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AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO
THE DECLINE OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES
IN A METROPOLITAN CENTER

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Ira Deal Jones, Jr.

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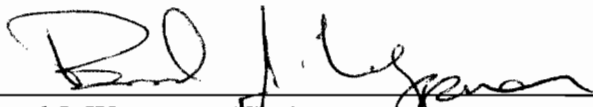
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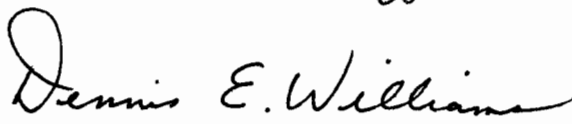
**AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO
THE DECLINE OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES
IN A METROPOLITAN CENTER**

Ira Deal Jones, Jr.

Read and Approved by:



Brad J. Waggoner (Chairperson)



Dennis E. Williams

Date May 14, 2004

**THESES Ed.D. .J717a
0199701833188**

Dedicated to
Andrea DuBois Jones,
my wife and life companion

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PREFACE

Though this work bears my name, I could not have completed this task without the help and support of many others. Dean Brad Waggoner, my supervising professor, challenged me to think critically and accurately and led me to create a professional research document that has validity today. Dean Dennis Williams, Interim Associate Dean Hal Pettegrew, and Professor Mark Simpson likewise provided valuable insights and continual encouragement.

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And finally, I am amazed at the grace of God. He has called me and sustained me as His child. He loves me and He alone is my God.

Ira D. Jones Jr.

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2004

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH CONCERN

Jesus revealed His plan for the church to His disciples. It would be an earthly church based on faith.

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.” (Matt 16:15-23 All Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Update Version)

Jesus’ established church is to be strong enough that even the gates of Hades will not be able to overpower it. This denotes that even though the church is strong, it is still a part of the world and is still subject to earthly pressures. It also shows that Satan will try to destroy it and many churches will suffer hardship and losses because of the pressures Satan will impress on them, but Satan will not destroy the church.

Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus met with His disciples in Galilee and gave them what we now call the Great Commission, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20). “The commission is the capstone of the Savior’s earthly teaching ministry. It is His ultimate command to evangelize the world, His mandate to His disciples and to every believer” (Mims 2001, 19). Mims summarizes:

The early Christians went from city to city and country to country in the face of intense oppression and difficulty, doing what their Lord had commanded. Their record of going where no one had gone with the message of redemption has yet to be matched. They saw the lost redeemed. They baptized them, taught them, and shared with them the Lord's incredible promise that He would be with them until the end of the world. Because of these early believers' efforts and God's power, the gospel spread swiftly throughout the known world and has not ceased going to this very day. The Great Commission has been the driving force of missions and evangelism for believers and churches in every generation since New Testament times. It continues to be the driving force for missions and evangelism and shall ever remain so. (Mims 2001, 19)

Today the church is still strong. Yet it is not without problems. Throughout history there have been times when the church became lukewarm. The Word of God was not preached with such fervor as it once was. Today in America we are seeing many churches fail to carry out the Great Commission.

Introduction to Research Problem

“An unprecedented period in the life of the North American church began in the mid-1960s. For the first time since records allow us to recall, many major denominations actually stopped growing in membership and began to decline, and the growth rate of most others slowed considerably” (Hoge and Roozen 1979, 17). Many churches are in decline or are dying. Some have already closed their doors. The problem is not limited to any single denomination or a particular part of the country, but all denominations throughout the United States are seeing signs of church decline. This trend has continued. In the decade of the 1990s the high attendance of churches was reached in 1992 when “the median number of adults attending worship services in a typical week was 102. The current norm measured in 2000 was 90 people – this signifies a 12% drop during a period when the population itself grew by about 9%” (Barna 2000, 3).

A few churches have continued to grow, especially new churches started in population growth areas, but the growth is minimal in comparison to the population growth. Barna Research Group found, “The nation is now roughly divided in thirds – the unchurched, the minimally churched, and the consistently churched” (Barna 2000, 3). He found, “While we have a few thousand large and growing churches dotting the map, many more Protestant churches and denominations have chosen to pursue business as usual as if they were ministering in the context faced by their grandfathers” (Barna 1993, 12). Herrington, Bonem and Furr say:

The state of Christianity in America provides ample evidence that we “keep doing what we’ve been doing.” As churches and denominations rode the baby boom wave of growth and prosperity in the 1950s and 1960s, we became smugly confident that we “had all the answers.” In the 1970s, we were too busy running our successful programs to see the shifts in our society and to understand their deep implications. When growth tapered off and decline set in, we were convinced that it was a temporary problem. Or we blamed any number of uncontrollable, external factors while clinging to our “tried-and-true” ways.” (Herrington, Bonem and Furr, 2000, ix-x).

“Mainline Protestant churches have lost millions of members over the past three decades, and growth at evangelical Protestant churches has not been nearly large enough to offset those losses” (Wall 1996, 843). Southern Baptists in Texas are reporting 51% of their churches experiencing decline. This is compared to 38% experiencing growth or growth spurts and 12% percent being plateaued or having erratic changes (Price 2003, 1). “Approximately two-thirds of the Protestant congregations in America have long-term attendance trends that are either flat or declining” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, x).

One of the key factors of measuring church decline is baptism. Statistics show, “With the exception of the Southern Baptists, baptisms have declined for all the denominations in the twenty-five-year period. The declines have been especially dramatic

since 1960 and, in general, are proportionately larger than the declines in church membership” (Doyle and Kelly 1979, 149-50). In 1979 Southern Baptists were reporting, “There has been no major increase in the ‘number of baptisms’ since 1950. Although there has been some yearly variation, in the years 1950-77 baptisms have remained on a plateau” (Jones 1979, 166). This trend appears to have continued today.

Findings show, “The drop in baptisms commenced earlier than the drop in church membership, suggesting a relationship between the changing rate of baptisms and changes in church membership in these denominations” (Doyle and Kelly 1979, 149-50). Southern Baptists found, “This stagnation in the number of yearly baptisms has resulted in the slow down of the membership growth of the Southern Baptist Convention” (Jones 1979, 166).

George Sweeney identifies five factors, which caused an upsurge of church membership after World War II and into the 1950s.

(1) The ‘higher regard for religion,’ symbolized by the simple faith of President Dwight D. Eisenhower and piety along the Potomac; (2) the ‘national situation,’ in which religion was considered essential for the country’s survival and triumph in the struggle against Communism; (3) the ‘personal situation,’ in a turn from materialism as a rival religion because it had ceased to satisfy; (4) the ‘cultural factors,’ since membership in a church was, to a degree, still a sign of upward movement on the social scale; and (5) because of simpler personal factors, more conscious than the zeitgeist of the period. (1995 Smylie, 203)

Kinnaman states, “The peak in church attendance in 1991 probably had much to do with the Persian Gulf War, the breakdown of the Soviet Union, and economic recession. Those types of issues formed a climate conducive to church attendance” (Wall 1996, 843).

America’s society is stable today. We have no long lasting wars or threats of wars. There is an increase in the threat of terrorism. The destruction of the Twin Towers

in New York City on September 11, 2001, appeared to have caused a slight upsurge in church attendance, but that did not have a lasting effect.

Bookshelves and libraries are filled with books on church growth. The majority of these books deal with what happened to an individual church or on internal changes that a church can make such as program adjustments, worship style changes and staff reorganizations (2001 Stovall, 4). Research demonstrates that even with the countless books written, churches across the nation are still in decline. What is needed is to go back to the basics and discover the problems, the factors causing church decline. Through a diagnosis of these factors leading to church decline, models of church growth that will address the real problems facing churches today can be established.

This study is in many ways about healthy and productive church growth. The end result is to help churches discover the reasons for church decline so they can again become healthy, growing, and ministering churches in their communities. Donald McGavran, considered the father of the church growth movement, says, “Anyone who would comprehend the growth of Christian churches must see it primarily as faithfulness to God. God desires it. The Christian, like his master, is sent to seek and to save the lost” (McGavran 1970, 15). The mission of the church is to be “an enterprise devoted to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and to persuading men to become His disciples and dependent members of His Church” (McGavran 1970, 34).

Factors Relating to the Decline of Churches

Many factors can be cited for the decline in churches. This researcher studied churches in a metropolitan center. The study focused on biblical and theological foundations, leadership and organizational styles, cultural influences, and demographic

characteristics of the churches. It is to be understood that although there are four distinct areas of study they are co-related. Studying these areas helped to determine factors leading to church decline.

Biblical and Theological Foundations

Biblical and theological foundations are rooted in the Bible. They begin with the factors that affected the Israelites in their decline as a nation, as recorded in the Old Testament, and continue with factors that affected the first century church, as recorded in the New Testament.

In the Old and New Testaments God repeatedly told His people to act a certain way, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut 6:4-5). Unfortunately, throughout the ages God's people have time and time again rebelled against His commandments. The New Testament is full of examples of apostasies and heresies taught in the churches. Those churches denied the deity of Christ and caused men to turn away from God in rebellion. In Revelation 2 and 3, there are several examples of churches that have turned toward other things and various heresies. They are accused of leaving their first love, holding the doctrine of Balaam, eating things sacrificed to idols, committing sexual immoralities, being spiritually dead, and being lukewarm.

Drane's studies show "New Age and Gnosticism are closely related" (Drane 2000, 40). According to him, the New Age movement can be called a new philosophy in an old wine skin (Drane 2000, 40). These and other non-biblical doctrines have emerged into our society. The questions are: Have these doctrines and teachings infiltrated our

churches or are basic biblical and theological doctrines still being taught and practiced?

How many apostasies and heresies are present in our churches today? And, are there any relationships between false doctrinal teachings and church growth and decline?

This study investigates whether there were any parallelisms between growing, plateaued, and declining churches in relationship to biblical and theological factors.

Leadership and Organizational Styles

Leadership and organizational styles are factors that men have used to help lead and organize the church. Most of these are biblically based factors and have been tried and proven through church growth studies. Peter Wagner says, “The research paradigm within which the church growth movement operates is frankly task-oriented. It is deeply rooted in theological traditions, but it does not study theology for theology’s sake. Theology is seen as a tool, and a necessary one at that, for the development of good church health” (Wagner 1979, 271).

Much has been written in the area of using leadership and organization to grow a church. John Maxwell states, “The higher you want to climb, the more you need leadership” (Maxwell 1998, 6). Church growth books are mainly about leadership and organization in the church. Basically, the characteristics of the leader and the organizational structure will dictate how much the church will grow or decline. This study looked at these characteristics to see whether there were any similarities between growing, plateaued and declining churches in relationship to leadership and organizational factors.

Cultural Influences

Cultural influences are factors, both internal and external, that affect the church. Internal factors deal with the curricula of the church. These can be both national and local institutional influences placed on the church. Many denominations determine specific curricula for their churches. These are usually very difficult to change because a hierarchical governing body dictates them. Local internal cultural factors can be changed. An autonomous church body determines these curricula from within.

External cultural influences are factors that have been brought to the church through society. They are made up of an artificial environment which man superimposes on the people and the church. External cultural factors are local contextual factors. These factors cannot normally be changed. There are three possible responses a church can have to external cultural influences. The church could say no to these cultural influences and continue to minister as the church has always ministered. The church could accept them as realities of the community and make adaptation to their own culture by bringing the local culture into the church. Or, it could decide to minister within the culture but keep the church's culture separate from the community's.

The intent of this study was to look at the cultural factors, both internal and external, to see if they affected the church. A comparison was made between growing, plateaued, and declining churches to see what cultural factors had an influence on church growth and decline.

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics are factors related to the demographics of the church and to the society surrounding it. Demographics are defined as "the cumulative

personal background characteristics of a population” (Barna 2001, 29). Demographic church factors are considered local contextual factors because the church has little or no control over them. Many demographic factors can lead to church decline: changing and disintegrating communities, a decline or stabilization in population growth in the community, and racial diversity in the community are a few. Factors can change overnight or take years to change. Churches that do not keep abreast of these changes can find themselves in decline.

Research has found church decline occurs when demographics in the community change and the church does not change with them. Demographics are closely related to cultural factors because as demographics change so does the culture. Failure to make the proper adaptations can cause the church to decline or even die.

This study looked at the demographic factors surrounding the church and the community to see what effect demographics had on church growth and decline.

The Need for this Current Study

Research has been conducted on church decline, but most of these studies were conducted in the 1960s and 1970s. In recent years studies focused on church growth rather than decline. In 1982 Kirk Hadaway published “Church Growth (and Decline) in a Southern City” (Hadaway, 1982). His study mainly dealt with population growth and decline and how it affected church growth and decline. His conclusion was that new churches tend to grow faster than older ones. The Institute for Natural Church Development studied 1000 churches in thirty-two countries from 1994 through 1996 and published, “Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches” (Schwarz 1998). Their studies found eight quality characteristics in

growing churches. Teresa Stovall studied Southern Baptist churches in Texas in 2001 and wrote her dissertation, “A Study of the Differences Between Growing, Declining, Plateaued and Erratic Growth Southern Baptist Churches in the State of Texas” (Stovall 2001). Her conclusion was that worship style, resident members, baptisms, and other additions were significantly different between the different classifications of churches.

This study on church decline in a metropolitan center enhances current understanding of the factors related to church decline. Through this study pastors and other researchers may gain new insight into the problems faced in the local church. New models of church growth that will address these findings can now be developed.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic factors that contribute to the decline of churches in a metropolitan center.

Delimitations of the Study

Church decline is prevalent in churches across the United States. Both rural and urban churches have experienced it. There are many cultural and demographic differences between churches located in rural communities, small towns, and metropolitan communities. There are differences between churches in different metropolitan centers throughout the United States. The research was delimited to Protestant churches in the metropolitan center of Houston, Texas.

Research Questions

1. What biblical and theological factors have led to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?

2. What leadership and organizational factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
3. What cultural factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
4. What demographic factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
5. What differences are there between declining churches in comparison to growing and plateaued churches in a metropolitan center?

Terminology

Baby Boomers. The generation of people that were born between 1946 and 1964.

Biblical and theological concerns. Concerns founded on biblical doctrine.

Church growth study. The study which investigates the nature, expansion, planting, multiplication, function, and health of Christian churches. (Wagner 1989, 25)

Church Growth Specialists. Specialists who have given their life to the study and teaching of church growth.

Culture. An artificial, second environment, which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical process and values. (Niebuhr 1951, 32)

Cultural concerns. Concerns both internal and external that affect the church.

Contextualization. The adaptation of the community's culture into the local church.

Demographic concerns. Concerns related to the demographics of the church and to the society surrounding it.

Declining Church. A Church that has declined more than ten percent in attendance in the past five years.

Established church. A church that has been chartered, constituted, incorporated, etc.

External cultural factors. Influential factors that have been brought into the church through society. These are made up of the artificial environment which man superimposes on the people and the church.

Growing Church. A church that has grown more than ten percent in attendance in the past five years.

Internal cultural factors. Factors relating to the curricula of the church. These can be both national and local institutional influences placed on the church.

Leadership and organizational concerns. Concerns used to lead and organize the church.

Local contextual factors. Factors relating to the social trends in the local community and neighborhood surrounding the church. (Wagner 1996, 12)

Local institutional factors. Factors relating to the conditions that exist within the leadership and membership of the local church. (Wagner 1996, 12)

National contextual factors. Factors relating to the national trends in population, attitudes, values, and social conditions. (Wagner 1996, 12)

National institutional factors. Factors relating to the policies determined on the denominational level concerning priorities of ministry, theological stance, church polity, and other areas that to one degree or another affect all the churches in the denomination. (Wagner 1996, 12)

Plateaued Church. A church that has neither grown nor declined more than ten percent in attendance in the past five years.

Syncretism. “The worship of one deity with the ritual and theology which belong to another, the mixing of two religions, and the nominal adherence to the one with the practical maintenance of the other.” (Robinson 1930, 43)

Procedural Overview

The population was the Protestant churches in the metropolitan center of Houston, Texas. The sampling was made up of ten major denominations with a total population of 842 churches. The sampling was made up of all pastors of major denominations who had e-mail addresses, and half of the pastors of major denominations without e-mail addresses available. The random sampling used for mailing addresses was every other church listed by major denominations in alphabetical order.

E-mail addresses were received from the director of churches of the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations. Other e-mail addresses and mailing addresses were acquired through the Internet. The main source of receiving mailing addresses and calculating the number of churches was www.cityofhouston.org. As a courtesy to the participating churches, a summary of the results of the study was sent to them.

An Internet-based Likert response scale survey was formulated using the biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic factors found in the precedent literature. Response statements were scrambled. Two forms of the survey were created. The first survey was created using Quask Form Artist by Quask AG. and was posted on the Internet at www.irajonesministries.com/churchsurvey.htm. The second form was created using Microsoft Word and was mailed out along with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

All information gathered was confidential. Each participating church was assigned a number. Pastors and church names do not appear in the study.

Pastors receiving their survey through the Internet received three communications from the researcher. The first two were sent to all participants. After the results were received from the second communication, a telephone call was made to all pastors who had not yet participated in the survey. The pastors were contacted personally or a voicemail message asking them to participate was left. A third communication was sent to them. Surveys were mailed out only once to the churches of the five denominations that did not have adequate e-mail addresses: Assembly of God, Church of God, Church of Christ, Episcopal, and Christian.

Information was entered into a worksheet using Microsoft Excel. Data was sorted into three categories: growing, plateaued, and declining churches. Means, mode, median, and standard deviation scores were tallied from the responses. The scores were compared using the three categories of churches. Through careful evaluation of the information, the conclusion was formulated.

Research Assumptions

The assumptions of the study were as follows:

1. The previous studies that had been conducted are sufficient resources of information for the formulation of the Internet Likert response scale survey.
2. E-mail addresses from the denominations or from the Internet of the churches in the metropolitan center of Houston and addresses secured from the Internet were a fair representation of Protestant churches in Houston, Texas.
3. Pastors had responded to the best of their ability and had been honest in their evaluation of the churches in which they serve.
4. The factors, biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic, while not exhaustive, provided an adequate assessment of the reasons for church decline.

5. The major denominations, while not exhaustive of all Protestant churches in Houston, provided an adequate assessment of Protestant churches in the Houston metropolitan center.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENT LITERATURE

The content in this chapter is divided into five areas: church growth specialists, biblical and theological review, leadership and organizational review, cultural review, and demographic review.

Church Growth Specialists

Throughout the existence of the church various persons have made an impact on the growth of the church. The North American Society for Church Growth defined church growth study as, “That discipline which investigates the nature, expansion, planting, multiplication, function, and health of Christian churches as they relate to the effective implementation of God’s commission to ‘make disciples of all people’ (Matt. 28:18-20)” (Wagner 1989, 25).

Specialists are those who have given their life to the study and teaching of church growth. This list of church growth specialists is not exhaustive. Many have written and added much to the field. The specialists were chosen because they are recognized as writers in the field of church growth.

Martin Luther

Luther preceded the modern church growth movement. His emphasis was intended to change the biblical and theological doctrine of the church. His stance, known

as the Reformation, was the beginning of the Protestant church. It caused the greatest growth of the church since its formation in the first century. This reform came about through his sermons, teaching, and writings.

Luther was born on November 10, 1483. In September 1506, he professed the irrevocable vows of chastity, obedience and poverty. He became a priest. “His entire religious background had stressed Christ as the Judge, not the Savior, of the world” (Dannenfeldt 1970, 52). His great awakening to the Scriptures occurred around 1514.

He was studying the meaning of Romans 1:17. “For therein [in the Gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith,” that Luther experienced his historic discovery. He felt as though he “had entered Paradise through widely opened doors” when he suddenly realized that God loves sinners and judges the believer in mercy, acquitting him from his sin and imputing to him by pure grace the righteousness of Christ. That is, God justifies the believer for Christ’s sake and by faith alone. Man’s moral deeds play no role in it. Faith, that is, trust in God, is the “receiving hand” which enables man to accept God’s mercy; it is the instrument of his justification. Although unacceptable in himself, he is now “righteous” in God’s sight and saved. Faith simultaneously leads the Christian to a life of gratitude for God’s unmerited love. (Dannenfeldt 1970, 32-33)

He came to understand that a simple layman armed with Scripture is to be believed above a pope or a cardinal without it and that every Christian was a member of the “priesthood of believers.” “Baptism was really a continual process of ‘the drowning of the old man’ and the coming forth of the ‘new man’ in Christ throughout his life. . . . In the Lord’s Supper, Luther rejected the late medieval doctrine of transubstantiation whereby the substance of the bread and wine were taught to be transformed into the body and blood of Christ” (Dannenfeldt 1970, 38).

Luther’s contribution to church growth was his discovery and application of biblical principles to the church. He caused others to examine the scripture for

themselves, and revival spread throughout Europe. He is considered the father of the Protestant church.

Donald A. McGavran

McGavran is considered as the father of the Church Growth Movement that started in 1955 with the publication of “The Bridges of God.” He was founding dean of Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Missions. McGavran believes that church growth is a principle of universal truth which, “when properly interpreted and applied, contributes significantly to the growth of the churches and denominations. It is a truth of God which leads His church to spread His Good News, plant church after church, and increase His Body” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 15).

He believes that church growth should be built respecting biblical principles. He says, “The relationships between biblical principles and church growth tie church growth thinking firmly to the Bible” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 24). McGavran lists seven biblical principles.

Respect Biblical Principles

1. Biblical principles mean accepting the Bible as the final authority. “Scripture is the major source for Church Growth thinking. The New Testament is a series of Church Growth documents. The Gospels, the Books of Acts, and the Epistles were written by missionaries for missionaries. They were written by Church Growth people to Church Growth people to help the church grow” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 24).
2. Biblical principles see people outside Christ as lost. “This is the basic reason Christians press forward with the growth and multiplication of churches. We remind ourselves constantly that people without Jesus Christ are really lost” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 26).
3. Biblical principles mean affirming that God’s love and concern is for all people. “Christians need to be certain that their affections are not narrowly limited to one small part of mankind but extend to all men and women” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 27).

