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A GROUNDED THEORY OF CHURCH GROWTH
IN URBAN POVERTY ZONES

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A GROUNDED THEORY OF CHURCH GROWTH
IN URBAN POVERTY ZONES

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To Lindsay, my wife and best friend,
To Jackson, my favorite little boy in the whole world,
And to Meredith, our beautiful baby girl

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBD	Central Business District
HUP	Homogeneous Unit Principle
ICIC	The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City
Int	Intentionally
RP	Receptivity Principle
UPZ	Urban Poverty Zone

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PREFACE

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Judson Derek Allen

Warrior, Alabama

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CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH CONCERN

Modern urban ministry in general and ministry to urban poverty zones specifically present unique challenges and opportunities compared to suburban and rural ministry. Some of the difficulties churches face in urban poverty zones include socioeconomic transition, loss of jobs, high crime rates, and high poverty rates (Bridge and Watson 2002, 260). Because of these and other factors, these churches often lose membership, revenue, and the ability to minister effectively. These strategic areas with higher rates of crime, poverty, drug use, and prostitution are left without effective churches to impact the culture.

Because there are unique challenges to churches in urban poverty zones, creative approaches are required to experience growth, or in some cases, to maintain attendance levels. Churches who are currently struggling with tough decisions or inability to reach an urban poverty zone could greatly benefit from the principles used by successful churches in such areas. These churches may or may not benefit from principles of suburban and rural church growth because of their unique challenges. It is unknown, therefore, if the current church growth literature is applicable to churches in urban poverty zones.

Introduction to the Research Problem

Both theological and educational concerns prompt an investigation into church growth in urban poverty zones. Theologically, there is a great concern for the conversion and discipleship of residents living there. Because of the challenges associated with life in urban poverty zones, many churches do not survive, and residents are often not evangelized or discipled. This is of further concern because many of society's poorest and most oppressed live in urban poverty zones. Many of those who are hungry, thirsty, in need of shelter, in need of clothes, sick or in prison live there, and Jesus taught that his followers would minister to people in these situations (Matt 25:31-40). Jesus also taught that part of his personal ministry was to preach to the poor and oppressed (Luke 4:18-21).

Urban poverty zones are of additional theological concern because of the biblical and historical importance of cities in God's kingdom strategy. Jerusalem was the center of Old Testament Yahweh worship, and it was the chosen place for the greatest act in redemptive history—the substitutionary death of Jesus. Other cities, like Ephesus and Corinth, were central to Paul's missionary strategy in the New Testament. He evangelized the cities and planted churches in them that would subsequently reach the surrounding regions.

Educationally, there is a concern to understand the principles of growth unique to urban poverty zones. In American church growth, the research is normally done on those churches which are growing fastest. These churches are most often in suburban areas because of sociological conditions. Urban ministry arose as a distinct discipline in the 1970s and 1980s and began intentionally studying, in part, principles of growth in urban settings. Hadaway reports that research has explored the influence of selected

factors on growth or decline such as ministry context and racial transition. He also states that future research needs to focus on institutional sources of growth and decline in urban ministry settings (Conn 1997, 40-41).

Growing churches in difficult contexts are rare according to Conn. In one study, he found that only 1 of 30 churches in Birmingham, Alabama was experiencing growth in racially transitioning neighborhoods. This larger context around the church was changing, but the immediate context was sheltered from the change by a set of railroad tracks and a mountain. The actual community around the church was mostly middle class Caucasian, and the church was not doing anything special to reach the larger community within the changing context. These findings reinforce both the need to research churches that are actually growing in urban poverty contexts and the need to designate these contexts separately from the larger urban designation (Conn 1997, 40-42).

As urban areas were studied, authors and researchers began to distinguish between urban areas, which are geographically determined, and inner city areas, which are “where the poor can be found. They are the location of the disenfranchised rather than just geographical territories” (Conn and Ortiz 2001, 339). This ensures that further inner city research will not include churches such as the one from Birmingham mentioned above that can skew research results. The distinction between urban and inner city, then, is determined by poverty rather than location. In this study, the term urban poverty zones will be used synonymously with the term inner city as researched and written about in urban ministry literature.

Some studies have been conducted on churches in difficult urban areas, but urban poverty zones have not been specifically studied. Some of the individual churches

might have been located in urban poverty zones by chance, but no research has been designed specifically to study urban poverty zones. The studies that have been conducted have been more anecdotal than academic. For instance, *Urban Churches, Vital Signs* studied 28 churches in 15 cities and was published in 1999. The churches were selected for their creative ministries, work in social justice and engagement in urban ministry, but they were not selected specifically for their location in urban poverty zones. Some of the churches may have been located in urban poverty zones, but it is unlikely that they were all located in them. The author also stated that although interviews, site visits, observations, and examination of church documents were used, the result was not a collection of case studies but a collection of stories. In other words, it was anecdotal not academic (Harper 1999, xiv-xv).

Similarly, *Vital Signs of Urban Congregations* studied 12 urban congregations from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). These churches were hand selected because they seemed to be successful within urban contexts. Key members of the church were interviewed, but it was not an academic study. Although some of the participant churches were located in areas of poverty, they were not selected because of their location (Tom 2006, 3-8). These research projects are important, but none of them produced an academic theory that can be tested and applied.

Although no church growth research has been done that targets urban poverty zones, private organizations have studied them. The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City is a not for profit agency dedicated to encouraging economic development within designated impoverished areas in cities of 100,000 or more. They research demographics, economics, and development within these areas, and although they are interested in

churches contributing to inner city renewal, they do not specifically study inner city church ministry (ICIC 2008a, about us).

The uniqueness and importance of ministry in urban poverty zones combined with a lack of research in the area prompted an investigation into the factors that contribute to church growth there. This study developed a theory of church growth in urban poverty zones that is grounded in data. This theory provides opportunity for accurate consulting for those who desire to maintain or begin churches in urban poverty zones. The application of this theory can result in transformation in the lives of many who suffer from addiction, poverty, and other social and spiritual problems. This study has discovered principles that work in the most difficult areas.

Church growth is well researched with established principles and a wide literature base; research in the urban poverty zones, however, was a relatively untapped area of study. Some work had been done in the past through organizations such as the Center for Urban Church Studies, which worked in demographic research, studied external factors affecting growth or decline, and studied growth factors of individual churches in urban areas. This research was dated and incomplete. While it laid the foundation for the study of urban poverty zones, many areas had not been researched in a way that was accessible and applicable to current urban churches. Speaking of urban church research, one researcher noted, “In the area of church growth, we need to know if the homogeneous unit principle actually works as a programmed growth technique . . . and we need to test all the growth strategies being promoted by various agencies” (Rose and Hadaway 1985, 33-44).

The strategies promoted by the church growth literature include the homogeneous unit principle and the receptivity principle, but these principles had not been tested for effectiveness in urban poverty zones (Rainer 1993, 29-30; Wagner 1998, 166). Urban ministry literature has always stressed the need for a focus on social ministry, but it was unclear, until now, if such a strategy results in church growth in urban poverty zones (Conn 1997, 95). New principles were also found that promote growth in these difficult areas. Researchers and practitioners will benefit from the exploration of principles leading to church growth in urban poverty zones.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop a grounded theory of church growth within urban poverty zones.

Research Questions

The following questions were the focus of this research concern:

1. Do leaders of growing churches in urban poverty zones attribute growth to the intentional application of the homogeneous unit principle or the receptivity principle?
2. Do leaders of growing churches in urban poverty zones attribute growth to intentional social ministry?
3. What additional categories and subcategories of data arise from participant descriptions of church growth in urban poverty zones?
4. What relationships and variations arise in the categories and subcategories of data from participant descriptions of church growth in urban poverty zones?
5. What principles are grounded in the categories, subcategories, relationships, and variations discovered in questions 1, 2, 3, and 4?

Delimitations of the Study

Church growth is a highly researched genre. Any additional research, therefore, must be limited to exploring new areas. Because of this, the researcher delimited the study to the following types of churches:

1. Churches located in areas of urban poverty. Such areas have been designated by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) as inner city, and are identified by poverty rates and unemployment.
2. Churches located in urban poverty zones within the city limits of cities in the United States of America with a population of more than 500,000.
3. Evangelical churches.

Limitations of Generalizations

Church growth research in urban poverty zones will not necessarily generalize to other urban, suburban and rural churches. Not all urban areas are as impoverished as urban poverty zones, and some downtown areas have become very affluent. Church growth and ministry is very different in such areas than it is in urban poverty zones. Suburban and rural areas are further distinguished from urban poverty zones by socioeconomic factors including race, household income, and population concentration. The results, however, may provide opportunities for additional research in these areas as well as application for churches in affluent urban areas, suburban areas and rural areas. Principles were found to attribute to growth in the difficult context of urban poverty zones, and perhaps churches in other contexts could apply them to see if growth occurs without the barriers faced in urban poverty zones.

Furthermore, the results will not necessarily generalize to churches located in urban poverty zone areas of smaller cities. Smaller cities may produce different urban

poverty zone dynamics. The results will be helpful to churches located in such areas, but they may not generalize directly.

A final limit of the planned research is that it may not necessarily generalize to non-evangelical churches. Evangelical churches hold similar theological beliefs about Scripture and the gospel, and they are focused on converting unbelievers. Some non-evangelical churches, however, may find the results helpful.

Terminology

Research of church growth in urban poverty zones required clear definitions of the following important terms:

Axial coding. “A set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by utilizing a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies, and consequences” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 96).

Broadcast evangelism. A predetermined property of the category “receptivity principle” defined by the researcher as the intentional spreading of the gospel without targeting a specific group that is hypothetically more likely to respond.

Category. “A classification of concepts. This classification is discovered when concepts are compared one against another and appear to pertain to a similar phenomenon. Thus the concepts are grouped together under a higher order, more abstract concept called a category” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 61).

Concepts. “Conceptual labels placed on discrete happenings, events, and other instance of phenomena” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 61).

Controversial church growth principles. A predetermined category defined by the researcher for coding. It includes the subcategories of the homogenous unit principle and the receptivity principle.

Dimensions. “Location of properties along a continuum” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 61).

Evangelical churches. For this study, evangelical churches are defined as churches that are members of the National Association of Evangelicals or churches that agree with the National Association of Evangelicals’ statement of faith.

Homogeneous units. A predetermined property of the subcategory “homogeneous unit principle” defined by the researcher as small groups or congregations with high levels of affinity.

Homogeneous unit principle. Kraft defines the homogeneous principle as the compilation of 2 observations: (1) human beings show an overwhelming predisposition to band together with their own kind and (2) God accepts this fact and works with it (Kraft 1978, 121). In other words, churches grow best when they reach out to people who are most like themselves and use people of other cultures to reach those cultures. In this study, it will also be the name of a predetermined subcategory of the coding category “controversial church growth principles.”

Inner cities. The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) defines inner cities as “core urban areas that currently have higher unemployment and poverty rates and lower median income levels than the surrounding Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). To qualify for the ICIC definition of inner city, the areas must have 20% poverty rate or higher or two of the following three criteria: (1) Poverty rate of 1.5 times or more

that of their MSAs; (2) Median household income of 1/2 or less that of their MSAs; (3) Unemployment rate of 1.5 or more than that of their MSAs.

The ICIC uses Census data and relevant research to identify inner cities. Census data is examined at the Tract level and compared to the surrounding MSA to determine accurate inner city locations” (ICIC 2008a, about us).

Metropolitan Statistical Area. A geographic entity designated by the federal Office of Management and Budget for use by federal statistical agencies. An MSA consists of one or more counties, except in New England, where MSAs are defined in terms of county subdivisions (primarily cities and towns).

Ministry evangelism. A property of the predetermined category “social ministry strategy” defined by the researcher as the addressing social issues and needs while intentionally including a presentation of the gospel.

Mosaic units. A property of the predetermined subcategory “homogenous unit principle” defined by the researcher as small groups or congregations with high levels of cultural and/or socioeconomic diversity.

National Association of Evangelicals. An association established in 1942 of over 40 denominations representing American evangelicals. “The mission of the National Association of Evangelicals is to extend the kingdom of God through a fellowship of member denominations, churches, organizations, and individuals, demonstrating the unity of the body of Christ by standing for biblical truth, speaking with a representative voice, and serving the evangelical community through united action, cooperative ministry, and strategic planning” (National Association of Evangelicals 2009, about us).

Non-evangelistic social ministry. A property of the predetermined category “social ministry strategy” defined by the researcher as addressing social issues and needs without intentionally including a presentation of the gospel.

Non-ministry evangelism. A property of the predetermined category “social ministry strategy” defined by the researcher as intentionally presenting the gospel without addressing social issues and needs.

Open coding. “The process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 61).

Properties. “Attributes or characteristics pertaining to a category” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 61).

Receptivity principle. A strategy that directs the most resources towards the people who are most likely to respond in salvation to the gospel message. (Rainer 1993, 29-30).

Selective coding. “The process of selecting the core category, systematically relating to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 116).

Social ministry strategy. A predetermined category defined by the researcher as the specific strategy taken by the church to address social issues and meet social needs in connection with the gospel message.

Targeted evangelism. A predetermined property of the category “receptivity principle” defined by the researcher as the intentional spreading of the gospel by targeting a specific group that is hypothetically more likely to respond.

The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC). The ICIC is “a national not-for-profit organization founded in 1994 by Harvard Business School Professor Michael E. Porter. ICIC conducts research that highlights the competitive advantage of inner cities. Its market-based approach to economic development comprises a number of efforts oriented toward increasing private-sector investment in the inner city, linking inner city development to metro, city, and regional development strategies, and breaking down information barriers that keep inner cities underinvested” (ICIC 2008a, about us).

Tract level. The census bureau defines a tract level as “a small, relatively permanent statistical subdivision of a county or statistically equivalent entity, delineated for data presentation purposes by a local group of census data users or the geographic staff of a regional census center in accordance with Census Bureau guidelines. Designed to be relatively homogeneous units with respect to population characteristics, economic status, and living conditions at the time they are established, census tracts generally contain between 1,000 and 8,000 people, with an optimum size of 4,000 people. Census tract boundaries are delineated with the intention of being stable over many decades, so they generally follow relatively permanent visible features. However, they may follow governmental unit boundaries and other invisible features in some instances; the boundary of a state or county (or statistically equivalent entity) is always a census tract boundary” (census bureau 2008, <http://www.census.gov/main/www/glossary.html>).

Urban poverty zones. This term is defined by the researcher as interchangeable with inner city. It is used to highlight the economic criteria used by the ICIC to designate inner city areas rather than geographic criteria emphasized by the term inner city.

Research Assumptions

Every researcher and research project makes assumptions. It is important to recognize and identify these. For this project, the researcher made the following assumptions:

1. Church growth in urban poverty zones is a phenomenon-that is unique from rural, suburban and urban church growth.
2. Church growth is possible in urban poverty zones.
3. Church leaders are aware of the factors that contribute to the growth of their churches and other churches.

Procedural Overview

With the help of denominational leaders, missional leaders and local pastors the researcher selected 2 evangelical churches from 5 different cities that met the following criteria:

1. They were located in urban poverty zones within cities in the United States with populations of 500,000 or more.
2. They have displayed a pattern of growth as indicated by an overall increase of 3 % or more in average attendance over the last 5 years with growth in 3 of the 5 years.
3. They were members of the National Association of Evangelicals or affirm the following statements:

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious, and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. (National Associational of Evangelicals 2009, about us)

Once the churches were selected, the researcher traveled to each of the churches, interviewed the lead pastors and other key leaders, and observed the ministry site. This data was coded to discover categories, subcategories, and properties of information (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 181-87). Once the interviews and coding were completed, principles of church growth in urban poverty zones were extrapolated from the data.

Conclusion

Church growth is a well established discipline, and much observation and research has been done for churches in general; church growth in areas of urban poverty, however, was under researched. Cities have always been central to God's redemption plan, and cities contain tens of millions who need to hear the gospel. Jesus set the example of going to the poor, hurting, and hungry to share the good news of the kingdom; urban poverty zones in the United States contain many people who are affected by poverty, addictions, and crime, and the theory produced by this research of church growth in urban poverty zones can provide churches with strategies to stay in such areas or move to them for effective ministry.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENT LITERATURE

Research projects arise from the literature, and a study of church growth in urban poverty zones is founded on a theological and educational understanding of important issues. The theological foundation comes from a study of the Bible, and although little literature exists about the specific area of church growth in urban poverty zones, two other areas of literature provide insight into the research area—urban ministry and church growth. These provide a foundation from which urban poverty zone church growth can be explored. Throughout this section and the other sections of the paper, the terms inner city and urban poverty zone are used interchangeably and synonymously.

A Theology of the Urban Poverty Zone

Every research project has important foundations, and those which impact church life must be founded on biblical theology. God has clearly communicated in his word that both the city and the poor have an important place in his kingdom. The following section will explore Scripture to create an understanding of God's thoughts about the city and the poor. Together, these constitute a theology of the urban poverty zone, which, as defined below, is an urban area with a high concentration of poverty.

A Theology of the City

Cities are the central stage for much of God's work in history. The Bible speaks about cities through its narratives in the Old and New Testaments. According to

Bakke, the term city is used over 1250 times in Scripture (Bakke 1997, 15). Theological principles relating to cities can be derived from those narratives.

Cities in the Old Testament

This section contains a brief Old Testament history of the city divided into time periods of creation to conquest, settlement to captivity, and exile to return. Two characteristics are apparent from this survey: God uses cities, and cities have the potential for increased sinfulness and increased righteousness. Greenway and Monsma recognize the tension between sin and obedience in cities. They write, “The cities we know today are not to be identified with either the kingdom of Satan or the kingdom of God. Cities are the result of God’s common grace. Through them God restrains the development of evil, blesses his creatures, and works out his sovereign purpose in both judgment and grace” (Greenway and Monsma 2000, 30).

Creation to Conquest

From the beginning of time until the conquest of Canaan by the nation of Israel, cities were vital to the development of civilizations and the advancement of God’s plan. Sometimes they were centers of worship and obedience while at other times cities were centers of idolatry and disobedience. Bakke notes that the first city was established by Cain as a replacement for the community he had lost when he lost his relationship with God. Cain’s actions led to an increase in disobedience through violence but an increase in obedience through the culmination of the arts (Bakke 1997, 40).

The table of nations. God commissioned the first humans, Adam and Eve, to fill the earth through procreation (Gen 1:28), and he commanded Noah and his family to

repopulate the earth after the flood (Gen 9:1). The table of nations in Genesis 10 communicates that humans obeyed God's command to populate the earth by spreading out through civilizations. Nimrod, however, highlights the propensity for disobedience through city building. He established 10 cities, which served as kingdom centers (10:10-11). These kingdom centers were used to repopulate the earth after it was destroyed in the flood, but at least one of them, Babylon, became a city of rebellion.

The tower of Babel. The first recorded act of collective disobedience also occurred in a city. Genesis 11 records the story of Babel which mankind determined to build their own security, prosperity, and path to God (11:4). This idolatry resulted in God's judgment and dispersion of the people (11:8-9). From earliest recorded history, therefore, the city has been a tool, which can be used for obedience or disobedience.

Cities of Abraham. God used cities throughout the life of Abraham. He often wandered in rural areas, but he set his tent up in areas of concentrated population in Egypt (Gen 12:10-20) and Gerar (Gen 20:1). Although Abraham had trouble in both of these cities, God also used them to provide wealth and supplies for his livestock.

The most famous cities that Abraham encountered highlight the propensity for increased disobedience in a city. Sodom was the chosen city of Lot, Abraham's nephew. It and its sister city, Gomorrah, were rampant with homosexuality and other forms of unrighteousness (Gen 18:20-19:13). The sexual sin was corporate because it involved "all the men from every part of the city" (Gen 19:4). Sodom was a wicked city, but Bakke notices that even a small presence of faithful people would have saved the wicked city. Had there been enough preserving salt and light, Abraham's prayer for the salvation of the city would have been answered (Bakke 1997, 40). According to Bakke, believers

must follow the example of Abraham and pray for cities, and they must understand the power of a preserving remnant to save the city. He suggests that churches tithed members into their urban communities as a righteous, preserving remnant just as Nehemiah did (Neh. 11:1-2) (Bakke 1997, 45).

In contrast to the cities that represent disobedience in Abraham's life, there are also cities of worship. Abraham established Bethel (Gen 12:8) and Beersheba (Gen 21:32) as sites for worshipping God, which were developed into cities and were important in Israel's relationship with God (Gen 26:23-33, 28:10-15, 19, 35:7, 1 Kgs 19:3). Bethel is an example of a city that represents both concentrated obedience and increased disobedience; it was established as a center of Yahweh worship, but it eventually became a center of idol worship under the northern kingdom of Israel (2 Kgs 23:15).

Cities for food. After Abraham, God continued to use cities to advance his purposes and his kingdom. When Joseph was put in charge of Egypt to prepare for a coming famine, he used regional cities to store grain raised in the fields of those regions (Gen 41:46-49). During the famine, people came from all over Egypt and other countries to these food cities to buy grain. God used this providentially to spare the family of Israel and preserve the lineage of the messiah (Gen 41:56-57, 45:7). Once again, the cities were tools of obedience for God's people. These cities were also used as distribution centers for benevolent ministry during a difficult time.

Cities of the conquest. From the close of Genesis until the conquest of Canaan, cities were not as prominent in God's plan as they had been or would be, but after forty years of desert wandering (Deut 2:14), cities again took a place of priority in

God's plan. Jericho, Ai, Gibeon, and other cities of Canaan represent God's use of cities and the dichotomy of human obedience and disobedience through cities. Jericho was conquered in a miraculous way for God's glory through careful obedience (Josh 6:20-21); Ai was used by God to purify his people and highlight the seriousness of sin (Josh 7:10-11), and Gibeon was an example of the seriousness of careless disobedience (Josh 9:14-15, 2 Sam 21:2-5).

Settlement to Captivity

As the nation of Israel began to settle the land of Canaan, cities remained important to God's kingdom work. The significance of cities during this period began in the final days of the conquest and extended through the establishment of the monarchy, the division of the kingdom, and the decline and fall of both Israel and Judah.

Cities of refuge. As the conquest was coming to an end, Joshua set up cities of refuge where those who killed others unintentionally could be saved from an avenger (Josh 20:1-3). Cities of refuge continued two themes from the previous era; first, they were needed because of sin, but they were established as an act of obedience. Though unintentional murder was not purposeful or motivated by hate, the possibility for vengeance and the need for confinement to a city of refuge imply that unintentional murder is a type of unintentional sin (Num 15:27-29). These cities therefore, were specifically connected to sin, but they were also established in obedience to God's command (Josh 20:2).

In addition to a connection with sin and obedience, cities of refuge also continued the tradition of regional centers of benevolence. These cities were strategically placed throughout the nation of Israel and offered all citizens equal access to mercy (Josh

20:7-8). An added component of the cities of refuge was justice. If an unintentional murderer entered a city of refuge, he was guaranteed a trial before the assembly (Josh 20:9).

Cities as security. Bakke comments on Deuteronomy 22 saying, “There was an assumption in Israel that city victims would cry for help, and neighbors would respond . . . The law presumed that the presence of neighbors or community is beneficial to the security and salvation of individual persons. That’s the role of the city system, with its walls, gates, and code of law, but it’s also the role of its righteous remnant” (Bakke 1997, 41). He later comments that this passage teaches that the presence of many people living in community “was presumed to be good (and this will surprise the modern reader), a genuine guard against crime, such as a deterrent for rape (Deut. 22:23-24)” (Bakke 1997, 62).

Corporate sinfulness and urban prophets. Corporate disobedience was possible in an Old Testament city. As an example, Bakke notes, “The Old Testament city is implicated in its entirety whenever idolatry exists, even in incipient form, within its walls. The penalty appears harsh; the entire city is to be burned as an offering to the Lord (Deut. 13:15-16)” (Bakke 1997 62). Bakke labels the entire ministry of Isaiah as an urban ministry addressing corporate sinfulness. He notes that the book of Isaiah opens with a scene of cities on fire, that the prophet used the word city almost sixty times, and that Isaiah’s entire career was likely spent as an urban prophet (Bakke 1997, 78).

According to Greenway and Monsma, Jonah was also an urban prophet. His “mission is a sign of the call of God to his people to proclaim his message of repentance and salvation to the cities, which are, even horribly wicked cities that are hell-bound for

eventual destruction. Despite its shortcomings, Nineveh was important in the sight of God, and he wanted his message proclaimed in the streets” (Greenway and Monsma 2000, 33).

Jerusalem during the monarchy. While Israel grew into a powerful kingdom, God placed David on the throne and used him to gain control of the most important city in theological history— the city of Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6-7). Soon after the capture of Jerusalem, David established it as the center of Yahweh worship by bringing the Ark of the Covenant there (2 Sam 6:12). Under God’s direction, Solomon built a Temple to be God’s permanent residence in Israel (1 Kgs 6:37-38), and the only proper place for sacrificial worship (Deut 16:2, 16). Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem remained the center for Yahweh worship and sacrificial atonement until its destruction by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. (La Sor, Hubbard, and Bush 1996, 218). Bakke highlights the importance of Jerusalem by saying,

A city, namely Jerusalem itself, became a symbol of God’s presence and power in the world . . . It was clearly taught in the Old Testament that Jerusalem was something special, for it was the place that God had ordained and where his name would dwell (Deut. 12:11), and even in ruins (Is. 44:5; 49:16) affirmations could be made on its behalf and its future could be anticipated (Zech. 8:21; Ps. 86:9). (Bakke 1997, 63)

In contrast to Jerusalem’s place of prominence in Yahweh worship, two other cities stand as examples of disobedience and idolatry. After the division of the kingdom, Jeroboam set up two cities as places of worship to replace Jerusalem; they were Dan and Bethel (1 Kgs 12: 29). He did so in order to maintain control over his people and to keep them from returning to the king in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 12:27-28). In these three examples, the paradox of obedience and disobedience in urban centers emerges again.

Jerusalem also continues the other pattern set forth in earlier biblical cities. It was not intended to be a closed city but rather a city, which would influence and impact the nation of Israel and the world (Isa 1:26). From Jerusalem, the king served as the judge of the people dispensing rulings for the nation and providing justice (2 Sam 8:15, 15:1-4). Jerusalem, then, was a regional center of benevolence and justice.

Exile to Return

After the exile of the southern kingdom, Jerusalem was mostly abandoned (Lam 1:1), and Babylon became an important city in the biblical narrative and the history of God's work (Dan 1). After seventy years, however, Jews returned to Jerusalem, rebuilt the Temple and began worshipping God there again (Ezra 6:13-15).

Babylon. Although Babylon existed as a city for many years before the exile, it came into theological prominence as the Jews were relocated there after the destruction of Jerusalem. Babylon was the city from which Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1) and Daniel (Dan 1:6) prophesied, and from which God revealed to both men apocalyptic visions that addressed the coming of the Messiah and the end times. Babylon was also the place from which the decree, material, and protection were supplied for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple (Ezra 1:2-4; Neh 2:7-9).

Like other cities, Babylon is an example of the potential for increased sinfulness and increased righteousness. An example from the book of Daniel highlights each of these. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faithfully refused to worship an idol and faced execution in a furnace. In the context of the sins of idol worship and persecution, the faithfulness of the three men is a great example of righteousness, and God miraculously delivered them (Dan 3). The people of God were to embrace the city of

Babylon during their time there. Bakke comments on God's instructions to the Jewish people in Jeremiah 29:4-11 saying, "The straight forward logic of this text gripped me. First, these refugees were not victims as they had thought. They were on a mission sent by God to the enemy city (v. 4). Secondly, they were to raise their kids there (v. 6); third they were to seek the *shalom* or just peace of the city Babylon (v. 7); and finally, God would retrieve them in due time (v. 11)" (Bakke 1997, 25).

Jerusalem. The presence of a desolated Jerusalem was a constant reminder of the sinfulness that resulted in God's judgment on the city (Lam 1:1-5). God judged the people of Judah because of adultery, idol worship, injustice, and the false prophecies of its leaders and common people (Jer 5). During the years of the return, however, Jerusalem became a symbol of righteousness as those who returned rebuilt the temple and followed the law faithfully (Neh 8-9).

Greenway and Monsma explain the representative nature of the relationship between Babylon and Jerusalem. They write,

Scripture depicts the religious warfare of the city as a battle between Babylon and Jerusalem. Babylon is the representative city of humankind, rebellious, greedy, violent, idolatrous, and doomed. Jerusalem, on the other hand, is the representative city of God. It is a theocracy, for there God reigns. It symbolizes God's peace, unity, and righteousness. (Greenway and Monsma 2000, 30)

Cities in the New Testament

After the birth of Jesus, cities continued to be important to God's kingdom work. Like the Old Testament counterparts, cities in the New Testament had increased potential for obedience and increased potential for unrighteousness. The New Testament, however, does not emphasize cities as centers of benevolence, mercy, and justice, but it

reports that cities served as centers of ministry for Jesus and the early church. It also reveals that cities will be central to God's eschatological kingdom work.

Cities in the Ministry of Jesus

During his earthly ministry, Jesus often visited cities to preach the message of the kingdom (Matt 9:35). Specifically, he visited the cities of Korazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum (Matt 11:20-23), Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:13), Cana (John 2:11), the Decapolis (Mark 7:31), Gennersaret (Matt 14:34), Jericho (Mark 10:46), Nain (Luke 7:11), Nazareth (Luke 4:16), Tyre and Sidon (Mark 7:31), and Sychar (John 4:5).

Often, Jesus encountered people in cities who believed in his message and followed him. Many people were healed through the city ministry of Jesus (Matt 9:35). Cities, however, were also concentrated areas of rejection for Jesus and his message. Such disobedience and rejection led him to pronounce woes on many of the cities in which he ministered (Matt 11:20-24).

