, traditional-Mexican cowboy culture of cattle and ranching, horsemanship, and tight family community. Both traditional cultures comingle with the current cultures of America that create San Antonio's dynamic, cross-cultural amalgamation. A type of new meets old, with a western blend, creating a unique South Texas experience. San Antonio is experiencing explosive growth as many are moving to embrace this experience. San Antonio is in the process of becoming a dynamic city mixed with business professionals, business entrepreneur start-ups, established large corporations, retired middle-Americans, retired military, and a

growing number of first generation-immigrants, all embracing the older traditions of

agriculture and ranching that are creating an extremely dynamic cultural blend of families

and friends. San Antonio is a unique area of new cohabitating with the older but not-

forgotten frontier, and all are amalgamating into the twenty-first century South Texas

experience of a united willingness to embrace life at the fullest level.

<div align="center">

Participants

</div>

Criteria for Selection

The first twenty Christian church leaders within the geographic area of

San Antonio, Texas that responded to the initial request to participate and returned the

signed Informed Letter of Intent.

Description of Participants

Decision makers for the church in a leadership role that are at least of adult legal

age in Texas.

Ethical Considerations

Potential participants were informed of the nature of the study through an

informed consent letter. The informed consent letter is also considered an abstract of the

project. A copy of the informed consent letter is attached as Appendix C.

To protect confidentiality, no names, individually identifying denominational

information, specific job descriptions, or any other distinguishing characteristics are

reported in this study. If referencing a particular participant, a pseudonym was used

known only to the researcher. Raw data will never be shared or disseminated.

The researcher will share significant findings in a colloquium with D.Min. cohort colleagues and ATS faculty on Asbury's Kentucky campus or through electronic means. Only research findings will be shared, no raw data will be dispersed.

Electronic data stored will be password protected on the researcher's personal computer only. Any hardcopy data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office. All electronic data and hardcopy data will be destroyed within twelve months of the conclusion of the research project.

Instrumentation

An email invitation was sent out to 300 plus Christian churches in San Antonio, Texas asking if they would agree to participate in an ATS dissertation research project that would consider best practices for new church plants. Thirteen responded and completed the quantitative email survey.

The first instrument employed was an emailed survey. The second instrument was a set of one-on-one video interviews. Both instruments were researcher designed. The research was designed to move from general to more specific through the investigative process of discovering the best practices for new church plants and then considering additional practices that might be considered best practices for new church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

Survey questions 1-2 were designed to help gauge the participants' attitude towards new church planting for local growth of their church. Questions 3-4 were designed to determine the participants' title & role within the supporting church. Questions 5, 9, and 10 were examples of best practices to be rated by participants as important, the first listed being most important. Questions 8 and 9 were designed to help

determine obstacles to church planting. Question 6 was designed to discover best practices offered by the participants that had not been priorly discussed.

After the survey was concluded and studied to identify best Practices the findings were summarized into San Antonio, Texas best practices for new church plants. The summary was explored through structured one-on-one interviews. Sensing describes this structure as loose and unrehearsed but not devoid of complete structure (Sensing 106). Probing is narrowed by a preset protocol that will attempt to gain best practices purpose statement.

The results from the interviews were synthesized with findings from the literature review and then applied to the specific context of San Antonio, Texas as best practices for new church plants.

Pilot Test or Expert Review

Dr. M. Lowe and Dr. B. Collier approved the quantitative survey questions and the qualitative interview questions before their use in this project.

Reliability & Validity of Project Design

Sensing's suggestions about the quantitative survey were followed by adjusting and using his model of quantitative questions to make sure that they would not be biased or misleading. The quantitative questions that had been asked were considered, and then Creswell's grounded theory was followed to develop interview questions that would broaden the understanding gathered from the quantitative questions to build a deeper understanding of best practices.

The questions on the quantitative survey were intentionally developed to be clear and not confusing. Dr. Milton and Dr. Collier reviewed and approved those questions, offering advice as needed to create a clear and concise project.

This project can be duplicated and will discover the same findings. The caliber of participants could be duplicated by staying with adult leaders of Christian churches in San Antonio, Texas. As time moves on and the Christian church adjusts to the post-Covid environment, some best practices may change in importance. The project can be duplicated. The attitude coming out of Covid cannot be duplicated as the shock and awe of that limiting, physical engagement gets further away. It affected perceptions.

Data Collection

The type of research design is pre-intervention. This project measures and describes a best practice situation for supporting churches and their leadership teams for church planting in San Antonio, Texas by using the mixed-method design. It may further begin to develop a strategic plan to address the situation, but it does not entail development or engagement of a tool and the measurement for a post-intervention result.

This project engages in qualitative and qualitative research. John Creswell describes as mixed-method:

> A researcher using qualitative methods decides what to study, poses specific questions, measures variables to facilitate the assessment of answers, uses statistical analysis to obtain information to answer the questions, and makes an interpretation of the results. Different from qualitative research, in which the investigator poses general questions and collects data in the form of text, audio recordings, or video recordings. A hallmark of qualitative research is that the

researcher collects data by observing participants or directly asking them open

ended questions using tools such as interviews, focus groups protocols, or

questionnaires. After collecting qualitative data, the researcher conducts a

thematic analysis and presents the findings in literary form, such as story or

narrative. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative research follow the general

process of research: identify a problem, determine research questions, collect

data, analyze data, and interpret results. Elements of both quantitative and

qualitative research are included in a mixed methods study. (Creswell 4)

Sensing says the multi-methods approach advocated in his book, *Qualitative Research; A multi-Methods Approach to Projects fort Doctor of Ministry Thesis*, "Allows various perspectives to engage in a critical dialogue that leads to several sets of rich data, resulting in the possibility for deeper understandings" (Sensing 54). Patton validates Sensing's thoughts and says that those findings can be communicated to readers in such a way that makes information useful to others (Patton 96–102).

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

</div>

The surveys were examined, named, and organized to create a best practices list showing best practices and biggest obstacles to be aware of. From most important to least important for new church plants, an obstacle list was also developed for successful church planting in San Antonio, Texas. These results informed the interview questions to determine the depth of agreement and to reconsider best practices for the San Antonio, Texas context specifically. Finally, the finished list was compared to the original survey, synthesized with findings from the literature review and contextual observations to create a best practices list for new church planting in San Antonio, Texas.