4. Biblical principles mean believing that Christ is the only way. "The Good News is that God has provided one way, a beautiful way, the way of his Son, the way of the cross, the way through the tomb to joyful resurrection. This one way is "whosoever believes on the Son will have everlasting life" (McGavran and Arn 1977, 28).
5. Biblical principles mean obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit commands; it is up to us to obey! . . . Such obedience is a major factor in the growth of any church" (McGavran and Arn 1977, 28-29).
6. Biblical principles mean "praying intelligently and specifically for the growth of the church" (McGavran and Arn 1977, 29).
7. Biblical principles mean seeing the church as the Body of Christ. "The church is absolutely essential. It is not just one organization among many through which God works. It is the Body of Christ" (McGavran and Arn 1977, 30).

Churches grow as they yield themselves to God's unswerving purpose. "The purpose of God, shared by His servants, is the driving force behind Church Growth" (McGavran and Arn 1977, 35).

Churches Grow as They Structure for Growth

Church growth should be structured. It occurs as the church plans and organizes for growth. He gives 10 steps to structure for growth.

1. Build a conscience concerning growth. "Growth conscience is a conviction that permeates the Body of Christ that God's will is for growth, that a church has the opportunity, and responsibility to carry out God's will regarding those who have yet to believe, and that programs and activities should serve this end" (McGavran and Arn 1977, 102).
2. Identify needs and opportunities. "The time-honored business slogan 'Find a need and fill it' has meaning for the church. In finding needs, one discovers opportunities" (McGavran and Arn 1977, 104).
3. Establish faith goals. "There is spiritual power in a faith goal. A 'leap of faith' develops dynamic spiritual power in an individual and a congregation. To 'risk' seems essential for growth" (McGavran and Arn 1977, 105).
4. Involve laymen and train them. "If a church is serious about the Great Commission, the involvement of laity is of utmost importance. The growth of each church is uniquely dependent on its laity" (McGavran and Arn 1977, 108). "Our objective

must be very clear. We are training the laity to make churches grow” (McGavran and Hunter 1980, 73).

5. Rightly discern the Body. “There is no doubt the Body rightly understood, reverently discerned, and scientifically described assists Christian leaders in being better stewards of the grace of God and effective communicators of the gospel of Christ” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 110).
6. Rightly discern the community. “Discerning the community involves knowledge of population growth or decline, kinds of housing, age of housing, changes occurring in the community, and the ages, racial characteristics, ethnic distinctives, family structures, family incomes, employment characteristics, and educational backgrounds of the people” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 110).
7. Develop effective strategy. “An effective strategy is a strategy that works. It results in people receiving Christ and becoming part of His Body” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 111).
8. Invest resources in growth. “By resources we mean time, talent, and treasure. A church’s use of time correlates significantly with its pattern of growth” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 112).
9. Give priority to effective evangelism. “An evangelism that counts itself imperfect or incomplete until it brings people to Christ and into His church where they are integrated into the congregation is effective evangelism” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 113-14).
10. Use spiritual resources. “God’s work should be done in God’s way. Spiritual resources are an indispensable part of the mix – praying, witnessing, preaching, teaching, humble reliance on the Holy Spirit” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 114).

Conclusion

McGavran made churches look at themselves and evaluate their strategy for church growth. His strength as a church growth specialist was to set a foundation for others specialists to build on. His writings cover a wide range of subjects: biblical principles, evangelism, leadership and organization, and culture. His missionary background made him keenly aware of cultural differences between the church and the community. His writings reflect that missionary mindset of adapting to the needs of the community. He makes it obvious that the purpose of the church is to minister to the needs

of the people in the community using trained laypeople and through these ministries to evangelize the lost.

Dean Kelley

Dean Kelley wrote *Why Conservative Churches are Growing* in 1972. The book had an effect on church growth and decline studies. For decades, denominations and individuals tried to prove or disprove his theories. He states that the five major Protestant families, those he calls liberal, the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, the Lutheran Church in America, and the United Church of Christ, “show a significant decline in the latter half of the decade (1960-1970)” (Kelley 1972, 6). Others, which he calls conservatives, the Southern Baptist, the Assemblies of God, the Churches of God, the Pentecostal and Holiness groups, the Evangelicals, the Mormons, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Seventh-day Adventists, the Black Muslims and many smaller groups are “overflowing with vitality” (Kelley 1972, 21). Kelley gives twelve traits found in churches.

Traits of a “Strong” Religion

Kelley’s theory is that there are six basic traits of a “strong” religion. These traits would be present in growing churches and religious groups.

Commitment – “Willingness to sacrifice, a total response to a total demand, group solidarity, and total identification of individual’s goals with groups” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Discipline – “Willingness to obey the commands of leadership without question and willingness to suffer sanctions for infraction rather than leave the group” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Missionary Zeal – “Eagerness to tell the “good news” of one’s experience of salvation to others, refusal to be silenced, internal communications stylized and highly symbolic, and winsomeness” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Traits of Strictness – “Belief that ‘we have the truth and all others are in error,’ closed system of meaning and value which explains everything, and uncritical and unreflective attachment to a single set of values” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Conformity – “Intolerance of deviance or dissent, “shunning” of outcasts, shared stigmata of belonging, group confessions or criticism, and separatism” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Fanaticism – “Keep yourselves unspotted from the world and cloister” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Traits of Leniency in Religion

Kelley’s theory also includes six traits of leniency in religion. These traits would be present and prevail in churches and religious groups that are declining.

Relativism – “Belief that no one has a monopoly on truth; that all insights are partial, attachment to many values and to various modes of fulfillment, and a critical and circumspect outlook” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Diversity – “Appreciation of individual differences, no heresy trials; no excommunications; no humiliating group confessions or error, leadership is institutionalized, not charismatic” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Dialogue – “An exchange of differing insights and appreciative of outsiders rather than judgmental” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Luke-warmness – “You have some truth and I have some truth, why should either of us die for his portion?” There is “a reluctance to sacrifice all for any single set of values or area of fulfillment, and indecisiveness even when important values are at stake” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Individualism – “Unwillingness to give unquestioning obedience to anyone, individuality prized above conformity, undisciplined, and to leave the group rather than be inconvenienced by its demands” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Reserve – “Reluctance to expose one’s personal beliefs or to impose them on others, consequent decay of the missionary enterprise, and no effective sharing of conviction or spiritual insight with the group” (Kelley 1972, 84).

Kelley states, “The main hypothesis of this book is that social strength and leniency do not seem to go together” (Kelley 1972, 83). Conservative churches that are strong in items one through six are growing. Liberal churches that are strong in items seven through twelve are declining.

Criticism of Kelley’s Theory

Kelley’s theory was not based on research. It was strictly theoretical. Many studies were conducted to prove his assumptions. Some of these studies found his theory was flawed.

Bibby and Brinkerhoff studied Canadian Conservative and Mainline churches in 1973. Their study found:

Over 70 percent of the new members came from other evangelical churches, while nearly another 20 percent were the children of members. Less than 10 percent were proselytes or converts from outside the evangelical community, and even these were primarily recruited from other churches or became members through intermarriage. (Bibby and Brinkerhoff 1973, 273)

Bibby and Brinkerhoff conclude that it seems noteworthy that Kelley has not demonstrated that superior conservative church growth has involved substantial outreach beyond the conservative religious community. Significantly, they found that such 'growth' was primarily the result of member and offspring retention, rather than proselytism. Their conclusion suggests severe limitations to the applicability of Kelley's thesis: conservatives may simply do a better job of retaining their mobile members and children than do other groups. (Bibby 1978, 130)

Their studies conclude, "Neither the Conservatives nor the Mainliners are very successful in recruiting active followers from outside the Christian community" (Bibby 1978, 136).

In a study on trends in church membership and participation, Carroll concluded:

Contrary to what one might expect from Dean Kelley's theory of the growth of conservative churches, there is little evidence that growing local congregations are more conservative theologically than declining ones. It does not appear that the theological position of the congregation affects growth either positively or negatively. Rather what seem important, regardless of theological position, are the strength, clarity, warmth, and enthusiasm of the church leadership and program." (Carroll 1978, 80)

Kelley Revised

Kelley revised his hypothesis in 1978. He changed his list to two groups: Group A included win others to Christ, provide worship for members, provide religious instruction, provide ministerial services, and provide for sacraments. Group B included help the needy, support overseas missions, serve as social conscience of the community, provide fellowship activities, maintain facilities for congregation, support denomination, support minority groups, influence legislation, and build low-cost housing. He concluded, "Ecumenical churches are losing members, not because they are engaging in the B group of activities, but because they are muffling the A group. Non-ecumenical churches are flourishing because they are effective at the A group" (Kelley 1978, 170).

Conclusion

It appears that Kelley was not concerned with the biblical teachings of the church. His theory mainly dealt with religion in general. For him, the Mormon Church and the Jehovah Witnesses were the same as the Baptist and Assembly of God churches. His main concern was their conservative nature rather than their evangelistic thrust. His revised list of traits seems to better understand the church and its need to bring people to Christ. His strengths lie, not in his theory, but in the research others did to prove or disprove his theory.

Kirk Hadaway

In 1988 Kirk Hadaway compared “breakout churches” (churches which have grown rapidly after years on statistical plateaus) to churches that have remained plateaued. These are his findings:

Breakout Churches

1. Churches, which were dominated by the elderly, were less likely to experience breakout growth than those dominated by baby-boomer adults.
2. It is easier to reorient a small church toward growth than it is a large church.
3. There also seems to be something about a sense of optimism, high morale, and desire for growth that is characteristic of breakout churches.
4. Even though optimism and purpose were related in the study, they were sufficiently separate so that each added a distinct contribution to the discriminate function.
5. Belief that growth is possible was also strongly correlated with breakout growth and added to the discriminate function in a substantial way.
6. The evangelism scale was by far the most central to the discriminant function and contributed most substantially to its development.
7. Breakout churches tend to be goal-directed, with growth as a primary aim.
8. Sunday School was rated and was most central to the discriminant function and contributed to the function more substantially than did any other variable.
9. The spiritual emphasis on prayer and spiritual growth of members strongly correlated with breakout growth and contributed to the spiritual emphasis/renewal discriminant function to a greater extent than any other item in the set. (Hadaway 1991, 186)

In another study of Hadaway's on the impact of new church development on the Southern Baptist Convention he concluded, "New Churches not only add members when they come into a denomination, but they tend to grow faster than older churches. So the impact of new church development is cumulative" (Hadaway 1990, 376).

Conclusion

Hadaway's research mainly involved Southern Baptist churches. His research on breakout churches help declining and plateaued churches to evaluate their church's emphasis and attitudes. These studies seem to show that attitude plays an important role in church growth. When a church has a church growth consciousness and is organized for growth, the church appears to grow. Another conclusion of his research helps churches understand that churches in growing metropolitan centers are more apt to grow faster than churches in a non-growth area. This researcher believes that these are important factors of church growth, but there are many other factors to consider and that must be evaluated to understand church growth and decline.

C. Peter Wagner

Wagner was the Donald McGavran Professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary. He has authored various books and numerous other publications. In the area of church growth and decline he found various vital signs for a healthy church and other signs for a "diseased" church.

Vital Signs of a Healthy Church

Wagner lists seven vital signs of a healthy church:

Dynamic Pastoral Leadership – “A pastor who is a possibility thinker and whose dynamic leadership has been used to catalyze the entire church into action for growth” (Wagner 1976, 63). “The pastor must want the church to grow and must be willing to pay the price if the church is to grow” (Wagner 1979, 281). In his study he found that pastoral longevity plays a vital role in church growth (Wagner 1976, 67).

Mobilization of the Layperson – “Mobilized laypeople are a sign of good church health. The biblical teaching of the church as a body and every Christian functioning as one member or another of that body needs to be implemented for growth” (Wagner 1979, 281-82).

A Big Enough Church – “Almost any church is big enough to do something, but for many significant church functions a critical mass is required for the ministry to seem appropriate to the market it serves” (Wagner 1979, 282). A church can measure its efficiency in size by two measures: “(1) It must be large enough for the efficient functioning of its own philosophy of ministry; (2) it must be large enough to provide an adequate base for extension growth” (Wagner 1976, 107).

Structural Balance – “The three significant components of the infrastructure of a church are celebration (the membership group), the congregation (the fellowship group), and the cell (the spiritual kinship group). Although there are types of churches which provide exceptions, the rule is that the three structures need to be balanced for optimum church health” (Wagner 1979, 282).

One Homogeneous Unit – “A ‘homogeneous unit’ is simply a group of people who consider each other to be ‘our kind of people’” (Wagner 1976, 127). “Churches that have developed around the homogeneous unit principle are, in the main, healthier than

those that have mixed significant percentages of people from more than one group” (Wagner 1979, 282).

Efficient Evangelistic Methods – The objective of evangelism is to make disciples (Wagner 1976, 161). “No one evangelistic methodology is adaptable to all local situations. Each situation needs a tailor-made approach fitted specifically to its needs” (Wagner 1979, 283).

Properly Arranged Priorities – “The one acute human need that churches and only churches can meet is the desire to relate to the ultimate, to know God personally” (Wagner 1976, 174). “The most crucial area for arranging priorities in church growth seems to be the relationship between evangelism and social service in the outreach ministry of the church” (Wagner 1979, 283).

Church Growth Diseases

Wagner found nine church growth diseases:

Ethnikitis – Ethnikitis (author’s own word invention) is a disease produced by local contextual factors, in this case a changing community. “It has been called, among other things, ‘the changing church,’ ‘the church in a changing community,’ the transitional church’ and the ex-neighborhood church” (Wagner 1996, 25). Some call this a terminal disease, while others say that with certain changes the disease can be cured. Ethnikitis is a local contextual factor. “Because ethnikitis is caused by a local contextual factor, it is probably more helpful to focus attention on the changing community rather than the changing church” (Wagner 1996, 27). The scenario occurs when newcomers of a different race or nationality begin to move into the community. Church members move out of the community but continue to attend the church. “The result is a church that is

virtually an island of one kind of people, in the midst of a community of another kind of people, and very little communication between the two” (Wagner 1996, 28). The best way to combat the problem is by “making a clean transition by changing the existing church into a church more relevant to the new community” (Wagner 1996, 37).

Ghost Town Disease – “The underlying cause of ghost town disease is a disintegrating community” (Wagner 1996, 44). It is caused when the older generation leaves and no one moves in. Normally it happens in rural areas. This disease more than any other is terminal. It is a local contextual factor.

People-blindness – “People-blindness is the malady that prevents us from seeing the important cultural differences that exist between groups of people living in geographical proximity to one another – differences that tend to create barriers to the acceptance of our message” (Wagner 1996, 60). There is a problem with linguistics in the transmission of the gospel and there is a problem assimilating the converts into the culture of the church. This is a local institutional factor that has a cure. The cure is “some rethinking to accept a position of respecting different cultural groups for what they are, and of affirming their desire, if and when it is present, to maintain their own cultural identity and integrity” (Wagner 1996, 71).

Hyper-cooperativism – Church cooperation with other churches and denominations is good. Hyper-cooperativism “occurs when an attempt is made to use cooperation for unwise purposes. It is frequently not just neutral, but in certain circumstances it can become counterproductive” (Wagner 1996, 74). “Hyper-cooperativism frequently reduces evangelistic effectiveness” (Wagner 1996, 75).

Koinonitis – “Like hyper-cooperativism, koinonitis is a church disease caused by too much of a good thing” (Wagner 1996, 89). The biblical concept of koinonia

(fellowship) is essential and healthy for church growth. The lack of fellowship will also cause a church not to grow. “Koinonia can easily be overdone until it becomes not just good Christian fellowship, but fellowship inflammation. As a consequence, the whole organism suffers, and the church cannot grow as it should” (Wagner 1996, 91). The problem is that the church turns inward rather than meeting the needs of the community. The second problem of koinonitis is called fellowship saturation. It “focuses on the number of people who relate to each other” (Wagner 1996, 100). Research has found that most people will know forty to sixty people in the church by their first name. Eighty persons is the limit. Groups that are saturated will stop growing and turn inward. “The cure for koinonitis is straightforward and simple: divide” (Wagner 1996, 102). Divide large groups into smaller groups. This will allow the new groups to grow to their maximum potential.

Sociological Strangulation – Sociological strangulation is the only disease on the list specific to growing churches. It occurs when the volume of people flow exceeds the ability of the facilities to handle it. The two areas most affected are the sanctuary and parking lot. Christian education facilities are also very important. “Churches that are targeting young suburban married couples will not grow well without adequate quality nursery facilities” (Wagner 1996, 107). Multiple services, temporary space, and off campus parking can help alleviate the problem of sociological strangulation.

Arrested Spiritual Development – When church members fail to mature in their spiritual life, church growth will ordinarily suffer. It “is a problem connected with internal growth, sometimes referred to as ‘quality growth’” (Wagner 1996, 119). It is a disease that is easily cured. The cure does not happen overnight. It will take years of good strong pastoral teaching and leadership.

Saint John's Syndrome – Saint John's syndrome is named after the person who discovered it. The churches were about forty years old when John perceived them as having left their first love. They were second-generation churches that had become nominal or "lukewarm" (Wagner 1979, 281-86). "The underlying problem of St. John's syndrome is Christian nominality. When Christians become Christians in name only, when they feel that their faith is only routine, when church involvement is largely going through the motions, and when belonging to church is nothing more than a family tradition and a social nicety" (Wagner 1996, 135). The disease "can be prevented or cured by steady conversion growth. Biological growth alone will tend to encourage St. John's Syndrome. Transfer growth may or may not help, depending on the kind of people who are transferring in the church" (Wagner 1996, 147).

Hypopneumia – Hypopneumia "is a church disease caused by a subnormal level of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of the church" (Wagner 1996, 152). The cure is to receive more of the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the church. "When the Holy Spirit comes to individuals and to the congregation as a whole, the fruit of the Spirit becomes evident in lives and the power of the Holy Spirit opens unlimited horizons for bringing new people to Christ, for the church to grow, and for the love of God to spread throughout the community" (Wagner 1996, 162).

Criticism of Wagner

Jackson Carroll criticized Wagner's idea of "one homogeneous unit." He stated, "Such advice, while sociologically sound, is troubling theologically and ethically. It smacks of exclusiveness, segregation, and captivity to a particular cultural style" (Carroll 1978, 79).

Conclusion

This research found two areas of concern in Wagner's theory. First, this researcher agrees with Jackson Carroll that the idea of "one homogeneous unit" is not biblically sound. Sociologists believe that by the year 2056 the United States American population will be **non-European** and **non-white** (Rhodes 1998, 12). Today's society in a metropolitan center is heterogeneous and a church needs to reach all of the constituents in a community. Second, he speaks about the need of the church being "big enough" in order to grow. This is contrary to what Jesus said, "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst" (Matt 18:20). All churches are big enough to do some kind of ministry. It only takes one person to proclaim the gospel. This researcher believes vision is more important than size. Size is not a factor in the kingdom of God.

George Barna

George Barna of the Barna Research Group has done extensive studies in church growth and decline. His results are published in many different publications and books. He has found that there is not one single factor that could be blamed for church decline. Most churches were suffering from two or more harmful conditions.

Symptoms of Church Decline

Barna lists eight symptoms that a church should watch that could cause decline.

Demographic Changes – "Every year almost one-fifth of the nation's population moves. Nearly half of our population growth is attributed to immigration" (Barna 1993, 33).

Inadequate leadership – “Churches that declined found themselves with a pastor who failed to provide effective leadership. . . . In some of the churches studied, the problem was that the pastor never was a true visionary leader nor was he capable of becoming one” (Barna 1993, 34).

Poor management – “Many churches floundered because they had ineffective organization and operational management”(Barna 1993, 35).

Old blood – “It is difficult to build a thriving, vibrant church in which young adults and children are not a significant part of the mix. . . . The church that either ignores its failure to integrate new people into the mainstream of the ministry, or proves incapable of attracting young people, usually suffer serious consequences (Barna 1993, 36).

Building Campaigns – Building campaigns can “shatter the tranquility and emotional balance of the body. . . . Building program often takes years to complete, the shift of focus from a ministry purpose to a non-person goal erodes the heart of the congregation” (Barna 1993, 36).

Ingrown Family – “Declining churches generally focus inward rather than outward. The ministry that takes place rarely reaches beyond those people who are faithful participants within the church” (Barna 1993, 36).

Resistance to Change – “Change is uncomfortable for all people because it means a departure from what is familiar and comfortable to embrace that which is unknown and risky. Declining churches often enter their tailspin, however, because they lack vision, leadership and a commitment to remaining relevant to their ministry context” (Barna 1993, 37).

Spiritual Health – “In declining churches, you find a lack of passion for ministry. Ministry becomes a job or a series of routine activities that are to be performed at the prescribed time by the usual cast of characters like a Broadway play. The people lose the sense of urgency about the calling to serve Christ” (Barna 1993, 38).

Pastoral Longevity

The group found, “The typical pastor has his or her greatest ministry impact at a church in years five through fourteen of their pastorate. Unfortunately, the average pastor lasts only five years at a church, thereby forfeiting the fruit of his or her investment in the church he or she has pastored” (Barna 2002, 119).

Evangelism

Another problem facing the church is in the area of evangelism. Barna Research Group found, “Christians acknowledge the importance of evangelism but have no heart or stomach for the process. In other words, millions of Christian adults affirm the importance of evangelism and want to see it done – by someone else (Barna 2002, 37). They found that churches are not evangelizing youth and adults:

Based on a nationwide representative sampling of more than 4,200 young people and adults, the survey data show that people from ages 5 through 13 have a 32% probability of accepting Christ as their Savior. Young people from the age of 14 through 18 have just a 4% likelihood of doing so, while adults, (ages 19 through death) have only a 6% probability of making that choice. (Barna 1999, 1)

Discipleship

They also found, “ Only one out of every six people who attend a Christian church is being disciplined” (Barna 2000, 4). This is understandable when they also found “that believers are rarely distinguishable in their thoughts, words or deeds from those who have no relationship with Christ” (Barna 1999, 7).