The most important city in the ministry of Jesus and in biblical history was Jerusalem. As the most prominent city in the four gospels, it is the epitome of the obedience/disobedience dichotomy. Judaism was centered in Jerusalem, and the religious leaders came from Jerusalem to evaluate Jesus; on that occasion, Jesus identified them as hypocrites whose hearts were far from God (Matt 15:1-9). In Matthew 23:37, Jesus described Jerusalem as a city which kills prophets and a city which is not willing to be gathered under God's care. The greatest example of Jerusalem's disobedience is her crucifixion of Jesus. All four gospels identify the city of Jerusalem as the location of the trial, beating, and crucifixion of the messiah (Matt 20:18; Mark 10:33; Luke 23:7; John 12:12).

The death of Jesus is the greatest example of disobedience in a city, and it is also the greatest example of obedience and righteousness. Set against the scene of God's city (Ps 87:2-3), the death of Jesus was an act of disobedience and sin on the part of the Jewish religious leaders (Acts 7:52), but it was an act of perfect obedience for Jesus (Phil 2:8). The death of Jesus was necessitated by the collective disobedience of mankind, but it was the death of a perfectly righteous person (2 Cor 5:21).

Jesus' death is also the greatest example of justice, mercy, and benevolence flowing out of a city. Although Jesus was crucified outside of the city walls (Heb 13:12), the crucifixion was set against the city. Jerusalem, therefore, is a place of atonement (Rom 3:25).

Cities in the Strategy of the New Testament Church

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, Jerusalem continued to be important to God's kingdom work, and other cities were vital to the strategy of the early church. A brief survey of the book of Acts, the Pauline Epistles, and the book of Revelation communicates the importance of Jerusalem as well as cities like Antioch, Ephesus, and Corinth.

Cities in Acts. The book of Acts begins with Jesus' command for the disciples to stay in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4) and a prophecy that the disciples will be witnesses for Jesus beginning in Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). Throughout the first seven chapters of Acts, the church stayed in Jerusalem and gained many converts (Acts 2:41, 2:47, 5:14). After the stoning of Stephen, however, the believers began to spread throughout Judea and Samaria

(Acts 8:1-4). As they dispersed throughout the region, they used cities to preach the gospel (Acts 8:5, 8:40, 11:19-21).

In Acts 9, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) was converted, and cities became vital to the expansion of the church. Paul began his preaching ministry in Damascus (Acts 9:19-22), and he spent a year at Antioch encouraging the church. It is important to note that a group of believers, in a city, under the ministry of Paul the urban evangelist first earned the name Christians (Acts 11:26).

Paul's subsequent missionary journeys were urban missionary journeys. According to Bakke, "Paul never approached a city the same way twice. He custom-made his approach. Today we call it 'contextualization.' He varied the three m's—the message, the meeting place, and the methodology—to better reach the different audiences of those cities" (Bakke 1997, 154). Paul preached in the cities of Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14, 13:49), Iconium, Lystra, Debre (Acts 14:1, 14:6), Philippi (Acts 16:12), Thessalonica (Acts 17:12), Berea (Acts 17:10-12), Athens (Acts 17:16-17), Corinth (Acts 18:1), Ephesus (19:1), and Rome (Acts 28:30-31). He often used these cities as regional ministry centers to evangelize the surrounding areas (Acts 14:1; compare Acts 16:9 to 16:12).

Cities in the Pauline Epistles. Paul established churches through the cities of the Roman Empire, and he also encouraged and disciplined believers through cities. Throughout his ministry, Paul wrote letters to some of the churches he visited such as Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and Thessalonica; he also wrote to other churches which he did not visit (Col 1:4-8, 4:16). He sent people to encourage and support the churches in

cities. Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus to confront false doctrine (1 Tim 1:3), and he left Titus to appoint elders in every city of Crete (Titus 1:5).

Cities in Revelation. Acts and the Pauline Epistles communicate the importance of cities in the New Testament, and Revelation confirms their significance. The book is addressed to the seven churches in Asia: Ephesus (Rev 2:1), Smyrna (Rev 2:8), Pergamum (Rev 2:12), Thyatira (Rev 2:18), Sardis (Rev 3:1), Philadelphia (Rev 3:7), and Laodicea (Rev 3:14). Although Revelation is addressed to the churches in these seven cities, its audience is intended to be universal (Rev 3:22). This indicates that God uses cities as regional ministry centers to reach out to a larger audience.

Two more cities are prominent throughout Revelation and the end of history: Babylon the Great and the New Jerusalem. Together they encapsulate all of the themes represented by other cities throughout the Bible. Babylon the Great is a city of wickedness, adultery, idolatry, and absolute rebellion against God (Rev 18:1-10). The New Jerusalem contrasts the wickedness of Babylon the Great; it is beautiful, and it represents the fulfillment of God's relationship with humanity. Furthermore, nothing impure will ever enter it (Rev 21:1-27). In addition to displaying the increased capacity for righteousness in a city, the New Jerusalem also reinforces the use of cities as places of gathering and provision. The nations will bring their glory to the city, and the Tree of Life, which is located there will be for the healing of the nations (Rev 21:26-22:2). Greenway and Monsma note the New Jerusalem is presented as a place where "community life is peaceful, harmonious. There are no tears, nor cause for them. Death and mourning are gone. There is not pain. The things that blighted the former cities are gone forever . . . The world to come, Scripture teaches, will be an urban world. The

redemption drama that began in a garden will end in a city, the new Jerusalem”
(Greenway and Monsma 2000, 27).

A Theology of the Poor

God speaks implicitly about cities throughout the Bible by his actions, but he directly addresses issues of social justice and poverty. God communicates his concern for the poor in over 400 verses of Scripture, and 80 additional verses address issues of social justice (Claerbaut 1983, 18). From these verses, two themes arise: God loves the poor, and people are held accountable for their treatment of the poor.

God Loves the Poor

God loves those who are impoverished. As Hannah sang a hymn of worship, she said that the Lord raises the poor from the dust and seats them with princes. This does not imply that God blesses all poor people with wealth because the previous verse states that God sends both wealth and poverty, but it does indicate that God cares for poor people (1 Sam 2:8-9). The Bible speaks much about God’s care for the poor. He is their refuge (Ps 14:6, Isa 25:4); he will feed them in his kingdom (Ps 22:26), and he will save them, rescue them, and provide for them (Pss 34:6, 35:10, 40:17, 68:10, 70:5, 112:9, 113:7, Isa 41:17). God is the ultimate source of justice for the poor despite unjust societies (Ps 140:12, Isa 11:4), and although the good news of the gospel is for everyone, Jesus often mentioned it as being preached to the poor and oppressed (Matt 11:5, Luke 4:18, 6:20).

God does not see poverty as not a shameful position. Haley makes this point by asking,

Where in the Bible does it say that the person who is poor should be ashamed just for being poor? We know that the apostle Paul admonishes the poor who will not work (see 2 Thess. 3:10) . . . But for the poor who are squeezed in an unjust system, disposed or marginalized . . . where does it say that their poverty should be covered in disgrace? In fact, the message of the gospel is just the opposite. James wrote, ‘But let the brother in humble circumstances glory in his high position; and let the rich man glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away’ (1:9-10, NASB). (Hayes 2006, 76)

It is likely that Jesus often gave gifts to the poor during his earthly ministry.

This can be deduced from two pieces of information. First, Jesus often commanded others to give to the poor (see below). Secondly, the disciples assumed it was a normal part of Jesus’ ministry. Just before the betrayal of Judas, Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly” (John 13:27). John records that the other disciples did not understand what Jesus meant. Instead,

Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the feast, or to give something to the poor. (John 13:29)

This passage indicates that giving money to the poor was a regular activity for Jesus and the disciples. God loves the poor so much that he gave them monetary gifts during his earthly ministry.

God loves the poor impartially; he does not show favoritism due to wealth.

The Bible proclaims that it is better to be poor and blameless than to be perverse or a liar (Prov 19:1, 19:22). God is the creator of the poor just as he is the creator of the rich, and he provides sight to both the poor and their oppressors (Prov 22:2, 29:13). His word teaches that it is better to be poor and wise than a king who ignores warnings (Eccl 4:13).

God Demands Fair Treatment of the Poor

The love God has for the poor is impartial, but he calls for the protection and proper treatment of the poor more than other groups. Specifically, God holds individuals

accountable for their treatment of the poor, he commands societies to care for the poor in a responsible way and he commands his church to treat the poor fairly.

Individuals Must Treat the Poor Fairly

Throughout Scripture, God commands individuals to care for the poor, and he blesses those who do. He also declares the sinfulness of those who mistreat the poor. Consider some of the laws given to Israel that demanded merciful treatment of the impoverished. During the harvest, farmers were to leave fallen grapes and the edges of the wheat fields for the poor (Lev 19:10, 23:22). The Jewish people were commanded to support the poor and help them “live among” Israel. No Jewish person was to enslave another because of poverty (Lev 25:35, 25:39). God commanded the Jews to be generous towards the poor, and no Israelite had the right to take advantage of the poor (Deut 15:11, 24:12, 24:14, 24:15). God commanded the Jewish people to provide the poor with sensible loans, and he commanded that food be available for sale to the poor at no profit (Lev 25:36).

Generosity, not enablement. It is important to recognize that God never commands individuals to give handouts to poor people who are unwilling to work. Many of the laws concerning the poor assume that the poor person works or that he has received a loan rather than a gift (Deut 24:12-15). Several passages in Scripture condemn laziness, and some of them connect laziness to poverty and hunger (Prov 10:4, 2 Thess 3:10). The gleaning laws provide a great example of the balance between generosity and enablement. As mentioned above, the Jews were commanded to leave part of the crop in the field, but they were not commanded to gather the crops and take them to the poor. In

this system, the impoverished could be provided for if they were willing to work and harvest the remaining crops.

This approach can be contrasted with that of the main character of Jesus' parable of the rich fool. In this parable, a man builds bigger barns to hoard his wealth rather than using for kingdom purposes such as giving to the poor (Luke 12:13-21). Speaking about this parable, Hayes states, "Many of us set about building bigger barns rather than investing in the Kingdom. American Christians began the new millennium giving only about 2.6 % of their incomes to charity, just a percentage point above non-Christians who averaged about 1.6 %" (Hayes 2006, 61).

The examples of Boaz and Ruth. Boaz was a generous and godly man who followed the laws concerning treatment of the poor. His workers did not harvest all of the crops but left some for the poor to glean. Ruth was poor, but she was a hard worker; she worked all day with only a short rest. When Boaz noticed her hard work, he was generous and provided more food for gleaning and water for Ruth to drink. Ruth responded with thankfulness rather than an attitude of entitlement (Ruth 2:2-18). Boaz and Ruth are examples of generosity towards the poor without enabling laziness.

Societies Must Treat the Poor Fairly

Like Boaz, individuals must treat the poor fairly. Many passages that discuss fair treatment of the poor, however, apply to society as a whole. As the nation of Israel was established, God created laws and traditions to care for the poor. Later, many of Israel's prophets admonished the nation or its leaders for failing to treat the poor fairly. God is concerned with the way entire groups treat the poor that live among them. Bakke

observes that according to Ezekiel 16, the city of Sodom was judged for extravagance and neglect of the poor (Bakke 1997, 42).

Laws and traditions. The books of the law demand fair treatment of the poor. Consider the following statutes: “Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits” (Exod 23:6), “during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among you may get food” (Exod 23:11), “Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor” (Deut 24:14).

These laws were so important to the nation of Israel that breaking them could result in harsh punishment. Nathan the prophet used a parable about the mistreatment of the poor to confront David about adultery and murder; he told David of a rich man with many lambs who stole the only lamb of a poor family. Before David knew it was a parable, he burned with anger and declared this judgment, “As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity” (2 Sam 12:5-6).

In addition to specific commands such as these, God established traditions for Israel to care for the poor. For instance, the poor were allowed to give less expensive offerings, and they could consult with a priest to have an amount set for vows according to their income (Lev 14:21, 27:8). The year of jubilee protected families from poverty and slavery. Demanding the release of servants and the return of property every fifty years assured families would never face the reality of generational poverty (Lev 25:1-55).

Admonishment for injustice towards the poor. As the prophets expounded on the law and declared God’s judgment on the nations, they often cited mistreatment of the poor as a reason for judgment, and they condemned nations for a lack of generosity

and denying justice to the poor. While citing sins of Israel, Amos said, “They sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed” (Amos 2:6-7). Later, he condemned the women of Israel for oppressing the poor while demanding service from their husbands (Amos 4:1), and he declared that the people of Israel would not live in their nice houses or drink the wine of their vineyards because they abused the poor (Amos 5:11).

Ezekiel also admonished nations for mistreating the poor. He condemned Sodom as an overfed and unconcerned society who did not help the poor (Ezek 16:49). While listing the detestable practices of Israel he said, “The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the alien, denying them justice” (Ezek 22:9). God spoke similar condemnations through the prophet Jeremiah. He said of Israel, “They... have grown fat and sleek. Their evil deeds have no limit; they do not plead the case of the fatherless to win it, they do not defend the rights of the poor” (Jer 5:28).

The Church Must Treat the Poor Fairly

In the New Testament, God continues to encourage his people to treat the poor fairly. Jesus taught that his followers will feed the poor, give drink to the thirsty, visit those in prison, invite strangers in, clothe the naked, and visit those in prison (Matt 25:35-40). He also advocated an offering system based on income. As he watched people bring offerings, he commented on a lady’s small offering by saying, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their

wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on” (Matt 12:43-44).

The early church followed the example and teaching of Jesus. The church at Jerusalem established a common fund, which provided for the needs of the people (Acts 2:45, 4:32). Peter, as a leader in that church, healed the lame beggar that was looking for money. Instead of helping him meet a temporary need, Peter set an example for helping the poor while encouraging a productive lifestyle (Acts 3:6). As Matthew Henry notes about this passage, “He gave him that which was better—the cure of his disease, which he would gladly have given a great deal of silver and gold for, if he had had it, and the cure could have been obtained. This would enable him to work for his living, so that he would not have to beg anymore” (Henry, 32).

The early church took care for the poor seriously; they had an administrative process of caring for needy widows. This process included specific regulations and appointed overseers. The church kept a list of eligible widows and met their physical needs. Widows were only allowed on the list if they were not young enough to work or if their families were not taking care of them; they were also required to have a history of serving the Lord (Acts 6:1, 1 Tim 5:3-14).

As Paul served the Lord as a missionary to the gentiles, he emphasized caring for the poor. He administered an offering for the church at Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-3), and he agreed with Peter and the other Apostles to remember the poor (Gal 2:10). It was Paul who wrote the requirements for widows, he encouraged churches to give to the poor, and thanked them for their contributions (Phil 4:10, 2 Cor 8:1-8).

James, another leader of the early church, spoke clearly about the church's responsibility to the poor. He forbid favoritism due to wealth (Jas 2:1-4), and he admonished the wealthy for unjust treatment of the poor (Jas 5:1-6). James also identified the hypocrisy of expressing compassion for the poor without being willing to meet their needs. He said, "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?" (Jas 2:15-16).

Conclusions about Urban Poverty Zones

Urban poverty zones have increased poverty, and biblical principles arise from a study of the city and the poor. God has used and will continue to use cities, and he loves the poor; it can be concluded, therefore, that God is very interested in urban poverty zones, and his work is important there. A study of Scripture also reveals that cities have increased opportunities for obedience and disobedience. This can be combined with the principle of help without enablement to conclude that inner cities can either be communities in which God is glorified through redeemed people living for him, or they can be places in which the poor are enabled to be lazy.

One final conclusion comes from the observations that cities are often used as places of benevolence, and that God's people are called to treat the poor fairly. The conclusion is that urban poverty zones can be used to strategically accomplish part of God's plan for the church. The greatest opportunity the church has to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and preach the gospel to the poor is in urban poverty zones.

Church Strategy

Since the Bible places an emphasis on the need for urban poverty zones, it is important to understand how to grow churches there. The purpose of this section is to identify fundamental principles of church strategy, which include church growth and church health. These principles create part of the foundation from which ministry in urban poverty zones can be understood. A brief history of church strategy will identify principles, historical trends, and the development of evaluation methods.

A Brief History of Church Strategy

Church strategy developed fluidly over the last half century. The original church growth movement transformed into a modified church growth system; that system produced a focus on church health, which in turn is transforming into church planting. Many of the basic principles are the same, but each transition has lent unique elements to church strategy development.

Beginning of Church Growth— McGavran

Donald McGavran is the widely recognized father of the church growth movement and could thus be identified as the father of the larger developmental movement, which has arisen over the last fifty years. McGavran made assumptions when he began his research that are often overlooked in discussion of church growth and health. Mainly, he assumed that the churches he studied were equally faithful and doctrinally sound. It is also important to remember that his initial research was conducted in the international mission field of India. He was driven by the question: why do some

churches grow while others, which are equally faithful, do not grow? (Rainer 1993, 33-40).

Continuing Church Growth— Other Major Writers

Building on the foundation laid by McGavran, many other writers and researchers worked in the field of church growth. The most notable include Wagner, Hunter, Schaller, Mims, McIntosh, and Towns. Each made unique contributions, but mainly they built upon the foundational principles discovered by McGavran (see reference list for works). Eventually, this developed into a system of church growth, which promoted a list of principles that authors seemingly claimed could be employed in any situation to produce numerical growth.

A Shift to Church Health

While church growth authors and researchers continue to work in the current decade, a subtle but significant shift took place in the literature beginning in the mid nineties. Authors began using the idea of church health in place of or in competition with church growth. Two authors gained wide readership with discussions of church health: Rick Warren and Christian Schwarz.

Warren and Schwarz

Together, along with contributions from other authors and researchers, Warren and Schwarz changed the focus of church strategy from growth to health. As mentioned above, this was a subtle shift, and it is often difficult to classify a work as distinctly church growth or distinctly church health. It is apparent, however, that the subtle shift has

resulted in a significant change in focus from elements that cause church growth to elements that constitute a healthy church.

It is important to remember that McGavran did not neglect health—he assumed it (Rainer 1993, 33-40). The new group of writers in the 1990s and into the new century made the opposite assumption. Rather than assuming that all churches were healthy but only a few grow, they assumed that all or most healthy churches grow.

Warren states,

The fact that many pastors wish to ignore is this: Quality produces quantity. A church full of genuinely changed people attracts others. If you study healthy churches, you'll discover that when God finds a church that is doing a quality job of winning, nurturing, equipping, and sending out believers, he sends that church plenty of raw material. (Warren 1995, 51)

Warren used five functions (evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship) of the church as the five purposes of the church postulating that they must be pursued equally in order to build a healthy church (Warren 1995, 123-28). Schwarz used a similar approach by identifying eight characteristics of healthy churches through international research. He proposed that churches need to equally pursue all areas. A summation of his approach is found in the “minimum factor.” His research found a correlation between a church’s growth and its weakest score in a test of the eight characteristics. He called the weakest area the “minimum factor” because his research found that no church can grow beyond its capacity in the weakest area. To clarify, he used the example of a barrel with different length staves. Despite how tall the other staves are, no barrel can be filled beyond the lowest stave. In Schwarz’s example, the staves each represented 1 of the 8 characteristics, and the water level represented church attendance.

According to Schwarz, a church only has the capacity of its lowest healthy characteristic (Schwarz 2000, 176).

Other Authors

In addition to Warren and Schwarz, others have written about church health. Some have written based on experience like Warren, and others have written based on research like Schwarz. Still others have written directly from biblical exegesis about church health. Some of the works in the church health genre include *The Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* by Mark Dever, *Healthy Kingdom Churches* by Robert J. White, *Church Health: Ten Leading Indicators* by Evangelical Free Church Health (see the reference list for more works).

Many others have worked in the area of church health. Mainly, these researchers identify a list or group of characteristics of a healthy church. Most come to similar conclusions, and a general understanding of the literature can be gained by referencing any of the books mentioned above.

Current Trends

Both church growth and church health continue to have influence, but there are current trends that will shape the future of church strategy. They include a trend toward research, missional thinking, and church planting. Just as church health was an assumed part of church growth, these trends have always been a part of church strategy, but over the last decade they have emerged as separate church strategy genres.

Research

Thom Rainer and George Barna are leaders in one area of influence on the discipline of church strategy—social science research. Rainer has been an influence in the church growth movement since the early 1990s. As an author and researcher, he has continued to contribute through the shift to church health and currently works through a unique style of research and writing about church life. Barna has also been influential in every stage of the church strategy discipline. His work extends back into the 1980s well before the church health shift and continues to make important contributions in the modern transition time. Each of these has used social science research to inform the church of trends, strategies, and transitions in church life and in the outside world (see reference list for works by Barna and Rainer).

Missional

Another current trend in church strategy is the missional trend. This calls for a refocusing on the mission of the church to make disciples in all nations and an emphasis on transformational change in individual lives and the world. It proposes a less structured, more focused church, which is not as concerned with the growth or health of an existing church as it is with the advancement of the gospel into unreached groups (Hirsch 2006, 17). Roxburgh and Romanuk define a missional church as “a community of God’s people who live in the imagination that they are, by their very nature, God’s missionary people living as a demonstration of what God plans to do in and for all of creation in Jesus Christ” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, xv). Another distinguishing characteristic of the missional trend, therefore, is a focus on impacting the world in all areas of creation and culture.

Church Planting

One final trend in church strategy is the church planting movement. Church growth, church health, the research trend, and the missional trend all contribute to and support church planting, but it has become a distinct and important discipline in church strategy. J. D. Payne is the director of the Nehemiah Project for church planting at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS). Along with biblical evidence from Matthew 28, the book of Acts, and Romans 15, he cites historical evidence, demographic evidence, cultural evidence, denominational evidence, evangelistic evidence, religious evidence, and economic evidence as reasons to adopt a church planting strategy (Gilman 2007, 114-15). The SBTS and North American Mission Board (NAMB) websites encourage individuals and churches to be involved in church planting in a variety of ways including praying, giving, and going; in their strategy, every church should be heavily involved in church planting.

Proponents of church planting see it as the best evangelistic tool for the church. Stetzer and Bird comment, “We believe church planting is the best way to take the church to the people it needs to serve. We believe new churches are the best platform for followers of Jesus to live as salt, light, and doers of good deeds in our communities (Matthew 5:13-16), to demonstrate love in practical ways (Matthew 22:34-40; John 13:35)), and to intentionally make more disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20)” (Stetzer and Bird 2010, 12). Like other church planting strategists, they share a “vision for what it means not just to start one church, or even to be a replicating church, but to be part of what may become a movement of multiplying church plants” (Stetzer and Bird 2010, 16).

In another work, Stetzer highlights the importance of church planting for the future of the American church. He says, “Church planting is essential. Without it Christianity will continue to decline in North America” (Stetzer 2006, 5). He lists three reasons to plant churches: “the command of Jesus, the need for new churches to reach North Americans, and the ineffectiveness of our present methodologies” (Stetzer 2006, 14). He goes on to say, “Without church planting, we will not fulfill the Great Commission” (Stetzer 2006 14).

Other church growth experts echo the importance of church planting. Like Stetzer, Malphurs comments about reasons to plant churches; “While numerous reasons exist, four stand out: the need for new churches, Jesus’ promise, the Great Commission, and the advantage of church starts” (Malphurs 2006, 32). He says of declining denominations, “While some deny the obvious, others have turned to a vigorous program of church planting, knowing that starting new churches will be the key to their survival” (Malphurs 2006, 34).

Because of its popularity and effectiveness, church planting is most likely the next long-term shift in the church strategy discipline. Like its predecessor church health, it maintains some of the elements of the previous movements/shifts. Most notably, church planting or multiplication is a listed element in some church growth and church health literature. When it is mentioned, however, it is understood as a mark of the mother church’s health or another way to grow the mother church. In the church planting movement, the focus is on the planted church as an effective evangelistic tool. Another element of the previous movements present in church planting is the homogeneous unit principle. Churches are often planted to reach a very specific age or culture group. The

researcher attended a recent presentation at the Alabama State Board of Missions State Evangelism Conference, the pastor of The Cowboy Church of Marshall County discussed the specific target of the church. He recalled that the church began when a new convert had a desire to reach his friends who, like himself, were not comfortable in traditional churches.

Not all church planters, however, embrace the homogeneous unit principle. Consider Stetzer's comments, "In North America today, we have such a rapidly growing and changing population that church planters can't afford to target such a specific niche that we miss one part of a mission field in favor of another" (Stetzer 2006, 1).

Church Strategy Principles

It is almost impossible to construct a comprehensive list of the principles identified by the church growth movement, but 4 major tenets of the movement are the principle of doctrinal soundness, the principle of visionary leadership, the homogeneous unit principle, and the receptivity principle. These 4 transcend all stages of church strategy.

Abstract Principles

All 4 principles are important in the discussion of church strategy, but the first 2 principles, doctrinal soundness, and visionary leadership, should be considered together since they are abstract principles, which are hard to measure.

Doctrinal Soundness

Doctrinal soundness is highlighted in almost all aspects of the church growth literature. It was one of McGavran's original assumptions (Rainer 1993, 33), and many of

the writers since that time have made similar assumptions or have stated the importance of doctrinal soundness. McIntosh writes, “In effect, a church that is committed to the authority of God’s word and is passionate in articulating its beliefs and behaviors has increased potential for biblical church growth” (McIntosh 2003, 45). Mittelberg makes a similar remark when he says, “None of these plans or approaches will make our church truly contagious if the core concept we are proclaiming—at both the personal and public levels—is not the unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ” (Mittelberg 2000, 345).

Visionary Leadership

Another key element of the church growth movement is the principle of visionary leadership. Many authors include the need for visionary leadership in discussion of strategic planning. Malphurs, Schaller, McIntosh , and Stetzer and Dodson all discuss strategic planning on some level, and many of them devote one or more chapters to the subject. It is important that a pastor or church leaders have a plan for the direction of the church.

Concrete Principles

It is difficult to measure the doctrinal soundness or visionary leadership of a church. The 2 remaining principles, however, are more easy to measure; churches either use them or they do not. These 2 principles are concrete, but they are also controversial.

The Receptivity Principle

One of the 2 most controversial principles of church growth is the receptivity principle. Rainer reports that it was developed by J Waskom Pickett but popularized by McGavran. He defines the receptivity principle as a strategy that directs the most

resources towards the people who are most likely to respond in salvation to the gospel message. “Do not neglect unreceptive people, they (Pickett and McGavran) said, but use the greatest level of resources to reach the greatest number likely to receive Christ” (Rainer 1993, 29-30).

The Homogeneous Unit Principle.

Wagner says the homogeneous unit principle is “without a doubt the most controversial of all church growth principles” (Wagner 1998, 166). Kraft defines the homogeneous principle as the compilation of 2 observations:

1. Human beings show an overwhelming predisposition to band together with their own kind and,
2. God accepts this fact and works with it (Kraft 1978, 121).

In other words, churches grow best when they reach out to people who are most like themselves and use people of other cultures to reach those cultures.

Church Strategy Evaluation

According to the current literature and trends, church strategy can assume health and focus on growth, focus on health and assume growth will follow or plant new works that are healthy and reach new people. Of course pastors and church leaders have the option of a combined approach. Either way, evaluation is an important part of any strategy, and growth and health are each evaluated differently in the literature.

Measuring Church Growth

Church growth measurement seeks to answer 2 questions: (1) Is the church growing? (2) Are church growth principles being applied so that the church will grow? Evaluators may attempt to answer either or both of the questions according to their

purpose. Researchers may want to know which churches are growing so further study can be done as to why they are growing while pastors may want to know which principles churches are not employing so they can reorganize accordingly.

Is the Church Growing?

The most basic method of church evaluation is attendance. Churches measure worship attendance, small group attendance, and event attendance. Most churches are familiar with these numbers, and denominational entities track them. Attendance can be evaluated by age, time of year, rate of increase/decrease, race, sex, and a number of other factors. While these numbers are easily attained and evaluated, they do not address what most church growth researchers and pastors desire.

Another method of church growth evaluation is conversion or baptism rates. In *Effective Evangelistic Churches*, Rainer states, “As I read again through my rather extensive church growth library, I realized that none of the works had devoted themselves to the study of leading conversion growth churches” (Rainer 1996, 1). He later explains the criteria he used to identify churches for his study: they were Southern Baptist (this was for continuity rather than growth), they baptized 25 or more in the selected year (1993), and had a baptism ratio of 20:1 or less. In other words, 1 or more was baptized for every 20 members (Rainer 1996, 4-5).

Warren mentions further numerical measurement. “Anytime someone says, ‘You can’t measure success by numbers,’ my response is, ‘it all depends on what you’re counting!’ If you’re counting marriages saved, lives transformed, broken people healed, unbelievers becoming worshipers of Jesus, and members being mobilized for ministry and missions, numbers are extremely important. They have eternal significance” (Warren

1995, 53). Almost any group can be counted and evaluated statistically, and this can be a legitimate measurement of church growth.

Rainer often uses creative methods of numerical evaluation. Recently, he studied churches that met the criteria to be an effective evangelistic church and also met four additional criteria:

1. Each church had been declining, plateaued, or had stagnated for several years prior to a breakout year
2. Each church broke out of its slump and sustained growth for several years
3. None of the churches changed pastors
4. Each church made a clear and positive impact on the community (Rainer 2005, 13-14)

Obviously, Rainer wanted to identify a group of churches that made a major change from ineffectiveness to effectiveness. His methods can serve as an example of creative numerical evaluation to study a specific type of growth.

Are Church Growth Principles Being Applied?

Another type of church growth evaluation is the presence or absence of elements found in growing churches. In other words, if a pastor or leader wants his church to grow numerically, he can evaluate to what extent the church contains the elements identified by a selected church growth author. Some elements are more practical and quantifiable while others are more difficult to assess. For instance, of the 4 elements mentioned earlier 2 of them are easily measureable while 2 are not.

The homogeneous unit principle and the receptivity principle are easily measured. Either a church is using them or it is not. A church can also evaluate how many of their ministries use selected church growth principles. For example, a church may find that 30 % of its small groups are using the homogeneous unit principle.