CHAPTER 4
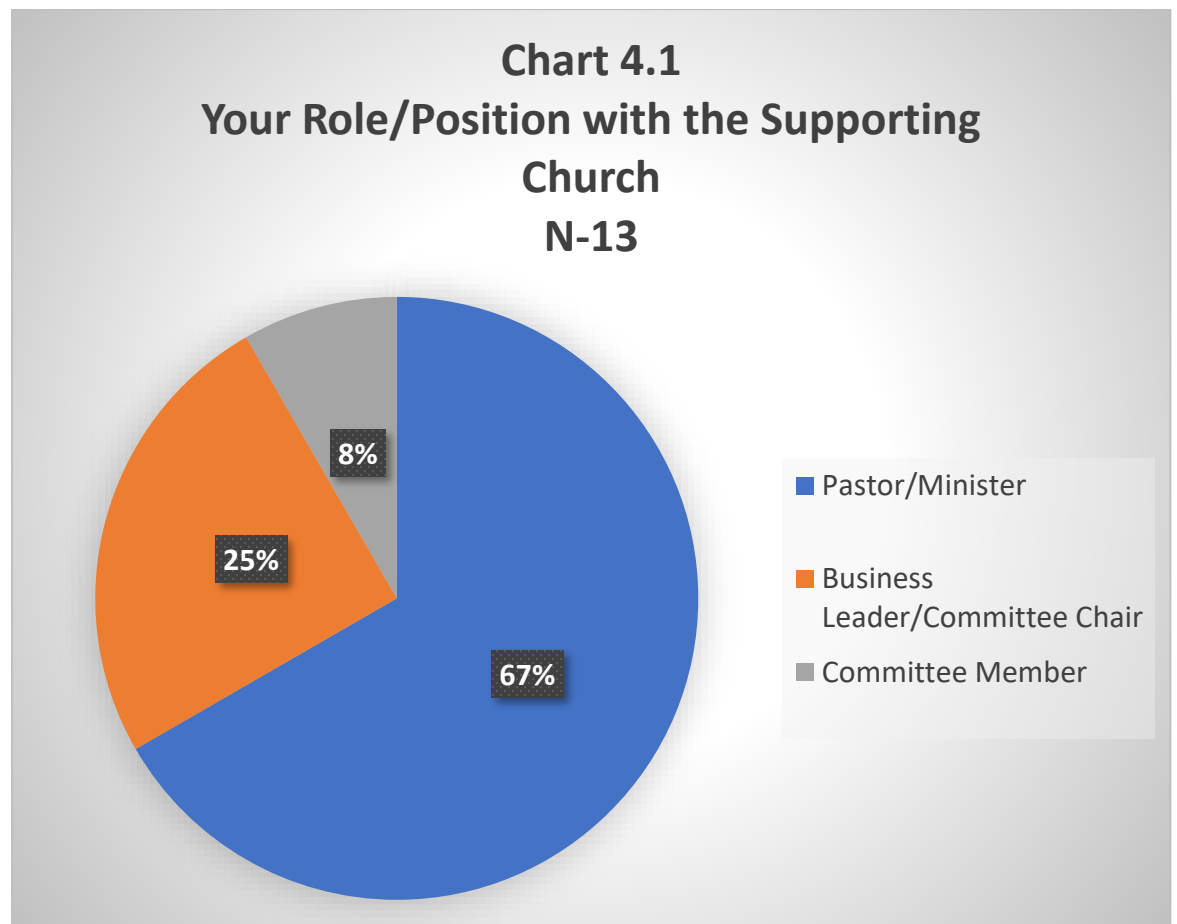
EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

***Much has been written on new church planting from the church planter's

perspective. Much has also been written about new church planting from a coaching

perspective, but very little has been written from a supporting church perspective. The

purpose of this research was to discover best practices for supporting churches and their

leadership of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

This chapter identifies the participants within the supporting church located in

San Antonio, Texas. This chapter next presents the quantitative data from the survey and

the coded qualitative data from the interviews for each of the three research questions.

Chapter Four concludes with a list of major findings from the data.

Participants

An email invite was sent to 302 Christian churches during the month of December

2022 that were listed online for San Antonio, Texas with email addresses. A second email

was sent to those same 302 Christian Churches in the middle of January 2023 as a

reminder to participate in the online survey. From those bulk email invites, seventeen

church leaders responded. A follow up email was sent to those that responded with an

informed consent attached. It was requested that the informed consent be returned prior to

the quantitative survey link being sent. Fourteen informed consent forms were returned,

and thirteen quantitative email surveys were completed by March 5, 2023. From those

thirteen quantitative survey participants, two were invited to complete the qualitative

interview as 10% was the representative target for the number of interviews. Of the two

requests, one completed the video interview. The informed consent and research model approved by the IRB were designed so that only adults and church leaders were invited to complete the quantitative survey. The gender of the participants and the specific age of each adult participant was not identified. The title of each participating church leader was determined: 67% were Pastors, 25% were business leaders/committee chairs, and 8% were committee members. The quantitative survey results are shown in Figure 4.1. The qualitative interview was performed with one participant.

Chart 4.1
Your Role/Position with the Supporting Church
N-13

- Pastor/Minister
- Business Leader/Committee Chair
- Committee Member

The thirteen participants were also asked whether they had the authority to make decisions for the Supporting Church concerning new church planting. 76.92% were decision makers, as shown in Chart 4.2.

Chart 4.2
Are you a decsion maker for New Church Plants?
N=13

23.08

76.92

■ Yes ■ No
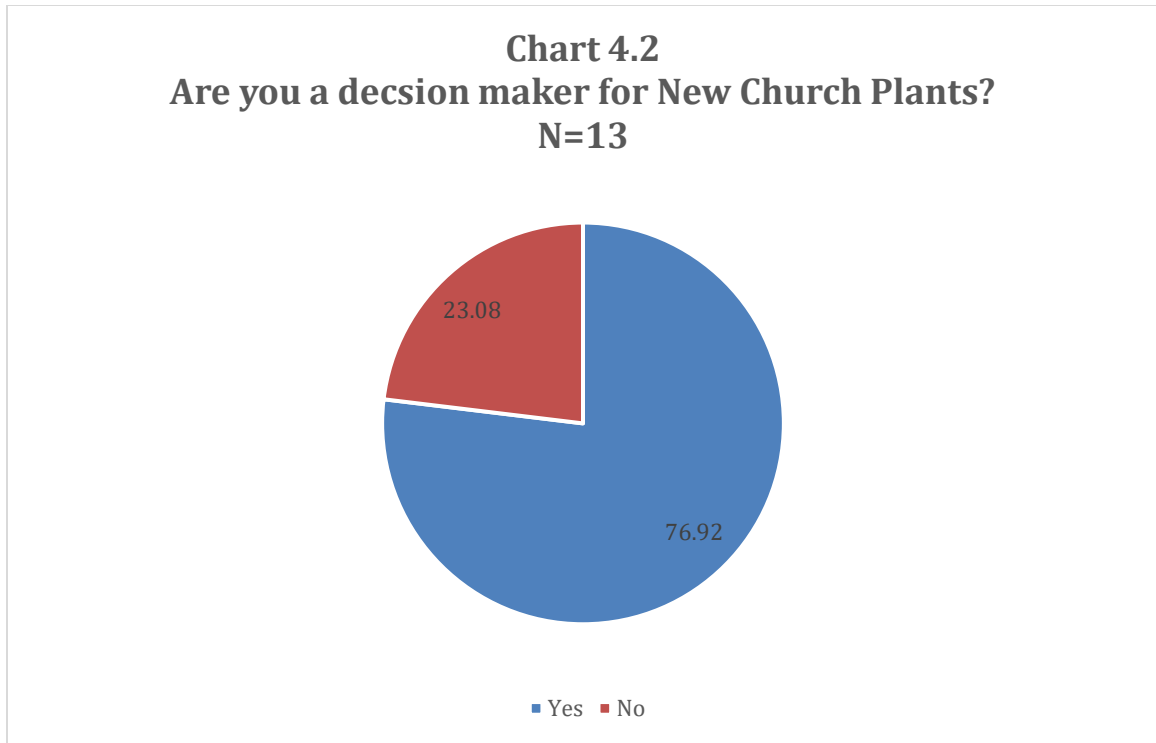
Research Question #1: Description of Evidence

What practices of supporting churches and their leadership contribute to the

success of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas?