Leadership

A study on senior pastors demonstrated:

Barely 4% of Protestant senior pastors listed the need to enhance or to better facilitate worship as a top priority in their churches. Fewer than 5% of all senior pastors can identify the unique vision that God has for the church they pastor. Only 2% listed personal or lay leadership development, vision clarification and communication, or strategic development of the ministry as top ministry priorities. Less than 1% of America's senior pastors list better teaching, the provision of worldview-based teaching, or the development of a life in which faith and behavior are integrated as a top priority for their church. (Barna 1999, 6-7)

Biblical Worldview

Barna's most recent study dealt with a biblical worldview. He has come up with six essential beliefs a church should have to have a biblical worldview.

1. God is the all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the universe who still rules that universe today.
2. When Jesus Christ was on earth He lived a sinless life.
3. Satan is not just a symbol of evil but is a real, living entity.
4. A person cannot earn his or her eternal salvation by being good or doing good things for other people; that salvation is the free gift of God. Every person who believes in Jesus Christ has a personal responsibility to share his or her faith in Him with other people who believe differently.
5. The Bible is totally accurate in all that it teaches. (Barna 2003b, 38)

Conclusion

Barna has done widespread research on numerous areas of church growth and decline. His research on symptoms of church decline was based on churches that had turned around. They were growing, then declined, and then grew again. It was based on 30 churches across the United States. These symptoms are worth testing again to see if they are symptoms affecting churches in a metropolitan center.

Thom S. Rainer

Rainer is dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has written various books on church growth.

Characteristics of Growing Churches

In his studies and research he found various characteristics of growing churches.

Prayer – He calls it, “The power behind the principles” (Rainer 1993, 175). “Prayer must be the means by which we see God’s vision for our churches, and it must also be one of the principal weapons in the warfare against those powers that would impede the growth of the church” (Rainer 1993, 179). “Though the forms of prayer ministries vary, the leaders of these evangelistic churches stress that their personal prayer lives and the prayer ministries of the church are inevitably tied to the winning of souls to Christ” (Rainer 1996, 15).

Pastoral Leadership – Pastoral leadership “is a major factor in the church growth process” (Rainer 1993, 185). A key factor of his leadership is his vision. Rainer found, “A visionary pastor is a major contributor to the growth of a church” (Rainer 1993, 193). Another factor influencing church growth is the tenure of the pastor. Rainer found the average tenure of a pastor was 3.8 years. “But the average tenure of an unchurched-reaching pastor is 11.8 years” (Rainer 2001, 146).

Lay Ministry – “One of the most exciting principles of church growth is unleashing laity to do the work of ministry” (Rainer 1993, 203). In a survey, when asked “What keeps you active in the church?” the response was 62% said that ministry

involvement kept them in the church (Rainer 2001, 122-23). A key factor of unleashing the laity is the need to educate and equip them for their ministry.

Church Planting – New churches grow faster than older ones. Rainer found, “New churches have both a higher growth rate and a higher conversion growth rate” (Rainer 1993, 205-06).

Evangelism – The goal of evangelism is to evangelize new converts that becomes disciples and active in the church. Rainer found that evangelism programs, like Evangelism Explosion, have their best results “with lost people who already had relationships with people in the church” (Rainer 1993, 216). He found ministering through small groups, meeting the unchurched time schedule, having ministries that make a difference, and training for evangelism to be key factors for evangelistic churches (Rainer 1993, 221-22). He also found, “Relationship evangelism must eventually become confrontation evangelism” (Rainer 1996, 121). A survey showed that 53% of the people accept Christ because someone shared with that person how to become a Christian (Rainer 2001, 43).

Worship – “Worship services are increasingly becoming the entry point for the unchurched into churches” (Rainer 1993, 225). Growing churches are making worship culturally relevant to the society. Central to the worship service is the preaching from the pulpit. “The leaders of the evangelistic churches told us that preaching is one of the most effective means of reaching people for Christ” (Rainer 1996, 14). In a study of types of preaching, it was found that 73.6% preferred expository/textual preaching (Rainer 1996, 56) and 97% said that their pastor and his preaching played a part in coming to the church (Rainer 2001, 55). Another factor important in worship is the friendliness of the

congregants. Research shows 90% of unchurched people say that this was a factor in returning to the church (Rainer 2001, 93).

Planning and Goal-Setting – “Evidence suggests that a positive correlation exists between church growth, planning, and goal-setting” (Rainer 1993, 268). The beginning stage of planning is having a vision. Through the vision, goals are set and then a strategy or plans of actions are planned to meet those goals. “Goal-setting motivates the church to put the plans into actions” (Rainer 1993, 266).

Small Bible Study Groups – “Churches with successful small Bible study groups tend to have strong leadership, organization, and accountability” (Rainer 1993, 295). The groups are the “teaching, nurturing and evangelizing arm of the church” (Rainer 1993, 291).

Community Ministries – Growing churches were involved in community ministries. Research found “almost every church was involved in some kind of intentional social ministry” (Rainer 1996, 139).

Discipleship – Work is not finished when a convert accepts Christ; it is only the beginning. “Incorporation and active discipleship in the local body were seen as essential” (Rainer 1996, 170). He found that “the most effective assimilation took place where churches were developing disciples through three key foundational elements: expectations, relationship, and involvement” (Rainer 1996, 173).

Conclusion

Rainer’s research has been based on church growth. His research has been mainly in the area of administration, organization, and church culture. His findings are in agreement with other studies in the field. Barna’s studies reflected churches in decline

while Rainer's studies reflect growing churches. There is a parallelism between the two studies. These factors are worth testing again to see if they are factors affecting church decline in a metropolitan center.

Christian Schwarz

Christian Schwarz developed a new paradigm for church growth called Natural Church Growth. He explains, "The nature of the church is made up of two elements: a dynamic pole (organism) and a static pole (organization). Both are necessary for church development, and both poles are implied in the New Testament of *ekklesia*" (Schwarz 1999, 16). One cannot exist without the other. It is a twofold relationship. "The development of the church as an organism inevitably leads to the creation of institutions. On the other hand, the aim of these institutions is to be useful in stimulating the development of the church as an organism" (Swartz 1999, 20). The two together make up a healthy church.

Church organizations can be manufactured and manipulated by humans, but the church as an organism cannot. "The goal is to let God's growth automatisms flourish, instead of wasting energy on human-made programs" (Schwarz 1998, 7). He says, "We should not attempt to 'manufacture' church growth, but rather to release the biotic potential which God has put into every church" (Schwarz 1998, 10). "Biotic implies nothing less than a rediscovery of the laws of life" (Schwarz 1998, 7). Schwarz explains, "Since we have very little control over outside factors, we should concentrate on the removal of obstacles to church growth and multiplication within churches. Then church growth can happen 'all by itself.' God will do what He promised to do. He will grant growth (1 Cor 3:6)" (Schwarz 1998, 7).

Quality Characteristics of Growing Churches

Schwarz found, There are eight quality characteristics which are “measurably more developed in growing churches than in stagnant and declining ones” (Schwarz 1999, 21).

Empowering Leadership – “Leaders of growing churches concentrate on empowering other Christians for ministry. They do not use lay workers as ‘helpers’ in attaining their own goals and fulfilling their own visions. Rather, they invert the pyramid of authority so that the leader assists Christians to attain the spiritual potential God has for them” (Schwarz 1998, 22). The pastor’s ministry is to equip, support, motivate, and mentor individuals, enabling them to do the ministry.

Gift-oriented Ministry (Use of Spiritual Gifts and Lay Training) – “The role of church leadership is to help its members to identify their gifts and to integrate them into appropriate ministries” (Schwarz 1998, 24). Lay training is important because it equips the layperson to do his or her ministry.

Passionate Spirituality (Enthusiasm) – Christians are on “fire.” They enjoy serving and worshiping. “There are significant differences in this area between growing and declining churches” (Schwarz 1998, 26).

Functional Structures – The best functional structure found is the use of department heads. Each individual area of ministry has a leader. The department head’s task is to organize and lead. Schwarz points out, “Leaders are not simply to lead, but also to develop other leaders” (Schwarz 1998, 28).

Inspiring Worship Service – Schwarz found that the type of worship service is not important. “Whenever the Holy Spirit is truly at work (and His presence is not merely

presumed), He will have a concrete effect upon the way a worship service is conducted including the entire atmosphere of a gathering. People attending truly ‘inspired’ services typically indicate that ‘going to church is fun’” (Schwarz 1998, 31).

Holistic Small Groups – Holistic small groups “go beyond just discussing Bible passages to applying its message to daily life. In these groups members are able to bring up those issues and questions that are immediate personal concerns” (Schwarz 1998, 32).

Need-oriented Evangelism – “The key to church growth is for the local congregation to focus its evangelistic efforts on the questions and needs of non-Christians” (Schwarz 1998, 35).

Love Relationships – Schwarz found that growing churches have a higher level of “love quotient” than stagnant or declining ones. He says, “Unfeigned, practical love has a divinely generated magnetic power far more effective than evangelistic programs which depend almost entirely on verbal communication” (Schwarz 1998, 36).

Conclusion

Schwarz has an innovative approach to church growth. His research shows that the ability to remove barriers of growth is sufficient in order for a church to be a growing church. His research starts from the end result and moves toward the administration of making it happen. This researcher found that, even though he approached his study from a reverse order from others, the results were very similar to other researchers. His main emphasis appears to be on the creation of a positive atmosphere of church and worship. Schwarz’s study was done mainly in European countries. These characteristics are worth testing again to see if they are characteristics affecting churches in a metropolitan center.

Summarization of Church Growth Specialists

These specialists wrote on sundry subjects. They found that the church must be biblically and theologically sound. They found that the pastor must be the spiritual leader of the church. Numerous specialists found that pastoral vision is a key factor of church growth. They found that when vision is present, then there must be an organization and an implementation strategy to carry out the vision. Culture is also important in the church. The friendliness of the church, a growth consciousness, inspired worship, small group Bible study and other church culture play an important role in having a healthy growing church. Many specialists found that demographics play an important role in church growth. Churches in stagnant growth communities have a difficult time growing. Churches located in growing communities are more apt to see growth. They found that ethnic changes in the community could affect church growth. In all, nineteen subject matters were found to be of common areas of considerations. These are discussed in the summations of the four areas of concerns: biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic.

Biblical and Theological Review

From the beginning, it was always God's plan for His people to worship only Him. The first of the Ten Commandments states God's command for His children: "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God" (Exod 20: 3-5).

This review focuses on three areas of biblical and theological decline: Israel and Judah's rebellion and ultimate decline, the first-century church's apostasy and heresy, and today's church decline.

***Israel and Judah's Rebellion and
Ultimate Decline***

T.H. Robinson says,

Moses mediated for them a 'covenant' between them and the God who was henceforward to be their national deity. His name given was Jahveh (or Jehovah). The religion of Israel was a partnership, voluntarily invited by Jahveh and deliberately accepted by Israel. It was no mere theoretical fancy to say that Jahveh had chosen Israel. (Robinson 1930, 41)

“One of the permanent features of Jahveh was his faithfulness. If a breach arose, it would not be from His side, but from that of Israel” (Robinson 1930, 42).

Moses wrote “The National Song of Israel,” which is found in Deuteronomy 32. It summarizes Jehovah's dealing with Israel and the beginning apostasy that would ultimately destroy Israel as a nation.

But Jeshurun (Israel) grew fat and kicked – You are grown fat, thick, and sleek – Then he forsook God who made him, and scorned the Rock of his salvation. They made Him jealous with strange gods; with abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons who were not God, to gods whom they have not known, new gods who came lately, whom your fathers did not dread. You neglected the Rock who begot you, and forgot the God who gave you birth. (Deut 32:15-18)

“The gross idolatry marked only the culmination of the first stage in Israel's national apostasy” (Baron 1983, 78). This idolatrous worship would continue from generation to generation throughout the life of Israel. It would ultimately destroy the nation, drive them into exile, and cause the ultimate sin, the denial and crucifixion of God's Son, Jesus.

The children of Israel escaped from the life of slavery in Egypt and wandered in the wilderness for forty years because they committed six great national sins against

God. These are recorded in Psalm 106:13-34: (1) They lusted and spoke against God. (2) They envied (or were jealous) against Moses, and Aaron, their spiritual leaders. (3) They worshipped a molten image. (4) They had unbelief and demoralization in consequence of the evil report about the land brought by the spies. (5) They participated in the abominable Moabitish worship of Baal-peor. And, (6) they had strife against Moses and Aaron at the waters of Meribah. Baron says, “The cause of their sins and apostasies is again traced to their forgetfulness of what God had been to and done for them” (Baron 1983, 229).

Israel entered the land of Canaan and settled there. The Psalmist summarizes their sins in their new land.

They did not destroy the peoples, as the LORD commanded them, but they mingled with the nations and learned their practices, and served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with the blood. Thus they became unclean in their practices, and played the harlot in their deeds. (Ps 106:34-39)

“He dwells particularly on the two outstanding sins of which they were guilty, disobedience to the command to extirpate the idolatrous inhabitants of the land, and their adoption of their bloody, soul-destroying worship” (Baron 1983, 242). “They compromised on a type of religion which is commonly called syncretism” (Robinson 1930, 43).

The key to Israel’s apostasy is found through the worship in what the Bible records as the ‘high places.’ These were worship areas established before the Temple was built. “The people were still sacrificing on the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the Lord until those days” (1 Kgs 3:3). The problem was that after the Temple was built the people continued to worship in the “high places.” These places

began to be used for idol worship that defiled the true worship of God. Kings were judged by their willingness to allow worship to continue in the high places.

Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put His name there. And his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy more than all that their fathers had done, with the sins which they committed. For they also built for themselves high places and sacred pillars and Asherim on every high hill and beneath every luxuriant tree. There were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel. (1 Kgs 14: 21-24)

Israel's Rebellion

Israel was divided into the Northern Kingdom, Israel, and the Southern Kingdom, Judah. When the two kingdoms divided, Jeroboam, king of Israel, decided to build places of worship in “high places” so the Israelites would not go to Jerusalem to worship. “He revolutionized the religion of Israel by changing (1) the symbols of religion, (2) the centers of worship, (3) the priesthood, and (4) the religious calendar” (Davis and Whitcomb 1980, 359). Israel never recuperated from this apostasy and it finally led to its destruction. In 722 B.C. the last king of Israel, Hoshea, was imprisoned and the people were led away into captivity to Assyria (2 Kgs 17:6). Their defiance against God was great. They had sinned. They committed syncretism, walking in the statutes of nations whom the Lord had cast out. They secretly did things that were not right against the Lord their God. They set up sacred pillars and Asherim, burned incense, and served idols. They rejected His statutes, His covenant, and forsook all the commandments. They made for themselves molten images, two calves, an Asherah, worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. They sacrificed their sons and daughters, practiced divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the

sight of the Lord (2 Kgs 17: 7-17). “So the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them from His sight; none was left.” (2 Kgs 17:18)

Judah’s Rebellion

The Southern Kingdom, Judah, was a nation that had good and bad kings. The bad kings led the people to worship like Israel worshiped and the good kings brought them back to worship God. Kings like Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Azariah, and Jotham were described as doing right in the sight of the Lord. Hezekiah was a very good king. “He trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him” (2 Kgs 18:5). Each time the nation repented, God removed His wrath against Judah.

Josiah was the last good king of Judah. He was only eight years old when he began to reign. He did right in the sight of the Lord. He brought his people to repentance and revival. He made a covenant before the Lord, “To walk after the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and his soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant” (2 Kgs 23: 3). He then initiated a spiritual reform. He destroyed all items used to worship Baal. He destroyed the “high places.” He broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes which were in the house of the Lord. He removed the houses of high places, which were in the cities of Samaria and slaughtered their priests. He commanded all the people to celebrate the Passover to the Lord. He removed the mediums and the spiritists and the terphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and Jerusalem, that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord (2

Kgs 23:4-24). It is written of him, “Before him there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him” (2 Kgs 23:25).

After Josiah’s death the kings did evil in the sight of the Lord. The king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, captured Jerusalem in 597 B.C. and carried its inhabitants into captivity. The reason given, “For because of the anger of the Lord this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence” (2 Kgs 24:20).

The exile lasted seventy years. During those years, God called up godly men and women who would stand firm and testify of Him. Ezra was one of those persons. His prayer shows the repentance of Judah in captivity:

At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God. And I said, "O my God: I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens. Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been very guilty, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as it is this day." (Ezra 9:5-7)

God heard their prayers and, as was prophesied by Jeremiah, after seventy years He sent a remnant back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the city. This time they were to wait for a new king, different from before. The new king would be Jesus, God’s only begotten Son. He would rule from men’s hearts rather than serve as a political king.

The First Century Church’s Apostasy and Heresy

God sent His Son Jesus to live, die, and be resurrected. He ushered in a new kingdom, the kingdom of God. Jesus established His church to carry out His ministry and

witness to all mankind. His desire is for, “All men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4). His plan is very simple, “That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9).

The church was established and grew. Churches sprang up in every city. Missionaries went out to all the known world and started churches. The churches grew and as they grew, problems of apostasy and heresy began to emerge. The pastoral epistles in the New Testament give instructions to church leaders about how to deal with the false teachings.

Epistle of Jude

The Epistle of Jude is a vibrant letter to the first century church that summarizes the problems the churches were facing and provided instructions on how to deal with them. The problem was that false teachers had infiltrated the churches and had begun to teach heresy. The churches were in decline. They had lost the love of evangelism and members had begun to fight among themselves.

Jude’s first love was evangelism. “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (v. 3). He wanted to write to the church about evangelism. His passion and love was to see people saved. Jude was the half brother of Jesus. He was there when they crucified Him and when He was resurrected. He understood that Jesus died that all might be saved.

Evangelism is what is important to the church, but often the church loses its first love. Daryl Charles states, “The epistle of Jude is an impassioned exhortation to a

church that is being compromised” (Waltner 1999, 274). Tatford’s exegetical studies point out, “In his first use of the verb ‘to write,’ he employed the present tense: it was his general purpose to discuss the common salvation. But in his second use of the verb he adopted the aorist tense, implying that it was an immediate and special act, unrelated to his previous intention” (Tatford 1975, 18). There arose an immense problem, which would take the church away from its duty. Jude had to change his focus, his love of evangelism, to handle this problem, which had caused the church to begin to decline. “His revised purpose was to enjoin his readers to strive urgently and agonizingly, as soldiers engaged in a hand to hand struggle with their opponents, for the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Tatford 1975, 18).

The main problem facing the first century churches was the teaching of false doctrine. When churches are divided over doctrinal issues they lose their passion for sharing the gospel. Jude describes the problem as, “Certain men have crept in unnoticed and they turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 4). Clements describes these as, “The ungodly men who had wormed their way into the church’s fellowship” (Jones 2001, 16). Apostate teachings were swaying men’s minds away from the gospel. Manton articulately describes these men’s actions: “They are creeping into the people’s hearts and affections by plausible pretenses and insinuations, instilling their errors drop by drop before they could be observed and pretending themselves to be friends of truth and piety” (Manton 1658, 122).

The church had entered into a fight to keep the brethren in the faith. Joy, peace, and happiness were missing and discontent was left. These teachings were about to divide the church and the church had to deal with the conflict.

Jude was angry that the church had compromised its beliefs. He feared that his brother's death could literally become of no avail by these heretics and their persuasive teachings. Charles states, "Jude's prophetic burden, which should be the church's as well, is that evils from the surrounding culture have infiltrated the church. These men moved through the church supposedly as friends and the people of the church accepted them. Many had been members for a long time. Some had moved up the ranks and were the leaders; others were spokesmen for groups of dissention. Jude says they are, "men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever (vv.12-13). He describes them as, "grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage" (v.16).

First Century Church Conflicts

Jude describes their conflicts, "Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties" (v. 8). He gives three examples of their teachings.

Sexual Immorality

"Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh" (vv. 7-8). Sodom and Gomorrah were the pit holes of humanity. The early church fathers describe the Sodomites, "Indeed the

Sodomites are set forth as a token of the unending fire which received them. They ‘went after different flesh’ and committed impurity, that is, they went out of line which is what impurity signifies” (Jones 2001, 101). Tatford describes them:

These were men that claimed superiority over the ordinary Christians and who declared that a special knowledge had been bestowed upon them. Yet their sinful practices, their unnatural vices, their gross immorality and licentiousness, and their total disregard for any of the laws of nature were worse than the practices of the pagan world around them. (Tatford 1975, 31)

Prosperity Evangelism

“Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam” (v. 11). Tertullian says that Cain “was the devil’s patriarch, the first root of the carnal seed, or of the ‘seed of the serpent,’ in whom persecution began” (Manton 1658, 269). God did not respect Cain’s offering because it was given with impure motives. God blessed Abel, so surely He would bless him. When it did not happen, he was angry. “The ‘deception of Balaam’ is deception for selfish profit. Balaam typically loved the wages of wickedness” (Waltner 1999, 299). Both men were after gains for themselves. They were lovers of self and wanted whatever they could get from God. This is the beginning of prosperity evangelism.

David Williams describes prosperity evangelism or prosperity teachings:

By ‘prosperity teaching’ I understand that a Christian, by exercise of faith, can claim material benefits; he has a right to be rich because he is a child of God who owns all things, and because Christ died on the cross to redeem him from all the ‘curse of the law,’ which includes poverty (Williams 1987, 33). Thus God is forced to act by a human technique. This denies the idea of the sovereignty or the freedom of God, rendering human whims absolute. This is pagan magic rather than Christian faith. (Williams 1987, 35)

Defiance of Authority

“In the same way these men reject authority . . . and perished in the rebellion of Korah” (vv. 8,11). Korah was a ringleader of two-hundred-fifty men who led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. Their rebellion was, “They assembled together against Moses and Aaron and said to them, ‘You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?’” (Num 16: 3). Fortunately the rebellion was short lived. God showed the Israelites that His call to God’s man was sacred and should be respected. He literally opened up the ground and swallowed alive Korah and his family. “Jude virtually accused the heretical teachers of spiritual sedition” (Tatford 1975, 34).