Other principles are less quantifiable. For instance, doctrinal soundness means different things to different people. It is difficult to imagine a church which would self identify as doctrinally unsound. However, churches can evaluate the perception of its members and the content of worship services. Other less quantifiable principles may be easier to evaluate. For example, members can evaluate the level of visionary leadership in the church. Any evaluations involving less quantifiable principles are most effectively done with a simple Likert scale.

Measuring Church Health

Measuring church health is more complicated than measuring numerical growth. This type of evaluation attempts to answer the question: is the church healthy? The shift to church health within the church strategy discipline produced many ideas about what makes a church healthy. Church health authors and researchers assume that a healthy church will grow. The strategy, therefore, is to evaluate the health level and address unhealthy areas within the church. There are several methods of evaluation that can be classified as either reflective evaluations, basic inventories, or comprehensive evaluations.

Reflective Evaluations

Much of the church health literature develops a framework or portrait of a healthy church without giving specific insight into evaluation or diagnosing a church's health. In such a case, the literature can be very helpful, but the only method of evaluation may be personal reflection by church leadership. Reflective evaluation can be a legitimate source of helpful information for a church especially considering the qualitative nature of church health. Some of the tools that assist leaders in reflective

evaluation are *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, *Ready for Reformation*, *The Intentional Church*, *Signs of Emergence*, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, *Comeback Churches* and *Simple Church*. Each of these communicates useful principles of church health, but they do not offer any official method of evaluating the current status of a church. Two examples, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* and *Simple Church*, will be explored as to how reflective evaluation can occur.

Nine marks of a healthy church. Dever identifies nine characteristics of healthy churches and has communicated them through a journal article, two books, and a website. The characteristics are expositional preaching, biblical theology, biblical understanding of the good news, biblical understanding of conversion, biblical understanding of evangelism, biblical understanding of membership, biblical church discipline, promotion of Christian discipleship and growth, and biblical understanding of leadership. Simply reading the book is an act of reflection as pastors and leaders can evaluate their own ministries according to the principles communicated. However, there is much more assistance available for evaluating according to each of the marks. The website offers additional material on each mark such as downloadable tools, audio lessons from the author, related articles, and blogs covering related subjects.

Although there are many tools available in the book and on the website, pastors and leaders can only evaluate their churches according to the nine marks by reflection. There is no tool to measure which areas are the weakest for the church and which are the strongest. Churches could possibly employ a 360 degree evaluation by asking leaders, associational or denominational staff, membership, and community

members about strengths and weaknesses, but many of the marks are difficult to assess for an outside perspective. The information would still be helpful.

Simple church. Unlike many other church health books, *Simple Church* is not a list of characteristics as much as it is a proposed model including four basic principles: clarity, alignment, movement, and focus. Like the nine marks, there is opportunity for reflection on the description of these principles as the book is read, but there is also a prescriptive chapter for adopting the simple model. Chapter 9 is titled “Becoming Simple,” and relates a process to adopt each of the components of the new model. For church evaluation, the implication is that pastors can move their church to implement the principles after they reflectively evaluate where they stand with each of them.

Inventories

The discipline of church health is full of basic inventories. These are ones which employ a simple Likert scale or other type of measurement to return a score in each of the areas in the specific church health theory. Examples include *Highly Effective Church Inventory* by the Barna Group based on 12 habits identified in research for the book by a similar title; *The Church Health Check Up* based on the ten leading indicators of church health provided by the Evangelical Free Church of America; *The Church Health Profile* based on 12 health factors and offered through the Wesleyan Church; *The Church Health Assessment* based on 4 stages of effective ministry and offered by the Rural Home Missionary Association; *The Church Health Survey* based on the six purposes of the church and offered by The Lawless Group; *Vital Signs of a Healthy Church: Church Check-Up* developed by Randy Millwood; *The Measure of a Church*, which is a book by Gene Getz with a basic survey in the back; *The Empowerment*

Church, which is a book by Carlyle Stewart with summary questions and checklists for evaluation; *Effective Evangelistic Churches* and *Breakout Churches*, which are books by Thom Rainer with surveys in the back.

Most of these are very similar; they are based on a particular theory and ask for self reporting about strengths and weaknesses in given areas. Actually, they are a written, more rigid, quantified form of reflective evaluation. For further understanding, two examples will be considered: *Highly Effective Church Inventory* and *The Measure of a Church*.

Highly effective church inventory. This assessment is based on 12 characteristics of churches identified as highly effective by the Barna Group. Those characteristics are ensuring that leaders direct the church, structuring the church for impact, building lasting and significant relationships, facilitating genuine worship, engaging in strategic evangelism, facilitating systematic theological growth, experiencing holistic stewardship, serving the community, and equipping the family. It contains 10 items per section for 120 total questions and is self administered. It is a survey for church leaders and returns a score in each area. It is marketed as a spark for strategic change (Barna 1999, iv).

The Highly Effective Church Inventory is similar to many of the other profiles mentioned above. They give a simple score in each of the identified areas, and they are very useful, practical, and easy to facilitate. They do not offer much more insight, however, and participants must return to the foundational theory behind the survey for prescription and advice.

The measure of a church. *The Measure of a Church* represents another type of church health literature. Rather than building a theory from research, Getz uses an exegetical approach to theory development. He conducts a survey of Paul's letters to the churches in which he notices the reoccurrence of three characteristics: faith, hope, and love. The presence or absence of each of these is noted in regard to the principle problem addressed by the specific epistle. For instance, he points out that Paul's first letter to the church at Thessalonica comments on their faith, hope, and love, but his second letter only comments on their faith, and love. Consequently, Paul addresses false teachings about the second coming of Jesus and encourages them to increase their hope (Getz 2006, 115).

Getz also uses exegesis to develop a framework for evaluating leaders and corporate worship (Getz 2006, 153, 71). At the end of every chapter, he provides guiding principles, which are combined in an appendix as an evaluation tool. The tool is a restatement of the guiding principles with a Likert scale attached. Like the previously discussed tools, this inventory relies on self reporting of the leadership and is highly subjective. It returns a simple score but offers no advice outside the original theory.

Comprehensive Evaluations

In addition to basic inventories, more comprehensive evaluations are available to pastors and leaders. These evaluations are in depth, facilitated and/or scored by an outside group, and return detailed results including specific advice. Some of the available instruments include: *Natural Church Development Assessment* (NCD) based on eight quality characteristics found in research for a book of the same title; *Church Health Assessment Tool* (CHAT) based on principles from *Becoming a Healthy Church* by

Stephen Macchia; *Transforming Church Index* (TCI) based on research that identified five key indicators of church health.

These tools provide in depth evaluation from several perspectives with both description and prescription. They can be a more powerful impetus for change. A pastor reported his experience with NCD in a personal email.

Our church used the assessment. It was valuable for us in that our members thought we were such a friendly church because we did a good job welcoming our guests and making them feel at home during worship. But we discovered that our greatest weakness was “Loving Relationships.” As an established church that had gone through conflicts before I arrived, they were quite cliquish, making it hard for newcomers to become part of the in-group. This (NCD) gave us leverage to make some strategic changes in how we prioritized and developed new programs to address this need. (Day 2008)

For better understanding of comprehensive evaluations, consider details of the TCI.

Transforming church index. This index is facilitated by the Transforming Church Institute and is based on five key indicators of church health. They are,

1. Consumerism vs. Community – How church members relate to each other. Unhealthy churches are a collection of individuals acting individually, while healthy churches relate as a community.
2. Incongruous vs. Code – Healthy churches have a “genetic code”. Unhealthy churches lack a clear identity. Healthy churches have a clear sense of their DNA and are intentional about aligning their ministries with their code.
3. Autocracy vs. Shared Leadership – How the church leadership functions. Unhealthy churches tend to be overly autocratic or bureaucratic, while healthy churches view leadership as a shared function and as a ministry.
4. Cloister vs. Missional – Addresses how the church relates to the local community. Unhealthy churches isolate from the community around them, while healthy churches are focused on their mission and have an outward orientation.
5. Inertia vs. Reinvention – Focuses on how church members think about the future. Unhealthy churches resist change and fear the future, while healthy churches embrace change, even when it is uncomfortable. (TAG Consulting 2008a, sample tcindex report)

After the church goes through the assessment, the results are processed and returned in a sixty page report that includes qualitative and quantitative data with both description and prescription. The responses are also compared with the national average to determine how the church compares with the norm. This type of detailed information is common to comprehensive evaluations (TAG Consulting 2008, survey description).

Conclusion

The church strategy discipline has transformed from a focus on church growth with assumed health to a focus on church health with growth as an assumed result. Currently, research, missional emphasis, and church planting are shaping the discipline. In any area of church strategy, evaluation is necessary. There are different types of evaluation available to pastors and church leaders for determining which areas need more focus. Much of the church growth and health research, however, has focused on the fastest growing churches, and sometimes that excludes urban and urban poverty zone churches.

Urban Ministry

Bakke comments, “Not only do nearly three billion of the earth’s nearly six billion persons live in cities, the other three billion are being urbanized as well” (Bakke 1997, 12) Because of this rapid urbanization of the world, authors, pastors, and other believers developed a concern for urban ministry, and it has emerged as a distinct genre of religious study. In order to understand church growth in urban poverty zones, consider a brief history of urban ministry and principles of urban ministry which have emerged.

A Brief History of Urban Ministry

Urban ministry studies arose from church growth in the 1960s to help churches facing transitioning neighborhoods. From that time until the early 1980s, the genre matured and began investigating urban ministry for the sake of reaching an increasingly urban population (Conn 1997, 25). Until the 1970s, urban ministry was studied through secular sociology texts combined with church growth books or books on ecclesiology. During the late 1970s, distinct urban ministry resources began to emerge (Claerbaut 2005, ix), and the 1980's saw an increase in urban ministry literature. David Claerbaut wrote the first edition of *Urban Ministry* in 1983, and Roger Greenway and Harvie Conn, two urban ministry pioneers, began publishing the journal *Urban Mission* the same year (Conn 1997, 17).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, interest in urban ministry increased, and schools, programs and conferences began, which focused solely on urban ministry (Conn 1997, 27-28). Recently, interest in urban ministry has resulted in the establishment of degree programs in urban evangelism at schools such as The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 2008, degree programs), and the development of a graduate schools devoted completely to urban ministry; Bakke Graduate University, which is named after another urban ministry pioneer, Ray Bakke (Bakke Graduate University 2009, about).

Five patterns have emerged in urban ministry that closely follow church growth patterns. Urban ministry in the United States and around the world is utilizing mass evangelism, church planting, mega churches, cell churches, and flagship churches (mother churches with satellite congregations). All of these trends have similar

characteristics, and they represent the newest developments in urban ministry (Conn and Ortiz 2001, 241-48).

Principles of Urban Ministry

Urban ministry has distinguished itself from other church growth studies; there are no long lists of principles which promise to produce numerical growth if applied correctly, and there are few urban ministry models as compared to the rest of church growth literature. David Britt reports that theoretical modeling of urban church growth is rare (Britt 1991, 27). There are, however, both implicit and explicit principles that occur throughout the literature base. While they are not accompanied by statements of promised growth, many urban ministry writers report similar organizational components and evangelistic strategies as effective. Before considering those strategies, it is important to explore the uniqueness of urban ministry and the challenges and opportunities provided by its context. These provide the foundation on which are built distinctive urban ministry principles.

Challenges and Opportunities of Urban Ministry

The urban environment provides unique challenges to churches located there. Bakke groups the challenges of urban ministry into the classifications of structural challenges, pluralistic challenges, geographical challenges, and challenges related to the leadership and laity of the church (Bakke and Hart 1987, 85-93). In this section, those are combined with insights from other authors and classified as structural challenges, cultural challenges (pluralistic and geographical challenges), economic challenges, and organizational challenges (challenges related to the leadership and laity of the church).

Like most challenges, those facing urban churches can also be understood and accepted as opportunities to advance the kingdom of God in some of the darkest places on earth.

Structural Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges. Larger populations place increased demand on the support structures of urban areas. Often, the urban structures are inadequate in areas such as education, law enforcement, health care, and transportation (Bakke and Hart 1987, 85). These inadequacies make it difficult to maintain members who can afford to live in better areas, and they can also make it difficult to recruit and maintain church staff. Pastors, ministerial staff, and even lay leaders are more effective when they are incarnational witnesses that live among the people they are trying to reach and lead (see below), and when the structures in suburban or rural areas are more palatable to the needs of families, churches struggle to find staff and leaders who are willing to live in the urban areas.

Structural challenges also effect logistical aspects of church ministry such as scheduling. For example, if a church located in an urban area plans an evening service, the law enforcement structure may not be sufficient to ensure the safety of those attending or traveling to and from the service. Inadequate transportation structures might also keep a church from having a midweek service due to increased traffic and travel times.

Opportunities. Structural inadequacies offer great opportunities for churches to supplement or even replace government structures. The absence of sufficient structures creates deeper felt needs in the community, and urban churches can use those needs as a bridge to the gospel and an occasion to fulfill the cultural mandate. Most churches meet individual needs, but churches in urban areas have an opportunity to meet corporate felt

needs in five potential areas: spiritual, emotional, cognitive, relational, and physical. Rather than helping one family or one child with educational support, a church in an urban area with inadequate educational structures can begin a Christian school or offer job skill training to local residents. These opportunities do not exist in areas where the educational structures are strong (Conn 1997, 102).

Scripture is well equipped to address structural challenges to transform them into opportunities. According to Bakke, wisdom literature in the Old Testament addresses many of the issues facing urban residents. Job addresses tragic poverty and loss of loved ones. Song of Solomon communicates a “beautiful alternative to the ‘sex-is-for-sale’ culture of our streets” (Bakke 1997 75). Ecclesiastes reveals the limits of secular pursuits of knowledge, money, and power. The book of Proverbs “balances attitudes and actions; private faith and public application in the marketplace of daily life. Abuses and vices are confronted directly (even alcohol, in 23:29-35), as are laziness and a host of lifestyle issues city kids can understand” (Bakke 1997, 75). Proverbs 31, Bakke continues, is of specific interest to single moms who need to balance family, community work, and career. Lamentations is a tour of a city which has faced God’s judgment. The narrator loves the city, and he constantly reminds the reader of the height from which it has fallen (Bakke 1997, 75).

Cultural Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges. Urban poverty zones are the pinnacle of a cultural shift occurring throughout the entire United States due to a large increase in immigration. Levy describes this shift as a transition from a melting pot to a mosaic. Inner cities are filled with people from different cultural backgrounds that are no longer adapting to American culture; this

increases the pluralistic nature of inner city neighborhoods (Levy 2000 39; Bakke and Hart 1987, 33; Smith 2008). In the past, churches adapted their strategies to reach people who were geographically distant, but the current challenge is to adjust efforts to reach those who are geographically close but culturally different. The cultural shift in the United States that is very prevalent in the inner city is destroying the old distinction between home and foreign missions (Ortiz and Baker 2002, 187).

In addition to the mosaic of cultures in inner city areas, churches also face the challenge of ministering in areas with little or no social structure, high crime rates, and overcrowded and insufficient housing (Bakke and Hart 1987, Claerbaut 1983). In many cases, a combination of these factors leads to the perception and reality of racism (Wolf 2002, 121).

The cultural challenges facing inner city churches have been organized by Brad Smith into four categories: pluralism, pain, presence, and power. Pluralism is discussed above. Pain, according to Smith is the culmination of the broken promises of the city. Since the fall, mankind has never found a place like Eden, but even the earliest cities were build on promises that could not be kept (see Gen 11 and the account of Babel). The inner city loudly communicates the pain of humanities attempts to recover civilization. Presence relates to over crowdedness; specifically there is little personal space and privacy in the inner city. The final area of challenge identified by Smith is the pursuit of power. According to Smith, those who have it do not seek it, and those who do not have it will do anything to get it. The inner city is a collection of people who feel powerless (Smith 2008, 168).

Opportunities. The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ that is to be taken to the entire world. The inner city provides the opportunity for Christians to accomplish the Great Commission and the Acts 1:8 model without leaving their own community. In many inner city areas, lost people from many different languages, countries, and people groups walk right by the door of the church every day. This is similar to the opportunity Peter had on the day of Pentecost when 3000 people from all over the world were saved because they were gathered in one place and heard the gospel (Acts 2). The new mosaic inner cities are international audiences for the gospel. Bakke interprets Psalm 107:1-9 as confirmation of divine authorship of urban migration (Bakke 1997, 73). Perhaps God is bring the nations together for their salvation.

The mosaic factor is not the only opportunity derived from the unique inner city culture. For instance, the church, if she is willing can become one of the few reliable social structures. If so, people will naturally turn to her in times of crisis. The church building can serve as a safe place where people can escape the crime of the neighborhoods for periods of rest and renewal. Churches can also meet the felt need for empowerment; there is no greater liberation than that offered by Jesus.

Bakke specifically sees an opportunity for the church to use the opportunity of social needs to reach urban residents. Commenting on the great challenges of the urban world, Bakke observes, "Jesus was born in a borrowed barn in Asia and became an African refugee in Egypt. So the Christmas story is about an international migrant. Furthermore, a whole village of baby boys died for Jesus before he had the opportunity to die for them on the cross. Surely this Jesus understands the pain of children who die for

the sins of adults in our cities” (Bakke 1997, 29). The church has the opportunity to introduce urban children to God who understands their struggles.

Economic Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges. Perhaps the most obvious challenges facing inner city churches are economically related. This is in part because of the poverty in the inner city; most household heads do no work, and there are no resources to support religious institutions (Levy 2000, 39). Because businesses have moved away, many inner city residents are not able to find work which accommodates their transportation resources. Job opportunities are limited, and job networking is almost non-existent. Additionally, many inner city residents are caught in the downward spiral of community and individual influence towards unemployment (Halpren 1995, 65).

Property is also a major economical challenge facing inner city residents and churches. In some cases, inner city areas are filled with abandoned buildings from vicious rent cycles. In these cycles, changes in the neighborhood devalue property so that landlords cannot acquire sufficient rent. Because they are renting for less, they do not have extra money needed for maintenance; the buildings deteriorate and become unusable so they are abandoned (Halpren 1995, 67). On the other end of the spectrum, inner city churches sometimes find it hard to purchase needed property. Because of many factors, buying and maintaining property can be very expensive (Wolf 2002, 97).

Opportunities. The economic depression in inner city neighborhoods provides incredible opportunity for churches. One of the greatest honors of the Christian life is to meet someone’s basic physical needs; Jesus said that in doing so believers are meeting his needs. Many places in the United States do not have a large population of people with

real hunger, thirst or other basic needs, but the inner cities are concentrated with opportunities to directly serve Jesus by serving others.

Churches can also serve the community by being a job training and networking facility. This opens numerous doors for discipleship. Economically depressed areas provide many opportunities for effective ministry, and they provides a great spiritual growth experience as churches and leaders depend more upon God than bank accounts and wealthy church members. Economic depression is a challenge, but it is also an opportunity.

Organizational Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges. In addition to cultural and economic factors, inner city churches also face unique organizational factors. Many churches located in inner city areas are older churches; when cities were first established, all the denominations wanted to insure a presence in the city, so they started downtown congregations. In many cases, the geography of the city has shifted, and these churches are in inner city areas. Because of this, such churches face two organizational challenges: the challenge of age and the challenge of change. Bakke states, “Every church and denomination will face the reality that while the church may keep the same basic functions. . . the forms they take must adapt to the pluralized and kaleidoscopic realities of a twenty-four-hour city” (Bakke 1997, 13)

Organizations naturally follow life cycles. As an organization ages and progresses along its cycle, bureaucracy and aristocracy develop, and the organization loses its missional value (Bridges 2003, 81). This process has been observed in all types of organizations, including churches. These organizational forces inevitably lead to

decline and even death, and inner city churches often face these challenges. The cure for organizational decline due to the life cycle is a rebirth or renewal or missional values. This requires major change in any church or organization, but many inner city churches are so different from the culture of their surrounding neighborhoods that a change to missional values would be cataclysmic (Wolf 2002, 97). Age and change present great challenges to inner city churches, but they are not the only organizational challenges.

Ray Bakke has interviewed urban ministry leaders from all over the world. In doing so, he has asked them about barriers to urban evangelization, and he has found eight that are commonly named. These include denominational politics, leader egos, competition between pastors, no seminary training on cross cultural ministry, rural mentality of leaders, failure to seize opportunities, no organized prayer, and no convincing ethics among Christians (Bakke and Hart 1987, 93). Inner city churches do face many barriers that are beyond the control of the church, but these eight commonly named barriers indicate that there are many ways in which the church can improve to increase urban and inner city evangelization.

Opportunities. Results are often directly related to the size of positive change efforts. Incremental change rarely changes the culture of an organization or increases its impact on society (Kotter 1996, 136). Churches facing massive cultural change have an opportunity to be on the front lines of God's advancing kingdom, and cultural change is nowhere more evident than in a church whose neighborhood has transformed into an inner city around them. Bakke's eight principles indicate that churches who are willing to take advantage of the opportunities present in inner city ministry have the potential to impact entire denominations. All churches are restricted by the eight barriers mentioned

above, but only in extreme contexts like urban and inner city ministry do they cause enough problems to be noticed and addressed.

Urban Ministry Strategies

Given the unique challenges and opportunities facing urban churches, there is a need for effective and unique approaches to urban ministry. David Britt developed and tested a model for urban church growth in which the factors effecting growth were labeled as institutional or contextual. Contextual factors are outside of a church's control, but they can shape the institutional factors. According to Britt, when there is congruence between the church's institutional factors and the context in which it operates, the church will grow (Britt 1991, 34-41). The following principles of urban ministry are all examples of institutional and contextual congruence. They are categorized as organizational components and evangelistic activities, and in each case, the principle molds the efforts and the organization of the church to be congruent with the urban context.

Organizational Components

Urban churches are most effective when their structure matches the context. Wolf and Schaller both found that effective urban churches had strong pastoral leadership and a strong sense of mission and vision. While both of these are generally accepted as church growth principles regardless of context, each of these researchers found that the vision and mission of the churches was specifically connected to the inner city (Wolf 2002, Schaller 1993b). Wolf recalled a monumental vote in a church which decided not to relocate from the inner city area but rather to stay and commit to reaching it. Over the

next several years, they developed a vision that was strongly tied to the local community and experienced great growth.

Another organizational component is suggested by Smith in consideration of the oppression mindset of many urban residents. He suggests that churches organize themselves to give away as much power as possible. Again, many management and church growth resources teach this principle, but it is especially important in a context of power struggle. Churches can use organizational policies to empower people who have never felt important to any organization (Smith 2008, 168).

Evangelistic Activities

Throughout urban ministry literature, three strategies emerge as the most prominent among growing urban churches. These are incarnational witness, community ministry and church planting. Once again, these principles are promoted, along with others, by much of the church growth literature. The difference, however, is that these principles can help suburban and rural churches, but because of the unique challenges facing urban churches, these principles are vital to their survival.

Incarnational witness. If urban churches are going to reach their communities, they must become part of the culture (Smith 2008, 169; Bakke and Hart 1987, 91). Given the mosaic that exists in many areas, this may be difficult, but it is not impossible. Churches may have to hire staff from different cultures or begin ministries that target specific people groups in their neighborhood. Pastors need to move their families into the neighborhood of the church. Some church members might even have to learn another language, but churches must be willing to take the gospel to people of the city rather than expecting the people to come to them and ask for it. As churches become

incarnational, two things will happen. First of all, the neighborhood will slowly begin to accept the people of the church. Secondly, the church will begin to understand the difficulties of urban life. Both of these provide a foundation for sharing the gospel (Bakke and Hart 1987, 83).

Community ministry. A natural requirement and outflow of an incarnational witness is community ministry. Urban churches have a great opportunity to meet physical, emotional, and psychological needs by reaching out to the community. They can use sports, education, food and benevolence, counseling, and job skills training to reach into the community and share the gospel. Urban churches have a greater opportunity than most to affect the entire area in a positive way. Aside from government entities, churches may be the only source of help and hope for some residents. This position can be used for evangelism and discipleship (Wolf 2002, 125).

Urban dwellers have felt needs, and churches can use community ministry to address those felt needs. Not all church leaders or church members, however, are convinced of the need for community ministry. Urban churches must allow the reasons supporting felt need ministry to overpower the barriers against it. Three of the most compelling reasons to meet felt needs through the ministry of the church are to provide a point of redemptive connection with those who are spiritually lost, to add credibility to the communication of the gospel, and to obey the command of God demonstrated by Christ (Conn 1997, 94).

Bakke provides a theological framework for meeting physical, felt needs in urban ministry. He reflects on addressing social needs as most appropriate in light of Christian theology. Consider God's creative actions in Genesis 2:7. The spiritual God

connected with the earthly dirt. For Bakke, this combination of spiritual and physical make Christians the only people “who can truly discuss the salvation of souls and the rebuilding of city sewer systems in the same sentence” (Bakke 1997, 34). According to Bakke, separating the gospel from social issues is putting redemption before creation. Such action has “created the great divorce and resulted in a cannon-within the cannon-of Scriptures—that is, while they believe the whole Bible is the Word of God, they treat certain parts as more valuable than others. As a result, many Christians justify throwing away neighborhoods like styrofoam cups when they cease to function for our benefit. They deny that the salvation or destruction of communities is a spiritual issue” (Bakke 1997, 35).

Ellison writes of five reasons that churches and individuals do not engage in felt needs ministry despite the strong positive reasons listed above. The first reason is Greek mindedness or analytical rather than holistic ministry. Churches try to minister to the heart and soul without ministering to the mind and body (Conn 1997, 98). To be sure, the gospel must remain at the forefront despite the importance of social justice issues. Greenway and Monsma conclude, “What must head the list of things to be done in today’s cities? If the New Testament shapes our strategy, we will begin with the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Like Paul, we will do everything in our power to win converts and will openly affirm that to be our goal (1 Cor. 9:19-23)” (Greenway and Monsma 2000, 40). This, however, can be done in the context of meeting felt needs.

Another reason given is class captivity or the tendency to normalize theology according to social environment or class. According to Ellison, white suburbanites react

to urban settings and urban cultures as though they are wrong and in need of reform (Conn 1997, 99).

A third barrier identified by Ellison is the professional priesthood in evangelical churches. Urban evangelism is most effective in relational contexts such as work, school and family, and vocational ministers do not have the access to these areas that the laity have. As a result, church members are more likely than church staff to reach those in their homes and places of employment. In a professional priesthood system, however, the laity is not empowered to reach those around them (Conn 1997, 100).

The final two barriers work in concert with one another to stifle evangelism in urban churches. One of these barriers is what Ellison calls self defense. Accordingly, individuals and churches are most concerned with the money, programs, and ministries that benefit them, and they neglect to spend or plan for programs and ministries that impact the lost. They choose self aggrandizement over selfless sacrifice. The supporting barrier to self defense is a misunderstanding of the Great Commandment. Rather than understanding love for neighbors as a practical set of actions, churches emotionalize and spiritualize love. It becomes a point of theological and philosophical discussion, but it rarely results in felt need ministry (Conn 1997, 101).

Church planting. Different people respond to different types of churches. Since the inner city is a mosaic of cultures, church planting is often an effective strategy for reaching the lost and making disciples (Conn and Ortiz 2001, 331-32). Many older churches in inner cities are debt free but not using all of their facilities because of years of decline. These churches can very successfully plant churches out of their existing buildings to reach different people groups; small, declining churches could literally have

a worldwide ministry from an old building in a very poor neighborhood. Dennison suggests a coordinated effort of saturated church planting across large cities and inner city areas. He believes that doing so could spark a national revival in the United States (Dennison 1999, 253-68). Stetzer and Bird echo this call for planting churches in urban and inner city areas. They state, “Contrary to popular practice, not every church plant has to take place among upper-middle class white people in a rapidly growing suburb of a metropolitan city” (Stetzer and Bird 2010, 13).

Ministry in Urban Poverty Zones

The study of church growth in urban poverty zones is a division of urban ministry. It has a unique context, unique challenges and opportunities and unique principles. These distinct characteristics are built upon the disciplines of church growth and urban ministry, but they require specific discussion. Hayes observes, “In the developed and developing world, the unreached poor dwell in places that are increasingly inaccessible to traditional Christian outreach efforts” (Hayes 2006, 16).

What Is an Urban Poverty Zone?

In this project, the term urban poverty zone is synonymous with inner city. Most people have an intuitive sense about the idea of an inner city. They can identify areas that they perceive as inner city in comparison to other neighborhood designations. Sociologists and researchers, however, are more precise for research and writing purposes. Over the last century, there have been two main approaches to designating inner city areas; researchers have either used a geographical approach or an economic approach. Although it seems these would contradict each other, they share very similar

characteristics, and in much of the recent research the more rigid geographical approach has yielded to the more accurate and flexible economically based approach.

Geographical Approach

The geographical approach is based on the earliest attempts to study metropolitan geography. Researchers employ geographic models in their work, and one of the earliest models of a city was the Burgess Concentric Zone Model. It was comprised of five concentric circles based around the core of a central business district (CBD). Burgess assumed that a light manufacturing area would naturally develop around the CBD, and he assumed that the lower class workers would live in that area. The succeeding concentric zones would be the home of middle and upper class citizens who could afford to travel (Levy 2000, 37-39).

The Burgess model established the geographical base for the first idea of inner city. Researchers understood the CBD to be the core of urban areas, and they recognized the outer zones as distinct from the inner zones. The term inner city, therefore, came to mean those areas between the outer or suburban areas and the CBD. It is important to note that this is a strictly geographical designation, but it was understood to be the home of the lower class (Wallace 1980, 195).

Burgess received both credit and criticism for the concentric zones. The credit is due to his pioneering in model development; he is criticized for the simplicity and inaccuracy of the model. His model was based on the city of Chicago, so he failed to take into account geographical factors such as mountains and valleys that cause other cities to form differently. These factors provide the impetus for the next geographical definition of inner city (Levy 2000, 39).