The quantitative emailed survey had six questions that focused on supporting

church practices for new church plants. Questions One and Two were designed to gauge

the supporting churches' attitude about new church planting. Question One revealed that

53.85% of the participants agreed that it was somewhat true; that new church planting

was an effective way to grow the local church. Question Two showed that a 69.23%

majority had strong approval of supporting new church plants from within their existing

churches. This is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 (N=13)

Questions	% TRUE	% Somewhat True	% Maybe. Not Sure	% FALSE

| 1. Do you feel New Church Planting is an effective way to grow your existing church?	46.15	53.85	0	0
	Strongly Approve	**Approve**	**Neither**	**Disapprove**
2. Do you approve of your existing church supporting a new church plant?	69.23	23.08	7.69	0

Questions 1 & 2

Do you feel New Church Planting is an effective way to grow your existing church?

Do you approve of your existing church supporting a New Church Plant?

■ Neither True or False   ■ Somewhat True/Approve   ■ True/Strongly Approve
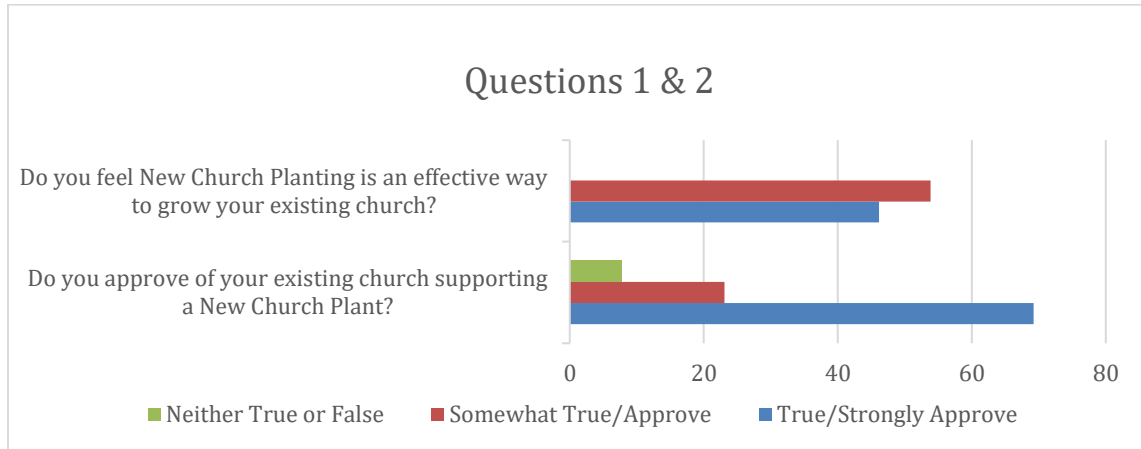
Question Five showed that the majority of participants agreed that a budget was necessary and was used for new church planting, as shown in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 (N=13)

Question	% Yes	% No	% Not sure. I'm not active with Planting
5. Is a budget approved and used by your church to support new church plants	61.54	23.08	15.38

Question 5

Is a budget approved and used by your church to support new church Plants?

■ Not sure. I'm not active with Church Planting   ■ No   ■ Yes
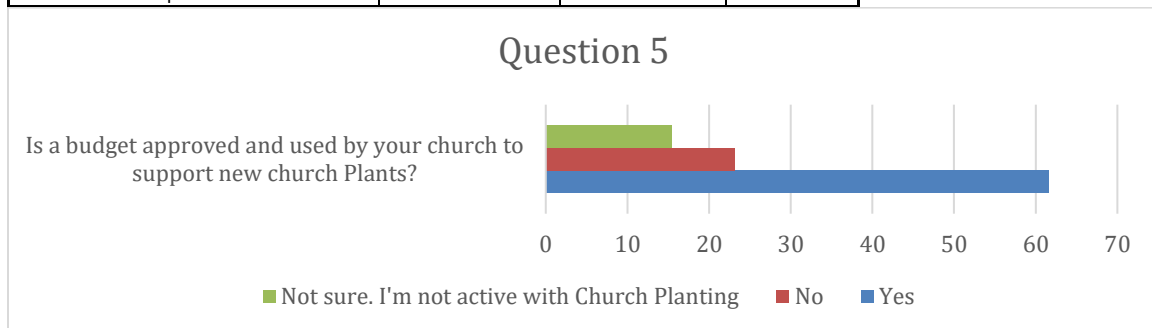
Question Seven explored who was responsible for new church planting success from the supporting church perspective. The answers were varied with all participants

selecting multiple answers. Of the 32 selections made, results show a majority 69.23%

believe that the Pastor of the new church plant was considered the most responsible for

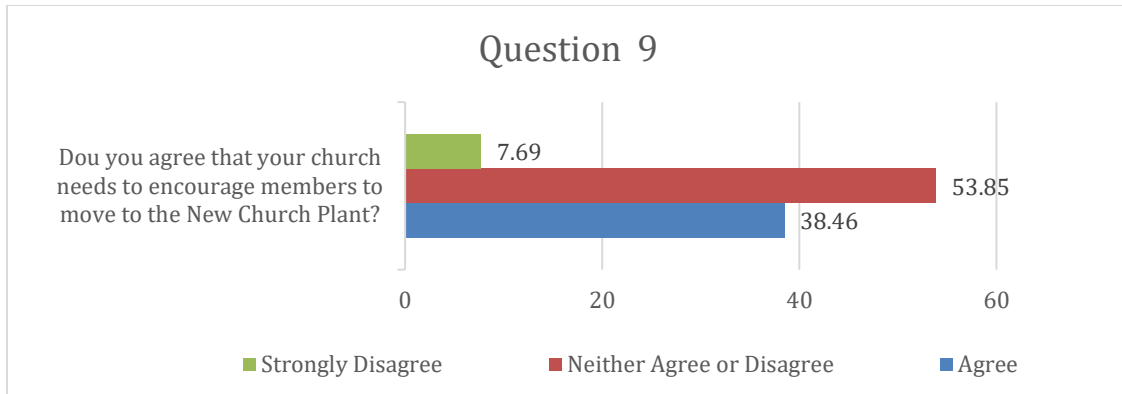the success of the New Church Plant, shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 (N=32 selections)					
Question	%	%	%	%	%
Note to Question 7: 13 total responded with multiple selections. A total of 32 selections were recorded.	**Pastor of Supporting Church**	**Pastor of new church plant**	**Oversight Teams or Committee's**	**Every Member of the Supporting Church**	**Every Member of the New Church Plant**
7. Who is most responsible for the success of the new church plant?	38.46	69.23	53.85	46.15	38.46

7. Who is most responsible for the success of the new church plant?

38.46	69.23	53.85	46.15	38.46
Pastor of Supporting Church	Pastor of New Church Plant	Oversight Teams or Committee's	Every Member of the Supporting Church	Every Member of the New Church Plant
%	%	%	%	%
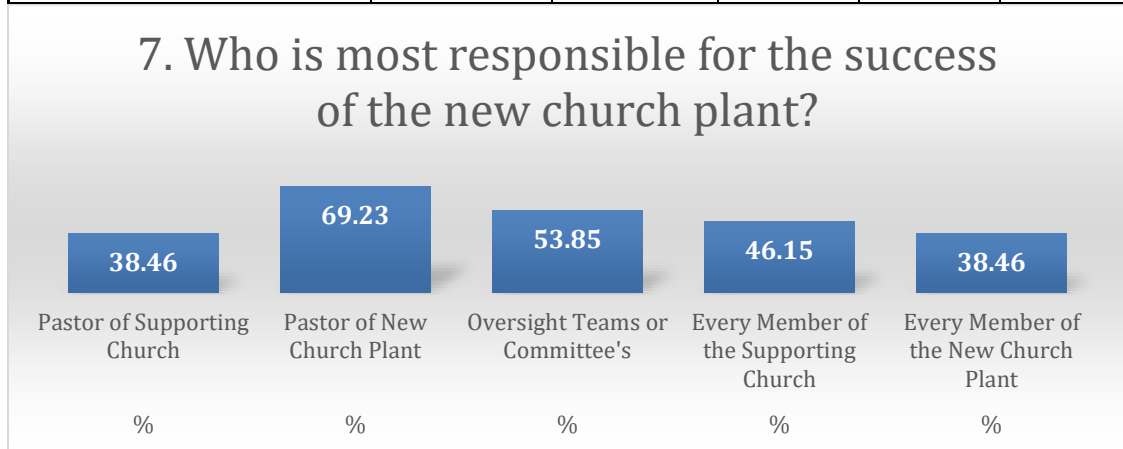
Question Nine showed a varied reaction to encouraging supporting church

members to join the new church plant with a majority not agreeing or disagreeing if this

was a good practice, shown in Table 4.4.