The Call For Revival

Jude knew the churches must act quickly to stop these men from destroying the church. His solution was:

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. (vv. 20-23)

Jude’s solution is to say to the church, “there is a need for revival.” When revival comes, the other problems go away because the main focus of the church is then changed from conflict to evangelization. Salvation becomes the main focus again. Donald Luidens says, “There are congregations (perhaps entire denominations) which are in dire need of ground-breaking revival. They may have lost their sense of calling; they may be communities in disrepair. There are also individuals whose faith has flagged, and who

need the breath of renewal and, hope – a reclaiming of the Good News” (Luidens 1996, 1078).

Jude’s call for renewal or revival came in these words, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God” (v. 20). Henry Blackaby defines revival as “God putting the plumb line of His Word right down the middle of His people. He calls us to repent of our wicked ways, return to holiness, and a love relationship with Him” (Blackaby and King 1996, 21).

The Need for Prayer

Jude says, “Begin praying.” Changed and renewed lives begin with prayer. Charles Spurgeon says, “What we desire in prayer is an audience with God. If the Lord does not hear us, we have gained nothing” (Hall 1993, 142). Communication with God brings about repentance and a renewed life. It is the beginning of a new and refreshing life. All the great revivals began with prayer. The First and Second Great Awakenings began when men decided to pray and ask God for revival. This is the reason Jude wanted God’s people to begin to pray.

Three things happen when men begin to pray. First, Jude says that there is a calling back to God’s love. Blackaby reminds us, “Revival is for God’s people who need a fresh encounter, a fresh love relationship with Him” (Blackaby and King 1996, 21). Second, Jude says, “Men will find mercy.” Mercy is forgiveness. It is getting your life back into perspective. Lewis Drummond says, “A great and gracious awakening, personal or nationwide, always has at its core a coming to one’s self in the sight of a holy God and getting thoroughly right with Jesus Christ” (Drummond 1982, 64).

When lives are brought back into a right relationship with God, then people's eyes are opened and they will be willing to serve and be used by God. The third result of revival is that men will have compassion. Hearts are right, judgment is done away with, and the person of God can now look at those in sin and have compassion on them.

The first thing is to remove sin from our lives, and the second is to have compassion on those involved in sin. Jude's compassion was two-fold. First, Christians are to make a distinction between those causing the problem and those caught up in it. They are to deal firmly with those who have caused the problem, helping them to repent. Second, they are to bring back into the church those who were innocently brought into the heretic teachings. He uses the graphic illustration "pull them out of the fire."

The Call to Holiness

Finally Jude says, "Hate even the garment defiled by the flesh." God's people first become aware of the problem of heresy. And second, they deal with it rather than allow it to fester and destroy the church. The results are a purifying of minds and hearts. They hate all impurities that filter into the church. They become holy, as God is holy.

Today's Church Decline

Today the church finds itself in the same situation as the Israelite people and the churches in the first century. Churches are in decline. "After World War II and into the 1950's there was an upsurge of church membership and interest in religion. . . . Since the 1960's, however, several mainline denominations have suffered serious drops in participation and losses in membership" (Smylie 1995, 203).

Many studies and suggestions have brought up numerous theories. James Smylie summarizes these studies: (1) "Kelley suggested that liberal churches had

declined in membership because of a loss of ability to respond to the basic human search for meaning” (Smylie 1995, 204). (2) In a study of decline and growth of the United Methodist Church between 1949-1975, it was found that proper leadership and the planting of new churches would once again cause the denomination to grow. (3) “Church growth movement experts suggest that it is axiomatic that those denominations which engage in social action will not grow (Smylie 1995, 207). (4) The Sunday school movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was used to recruit new members and churches grew because of it. Today the church school has become “more a means of nurture within the Christian community” (Smylie 1995, 212). It no longer serves the purpose of evangelism. (5) “Electronic churches, as they have been called, reach millions. Leaders who have certain charisma conduct programs and they mix nostalgia, informality, and intimacy with spiritual uplift. . . . Mass audiences join for prayer and praise, and they pay by mail for the support of these new churches” (Smylie 1995, 213).

Eugene Heidman’s study on syncretism and contextualization concludes:

First, Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants from North America, Europe, and the Middle East are often remarkably insensitive to their own long contextualizing, syncretizing traditions. They assume the assured results and orthodoxy of their own creedal and liturgical traditions and their ministerial orders as if these must be of universal application rather than understood as a valuable but somewhat provincial contextualized endeavor to confess the faith. Second, the dominant older churches and Western missionaries tend to ignore or to lack respect for Asian, African, and indigenous peoples’ cultural potential and identity. And third, marginalized people, such as racial or ethnic minority populations and women, easily hear issues of syncretism and contextualization as the desire of educated white males to continue their traditional dominant role in the churches. (Heideman 1997, 40-41)

The first, second, and third “Great Awakening” were the result of an awakening from false apostasy in doctrines, secularism, and a shift from emphasis on

personal to social sin. Today, a “Fourth Great Apostasy” may have “begun to emerge in the mid-twentieth century. It begins “again wooing erstwhile evangelicals from their Puritan heritage. It appears to be an attack on evangelical moral standards” (Carpenter 2001, 666). Today “one of the most prevalent teachings within the present day charismatic movement is a doctrine called ‘positive confession.’ This doctrine is accompanied by a basic presupposition that all Christians are to be physically healthy and materially rich” (Neuman 1990, 32). This is another sign of the immorality and false doctrines being taught in our churches.

William Stringfellow, Episcopal layman and lawyer, wrote of becoming an alien in his own land, “America has turned out to be, not the Promised Land, but modern Babylon” (Smylie 1995, 210). History has repeated itself over and over again. We can learn from the rebellion of the Israelites, the first century heretics, the carnal church leaders of the Renaissance, and the attack on the morality today that is infiltrating our churches. What man needs today is to return to God, repent of his sins, seek His glory, and worship only Him as his Lord and Savior.

Summarization of Biblical and Theological Review

In the Old Testament the problem was syncretism. The Israelites mixed their religion with other religions. They worshiped one God with the ritual and theology that belonged to another. In so doing they compromised their belief. The New Testament churches declined because of false teachings, loss of their love for evangelism, defiance of authority for the leaders of the church, and immorality. Modern day churches appear to have been plagued with the same defiance as the Israelites and the first century churches.

This researcher believes one way to test these areas is to assess the factors of biblical soundness in the church. Two other areas that are in question in the churches today are pastoral authority and immorality in the church.

Biblical Soundness in the Church

Four biblical doctrines have been chosen to validate biblical soundness in the church: God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, and salvation. These four biblical doctrines have been referenced to by various authors.

God – (McGavran and Arn 1977, 27; Barna 2003b, 38). In the beginning there was God (Gen 1:1). He has always been and will always be. He is Spirit (John 4:34). He is triune. There is only one God and His name is “I am” (Exod 3:14). He is all powerful (Rev 19:6), all knowing (Matt 11:21), and is in all places (Ps 137:7-12). He is love (1 John 4:8). He is the essence of everything good (1 Chr 16:34). He is sovereign (Eph 1:8), jealous (Exod 20:5), holy (1 John 1:5), and never changing (Jas 1:17). God is truthful. What He says He does. He does not lie (1 John 5:6). God is creator. He created all things and He loves all things (John 3:16). God spoke creation into being. He said it and it was so (Gen 1:3). All things were created through Him and by Him (Col 1:16). He created the world in an orderly fashion and it was perfect. God said that all of His creation was very good (Gen 1:31).

Jesus Christ – (Barna 2003b, 38). Jesus is the Son of God. He is His only begotten Son and therefore has all the rights of the first-born of all creation (Col 1:15). He is the image of the invisible God; therefore He is God (1 Col 15; John 1:1). He is totally man and totally God (Phil 2:6, John 10:30). While on the earth He was subject to God (John 5:19). Christ came to us in the form of man to reveal the true nature of God

(John 1:18). Through Jesus all things were made. Nothing was created that He did not make (John 1:3; Col 1:16). Jesus is in all things and therefore all things are held together by Him. In Him is life (Col 1:17; John 1:5).

The Bible – (McGavran and Arn 1977, 24; Barna 2003b, 38). The Bible is the written record of the revelation of God through men. It is man's record of his encounters with God. In all cases it is God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16). This means it is holy and inspired. God led men to write their stories and encounters so that other men could read and understand the nature of God. The Bible is relevant for today. The Bible should be read, studied, and followed because it is God's divine teaching and is a revelation of Himself to man. It is for discipline and instruction in righteousness. It is designed that through its study, man may grow into a full and adult relationship with God (2 Tim 3:16, 17).

Salvation – (Dannenfeldt 1970, 32-33; McGavran and Arn 1977, 26,28; Barna 2003b, 38). Salvation is by grace. It is the free gift of God. It has nothing to do with the works of man (Eph 2:8). Man cannot save himself. It is through the redemption of God paid through the sacrifice of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (Rom 3:24). It is for this reason Jesus came, to save His people (Matt. 1:21). It is for all men (John 3:17). It is not automatic. It comes by accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior and believing that He died and came back to life (Rom. 10:9-10).

Immorality in the Church

Jude says that Sodom and Gomorrah had entered the first century churches. Today's church is facing a similar situation. Pastoral immorality, adultery and youth sexual immorality are becoming a reality in many of our churches. Carpenter says, "We have entered into the 'Fourth Great Apostasy,'" the apostasy of sexual immorality

(Carpenter 2001, 666). The church is supposed to be in the world, but not of the world.

Unfortunately, it appears that worldly values have entered in and are having a devastating effect on our churches today.

Pastoral Authority in the Church

Jude in his Epistle refers to men rejecting authority. He uses the example of Korah's rebellion against the leader Moses in the Old Testament. Korah lead a group to destroy the leadership of Moses. Defiance is a trait that will destroy pastoral leadership. Paul gave to Titus these words, "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. . . . They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed" (Titus 1:10-16). Maxwell says, "If you don't have influence, you will never be able to lead others" (Maxwell 1998, 11). Defiance undermines and destroys the influence of the pastor to lead the church.

Leadership and Organizational Review

There has been much written and studied about leadership and organization in the churches. Much of the precedent literature in this area has already been discussed in the church growth specialists review. These will be discussed in the summation section. In this division, two subjects will be reviewed, leadership in the church and lay leadership.

Leadership in the church.

The key leader of the church is the pastor. Nanus and Dobbs give six of his roles. He is "visionary, strategist, politician, campaigner, coach, and change agent"

(Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 17-19). Herington, Bonem, and Furr are consultants that worked with a group of churches in Houston, Texas. They came up with eight leadership stages needed for a pastor to turn a church from plateaued or declining to a growing church:

Making personal preparation – “This means analyzing the needs and proposed uses, considering financial capabilities, discussing the possibilities with the congregation, and obtaining outside expertise” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 29).

Creating urgency – “Urgency is absolutely necessary in congregational transformation. When used properly, urgency is a positive driver for change” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 34).

Establish the vision community – “The vision community is a diverse group of key members who become a committed and trusting community in order to discern and implement God’s vision for the congregation” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 41).

Discerning the vision and determining the visionpath – Vision is a clear, shared, and compelling picture of the preferred future to which God is calling the congregation” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 50). “A clear and concise vision statement needs to be accompanied by a more detailed visionpath. Visionpath is the next level of detail beyond vision. It explains the meaning and implications of the vision. It begins to fill in detail of how the church will fulfill the vision” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 51).

Communicating the vision – “Communicating the vision is a comprehensive, intentional, and ongoing set of activities that are undertaken throughout the transformation process to make the vision clear to the congregation” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 61).

Empowering change leaders – “It consists of two equally important elements: (1) establishing a new model for leadership within the congregation and (2) removing the obstacles that would prevent leaders from serving effectively. . . .The new leadership model involves broadening the leadership base in the congregation beyond the pastor and a few lay leaders. This requires authorizing and trusting others to take on major responsibilities, but it also means adopting a new mindset in the mobilization and training of new leaders” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 70).

Implementing the vision – “Implementation is a specific set of coordinated, high-leverage initiatives that move the congregation toward realization of God’s vision. Implementation should flow directly from the visionpath. It should be done in accordance with the priorities that have been agreed on by the vision community” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 78).

Reinforcing momentum through alignment – “Alignment is evident when the majority of the people, ministries, and structures of the church are functioning out of a clear understanding and commitment to the vision. Alignment is not a conclusion to the change process but an ongoing effort to adjust to the call of God’s vision and to the changes in the world around us” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 85).

Churches that are growing share three main characteristics. The churches have a pastor that has a vision for the church. The churches have organized the vision into the mission of the church and have stated it through a mission statement. And, the churches plan their ministries in accordance to their mission statement.

Vision

Each church has a pastor that has a vision. Barna defines a pastor's vision as "a clear and compelling mental portrait of a preferable future conveyed by God to His chosen leaders in order to direct people's resources for kingdom purposes and outcome" (Barna 2003a, 47). "Vision is God's dream of how things might be, dreamed within the heart of the person or congregation that faithfully works in harmony with God. . . . Vision grows out of the spirituality of individuals and the congregation together" (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 34).

The visionary must have a shared vision. "Shared vision authorizes and legitimizes the activities of all who commit to it and act accordingly. A shared vision is a major source of hope and self-esteem for people in the organization" (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 80). The strategy is a statement of how it intends to get there.

Vision generally follows a three-part theme. First, the vision gives the invisioned one a new and clear insight into who God is – God's greatness. Second, the vision gives the person or group a new and clearer insight into who she/he/they are – my/our littleness, sinfulness, inability. Third, the vision points toward new and exciting possibilities for making the dream come true – my/our mission. (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 34)

Mission

"Mission is the incarnation of vision, the congregation's first-level attempt to make its dream real and visible" (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 40). A mission usually comes in the form of a statement. "A mission establishes ministry directions and evaluative standards for turning the vision into a reality" (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 42). "Christians are more likely to witness and invite others if they have a vision of what people can become that goes deeper than accepting our beliefs, obeying our rules, or conforming to our style" (Hunter 1996, 33). "Congregations need to clearly encounter

God as they make plans to achieve His vision” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 20).

The mission statement gives the congregation a goal or objective toward which to build the ministry of the church. “Missional objectives start with a longing to help. . . . The longings to help have been placed within us by God, and, indeed, God uses His actions in the world to create precipitating events that call forth from us timely directions of effective help” (Callahan 1983, 6-8).

Ministry

Ministry is the result, not the means, of a fulfilled vision and mission of the church. “Ministries are proactive and environment-shaping rather than reactive and environmentally responsive” (Heinecke, Hunter, Luecke 1991, 122). It is putting the mission of the church into action through careful study and planning. Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke found five characteristics of ministry in their study on growing churches:

1. Congregational leaders communicate high expectations for members. People feel strongly committed to the work of ministry in the congregation. Members place the church as a high priority in their lives.
2. The churches operate from a worldview that offers choice – in Bible studies, service times, and worship styles.
3. These churches plan. The professional and lay leaders set goals and work toward fulfillment of them.
4. The leaders of these churches organize pragmatically, display a passion for success and effectiveness, and celebrate goals achieved as victories.
5. The churches sustain growth by change in the organizational relationship between pastor and people, in the structures of congregational decision-making, and in continued self-analysis and redefinition of the ministry philosophy, frequently with the aid of church consultants. (Heinecke, Hunter, Luecke 1991, 28-29)

Lay Leadership

Lay leadership is fundamental in the growth and ministry of the church. The Bible clearly states that the responsibility of the pastor is the “equipping the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:12). “Strong leaders want to build strong teams. They want

people who can exercise initiative and leadership on their own, and who can operate more as colleagues and associates than as followers” (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 150).

“Team leadership is the genius of the New Testament. Exemplified first in Jesus and the disciples, it continues in the ministry of the apostles both in the early church and all of the missionary journeys” (Gangel 1989, 27). Shawchuck and Rath found:

Lay-led qualities are the means by which a congregation ever expands its ministry base, for lay participation is a fundamental key to achieving quality. Without a broad and ever expanding base of lay leadership and participation at every level of the church organization and ministry, the church will never approach its potential for quality. Their serious and enthusiastic participation is necessary to succeed in achieving all of the qualities. (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 55)

Weak leadership teams in churches have these characteristics: “(1) Not enough people actively involved in the ministry. (2) Insufficient commitment on the part of those who are involved. (3) People who are willing but not equipped to do the job. (4) A high dropout rate – they join, they serve, and they leave. (5) A high burnout rate – they serve intensely, but they don’t last” (Barna 2003a, 48). Maxwell reminds us, “The greatest value to any leader is someone who can raise up other leaders” (Maxwell, 1998, 114).

“Increasingly, effective and successful congregations have discovered that people are more important than programs – that people reach other people – precisely because all of us search for groups in which we can discover significant relationships of sharing and caring” (Callahan 1983, 39).

To serve is an innate desire of Christians. Callahan found:

Most people have four life searches: for individuality, community, meaning, and hope. The search for individuality is the search for integrity and power in one’s existence and destiny. The search for meaning is the search for the discovery of purpose and values in ordinary everyday life. The search for hope is the search for a reliable and certain future. The search for community is the search for roots, place, and belonging – for a group of people in which significant relationships of sharing and caring can take place. (Callahan 1983, 6-8)

“If a local congregation wants its competent leaders to function effectively, it is important that that congregation and pastor deliver to these leaders both responsibilities and the authority appropriate to the responsibilities” (Callahan 1983, 47).

Summarization of the Leadership and Organizational Review

Through an analysis of the leadership and organizational review and the church growth specialists, five subject matters were found to be common considerations of interest: pastoral leadership, laity involvement and training, small group Bible study, prayer emphasis, and discipleship training.

Pastoral Leadership

Pastoral leadership “is a major factor in the church growth process” (Rainer 1993, 185). Pastors lead their congregation through vision, mission, and ministry.

Vision

(Barna 1993, 33-38; Rainer 1993, 185, 260; Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 51). It is defined as “a clear and compelling mental portrait of a preferable future conveyed by God to His chosen leaders in order to direct people’s resources for kingdom purposes and outcome” (Barna 2003a, 47).

Mission

(McGavran and Arn 1977, 35,111; Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 51; Callahan 1983, 6-8). “Mission is the incarnation of vision, the congregation’s first-level attempt to make its dream real and visible” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 40). It “establishes ministry directions and evaluative standards for turning the vision into a

reality” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 42). A mission usually comes in the form of a statement that states the purpose of the church.

Ministry

(McGavran and Arn 1977, 104; Kelly 1978, 170; Hadaway 1991, 186; Wagner 1976, 174; Barna 1999, 6-7; Rainer 1993, 268; Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 50). Ministry is putting the mission of the church into action. This is usually accomplished through setting goals, strategizing to meet the goals, and then implementing the goals into ministry opportunities.

Laity Involvement and Training

(Wagner 1979, 281-82; Rainer 1993, 203, 122-23; Schwarz 1998, 22; Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 150; Gangel 1989, 27). “Without a broad and ever expanding base of lay leadership and participation at every level of the church organization and ministry, the church will never approach its potential for quality” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 55). “If a church is serious about the Great Commission, the involvement of laity is of utmost importance” (McGavran and Hunter 1980, 73). “People who are involved in a lay ministry, for which they are gifted and in which they experience God working, are much more likely to engage in the ministry of evangelism” (Hunter 1996, 33). Having the laity involved in the church is paramount to be a New Testament Church.

Laity Training – (McGavran and Hunter 1980, 73; Barna 1999, 6-7; Rainer 2000, 22-23, Schwarz 1998, 24). Laity training is important because it equips the layperson and enables him or her to do ministry. It is a biblical mandate for leaders to train and equip their members to do the ministry. Leaders “see themselves as equipping people for ministry rather than just ministering to people” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke

1991, 99). “Learning expands a group’s capacity to achieve its desired results” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 129).

“The professional leader equips the laity. They see their primary job as motivating, releasing, and training laity through a preaching and teaching ministry. These leaders strongly emphasize the priesthood of all believers” (Heinecke, Hunter, Luecke 1991, 27).

Small Group Bible Study

(Hadaway 1991, 186; Wagner 1979; 282; Rainer 1993, 295; Schwarz 1998,32). Small group Bible studies are groups that meet on Sunday morning and/or those who meet in cell groups in the community. Schwarz calls them holistic small groups because persons attending apply the Bible study to their lives (Schwarz 1998, 32). “Church leaders consider Bible study as key to growth. They understand that churches grow because people are growing spiritually through the Word of God” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke 1991, 26). “Christians who regularly discuss the gospel, and share what God is doing in their life, in a small group are much more likely to share these matters in their other relationships” (Hunter 1996, 33).

“Small groups serve the church’s ministry in two ways. First, they provide an infrastructure for congregations in which people can interact, grow in their prayer life together, meet fellowship needs, and study the Bible in depth. Second, they serve as an avenue for outreach” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke 1991, 65).

Prayer Emphasis

(McGavran and Arn 1977, 114; Hadaway 1991, 186; Rainer 1993, 179 and Rainer 1996, 15). Prayer emphasis is more than praying for the sick. It is praying for the

lost and the direction of the church. Prayer begins with the pastor if he is to be a change leader. “The change leader must consistently encounter the holiness of God” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 20). “Prayer takes high priority in the pastor’s and church leaders’ lives and is reflected in the church’s corporate lifestyle” (Heinecke, Hunter, Luecke 1991, 26).

For a church to be in God’s will, it must have discernment. “Discernment is a product of spiritual life. Discernment is a decision-making process that seeks faithfully to involve God in the decision-making. It is a process built upon silence and prayer, and a searching of the Scriptures to discover the missional directions and ministries toward which God may be leading the church” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 47).

Discipleship Training

(Wagner 1996, 185; Barna 2000, 4; Rainer 1996, 170). Discipleship training is a mentor – mentored relationship. The mentor regularly invests in a person’s life and helps that person to grow spiritually. Barnabas and Paul are examples of the mentor – mentored relationship. Barnabas mentored Paul until he grew strong enough in his spiritual walk to become a leader. In return, Paul started mentoring others. “People who are in regular spiritual conversation with a pastor or spiritual mentor are much more likely to engage in spiritual conversations with people who are not yet Christians” (Hunter 1996, 33).

Cultural Review

From the time of Christ to the present day there has been a conflict between Christians and the world culture. Niebuhr states, “The enduring problem evidently arose

in the days of Jesus Christ's humanity when, "He who was a Jew and . . . remained a Jew till his last breath confronted Jewish culture with a hard challenge" (Niebuhr 1951, 2).