After World War II, the Hoyt Sectoral Model was developed to address the inadequacies of the Burgess model. The new model retained the CBD and the same classification system, but rather than being modeled in concentric circles, they were arranged according to sectors which followed transportation routes. The use of roads, waterways, and railways to designate sectoral boundaries corrected the earlier mistake of assuming flat, homogeneous geography; these transportation routes either compose or adapt to the geography of the city. In addition to retaining Burgess' zone classification system, Hoyt also kept the lower class section in the middle of the city. One difference, however, is that he allowed for other zones to also be located in sections immediately adjacent to the CBD. Therefore, the inner city was still connected with poverty, but it might also be connected with affluence (Levy 2000, 39).

Harris and Ullman delineated further from Burgess by developing a third model, which organized zones in relation to multiple nuclei. In the aptly named Multiple Nuclei Model, the CBD may or may not be in the geographical center, and there may be two or more lower class residential areas. Each area is organized in relation to its own center rather than the center of the city. While their model still locates low income areas close to the CBD, the clean geographical designation of the inner city as the area between the CBD and the suburbs is lost in the Multiple Nuclei Model. This reality prepared the foundation for a more flexible definition of inner city (Levy 2000, 39).

Economic Approach

While researchers, sociologists, and even casual observers maintain an intuitive idea of the inner city, a precise definition based on economic factors rather than geography provides a more accurate and flexible understanding of inner city. In the

development of this definition, researchers first developed a general, understood concept of an economically defined inner city. David Claerbaut observed in 1984 that the inner city is not geographic. It is a area of poverty with much government activity and very little activity from the private business sector; like Harris and Ulman, he recognized that there may be several in each city (Claerbaut 1983, 34-35).

The general concept of the inner city as an area of poverty rather than the area immediately adjacent to the CBD is encapsulated by Conn and Ortiz. They state, “The world’s inner cities and squatter areas are where the poor can be found. They are the location of the disenfranchised rather than just geographical locations” (Conn and Ortiz 2001, 339). The general concept of inner city as an area of poverty rather than a geographical location provides an opportunity for valuable research into the problems and opportunities facing inner city residents and institutions such as churches. One disadvantage, however, of the general designation of inner city as an area of increased poverty is the lack of precision.

Currently, the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) is addressing the problem of precision. The ICIC is a not for profit agency dedicated to the expansion of opportunity into inner city areas. Using census data, they have designated inner city areas in cities with a population of more than 1000,000 throughout the United States. They use poverty based criteria to designate geographic areas with specific boundaries. The ICIC defines an inner city as a core urban area with a poverty rate of 20 % or more. Core urban areas with lower poverty rates are also designated as inner city if they meet 2 of 3 criteria based on poverty rates, median household income, and unemployment as compared to their Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (ICIC 2007b, what is an inner city).

The ICIC definition provides researchers with two important elements. First of all, inner city areas are definable and more available for research. Secondly, inner cities are guaranteed, by definition, to be impoverished areas. This combination allows for investigation into areas of concern such as inner city church based ministry, which faces challenges and opportunities unique to its context.

Conclusion

Cities are important to God's strategy for reaching the world. They have always had greater potential for kingdom significance and corporate disobedience. Specifically, urban poverty zones provide opportunities for kingdom advancement in the context of increased sinfulness. Neither proper organizational components nor the best evangelistic strategies are certain to grow churches in urban poverty zones, but they will provide the best opportunity for sharing the gospel and advancing the kingdom of God. Churches must accept that they do not exist for themselves; they exist to love God and love others through accomplishing the Great Commission. Such values require great spiritual maturity, but perhaps leaders and churches are willing to face the challenges of ministry in urban poverty zones and embrace the principles for effective evangelism.

Jesus is the head of the church and the living example of perfect obedience. Churches in urban poverty zones must follow his example by identifying with those they are trying to reach, accepting unique challenges, embracing unique opportunities, and committing to the Great Commission.

Profile of the Current Study

The theological foundations of this study reveal that God loves cities, and he wants to use them. God loves the poor and he desires that they be treated benevolently

and fairly by the church; he also wants them to be converted. The educational foundations of this study are based in the disciplines of church growth and urban ministry. Together, the literature bases of these disciplines communicate a lack of knowledge about church growth in urban poverty zones. This study proposes to begin studying how churches grow in urban poverty zones, or inner city contexts, by developing a theory that is grounded in qualitative research data. A grounded theory of church growth in urban poverty zones will provide further opportunities for study of churches located there.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Research Question Synopsis

Urban poverty zones provide unique challenges to church growth. In order to understand the phenomenon-of church growth in these areas, it was beneficial to gather data from churches growing in such areas and extrapolate principles of church growth in urban poverty zones that were grounded in the data. This study was theologically and educationally prompted, and it had a research purpose, research questions, a research design, a research method, and research procedures. It also required a defined population, a delimited sample of the population, and limits on the generalization of the results.

Introduction to the Research Problem

A grounded theory of church growth in urban poverty zones was prompted by theological and educational concerns. Theologically, God loves the world and desires that everyone come to repentance and faith (John 3:16, 2 Pet 3:9); cities are areas of denser population, and urban poverty zones are densely populated areas of increased poverty. Church growth needs to be understood in such a context. Although Jesus came to everyone who would receive him (John 1:12), he specifically identified the poor as a target of his ministry (Luke 4:18).

Educationally, church growth research has not specifically studied urban poverty zones. Although urban ministry studies arose in the 1970s and has addressed

some of the concerns of ministry in urban poverty zones, it has not resulted in a specific study of designated impoverished areas. The work of the ICIC provided a unique opportunity to study churches located within urban areas designated as inner city by increased poverty rates. The grounded theory developed from this opportunity has created a foundation from which future research into church growth in urban poverty zones can occur.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop a grounded theory of church growth within urban poverty zones.

Research Questions

Five questions were the focus of this research concern:

1. Do leaders of growing churches in urban poverty zones attribute growth to the intentional application of the homogeneous unit principle or the receptivity principle?
2. Do leaders of growing churches in urban poverty zones attribute growth to intentional social ministry?
3. What additional categories and subcategories of data arise from participant descriptions of church growth in urban poverty zones?
4. What relationships and variations arise in the categories and subcategories of data from participant descriptions of church growth in urban poverty zones?
5. What principles are grounded in the categories, subcategories, relationships, and variations discovered in questions 1, 2, 3, and 4?

Research Design Overview

This research study was designed to develop a theory of church growth in urban poverty zones that is grounded in data. This grounded theory project explored 10

growing evangelical churches located in inner city areas as designated by the ICIC and defined as urban poverty zones by the researcher. The pastors of the 10 sample churches were interviewed to explore the prevalence of predetermined categories, subcategories, and properties of data and to identify other categories, subcategories, and properties of data. The data was analyzed and coded to discover principles of church growth in urban poverty zones.

Population

The population consisted of all growing evangelical churches located within urban poverty zones of cities in the United States of America.

Urban Poverty Zones

Urban poverty zones were defined by the researcher as synonymous with the ICIC definition of inner city areas. They were separated from other urban areas by poverty and unemployment rates. They either had a 20 % or higher poverty rate or met two of the three following criteria:

1. Had a poverty rate of 1.5 times or more that of their Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs);
2. Had a median household income of half or less that of their MSAs;
3. Had an unemployment rate of 1.5 or more that of their MSAs.

It is important to this study to note that these areas were defined by poverty. This distinction separated the population from other urban evangelical churches since urban and inner city are not congruent terms. As the precedent literature displayed, inner city is defined by poverty while urban is defined as relating to the city or inside the city. According to the ICIC definition, an inner city is always located in an urban area; each of

the designated inner city areas was in a city with a metropolitan population of four million or more.

Sample

Non- random sampling was used to select churches which met the following inclusion criteria:

1. They were located in urban poverty zones within cities in the United States with populations of 500,000 or more.
2. They displayed a pattern of growth as indicated by an overall increase of 3 % or more in average attendance over the last 5 years with growth in 3 of the 5 years.
3. They were members of the National Association of Evangelicals or affirmed the following statements:

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. (National Associational of Evangelicals 2009, about us)

To control for regional and geographical factors, the researcher selected churches located in cities within a variety of regions—Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York. Two churches were selected from each city.

Non-random sampling is consistent with grounded theory research, which uses theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is “sampling on the basis of concepts that have proven theoretical relevance to the evolving theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 176).” The non-random sampling method for this study was a modified version of theoretical sampling because it established inclusion criteria before the research began rather than as it emerged.

Delimitations of the Sample

The sample was delimited from the population by the following criteria:

1. Churches located in cities with populations of more than 500,000.
2. Churches identified by denominational leaders and local pastors as being able to contribute to the knowledge of church growth in urban poverty zones.

Limitations of Generalizations

The data from the sample will not necessarily generalize to the entire population. Some growing evangelical churches located in urban poverty zones of United States cities with more than 500,000 in population may be experiencing growth because of situational or organizational factors not explored in this study. Growing churches in urban poverty zones in cities of fewer than 500,000 may experience different growth dynamics.

Research Method and Instrumentation

This study used the grounded theory method developed by Glaser and Strauss in which data was collected through qualitative means and a theory was allowed to arise from the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 28). Open ended, low structure interviews were used to gather most of the data for this study, although some data was discovered by observation during on site interviews (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 179).

The instruments used for this research were interview questions and coding methods. The interviews had very little structure and no time limits. All of the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for categories, subcategories, relationships, and variations using open, axial, and selective coding. Grounded theory interview questions were planned, but the interviews were not limited to those questions (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 27). Four questions were asked in every interview.

1. Why has your church grown over the last 5 years when others in your area have not grown?
2. Has your church intentionally used the homogeneous unit principle, and has it contributed to your growth?
3. Has your church intentionally used the receptivity principle, and has it contributed to your growth?
4. Has your church intentionally addressed social justice issues, and has doing so contributed to your growth?

Additional questions were used when those questions failed to produce significant data (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 28). The additional questions are as follows:

5. Why do churches in communities like yours grow or not grow?
6. What factors cause urban poverty zone church growth?
7. What can other churches in communities similar to yours do to grow?

8. How have you contributed to the growth of the church?
9. How does church growth in your community differ from church growth in other contexts?

These questions were only used when the original questions did not generate enough data. Clarifying questions were also used such as “Can you explain that further, or can you give me some more details about that?”

Research Procedures

Once the initial churches were chosen through non-random sampling, the researcher scheduled on site interviews with the lead pastors of each church. The interviews were conducted as described above (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 178). The data from all the interviews was evaluated through open coding to identify categories and subcategories of information and to determine the relationship of the data to the predetermined categories and subcategories. The predetermined categories and subcategories came from the precedent literature and are controversial church growth principles (category), homogenous unit principle (subcategory), receptivity principle (subcategory), and social justice issues (category).

Once the initial categories and subcategories were established through open coding, axial coding was used to explore relationships and variations between categories and subcategories, and selective coding was used to evaluate data further and saturate the categories. Once all the data was gathered and coded, the categories, subcategories, relationships, and variations were analyzed to determine what principles arose from the data to explain church growth in urban poverty zones.

Coding Procedures

Strauss and Corbin (1990) developed specific procedures to analyze data gathered through grounded theory research. These coding methods are designed to do several things:

1. Build rather than only test theory.
2. Give the research process the rigor necessary to make the theory “good” science.
3. Help the analyst to break through the biases and assumptions brought to, and that can develop during, the research process.
4. Provide the grounding, build the density, and develop the sensitivity and integration needed to generate such a rich, tightly woven, explanatory theory that closely approximates the reality it represents. (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 57)

Like grounded theory research in general, the Strauss and Corbin coding method requires creativity, rigor, persistence, and theoretical sensitivity (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 58).

In this project, the researcher used the Strauss and Corbin coding method to analyze the data gathered from the ten on site interviews and the additional data gathered through observation. The method is presented below in a 3 step process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. It is important to consider these as distinct stages for understanding, but in reality they occurred simultaneously as data was analyzed (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 58).

Open Coding

Data analysis began with open coding. Open coding is “the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 61). The process used two analytical procedures—making comparisons and asking questions—and it resulted in the development of categories of data (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 62). Three steps comprised the open coding process: conceptualizing the

data, categorizing the data, and developing the categories (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 63-69).

Conceptualizing the data. In this stage, every observation, sentence and paragraph was examined, and each idea was given a name that represented the phenomenon. The names given to the phenomena were more than summarizing statements; they were conceptual ideas that allowed more incidents to be gathered under one name (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 63-65). For example, imagine one data set revealed that a growing church in an urban poverty zone hired an associate pastor whose ethnicity differed from most of the congregation but matched a people group in the community. A name based on a summarizing statement might be “minority associate pastor.” This name accurately describes the phenomenon, but it does not conceptualize it. A more appropriate name would be “multicultural leadership.” Such a name describes a concept represented by the occurrence rather than the occurrence itself. It also provides a broader concept, which can encompass more phenomena as they arise in the data.

Once the initial phenomena were named, future ideas, incidents, and events in the data were either given a new conceptual name or coded under an existing name. From the example above, specific teaching or preaching strategies would need a new name, but an intentional strategy to promote lay leaders with varying ethnicities would be coded with “multicultural leadership.”

Categorizing the data. Once the data was conceptualized, the researcher grouped concepts around others that seemed to pertain to the same phenomenon. These concept groups became categories of data and the concepts retained an identity as subcategories. Groups and concept relationships were speculative at this stage, and they

were further explored through axial coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 65-66). Consider the previous example of “multicultural leadership.” It might be combined with the possible concepts of “ethnic celebration” and “alternative arts” to create the category “cultural sensitivity strategies.”

The categories were named in one of three ways. Names were logically developed by the researcher as he examined data. This was advantageous in many cases because existing names or labels come with expectations and strong feelings that might bias the research. Another name development technique was borrowing a term from the precedent literature. In such a case, the researcher was very careful to clearly define the specific meaning of the term for the research project in order to escape confusion or evoke passionate feelings about a common phrase. One final source of category names was “in vivo” codes. These were taken from the interviewees and were appropriate names because there were no preconceived ideas about their meaning, and they were directly tied to the data.

Developing the categories. After the categories were established, the researcher used the data to develop properties of each category and dimensions of each property. These properties and dimensions later formed the basis for relationships between categories and subcategories. Properties are characteristics or attributes of a category, and they were listed before they were dimensionalized. For example, the category of color would have the properties of intensity and shade. Once these properties are listed, their dimensions can be developed. Intensity and shade can be dimensionalized with continuums of high to low and darker to lighter respectively. Properties and

dimensions allowed for any instance of a category to be located along the property continuums (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 69-70).

Predetermined categories. Grounded theory research allowed the inclusion of predetermined categories that arose from the literature review (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 50-51). In this study, the researcher used two predetermined categories: controversial church growth principles and social ministry strategy. These categories addressed research questions 1 and 2, and they had predetermined subcategories, properties, and dimensions.

The category of controversial church growth principles had the subcategories of homogeneous unit principle and the receptivity principle. Both of these had properties that were dimensionalized. The homogeneous unit principle had the properties of homogeneous units and mosaic units, and each of these had dimensions that ranged from intentional development through unintentional development to non-development. The receptivity principle had properties of targeted evangelism and broadcast evangelism, and the dimensions of these properties ranged from high involvement to low involvement.

The category of social ministry strategy had the properties of non-ministry evangelism, ministry evangelism, and non-evangelistic social ministry. These properties had dimensions with the range of high involvement to low involvement. The predetermined categories were changed after they were compared to the data. All of them were maintained, but additional subcategories and properties were added, and some properties were reclassified as subcategories. See chapter 4 for a complete discussion of this.

Axial Coding

During open coding, the data was fractured to reveal categories, subcategories, properties, and dimensions. Axial coding brought the data back together in new ways by making connections between the categories and their subcategories. In this stage, main categories were developed, but they were not interrelated to other main categories until selective coding. The category development completed during axial coding developed the foundation to formulate the actual theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 97-97).

A specific set of relationships was used to relate subcategories to their categories during the 1st stage of axial coding. These relationships were labeled phenomenon, causal conditions, context, intervening conditions, action/interactional strategies, and consequences. These relationships constructed a model that provided a systematic framework for processing the data in a complex way (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 98-99).

Phenomenon. This was the central event, incident or idea occurring in the data. The other relationships and specifically the actions and interactions were directed towards it. To discover the phenomenon, the researcher used the questions “What is the data referring to and what is the action/interaction all about?” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 100).

Causal conditions. The causal conditions were the events identified in the data that led to the phenomenon. They were discovered by asking, “What preceded the phenomenon?” and looking for context clues like “when, while, since, because or due to” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 10-101) For example, in the phenomenon-of pain, a causal condition might be a broken leg. This could easily be inferred from noticing that the

incident of a broken leg proceeded the phenomenon-of pain or it could be discovered and labeled from data in which participants used the context clues in relation to a broken leg. Like other subcategories, causal conditions had their own properties that were developed and explored. The causal condition of a broken leg would have properties of type (simple, compound, etc.) and location (upper, middle, lower leg).

Context. The context was the specific set of conditions within which the action/interaction strategies were taken to manage, handle, carry out, and respond to a specific phenomenon. In the example of pain the context could be described by the statement, “Under intense pain of long duration, action X was taken.” The words intense and long duration describe the context of pain in which action X was taken (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 101).

Intervening conditions. Like context, the intervening conditions were conditions that bore on the action/interactional strategies, but they were not as specific. They were the broad and general factors that influenced the strategies but were not included in the context. In the example of pain from a broken leg, an intervening condition might be geographical location. If the leg was broken in a remote location like a forest, the action/interaction strategies would be influenced differently than if the leg were broken on a sidewalk one block from an emergency room (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 102-03).

Action/interactional strategies. These have been mentioned above in relation to the other labels, and they were the strategies directed at managing, handling, carrying out or responding to a phenomenon-as it existed in context and under a specific set of

perceived conditions. These strategies had specific properties of being processual and purposeful. In other words, they evolved over time, and they were goal oriented. In respect to the phenomenon-of pain caused by the condition of a broken leg in the context of high intense pain of long duration with the intervening condition of a remote location, an action strategy might be to set and splint the leg (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 104).

Consequences. Action/interactional strategies resulted in outcomes, and these were traced out in the data and labeled consequences. In the example of pain, the action of setting and splinting the leg might result in relief. Axial coding explored the categories to develop them according to the concepts, or subcategories, located in them. Doing so established the foundation for linking the categories and developing the theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 106).

To develop linkages between categories and subcategories, the researcher used the same basic process used in open coding to purposefully track down relationships rather than stumble across them. The researcher asked questions and made comparisons with the data by developing hypothetical relationships and testing those relationships against the data. In doing so, he constantly moved between inductive and deductive thinking. Many hypotheses developed, but the final theory was limited to those categories, properties, dimensions, and relationships that existed in the actual data. While this process was occurring, the researcher simultaneously continued the search for properties and dimensions in subcategories, and he began the search for variations and relationships among subcategories, their properties, and dimensions (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 108-12).

Selective Coding

The selective coding process was not much different from the axial coding process, but it was done at a higher, more abstract level. The procedure consisted of 5 non-linear steps that the researcher moved back and forth among. The steps were developing the story line, relating subsidiary categories around a core category, relating categories at a dimensional level, validating the relationships against the data, and filling in categories that needed further refinement (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 117-18).

The story line was a type of category with its own phenomenon-and accompanying relationships. It was developed by asking, “What area of study is the most striking?” (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 119). This “striking area” became the core concept, or phenomenon, and the accompanying relationships comprised the remainder of the story line. Once the core category was chosen, the researcher first developed its properties fully and then related the other categories to it in a subsidiary role as conditions, contexts, strategies, and consequences. These relationships were discovered through a 3 step process of asking questions, generating hypotheses, and making comparisons to verify the hypotheses. Such analysis produced further relationships and patterns and allowed the subsidiary categories to be grouped in relationship to the core category. The result was a systematic paradigm of a core category, and relating subsidiary categories with each having its own properties and dimensions (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 119-32).

Theory Development

Theory development naturally arose from the coding process. The core category, subsidiary categories, and their relationships formed the basic components of

the theory. This developed theory was grounded by comparing it to the data to verify it. The story line, which included the core category, was laid out in narrative form to explain the theory. Once developed the theory was compared to the data once again to ensure that it accurately communicated the reality of church growth in urban poverty zones.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Grounded theory research gathers qualitative data and analyzes it through open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990). For this study, data was gathered through the qualitative methods of interviews and observations. The interviews and observations were coded to reveal similarities, differences, and relationships among the data from which arose a grounded theory of church growth in urban poverty zones.

Compilation Protocol

Ten churches were selected to participate in this study based on the inclusion criteria detailed in chapters 1 and 3. The researcher discovered these churches by contacting denominational offices, searching the internet, and talking with pastors in large cities. This process revealed a network of people interested in church growth within urban poverty zones, and most of the churches contacted were willing to help.

These efforts generated a list of churches in seven cities—New York, Miami, Atlanta, Houston, Chicago, Memphis, and Los Angeles. The churches on this list were contacted to determine if they met the inclusion criteria and were willing to participate in the research. Initial contacts were made through phone calls, emails, and text messages. Many of the churches never responded, but among those who did, most of them met the criteria and were willing to participate. Of the 7 original cities considered, Houston and Memphis were the 2 not included in the study. In Houston, only one contact resulted in a

connection, and although the church qualified for the study, they were not willing to participate because of logistical and scheduling issues. In Memphis, only one church responded to contacts so other cities were chosen to meet the research requirements of two churches in each of five cities.

During or shortly after the initial contact with each church, the address, growth record and evangelical status were confirmed. After that, interviews were scheduled to collect the data. Because church growth in urban poverty zones is specifically tied to the physical location of the church, the researcher travelled to each site to compile the data. This allowed more time with each church and direct observation of the ministry site and surrounding community.

Data Gathering

Each data gathering trip was unique, but they all included a low structured interview with a lead pastor that was recorded for transcription and analysis. The interviews ranged in length from 30 minutes to 1.5 hours. Some of the interviews were very formal and concise while others were conducted in multiple locations throughout the churches and surrounding communities as the pastors and ministry team leaders relayed important information about their ministry philosophy, focus, and practice.

The interviews were the core data gathering tool, and they were designed to be low structured and open ended to allow the participants to provide the information they felt was most relevant to the subject of church growth in urban poverty zones. It was not difficult for the participants to generate thoughts and information, and the interviews produced a wealth of data for analysis and theory development.

Other data gathering opportunities included community tours, church facility tours, interviews with associate staff, and even direct observation of church ministry in urban poverty zones. All of these additional data gathering opportunities were observed closely and notes were taken for coding and analysis.

Follow up interviews were not conducted because the initial interviews and observations were sufficient for gathering the data and developing a grounded theory of church growth in urban poverty zones.

Analysis through Coding

The data was analyzed by open, axial, and selective coding and produced categories and subcategories of data. Each of these had properties, which in turn were dimensionalized through the data. This analysis is the combination of two analytical methods. In the first method, the researcher looked for data to fill predetermined categories. These categories arose from the precedent literature. In the second method, the researcher discovered new categories and subcategories, which comprised the basis of the discovered theory along with the predetermined categories. This two pronged approached allowed the data to address significant ideas present in the literature, but it also allowed the development of new ideas that led to a new theory grounded in the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 102). The predetermined categories were explored through research questions 1, 2, and 3 while research question 4 allowed for the discovery of new categories.

Open Coding

Once the first piece of data was gathered, open coding began. It was the 1st stage of analysis, and it yielded much information in the form of concepts, categories,

and subcategories. Phenomena relating to church growth in urban poverty zones were labeled with broad names to describe what they represented. This continued through with all collected data and produced over fifty concepts.

Upon further analysis, many of these concepts were found to represent the same phenomenon-or one similar enough to the others to be categorized with them. The original list of concepts was narrowed to 35 concepts that encapsulated all of the information discovered in the data.

Axial Coding

Once the concepts were narrowed, axial coding was used to link similar concepts together through story lines to develop category to subcategory relationships. In this process, the researcher analyzed, which concepts were similar although they represented a separate phenomenon. Those concepts, which all pertained to similar things were group together into a category. Either one of the concepts became the category with all the other concepts relating to it as subcategories, or a new category title was developed to accurately represent the phenomena characterized by the categories. In the latter case, all of the concepts became subcategories and related to the newly formed category. Some of the concepts were used more than once, but all of the concepts were used as a category, subcategory or property.

Through axial coding, 9 categories arose from the data. Once these categories were identified, a story line was developed to relate them to the subcategories. Each category became a central phenomenon-while the subcategories filled the rolls of causal conditions, intervening conditions, action/interactional strategies, and consequences. The properties of the main category contributed to the story line by becoming the context.

During this process, it was sometimes necessary to go back to the data to develop additional concepts and categories to fill the needed roles. In such a case, the researcher asked appropriate questions of the data to determine, which subcategories needed to be developed in order to complete the story line and have better understanding of the central phenomenon-or category.

Selective Coding

Once categories and subcategories were discovered, the data was analyzed for a core concept through selective coding. The relationship between each of the categories was explored in the same way that the relationship between categories and subcategories was explored in open and axial coding. The researcher used selective coding to determine if the categories all related to one or more core categories or principles (Miller and Salkind 2002, 155).

Throughout the research process, the researcher speculated about the relationships to be explored in selective coding, and 3 categories arose from the data as possible core categories. During the selective coding process, one category arose from those 3 as a core category, and it was placed in another story line as the central phenomenon. The other categories became sub categories of the core category, and they filled the remaining roles in the story line. The development of a story line among the main categories completed the theory development process.

Demographic and Sample Data

The research sample was chosen through non-random sampling to meet inclusion criteria. Although the criteria was not specific to geographical location of the cities in which the churches were located, an attempt was made to select cities, and

therefore churches, which were located in geographically diverse cities. An attempt was also made to include many different evangelical denominations to increase diversity in the study. The churches were selected without regard to race, size or longevity, although they were diverse with respect to all of these areas.

The churches were located in New York, Atlanta, Miami, Chicago, and Los Angeles. With the exception of Atlanta and Miami, these cities are all located in different geographical regions of the United States of America, and they all represent a broad spectrum of culture. The churches ranged in size from less than 100 in average attendance to more than 600 in average attendance; one church had existed for more than 100 years while another had only existed for 5 years. The denominations represented were Southern Baptist, Missionary Baptist, independent (non-denominational), and independent Pentecostal. The lead pastors were also very diverse; some were Caucasian, and others were African American or Latin American. Their ages ranged from the early 30's to the middle 60's. Some were raised in the city while others moved to the cities to minister.

Atlanta Churches

Atlanta, Georgia is located in the Southeastern United States, and has an estimated 2009 population of 540,921 (United States Census Bureau 2010c, SAFFPopulation); the metropolitan area has a population of more than five million (United States Census Bureau 2010b, CBSA-est2008-annual.html). The Center for Missional Research at the North American Mission Board provided a list of thirty churches in Fulton County, Georgia, that met the growth criteria for the research. The addresses of these churches were analyzed according to census data to determine if they

were located in urban poverty zones. Five of the 30 churches were located in census tracts with 20% or greater poverty levels. Of those 5, only 2 responded to phone calls or emails—First Baptist Church Chattahoochee and Greater Deliverance Baptist Church.

First Baptist Church Chattahoochee

First Baptist Church of Chattahoochee was located at 1950 Bolton Road Northwest, Atlanta, 30318. It was in census tract 88, which had an individual poverty rate of 30.7 % (United States Census Bureau 2010a, SAFFacts). Jim Haskell was the pastor interviewed for the study. The church had existed for 113 years, and over the 5 years previous to the interview, the church had grown from 45 to 153 in average attendance with growth in 4 of the 5 years.

Greater Deliverance Baptist Church

Greater Deliverance Baptist Church was located at 705 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd Northwest, Atlanta, 30318. It was in census tract 8 of Fulton County, which had an individual poverty level of 25.8 % (United States Census Bureau 2010a, SAFFacts). James Dixon was the pastor, and he and his wife, Caroline, were interviewed for the study. The church had existed for 13 years, and over the 5 years previous to the interview, the church had grown from 37 to 54 in average attendance with growth in all 5 years.

Chicago Churches

Chicago, Illinois is located in the Midwestern region of the United States and has an estimated population of 2,851,268 (United States Census Bureau 2010c, SAFFPopulation) with a metropolitan population of over nine million (United States

Census Bureau 2010b, CBSA-est2008-annual.html). The Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association provided a list of ten churches that might meet the research criteria and be willing to participate. These churches did not necessarily belong to the association, but they were known to be growing churches in difficult areas of the city. Of the 10 churches, 8 of them were located in urban poverty zones, and 4 of those 8 responded to the initial contacts. Of the 4 that responded, only 2 of them met the growth criteria—Armitage Baptist Church, Garfield Park and Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church.

Armitage Baptist Church, Garfield Park

Armitage Baptist Church, Garfield Park was located at 131 South Pulaski, Chicago, 60624. It was in census tract 2608, which had an individual poverty level of 30.7 % (United States Census Bureau 2010a, SAFFacts). Jamie Thompson was the pastor, and he was interviewed for the study. The church had existed for 5 years, and during that time, the church had grown from 8 to 70 in average attendance with growth in all 5 years.

Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church

Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church was located at 2050 West 59th Street, Chicago, 60636. It was in census tract 6705, which had an individual poverty level of 26.9 % (United States Census Bureau 2010a, SAFFacts). Bishop Vesta Dixon was the pastor, and he was interviewed for the study. The church had existed for 31 years, and over the 5 years previous to the interview, the church had grown from 200 to 425 in average attendance with growth in all 5 years.

Los Angeles Churches

Los Angeles, California is located on the west coast of the United States and has an estimated population of 3,831,868 (United States Census Bureau 2010c, SAFFPopulation) with a metropolitan population of over twelve million (United States Census Bureau 2010b, CBSA-est2008-annual.html). World Impact, a “Christian missions organization dedicated to ministering God's love in the inner cities of America (World Impact 2010, about/index.php),” provided the names of 4 churches located in difficult urban areas, which might qualify and be willing to participate in the research. Of those 4, 3 responded to contact efforts, but only 2 met the inclusion criteria. Those 2 were Open Arms Christian Center and Power House Church of Watts.