| Table 4.4 (N=13)				
	%	%	%	%
Question	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. Do you agree that your church needs to encourage members to move to the new church plant?	38.46	53.85	0	7.69

Question 9

Dou you agree that your church needs to encourage members to move to the New Church Plant?

7.69
53.85
38.46

0   20   40   60

■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Neither Agree or Disagree   ■ Agree

Question Ten built upon Question Two and asked how long the supporting church should financially support a new church plant. A slim majority reported that each new church plant should be considered unique and that supporting churches should not use a hard-set, one-size-fits-all time frame, for new church plants. A slim majority of 38.46% felt that the financial time of support should be different for each new church plant based on their unique context; 30.77% of the participants felt that financial support should last as long as it takes for the new church plant to reach self-sustainability, shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 (N=13)					
	%	%	%	%	%
Question	None	3 Years	4 Years	Until the Plant Reaches Self-Sustainability	Different for each Plant
10. How long should your church financially support a new church plant?	0	23.08	7.69	30.77	38.46
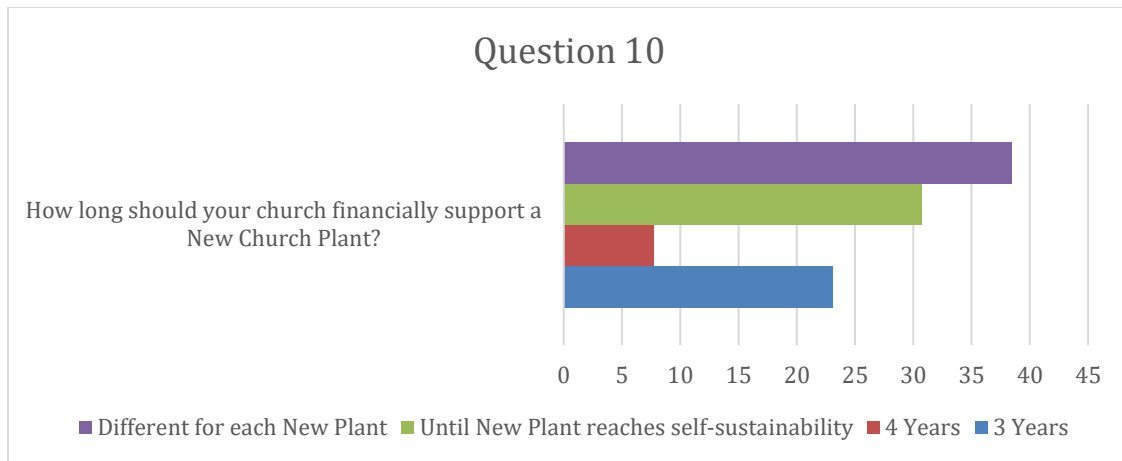
Qualitative data collected from the video interview provided deeper answers to the first research question. Analyzing and sorting the data identified the following factors as to what practices of supporting churches and their leadership contribute to the success of new church plants in San Antonio, Texas.

Confirmation of the Claim of Research Question One

The qualitative data from interview Questions Four and Five show success of practices used within the supporting church with five new church plants started over the last five years and five new church plants not still running but beginning to multiply. Question Six discovered a best practice of the supporting church, described as walking beside new church plants, not leading, but supporting fully with availability when needed.

Reasons for the Use of Best Practices for Supporting Churches of New Church Plants

As written above, best practices of supporting churches will lead to new church plant success. Success is currently being tested and is becoming somewhat redefined to include surviving an extremely difficult tough time in ministry. COVID and the resulting economic hardships since COVID have contributed to the local churches defining success

to include survival. Many successful churches of yesterday are now in danger of closure or have closed due to the economic and communal situations that the COVID environment created. The United Methodist Church shows this best as divisions had grown before COVID. The post-COVID economy and changing culture have added to the earlier issues of inclusion which have now helped to exacerbate a very-difficult time for success. Only the future will define whether the United Methodist Church will still be considered successful. The interview revealed several best practices which can be organized into three main points.

Communication

Communication was mentioned many times during the interview. The participant was clear that communication, good communication, and clear communication were paramount for the success of the new church plants.

Compatibility

The participant used this word in three different questions when describing the experience as a supporting church. Compatibility was used to describe a practice for both the supporting church and the new church plant receiving the support. It was also used to describe building a strong mission minded team with the task of exponentially supporting new church plants.

Prayer

The participant described prayer as a must for solid support of a new church plant. Prayer was used when answering numerous questions during the interview. Steady prayer, relevant prayer and more prayer were mentioned in three of the fifteen questions.
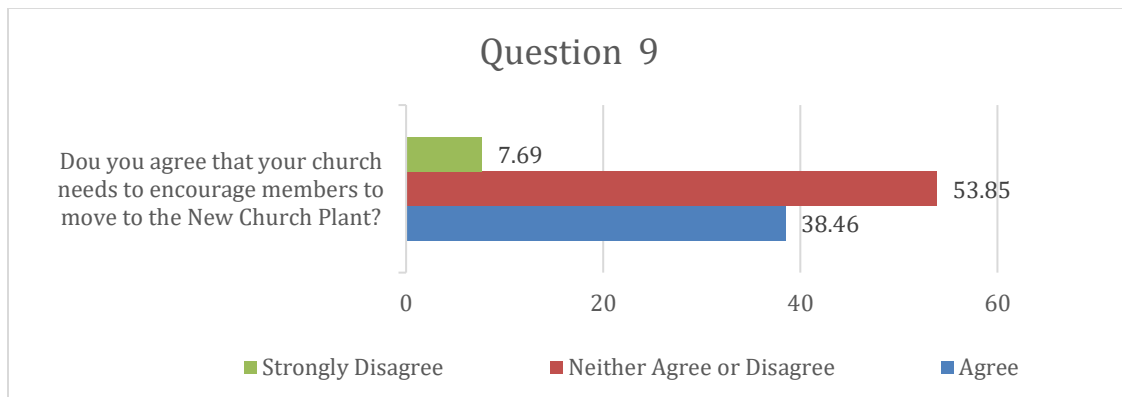
Research Question #2: Description of Evidence

What obstacles do supporting churches and their leadership present to new church starts that hinder their success in San Antonio, Texas?