Culture is defined as "an artificial, second environment, which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical process and values" (Niebuhr 1951, 32).

"Religious beliefs are not mere abstractions that are irrelevant to everyday life. People use their beliefs to make choices, interpret events, and plan actions" (McGuire 2002, 16).

Christianity in Culture

Christianity has not joined culture; it transforms it. It is rooted and grounded in Christ, His teachings, and the teaching of the first century church found in the New Testament. The bearers of Christology are Christians. A Christian is normally defined as a believer or follower of Christ. A more adequate description is:

One who counts himself as belonging to the community of men for whom Jesus Christ – his life, words, deeds, and destiny – is of supreme importance as the key to the understanding of themselves and their world, the main source of the knowledge of God and man, good and evil, the constant companion of the conscience, and the expected deliverer from evil. (Niebuhr 1951, 11)

Christianity has had a drastic effect on world culture. Jesus said:

Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it. (Matt 10:34-39)

From the time of Christ four basic problems have emerged in world culture:

1. Christians are animated by contentment for present existence and by confidence in immortality. This two-edge faith has baffled and angered glorifiers of modern civilization as well as defenders of Rome, radical

- revolutionaries as well as conservers of the old order, believers in continuing progress and desponding anticipators of the decline of culture.
2. He induces men to rely on the grace of God instead of summoning them to human achievement.
 3. Christ and his church are intolerant.
 4. The forgiveness that Christ practices and teaches is said to be irreconcilable with the demands of justice or the free man's sense of moral responsibility. (Niebuhr 1951, 5-9)

It is not that Christians want to be considered rebellious as world culture deems them. It is that Christians are of the kingdom of God rather than the kingdom of the world. They stand firm on their principles because they believe they are God's principles. The Apostle Peter facing the world gave these words, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). It is that Christ forgives men and women of their wrong doings and gives them love and peace. This forgiveness causes them to be both content and confident throughout their life. This has an abrasive reaction for non-Christians. This researcher believes the world wants to control and to be dominant. Christians stand firm in their beliefs and do not heed to the control and dominants of the world.

Secularism in Culture

Little by little, Christian principles are being stripped from America's society. "The U.S. may be following many other secular nations in becoming a society without rigorous systems of religious education in which churches, temples and mosques serve as a moral training ground" (Wall 1996, 844). "Western culture is undergoing a massive paradigm shift, in the course of which our entire style of being will be radically transformed" (Drane 2000, vii). Secular culture has infiltrated our churches, schools and communities. Signs of cultural secularism are everywhere.

"Young people are confused about morals and not familiar with religious tradition. And the global youth culture has become pluralistic and relativistic" (Wall

1996, 844). “Work ethics, which had meaning within the Christian framework, now became ugly as the Christian base was removed. Work became an end in itself – with no reason to work and no values to determine what to do with the products of one’s work” (Schaeffer 1976, 206). And, students now approach drug taking as an ideology, and some, as a religion. They hope that drugs would provide meaning “inside one’s head,” in contrast to objective truth, concerning which they have given up hope (Schaeffer 1976, 206).

New Age

“New Age is first and foremost a cultural movement, inspired by dissatisfaction with the values of modernity, and motivated by the conviction that for the human race – indeed the cosmos – in effect, a form of post modernism projected as spirituality” (Drane, 2000, 40). It is a movement that is hard to define. Drane says:

It is like a vacuum cleaner. ‘It picks up whatever is out there, and messes it all up. So when you open the bag, you recognize all the bits and pieces that are in here – but the mixture is completely different from anything you’ve ever seen before, or anything you could even imagine.’

New Age and Gnosticism are closely related. For example, when we place a New Age statement alongside a typical Gnostic statement, it is obvious that the two are closely related.. ‘The kingdom of God is inside of you. . . . when you come to know yourselves, then you will become known and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living Father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty.’ (Drane 2000, 40)

Baby Boomer Generation

One of the greatest proponents of the New Age Movement is the Baby Boomer generation. Baby Boomers have the greatest influence on our culture today. They are in leadership roles in government and schools. They have passed laws to reflect their secular viewpoints and to do away with any religious influence in our society. They are characterized by a continuing search for meaning and purpose in life. “These people have

been on a long-running exploration for values and significance. They have ventured into Eastern religions, self-indulgence, drugs, career achievement, sexual experimentation, and other approaches to ‘finding oneself’ and ‘becoming empowered’” (Barna 1989, 1-2).

The church is being affected by the secular society. Churches, rather than take a stand against it, have almost embraced it. Drane concludes,

I want to suggest here that Christians today are dealing with the fallout of a theological and cultural time-bomb left by their forebears’ uncritical acceptance of the materialist values of the Enlightenment, with its pretentious optimism about human potential, and which in turn spawned a self-centered individualism that inevitably led to a reduction in the sense of responsibility towards other people and for the wider environment. (Drane, 2000, 59)

Biblical Worldview

Christ’s teachings demand a biblical worldview of Christianity. Our society today is multicultural and each culture brings its own worldview. Communities are no longer homogeneous units. New communities are formed with people from every race, tribe, and creed. Ministries, worship, and biblical teachings need to be based, not on our own biases, but on the biases of Christ and His plans for the world.

How do we interpret another person’s worldview? McGuire says that in reality there is a dualistic worldview which consist of “two fundamental modes or opposing principles: one good and the other evil” (McGuire 2002, 40). He says, “Religious beliefs also inform the individual what action is good and desirable or bad and to be avoided” (McGuire 2002, 17). Though this simplifies worldview it helps us to have an understandings of other’s actions. Hiebert says, “We build our worldview on the careful study of the Bible; however we recognize that our worldview is also shaped by a

particular culture. So we constantly must reexamine any worldview, our own or someone else's, in the light of scripture" (Hiebert 1994, 11).

We must have a global perspective for ministry. "A global perspective requires critical contextualization. The gospel calls us all to follow Christ. It also stands in prophetic judgment on all societies and cultures. It affirms what is good in each, but condemns what is evil in our corporate idolatries, and rebellions against God and our sins of oppression and injustice" (Hiebert 1994, 65).

"The communication of the gospel across the chasms of cultural differences rests upon the quality of interpersonal relationships between human beings, between missionaries, and the people they serve. This relationship between people of one culture and those of another culture is the bicultural bridge" (Hiebert 1994, 147). Rhodes says, "To be people of the promise means to be willing to risk leaving home, whatever or wherever that may be, and to be willing to walk with God toward what we cannot yet fully see" (Rhodes 1998, 41).

A global perspective for ministry means see people for who they are where they are and be willing to minister to them in their own context in order to bring them to a saving knowledge of Christ. Christ crosses cultural barriers and we, as the body of Christ, must be willing to do the same. Barna says, "It is thinking like Jesus" (Barna 2003, 20).

Culture in the Church

Every church has a culture. It is the force behind the decision making and the purpose of the church. "There is a guiding force, a controlling assumption, a directing

conviction behind everything that happens” (Warren 1995, 77). The following are various cultures found in churches.

Churches Driven by Tradition – In a tradition-driven church the goal is to perpetuate the past. “Change is almost always seen as negative, and stagnation is interpreted as ‘stability’” (Warren 1995, 77). Older churches tend to be bound together by rules, regulations, and rituals. These traditions can cause church decline in a changing culture.

Churches Driven by Personality – The question is, “What does the leader want?” Pastors who have served the church for a long time are usually the driving personality. When pastors change every few years, a key layperson is likely to be the driving force. “One obvious problem with a personality-driven church is that its agenda is determined more by the background, needs, and insecurities of the leader than by God’s will or the needs of the people. Another problem is that the personality-driven church comes to a standstill when its driving personality leaves or dies” (Warren 1995, 77-78).

Churches Driven by Finances – The foremost question is, “How much will it cost?” Nothing else seems quite as important as finances. The most heated debate is over the budget. “While good stewardship and cash flow are essential for a healthy church, finances must never be the controlling issue” (Warren 1995, 78).

Churches Driven by Buildings – Congregations are so anxious to have a nice building that the members spend more than they can afford. Paying for and maintaining the building becomes the biggest budget item. “Funds needed to operate ministries must be diverted to pay the mortgage, and the actual ministry of the church suffers” (Warren 1995, 79).

Churches Driven by Events – Looking at the calendar of an event-driven church will give the impression that the goal of the church is activities and keeping people busy. Something is going on every night of the week. “A church may be busy without having a clear purpose for what it does” (Warren 1995, 79).

Churches Driven by Seekers – “In an honest attempt to reach unbelievers for Christ and be relevant in today’s culture, some churches allow the needs of the unbelievers to become their driving force” (Warren 1995, 79). We need to be aware of the seekers, but they should not drive the total agenda of the church.

Churches Driven by Purpose – Warren says, “What is needed today are churches that are driven by purpose instead of by other forces” (Warren 1995, 80). This is a new paradigm for many churches. There are two essential elements to this new paradigm: First, it requires a new perspective. You must begin to look at everything your church does through the lens of five New Testament purposes and see how God intends for the church to balance all five purposes. Second, this paradigm requires a process for fulfilling the purposes of the church (Warren 1995, 80).

Thom Rainer found through research three factors that are consistently important in most churches of all sizes. First, “Repeatedly the leaders of the evangelistic churches told us that preaching is one of the most effective means of reaching people for Christ” (Rainer 1996, 14). Second, “Though the forms of prayer ministries vary, the leaders of these evangelistic churches stress that their personal prayer lives and the prayer ministries of the church are inevitably tied to the winning of souls to Christ” (Rainer 1996, 15). “Historically, the most significant trends in the church are prefaced by extraordinary prayer” (Rainer 1995, 22). And third, “If any program-based methodology

dynamic tool for these evangelistic churches, it was the Sunday School program” (Rainer 1996, 16).

Purpose of the Church

There are five basic purposes or curricula in the church (Harris 1989, 76, 127; Pazmiño 1992, 45; Warren 1995, 103).

Koinonia – Community

“The common elements in affiliating with a community tend to be remarkably constant. These are the impetus toward belonging; toward associating with those sharing a common heritage, belief, and way of life; and toward the human need to share” (Harris 1989, 76). “The issue of conversion in koinonia is turning from a life centered upon oneself or upon one’s family or group to a life that centers upon a community” (Pazmiño 1992, 48). “Although it may not be reached, the ideal embodied in community is the movement toward unity and union with others” (Harris 1989, 76).

Diakonia – Service

“Love your neighbor as yourself” “The word we use to describe this purpose is ministry (or service). The church exists to minister to people. Ministry is demonstrating God’s love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus” (Warren 1995, 104).

Leiturgia – Worship

“Love the Lord with all your heart.” “Worship includes celebrating and the expression of creativity that gives glory to God” (Pazmiño 1992, 53).

Kerygma – Proclamation

“Go and make disciples.” “The church exists to communicate God’s Word. We are ambassadors for Christ, and our mission is to evangelize the world” (Warren 1995, 104). “For Christians, the proclamation is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ; of a saving God whose word is with and for the people being fashioned” (Harris 1989, 127).

Profeteia – Advocacy

“Baptizing them.” “ In the Greek text of the Great Commission there are three present participle verbs: going, baptizing, and teaching. Each of these is a part of the command to “make disciples.” Going, baptizing, and teaching are the essential elements of the disciple-making process” (Warren 1995, 105). “The educational task in propheteia is to make people understand how commitment to God’s reign relates to the dominant virtues and ideals of one’s community or society” (Pazmiño 1992, 52).

“Church growth is the natural result of church health. Church health can only occur when our message is biblical and our mission is balanced. Each of the five New Testament purposes of the church must be in equilibrium with the others for health to occur” (Warren 1995, 49). “We also need to tackle the related assumption that God only works in the church. The biblical view is that God is at work in the world all the time, and always has been” (Drane, 2000, 15).

Age Factors

“The next cultural variable is age structure. Knowledge of age groups allows the church to plan age-specific outreach strategies” (Price 1995, 119). One of the diseases of the church that can cause death is “old age.” A disintegrating community causes “old

age.” “The birth rate peaked in 1958 and has declined sharply since that time. The pattern of church membership for most mainline Protestant churches closely parallels this pattern of growth and decline in the school age population” (Carroll 1978, 73-74).

Research blames youth defection from mainline congregations as one of the reasons for church decline. Their reasoning was threefold: First, a disproportionate number of mainline “Baby Boomers” stopped going to church; second, birth rates declined among baby boomers; third, the declining church involvement denied the churches the benefit of what natural increase the Baby Boomers children would have provided (Perrin 1989, 77). Rainer says, “It is little wonder that church became an increasingly lower priority for a generation whose values were the antithesis of the cross and sacrifice. Worship services were sometimes attended for social reasons” (Rainer 1995, 52).

Child-rearing theory states that parents feel it is important to provide religious education for their children. Nash and Berger interviewed new members of suburban churches and concluded, that “the presence of school-age children was a foremost factor leading to membership” (Hoge and Roozen 1979, 54). Without programs, ministries, and other children present, it is difficult to have new members join the church or hold on to current members.

Baby Boomers had fewer children than their parents. The population growth factor fell below replacement level (Luidens 1996, 1075). Along with this, Baby Boomers have always been non-conformists and after their children were grown they began to drop out of churches. Fortunately, their children, the Baby Busters, did not follow their parents’ example. Their children, the Mosaics, are the “second most numerous generation ever” (Barna 2003a, 60).

Summarization of the Cultural Review

Churches are affected by internal and external culture. Through an analysis of the cultural review and church growth specialists seven subject matters were found to be common considerations of the cultural influences on the church: inspired worship, evangelism, ministry, fellowship, enthusiasm and growth consciousness, innovation and change, and generational differences.

Inspired Worship in the Church

(Rainer 1993, 225 and Rainer 2001, 93; Schwarz 1998, 31). “Worship is corporate whenever there is a strong sense of belonging, a strong sense of togetherness and community, among the people who share in it. Worship is dynamic whenever the service stirs and inspires the people who participate in it and whenever profound help and hope are shared with and among them” (Callahan 1983, 24). “Worship services are increasingly becoming the entry point for the unchurched into church” (Rainer 1993, 225). “The members of a culturally relevant church are much more likely to invite their friends to a worship service they would like their friends to experience than to a service they would dread for their friends to experience!” (Hunter 1996, 33).

There are various attributes that make inspired worship different from just worship. “People attending truly ‘inspired’ services typically indicate that ‘going to church is fun’” (Schwarz 1998, 31). Other attributes are worship that is culturally relevant, people that are friendly, and preachers that are preaching expository/textual messages.

Evangelism in the Church

(McGavran and Arn 1977, 51; Kelley 1978, 170; Hadaway 1996; 186, Wagner 1976, 161; Barna 2002, 37; Rainer 1993, 216; Schwarz 1998, 35). The “definition of evangelism is ‘to proclaim Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to persuade people to become His disciples, and responsible members of His church’” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 51). Growing churches are described as those having “a heart for reaching the lost” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke 1991, 25). Evangelism must take high priority. Second, churches who know “about different people groups in the community, and they design ministry and evangelistic strategies accordingly” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke 1991, 28). “The key to church growth is for the local congregation to focus its evangelistic efforts on the questions and needs of non-Christians” (Schwarz 1998, 35).

Ministry in the Church

(Wagner 1979, 281-82; Rainer 1993, 203; Schwarz 1998, 22; Harris 1989, 144; Pazmiño 1992, 45; Warren 1995, 104) “Ministry is demonstrating God’s love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus” (Warren 1995, 104). “A high-quality church offers a menu of many ministries, programs, committees and social groups that positively involve most, if not all, persons in the congregation” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 67). In a high-quality comprehensive church, ministries are offered at most times of the day and utilize most of the available space in the church buildings” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 76). “Churches with ministries to the needs of unchurched pre-Christians thereby build more bridges to the people, have greater credibility with them, find them to be much more receptive, and experience many more ‘natural’ opportunities for faith sharing” (Hunter 1996, 33).

The pastor and staff carry out ministry, but the main thrust of ministry is carried out by the layperson. The pastor and staff equip the layperson and empower him or her to do the ministry.

Fellowship in the Church

(Wagner 1996, 91; Rainer 2001, 48; Schwarz 1998, 36; Harris 1989, 76; Pazmiño 1992, 45; Warren 1995, 103). “The high-quality congregation acts as a family, or as a neighbor in the community, in the best sense. Community in the life of the congregation has two foci: (1) the congregation’s life together and (2) its relationships to the community in which it is located and serves” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 94).

Growing churches find “unity must be translated into community if God’s people are to have an ongoing impact in the world” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 25). Their church ministry is centered on people and they “deliberately work to understand the context, the community, in which the people live – and plan ministry accordingly” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke 1991, 65). They “operate to meet their community’s felt needs. Each church constantly investigates needs and finds vehicles to touch people’s lives in relevant ways. These churches encourage fellowship and maintain a family atmosphere” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke 1991, 28).

Enthusiasm and Growth Consciousness in the Church

(McGavran and Arn 1977, 102; Wagner 1979, 281 and 1996, 153; Hadaway 1991, 186; Schwarz 1998, 26). “When joy is present, it pervades the entire life of the congregation. It is contagious, infecting every person who relates to the congregation” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 137). Enthusiasm brings healing. “Healing is a feeling of

wholeness that leads to greater health, through relationships, worship, prayer and altered life –styles” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 135). The church has a passionate spirituality. Christians are on “fire.” They enjoy serving and worshipping (Schwarz 1998, 26).

“Spiritual and relational vitality is profoundly personal and corporate. It pervades all of our attitudes and our actions” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 18). It “is the life-giving power that faithful people experience together as they passionately pursue God’s vision for their lives” (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 16).

They also have a growth consciousness. “Growth conscience is a conviction that permeates the Body of Christ that God’s will is for growth, that a church has the opportunity, and responsibility to carry out God’s will” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 102). The pastor must want the church to grow and be passionate about it.

Innovation and Change in the Church

(Hadaway 1991, 186; Wagner 1996, 71; Barna 1993, 33-38; Rainer 1993, 266). Churches that are innovative and ready for change sense “optimism, high morale and desire for growth” (Hadaway 1991, 186). They set goals, with growth as a primary aim. They are not afraid of new ideas, innovations and change.

The contrast to innovation and change is “people-blindness.” “People blindness is the malady, that prevents us from seeing the important cultural differences that exist between groups of people” (Wagner 1991, 186). Churches fail to change. They keep doing the same thing. Their ministries are based on yesteryear’s culture. “Churches and denominations have chosen to pursue business as usual as if they were ministering in the context faced by their grandfathers” (Barna 1993, 12).

Generational Differences in the Church

(Hadaway 1991, 186; Wagner 1996, 25-27; Barna 1989, 1-2 and Barna 1993, 33-38). Today our churches are being plagued with generational differences. Two groups of people, the elderly and the baby boomers, are being affected. Hadaway found, “churches, which were dominated by the elderly, were less likely to experience breakout growth” (Hadaway 1991, 186). They suffer from “old blood,” “churches in which young people are virtually absent” (Barna 1993, 33-38). The second group is baby boomers. They are disappearing from churches. This group should provide the greatest leadership and financial support, but in many communities today they have quit going to church.

Demographic Review

Today’s church is inundated with demographic changes in the community. These factors are important because “Most still prefer to attend churches that are fairly close (the median distance appears to be between one and three miles. The dependency on surrounding neighborhoods causes churches largely to mirror the population growth patterns occurring in these area” (Hadaway 1982, 373).

Contextual factors can have more influence on the church than institutional factors. Hadaway explains:

The institutional survival of any organization is dependent on how well it functions. Churches are no different in this respect, some providing the primary functions of meaning and belonging better than others. Since churches are voluntary organizations, presumably those churches, which are able to maintain a plausible system of meaning and a warm sense of community, are more likely to prosper. To a great extent, however, the survival and successes of a church may have little to do with its efforts to provide meaning and belonging. Instead, the adaptive constraints forced upon the church by the demographic environment may be much more important to institutional survival. (Hadaway 1981, 77)

Contextual Factors Leading to Church Decline

There are many contextual factors that affect church ministry. Many of these demographic factors do not affect church growth or decline, but help the church minister to its community. Household types, education, occupation, marital status, and language spoken in the home are variables that can determine how the church ministers to its community. Stump list three social factors that can affect church growth and decline:

1. Population growth represents one of the primary contextual factors affecting church growth.
2. Change in racial diversity may affect local growth.
3. High rates of immigration in a county may influence church growth through the aggregate effects of individual migrant behavior (Stump 1998, 639).

Population Factors

“A 1% or 2% change per year generally represents a fairly stable population. If the growth or loss is 3% to 5%, the change is significant and makes it difficult for a church to continue its usual programs” (Price 1995, 118). Fortunately, “the latest research by Roozen and Hadaway finds that demographic variables continue to be important but have diminished in influence because population change in the United States has slowed” (Clay 1995, 116). “Three factors correlate with church growth: new housing, racial stability, and middle to affluent households” (Price 1995, 117).

Changing neighborhoods can have a radical effect on churches. Hadaway lists four common factors that occur in churches when neighborhoods quit growing and begin to change.

1. Membership growth brings with it satisfaction, optimism, and the sort of positive feeling that newcomers find attractive. Yet when there are few newcomers available because the population has stabilized, church growth typically slows. Rarely will the membership recognize that the easy growth of previous years was not due to the pastor and to his own efforts, so they are likely to become demoralized and dissatisfied. The once active, optimistic church can easily

become the introspective, stagnant church. Such a church is not only unattractive to new residents; many of the members may leave to find a more “dynamic” church. Before long, serious membership decline may develop.