Open Arms Christian Center

Open Arms Christian Center was located at 8874 South Broadway, Los Angeles, 90003. It was in census tract 2402, which had an individual poverty level of 36.8 % (United States Census Bureau 2010a, SAFFFacts). Doug Kelley was the pastor, and he and his wife, Kathy, were interviewed for the study. The church had existed for 5 years, and during that time, the church had grown from 5 to 122 in average attendance with growth in 4 of the 5 years.

Power House Church of Watts

Powerhouse Church of Watts was located at 2003 East Imperial Highway, Los Angeles, 90059. It was in census tract 2431, which had an individual poverty level of 48.1 % (United States Census Bureau 2010a, SAFFFacts). Todd Grant was the pastor, and he was interviewed for the study. The church had existed for 4 years, and during that

time, the church had grown from 6 to 100 in average attendance with growth in all 4 years.

Miami Churches

Miami, Florida, is located on the southern tip of the continental United States and has an estimated population of 433,136 (United States Census Bureau 2010c, SAFFPopulation) with a metropolitan population of over five million (United States Census Bureau 2010b, CBSA-est2008-annual.html). A personal friend of the researcher provided the names of 6 churches located in difficult urban areas, which might qualify and be willing to participate in the research. Of those 6, 4 responded to contact efforts, and all 4 were found to be located in an urban poverty zone. One was experiencing a pastoral transition, and another did not want to participate in the study. The remaining 2 met the inclusion criteria, and they were willing to participate. Those 2 were the downtown campus of Christ Fellowship Downtown, and Citi Church.

Christ Fellowship Downtown

Christ Fellowship Downtown was located at 500 Northeast 1st Avenue, Miami, 33132. It was in census tract 37.01, which had an individual poverty level of 48.7 % (United States Census Bureau 2010a, SAFFFacts). Pete Cotto was the pastor, and he was interviewed for the study. The church had existed for 4 years, and during that time, the church had grown from 150 to 650 in average attendance with growth in all 4 years.

Citi Church

Citi Church was located at 3001 Northwest 22nd Avenue, Miami, 33142. It was in census tract 24.01, which had an individual poverty level of 35.0 % (United States

Census Bureau 2010a, SAFFFacts). Tony Rivera was the pastor, and he was interviewed along with two members of his leadership team, Natasha White, and Jakeisha Thompson, for the study. The church had existed for 5 years, and during that time, the church had grown from 25 to 150 in average attendance with growth in all 5 years.

New York Churches

New York, New York is the largest city in the United States and is located on the east coast of the country. It has an estimated population of 8,391,881 (United States Census Bureau 2010c, SAFFPopulation) with a metropolitan population of over nineteen million (United States Census Bureau 2010b, CBSA-est2008-annual.html). The Metropolitan New York Baptist Association and Concert of Prayer for Greater New York provided the names of 3 churches located in difficult urban areas, which might qualify and be willing to participate in the research. All 3 responded to contact efforts, but only 2 met the inclusion criteria. Those 2 were Graffiti Church and New Baptist Temple.

Graffiti Church

Graffiti Church was located at 205 East 7th Street, New York, 10009. It was in census tract 26.02, which had an individual poverty level of 26.9 % (United States Census Bureau 2010a, SAFFFacts). Taylor Fields was the pastor, and he was interviewed along with associate pastor Kareem Goubran for the study. The church had existed for 36 years, and over the 5 years previous to the interview, the church had grown from 60 to 130 in average attendance with growth in all 5 years.

New Baptist Temple

New Baptist Temple was located at 360 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, 11217. It was in census tract 62, which had an individual poverty level of 41.0 % (United States Census Bureau 2010a, SAFFacts). Gus Rodriguez was a lead pastor, and he was interviewed for the study. The church had existed for 6 years, and during the 5 years leading up to the interview, the church had grown from 50 to 120 in average attendance with growth in all 5 years.

Findings by Research Questions

In this section, the findings of the study are reported by the research questions they address. The first 2 research questions address predetermined categories while research question 3 addresses additional categories that were discovered during the research. Research questions 4 and 5 address theory development as both the predetermined and newly discovered categories are analyzed and compared to discover the grounded theory.

Research Question 1

The 1st research question is “Do leaders of growing churches in urban poverty zones contribute growth to the intentional application of the homogeneous unit principle or the receptivity principle?” To answer this question, the following section will explain how the data interacted with the predetermined category of controversial church growth principles and the predetermined subcategories of homogeneous unit principle (HUP) and the receptivity principle (RP).

Controversial Church Growth Principles

The main category of controversial church growth principles was designed to measure whether or not growing churches located in UPZs knew about or utilized the traditional church growth principles that have been heavily debated in the literature. For a detailed discussion of these, see chapter 2. The category was given the properties of knowledge and application, and each of these properties had dimensions that ranged from high to low. This allowed the researcher to record the knowledge and use of such principles.

The category controversial church growth principles was addressed through questions 2 and 3 in each interview.

2. Has your church intentionally used the homogenous unit principle, and has it contributed to your growth?
3. Has your church intentionally used the receptivity principle, and has it contributed to your growth?

The responses to these questions developed the additional categories and saturated all the categories and subcategories with data. In some cases, these principles had to be defined for the interviewee although most had either heard of them or had heard of the general concept.

Subcategory: Homogeneous Unit Principle

Both subcategories had predetermined properties that were dimensionalized by the data. The HUP had the properties of homogeneous units and mosaic units.

Homogeneous units measured to what extent, if any, growing churches in UPZs deliberately developed small groups, corporate services or large groups targeted at specific groups of similar people. Mosaic units measured to what extent, if any, growing

churches in UPZs deliberately developed small groups, corporate services or ministries targeted a variety of cultures, races, and income levels all together. The properties were developed in such a way to also measure the unintentional formation of homogenous or mosaic groups. Accordingly, each of these properties was dimensionalized along the range of intentional development through unintentional development to non-development.

Subcategory: Receptivity Principle

The category of RP was designed to measure the extent to, which growing churches located in UPZs used the receptivity principle. The predetermined properties of targeted evangelism and broadcast evangelism were designed to categorize how the researched churches chose evangelism targets. The dimensions of these properties ranged from high involvement to low involvement. In addition to these predetermined properties, two new properties were discovered from the data under the RP subcategory. These were opportunistic evangelism and urgency evangelism.

Table A1 in Appendix 1 illustrates the categories, subcategories, and properties predetermined and discovered from the data in relation to research question 1. Other concepts were coded as subcategories of the category controversial church growth principles because of their role in the story line of this category. These are ministry centered on the urban poverty zone, multiculturalism, urban challenges, and community restoration. The details of those, along with their categorical context are discussed along with other categories and subcategories in other sections.

Data Interaction with the Category

Relating to the homogenous unit principle, the interviewees reported not using it intentionally. Pastors in urban poverty zones recognized the strategic nature of the principle but rejected it in the urban poverty context. The following quotes provide a sample of the general response to interview question 2:

I think it's safe to say we don't do that [HUP]. Once you say you are the church that serves, you are going to deal with people in pretty difficult situations, but I say there is also a place for people who want to serve. . . . it has always been just a crazy trip with a bizarre mix of people. (Fields and Goubran 2010, 6)

No. We are the exact opposite. (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 16)

I would take that [HUP] and put it right in my bathroom and flush it. . . . I just turned 64 years old. The majority of my congregation is young folks. We've reached white folks, and we are reaching Hispanics. (V. Dixon 2010, 14)

For the most part, we are mosaic. (Cotto 2010, 5)

Homogenous church planting strategically makes sense, but spiritually it doesn't. (Fields and Goubran 2010, 6)

I understand it [HUP]. I understand that it is tapping into the fact that people like to be with like people, but I think it does not tap into the gospel, which tells us to go from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria into the ends of the earth, which means going across cultural, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines. (Grant 2010, 4)

There were, however, exceptions to this type of response. One pastor said, "We know who our target is. . . . we are going to stick with our homogeneous approach and go after the addict" (Rodriguez 2010, 4). First Baptist Chattahoochee used the homogeneous unit principle with its current strategy and with its plans for future church plants. Pastor

Haskell explained the process:

I have the seven pockets that I have now identified in our community. Which one of those pockets, or, which ones of those pockets can we possibly reach in our church, we at FBC Chattahoochee? We figure maybe three of the pockets can probably cohabit at the church and be close enough to the way they think that they can get along together. But four can't. So then we have to decide how do we penetrate the

darkness? How do we turn back the darkness in those four pockets? Do we need to do a cell church? Do we need to do a house church? Do we need to do a traditional church? Do we need to do more of an extension ministry as it becomes a church? (Haskell 2010, 3)

Although most of the direct responses to question 2 reported no use of the homogenous unit principle, some elements of it were evidenced by other parts of the interview or by observations. One pastor who responded that their church did not use the homogeneous unit principle also reported using Spanish speaking services to reach Hispanics (Cotto 2010, 5), and the church conducts a service designed to reach homeless people that meets in another building on campus (Cotto 2010, 3). Some church growth experts might interpret these as strategies based on the homogeneous unit principle. Other churches did not specifically use the homogeneous unit principle, but the resulting congregation was mostly homogeneous. For instance, Evening Star Missionary Baptist in Chicago and Greater Deliverance Baptist Church in Atlanta both had a multicultural focus, but most of their attenders were African American.

Overall, however, most of the churches studied were proud of their mosaic nature and focus. Even those like Evening Star and Greater Deliverance who had a mostly homogeneous congregation reached out to many races, classes, and nationalities and had a desire to be a mosaic congregation. Evening Star recently began reaching other races and intended to maintain such ministries (V. Dixon 2010, 8). Citi Church in Miami boasted of 46 nationalities among its Sunday morning attendance of around 120 (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 16). The downtown campus of Christ Fellowship in Miami had the word welcome translated into six different languages close to one of its entrances. When the pastor was asked about this, he responded,

We had 80 different nationalities attend Christ Fellowship [when the church was located at one campus]. So . . . us putting six different languages of the saying “Welcome” is nothing compared to what we really represent. . . . we definitely have more than six nationalities at this campus. (Cotto 2010, 4)

One church had a unique perspective on the reason the homogenous unit principle might not be as affective in urban poverty zones as it is elsewhere. They stated, “If you are focusing on a solid group of people and you think this group is going to be the same group in eight months from now, you might be mistaken . . . eight months from now, they might move—they might be gone” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 13). According to this idea, the high rate of transition in urban poverty zones might necessitate a mosaic approach rather than a homogenous one so that a church can survive and grow despite changes in the makeup of the community population.

Like the homogenous unit principle, the receptivity principle was mostly rejected by the churches interviewed. Citi Church attributed their current location to divine leadership and provision. As the pastor decided to plant the church the decision was “solely based on the Word of God that this is where we are going to go” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 19). The church leadership admitted that from a church growth viewpoint, “This is not prime real estate to plant a church” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 20). Other churches, like Graffiti Church in New York City, echoed the same type of response about the receptivity principle. Because they began as a community service organization, the resulting church was started to reach those that are not normally considered receptive. In many cases, the people Graffiti church has ministered to “are not going to come for worship on Sunday—that is a reality” (Fields and Goubran 2010, 7).

Rather than using targeted evangelism, the churches reported using broadcast evangelism in many cases. For instance, one pastor responded to question 3 this way:

No. No. No. No. No. . . . He [Jesus] said, “Go out into the highways and byways and compel.” . . . I believe we have to look for the drunks and the prostitutes and the liars. . . . I tell my church that we are called to be change agents . . . if I look for people I think have already changed then I am cheating. . . . I think you have to reach for the lost and he [Jesus] said there were 99 in a fold, but now what I want you to do is leave the 99 and go get that one. (V. Dixon 2010, 14-15)

Others evangelized based on opportunities presented rather than the perceived receptivity of the hearers. Still others based their evangelism on urgency. Consider these comments from a pastor in New York who works mostly with drug addicts:

We know how serious it is for the addict. You know, I have done more funerals in the last year than I care to ever do. But it is the nature of the people we service. . . . And that is the urgency with, which we function. . . . There is an urgency to evangelism. . . we have to go. We have to go and get them because, you know, the next time that somebody uses [drugs] could be their last. (Rodriguez 2010, 5)

As the above data indicates, the questions were met with varied responses although most pastors reported not using either principle. In fact, only 2 of the 10 pastors interviewed acknowledged intentionally using either of these principles.

Tables A2 through A11 in Appendix 1 explain the data from each church in relationship to the category of controversial church growth principles. The tables identify where the churches were according to each category and subcategory by placing an X on the dimensional spectrum.

Research Question 2

The 2nd research question is “Do leaders of growing churches in urban poverty zones attribute growth to intentional social ministry?” This section explains how the data interacted with the predetermined category of social ministry strategy and the predetermined properties of non-ministry evangelism, ministry evangelism, and non-

evangelistic social ministry. These properties all had predetermined dimensions with the range of high involvement to low involvement.

These properties were designed to measure how involved a given church was in 1 of 3 ministry approaches. The first, non-ministry evangelism, represented an approach of sharing the gospel without meeting any physical or social need. Ministry evangelism represented the approach of using a strategy that intentionally combined meeting physical or social needs with sharing the gospel message. Non-evangelistic ministry represented the approach of meeting physical or social needs without sharing the gospel message.

In addition to the predetermined subcategories, properties, and dimensions, the coding process revealed properties of the main category, which were involvement, importance, and effectiveness. These reported the significance level of social ministry for a given church. Involvement and effectiveness were dimensionalized from high to low while importance was dimensionalized along a continuum from foundational through important to peripheral. This continuum represented the idea that some churches were completely built upon social ministry strategy while others engaged in it at varying levels of importance.

In light of the data, it was necessary to move the predetermined properties of non-ministry evangelism, ministry evangelism, and non-evangelistic ministry to the subcategory level. Each was given the property of involvement, which was dimensionalized from low to high. This was done for two reasons. First, the data revealed a high level of involvement and variation, which suggested that they were more likely subcategories than just properties. Secondly, as the story line for the main category

developed, it became clear that these were needed at the subcategory level to fill in the story line adequately.

The data also revealed 2 additional subcategories of social ministry strategy: motivating factors and connection to others through service. The subcategory of motivating factors had the properties of opportunity, biblical conviction, and desire. Opportunity and desire were dimensionalized on a continuum from high to low and biblical conviction was dimensionalized on a continuum from strong to weak. Connection to others through service had the properties of number of connections and quality of connections. These were dimensionalized from many to few and from high to low respectively.

Table A12 in Appendix 1 illustrates the subcategories, properties, and dimensions of the social ministry strategy category.

Data Interaction with the Category

Social ministry was a regular part of the life of every church interviewed. For some, social ministry was foundational to their existence. For example, Graffiti Church started as a social ministry. According to their pastor, “The church grew out of community services” (Fields and Goubran 2010, 3). If it was not foundational, it was still very important for churches in UPZs like Evening Star Missionary Baptist whose pastor recounted their various social ministries:

We have a hot meals ministry every Monday from 4 to 6. We feed anybody wherever they come from; it does not matter. We also have a food give out every Thursday that serves between 300 and 500 people. . . . We are feeding kids twice a day, and we have kids working here during the summer. . . . A lot of people you ask about Evening Star—they might not know the name—but they’ll say ‘The food church’. . . . We’ll give away back to school supplies; we’ll have hotdogs and hamburgers; we’ll have the medicine van here. They will take shots for the kid’s immunization. They will take blood pressure. (V. Dixon 2010, 1-5)

Citi Church held an after school program that ran every day of the week to meet the needs of school children and working parents and a culinary arts program that taught high school students cooking skills as well as job placement skills. The leaders of Citi Church said of their social ministry programs, “It’s a ministry tool for us to reach out to the kids’ lives and the families that they come from because they normally would not come to church . . . from that we’ve gotten a lot of good results” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 3-4). Citi Church even held an annual community expo, which involved government agencies, local banks, non-profits, and general volunteers who came to offer social services to nearly one thousand people from the local community for free (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 14).

Most of the social ministry fell into the category of ministry evangelism. In other words, the churches were intentionally sharing the gospel in conjunction with meeting physical and social need. When asked about this, Bishop V. Dixon said, “I let people know everything I do here is about winning people to Christ; either winning them or growing them. . . . If I was not trying to win people to Christ, there is no way I would be out there on a Thursday trying to get out food” (V. Dixon 2010, 5). Greater Deliverance Baptist Church took a similar approach to their social ministry strategy:

We also have some other outreach ministries like our food pantry. We can use that. For instance, once we have someone to come in, and ask for food from our food pantry we use that as an evangelistic tool. We ask them, “Where do you worship? Or do you worship?” And if not we kind of do a one on one as we get the food ready for them to meet the need. And just have a one on one kind of conversation with them. We have actually been able to draw people in through the food pantry. (J. Dixon 2010, 1)

Tables A13 through A22 in Appendix 1 explain the data from each church in relationship to the category of social ministry strategy. The tables identify where the

churches were according to each category and subcategory by placing an X on the dimensional spectrum.

As the data shows, social ministry strategy was very important to growing churches in UPZs. To varying degrees, all of the churches interview used social ministry, and most of them used it as an important or foundational strategy. Ministry evangelism was the norm with a few cases of non-ministry evangelism and a few cases of non-evangelistic ministry. For the most part, therefore, growing churches in UPZs made an intentional effort to meet physical needs as a means to spread the gospel.

Research Question 3

The 3rd research question is “What additional categories and subcategories of data arise from participant descriptions of church growth in urban poverty zones?” In this section, the newly discovered categories, subcategories, properties, and their dimensions are listed along with excerpts from the data to support them.

In addition to the 2 predetermined categories, 7 categories arose from the data. They were non-threatening approach, ministry centered on the urban poverty zone, effective organizational principles, investing with co-laborers, spiritual foundation, financial flexibility, and community restoration. Combined with the predetermined categories, these are the core elements of the grounded theory discovered through this research, and they explain the uniqueness of church growth in urban poverty zones.

Non-Threatening Approach

The category of non-threatening approach arose from the data through the concepts of tangible love, the importance of personal contact, ministry to those who never connect, and a come-as-you-are environment.

Through the coding process, concepts were combined according to similarity to reveal the subcategories. The concepts were combined for the subcategories of tangible love, ministry to those who never connect, and church environment. The main category of non-threatening approach developed as a way to classify these subcategories, and it had the properties of aggressiveness and importance of relationships. These were both dimensionalized along the continuum of high to low. The subcategory of tangible love had the property of expression, which was dimensionalized along the continuum of expressed to not expressed. The subcategory of ministry to many that never connect had the property of involvement, which was dimensionalized along a continuum of high to low. The subcategory of church environment had the property of inclusiveness, which was dimensionalized along the continuum of inclusive to exclusive. Table A23 is an illustration of the relationships between the category and its subcategories along with the properties and dimensions.

Additional concepts were related to this category as subcategories and/or properties to complete its story line. These were concepts that mainly related to another category so they were not discussed in this section, but they are discussed below and/or above in relation to their main category. Their interaction with this category is discussed in the story lines section.

Data Interaction with the Category

Most of the churches interviewed worked hard to create a non-threatening environment. They desired to express God's love in tangible ways to the people of the churches and communities. Consider these quotes: "I think we have to show love. People have to feel that they are loved by us and we care. . . . I made a promise to myself . . .

that I would be here for the people, and I believe that has made a difference” (V. Dixon 2010, 1-2); “My particular calling is to express God’s love in real tangible ways” (Fields and Guobran 2010, 2). One pastor summed up this approach when he said,

There’s a lot of love in the church. There’s a lot of friendliness in the church. We do not put a high standard on a dress code, and I think that’s why we are connecting with our immediate community. When we first came, we let people know it is a come as you are [church]. It is not a high dress up church, and people seemed refreshed by that. (Grant 2010, 3)

Part of the challenge of ministering in a UPZ was reaching out to many knowing they would never connect to the life of the church. Bishop V. Dixon said of one of their key ministries, “We don’t draw a lot of people from that ministry [food handout]” (V. Dixon 2010, 1). He later elaborated, “A lot of people you ask about Evening Star—they might not know the name—but they’ll say ‘The food church.’ . . . Although they don’t belong to the church, I’m their pastor” (V. Dixon 2010, 4). Like V. Dixon, growing UPZ churches desired to “do this not because we want anything in return, but because we want to show the love of Christ (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 11).” Graffiti Church intentionally served people who could not connect or give back. Part of their calling was to do ministry “for people that you’re not going to get a return from” (Fields and Goubran 2010, 2).

Speaking of their social ministries, Citi Church leaders said, “This is an avenue for us to be Jesus in a community and really touch those lives” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 4). Pastor Grant of Powerhouse Church Watts also realized that many of the people ministered to would never connect to the church. He said,

There is a trickling of people who do become a part of the church [from social ministries]. Not necessarily a huge percentage. . . . I think that we would have grown, and would continue to grow about as well even if we did not have those ministries sometimes. . . . We’re here to bless the neighborhood. So I think it helps

to have a good rapport with the community regardless of whether or not people actually come into the church body [through the social ministries]. (Grant 2010, 2)

In addition to showing tangible love, Bishop V. Dixon and Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church were committed to creating an environment where people could come regardless of their outward appearance. He reminded his people,

Don't forget how you were when you first came to church. Now you have been here 2 years and you're looking down on Joe Blo because he is going to sleep. You're looking down on your sister because her blouse is down here and her skirt is up here. But do you remember what you were in your time? It took you some time to get rid of it. Give them time to grow. (V. Dixon 2010, 12)

Pastor Rodriguez at New Baptist Temple also developed an environment that was not threatening to those he was trying to reach. During the research interview, Rodriguez recounted, "I preached yesterday at service . . . and two people who sat in the front row were high—visibly high. We reserve our front row for people who are just coming off the street" (Rodriguez 2010, 3). Pastor Kelley at Open Arms Christian Center reported reaching homosexuals, prostitutes, and transgendered individuals. Even though the church stands for the biblical truth about these issues, the transgendered person told Pastor Kelley, "This is the first church I've been to since my operation in 1997 that I have felt loved" (Kelley 2010, 5).

Tables A24 through A33 in Appendix 1 explain the data from each church in relationship to the category of non-threatening environment. The tables identify where the churches were according to each category and subcategory by placing an X on the dimensional spectrum.

As the data reveals, most of the churches studied intentionally used a non-threatening approach to reach out to those in the UPZs. This was important because many

of the people they were reaching were not from a church background, and they came from many unusual backgrounds and lifestyles.

Ministry Centered on the Urban Poverty Zone

The category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone arose from the data through the concepts of calling to the urban poverty zone, calling to reach the urban poor, assimilating the urban poor, multiculturalism, two-city location, two-city congregation, reaching those who want to serve the urban poor, developing leaders among the urban poor, recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor, utilization of the city, urban challenges, redemption of secular buildings, vision for rebuilding the city, replacing ineffective churches, and redemption of church buildings. Most of these concepts remained as categories with the exceptions of reaching those who want to serve the urban poor, vision for rebuilding the city, and replacing ineffective churches. Upon further analysis, these were reclassified with other concepts.

The remaining concepts became properties of 2 subcategories that arose to classify the 2 major types of concepts present in the data—centered on the population and centered on the location. The combination of these produced the main category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone as a way to classify each of the subcategories and properties. The main category had the properties of importance of the urban poverty zone and influence of the urban poverty zone, and both properties were dimensionalized on the continuum of high to low. These properties record how important the location was to a given church and how much it had influenced the way they do church.

Subcategory: Centered on the Population

The properties were linked with the subcategories and dimensionalized as follows. The first property of the subcategory of centered on the population was calling to the urban poor. This property measured how strongly the pastors and leaders felt called by God to minister to the urban poor population. Its dimensions ranged from strong sense of calling to no sense of calling. The next property was assimilating the urban poor, which conceptualizes the discipleship and integration of the urban poor into the life of the church. Its dimensions ranged from high rate to low rate. Multiculturalism was the next property, and it represented the degree to which the church population reaches more than one culture. Its dimensions ranged from intentionally (int.) multicultural through non-int. multicultural to non-multicultural to represent the possibility that a church might become multicultural by accident or by strategic design.

The next property was two-city location—the title of, which came from one of the interviewees who said that their community was like a tale of two cities (Fields and Goubran 2010, 4). The idea of this property was that many urban poverty zones include or share a border with affluent pockets of the city. This property had the dimensions of urban poor and others to urban poor only. The next property was two-city congregation, and it was similar to the previous property but specifically considered the makeup of the congregation itself, not the surrounding community. Like the previous property, it had the dimensions of urban poor and others to urban poor only. The final 2 properties of this category were also closely related to one another. The property of developing leaders among the urban poor conceptualizes the practice of giving leadership roles and training to those from the urban poverty zone. Its dimensions ranged from high success to low

success. The other property was recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor and represented the strategy of finding people with a vision and heart for the urban poor and engaging them in short-term or long-term investment in a ministry located in the urban poverty zone. Its dimensions also ranged from high success to low success.

Subcategory: Centered on the Location

The remaining properties were classified with the subcategory of centered on the location. The first of these properties was labeled calling to the urban poverty zone, and it was discovered as a compliment and a possible contrast to those who were called to the urban poor. Some expressed a call to both while some expressed a call to only one or the other. The dimensions of this property ranged from strong sense of calling to no sense of calling. The next property under this subcategory was utilization of the city. This property explained how some of the churches used city life and resources to their advantage. Its dimensions ranged from high utilization to low utilization.

The next 2 properties recorded a given church's relationship to the unique challenges of an urban poverty zone. The first property was recognition of urban challenges, which recorded the church's awareness of the specific challenges of being in an UPZ, and it was dimensionalized from high to low. The next property dealt with a given church's response to these challenges. The property of response to urban challenges was dimensionalized from fight to flight and measured whether the church avoided or addressed the specific challenges of the UPZ.

The final 2 properties of this subcategory were closely related. Many of the churches met in old abandoned churches that had been remodeled and reopened and others met in secular buildings, which went through a similar process. The last 2

properties represented these phenomena and they were labeled redemption of secular buildings and redemption of church buildings. Each property had dimensions ranging from high involvement to low involvement.

Tables A34 and A35 in Appendix 1 are an illustration of the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone along with its subcategories and properties. Because of the number of properties, this category is divided into 2 tables—1 for each subcategory.

Additional concepts were related to this category as subcategories and/or properties to complete its story line. These were concepts that mainly related to another category so they were not discussed in this section, but they are discussed below and/or above in relation to their main category. Their interaction with this category is discussed in the story lines section.

Data Interaction with the Category

Eight of the 10 churches interviewed were strongly and intentionally centered on the urban poverty zone. The other 2 were centered on ministering to the area, but it was not as strong or necessarily deliberate; they were centered on UPZ ministry because that was their location. That contrasts with the majority who were located in a UPZ because that was their identity and calling as a church. Most reflected the attitude of the Citi Church leadership when they stated, “We want to reach the city at all costs” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 11). Like Citi Church, some felt called to the location while others, like Graffiti Church, felt called to the people—“we still feel called to those who have fallen through the cracks” (Fields and Goubran 2010, 4).

Growing Churches in UPZs recognized and accepted the challenges associated with their location. They knew the difficulties of very “transient communities” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 13). While the researcher was interviewing Pastor Kelly from Open Arms Christian Center at a local restaurant, a lady walked in and he greeted her. He asked her if she was sober, and she reported having just celebrated her six-month sobriety birthday. During the course of the conversation, she asked for the rest of his food, which he gave her. This incident illustrated that he, like the other pastors interviewed, was willing to interact with the urban poor and directly address the challenges of addiction and hunger.

Growing UPZ churches were not only reaching the urban poor. They were also reaching those who want to invest in the urban poor. As one pastor said, “People . . . want to be a part of a church that’s giving something back to the community” (V. Dixon 2010, 1). Another pastor recounted reaching a person who helped someone else with a social need:

We had a young lady that works for the city of Atlanta that we contacted to help another person in need with their water, and just in conversation with her she wanted to come visit the church. She drove to church on Sunday. So I think the connections formed from this church have an outreach of their own meeting the needs of the people. Sometimes it’s like a two-edged sword. You meet the needs of the one in need but you also touch the hearts of those who are providing the service. (J. Dixon 2010, 1-2)

Growing churches in UPZs did not avoid the problems associated with urban poverty. Instead, they “attack[ed] those types of issues” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 13). In many cases, they used the city to their advantage. One church was located right across the street from a tram station, and this provided an easy mode of transportation for members. Another church used the bus system to get members to and

from doctors' appointments. The churches served the community members by "connect[ing] them with resources in the city" (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 14). One pastor summed it up by saying, "We do utilize the city as best as possible" (Cotto 2010, 7).

Eight of the 10 churches interviewed overwhelmingly described themselves as multicultural. Consider these responses: "We are a multicultural people. That is just who we are" (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 18); "A lot of people I serve on Thursday are Latinos. . . . I believe if you want to see a real glimpse of heaven in a church, you need a mixture. . . . So that is my prayer" (V. Dixon 2010, 8).

In many places, UPZs have become "a tale of two cities" (Fields and Goubran 2010, 4) with pockets of affluence developing in areas dominated by poverty. First Baptist Church of Chattahoochee, Graffiti Church, New Baptist Temple, and Christ Fellowship Downtown all specifically reported this phenomenon. In some cases this produced new types of problems such as higher real estate prices. In some cases it provided a new source of membership to recruit those who would partner to invest in the neighborhood. In the case of Graffiti Church it was both a challenge and an opportunity—"We are Graffiti, a church that serves, and we feel like if you need to be served, we want to serve you if you are poor. If you don't need to be served, we want you to join us as we serve . . . we are no longer a church for the poor. I really think we are a church for all" (Fields and Goubran 2010, 5).