The quantitative emailed survey had two questions that contribute to the second research question. Question Nine may suggest a hinderance for a successful new church plant based on the majority 53.85% of the participants neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the practice of encouraging members of the supporting church to join the new church plant, shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 (N=13)				
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**
Question	**Agree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
9. Do you agree that your church needs to encourage members to move to the new church plant?	38.46	53.85	0	7.69

Question Eight specifically asked for the biggest obstacle that a supporting church may create for new church plants. A majority of 53.85% listed micro-management as the biggest obstacle, with 23.08% listing forced cloning of the new plant into the supporting church as another obstacle, shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 (N=13)				
	%	%	%	%
Question	Micro-management	Not Supportive	Not Available when Needed	Force New Church to be a Clone
8. What would you suggest as the biggest obstacle that a supporting church may create for a new church plant?	53.85	15.38	7.69	23.08
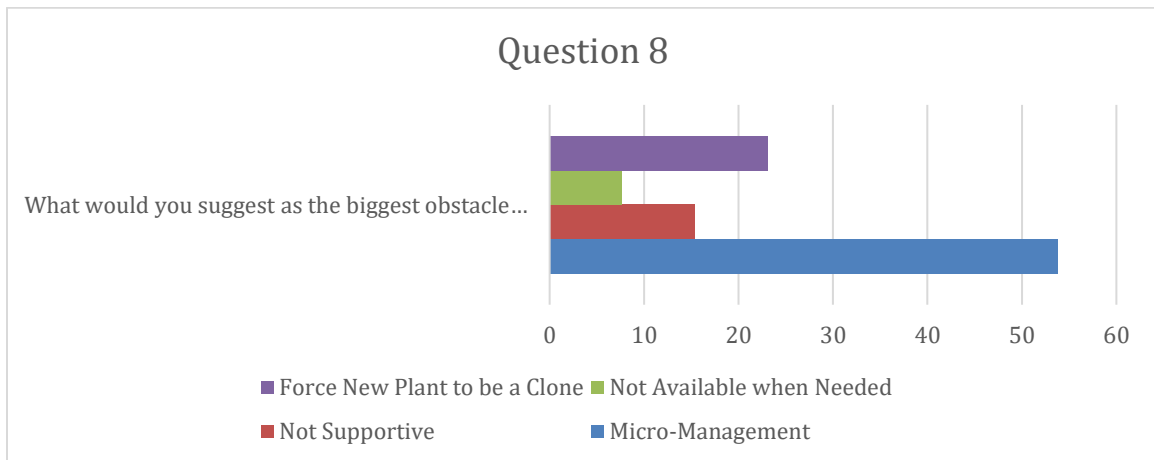
Question 8

Qualitative data collected from the video interview provided some answers to the second research question. Analyzing and sorting the data identified the following factors as to what obstacles hindered a successful church plant in San Antonio, Texas.

Confirmation of the Claim of Research Question two

The qualitative data from interview Questions Ten and Eleven were designed to discover practices used within the supporting church that hindered new church plants.

Reasons for the Use of Obstacles that hinder New Church Plants

As written above, Question Ten asked for a specific practice that had hindered new church plants. Hinderance is the opposite of success, described as those things that make the success of a new church plant difficult. The interview revealed that issue, described as "trying to lead, to do it our way, and not listening to the new church plant ideas" had worked to create a hinderance to the new church plant. Question Eleven asked

for another example of a hinderance. The interview revealed a time when the supporting

church had developed a bad attitude and would not listen to suggestions from the new
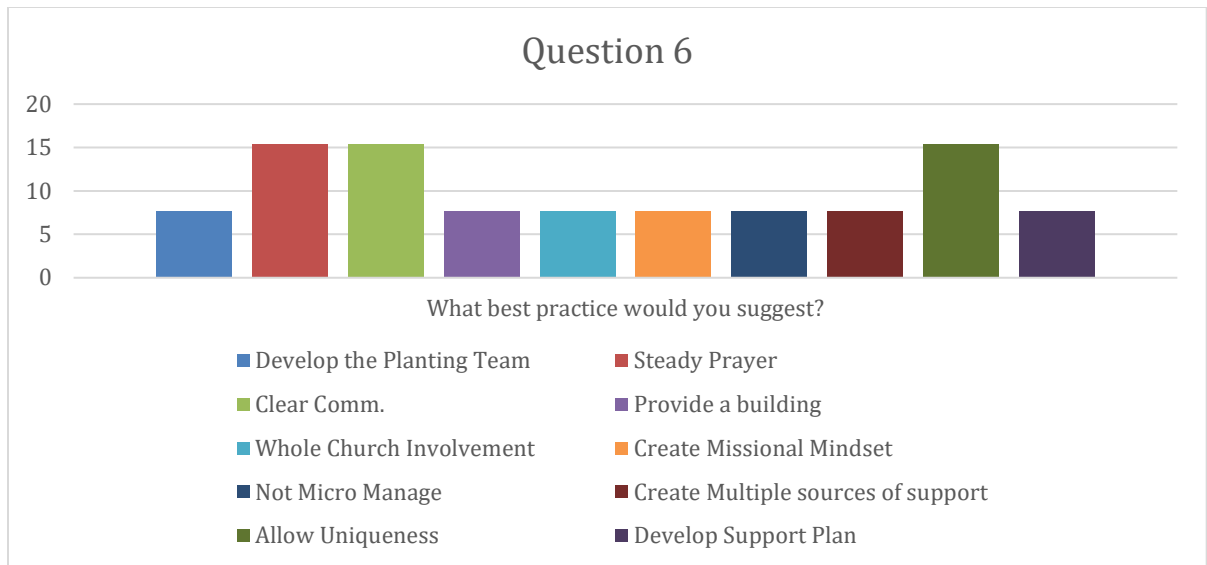
church plant.

<p style="text-align:center">Research Question #3: Description of Evidence</p>

What additional practices should have been included to ensure a successful new

church plant in San Antonio, Texas?

Question Six of the quantitative emailed survey was designed to offer suggestions

for research question three. Ten suggestions were offered from the thirteen participants

with Steady Prayer, Clear Communication, and allowing the new church plant to be

Unique as the top three suggestions with 15.38% in each of those three suggestions,

shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7
(N=13)

Question	% Develop the Planting Team from within the Supporting Church	% Steady Prayer	% Clear Communication	% Provide a Building	% Whole church involvement	% Create a Missional Mindset before Supporting	% Not Micro-manage the New Plant	% Create multiple sources for support, other churches, conference.	% Allow the church to be Unique	% Develop a clear plan for the support
6. What Best Practice would you suggest as most important for supporting churches of new church plants?	7.69	15.38	15.38	7.69	7.69	7.69	7.69	7.69	15.38	7.69

Qualitative data collected from the video interview provided some answers to research question number three. Analyzing and sorting the data identified the following factors as to what additional practices should have been included to ensure a successful new church plant. Question Thirteen revealed better communication, while Question Fourteen suggested more prayer, listening harder to the new church plant, and leading less.

Confirmation of the Claim of Research Question three

The qualitative data from the interview Questions Thirteen through Fifteen helped to suggest best practices that should be used by supporting churches. The participant pointed to five new plants as successful to validate that the practices offered below would have helped success come more quickly than it did.

Best Practices that should be included for supporting churches

As written above, five successes were found that validate that best practices for supporting churches help new church plants, even when applied through a very difficult

church growth time in America. The participant mentioned several best practices which should be included, and they that can be organized into three main points.

Communication

The participant used this word twice during the video interview. It was first used when talking about barriers that the supporting church had created for the new church plant. The second time came when offering three best practices that supporting churches need to be aware of; clear communication was the first offered.