2. Churches tend to suffer when the social composition of their neighborhoods begins to change. Churches find it increasingly difficult to replace members who move away, and the “fit” of the congregation to its surrounding neighborhoods becomes less and less close. These tendencies all relate to the fact that when a church initially forms, it becomes structured around the class, character, values, and actual residents of the neighborhoods it serves.
3. When new residents are not of the same social class or stage in the life cycle or do not share the same values and lifestyles as the members who make up the core of the church, these newcomers may feel that the present structure and orientation of the church simply do not meet their needs. The membership, on the other hand, who feel very comfortable with the church, are not likely to change in order to accommodate the new residents, because they do not understand why the newcomers should feel uncomfortable.
4. If a pattern of “white flight” develops, church and Sunday school class rolls tend to dwindle quickly, but the members who remain in nearby neighborhoods or who commute back to the church still cling to their image of the church as it once was. Potential newcomers are now of another race and the barriers between “we” and “they” become even greater. Radical change in the identity of the church and new avenues of entry for newcomers are essential if a decline is ever to be halted. Yet most churches do not react in time; they dwindle and die or simply move to new neighborhoods where racial transition is not yet a problem. (Hadaway 1982, 373)

Racial Factors

“In looking at population change, it is very important to examine racial or ethnic trends. If racial change is occurring, what is happening with church membership? In what ways can the church respond to the change?” (Price 1995, 119). Change in racial diversity may affect local growth when the church is made up of one ethnic group.

Research found, “An increase in the proportion of minority group members within a local population may limit the growth potential of most of these churches. Even if a county’s population is growing rapidly, if it is also becoming more racially diverse, the overall increase in population may contribute little to growth” (Stump 1998, 639). “Prejudice and the tendency of churches to be homogeneous compound the problems, and the result is

that many churches in transitional communities either die or merge with churches in another part of the city” (Hadaway, 1981, 83).

Dealing with Contextual Changes

Like other organizations, churches must deal with the adaptive constraints forced upon them if they are to achieve their goals and function normally. Because of their voluntary nature this is perhaps more critical to churches than to many other organizations. Simply being present in a neighborhood does not insure that new residents will attend the church, because a great deal depends on who the newcomers are and how their social characteristics fit the members who are already present. (Hadaway, 1981, 88)

“Few churches realize that previous growth was due primarily to demographic factors, so they tend to turn inward and blame themselves or their pastors rather than beginning to reach out to the unchurched people in their communities” (Hadaway 1982, 380).

Changes in the community structure do not have to be the end of the local church. Churches do not have to give in to contextual factors. Carroll’s research on growing churches found that “growing churches have typically found ways to meet the needs of their constituencies, whether these constituencies are a single type of audience or multiple constituencies” (Carroll 1978, 80).

Life-cycle of the Church

Churches typically go through a life-cycle. This is seen in the early first century church. Churches around forty years of age were going through a period of which the Apostle John calls “the luke-warm period” (Rev 3: 14-22). They were described as neither hot nor cold. God was sick of them. His response was, “I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Rev 3:16). Studies that help churches recognize these stages have been conducted.

The first stage is the start-up stage. “A single individual or small group determines the need for a new organization, gathers the resources, entices people to serve on a board of directors, establishes a charter and legal entity, and commences operation” (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 132). In this stage a church “usually begins with a dream. Usually that dream includes the evangelization of many persons in its community and a bringing of its members closer to God” (Baker, Brown, and Dale 1991, 6).

The second phase is the growth phase. In this phase the church establishes a belief system. It “sets goals and soon a structure appears that is simple at first but becomes more complex with the size and age of the church” (Baker, Brown, and Dale 1991, 6). “The growth phase may be slow or fast” (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 132).

The third phase is the mature phase. “A mature organization has enough experience to know what works and has established itself in the community” (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 132). At this stage the church “is at its apex in ministry” (Baker, Brown, and Dale 1991, 6).

The last stage is the decline phase. “Decline happens when the activities of an otherwise successful organization become so inflexible in the pursuit of efficiency and continuity that the organization loses touch with the changing needs of its clients or the community. The organization then either slowly sinks into irrelevance or is made obsolete by more responsive groups” (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 130). “The first symptom of the church’s being on a downward curve is nostalgia. A church should rightly appreciate its great past chapters in its life-history book. But for members to insist on living in a past golden era is unhealthy” (Baker, Brown, and Dale 1991, 6). Many things begin to take place as the church declines. People question why, they find themselves taking sides and finally church members begin to drop out.

“Instead of moving into the fourth phase and declining or prolonging the maturity stage through renewal, organizations have one other alternative. An organization can transform itself into a new entity, with an entirely new vision and mission and a dramatically different operating style” (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 132). “Leaders lead the church back to its original dream and then help it to redream new dreams for today” (Baker, Brown, and Dale 1991, 6).

Growing, Plateaued, and Declining Churches

Church growth, plateau, and decline can be measured using a five year - ten percent measurement. Figure 1 shows churches that have gained ten percent or more in church attendance over the past five years are considered growing. Churches that have remained stable, not growing or declining more than ten percent either way, are considered plateaued. And churches that have lost ten percent or more in church attendance are considered declining (Baker, Brown, and Dale 1991, 7).

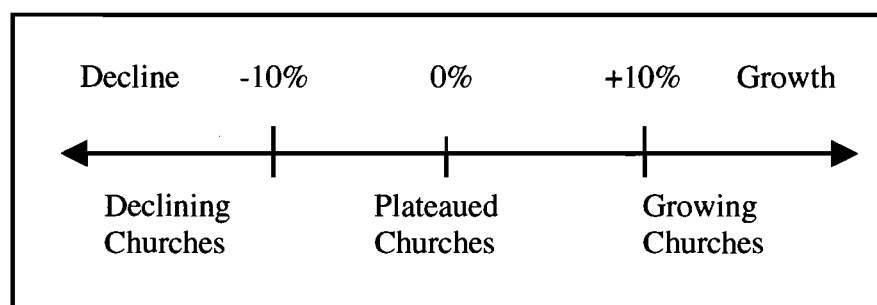


Figure 1. Growing, Plateaued, and Declining Churches Over Past Five Years

Summarization of Demographic Review

Through an analysis of the demographic review and church growth specialists, five topics were found to be common considerations of the demographic influences on

the church: population growth and decline in the community, ethnical changes in the community, life-cycle of the church, church growth, plateau, and decline, and pastoral tenure.

Population Growth and Decline in the Community

(McGavran and Arn 1977, 74; Wagner 1996, 44; Hadaway 1982, 373; Stump 1998, 639; Price 1995, 116-18). "Population growth represents one of the primary contextual factors affecting church growth" (Stump 1998, 639). "Every year almost one-fifth of the nation's population moves" (Barna 1993, 33-38). Member growth brings with it satisfaction, optimisms, and the sort of positive feeling that newcomers find attractive. Yet when there are few newcomers available because the population has stabilized, church growth typically slows" (Hadaway 1982, 373). Churches lose their optimistic personality. Many of the members may leave to find a more dynamic church.

A 1% or 2 % change per year in population generally represents a stable population. "If the growth or loss is 3% to 5%, the change is significant and makes it difficult for a church to continue its usual programs" (Price 1995, 118).

Ethnic Changes in the Community

(McGavran and Arn 1977, 110; Barna 1993, 33-38; Wagner 1996, 25). "Churches tend to suffer when the social composition of their neighborhoods begin to change" (Hadaway 1982, 373). "Changes in racial diversity may affect the local church. High rates of immigration in a county may influence church growth through the aggregate effects of individual migrant behavior" (Stump 1998, 639).

"If a pattern of 'white flight' develops, church and Sunday school class rolls tend to dwindle quickly, but the members who remain in nearby neighborhoods or who

commute back to the church still cling to their image of the church as it once was” (Hadaway 1982, 373). Research has found “an increase in the proportion of minority group members within a local population may limit the growth potential of most of these churches” (Stump 1998, 639).

Church Longevity

(Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 132; Baker, Brown and Dale 1991, 6; Rainer 1993, 205-06). Churches typically go through four stages of life. The start-up stage brings excitement and people want to join in the excitement. The growth phase sets up goals and a structure appears. The mature phase establishes itself in the community. The last stage, the decline phase, “happens when the activities of an otherwise successful organization become so inflexible in the pursuit of efficiency and continuity that the organization loses touch with the changing needs of its clients or the community (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 130).

Church Growth, Plateau, and Decline

(Price 2003; Stovall 2001; Baker, Brown, and Dale 1991, 7). Growing churches are churches that have had a 10% growth in attendance in the past five years. Plateaued churches are churches that have neither grown nor declined in attendance more than 10% in the last five years. Declining churches are churches that have declined 10% or more in attendance in the past five years (Baker, Brown, and Dale 1991, 7).

Pastoral Tenure

(Barna 2002, 119; Wagner 1976, 67; Rainer 2001, 146). “The typical pastor has his or her greatest ministry impact at a church in five through fourteen years” (Barna 2002, 119). It has been found that “the most productive years of any staff person begin

about year five, six, or seven” (Callahan 1983, 51). The average tenure of a pastor is 3.8 years. “The average tenure of an unchurched-reaching pastor is 11.8 years” (Rainer 2001, 146).

Conclusion

Throughout the study of precedent literature four concerns of church growth, plateau, and decline have emerged. From these, nineteen factors have surfaced as factors that could cause church decline. These nineteen factors are not the only factors that a church may face that would cause decline, but are the factors most spoken of in the precedent literature.

Biblical and Theological Concern

There are concerns that churches today may not be biblically sound, that immorality is present in the church’s leadership and youth, and that pastoral authority is being circumvented in the church.

Leadership and Organizational Concern

There are concerns that churches today may be lacking pastoral leadership, that there is a lack of laity involvement and training, that small group adult Bible study may not be present in the churches, that there is a lack of prayer emphasis, and that discipleship training is lacking in the churches.

Cultural Concern

There are concerns that churches today may be lacking inspired worship, that evangelism is not emphasized, that there is a lack of ministry, that fellowship among members is lacking, that there is no enthusiasm and growth consciousness in the

churches, that the churches are afraid of innovation and change, and that generational differences may be lacking in the churches.

Demographic Concern

There are concerns that churches today may be lacking population growth in the community, that ethnic changes have occurred in the community and the churches have not adapted to the changes, that pastoral tenures have been short, and that churches have been established for many years and this is affecting church growth.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

In analyzing the factors leading to church decline in a metropolitan center in the areas of biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic context, five research questions were investigated.

Research Question Synopsis

1. What biblical and theological factors have led to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
2. What leadership and organizational factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
3. What cultural factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
4. What demographic factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
5. What differences are there between declining churches in comparison to growing and plateaued churches in a metropolitan center?

Design Overview

The population was the Protestant churches in the metropolitan center of Houston, Texas. The sampling was made up of ten major denominations with a total population of 842 churches. The sampling was made up of all pastors of major denominations who had e-mail addresses and half of the pastors of major denominations without e-mail addresses available. The random sampling used for mailing addresses was every other church listed by denominations in alphabetical order.

E-mail addresses were received from the director of churches of the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations. Other e-mail addresses and mailing addresses were acquired through the Internet. The main source of receiving mailing addresses and calculating the number of churches was www.cityofhouston.org. As a courtesy to the participating churches, a summary of the results of the study was sent to them.

An Internet-based Likert response scale survey was formulated using the biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic factors found in the precedent literature. Response statements were scrambled. Two surveys were created, a paper survey and an electronic survey. The first survey was created using Microsoft Word and was mailed out along with a self-addressed stamped envelope (Appendix 1). The second survey was created using Quask Form Artist by Quask AG and was posted on the Internet at www.irajonesministries.com/churchsurvey.htm (Appendix 2).

All information gathered was confidential. Each participating church was assigned a number. Pastors and church names do not appear in the study.

Pastors receiving their survey through the Internet received three communications from the researcher. The first two were sent to all participants. After the results were received from the second communication, a telephone call was made to all pastors who had not yet participated in the survey. The pastors were contacted personally or a voicemail message was left asking them to participate. A third communication was sent to them. Surveys were mailed out only once to the churches of five denominations that did not have adequate e-mail addresses: Assembly of God, Church of God, Church of Christ, Episcopal, and Christian.

Information was entered into a worksheet using Microsoft Excel. Data was sorted into three categories: growing, plateaued, and declining churches. Means, mode, median, and

standard deviation scores were tallied from the responses. The scores were compared using the three categories of churches. Through careful evaluation of the information, the conclusion was formulated.

Population

The population was Protestant churches in the metropolitan center of Houston, Texas.

Samples and Delimitations

There are many Protestant churches in the metropolitan center of Houston, Texas. Therefore, there was a sampling taken. The sampling was made up of all pastors of major denominations who had an e-mail address and denominations without e-mail addresses available, half of the churches. The random sampling used for mailing the survey was every other church listed by major denominations in alphabetical order. Table 1 shows a total of 523 surveys were sent.

Surveys were sent to all pastors without consideration of criteria. Once the surveys were received the number of churches considered was diminished by the following criteria:

1. Mission churches who were not established churches.
2. Churches less than five years old, who were not established before 1998.
3. Pastor who did not agree to participate.

This criterion was chosen because it is the minimum requirement necessary to understand church decline. A church organized for at least five years will have an established pattern.

Table 1. Number of Churches and Sampling in Houston, Texas

Church Denominations	Number of Churches	Surveys Sent Through E-mails	Surveys Sent Through Mail
Presbyterian	41	25	
Assembly of God and Church of God	97	13	48
Baptist	374	185	
Methodist	96	64	
Church of Christ	104	14	51
Episcopal	28	22	14
Lutheran	63	46	
Nazarene	10	8	
Christian	29	4	29
Total	842	381	142
Grand Totals	842	523	

Limitations of Generalization

1. The study was conducted in the metropolitan center of Houston, Texas. The study does not necessarily generalize to other metropolitan centers, to rural areas, or small cities and towns.
2. The study is made of major denominations in Houston, Texas. The study does not necessarily generalize to other smaller denominations or independent churches.
3. The study is made of churches that have been established since 1998. The study will not necessarily generalize to churches younger than five-years old.
4. The “Likert response scale survey” was written in English. The study does not necessarily generalize to churches of pastors who do not read and are not able to respond in English.

Instrumentation

An Internet based “Likert response scale survey” was formulated using the research found in the precedent literature. Responses were composed from the four areas of

concern: biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic factors leading to church decline. The survey was prepared in a written form using Microsoft Word (Appendix 1) and for answering on the Internet using Quask AG (Appendix 2).

Demographic Information Gathered

The following demographical information was gathered on the survey.

1. The denomination of the church – What was the church's denomination?
2. The status of the church – Was the church established (chartered, constituted, incorporated, etc)?
3. The age of the church – How long had the church been established?
4. The pastoral tenure – How long had the pastor served as pastor of the church?
5. The location of the church – Was the church located in Houston, Texas?
6. The classification of the church – Was the church growing, plateaued, or declining?

Statements were written reflecting the four concerns. There were nineteen factors found in the precedent literature under the four areas of concern. The first factor, biblical soundness in the church, was divided into four separate fields of biblical doctrine. Three statements were written for each factor in the Likert response scale survey.

Biblical and Theological Concerns

1. Factors of biblical soundness in the church.

The purpose of testing biblical soundness in the church was to determine if false teachings and false doctrines were being taught in the church and contributed to church decline. The four basic doctrines tested were God, Jesus, the Bible, and Salvation. The following statements were tested:

God:

God is creator and is active today.

God has power over all things.

God is both all loving and all judging.

Jesus:

Jesus is more than a prophet; He is the only Son of God.

Jesus walked on earth, died, and was resurrected.

Jesus and God are one.

Bible:

The Bible is the written revelation of God through men and women.

The Bible is relevant for today's society.

The Bible, God's word, does not change.

Salvation:

Salvation is by the grace of God.

Humanity cannot save itself.

Salvation is free, but a person must ask to receive it.

2. Factors of immorality in the church's leadership and youth.

The purpose of testing the factors of immorality in the church was to determine if immorality among the leadership and the youth of the church contributed to church decline.

The following statements were tested:

An immoral pastor or staff has affected our church.

Immoral lay leadership has affected our church.

Many youth in the church are sexually active.

3. Factors of pastoral authority in the church.

The purpose of testing the factors of pastoral authority in the church was to determine if the level of pastoral authority contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

As pastor, I have authority to make decisions.

There are some in the church who regularly undermine my pastoral authority.

There are leaders in the church stronger than I am and dictate how our church functions.

Leadership and Organizational Concerns

4. Factors of pastoral leadership in the church.

The purpose of testing the factors of pastoral leadership in the church was to determine if the level of pastoral leadership contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

I have a vision for the direction of our church.

Our church has developed a mission statement.

Our ministries of the church are aligned with our mission statement.

5. Factors of laity involvement and training in the church.

The purpose of testing the factors of laity involvement and training in the church was to determine if the level of laity involvement and training contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Developing lay leadership is a high priority for our church.

Lay workers are regularly trained for ministry.

The pastor has the responsibility to see that the lay workers are trained.

6. Factors of small group adult Bible study

The purpose of testing the factors of small group adult Bible study was to determine if the level of adult Bible study contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Our church has adult small Bible study groups that meet regularly.

Our small group Bible studies meet for prayer, fellowship, and Bible study.

The Bible is the source of study in our small group.

7. Factors of prayer emphasis

The purpose of testing the factors of prayer emphasis was to determine if the level of prayer emphasis contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Our church regularly prays for non-believers.

Prayer is a high priority for me in my life as pastor.

The vision for the church comes through prayer.

8. Factors of discipleship training

The purpose of testing the factors of discipleship training was to determine if the level of training of new believers contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

New believers attend a new members class or meet regularly with a staff person or lay volunteer.

New believers are assigned a mentor.

Our church has a program for new believers to minister alongside a mature Christian.

Cultural Concerns

9. Factors of inspired worship

The purpose of testing the factors of inspired worship was to determine if the level of inspired worship in the church contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Going to worship is considered fun in our church.

When people come to worship they sense the friendliness of our church.

There is regularly a sense of awe in our worship service.

10. Factors of evangelism in the church

The purpose of testing the factors of evangelism in the church was to determine if the level of evangelism in the church contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Evangelism is a high priority in our church.

Our church has a strategy for reaching non-believers in our community.

Our church regularly has people who accept Christ as their Lord and Savior.

11. Factors of ministry in the church

The purpose of testing the factors of ministry in the church was to determine if the level of ministering in the church contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Most of our active church members are involved in ministry.

Ministry is carried on in the church during the week.

Lay people perform most of the ministry in our church.

12. Factors of fellowship in the church

The purpose of testing the factors of fellowship in the church was to determine if the level of fellowship in the church contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Our church functions as a “family of God.”

Our church members regularly meet together for fellowship and activities.

Our church members care for each other and regularly minister to one another.

13. Factors of enthusiasm and growth consciousness in the church

The purpose of testing the factors of enthusiasm and growth consciousness in the church was to determine if the level of enthusiasm and attitude of growth consciousness in the church contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Our church is a joyful place to be.

Our church members are on “fire” and love to serve.

Our church is growth conscious.

14. Factors of innovation and change in the church

The purpose of testing the factors of innovation and change in the church was to determine if the level of innovation and the willingness to change contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Our church is not afraid of new ideas, innovations, and change.

Our church’s worship and ministry is the same today as it has always been. It has not changed.

Most of our members do not live in the neighborhood, but travel here each Sunday.

15. Factors of generational differences in the church

The purpose of testing the factors of generational differences in the church was to determine if generational differences contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Our church consists primarily of senior adults.

Our church lacks middle-aged leaders.

Our church has an active youth and children's ministry program.

Demographic Concerns

16. Factors of population growth in the community.

The purpose of testing the factors of population growth in the community was to determine if decline in population growth contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

Our church is located in a growing community.

New members are regularly added to our church because they have moved into the community.

Our community has lost homes due to unforeseen situations (floods, buy-outs, factory closures, etc).

17. Factors of ethnic changes in the community

The purpose of testing the factors of ethnic change in the community was to determine if the changes in the ethnicity of the community contributed to church decline. The following statements were tested:

The neighborhood surrounding our church is considered multi-ethnic.

Our church reflects the ethnicity of our neighborhood.

Most of our members live in the neighborhood surrounding the church.

18. Factors of pastoral tenures.

The purpose of testing the factors of pastoral tenures was to determine if the lengths of pastoral tenures contributed to church decline.

19. Factors of church longevity.

The purpose of testing the factors of church longevity was to determine if the age of the church contributed to church decline.

Procedures

The procedures were divided into six steps: Creating the Internet-based Likert response scale survey, collection of sampling names and e-mail addresses, distribution of the surveys, gathering the data information, analyzing the data received, and drawing conclusions from the research.

Creating the Likert Response Scale Survey

A research profile, the researchers Vita, the Assessment of Risk to Human Subjects in Research form, and a description of the proposed instrumentation to be used in conducting the research was sent to the Research Ethics Committee of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for approval.

A paper survey of the Internet-based Likert Response Scale survey was formulated and sent to the researcher's supervisor for preliminary approval. The paper survey was tested on three church pastors from three different denominations. Corrections were made and the survey was retested with two different pastors. The final survey was sent to the researcher's supervisor for approval.

The survey statements were scrambled. The written survey was prepared for mailing (Appendix 1) and the Internet based survey was created using the Quask program (Appendix 2). The Internet based survey was downloaded to the website www.irajonesministries.com/churchsurvey.htm. The Internet-based Likert Response Scale survey was tested for clarity and ease of use by two pastors of different denominations.

Collection of Sampling Names and E-mail Addresses

The Internet site www.cityofhouston.org was used to find the names and addresses of pastors in Houston. It listed the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the churches.

The researcher contacted the denomination offices of the United Methodist, Southern Baptist, and Presbyterian, USA in Houston, Texas, and asked for the names and e-mail addresses of the churches. He also found the web sites for the Lutheran, Episcopal, Assembly of God, Church of Christ, and Nazarene denominations that had recorded the names and e-mail addresses of the churches in Houston.

Distribution of the Surveys

The e-mail addresses of each pastor were entered into the Quask program. Labels were typed for churches of the denominations that had an insufficient number of e-mail addresses and had few responses to the Internet survey.

The researcher sent out the first letter through e-mail to the pastors of each denomination asking them to go on the Internet and complete the survey. The letter was designed in such a way that the pastor only had to click on the easy link to go to the web site to complete the survey (Appendix 3). The second e-mail was sent out a week later thanking

the pastors that had filled out the survey and reminding the pastors, if they have not filled out the survey, to please do so now (Appendix 4).