Another interesting phenomenon-among the churches studied was the redemption of buildings. Graffiti Church was originally located in a former gang hangout, and its location at the time of the site visit and interview was a remodeled synagogue that

was in bad disrepair when they purchased it. Citi Church and Greater Deliverance Baptist Church were both located in church buildings that had been abandoned by previous congregations. Christ Fellowship Downtown and New Baptist Temple both merged with existing churches that were close to closing and created vibrant ministries within those buildings. Evening Star Missionary Baptist, Armitage Baptist Garfield Park and Open Arms Christian Center were meeting in secular buildings that had been remodeled as churches. Open Arms Christian Center was actually the second church to use that facility. All of these churches, 8 of the 10 studied, redeemed secular or church buildings and gave them new life and purpose.

UPZs offer a particular challenge for leadership development and recruitment. It is difficult to recruit volunteer and paid staff, and it is also difficult to develop leaders from among the urban poor. All of the churches studied, however, were involved in both of these to some extent. Pastor Grant from Powerhouse Church of Watts told about a leadership couple in the church:

We had one particular couple that was homeless. They were not married, and they came first through the medical clinic. We got to know them. They wanted to start coming to church, and they wanted to get baptized. I asked that they first either separate or get married, and they chose to get married. We married them in about—I think it was nine days. I put a wedding together and their lives have completely changed around. They are core leaders—Mr. and Mrs. Moss. (Grant 2010, 6)

Like Pastor Grant, the churches studied were committed to and, for the most part, centered on the UPZ. They did not run from challenges like these; instead they ran to them.

Tables A36 through A54 in Appendix 1 explain the data from each church in relationship to the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone. The tables

identify where the churches were according to each category and subcategory by placing an X on the dimensional spectrum.

As evidenced by the data, growing churches located in urban poverty zones centered their ministry on the people and location of UPZs. They did not desire or seek a ministry outside of the UPZ but embraced that location and the people in it as their calling, and they structured everything around that.

Effective Organizational Principles

The category of effective organizational principles arose from the data through the concepts of creativity, focus on quality, age grouping with quality, staff led structure, and team approach. All of these concepts remained as properties of the subcategories with the exception of age grouping with quality. That concept was combined with the concept of focus on quality. The subcategories abstract principles and concrete principles were developed to classify the nature of the concepts discovered. The main category was created to encompass all of the properties and subcategories in a way that represented the information in the data.

Subcategory: Abstract Principles

Two of the principles used by the churches studied were more abstract in nature. They are more difficult to measure and apply. These were combined to create the subcategory bearing the abstract principles label. The property of creativity reports how much a given church encourages and practices creativity in ministry. Its dimensions were creative through traditional to communicate that these churches were often doing things very differently than the traditional church in America. The property of focus on quality recorded the efforts of a given church to conduct programs, services and ministries with

high levels of quality. The dimensions of this property ranged from high focus to low focus. It is important to note that this category did not measure actual quality; it measured the organizational focus on quality. A church might produce many quality events without necessarily focusing on quality, and a church that focuses on quality might not produce quality events.

Subcategory: Concrete Principles

As the subcategory name implies, these principles were easier to measure. The property of staff led structure reported whether the church studied used a staff led system or a system led by committees. The dimensions, therefore, ranged from staff led to committee led. The property of team approach recorded how the church mobilized the membership and staff for ministry. It was dimensionalized along the continuum of team mentality to strict hierarchy.

Table A56 in Appendix 1 illustrates the relationship between the category, subcategories, properties, and dimensions of the main category effective organizational principles.

Additional concepts were related to this category as subcategories and/or properties to complete its story line. These were concepts that mainly related to another category so they were not discussed in this section, but they are discussed below and/or above in relation to their main category. Their interaction with this category is discussed in the story lines section.

Data Interaction with the Category

Some of the churches growing in UPZs deliberately used effective organizational principles. Citi Church used its name as an acronym for its organizational

values, which included creativity and teamwork (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 2-3). They also relied heavily on team work with a team structure that included core teams, leadership teams, and a ministry team (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 3).

The churches studied had effective leadership structures. At Christ Fellowship Downtown, they transitioned from a committee and deacon led model under the leadership of the previous church to this description, “We are staff led not committee led” (Cotto 2010, 6). In fact, 9 of the 10 churches studied were staff led. Christ Fellowship Downtown was a campus of Christ Fellowship Miami, so they used the Simple Church model developed by their executive pastor Eric Gieger. The campus pastor emphasized the importance of this model in their success.

Pastor Rodriguez said of the leadership structure at New Baptist Temple, “I don’t let people sit 20 to 30 years on a board or committees that would just rather talk than do—leaders that are very pompous and arrogant. We shake things up around here. We give you a timeframe and title and that is how it is around here” (Rodriguez 2010, 7).

Tables A57 through A66 in Appendix 1 explain the data from each church in relationship to the category of effective organizational principles. The tables identify where the churches were according to each category and subcategory by placing an X on the dimensional spectrum.

Investing with Co-laborers

The category investing with co-laborers arose from the data through the concepts of partnerships with church organizations, partnerships with secular organizations, secular serving, and church planting. All of these concepts were retained in

some form either as properties or in one case a subcategory. Additional properties and 1 subcategory were developed to accurately communicate the information in the data.

The main category was developed to represent these concepts, and its properties were importance and involvement. The property of importance reports the level of significance that a given church placed on investing with others who were working towards similar goals, and the property of involvement records how much the churches were actually involved in such partnerships. Both properties of the main category were dimensionalized from high to low.

Subcategory: Symbiotic Partnerships

The subcategory of symbiotic partnerships was created to classify the properties of church partnering, non-community secular partnering, and community secular partnering. In each of these types of partnerships, growing churches in urban poverty zones seemed to give and receive from the relationship. Therefore the subcategory was named symbiotic partnerships. As the name church partnering implies, the first property recorded a church's level of partnership with other churches. Its dimensions, like all of the properties in this subcategory, ranged from high involvement to low involvement.

Non-community secular partnering arose from the data to represent those partnerships between churches and secular organizations that were not directly involved in the community. These included government partnerships and grants. Community secular partnering arose from the data to represent partnerships between growing churches in urban poverty zones and secular organizations that were based in the local

community or had a direct interest in the local community. These included organizations like schools and social agencies.

Subcategory: Church Planting

Church planting arose as a subcategory directly from the concept with the same label. It was placed at the subcategory level because the data supported three distinct properties of church planting. These properties communicated the level of involvement, if any, with church planting by churches growing in urban poverty zones. The property of active planting measured a church's direct involvement in beginning other churches. The dimensions of this category ranged from high involvement to low involvement as did the dimensions of the next property. The property of supporting plants reported a church's financial or human resource investment into church plants started by others. The last property, desire to plant, recorded the desire of a church to plant other churches. Its dimensions ranged from high desire to low desire.

Table A67 in Appendix 1 illustrates the relationship between the category, subcategories, properties, and dimensions of the main category investing with co-laborers. Additional concepts were related to this category as subcategories and/or properties to complete its story line. These were concepts that mainly related to another category so they were not discussed in this section, but they are discussed below and/or above in relation to their main category. Their interaction with this category is discussed in the story lines section.

Data Interaction with the Category

All of the growing churches interviewed had strong partnerships with other churches and organizations. They were investing with the co-laborers in the

UPZ. Bishop V. Dixon of Evening Star Missionary Baptist reported partnerships with Operation Blessing, Feed the Children, the Children's Hunger Fund, and even the federal government through the stimulus bill (V. Dixon 2010, 3-4). Citi Church was involved with the Police Benevolent Association and the local schools. They also received government grant money to use in social programs (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 4-5). Citi Church cooperated with local schools, the city government, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Children's Trust, local banks, and other social service providers. Some of these partnerships resulted in grants while others led to direct community investment. For example, a local bank came in during a community fair held at the church and helped people open bank accounts (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 14).

Christ Fellowship Downtown, and the other churches studied, did not just benefit from partnerships. They also contributed greatly to the organizations. Specifically, Christ Fellowship Downtown served the local police and fire station; they set up aid stations during the ING Marathon, and they adopted local schools to provide school supplies and tutors. This was characteristic of all the churches. Some did receive help from partnering organizations, but all of the churches contributed greatly to the partnerships with money and human resources.

Church planting was a big emphasis for most of the churches studied. Graffiti Church had already assisted in several church plants all over New York City, and they had a vision for planting 5 more churches close to train stops across the city that were known for producing prison inmates (Fields and Goubran 2010, 2). New Baptist Temple reported, "Over the last 5 years, we've planted 3—we're on the verge of planting a 4th

church in Baltimore” (Rodriguez 2010, 2). First Baptist Church of Chattahoochee reported planting 5 churches over the previous 2 years (Haskell 2010, 1).

There were 2 churches that were not actively involved in or planning to be involved in church planting. Both of them, however, had a heart for and a past of helping other churches. Although Bishop V. Dixon said of church planting, “I am not a very good advocate of church planting. I believe we need to strengthen the churches that are already existing” (V. Dixon 2010, 10), he communicated a desire to partner with other churches. He said, “My goal is to help smaller churches” (V. Dixon 2010, 9).

Tables A68 through A77 in Appendix 1 explain the data from each church in relationship to the category of investing with co-laborers. The tables identify where the churches were according to each category and subcategory by placing an X on the dimensional spectrum.

As displayed by the data, all of the churches studied had strong relationships with secular groups and other churches. Most of the partnerships benefited both the church and the partnering organization, and they were an integral part of the churches’ existence and ministry. All but 2 of the churches had direct and distinct relationships with church planting. Some of the churches were recent plants themselves while others were very active starting or helping other church plants. Still others saw it as an important future phase in the life of their church.

Spiritual Foundation

The category of spiritual foundation arose from the data through the concepts of a biblically based vision, inspired by transformation, reach the men strategy, Holy Spirit led, personal sacrifice, supernatural personal provision, and supernatural church

provision. The main category had the property of strength and was dimensionalized from strong to weak. The concepts were all incorporated under the main category as properties, and 3 subcategories were developed to categorize them—spiritually driven, spiritual methodology, and supernatural provision.

Subcategory: Spiritually Driven

The concepts of biblically based vision and inspired by transformation were placed under this subcategory to record the level to which a given church was motivated by spiritual factors. The property of biblically based vision records if the church communicated a mission or vision that was directly tied to a scriptural principle or passage. It was dimensionalized on the continuum of strongly communicated through communicated to not communicated. The property of inspired by transformation reports how much the church drew inspiration from the life change of its members. Its dimensions began at source of much inspiration, continue through source of some inspiration and end at not a source of inspiration.

Subcategory: Spiritual Methodology

This subcategory arose as a way to classify the properties of reach the men strategy and sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The first property records the method used by some churches to focus on reaching men to empower them as the spiritual leaders of their communities and/or homes. It was dimensionalized from utilized to not utilized. The property of sensitive to the Holy Spirit records how the leadership of a given church seeks the guidance of God especially in contrast to popular methodologies or church growth strategies. Its dimensions ranged from high sensitivity to low sensitivity.

Subcategory: Supernatural Provision

Throughout the interview and coding process, the data communicated an unusual amount of information regarding supernatural provision. The property of personal sacrifice arose from the many stories relayed about the personal and family sacrifices made by the church leadership to minister in a UPZ. It had the dimension of high sacrifice to low sacrifice. The property of supernatural personal provision recorded the degree to, which those interviewed reported experiencing God's provision for them and their families as they made the sacrifices to minister in a UPZ. It was dimensionalized from high experience to low experience. Similar experiences were relayed on a church level, so the property of supernatural church provision arose to record these. It was also dimensionalized from high experience to low experience.

Table A78 in Appendix 1 illustrates the relationship between the category, subcategories, properties, and dimensions of the main category of spiritual foundation. Additional concepts were related to this category as subcategories and/or properties to complete its story line. These were concepts that mainly related to another category so they were not discussed in this section, but they are discussed below and/or above in relation to their main category. Their interaction with this category is discussed in the story lines section.

Data Interaction with the Category

By their nature, churches all have a spiritual component, but several of the churches studied had a particularly strong spiritual foundation. Pastor Thompson of

Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park communicated the strong spiritual base in his life when he compared his decision to pastor a church in a UPZ to Peter's experience of walking on the water.

Peter, when he was out on the boat . . . he had to step out of what was comfortable; he had to step out of what was logical. He has to step out of his past experience. You know, boats float—I don't. He had to step out of the realities that he understood and grew up knowing, and he had to step into a new reality, a new comfort, a new experience, a new logic. Jesus made the illogical logical, the virtually impossible possible. He made the inconceivable real. (Thompson 2010, 11)

Most of the pastors had the attitude that God was the reason for the churches' success. Bishop V. Dixon said, "All I can do is say, 'Lord, whatever you are doing, don't stop'" (V. Dixon 2010, 14). Pastor Rivera contributed their growth to "a supernatural thing" (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 22), and Pastor Cotto said of the reason for their success, "This might sound hokey, but I think a lot has to do with just being in the will of God" (Cotto 2010, 8). Pastor Thompson added,

I think it's prayer . . . I just believe that we have to get more out of the way, and we've got to spend more time getting into the presence of God and asking him to work miracles that we can't do ourselves. We've got to humble ourselves and come before the Lord and ask him, with faith, to do the impossible. Then from that point, we've got to be willing to jump off the cliff. We can't stay safe. Safety is for the birds. Safety doesn't work. Not in broken urban communities. (Thompson 2010, 13)

The pastors and leaders interviewed felt strong leadership from God to serve at their churches. One leader was preparing for a future in engineering when she "just really felt God, kind of, shifting me [her] in a different direction" (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 9). Her pastor based his decision to come to the UPZ "solely on the word of God" (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 19).

Growing churches in UPZs were led by pastors who were called to those locations, and several of them also emphasized a specific reliance on the Holy Spirit for

the direction of the ministry. One pastor stated, “Our plans are always subject to where the Spirit leads and what the Spirit says” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 21). Other pastors cited specific verses as visionary and directive towards their ministry. For instance, one pastor cited Isaiah 61:4 and Luke 14:13 as driving verses of their ministry (Fields and Goubran 2010, 2).

In addition to being led by the Spirit, pastors of growing UPZ churches were also driven by transformation. Pastor Fields said, “You don’t get the man out of the ghetto, you get the ghetto out of the man. . . . That is what makes my heart sing when I see that transformation.” Then he cited the example, “One of our best teachers came through the park and got a sandwich from us. . . . He lived in the park;” referring to the man’s life now he added, “He is one of the most anointed teachers” (Fields and Goubran 2010, 4).

Pastor Rodriguez has seen similar changes in people through the ministry at New Baptist Temple. He stated, “We have [former] prostitutes teaching Bible studies . . . We have guys who had five hundred dollar a day habits, all ushers now, sitting down and doing Bible studies, going out and evangelizing, speaking to people about Christ” (Rodriguez 2010, 3). Later in the interview, he added,

We have to seek that, which is lost, we have to save souls, we have to disciple people. You know, that’s what we are supposed to be doing. . . . I can point to the results of our work here. I see them come in broken. I see marriages on the verge of divorce. I see children abused and mistreated. Then a work of God takes place in a father or a mother and all of a sudden the marriage is not breaking up. They are here. Their kids are going to children’s church, singing on stage, and the family stays. And they are amazingly grateful because it was here that they got help; not in some program, and not by some court appointed liaison. They came to the church, and they learned about God and fell in love with Jesus Christ. And the church loved them and nurtured them and accepted them, and the result is there is a family now that’s a family. The dad is going to be there, not in jail, and the mother is going to be there, not using drugs. The kids are going to have a stable place where they can

come to every day after school and get a hot meal. That is what this work is all about. (Rodriguez 2010, 8)

The leaders and pastors of the churches interviewed all made great sacrifices to serve in UPZs. When asked if someone on the outside looking in would say she had sacrificed personally to move to Miami, one interviewee responded, “Absolutely” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 8). She then reported that she and another member of the planting team left good jobs with promising futures and secure incomes to move to Miami to serve (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 8-9). In every case of personal sacrifice, God provided the needs of the church leaders.

Tables A79 through A88 in Appendix 1 explain the data from each church in relationship to the category of spiritual foundation. The tables identify where the churches were according to each category and subcategory by placing an X on the dimensional spectrum.

Although there was much variance among the churches in the first 2 subcategories, most of them communicated some element of being spiritually driven and using spiritual methodology. In the last subcategory, however, there was much commonality. Almost every church leader experienced a high level of supernatural provision in either his or her person life or the life of the church.

Financial Flexibility

During the interview and coding processes, the data revealed a unique phenomenon-among growing churches in UPZ. Two concepts represented this phenomenon-and when combined they formed the category of financial flexibility. The concepts were congregational sustainability and financial creativity. Congregational sustainability records whether or not the group being reached by the church was able to

support itself as a church without any source of funds other than congregational gifts. Its dimensions ranged from unsustainable to self sustainable. Financial creativity recorded the degree to which the churches utilized innovative methods to raise needed funds. Financial flexibility developed into a small category, but it was so prominent and universal, that it deserved representation independent of the other categories. The 2 concepts were classified under the main category as properties, and no subcategories were created.

Table A89 in Appendix 1 illustrates the relationship between the category, subcategories, properties, and dimensions of the main category of spiritual foundation.

Additional concepts were related to this category as subcategories and/or properties to complete its story line. These were concepts that mainly related to another category so they were not discussed in this section, but they are discussed below and/or above in relation to their main category. Their interaction with this category is discussed in the story lines section.

Data Interaction with the Category

Without exception, every church interviewed in this study dealt with financial sustainability.

In my church, I have a bunch of folks that are on welfare. I got a bunch of folks that have a link card. So the way they help the hot meals ministry [is] they go out on the first of the month and they buy some on their link card to give to the hot meals ministry because they can't give any money. (V. Dixon 2010, 13)

One of the things about urban ministry is that it's really hard to raise money. It's really hard. We have probably 80 % of our people not working. We've lived off of support [from the outside]. We've raised support for the last number of years that we've been going. But people have a hard time supporting a church long term. They just don't grasp why, now, if you are 100 people or 80 people or 60 people, why you can't support the ministry now. (Thompson 2010, 5)

When asked about their greatest challenges as a church, Pastor Rodriguez said that New Baptist Temple faces a similar problem—“resources, because our target group is either unemployed or not necessarily making as much money as they would like to do. So we juggle a great deal of resources here” (Rodriguez 2010, 12).

The churches all faced the same dilemma—reaching a congregation that struggled to maintain itself financially. The solutions varied, and some of them were very creative. For example, Citi Church hosted a culinary arts program to teach needed skills to local high school students, but it also allowed them to receive grant money toward that ministry (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 4). They also operated for profit businesses that help supplement the staff’s income. They were operating a t-shirt business, a recording studio, and a tutoring company. “Without those things,” Pastor Rivera said, “there is no way we could fund what we do” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 24).

Open Arms Christian Center ran residential recovery houses, which they described as a type of “minister business because we charge fees for people. We don’t just bring people in to let them squat or flop or whatever. This is for people who want to be in sober living” (Kelly 2010, 1). These charges helped fund the ministry. Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park began a nonprofit that works directly with, and under control of, the church. This strategy utilizes the tendency of donors to support nonprofit missionary work. The pastor said,

These nonprofits flourish because they are on missionary support and everyone gets it. You’re raising money as a missionary to work with this organization to reach kids. They flourish because they have the staff. They are able to raise up a large staff of people to do evangelism where your churches are only able to, especially in broken urban communities, fund a small amount of people . . . We want to be able

to stand with a nonprofit that has the twenty staff members reaching out. (Thompson 2010, 5)

Other churches, like First Baptist Chattahoochee, Graffiti Church, Powerhouse Church of Watts, and New Baptist Temple, solve the financial problem with more traditional methods such as bi-vocational staff members, church partnerships, and mission agency support.

Tables A90 through A99 in Appendix 1 explain the data from each church in relationship to the category of financial flexibility. The tables identify where the churches were according to the category by placing an X on the dimensional spectrum.

As the data shows, each church studied dealt with the issue of congregational sustainability to some degree. For most churches, dealing with the issue was a major challenge. The churches addressed it with a wide variety of creative strategies, and most of them were looking for even more creative or reliable sources of funding.

Community Restoration

The category of community restoration arose from the data through the concepts of community involvement, building community, vision for restoration, restoring individual community, restoring community in the church, restoring community in the neighborhood, individual social justice rather than social justice organizing, and desire to see social justice. These concepts were combined and classified into the subcategories of vision for restoring community and restoring community. The main category was developed to represent these properties and subcategories, and its direct properties were interest and involvement, which were both dimensionalized from high to low.

Subcategory: Vision for Restoring Community

This subcategory developed to represent the phenomenon-where churches expressed a desire to rebuild and restore the local neighborhood. The property of level of expression was developed to report the degree to, which a given church expressed or did not express this type of vision or desire. It was the only property of this subcategory, and was dimensionalized from expressed through understood to nonexistent.

Subcategory: Restoring Community

The properties of restoring community for the individual, church, and neighborhood along with the properties of desire for political action and political involvement constituted the subcategory of restoring community. The first 2 properties report the level of priority churches placed on providing a source of community for the individuals they were reaching. This occurred for the individual and also within the church itself. These properties were dimensionalized from high priority to low priority. The third property related a given church's role in restoring community within its surrounding neighborhood that had many times been abandoned by other community building entities. That property was dimensionalized from high involvement to low involvement.

The final 2 properties—desire for political action and political involvement—reported the tension present between a lack of political involvement and a desire to see social injustices corrected. These were dimensionalized from high desire to low desire and from high involvement to low involvement respectively.

Table A100 in Appendix 1 illustrates the relationship between the category, subcategories, properties, and dimensions of the main category of community restoration.

Additional concepts were related to this category as subcategories and/or properties to complete its story line. These were concepts that mainly related to another category so they were not discussed in this section, but they are discussed below and/or above in relation to their main category. Their interaction with this category is discussed in the story lines section.

Data Interaction with the Category

Community restoration was at the heart of every church studied. They were providing community for individuals who otherwise had none and promoting a stronger sense of community within the church and neighborhood. Citi Church, like all of the churches interviewed had a “vision to really impact the community” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 22). Evening Star Missionary Baptist realized, “We have to be involved in community. We cannot be locked behind the sanctuary doors. It is important that people in the community know that we care” (V. Dixon 2010, 1). Pastor Thompson of Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park envisioned a church that serves as a community center to combine the ideas of nonprofit outreach centers that focus on outreach and churches, which often focus on in-reach (Thompson 2010, 4-5).

Open Arms Christian Center developed a community within the church body to meet the need for community in the lives of the people. Pastor Kelly said, “We try to create a sense of family and a sense of belonging for other people so that they know they are loved and that they belong here” (Kelley 2010, 4). This was evidenced by the pictures on the wall, which showed many people from the church hanging out in the apartment where the pastor and his wife lived above the church. There was no door or even a wall

separating the apartment from the church, which communicated to the church that they were welcome in the Kelley family home.

Churches growing in UPZs not only got involved in the community, but they also saw themselves as agents for community restoration. One church summed up the collective heart of the churches interviewed by saying, “Right now this community is kind of broken up. So we want to connect the community back together” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 5). Later in the same interview, they added, “We recognized early enough that we have to be intentional about trying to build roots and trying to build connections with people. That’s one of the reasons people are transient is because they have nothing to connect to. So what we are trying to do is to build those connections with people” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 13), and “we want to create a community” (Rivera, White, and Thompson 2010, 23).

First Baptist Chattahoochee served the community by saying, “This building needs to be as much the community’s building as it is ours” (Haskell 2010, 4). This attitude and openness resulted in the church being used in all the following ways:

We have three different neighborhood associations that meet in our church; there is an exercise group that meets in our church. There are some helping agencies, government agencies that come and set up and interview people in our church for different kinds of subsidies they need like gas and heat and things like that. . . . We became the staging area for the flood relief that took place, and we got so involved with that we were recognized by the Atlanta city council . . . for our work for the community during that time. The statement was made—and we had no idea we were going to get this certificate and it’s certainly not the reason we did it—but when they recognized us at the city council meeting they said, “If all the churches were like you, we’d be a lot better community.” (Haskell 2010, 4)

None of the churches interviewed were involved in political marches or causes. They were more focused on individual social needs. For instance, when asked about social justice issues, Bishop V. Dixon reported, “Social justice, political interests—I have

a personal political interest. My church is not political. I don't go out fighting all the social issues. I believe that is an individual choice" (V. Dixon 2010, 15). He did recall helping in an individual social justice issue:

I had a young man who shot a girl on a bus. His mother called me because the police had not caught him, and [she] asked me if I would assist her in trying to get him to turn himself in. That was a tough bargain for me. . . . He came in through the back door here and we brought him into the sanctuary, and the police came and got him. And he was guilty. . . . I did not want to go out and say he was innocent [to the media] because that was not my job. (V. Dixon 2010, 16)

After relaying that story, he clarified his church's position on social justice political involvement by saying, "I am not Jesse Jackson and his group" (V. Dixon 2010, 16).

Other churches responded in a similar way. Graffiti Church was involved with local social service organizations and coalitions, but even that was not a lead ministry. Like the other churches studied, they were not involved in trying to solve social injustices politically. Speaking of the difference, a pastor from Graffiti said, "If you want to go to a march, ask [another local minister], but if you have a guy whose need is a job, go to Graffiti" (Fields and Goubran 2010, 8). Pastor Kelley of Open Arms Christian Center in Los Angeles was a judge, ran for attorney general in his home state of Montana, and was once a self described political activist like "the Jerry Falwell of Montana" (Kelley 2010, 26). Even he, however, said his church was not politically involved. Instead, he stated, "We want to help the people more than we want to fight the system . . . we are not going to organize a march" (Kelley 2010, 26).

It is important to note, however, that several churches expressed an interest to become more politically involved in the future. Pastor Rodriguez communicated this idea when he reported that their church was not involved in social political action, but he

added, “I think the church should be a voice of social issues . . . I think He [God] has tapped us on the shoulder to enable us to be a voice” (Rodriguez 2010, 6).

Tables A101 through A110 in Appendix 1 explain the data from each church in relationship to the category of community restoration. The tables identify where the churches were according to each category and subcategory by placing an X on the dimensional spectrum.

As the data shows, community restoration was very important to growing churches in UPZs. With the exception of one category, political involvement, each church had a desire for and was directly involved with community restoration. In the case of community involvement, most churches had a desire to see social injustices corrected, but they were not directly involved in pursuing political means to that end. Community was important to growing churches in UPZs in part because many of the normal sources of community (family, community organizations, other churches) were not a regular part of the lives of the residents or the neighborhood itself.

Research Question 4

The 4th research question is “What relationships and variations arise in the categories and subcategories of data from participant descriptions of church growth in urban poverty zones?” The conclusions are presented as written story lines that communicate how the categories and subcategories relate with one another.

In this section, each category, except community restoration, has a story line, which positions it as the central phenomenon-and organizes and relates other categories, subcategories, and properties to it as causal conditions, context, intervening conditions, action/interactional strategies, and consequences. The story line for community

restoration is presented under the section for research question 5 as the core category of the grounded theory.

Story Line: Controversial Church Growth Principles

The story line of controversial church growth principles begins with the causal conditions, which are communicated in the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone. This category, its subcategories, and properties cause the application or non-application of these principles. UPZs are the reason churches were using or not using any principles including the church growth principles specified in this category. As reported above, 8 of the 10 churches studied were focused directly on ministry in this context, and 7 of those 8 were not intentionally using either of the principles. The exception was New Baptist Temple, which was centered on the UPZ surrounding it, but unlike the others, they used the homogenous unit principle.

The context of each phenomenon-are its direct properties and dimensions. In this case, therefore, the context is knowledge and application of the controversial church growth principles. As reported above, the context was generally high knowledge and low application. So the causal conditions of ministry in a UPZ led to most churches knowing about the phenomenon-of controversial church growth principles but not employing it.

This occurrence is due to the intervening conditions of multiculturalism, ministering to many who never connect, and urban challenges. Because the churches were centered on reaching the UPZ, they considered using the homogeneous unit and receptivity principles. In light of the multiculturalism of the UPZs, they abandoned or never used the homogeneous unit principle. Because of the need and/or desire to minister

to those who never connect, and because they were facing unique urban challenges, they did not apply the receptivity principle.

The action/interactional strategies employed to address this phenomenon-were a high focus on being mosaic and a high use of broadcast, opportunistic, and urgency evangelism.

The story line for controversial church growth principles is complete with its consequence. Because the strategies mentioned above were used with the given intervening conditions in the appropriate context, the consequence was community restoration for individuals, the church and the neighborhood itself. Using the homogenous unity principle might have provided community for the church and individuals, but it would not have provided restoration for a multicultural neighborhood. Use of the receptivity principle might have led these churches and pastors away from the neighborhoods altogether to neighborhoods with a more receptive population.

The combined story line for controversial church growth principles is as follows: those whose ministry is centered on the urban poverty zone generally know about but do not apply the homogeneous unit principle or the receptivity principle. This is because the multiculturalism and unique challenges of the UPZ make them less effective. Instead, growing UPZ churches use the strategies of mosaic units and broadcast, opportunistic, and urgency evangelism, which result in community restoration.

Story Line: Social Ministry Strategy

Like controversial church growth principles, the category of social ministry strategy, as the core phenomenon-in a story line, is driven by ministry centered on the

urban poverty zone. A calling to the urban poor, a calling to the UPZ, and urban challenges all cause church leaders to employ a social ministry strategy.

The context for the phenomenon is the main category properties of involvement, importance, and effectiveness. The churches studied varied on importance with some holding the strategy as important while others held it as foundational. None of the churches understood it as peripheral. There was very little variance, if any, on involvement and effectiveness. All of the churches reported high levels for each of these properties.

The intervening conditions of social ministry strategy are non-ministry evangelism and non-evangelistic ministry. These fit here in the story line because they take time away from the action/interactional strategy as discussed below. A few churches used these strategies, but they were not as prominent as ministry evangelism as discussed below.

The resulting action/interactional strategy is ministry evangelism. This is the social ministry strategy growing UPZ churches were using to reach the UPZ. The resulting consequences of such a strategy are community respect and connection through service.