Compatibility

The participant used this word twice during the video interview. It was first used when offering three best practices that supporting churches need to be aware of; compatibility was the second suggestion offered. This word was also used while offering anything else that needed to be added concerning best practices of supporting churches for new church plants. Total compatibility was used and defined as compatibility within the supporting team, compatibility between the supporting church and new plant, and as a discernment discovery that all parties were willing to work together as a totally compatible, union with God for church planting.

Represent Christ

The participant used the phrase "Be Christ like" four times while answering questions: in Question Six, "Remember to represent Christ, not self;" In Question Nine, "Model Christ always;" and in Question Nine, "Remember that we are accountable to Christ," and in Question Fifteen, "Use discernment from Christ, not from self."

Summary of Major Findings

Several major findings became clear from the data of both research tools. They are listed them here.

1. Supporting churches can be a significant support for new church plants.

2. Clear and concise communication is paramount between a supporting church and new church plants.

3. Micro-management from a supporting church is a hinderance to new church plants.

4. Supporting churches and new church plants need to be compatible and united around strategy and commitment to the end goal of starting a new church.

5. Prior developmental work should be done to gauge the attitude of the prospective supporting church before assignment to a new church plant.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

If a large denomination has made church planting a priority, funded a growth program, trained and appointed the church planter, and then designated a supporting church to develop the assigned area, there should be a unified effort to gain the market and numbers necessary to achieve that goal as God opens doors and opportunities develop. It is only possible to maintain traction with a supporting church if that supporting church has experienced traction in its recallable mental history. A supporting church may lose interest in the new church plant as time moves forward. Attitudes within the supporting churches' leadership may change towards new church planting.

This research project investigated best practices of the supporting church and its leadership regarding new church planting in San Antonia, Texas. Five major findings were discovered, and this chapter explains how they correspond to personal observations, the literature review, and the biblical framework of this project.

Major Findings

Supporting churches can be a significant support for new church plants

New church plants want support from a good supporting church. The United Methodist system that this researcher planted under required that a supporting church be appointed to each new church plant. The rationale behind that practice is strong and has generated success, though failure is sometimes a reality. A supporting church is a strong tool if administered correctly. This research revealed that many church planting systems used supporting churches to help new church plants get started. To become successful though requires much more than a supporting church. The quantitative survey revealed

that 69.23% of the supporting church leaders strongly agreed that their church should

support new church plants, with another 23.08% agreeing, but not strongly, with

supporting a new church plant. None of the church leaders said they should not support

new church planting. The qualitative interview revealed that new church plants could be

supported by an existing church but administered with a loving-touch and not with over-

aggressive authority. The qualitative interview revealed that the supporting church had

hurt new church plants with the practice of over-controlling, by making the decisions for

the new plant and by aggressively leading.

Much written within the literature review supports the reality that supporting

churches can be a benefit for new church plants. There was also much written about the

level of support, the longevity of support, and the limits of support, not specifically

whether support was needed for the success of the new church plant. Funding support

from multi-sources to single church can help new church plants. Clint Clifton wrote about

support from the sending church as necessary for new church planting in his article

Demystifying Church Planter Funding-New Churches, but also mentioned that ideally the

sending church knows the planter well. They would already believe in the planter's

ministry and would be willing to stick with it until the new church was up and running.

He also says, "when deciding on what church will serve in this role, it's important that

you not simply choose the church willing to contribute the greatest amount of money but

the church with the highest level of commitment to the success of your new church"

(Clifton sec 1). From a completely different perspective, Dan White wrote that financial

support helps new church plants but explained that his support came from a city grant

rather than from a supporting church (Woodward 198). John Wesley modeled expansion

through supporting churches by creating and supporting the growth of Methodism on the

American frontier. It is evident that supporting churches can be a benefit to new church

plants.

The biblical and theological framework for this project point to the reality that

supporting churches can help new church plants. The book of Acts showed Paul receiving

support from the church of Macedonia while in Corinth (Gal 2:4). The early church of

Antioch supported new church expansion by sending Paul and Barnabus out to

evangelize (Acts 13:1-4). Jesus Christ modeled supporting new church growth by

developing and then sending his Apostles out to make disciples (Mk 16:15; Matt 28:19-

20; Acts 1:8-9).

The research also showed examples of supporting churches hurting new church

plants and creating problems. In the book of Acts, Jews from Judea caused major

problems for Paul in Antioch (15:1-2); Jews started a riot in Thessalonica against Paul's

teachings (Acts 17:5-7), and forty Jews planned for the execution of Paul if he was sent

back to Jerusalem for trial (21:27-31). That support from Jerusalem created individuals

that were seriously trying to hurt new church growth. The book of Acts also describes

times when supporting churches were not necessary for new church growth. The early

church supported and funded itself from within by the continued contribution of all, not

from an existing, supporting church (Acts 4:23-37). Paul also supported himself and his

early ministry in Corinth by physically working in his trade (Acts 18:2-3). The research

shows that supporting churches can help and hurt new church plants.

Clear and concise Communication

It would be impossible to support or plant a new church without communication. Clear and concise communication will keep misunderstandings to a minimum. Clear communication is needed with every step of planning and application of the supporting church and the new church plant. Clear communication between the two is very important and needs to be practiced diligently. The quantitative survey mentions communication as it asks if the supporting church had developed and used a budget for church planting. A full 61.54% answered they did use a budget for church planting, proving that clear communication was practiced accomplishing that goal. It also validates that communication between the supporting church and the new plant is practiced realizing the application of that budget. The qualitative interview revealed clear and concise communication as a strong best practice used by the supporting church and went further to reveal that bad communication would create a barrier for new church planting. It was stated that clear and concise communication helped all parties involved understand the parameters and stay on the same page. No communication and bad communication had helped to create misunderstandings and confusion, which ultimately created barriers and added tension between the supporting church and the new church plants.

The literature review supports clear and concise communication as important. Steve Addison showed why clear communication between the supporting church and the new church plant is important as he described the partnership of the two as "Creative Tensions." Bad communication will become a barrier to the partnership by creating misunderstandings in an already tense environment. Clear and concise communication should become a practice for success in the supporting church of new church plants.

The biblical and theological framework for this project support clear and concise communication as important for supporting churches of new church plants. Paul is a great example of a clear communicator and used that skill many times defending his Apostolic authority to plant and support new churches (2 Cor Ch 11-Ch 13; Acts 22:1-21, 23:1-10, 24:10-21, 25:8-11, 26:1-19). Paul also shows that clear and concise communication is important between supporting church and new church as he travels back to Antioch numerous times to report about the ministry (Acts 14:21-28, 18:18-22), and to Jerusalem to report about the ministry and present the money that was raised (Acts 21:15-26). Prayer is highlighted many times as an example of clear and concise communication. Jesus consistently modeled that prayer is the way that people communicate with God. He most notably modeled clear and concise communication by telling his disciples to not communicate like the hypocrites (Matt 6:5-8) but to pray in this manner with the Lord's prayer (Matt 6:9-13).

Micro-Management is a hinderance

The researcher has observed supporting churches micro-managing new church plants in San Antonio, Texas. Furthermore, he has personally experienced the added difficulties that this practice creates for new church plants.

This research revealed that most supporting church leaders were aware of the hindrance that micro-management can have on new church plants. The quantitative survey showed that 53.85% of the supporting church leaders felt this practice was the biggest obstacle for new church planting success. The qualitative interview revealed that a best practice was to walk beside and not lead; to completely support the new church plant, allowing it to become unique in its environment. It validated that micro-

management hinders new church starts from being viable within their unique environments. It seems clear from these findings that micro-management from a supporting church hinders new church planting growth and will ultimately affect the success or failure of the new plant.