The researcher called all churches that had not responded to the Internet survey. He verified the pastor's e-mail address and requested the pastor to fill out the survey. The third e-mail letter was sent to the churches contacted (Appendix 5).

Four denominations were selected to receive surveys by mail. These denominations were selected because of the lack of participation to the Internet survey and the small number of e-mail address available. Letters were mailed to the selected churches by the criteria stated earlier. Each communication had a letter explaining the survey (Appendix 6), the survey (Appendix 1), and a stamped self-addressed return envelope.

Gathering the Data Information

The survey information was received and recorded on the web site. All information received through the paper survey was also entered into the Internet database. The Quask program retrieved the information and transferred it to a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel. The program calculated the mean, mode, median, and standard deviation for each response.

Analyzing the Data Received

Surveys of churches less than five years old (those established before 1998), mission churches that were not established churches, and surveys marked, "I do not want to participate" were excluded from the study except when analyzing pastoral tenure and church longevity.

All data was sorted into three categories: growing, plateaued, and declining churches. Calculations were made on the summation of the survey, the four areas of concern, and the nineteen factors of concern.

Conclusions from the Research

Conclusions were drawn from the data collected using the five research questions.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to identify the biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic factors contributing to the decline of churches in a metropolitan center.

Compilation Protocol

The data in this study was compiled using a Likert response scale survey. The survey was sent to the pastors using two methods. First, the survey was posted on the Internet and e-mails were sent to the pastors using the program Quask. The pastors went to the web address and completed the survey. Second, four denominations did not have sufficient e-mail addresses and the survey was mailed or faxed to them. All information received was transmitted to the web site using Quask.

Table 2 shows, of 548 surveys sent out to pastors of churches in Houston, Texas, 406 were emailed and 142 were mailed. A total of 100 surveys were returned, 92 through the Internet and 9 by fax or mail. The total return ratio of sent/received was 19%. From that total, 1 pastor responded, “did not want to participate” and 5 surveys were received from pastors of churches that had been established after 1998. Their responses were not used in the compilation of overall statistics except in the age of the church compared to growing, plateaued, and declining churches and years pastors have served compared to growing, plateaued, and declining churches.

Table 2. Sampling of Churches and Church Responses

Church Denominations	No.	Surveys Sent		Surveys Received	
		E-mails	Mailed	E-mails	Mailed
Presbyterian	41	25			3
Assembly of God and Church of God	97	13	48		2
Baptist	374	185		50	
Methodist	96	64		21	
Church of Christ	104	14	51		3
Episcopal	28	22	14		1
Lutheran	63	46		18	
Nazarene	10	8		1	
Christian	29	4	29		
Do not want to participate				1	
Total	842	381	142	91	9
Grand Totals	842	523		100	

The data was retrieved from the website using Quask and was translated into a Microsoft Excel worksheet for analyzing (Appendix 7). The program Quask figured the means, median, mode, and standard deviation for each statement. The information was sorted into three categories: growing, plateaued, and declining churches. Totals were calculated for the total survey. Second, the data was sorted into the four areas of concern: biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic concerns. And third, the data was sorted into the factors related to the areas of concerns. Biblical and theological had three factors. Leadership and organizational had five. Cultural concerns had seven. And, demographic concerns had four.

Findings and Displays

The research was divided into four concerns: biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural factors, and demographic factors. These four concerns were divided into nineteen factors. There were sixty statements in the survey related to the seventeen factors and two general statements dealing with pastor and church longevity. Points were given for each response: Strongly agree – 1 point, agree – 2 points, somewhat agree – 3 points, disagree – 4 points, and strongly disagree – 5 points. Eleven of the sixty responses were inverted to better reflect the answers given in relationship to growing, plateaued, and declining churches. These are noted when the factors are discussed.

In most surveys the higher scores are usually considered good scores. In this survey, because the subject is declining churches, the higher scores are considered problems in the churches. Low scores are considered good qualities in the churches.

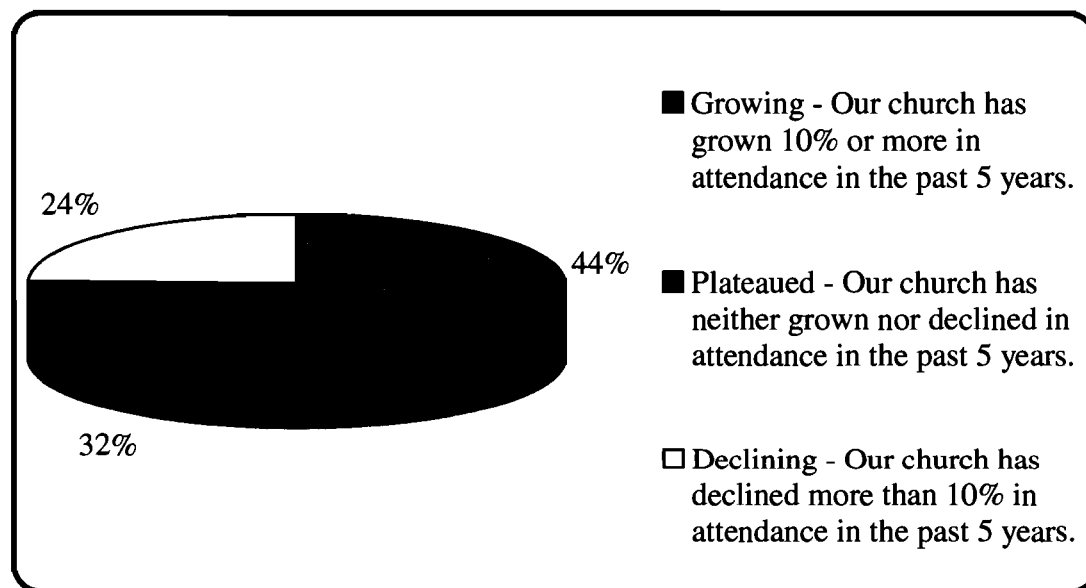


Figure 2. Classifications of Churches

Ratings of differences are defined through variances of the mean score. The ratings are: $\pm 0 - 0.4m$ = no distinct difference, $\pm 0.41 - 0.99m$ = difference, and $\pm 1.00m$ and over = distinct difference. The range of standard deviation was set at $1.25sd$. Standard deviation should fall within this range except in certain circumstances.

Overall Findings

There were 100 churches that participated in the study. Figure 2 shows the percentage of the classification of churches participating in the study, 44% were classified as growing, 32% as plateaued and 24% as declining.

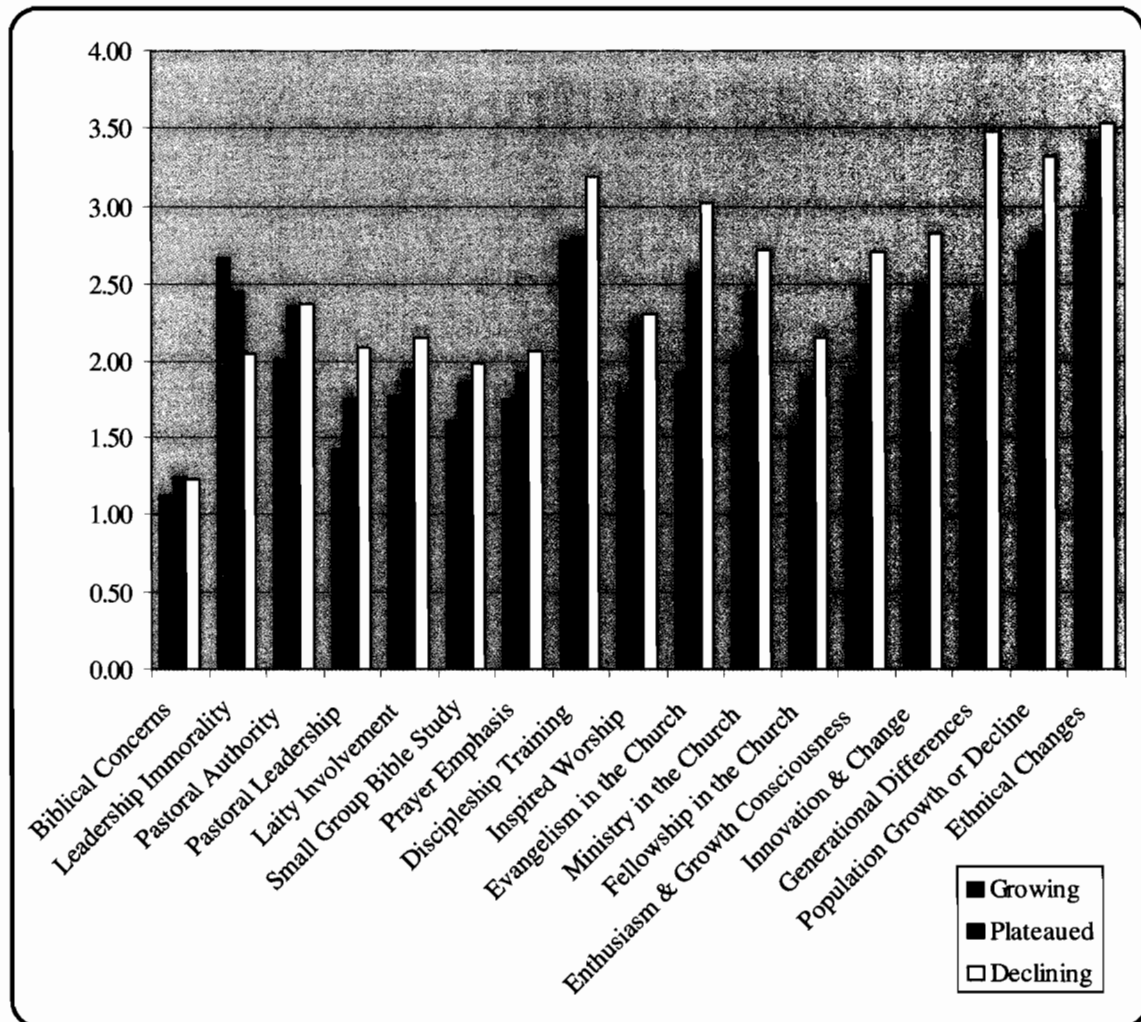


Figure 3. Mean Scores of Factors

Figure 3 shows the mean scores for the factors of concern. There was a difference between growing, plateaued, and declining churches in most areas.

In figure 4 the average total of the mean, mode and median scores are displayed. Growing churches have a 1.89 m . The mean increased by 0.25 points to a 2.14 m for plateaued churches and increased again 0.2 points to a 2.34 m for declining churches. The average difference of mean scores between growing and declining churches was 0.45 m , signifying a difference in growing and declining churches. The standard deviation averaged 1.14 sd .

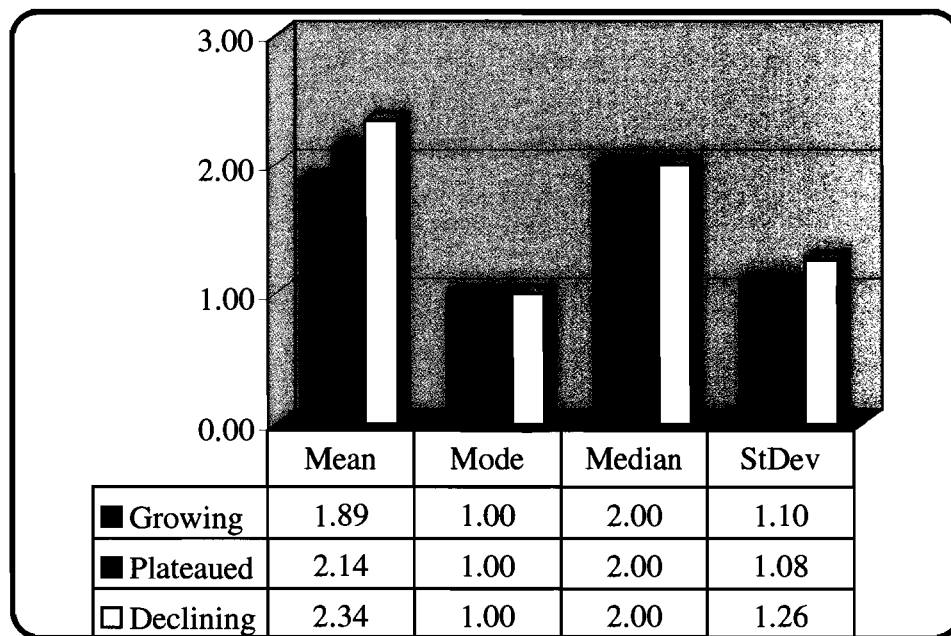


Figure 4. Mean, Mode, Median and Standard Deviation Scores

These totals give a summation of overall results but do not reflect the entire reality of the churches. A study of the four areas of concern more clearly demonstrates the realities of the churches in a metropolitan center.

Another way to understand the difference is to look at the mean of the total scores as shown in Table 3. Growing churches scored 113.17 m . Plateaued churches

scored fifteen points higher than growing churches for a mean score of 128.1 m and declining churches scored 27.44 m points higher than growing churches for a mean score of 140.61 m . The mode showed 41 *mode* points difference between growing and declining churches. The median showed 23 *median* points difference between growing and declining churches. The results of these studies conclude there is a measurable difference between growing, plateaued, and declining churches.

Table 3. Total Mean, Mode, and Median Scores

Total Scores			
	Growing	Plateaued	Declining
Mean	113.17	128.1	140.61
Mode	92.00	132.0	133.00
Median	113.00	132.0	136.00

Areas of Concern

This research measured in areas of concern: biblical and theological concerns, leadership and organizational concerns, cultural concerns, and demographic concerns. Figure 5 shows, with the exception of biblical and theological concerns, there is an increase in mean scores when comparing growing, plateaued, and declining churches.

Biblical and Theological Concerns

The research question was, “What biblical and theological factors have led to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?” The question was divided into three areas of study: factors of biblical soundness in the church, factors of immorality in the church’s leadership and youth, and factors of pastoral authority in the church.

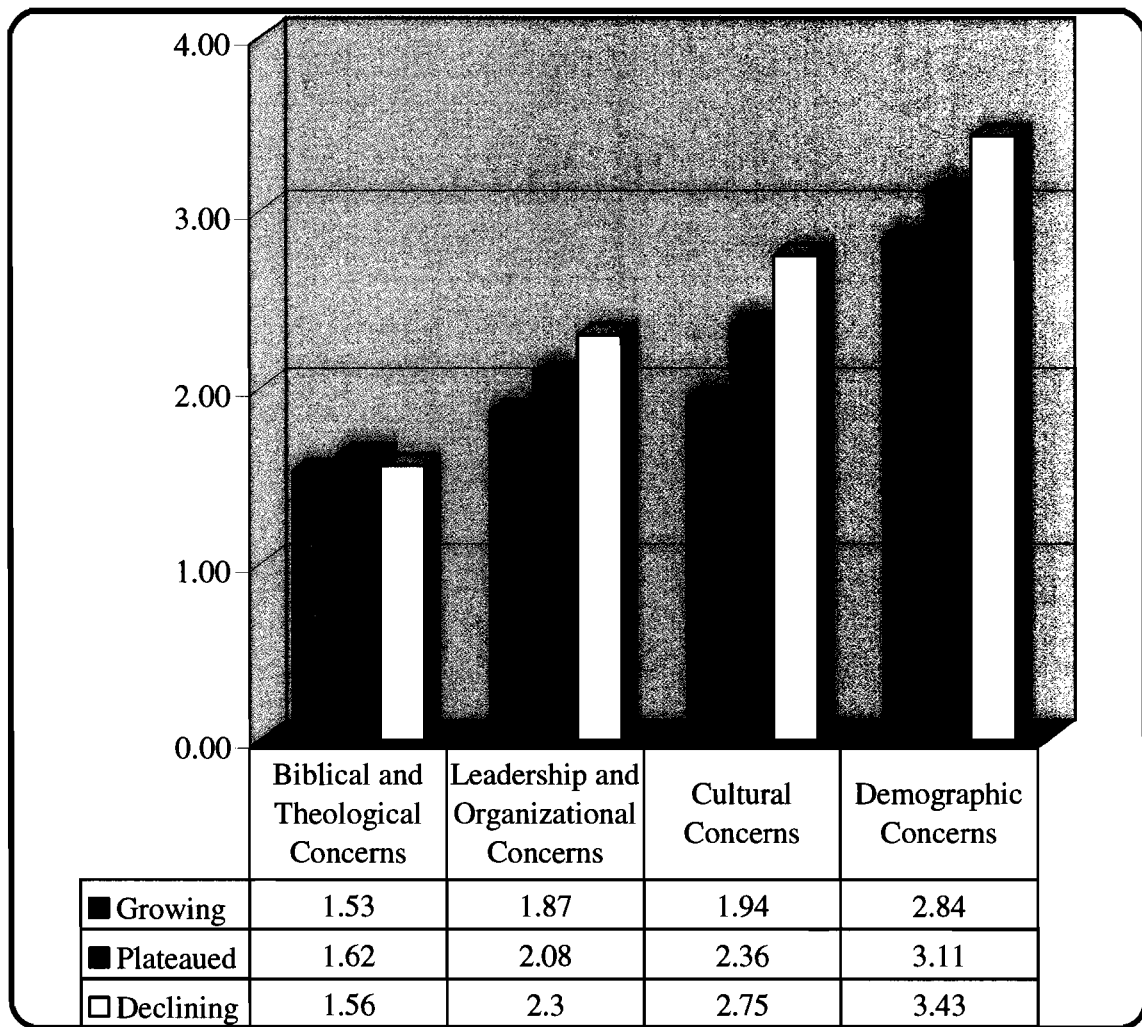


Figure 5. Mean Totals of Areas of Concern

Table 4 shows biblical and theological factors did not have a significant influence on growing, plateaued, and declining churches. The total of mean scores for growing churches was 1.53 m , for plateaued churches was 1.62 m , and for declining churches was 1.56 m . There was an overall mean difference of 0.09 m points, which showed no distinct differences. The standard deviation ranged from 0.96 sd for declining churches to 1.02 sd for plateaued churches. This falls within the standard range of deviation.

Table 4. Biblical and Theological Factors

	Growing Churches		Plateaued Churches		Declining Churches	
	Mean	St Dev	Mean	St Dev	Mean	St Dev
Factors of Biblical Concerns						
God	1.12	0.44	1.26	0.66	1.22	.057
Jesus	1.08	0.44	1.06	0.23	1.12	0.37
Bible	1.14	0.55	1.26	0.53	1.23	0.55
Salvation	1.16	0.63	1.37	0.91	1.35	0.84
Totals	1.13	0.52	1.23	0.64	1.23	0.60
Factors of Immorality	2.67	1.30	2.46	1.23	2.04	1.18
Factors of Pastoral Authority	2.01	1.10	2.36	1.11	2.38	1.18
Grand Totals	1.53	1.01	1.62	1.02	1.56	0.96

Factors of Biblical Soundness in the Church

Four basic doctrines were chosen to validate biblical soundness in the church: God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, and Salvation.

McGavran says, “The relationships between biblical principles and church growth tie church growth thinking firmly to the Bible” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 24).

The main problem faced by the first-century church was the teaching of false doctrine.

The purpose of testing biblical soundness in the church was to determine if the results of false teachings and false doctrines contributed to church decline.

The results in table 5 shows no significant differences between growing, plateaued, and declining churches. Churches of all the denominations scored about the same. The average mean score was 1.20 m and the standard deviation score was 0.59 sd

signifying there was little variation in pastors' responses. In this study biblical soundness is not a factor in declining churches.

Table 5. Responses to Statements of Biblical Soundness in Churches

Doctrinal Statements	Growing Churches	Plateaued Churches	Declining Churches
Doctrine of God			
God is creator and is active today.	1.00	1.10	1.17
God has power over all things.	1.07	1.10	1.04
God is both all loving and all judging.	1.29	1.57	1.43
Totals	1.12	1.26	1.22
Doctrine of Jesus			
Jesus is more than a prophet. He is the only son of God.	1.07	1.03	1.13
Jesus walked on earth, died, and was resurrected.	1.02	1.03	1.09
Jesus and God are one.	1.15	1.10	1.13
Totals	1.08	1.06	1.12
Doctrine of The Bible			
The Bible is the written revelation of God through holy men and women.	1.10	1.37	1.17
The Bible is relevant for today's society.	1.10	1.10	1.13
The Bible, God's Word, does not change.	1.22	1.30	1.39
Totals	1.14	1.26	1.23
Doctrine of Salvation			
Salvation is by the grace of God.	1.00	1.07	1.04
Humanity cannot save itself.	1.05	1.03	1.35
Salvation is free, but a person must ask to receive it.	1.44	2.00	1.65
Totals	1.16	1.37	1.35

Factors of Immorality in the Church

Carpenter says that we have entered into the "Fourth Great Apostasy" of sexual immorality. The church is supposed to be in the world, but not of the world.

Unfortunately, it appears that worldly values have entered in and are having a devastating effect on our churches today (Carpenter 2001, 666).

The purpose of testing the factors of immorality in the church was to determine if immorality among the leadership and the youth of the church contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if an immoral pastor or staff has affected the church, if immoral lay leaderships have affected the church, and if youth in the church are sexually active. Points are reversed for statements 1, 2, and 3.