The combined story line for social ministry strategy is as follows: churches that are centered on ministry to the UPZ are highly involved with highly effective social ministry strategies, which are very important to their overall strategy. A few take time to participate in non-ministry evangelism and non-evangelistic ministry, but the majority of strategic emphasis is placed on ministry evangelism. The result is that the community respects the churches, and they connect to one another while serving.

Story Line: Non-Threatening Approach

The causal conditions for a non-threatening approach are a calling to the urban poor and reaching unsustainable congregations. Churches that are reaching these groups develop an approach that welcomes them. The context, or properties of the main category, is aggressiveness and importance of relationships. Churches ranged greatly on aggressiveness, but they all scored high on the importance of relationships.

The intervening condition in the story line of a non-threatening approach is recognizing urban challenges. Pastors reported urban challenges ranging from church attenders who were high to those who dressed provocatively. These conditions call for action/interactional strategies to maintain a non-threatening approach. Those strategies are 2 subcategories of the main category and 1 subcategory of social ministry strategy: tangible love, church environments, and non-evangelistic ministry. The churches reported similar experiences in all of these areas. They all expressed tangible love, created an inclusive church environment, and had a low involvement in non-evangelistic ministry.

The results or consequences of these strategies in the non-threatening environment story line are ministry to many who never connect, assimilating the urban poor, community secular partnerships, and community restoration for the individual.

The combined story line of the category non-threatening approach is as follows: churches that are called to the urban poor and reaching unsustainable congregations use a non-threatening approach despite the intervening conditions of urban challenges. This approach uses the strategies of tangible love and an inclusive church environment with occasional non-evangelistic ministry. This approach results in ministry

to those who never connect, assimilation of the urban poor, secular community partnerships, and individual community restoration.

**Story Line: Ministry Centered
on the Urban Poverty Zone**

The central phenomenon-of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone has the causal condition of calling to the urban poor. It is this calling that drove churches, for the most part, to UPZs in the first place. The context, made up of the direct properties of the category, is the importance and influence of the urban poverty zone. Even the churches that were not driven to the urban poverty zone by a calling to the urban poor recognized the importance of the surrounding community. They were called more to the location, but adapted to reach the population.

The intervening conditions of this story line are reaching unsustainable congregations and a two-city location. This causes difficulty and opportunity for churches centered on the UPZ. The difficulty comes from trying to minister to a congregation that cannot sustain itself, which leads to financial difficulties. The opportunity arises from a location that is often filled with young professionals or others that might invest in serving the inner city. Not all of the churches studied were located in a two-city location, but most were.

The story line of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone continues with action/interactional strategies. Churches maintain ministry centered on the urban poverty zone by developing leaders among the urban poor, recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor, utilizing the city, addressing urban challenges, and redeeming church and secular buildings. The consequences of this story line, resulting from the strategies, are

multiculturalism in the congregation, assimilation of the urban poor, and community restoration.

The combined story line of the category ministry centered on the urban poverty zone is as follows: churches with a calling to the urban poor reach unsustainable congregations in a two-city location. They use the strategies of developing leaders among the urban poor, recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor, utilizing the city, addressing urban challenges, and redeeming church and secular buildings. These strategies lead to a multicultural congregation of assimilated urban poor who are restoring individual, church, and neighborhood community.

Story Line: Effective Organizational Principles

The story line of effective organizational principles begins with the causal condition of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone. Churches that are serious about reaching such areas must use effective principles due to the specific challenges and problems.

The context of the phenomenon-is application, which was dimensionalized from high to low. The churches studied all used some effective organizational principles, and most of them used several. The intervening condition for this story line is addressing urban challenges. As the churches that are centered on urban poverty zones try to employ effective organizational principles, they face the challenges that necessitate them doing so in the first place. In other words, a church that needs to develop leaders from among the urban poor to sustain a ministry that cannot support many paid staff must do so in the face of a high transient rate. That makes assimilation and leadership development difficult.

The action/interactional strategies of this story line are creativity, a focus on quality, staff led structure and a team approach. Every church employed one or more of these strategies, and they partially contributed their success to them. They are vital in the UPZ context. The consequences of this story line are assimilation of the urban poor, financial flexibility, and community restoration.

The combined story line of the property effective organizational principles is as follows: ministry centered on the urban poverty zone necessitates effective organizational principles and the urban challenges faced by UPZ churches create a more difficult context to use them in while at the same time developing a greater need for them. As churches use the effective organizational principles of creativity, focus on quality, staff led structure, and a team approach, the poor in the area are assimilated, the community is restored, and the church develops strategies to deal with their finances.

Story Line: Investing with Co-Laborers

This story line begins with three causal conditions: a calling to the urban poor, reaching unsustainable congregations, and a desire for political action. These drive churches in UPZs towards partnerships with existing churches, community organizations, and church plants. The churches studied used partnerships because of these. They needed other churches to invest, and they needed to plant churches or support church plants to reach more. Many of the churches expressed a desire to be politically involved, but none reported any corporate or church sponsored action. Therefore, the partnerships were important tools for addressing social injustices in non-political ways.

The context of the story line is comprised of importance and involvement. The churches studied all reported high levels in each of these properties. The churches

thought these partnerships were very important, and they were involved in many of them. The intervening condition of investing with co-laborers is a spiritual foundation. This could potentially hinder partnerships. Perhaps the partnering organization or church does not have the same spiritual foundation or perhaps they require the church to abandon some part of its spiritual foundation in order to participate in the partnership.

The resulting action/interactional strategy is the use of symbiotic partnerships in which the church gives and receives. The churches studied all had such partnerships with other churches and local community organizations. These partnerships benefit both groups involved, and none of the churches reported any difficulty keeping a strong spiritual foundation through some of the partnerships.

The consequences of this strategy and the entire story line are church planting and community restoration. As the churches partner, they invest in new church plants that align with their spiritual foundation, and they work with community groups to restore the functions of community for individuals and neighborhoods.

The combined story line for the category of investing with co-laborers is as follows: those who are called to the urban poor, reach congregations that cannot sustain themselves and have a desire for political action partner with local organizations and churches despite the conflict that might arise over theological matters. They participate in these partnerships on a symbiotic level and the result is a restored community and newly planted churches.

Story Line: Spiritual Foundation

The story line of the category spiritual foundation begins with the causal conditions of calling to the urban poor, social ministry strategy, biblically based vision,

and inspired by transformation. These are what drive the phenomenon-of spiritual foundation among growing UPZ churches. They have a calling to reach those around them, and they use a strategy that does not negate the spiritual need for evangelism or the spiritual mandate to care for physical needs. They derive their strength from specific passages or biblical principles, and they are inspired by the change that takes place in the lives of those they reach.

The context of the phenomenon-of spiritual foundation is strength. Some churches have a stronger spiritual foundation than others. All of the churches studied portrayed either a strong or moderately strong spiritual foundation. They were built upon the gospel and biblical principles. The intervening condition of this phenomenon-is personal sacrifice. Although it is a spiritual principle itself, it has the potential to cause some leaders to pull away from engaging in ministry. All of the leaders interviewed had experienced personal sacrifice in order to serve in the UPZ, and most of them had experienced a high level of personal sacrifice.

The action/interactional strategies used in the story line of spiritual foundation are a men first strategy and being Holy Spirit led. The men first strategy was only used by 2 churches in the study, but it was spiritually motivated; it also addressed the causal conditions of the story line. Most of the churches studied specifically expressed that they were led by the Holy Spirit. Many of them identified this as the main source of their success. It directly addresses the condition of personal sacrifice. As leaders sacrificed at the leading of the Holy Spirit, they experienced His provision. All of the leaders who spoke of personal sacrifice also spoke of the leading of the Holy Spirit in making those sacrifices.

The consequence of the category spiritual foundation is supernatural provision. This extends to individuals and churches. Without fail, those who had sacrificed at the leading of the Holy Spirit had experienced supernatural blessing in their personal lives. That is the result of having a spiritual foundation.

The combined story line of the category spiritual foundation is as follows: a calling to reach the urban poor, a social ministry strategy, a biblically based vision, and being inspired by transformation cause a spiritual foundation. This foundation is developed despite and through personal sacrifice, and growing UPZ churches use a men first strategy and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as spiritual strategies. These result in supernatural provision for the churches as a whole and its leaders individually.

Story Line: Financial Flexibility

The story line for the category of financial flexibility begins with the casual condition of congregational sustainability. The core phenomenon-occurs because most UPZ congregations cannot sustain themselves financially. The urban poor are often unemployed or underemployed, and ministry to them often costs more than they contribute.

The context of the story line includes both of its properties—congregational sustainability and financial creativity. The intervening condition is the category of social ministry strategy. This condition makes financial sustainability even more difficult because growing churches in UPZs use social ministry. Social ministry requires food, clothing, shelter, and other supplies that are costly. In addition to the initial cost, if the social ministry is effective in reaching those who are served, the new members can become a long term social ministry need for the church. This requires even more

resources. In an UPZ, some churches become less financially stable the larger they grow because the average giving of each member can be less than the average expense of ministering to each member.

The action/interactional strategy for addressing this issue are creative financial solutions. If churches reaching unsustainable congregations will survive, it will be through innovative strategies that raise funds from sources other than the congregation. These creative solutions include funding from other churches, funding from private donors, running church led non-profits, and church led for profit businesses. The churches studied were very creative in addressing this issue.

The consequence of this story line is the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone. If churches are able to come up with creative financial solutions, they will be able to maintain a ministry presence in an UPZ.

The combined story line of financial flexibility is as follows: congregational sustainability drives the need for financial flexibility. Social ministry strategy further complicates the need because of its costs, and because it will potentially reach members who will lessen the congregations' sustainability. In this setting, using creative financial solutions can result in maintaining ministry centered on the urban poverty zone.

Research Question 5 and Research Purpose

The 5th research question is “What principles are grounded in the categories, subcategories, relationships, and variations discovered in questions 1, 2, 3, and 4?” The conclusion presentation in this section is built upon the presentation from the previous sections. The data produced community restoration as a core category, and all of the other

categories related to it in a story line, which describes a grounded theory of church growth in urban poverty zones.

In the grounded theory discovered through this research, the category of community restoration is the central phenomenon. It is the foundation of the theory. Churches that are growing in UPZs are restoring community for the individuals they are reaching in areas where all community support is absent. Many of the people being reached have lost any sense of family, which is the most basic form of community. The churches have become their families—they meet physical, social, and emotional needs. The churches have also taken the role of rebuilding community within the neighborhoods. In many ways they are the community centers, the law offices, the courthouses, the medical clinics, the sources of education, the employment offices, and the safe places.

The story line for community restoration and the grounded theory begins with the category of spiritual foundation. The churches that are growing in UPZs are there because they have spiritual convictions that drove them there or kept them there when everything changed around them. They are led by the Holy Spirit, and they are inspired by the possibility of seeing transformation in the lives of those that other churches have overlooked. They make great sacrifices to stay or move to an UPZ, and they experience supernatural provision in their personal and church lives.

The context of community restoration, like the context of the other story lines, is its properties, which are interest and involvement. Growing UPZ churches have a high interest in seeing community restored for individuals and for the neighborhood. This interest leads them to high involvement in the restoration process. They become the

agents of the change they desire in the lives of the people and in the neighborhood as a whole.

The conditions of the community restoration story line are the subcategories and properties within the category of ministry centered on an urban poverty zone. Growing UPZ churches are called to the location and the population of UPZs, and they operate in spite of and because of the conditions that come with UPZs. The challenge of assimilating the urban poor shapes their strategies as does the multicultural nature of UPZs. They are located in two-city locations that complicate and help their ministries, and they are committed to developing leaders among the urban poor and recruiting leaders from outside UPZs to invest in the urban poor. They are located in the city, so they use the resources of the city and they respond to the challenges of the city. Their location also necessitates the redemption of buildings—both church and secular—as places for ministry.

Because of a spiritual foundation, in the context of high interest and high involvement in community restoration, with the intervening conditions that accompany ministry centered on an urban poverty zone, growing UPZ churches use specific action/interactional strategies. They reject, for the most part, controversial church growth principles; they invest with co-laborers. They utilize social ministry strategy, financial flexibility, and effective organizational principles. These strategies are used in relation to the central phenomenon-of community restoration. They are the limbs of the tree that is rooted in community restoration, and church growth in urban poverty zones is the fruit of that tree.

The consequence of the community restoration story line is not another one of the categories, it is the impetus for the study—church growth in an urban poverty zone. The story line proceeds as follows: a spiritual foundation leads or keeps a church focused on community restoration through ministry centered on an urban poverty zone. They use the strategies listed in the previous paragraph, and the result is church growth in one of the most difficult contexts. That is a concise presentation of the theory developed from and grounded in the data gathered in this study.

Evaluation of the Research Design

Grounded theory design was the best methodology for exploring church growth in urban poverty zones. Its strengths include flexibility, objectivity, connection to the real world, and creativity. Although grounded theory design was the best design for this research project, it has weaknesses. Grounded theory research cannot include as many participants as other designs, and it cannot test an existing theory.

Strengths of Grounded Theory Design

Grounded theory design is flexible. It is an inductive design, which allows analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns found without presupposing in advance what they will be (Patton 2002, 56). Grounded theory can be used on any data or combination of data (Glaser 2000, 7). Participant selection also remains flexible to allow the researcher to choose groups that will help generate as many properties as necessary (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 49).

Grounded theory methodology is designed to be objective. The hypothesis or theory is developed from the research process; it is not used to design the process (Patton 2002, 56). Researchers do not bring a predetermined theory into the project because that

increases natural bias (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, 46). In contrast to other forms of qualitative research, grounded theory stresses objectivity (Patton 2002, 128).

Although grounded theory design stresses objectivity, it maintains a connection to the real world data. While quantitative designs often test theories developed in a lab or academic setting, grounded theory is inductively generated from fieldwork and emerges from researchers' observations in the real world (Patton 2002, 7). The concepts that arise in grounded theory research come from collected data and are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the research process (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 5-6).

The objectivity and systematic data comparison of grounded theory are balanced with creativity in data selection. It is fundamentally objectivist in orientation with procedures that reduce bias while encouraging healthy creativity (Patton 2002, 129). Data selection decisions should be made, "on the basis of which data have the greatest potential to capture the kind(s) of information desired" (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 151). Grounded theory simultaneously emphasizes creativity and a systematic approach (Patton 2002, 127).

Weaknesses of Grounded Theory Design

Despite its great strengths, grounded theory design is limited by the number of participants it can study. Some quantitative and mixed method designs can study 100's or 1000's of participants, but grounded theory is limited because of the in-depth interview required. Some researchers suggest that grounded theory can study 20 to 30 participants at most (Miller and Salkind 2002, 156). Researchers rely on detailed interviews and

careful coding procedures, which require more time than other collection and analysis methods (Miller and Salkind 2002, 156).

Grounded theory procedure is also limited because it cannot test an existing theory. Other methods are needed for that. The purpose of grounded theory is to discover relationships and interactions rather than testing an existing theory (Miller and Salkind 2002, 154). It focuses on “the process of generating theory rather than a particular theoretical content” (Patton 2002, 125).

Suitability for Current Study

Researchers and church strategists have studied urban church ministry for several decades, but church growth in urban poverty zones had not been studied in depth. Most types of research, especially quantitative, require a basic theory or framework through which to engage the subject. Church growth in urban poverty zones lacked such a framework, and grounded theory research provided one. Grounded theory is a type of qualitative research with a specific purpose, set of principles, and methodology, but it is flexible enough to engage a new field of study such as urban poverty zone church growth (Patton 2002, 127). Now, through grounded theory research, a theory exists that can be tested and developed further.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Many churches located in urban poverty zones (UPZs) have not grown for years. At one time, these churches served the communities well, but for many of them, everything has changed. Former members have moved to churches located in the suburbs where they live. Others still drive in for service, but they do not feel a connection with the community anymore. Parsonages are now crack houses, and neighborhoods are no longer safe after dark. Leaders of churches in urban poverty zones want to see the churches grow again, but their situations seem hopeless. Other leaders feel called to start new churches to reach those living in urban poverty zones, but they are not sure how to start and grow a church there. The question driving this research is the same one that many of these church leaders are asking. How can the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ transform those living in the most difficult urban areas throughout the United States?

For this research, pastors and leaders from ten growing churches located in UPZs across the United States participated in detailed interviews as part of a grounded theory study of church growth in UPZs. The study uncovered several key insights and a grounded theory that can help churches in UPZs reach and transform their communities with the gospel. In other words, the gospel can and does work in urban poverty zones.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is “to explore urban poverty zone churches and develop a grounded theory of church growth within urban poverty zones.”

What is an Urban Poverty Zone?

The term urban poverty zone refers to a community with increased poverty levels located in an urban area. Some people refer to UPZs as inner city areas although many UPZs are far from the geographical center of their city. For this project, the researcher defined the term urban poverty zone as synonymous with the term inner city defined by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC). They define inner cities as

core urban areas that currently have higher unemployment and poverty rates and lower median income levels than the surrounding Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). To qualify for the ICIC definition of inner city, the areas must have 20% poverty rate or higher or two of the following three criteria:

1. Poverty rate of 1.5 times or more than that of their MSAs;
2. Median household income of half or less than that of their MSAs;
3. Unemployment rate of 1.5 or more than that of their MSAs.

The ICIC uses Census data and relevant research to identify inner cities. Census data is examined at the Tract level and compared to the surrounding MSA to determine accurate inner city locations. (ICIC 2008a, about us)

To summarize, UPZs are impoverished areas located in large cities in the United States. As Conn and Ortiz observed, “The world’s inner cities (UPZs) and squatter areas are where the poor can be found. They are the location of the disenfranchised rather than just geographical locations” (Conn and Ortiz 2001, 339).

The Research Process

There aren’t many churches growing in UPZs, and very little research has been conducted there in the past. These characteristics identified the study as a good candidate for a qualitative research method known as grounded theory. The grounded theory

approach gathers data from a relatively small sample and analyzes the data to discover a theory that explains the researched phenomenon. For this study, the pastors and leaders of ten churches were interviewed to reveal valuable insights and a grounded theory through the analysis of the data.

Sample Churches

Non-random sampling was used to select ten growing, evangelical churches from UPZs in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami and New York. Each of the churches displayed a pattern of growth as indicated by: an overall increase of 3 percent or more in average attendance over the last five years, and growth in three of the five years.

The churches ranged in size from less than one hundred in average attendance to more than six hundred; one church had existed for more than one hundred years while another had only existed for five years. Four denominational affiliations were represented, and the lead pastors were very diverse; some were Caucasian while others were African American or Latin American, and their ages ranged from the early thirties to the middle sixties.

Research Procedures

Once the churches were selected, the researcher conducted site visits and low structure interviews with lead pastors and other key leaders. Each of the interviews included questions about two controversial church growth principles (the homogenous unit principle and the receptivity principle) and social justice issues, and each interview included unique questions based on the direction of the interview.

After the interviews and site visits were conducted, the researcher transcribed and analyzed all of the data through open, axial and selective coding in accordance with

the grounded theory method of data analysis developed by Glaser and Straus (1967) and modified by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Research Questions

Five research questions led to the discovery of key insights and a grounded theory.

Research Question 1

The 1st research question was “Do leaders of growing churches in urban poverty zones attribute growth to the intentional application of the homogeneous unit principle or the receptivity principle?” This question led to the discovery of the 1st key insight.

Key Insight 1

Many growing churches in UPZs do not use the homogenous unit principle (HUP) or the receptivity principle (RP). The homogeneous unit principle has been defined as a compilation of two observations: “(1) Human beings show an overwhelming predisposition to band together with their own kind, and (2) God accepts this fact and works with it” (Kraft 1978, 121). The receptivity principle is defined as a strategy that directs the most resources towards the people who are most likely to respond in salvation to the gospel message (Rainer 1993, 29-30). Neither of these principles was prominent in the data. In fact, none of the churches studied reported using the RP and only two of the ten reported using the HUP.

In relation to the HUP, most of those interviewed described their congregations and prospects as mosaic and even “a bizarre mix of people” rather than homogeneous

(Fields and Goubran 2010, 6). Most of the participants knew about the HUP but decided not to use it. One respondent noted, “I understand it. I understand that it is tapping into the fact that people like to be with people (of their own kind), but I think it does not tap into the gospel . . . which means going across cultural, racial, ethnic and socioeconomic lines” (Grant 2010, 4). The churches studied and the surrounding communities seemed to be proud of their multicultural nature. One church posted the word “welcome” in six different languages beside its main entrance, and another church boasted of forty-six nationalities among its Sunday morning attendance of around 120.

One church offered a unique perspective on the reason that the HUP might not be as effective in UPZs as it is elsewhere. They stated, “If you are focusing on a solid group of people and you think this group is going to be the same group eight months from now, you might be mistaken . . . eight months from now, they might move—they might be gone” (Rivera, White and Thompson 2010, 13). In other words, the unique challenges of UPZs might decrease the effectiveness of principles, like the HUP, that work well in other, more stable environments.

UPZ populations are difficult to reach so it was not surprising that the churches studied did not use the RP. If the RP had been used, the churches would have been located in another community with a more receptive population. The leaders interviewed chose their locations and prospects based on the leadership of the Holy Spirit and often in spite of knowing that the community and population would not be as receptive as other populations. Rather than targeting the most receptive groups for evangelism, the churches studied used broadcast and urgency evangelism (see chap. 4 for more information about these strategies). Many of the churches shared the gospel at every opportunity to anyone

who would listen while others functioned with urgency that arose from recognizing the frailty of life in a UPZ.

The conclusion of this information is that churches can grow in urban poverty zones without intentionally using these principles. UPZs are environments in which multiculturalism within the community allows the church to pursue and reach less homogeneous congregations. Many of those interviewed had a theological or practical disagreement with the HUP. It is possible that conditions in UPZs work against these principles. Further study, however, would have to be conducted to determine this.

Research Question 2

The 2nd research question was “Do leaders of growing churches in urban poverty zones attribute growth to intentional social ministry?” This question led to the discovery of the 2nd key insight.

Key insight 2

Social ministry is vital to many growing UPZ churches. Social ministry was a regular part of the life of every church interviewed. For some, social ministry was foundational to their existence. For instance, the pastor of Graffiti Church noted, “The church grew out of community services” (Fields and Goubran 2010, 3). Similarly, New Baptist Temple began when three former addicts started a Bible study for other addicts in the community. Now the church operates recovery programs throughout the day. Other churches used social ministry as one of the most important parts of their overall strategy. The churches offered food, clothing, shelter, educational programs, after school programs, community service projects, medical help, job skills training, school supplies and more.

Leaders noticed many benefits of meeting social needs in the UPZs. In some instances, the churches gained recognition and trust while in other cases the entire community identified with the church. The leaders and pastors recognized that many of the people who received help from a social ministry, “are not going to come on a Sunday—that is a reality” (Fields and Goubran 2010, 7). The churches, however, reported gaining attenders, converts and members from among those who want to support a church that offers help to others.

A large majority of the social ministry used by the churches could be classified as ministry evangelism. In other words, the churches were intentionally sharing the gospel in conjunction with meeting physical and social needs. When asked about this, one pastor said, “I let people know everything I do here is about winning people to Christ; either winning them or growing them . . . If I was not trying to win people to Christ, there is no way I could be out here trying to get out food” (V. Dixon 2010, 5).

All of the churches studied attributed some of their growth to intentional social ministry. Social ministry provides a platform for churches to evangelize UPZs, and it creates opportunities to build partnerships, relationships, and community. It models Jesus’ approach of alleviating physical needs so spiritual needs can be addressed. Some social needs were being met without any direct evangelism taking place, but most of the social ministry was directly tied to evangelism. Intentional social ministry is an effective tool for church growth in an UPZ.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 was “What additional categories and subcategories of data arise from participant descriptions of church growth in urban poverty zones?” This

question is answered in detail in chapter 4, but the list below summarizes the additional categories and subcategories found including the subcategories found in relation to the predetermined category 2.

Categories	Subcategories
Predetermined category 2 Non-threatening approach	Motivating factors, community respect Tangible love, ministry to many that never connect, church environment
Ministry centered on the UPZ	Centered on the population, centered on the location
Effective organizational principles Investing with co-laborers Spiritual foundation	Abstract principles, concrete principles Symbiotic partnerships, church planting Spiritually driven, spiritual methodology, supernatural provision
Financial sustainability Community restoration	Vision for restoring community, restoring community

These categories and subcategories arose from the data and developed a new way to understand and study church growth in UPZs. They also produced the 3rd and 4th key insights of the research.

Key insight 3

The third key insight of church growth in UPZs discovered during this research is that UPZ churches often become less financially stable as they grow. Because of the unique economic characteristics of a UPZ, churches located there are more likely to reach members that cost more than they contribute. Someone who comes to know Christ at a soup kitchen or in a food line is unlikely to contribute money to the church, and they are likely to continue needing social services. Suppose the average person reached by a growing church located in a UPZ costs the church twenty dollars more per month than

they contribute. In such a case, a church of one hundred would have to make up two thousand dollars per month while a church of one thousand would fall short by twenty thousand dollars each month.

All of the churches studied faced this dilemma—reaching a congregation that struggled to maintain itself financially. The solutions to this problem varied, and some were very creative. For example, Citi Church hosted a culinary arts program to teach needed skills to local high school students, but it also allowed them to receive grant money toward that ministry. In addition, they operated three for profit businesses in other locations to provide the staff with second jobs for additional income. Open Arms Christian Center ran residential recovery houses which they described as a type of “minister business because we charge fees for people” (Kelly 2010, 1). One church began a non-profit ministry that works directly with, and under control of, the church. This strategy was designed to utilize the tendency of donors to support nonprofit ministries more than established churches. Many donors do not understand why a church with an average attendance of more than one hundred cannot support itself, but they understand the need for support of an evangelistic non-profit ministry in an UPZ.

Other churches attempted to solve the problem of financial sustainability with more traditional methods such as bi-vocational staff members, church partnerships and mission agency support. Another helpful strategy for maintaining financial sustainability is planting several small to medium size churches rather than trying to grow one large church. This strategy spreads out the cost to contribution gap among several pastors and leadership teams who have the capacity to develop creative solutions of their own. All of

the churches studied, with the exception of one, were either actively involved in church planting or planning to get involved soon.

Key insight 4

The fourth key insight that arose from the data in this study is the centrality of the UPZ to many growing churches located there. Eight of the ten churches studied deliberately chose the UPZ location either by planting there or making a decision to stay there. The other two were reaching the UPZ because it was the community in which they found themselves. Either way, the UPZ, with all its challenges and opportunities, was at the center of the strategy and life of all the churches studied.

These successful churches felt a sense of calling to the UPZ—either its location, its people, or both—and they took on the challenges of ministering there rather than hiding from them or looking for a way out. They recruited staff and volunteers to work with the urban poor, and they ministered to, witnessed to, assimilated, and developed leaders from among the urban poor.

UPZs have unique challenges, but they also offer unique opportunities. The churches studied were capitalizing on opportunities like two churches which used public transportation to transport members to and from services and to and from doctor's appointments. Other churches redeemed and restored abandoned buildings—even buildings abandoned by other churches—which are common in UPZs. Graffiti Church was originally located in a former gang hangout, and its location at the time of the interview was a remodeled former synagogue. Citi Church and Greater Deliverance Baptist Church were both located in church buildings that were abandoned by previous congregations. Christ Fellowship Downtown and New Baptist Temple both merged with

existing churches that were close to closing and created vibrant ministries within those buildings. Evening Star Missionary Baptist, Armitage Baptist Garfield Park and Open Arms Christian Center were meeting in secular buildings that had been remodeled as churches. Eight of the ten churches studied redeemed and restored secular or church buildings to give them new life and purpose.

Research Question 4

The 4th research question was “What relationships and variations arise in the categories and subcategories of data from participant descriptions of church growth in urban poverty zones?” All of the categories are interrelated, and these relationships are discussed in detail in chapter 4 by presenting story lines of each category that relay its relationship with the other categories and subcategories.

Research Question 5

Research question 5 was “What principles are grounded in the categories, subcategories, relationships, and variations discovered in questions 1, 2, 3, and 4?” The purpose of this research question was to analyze the data to discover a grounded theory.

The Grounded Theory

As the data was gathered and analyzed, a grounded theory arose centered around a core category (central principal) of community restoration. The other categories and subcategories are related to the category of community restoration, and the categories and their relationships are detailed in chapter 4. The next few paragraphs present those relationships in storyline form.

All of the churches studied were focused on restoring community—with God, other believers, and the world—for the individuals they were reaching. In most UPZs, all community support is absent. Many of the people reached by the churches had lost any sense of family—the most basic form of community outside of a relationship with God. This void provided an opportunity for churches to become the families and replace the community structures that were lost in UPZs. The sample churches were working to rebuild community in their neighborhoods in order to rebuild community between the neighborhood residents and God. In many ways, they were the community centers, law offices, medical clinics, sources of education, employment offices and safe places.

Community restoration begins with a spiritual foundation. Growing UPZ churches were in their locations because of spiritual convictions that drove them to or kept them in a UPZ even if everything changed around them. They were led by the Holy Spirit and inspired by the possibility of seeing transformation in the lives of those that other churches had overlooked. Growing UPZ churches desired community restoration for the individuals and the entire neighborhood. Their interest led them to become the agents of the change they wanted to see.

Community restoration is not easy in UPZs. The growing UPZ churches, however, chose to operate in spite of and because of the conditions of UPZs. The challenge of assimilating the urban poor and the multicultural nature of the UPZ shaped their plans. They used the resources of the city to respond to the challenges of the city by recruiting affluent urbanites to work with impoverished urbanites, which often lived within a few feet of each other, and by redeeming secular and church buildings for kingdom use.