In the literature review, Alan Hirsch supports this finding. Alan cautions that when supporting churches attempt to micro-manage, they create dependent new church plants that will fail to be self-sustaining and relative to their unique environment. In addition, John Wesley was forced to the street corners of England and tempered for the frontiers of American ministry by being rejected by the supporting Churches of England as he would not bend to their micro-management concerning his evangelical preaching.

The biblical and theological framework for this project point to the reality that micro-management from a supporting church is a hindrance for new church growth. From the earliest start of the Jerusalem church, seeds of micro-management created hinderances for the new church. Most notable was the theological argument of salvation in the early church. This was seen as an attempt of micro-management in the book of Acts for all Christian growth. This created many hindrances during Paul's church planting, most notably in Galatia. Peter believed that when with Jews he should follow the Mosaic law. Paul called Peter out in Galatia and made it clear that salvation was not earned by following the Mosaic law; if so, then the death of Jesus Christ would be redundant (Gal: Ch 2). Paul applied clear and concise communication about salvation and stopped Peter from micro-managing the new church (Gal 2:21).

Compatibility and Unity of Strategy and Commitment to the End Goal

The researcher has observed many types of incompatibility within many churches. From committee meetings to budget meetings, from church revitalization projects to new church planting, compatibility has been very important. As he worked to recruit and develop teams for new church planting or committees for other projects, he was very mindful of compatibility. It only takes one experience with extreme incompatibility to realize the importance of this best practice. During the research it was discovered that supporting churches and new church plants need to be compatible to form a unified team. The quantitative survey did not focus on compatibility specifically, but Question Seven did ask about responsibility for the success of a new church plant. The answers were varied, and multiple selections were recorded. It was obvious that a clear choice was difficult for each participant. A compatible group of participants would likely have answered differently or at the very least, with fewer selections. The quantitative interview, on the other hand, revealed that compatibility was an important consideration within the supporting church and within the new church plant. It was also very important between the supporting church and the new church plant. The supporting church used personality testing and strength-and-weakness testing to help determine the like-mindedness and compatibility of its team members, especially in supporting church planting. This revealed that the supporting church team members were compatible and stood in agreement concerning the new church plant; they were unified. The interview revealed that compatibility was a consideration, and the participant had worked to create success and minimize tensions, false expectations, and micro-management.

The literature review supported the importance of compatibility within the church. Marks wrote, "When you're a hammer, everything looks like a nail" (Marks 100). It

would be very difficult to join a mild group with an aggressor like that. Imagine a mild church planter trying to present thoughts to an aggressive supporting church member. Like the hammer, the supporting church member would end up becoming overly assertive, creating tension with the planter. Most church planters that the researcher has met are more like hammers than nails, and the opposite outcome would be more likely. Another area of compatibility would be the supporting church's belief on mission and outreach. If a supporting church believes the best outreach is a mission trip to Mexico, it will create tension for an aggressive church planter that is focused on outreach and conversion for local growth. In that case the supporting church and the new church plant are not on the same page as to growth and outreach. The point is that compatibility is important. It is important within the supporting church leadership and their teams and important between the new plant and the supporting church.

The biblical and theological framework for this project point to the reality that compatibility is important. The argument that developed between Peter and Paul over the observance of traditional food laws is a strong example of what incompatibility can foster in new church planting (Gal 2:11-21). Like-mindedness with a communal mindset was important for Peter (1 Peter 3:8). This validates that compatibility is important and preferred over incompatibility. The theological argument of circumcision-salvation and the obstacles that provided during Paul's church growth support the need for compatibility. The book of Acts would be very different had the early church been compatible on their belief of Mosaic law, especially in consideration of joining new converts. Those stories would not be the same if all had agreed and believed that salvation came from accepting Jesus Christ after the resurrection and not the observance

of Mosaic laws. As it was, tension and problems are recorded because of this incompatibility.

Assessing the Attitude of Supporting Church

Attitude within the supporting church is a very serious consideration. It was after a successful launch of the new church plant that the researcher first witnessed a hostile attitude or, at least, a changed attitude, towards the new church plant development. Things had changed, and the supporting church was not as excited as it had been about new church planting.

This research revealed that others had faced this same attitude. Question One and Two of the quantitative survey were designed to investigate the attitude of the supporting church leaders towards new church planting. Question One asked if they felt new church planting was an effective way to grow their existing church; 53.85% felt this true but not completely true. Question Two asked if they approved of their existing church supporting a new church plant; 92.31% of those participants approved of their church supporting a new church plant. This data revealed that some of the leaders felt that new church planting may not be the best way to grow their local church but did agree with supporting one if it started. Most likely that distinction could slowly grow into an area of discord or, at the very least, slowly influence attitudes.

The literature review supported the point that attitude should be an important consideration. McLeod writes that cognitive dissonance is created when people do not like what is happening. That dissonance slowly changes their attitude and they become agitated and not comfortable with what is going on. MacDonald writes that attitude influences how people act. In this perspective the attitude of the supporting church

becomes very important as it will begin to drive the leader's actions. John Wesley faced a hostile attitude after being rejected by the existing churches of England and was barred from preaching in them. Attitude is a huge consideration when looked at from the book of Judges and stops Kingdom growth when wrong attitude prevails. Attitude should become an area of review for supporting churches before they are assigned new church plants.

Ministry Implications of the Findings

The first implication of these findings is that supporting church attitude-discovery should become a serious best practice. Much work is done on the planting pastor and by extension the team that develops from that pastor. A great amount of time and energy is devoted to vetting the planting pastor, discovering and influencing their attitude, and teaching them about church planting, but it appears that very little work is done for the supporting church. If more work was done up-front before appointing that supporting church, it would become useful for all supporting churches in all areas, and a better outcome would be realized in the new church plants. If negative attitudes can be discovered before they grow the seeds of discord or cognitive dissonance is created, there will be much less creative tension for the new church plant and the supporting church. This would help the practice of supporting new church planting and make the relationship between support and new plant much stronger and viable.

The findings also indicate that not enough consideration is given to who will be a supporting church. Many pastors and their churches are busy just trying to survive. Burnout of local pastors is a harsh reality, with only twenty-four hours in the day to complete an impossible amount of ministry. Leadership, teaching, preaching, advising, visitations, and the business of running the church requires a very serious multi-tasking

ability from today's pastors. It is easy to understand why there are fewer supporting

churches as time moves forward. The findings show that new church plants need

supporting churches, just maybe not the way it was done in this researcher's United

Methodist case. A better outcome could have been realized if a group was created for the

purpose of supporting new church plants by district, not necessarily by assigning an

active church to the role of supporting a new plant as it fights to remain successful in its

own market. Much like a church planting organization provides help to a church planter,

a supporting organization should be developed distinctly for the sole purpose of

supporting new church plants. Once the new plant is successful and self-sustaining, then

it could be added to the conference or whole as a viable grown-church. The usefulness of

this practice would help the existing churches, the new church plants, and the whole of

the American Christian church.

Other implications of the findings for best practices for supporting churches or

supporting organizations for the sole purpose of supporting new church plants would

create a huge opportunity for the teaching institutions, including the local colleges.

Curriculum could be developed with the intent of being the best support. Mistakes could

be investigated, and corrections offered and then molded into each distinct environment.

This would create a better foundation that supporting churches could build upon.