UPZs require specific strategies of community restoration. Growing UPZ churches in this study rejected, for the most part, the controversial church growth concepts of the HUP and the RP. Instead, they sought a multicultural identity, invested time, money and resources into co-laboring entities, and utilized ministry evangelism as the main tool for growth. The strategies and principles used by the churches were all related to the central phenomenon of community restoration. These churches were driven by the need to restore community between God and humanity, among God's people, and between God's people—the church—and their neighborhoods. These restored community structures provided missional paths for the preaching and receiving of the gospel and the growth of churches in UPZs.

Research Implications

The key insights and grounded theory produced important implications for urban ministry researchers, church growth researchers and urban ministry practitioners.

Urban Ministry Researchers

As discussed in chapter 2, urban ministry research is a well-established field. It has not, however, been able to produce a distinction between urban and urban poor. Many urban researchers begin with convictions about reaching the poor, and some desire to reach other classes of people that live in the city. This research offers a pattern for urban ministry research to follow. Using the distinction of UPZs, urban researchers have a tool to distinguish between types of urban areas and develop strategies to study and reach these areas.

Urban ministry researchers can also learn about evangelistic and social ministry strategies from this research. Almost all of the evangelism and outreach

conducted by the churches studied was done using the platform of social needs. Also, there was very little social ministry conducted without an intentional outreach or evangelistic plan attached to it. While the churches recognized that they were ministering to many people who would never connect with the church that did not stop them from trying to connect those to whom they were ministering. The implication is that social ministry should rarely, if ever, be conducted without intentional connection to evangelism and outreach in UPZs.

Church Growth Researchers

Church growth research is usually conducted on the fastest growing churches without regard to context. Those who study church growth can learn from this research that environment and context have a large impact on church growth. Churches with lower growth rates in difficult contexts, like UPZs, have much to offer the church growth world. It would require more research to determine this, but perhaps recent principles of church growth are flawed because they mostly do not consider context.

Those who research church growth need to rethink how to approach the subject. Many of the church growth principles discovered lead church planters and existing churches to locate or relocate to suburban areas similar to the areas surrounding the churches studied. Very little of the church growth literature addresses growing city churches, and almost none of the church growth literature addresses churches growing in difficult urban areas like UPZs. Although their growth rates are not as impressive, they do exist, and they need to be studied.

Two of the foundational principles of church growth need to be reexamined. The homogeneous unit principle and the receptivity principle were mostly ignored or

rejected by churches growing in UPZs. Perhaps these were discovered and developed in certain contexts, which allow them to operate, and the UPZ context is so different that they do not apply. Another possibility exists, however. It is possible that these principles have always been products of contexts that produce church growth rather than principles of church growth themselves. It is possible that other, more powerful, principles of church growth exist that are masked by the HUP and the RP. The different and difficult context of a UPZ might be the tool that exposes these principles and provides for the discovery and verification of more powerful principles.

Consider the principle of community restoration discovered in this study. It is possible that community restoration is a much more powerful principle than the homogenous unit principle. Perhaps a mosaic community is as attractive or more attractive to seekers than a homogeneous community. The important piece may be community, not homogeneity.

In light of the increasing multiculturalism of the world, there is another possibility regarding the homogeneous unit principle. Perhaps the HUP worked well in a culture, like the American culture of the 1950's and 1960's, in which most people rarely encountered different races or cultures. In modern American culture, however, people encounter different races and cultures every day at school, work and in recreation. Perhaps the younger generations can be reached more easily through churches that are mosaic and not homogeneous. This results of this research are not conclusive on this matter, but church growth researchers need to consider these possibilities.

Urban Ministry Practitioners

Urban ministry is difficult ministry. Those who work in urban areas and UPZs can be encouraged that churches are making an impact in the most difficult urban areas. They also need to understand that urban ministry is different from ministry in other contexts. For example, the churches studied prove that traditional church growth methods are not needed in UPZs, and it is possible that they are detrimental to church growth in UPZs. Urban ministry is an important area of ministry practice, and there is a high degree of satisfaction that accompanies the life transformation of those reached in urban ministry.

Research Applications

A new theory of church growth in urban poverty zones can be applied by those currently ministering in UPZs or by those desiring to begin churches there. The story line of the core category, community restoration, is used as an outline below to organize the applications of the research.

The causal condition of the community restoration story line is the category spiritual foundation. The motivating factor for the effective churches studied in urban poverty zones is a spiritual foundation. Churches and church planters experiencing success in UPZs are driven by the transformation of UPZ residents and are willing to experience personal and church wide sacrifice. This helps them reach their community. Others who are willing to do so can expect to see growth and transformation in the community.

The central phenomenon-of the story line is community restoration. The context is high importance and high involvement. Some churches may find it difficult to

imagine being a community center that services many people who never connect to the life of the church and partners with community organizations to serve the community. If a church, however, can focus on restoring community for individuals and the neighborhood, it has a good chance of being a successful, growing church.

The intervening conditions of community restoration for churches located in UPZs is ministry that is centered on the UPZ and its residents. This is vital. Churches who desire to stay or begin ministries in UPZs must center everything they do on that context. The UPZ has ministry advantages and challenges like any other context, and a church that is centered on the location and the people will be able to maximize the advantages and minimize the challenges. The churches and/or church planters must be willing to take on the challenges associated with UPZs rather than ignore or avoid them. They must work to intentionally assimilate the urban poor and recruit leaders from other contexts that have a heart to work in UPZs.

Because of the context and intervening conditions, churches and church planters trying to reach UPZs need specific strategies. The strategies listed here are not exhaustive, but they represent the strategies used by the churches studied. First, the traditional church growth principles of the HUP and the RP need to be evaluated for each situation, and in many cases, rejected. Secondly, strong partnerships need to be developed with both community and church organizations to maximize the resources and impact of the ministry. This includes partnering with church plants and adopting a church planting strategy to reach parts of the city that cannot be reached from the current location. Third, churches and church planters must have a social ministry strategy that includes

intentional evangelism. This can be the foundation of the entire ministry, or it can be an important part.

Fourth, each church reaching a UPZ must develop a plan for financial sustainability. By definition, the residents of UPZs will most likely never fully support a church. Possible solutions include using bi-vocational staff, cooperating with missions agencies and other churches that want to invest in UPZ ministry, reaching the urban affluent who have a desire to reach the urban poor, operating businesses to provide staff with additional jobs and income, and receiving government and non-government grants for particular programs. Regardless of the type of financial solution, every church and church planter must address financial sustainability in order to maintain a ministry in a UPZ. Finally, churches and church planters should consider using effective organizational skills like staff led churches, and creative rather than traditional church models. These do not guarantee growth, but they remove internal obstacles that allow churches to focus on the external obstacles of the UPZ.

If a church planter is not willing to follow these guidelines, he should strongly consider another context. A UPZ provides unique challenges compared to other contexts, and those beginning churches there must recognize and prepare for those challenges. If a current church is located in a UPZ, but they are not willing or able to adapt to these principles, they are not likely to be successful there. In light of the research, a good strategy for such churches is to consider relocation and/or partnering with a church planting group that can use their facilities to reach the neighborhood. If the church wants to reach the community but feels they cannot do so, they should prayerfully seek out a group with a calling and a plan to plant a church in their area, and give them their

existing facilities, assets, and members with very few restrictions. If they desire to reach another community, they should consider relocating and giving the building to a church-planting group. The principles outlined above could provide the church with a tool to determine if a group will be effective in reaching the community.

Opportunities for Further Research

Every research project produces opportunities for further research, and a grounded theory of church growth in urban poverty zones produces such opportunities. Of course, one possible research project is replication of this study.

Another research opportunity is the replication of this study with another population such as UPZs in countries other than the United States, rural poverty zones in the United States, UPZs in smaller cities, and urban areas that are not UPZs.

A comparative study could also be conducted between this research and urban church growth research to determine the similarities and variations between urban ministry in general and UPZ ministry.

While grounded theory is a qualitative procedure, it produces a theory, which can be tested quantitatively (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 103). Another opportunity for research, therefore, is a quantitative research project to test the discovered theory with a larger sample and/or population.

Research could also be conducted through an experimental design with the model discovered in which churches located in UPZs who have not been growing would agree to adopt the model for a set amount of time to determine if it produces growth.

Conclusion

Consider Mr. and Mrs. Moss from Powerhouse Church of Watts. They are now core leaders in the church, but just a few years ago, they were homeless. Because Powerhouse Church had a vision for community restoration, they hosted a free medical clinic where the leadership and members of the church met Mr. and Mrs. Moss. That meeting led to the salvation, marriage and baptism of the Mosses. Now, they have community with God through salvation, community with a family through marriage, community with a church family through Powerhouse Church, and community within their neighborhood as they help others. The couple serves faithfully in the leadership of Powerhouse Church restoring community in the lives, families and neighborhoods around them.

Is there hope for churches located in UPZs? Can the gospel work in UPZs? Yes, but UPZ churches must be willing to adapt to the context of UPZs and become a bridge of community restoration between God and the people of the neighborhood.

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions will be used by the researcher to discover data in interviews with subjects selected through theoretical sampling. The first 4 questions will be used with all participants. The other questions will only be used if the original questions do not generate enough data. If the data drives the interview in a different direction, questions that are not listed here may be used.

1. Why has your church grown over the last 5 years when others in your area have not grown?
2. Has your church intentionally used the homogeneous unit principle, and has it contributed to your growth?
3. Has your church intentionally used the receptivity principle, and has it contributed to your growth?
4. Has your church intentionally addressed social justice issues, and has doing so contributed to your growth?
5. Why do churches in communities like yours grow or not grow?
6. What factors cause urban poverty zone church growth?
7. What can other churches in communities similar to yours do to grow?
8. How have you contributed to the growth of the church?
9. How does church growth in your community differ from church growth in other contexts?

APPENDIX 2

DATA TABLES

Table A1. Category: Controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High-----low
Application	High-----low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement-----low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement-----low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement-----low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement-----low involvement

Table A2. First Baptist Church Chattahoochee and the category of controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High-X-----low
Application	High---X-----low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional-X-----unintentional-----non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----X---non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A3. Greater Deliverance Baptist Church and the category of controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High-----X-low
Application	High-----X-low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional-----X--unintentional-----non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----X-non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A4. Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park and the category of controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High-----X-----low
Application	High-----X-low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----X-non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional---X-----unintentional-----non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A5. Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church and the category of controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High-----X-----low
Application	High-----X-low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----X-----non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----X-----non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A6. Open Arms Christian Center and the category of controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High--X-----low
Application	High-----X-low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----X-non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional-X-----unintentional-----non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A7. Powerhouse Church of Watts and the category of controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High-X-----low
Application	High-----X-low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----X--non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional--X-----unintentional-----non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement-----X--low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement--X-----low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement-----X--low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement-----X--low involvement

Table A8. Christ Fellowship Downtown and the category of controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High-----X--low
Application	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional-----X--unintentional-----non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional---X-----unintentional-----non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement--X-----low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement--X-----low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A9. Citi Church and the category of controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High-X-----low
Application	High-----X--low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----X-non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional-X-----unintentional-----non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement--X-----low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A10. Graffiti Church and the category of controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High-X-----low
Application	High-----X--low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional-----unintentional-----X--non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional--X-----unintentional-----non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement-----X--low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement--X-----low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement--X-----low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A11. New Baptist Temple and the category
of controversial church growth principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Knowledge	High-X-----low
Application	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: homogeneous unit principle	
Property	Dimensions
Homogeneous unit	Intentional--X-----unintentional-----non-development
Mosaic unit	Intentional-----X-unintentional-----non-development
Subcategory: Receptivity principle	
Property	Dimensions
Targeted evangelism	High involvement-----X--low involvement
Broadcast evangelism	High involvement-----X--low involvement
Opportunistic evangelism	High involvement-----X--low involvement
Urgency evangelism	High involvement--X-----low involvement

Table A12. Category: Social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----low
Importance	Foundational-----important-----Peripheral
Effectiveness	High-----low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong-----weak
Desire	High-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many-----few
Quality of connections	High-----low

Table A13. First Baptist Church Chattahoochee and
the category of social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Importance	Foundational-----important-----X--Peripheral
Effectiveness	High-----X--low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High-----X-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong--X-----weak
Desire	High--X-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many--X-----few
Quality of connections	High---X-----low

Table A14. Greater Deliverance Baptist Church and
the category of social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Importance	Foundational-----X--important-----Peripheral
Effectiveness	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High--X-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong--X-----weak
Desire	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X--low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many-----X-----few
Quality of connections	High--X-----low

Table A15. Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park and
the category of social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Importance	Foundational--X-----important-----Peripheral
Effectiveness	High--X-----low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High-X-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong--X-----weak
Desire	High--X-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X--low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many-----X-----few
Quality of connections	High-----X-----low

Table A16. Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church and
the category of social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Importance	Foundational-----X--important-----Peripheral
Effectiveness	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High-X-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong-X-----weak
Desire	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many-X-----few
Quality of connections	High-----X-----low

Table A17. Open Arms Christian Center and the category of social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Importance	Foundational-X-----important-----Peripheral
Effectiveness	High-X-----low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High-X-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong-X-----weak
Desire	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many--X-----few
Quality of connections	High--X-----low

Table A18. Powerhouse Church of Watts and the category of social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Importance	Foundational-----X--important-----Peripheral
Effectiveness	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High-X-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong-X-----weak
Desire	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many-----X-----few
Quality of connections	High-X-----low

Table A19. Christ Fellowship Downtown and the category of social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Importance	Foundational-----X-important-----Peripheral
Effectiveness	High--X-----low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High-X-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong-X-----weak
Desire	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High----X-----low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many-X-----few
Quality of connections	High--X-----low

Table A20. Citi Church and the category of social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Importance	Foundational-----X----important-----Peripheral
Effectiveness	High--X-----low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High-X-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong--X-----weak
Desire	High--X-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High----X-----low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X---low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many-X-----few
Quality of connections	High-X-----low

Table A21. Graffiti Church and the category of social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Importance	Foundational-X-----important-----Peripheral
Effectiveness	High-X-----low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High-X-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong-X-----weak
Desire	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many-X-----few
Quality of connections	High-X-----low

Table A22. New Baptist Temple and the category of social ministry strategy

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Importance	Foundational-X-----important-----Peripheral
Effectiveness	High-X-----low
Subcategory: motivating factors	
Property	Dimensions
Opportunity	High-X-----low
Biblical Conviction	Strong-X-----weak
Desire	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-low
Subcategory: ministry evangelism	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: non-evangelistic ministry	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-low
Subcategory: connection to others through service	
Property	Dimensions
Number of connections	Many-X-----few
Quality of connections	High-X-----low

Table A23. Category: Non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-----low
Importance of relationships	Important-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-----exclusive

Table A24. First Baptist Church Chattahoochee and the category of non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-----X-low
Importance of relationships	Important--X-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed-X-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-----X----exclusive

Table A25. Greater Deliverance Baptist Church and the category of non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-----X-----low
Importance of relationships	Important-X-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed--X-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-----X-----exclusive

Table A26. Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park and the category of non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-----X-----low
Importance of relationships	Important--X-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed--X-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-X-----exclusive

Table A27. Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church and the category of non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-----X-----low
Importance of relationships	Important-X-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed-X-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-X-----exclusive

Table A28. Open Arms Christian Center and the category of non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-----X-----low
Importance of relationships	Important-X-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed-X-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-X-----exclusive

Table A29. Powerhouse Church of Watts and the category of non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-----X-----low
Importance of relationships	Important-X-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed-X-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-X-----exclusive

Table A30. Christ Fellowship Downtown and the category of non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-----X-----low
Importance of relationships	Important-----X-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed-X-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-X-----exclusive

Table A31. Citi Church and the category of non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-----X-----low
Importance of relationships	Important-X-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed-X-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-X-----exclusive

Table A32. Graffiti Church and the category of non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-----X--low
Importance of relationships	Important-X-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed-X-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-X-----exclusive

Table A33. New Baptist Temple and the category of non-threatening environment

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Aggressiveness	High-X-----low
Importance of relationships	Important-X-----not important
Subcategory: tangible love	
Property	Dimensions
Expression	Expressed-X-----not expressed
Subcategory: ministry to many that never connect	
Property	Dimensions
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: church environment	
Property	Dimensions
Inclusiveness	Inclusive-X-----exclusive

Table A34. Category: Ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-----low
Influence of the UPZ	High-----low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-----no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-----low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural---non-int. multicultural---non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-----urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others-----urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-----low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-----low success

Table A35. Category: Ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-----low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-----low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement-----low involvement

Table A36. First Baptist Chattahoochee and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-----X--low
Influence of the UPZ	High-----X--low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-----X-----no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-----X-low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural---non-int. multicultural--X-non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-X-----urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others-X-----urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-----X-low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-----X-----low success

Table A37. First Baptist Church Chattahoochee and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-X-----low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High-X-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-X-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A38. Greater Deliverance Baptist Church and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Influence of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-X-----low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural---non-int. multicultural--X-non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others----X-----urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-----X-----low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-----X-low success

Table A39. Greater Deliverance Baptist Church and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-----X-----low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High--X-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-X-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement-X-----low involvement

Table A40. Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Influence of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-X-----low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural-X--non-int. multicultural---non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-X-----urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-X-----low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-----X-----low success

Table A41. Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-----X-low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High-X-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-X-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A42. Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Influence of the UPZ	High--X-----low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-----X-----no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-X-----low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural---non-int. multicultural--X-non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others-----X----urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-X-----low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-----X-low success

Table A43. Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-----X-low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High-X-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-X-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement-----X--low involvement

Table A44. Open Arms Christian Center and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Influence of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-X-----low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural-X--non-int. multicultural---non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-X-----low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-X-----low success

Table A45. Open Arms Christian Center and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-----X-----low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High-X-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-X-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement--X-----low involvement

Table A46. Powerhouse Church of Watts and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Influence of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-X-----low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural-X--non-int. multicultural---non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-X-----low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-----X-----low success

Table A47. Powerhouse Church of Watts and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-----X-----low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High-X-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-X-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-----X-----low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A48. Christ Fellowship Downtown and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-----X-----low
Influence of the UPZ	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-----X--no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-----X--low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural-X--non-int. multicultural---non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-X-----urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others-X-----urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-----X-low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-X-----low success

Table A49. Christ Fellowship Downtown and the category
of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-X-----low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High-X-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-X-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement-X-----low involvement

Table A50. Citi Church and the category of ministry
centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Influence of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-----X-no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-X-----low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural-X--non-int. multicultural---non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-X-----low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-X-----low success

Table A51. Citi Church and the category of ministry
centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-X-----low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High-X-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-X-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement-X-----low involvement

Table A52. Graffiti Church and the category of ministry
centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Influence of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-X-----low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural-X--non-int. multicultural---non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-X-----urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others-X-----urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-X-----low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-X-----low success

Table A53. Graffiti Church and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-X-----low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High-X-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-X-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A54. New Baptist Temple and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 1

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Influence of the UPZ	High-X-----low
Subcategory: centered on the population	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the urban poor	Strong sense of calling-X-----no sense of calling
Assimilating the urban poor	High rate-X-----low rate
Multiculturalism	Int. multicultural--X-non-int. multicultural---non-multicultural
Two-city location	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Two-city congregation	Urban poor and others-----X-urban poor only
Developing leaders among the urban poor	High success-X-----low success
Recruiting leaders to invest in the urban poor	High success-----X-----low success

Table A55. New Baptist Temple and the category of ministry centered on the urban poverty zone part 2

Subcategory: centered on the location	
Property	Dimensions
Calling to the UPZ	Strong sense of calling-----X-----no sense of calling
Utilization of the city	High utilization-----X-----low utilization
Recognition of urban challenges	High-X-----low
Response to urban challenges	Fight-X-----flight
Redemption of secular buildings	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Redemption of church buildings	High involvement-X-----low involvement

Table A56. Category: Effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality-----strict hierarchy

Table A57. First Baptist Chattahoochee and the category of effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High---X-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative--X-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus-----X-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-----X-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality--X-----strict hierarchy

Table A58. Greater Deliverance Baptist Church and the category of effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative----X-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus---X-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-X-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality-----X-----strict hierarchy

Table A59. Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park and the category of effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High--X-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative-X-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus---X-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-X-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality-X-----strict hierarchy

Table A60. Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church and the category of effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High---X-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative-----X-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus---X-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-X-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality-X-----strict hierarchy

Table A61. Open Arms Christian Center and the category of effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High-X-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative-X-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus-X-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-X-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality-X-----strict hierarchy

Table A62. Powerhouse Church of Watts and the category of effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High----X-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative-X-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus----X-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-X-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality----X-----strict hierarchy

Table A63. Christ Fellowship Downtown and the category of effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High-X-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative-X-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus-X-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-X-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality-X-----strict hierarchy

Table A64. Citi Church and the category of effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High-X-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative-X-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus-X-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-X-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality-X-----strict hierarchy

Table A65. Graffiti Church and the category of effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High-X-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative-X-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus-X-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-X-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality-X-----strict hierarchy

Table A66. New Baptist Temple and the category of effective organizational principles

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Application	High-X-----low
Subcategory: abstract principles	
Property	Dimensions
Creativity	Creative-X-----traditional
Focus on quality	High focus---X-----low focus
Subcategory: concrete principles	
Property	Dimension
Staff led structure	Staff led-X-----committee led
Team Approach	Team mentality-X-----strict hierarchy

Table A67. Category: Investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-----low
Involvement	High-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-----low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-----low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-----low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire-----low desire

Table A68. First Baptist Chattahoochee and the category of investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement---X-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire-X-----low desire

Table A69. Greater Deliverance Baptist Church and the category of investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement-----X-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire-----X-low desire

Table A70. Armitage Park Baptist Church Garfield Park and the category of investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-----X-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire-X-----low desire

Table A71. Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church and
the category of investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire-----X-low desire

Table A72. Open Arms Christian Center and the category of investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement--X-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-----X-----low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-----X-----low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire-X-----low desire

Table A73. Powerhouse Church of Watts and the category of investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire-X-----low desire

Table A74. Christ Fellowship Downtown and the category of investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement-----X-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-----X-low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire----X-----low desire

Table A75. Citi Church Miami and the category of investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-----X-----low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-----X-----low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire-X-----low desire

Table A76. Graffiti Church and the category of investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire-X-----low desire

Table A77. New Baptist Temple and the category of investing with co-laborers

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Importance	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: symbiotic partnerships	
Property	Dimensions
Church partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Non-community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Community secular partnering	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Subcategory: church planting	
Property	Dimension
Active planting	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Supporting plants	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Desire to plant	High desire-X-----low desire

Table A78. Category: Spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated---communicated---not communicated
Inspired by transformation	Much inspiration---some inspiration---not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized-----not utilized
Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity-----low sensitivity
	High desire-----low desire
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience-----low experience

Table A79. First Baptist Chattahoochee and the category of spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong-----X-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated--X--communicated---not communicated
Inspired by trans-formation	Much inspiration---some inspiration-X--not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized-----X--not utilized
Sensitive to the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity---X-----low sensitivity
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice-X-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-----X-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience-----X--low experience

Table A80. Greater Deliverance Baptist Church and the category of spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong-X-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated-X--communicated---not communicated
Inspired by transformation	Much inspiration---some inspiration--X-not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized-----X--not utilized
Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity--X-----low sensitivity
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice-----X-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-----X-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience----X-----low experience

Table A81. Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park
and the category of spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong-X-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated-X--communicated---not communicated
Inspired by transformation	Much inspiration-X--some inspiration---not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized-----X-----not utilized
Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity-X-----low sensitivity
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice-X-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-X-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience-X-----low experience

Table A82. Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church and the category of spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong--X-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated--X-communicated---not communicated
Inspired by transformation	Much inspiration--X-some inspiration---not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized---X-----not utilized
Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity--X-----low sensitivity
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice-----X-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-----X-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience--X-----low experience

Table A83. Open Arms Christian Center and the category of spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong--X-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated-X--communicated---not communicated
Inspired by transformation	Much inspiration-X--some inspiration---not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized-----X--not utilized
Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity-X-----low sensitivity
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice-X-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-X-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience-X-----low experience

Table A84. Powerhouse Church of Watts and the category of spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong-X-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated--X-communicated---not communicated
Inspired by transformation	Much inspiration-X--some inspiration---not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized-----X-not utilized
Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity-X-----low sensitivity
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice-X-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-X-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience-X-----low experience

Table A85. Christ Fellowship Downtown and the category of spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong---X-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated--X-communicated---not communicated
Inspired by transformation	Much inspiration---some inspiration-X--not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized-----X-not utilized
Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity-X-----low sensitivity
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice----X-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-----X-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience-----X-----low experience

Table A86. Citi Church and the category of spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong-X-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated-X--communicated---not communicated
Inspired by transformation	Much inspiration--X-some inspiration---not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized-X-----not utilized
Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity-X-----low sensitivity
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice-X-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-X-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience-X-----low experience

Table A87. Graffiti Church and the category of spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong-X-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated-X--communicated---not communicated
Inspired by transformation	Much inspiration-X--some inspiration---not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized-----X-not utilized
Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity-X-----low sensitivity
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice-X-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-X-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience-X-----low experience

Table A88. New Baptist Temple and the category of spiritual foundation

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Strength	Strong-X-----weak
Subcategory: spiritually driven	
Property	Dimensions
Biblically based vision	Strongly communicated-X--communicated---not communicated
Inspired by transformation	Much inspiration-X--some inspiration---not a source of inspiration
Subcategory: spiritual methodology	
Property	Dimension
Reach the men strategy	Utilized-X-----not utilized
Sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit	High sensitivity-X-----low sensitivity
Subcategory: supernatural provision	
Property	Dimension
Personal sacrifice	High personal sacrifice-X-----low personal sacrifice
Supernatural personal provision	High experience-X-----low experience
Supernatural church provision	High experience-X-----low experience

Table A89. Category: Financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable-----self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-----uncreative

Table A90. First Baptist Church Chattahoochee and the category of financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable----X-----self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-----X--uncreative

Table A91. Greater Deliverance Baptist Church and the category of financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable----X-----self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-----X--uncreative

Table A92. Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park
and the category of financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable-X-----self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-X-----uncreative

Table A93. Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church
and the category of financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable-----X----self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-----X----uncreative

Table A94. Open Arms Christian Center and the category of financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable-X-----self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-X-----uncreative

Table A95. Powerhouse Church of Watts and the category of financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable-X-----self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-----X--uncreative

Table A96. Christ Fellowship Downtown and the category of financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable-----X-self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-----X-uncreative

Table A97. Citi Church and the category of financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable-X-----self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-X-----uncreative

Table A98. Graffiti Church and the category of financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable-X-----self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-----X-----uncreative

Table A99. New Baptist Temple and the category of financial flexibility

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Congregational sustainability	Unsustainable-X-----self sustainable
Financial creativity	Creative-----X-----uncreative

Table A100. Category: Community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-----low
Involvement	High-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed---understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-----low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----low involvement

Table A101. First Baptist Church Chattahoochee and
the category of community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-----X-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed-X--understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-----X-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-----X-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-----X-low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A102. Greater Deliverance Baptist Church and
the category of community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed--X-understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-----X-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement----X-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-----X-low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A103. Armitage Baptist Church Garfield Park and the category of community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed-X--understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-----X-----low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A104. Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church
and the category of community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed--X-understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement----X-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-----X-----low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----X--low involvement

Table A105. Open Arms Christian Center and the category of community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed-X--understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-----X-low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----X-----low involvement

Table A106. Powerhouse Church of Watts and the category of community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed-X--understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-X-----low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A107. Christ Fellowship Downtown and the category of community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed-X--understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement---X-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-----X-low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A108. Citi Church and the category of community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed-X--understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-----X-----low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----X-low involvement

Table A109. Graffiti Church and the category of community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed-X--understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement-X-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-X-----low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----X---low involvement

Table A110. New Baptist Temple and the category of community restoration

Main category	
Property	Dimensions
Interest	High-X-----low
Involvement	High-X-----low
Subcategory: vision for restoring community	
Property	Dimensions
Level of expression	Expressed--X-understood---non-existent
Subcategory: restoring community	
Property	Dimension
For the individual	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the Church	High priority-X-----low priority
Within the neighborhood	High involvement---X-----low involvement
Desire for political action	High desire-X-----low desire
Political involvement	High involvement-----X-low involvement

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ABSTRACT

A GROUNDED THEORY OF CHURCH GROWTH IN URBAN POVERTY ZONES

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This dissertation examines church growth in urban poverty zones and develops a grounded theory to explain the data. Urban poverty zones are impoverished census tracts located in cities of 500,000 or more, and the term is synonymous with the term inner city as defined by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City. Chapter 1 details the educational and theological concerns that drive the research and gives a brief overview of the research design.

Chapter 2 reviews the precedent literature from the fields of church growth, and urban ministry. This chapter also contains a theological section, which covers a theology of the city and a theology of the poor. It also contains a section which discusses the definition of urban poverty zone and inner city.

Chapter 3 reports the methodology used to explore church growth in urban poverty zones. Since very little existed in this field, the grounded theory method was used, and the procedures are explained in this chapter.

Chapter 4 relates the findings of the research including the data's interaction with predetermined categories and the development of new categories and subcategories

of data. Chapter 4 also includes story lines for each category, and a story line for the main category of community restoration. This story line encompasses the grounded theory.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions of the research including key insights, the grounded theory, implications related to church growth research and urban ministry research, applications for practice in urban poverty zones, and suggestions for further research.

Key Words: Urban Ministry, Church Growth, Poverty, Inner City, Grounded Theory, Community Restoration, Homogeneous Unit Principle, Receptivity Principle, Social Ministry.

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