Limitations of the Study

Although an enormous amount of time and energy went into this project from the

researcher's part, it is limited by the number of participants that responded. This did not

impact the generalizations of the study findings, but more best practices may have been

discovered with larger participation. It is unclear how to gain greater participation; maybe

by not asking for participation close to or within the Christmas season; maybe by completing this project before the COVID environment began: maybe by waiting to complete the research a few more years removed from the time of COVID. Maybe all three of these together could have netted a larger result. Regardless, this project was completed as it developed, in God's time. The results are from the number that agreed to participate, for that the researcher is extremely thankful.

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Unexpected Observations

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It was surprising that the research showed that a supporting church is not necessary for new church planting success. The planting model created and used by the United Methodists likely presupposed the researcher towards the necessity of a supporting church as many of his frustrations and barriers came from his supporting church and its limitations. As he reviewed this project, and rewrote some of the findings, he still found some presupposition. The dissertation coach challenged these, which provided consideration beyond presupposition with a view of the research on its own merit. If the success for the new church plant is not dependent on the supporting church, then neither can its failures.

It was surprising that the quantitative survey revealed some tension as to who is ultimately responsible for the success of the new church plant. The multi-selections from the participants were also surprising. It almost looked like they were not entirely sure, so they selected everything, or at least many things. Ultimately, it revealed that the majority felt that the pastor of the new church plant was responsible. In the future it would have been better to limit them to one selection.

The answers in response to the best practice of encouraging existing members of the supporting church to join the new church plant to seed the membership were also surprising. It was revealed that the majority did not approve of that practice. The majority was more neutral on their selection of neither agree nor disagree. This is much like the act of indifference that Bonhoeffer described.

Recommendations

This project produced good work with applicable findings. In a future study of best practices for supporting churches more work could be done on attitude discovery with a document that was psychologically designed to gauge human feelings. Hopefully, that would lead into tools that would investigate the origin of those attitudes and culminate with the development of practices to help change attitude to that of which Paul spoke of to the Philippians. This is labeled here as the attitude of support:

"Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel" (Phil 2:7).

Postscript.

This journey made me experience every human emotion at one point or another. I now know why doctorate work is considered a terminal degree. I also saw the attacks and hardships that my classmates and I faced while doing this work. I am shocked at the number of classmates, wives of classmates, members of our support systems, and friends that died while this work moved forward. In my cohort, a large number indeed. What we faced at the beginning and in the post-Covid environments were very different; the

changes in attitude and culture were significant. The burden that those changes placed on churches, businesses and each classmate was hard as houses, churches, and businesses were lost. Dramatic and rapid change became the norm. I cannot remember a time of such turmoil in my entire lifetime, including combat in the military or rescue situations as a firefighting medic. I am proud of those who stood with me, and I am saddened by those who passed on, completing their journey early by my standards. I ran the gauntlet of loss, from my closest friends and family to strong supporters who were excited when this project began.

My heart completely broke with the loss of my favorite horse months ago, the one that I trailered all the way to Kentucky to be with me as I finished my M.Div. She was instrumental in helping me finish the training of a young yearling we had started together. Once started, training needs to be steady to completion to be effective. We then returned to Texas to help plant new churches and develop a stronger-cattle herd and ranch in our Northeast Texas dream of greener grasses, fresh water, timber, and mountains. That horse travelled as many road miles as I did. To her I say thank you, you kept me full of hope and looking forward to our next adventure. You always made it more interesting by drawing the craziest people to us for ministry.

Another huge realization came from working with my dissertation coach and realizing how busy he is. There were many times I slowed down and did not submit anything to give him a breather. Of course, what happened is that I then crammed as hard as possible, night and day to catch up, likely overburdening him as it all hit at once, generally submitted close or after deadlines. This entire project was completed at the last

minute, of the last hour, of each day for both writer and coach. For his commitment to

me, his churches, and the university, I am extremely thankful.

Appendix A

**Quantitative Survey: Best Practices of Supporting Churches for
New Church Plants.**

1. Do you feel New Church Planting is an effective way to grow your existing church?
○ True
○ Somewhat true, but not completely
○ Maybe, I have no experience in supporting a new church plant
○ False

2. Do you approve of your existing church supporting a new church plant?
○ Strongly approve
○ Approve
○ Neither approve nor disapprove
○ Disapprove
○ Strongly disapprove

3. Are you a decision maker for new church planting in your church?
○ Yes
○ No

4. Which best describes your position in the church?
○ Pastor/Ministry Leader
○ Church business leadership/Committee chair
○ Committee member

5. Is a budget approved and used by your church to support new church plants
○ Yes
○ No
○ Not sure, I'm not active with new church planting

6. What Best Practice would you suggest as most important for supporting churches of new church plants?

7. Who is most responsible for the success of the new church plant?

☐ Our Pastor/s of our supporting church

☐ The Pastor of the new church plant

☐ The Committee/Team that oversees the new church plant

☐ Every member of our supporting church

☐ Every member of the new church plant

8. What would you suggest as the biggest obstacle that a supporting church may create for a new church plant?

[   ]

9. Do you agree that your church needs to encourage members to move to the new church plant?

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

10. How long should your church financially support a new church plant?

○ None. The new church plant should raise their own funding

○ 3 years

○ 4 years

○ As long as it takes to reach self-sustainability

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

Qualitative Interview Questions.

Define their role and activity:

1. What is your primary position in the supporting church?

2. Why do you feel new church planting is the best way to grow local church?

3. How long have you been active in new church planting?

4. How many new church plants have you supported over the last 5 years?

5. How many of those new plants are successful?

Define some Best Practices:

6. What would you say that you did right as a supporting church to help the new church plant?

7. Was A budget created and followed, and for how long?

8. Where members transferred to the new church plant, and for how long?

9. What would you say the 3 most important "Best Practices" should be followed by supporting churches of new church plants?

Define some Obstacles of the supporting church concerning new church plants:

10. What obstacles did your support create for the new church plant?

11. What obstacles did the new church plant create for your supporting church?

12. How could these obstacles have been avoided?

13. What would you list as the number 3 obstacles that supporting churches need to be aware of?

Suggestions for supporting churches of new church plants:

14. In hindsight, what could you have done different that may have created a better outcome?

15. Is there anything that you'd like to add that was not discussed concerning best practices of supporting churches for new church plants?

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Best practices of supporting churches and their leadership for new church plants in San

Antonio, Texas.

You are invited to be in a research study being done by CJ Tillinghast, a doctoral student from Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because you are listed on Google as a Christian Church in the SanAntonio, Texas geographic area being researched for supporting churches of new church plants.

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to complete an online survey. From that survey a few random responders will be selected for interview and further questions. The total study will be conducted from December 2022 through March of 2023. There will be no compensation and anyone under 18 years of age will not be permitted to participate.

Initials will be used instead of your name on this consent to help keep your info confidential.

The surveys will be coded and kept confidential by the researcher. Names and addresses will be omitted. A cell phone may be used to record the interview if selected for further questions. All info will be digitized onto a laptop and then coded, kept under password protection, and then used to complete the study, without specific information being shared. All recordings, releases and any other specifics will be destroyed. The study will be reviewed by the research committee at Asbury Theological Seminary and will be presented by the researcher in a colloquium for May of 2023. The results will be published as a Doctrinal Dissertation and kept at the University library to aid in further research.

This project should pose no risk and will benefit the ongoing research of 21st Century Church Planting.

If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in the study, please tell CJ Tillinghast who can be reached at cj.tillinghast@asburyseminary.edu. You can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact CJ Tillinghast at cj.tillinghast@asburyseminary.edu.

Initialing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

_____ _____

Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study Date Signed

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