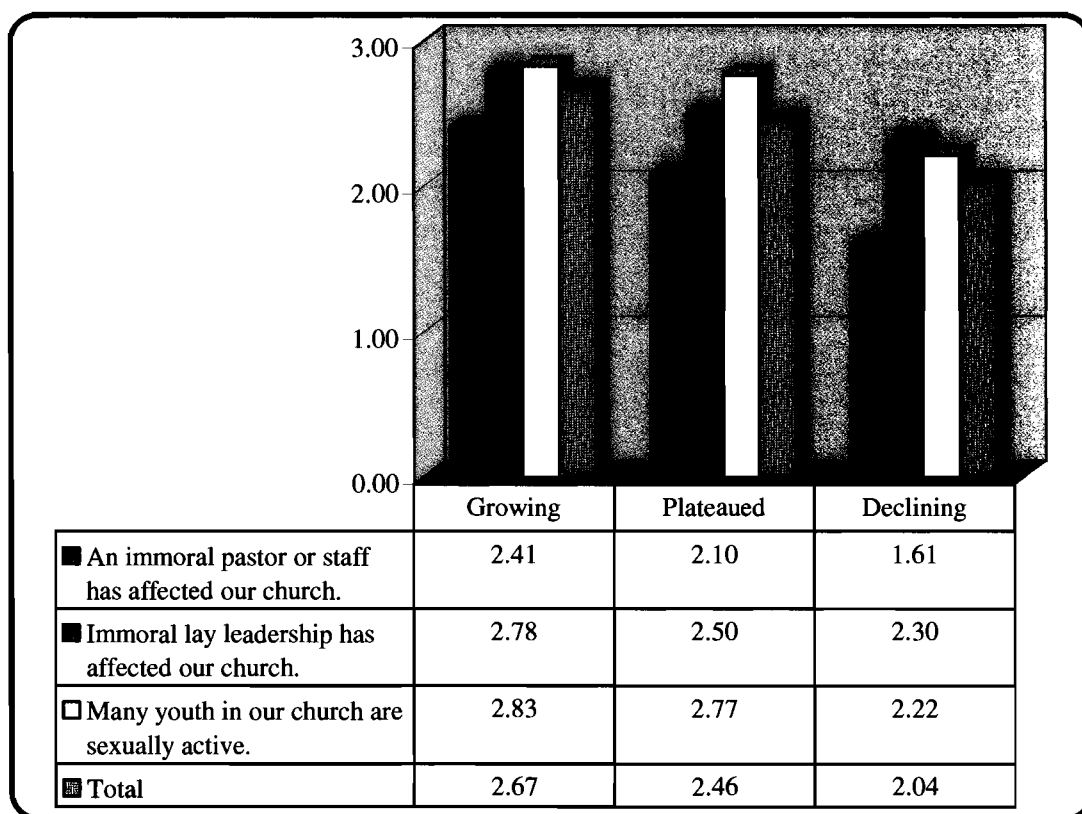


Figure 6. Immorality in the Church

Figure 6 shows declining churches have a lower rate of immorality than plateaued or growing churches. When comparing declining churches to growing churches, there was a $-0.80m$ difference in immorality with pastors or staff, a difference

of $-0.48m$ in lay leadership immorality, and, a $-0.63m$ difference in sexually active youth. The mean difference for factors of immorality in the church was $-0.63m$ lower than growing churches.

Factors of Pastoral Authority in the Church

Throughout history the church has been plagued with rebellion against the leadership of the church. Jude's letter to the church dealt with it almost exclusively. Maxwell says, "If you don't have influence, you will never be able to lead others" (Maxwell 1998, 11). Defiance undermines and destroys the influence of the pastor to lead the church.

The purpose of testing the factors of pastoral authority in the church was to determine if the level of pastoral authority contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if the pastor has authority to make decisions, if there are those in the church who regularly undermine the pastoral authority, and if there are those in the church stronger than the pastor who dictate how the church functions. Points were reversed for statements 2 and 3.

Figure 7 shows there were no significant differences between growing, plateaued, and declining churches in factors of pastoral authority in the church. The difference was $0.37m$. An analysis of the three statements shows there were some differences in the responses to the statements. All pastors said they had authority to make decisions. All three classifications of churches scored the statement, "There are some in the church who regularly undermine my pastoral authority," high, but there were no significant differences in the responses. There was a difference between growing and declining churches for the statement, "There are leaders in the church stronger than the

pastor who dictate how the church functions.” Declining churches showed a 0.62m difference signifying that even though the pastor has authority to make decisions, there are those in the church who control it. It is noteworthy that even though there were no significant differences between growing and plateaued churches, mean scores were higher for each response than from those of growing churches.

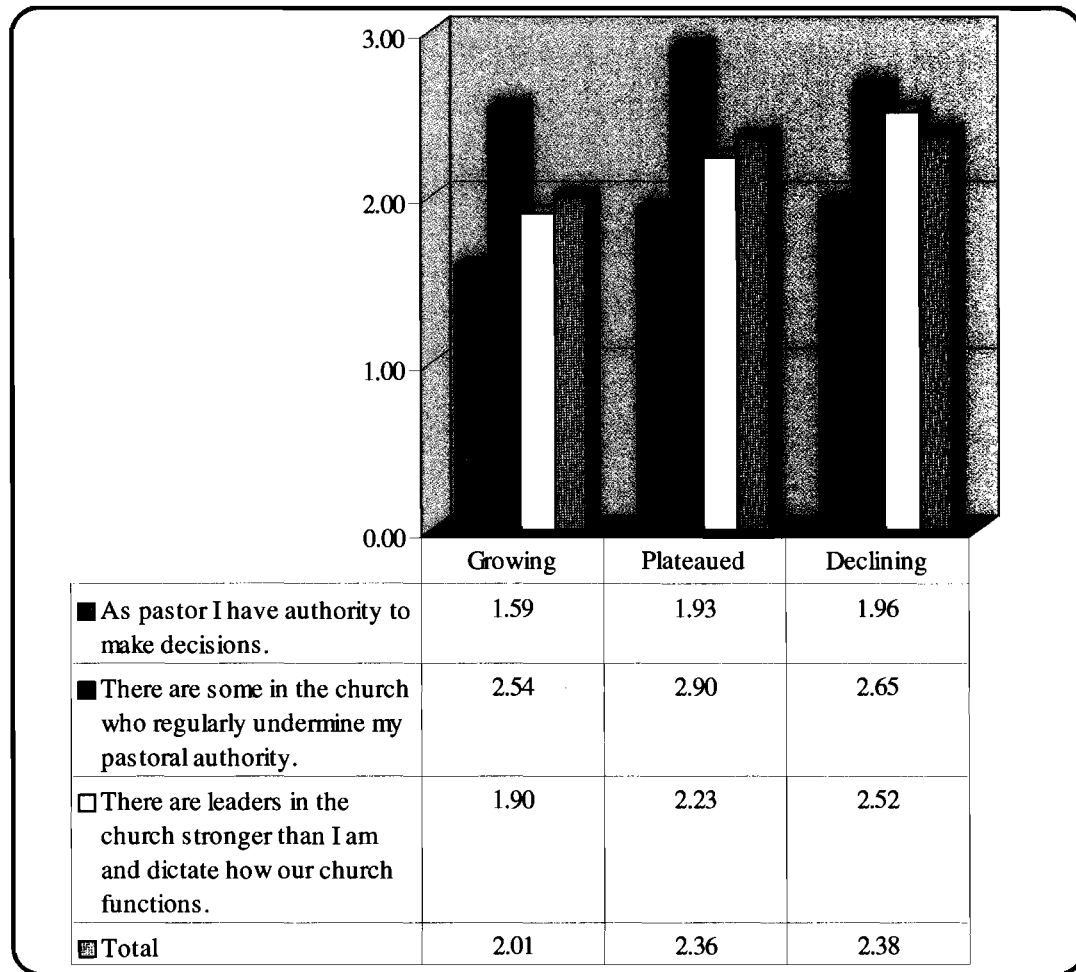


Figure 7. Pastoral Authority in the Church

Leadership and Organizational Concerns

The research question was, “What leadership and theological factors have led to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?”

The question was divided into five areas of study: factors of pastoral leadership in the church, factors of laity involvement and training in the church, factors of small group Bible study, factors of prayer emphasis, and factors of discipleship training.

Table 6 shows a mean total difference of 0.43m between growing and declining churches. This signifies there was a difference in leadership and organizational concerns. The standard deviation scores were 1.03sd for growing churches, 0.95sd for plateaued churches, and 1.12sd for declining churches. These fall within the standard deviation range of 1.25sd.

Table 6. Leadership and Organizational Factors

	Growing Churches		Plateaued Churches		Declining Churches	
	Mean	St Dev	Mean	St Dev	Mean	St Dev
Degree of pastoral leadership in the church	1.42	0.76	1.74	0.73	2.09	1.00
Degree of laity involvement and training in the	1.77	0.81	1.94	0.80	2.14	1.09
Degree of small group Bible study	1.60	0.89	1.84	0.94	1.99	1.04
Degree of prayer emphasis	1.74	0.92	1.91	0.84	2.06	0.86
Degree of discipleship training	2.77	1.19	2.80	1.06	3.19	1.24
Totals	1.87	1.03	2.08	0.95	2.30	1.12

Factors of Pastoral Leadership in the Church

Rainer says, pastoral leadership “is a major factor in the church growth process” (Rainer 1993, 185).

The purpose of testing the factors of pastoral leadership in the church was to determine if the level of pastoral leadership contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if the pastor had a vision for the church, if the church had a mission statement, and if the ministry of the church was aligned with the mission statement.

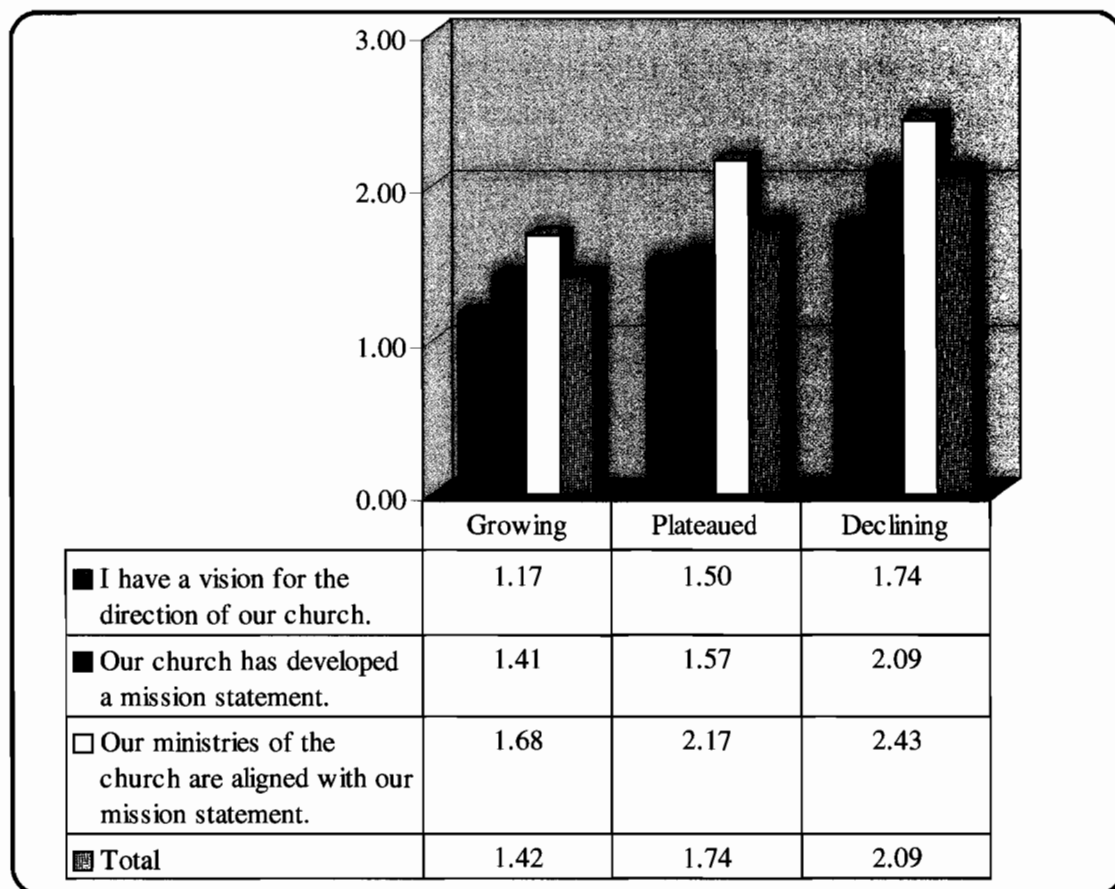


Figure 8. Pastoral Leadership in the Church

One of the main factors for growth in the church was pastoral vision and the ability to put the vision into action. Growing churches scored 1.17m. They had a total mean score of 1.42m in pastoral leadership. Plateaued churches' scores increased to a total of 1.74m points when asked about pastoral leadership, but showed no significant differences. They did show a difference of 0.49m points when asked if the ministries of

the church are aligned with the mission statement. There was a difference in declining churches. The total difference was 0.67m points when comparing their scores to growing churches. Their scores increased in each statement of pastoral leadership. When asked if they had a vision for the church, their mean scores increased 0.57m points. When asked if the church had developed a mission statement their mean scores increased 0.68m points. And, when asked if churches ministry was aligned with their mission statement, their mean scores increased 0.75m points.

Factors of Laity Involvement and Training in the Church

Lay leadership is fundamental in the growth and ministry of the church. The Bible clearly states, the responsibility of the pastor is the “equipping the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:12). Barna says, “weak leadership teams in churches have these characteristics: (1) Not enough people actively involved in ministry. (2) Insufficient commitment on the part of those who are involved. (3) People who are willing but not equipped to do the job. (4) A high dropout rate – they serve, and they leave. (5) A high burnout rate – they serve intensely, but they don’t last” (Barna 2003a 48). Without a broad and ever expanding base of lay leadership and participation at every level of the church organization and ministry, the church will never approach its potential for quality” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 55).

The purpose of testing the factors of laity involvement and training in the church was to determine if the level of laity involvement and training contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if the development of lay leadership was a high priority, if lay workers were regularly trained, and if the pastor has the responsibility to see that the lay workers are trained.

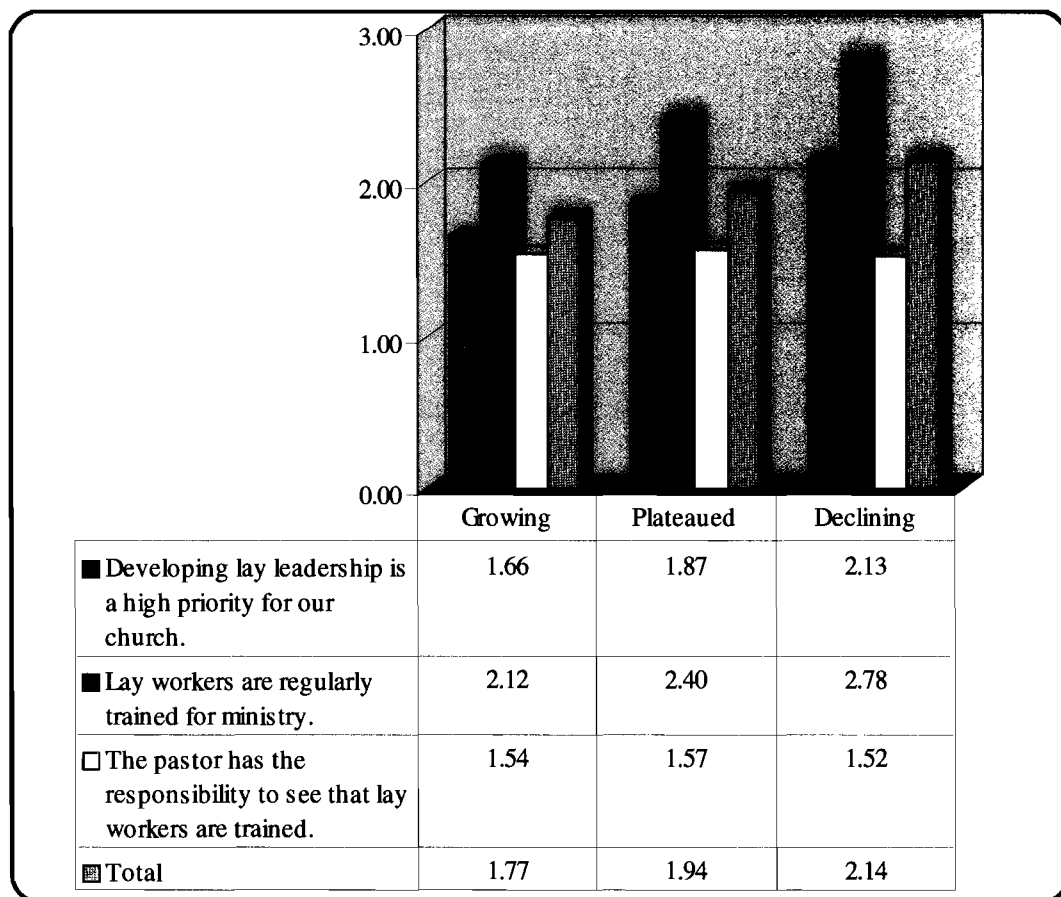


Figure 9. Laity Involvement and Training

Figure 9 shows there were no significant differences between growing, plateaued, and declining churches in factors of laity involvement and training. The difference was $0.37m$. There were some differences within the questions asked. Pastors of all classification of churches agreed the pastor has the responsibility to see that lay workers are trained. The difference was in developing lay leadership and training the lay worker. Growing churches scored $1.66m$ for developing lay leadership as a priority. Declining churches scores increased $0.47m$ points over growing churches. The greatest difference was in training. Growing churches had a mean score of $2.12m$. Declining churches scores increased $0.66m$ points over growing churches.

Factors of Small Group Adult Bible Study

“Church leaders consider Bible study as key to growth. They understand that churches grow because people are growing spiritually through the Word of God” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke 1991, 26). Schwarz calls them holistic small groups because persons attending apply the Bible study to their lives (Schwarz 1998, 32). “Small groups serve the church’s ministry in two ways. First, they provide an infrastructure for congregations in which people can interact, grow in their prayer life together, meet fellowship needs, and study the Bible in depth. Second, they serve as an avenue for outreach” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke 1991, 65).

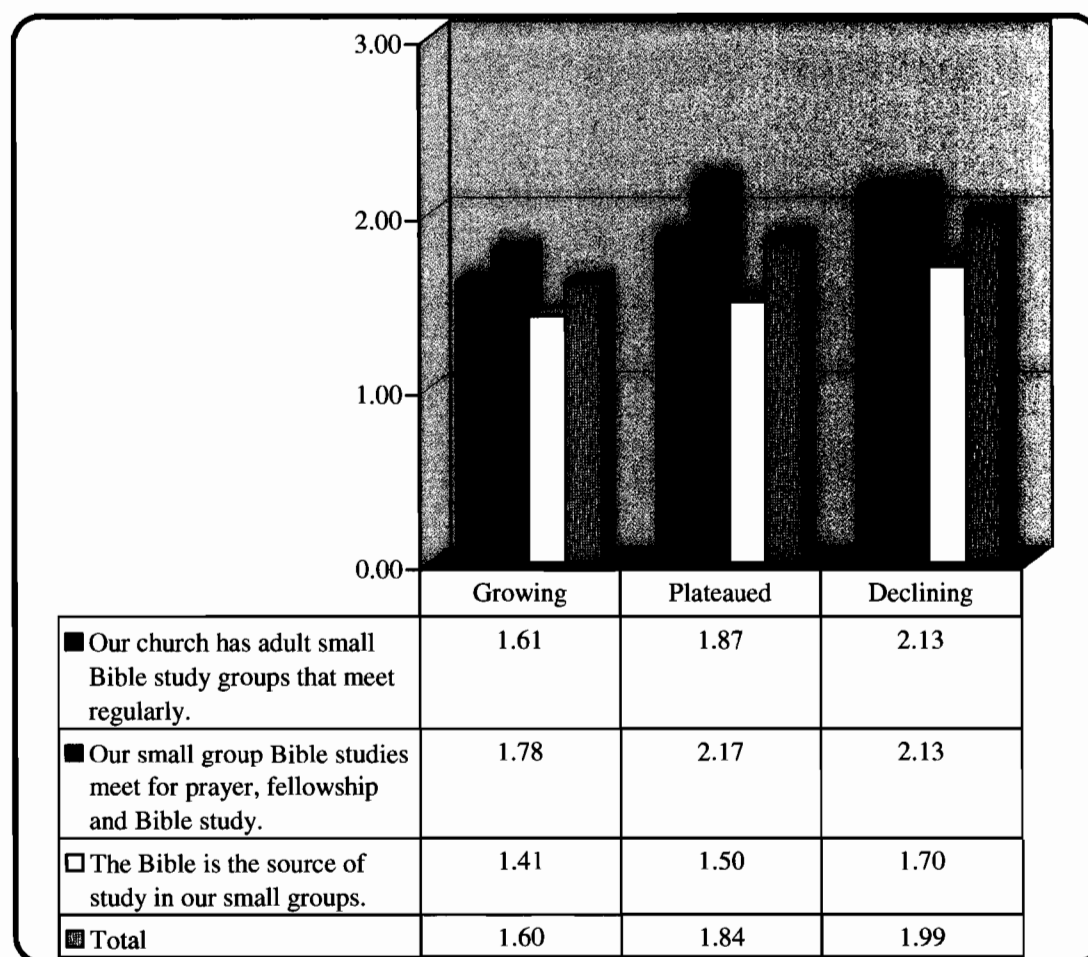


Figure 10. Small Group Bible Study

The purpose of testing the factors of small group adult Bible study was to determine if the level of adult Bible study contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if the church had adult Bible study, if the small groups meet for prayer, fellowship and Bible study, and if the Bible is the source of study in the small groups.

Figure 10 shows there were no significant differences between growing, plateaued, and declining churches in factors of small group Bible study. The difference was 0.39 m . All three classifications of churches stated that the Bible is the source of study in their small group and that they meet for prayer, fellowship, and Bible study. The difference was in the statement, “Our church has adult small Bible study groups that meet regularly.” Declining churches’ mean score increased 0.52 m points above growing churches.

Factors of Prayer Emphasis

Rainer says, “Prayer must be the means by which we see God’s vision for our churches, and it must also be one of the principal weapons in the warfare against those powers that would impede the growth of the church” (Rainer 1993, 179). He states, “Though the forms of prayer ministries vary, the leaders of these evangelistic churches stress that their personal prayer lives and the prayer ministries of the church are inevitably tied to the winning of souls to Christ” (Rainer 1996, 15). Prayer must be more than emphasizing praying for the sick. It is praying for the lost and the direction of the church. Prayer begins with the pastor if he is to be a catalyst for change.

The purpose of testing the factors of prayer emphasis was to determine if the level of prayer emphasis contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for

pastoral response to determine if the church regularly prays for non-believers, if prayer is a high priority for the pastor, and if the vision for the church comes through prayer.

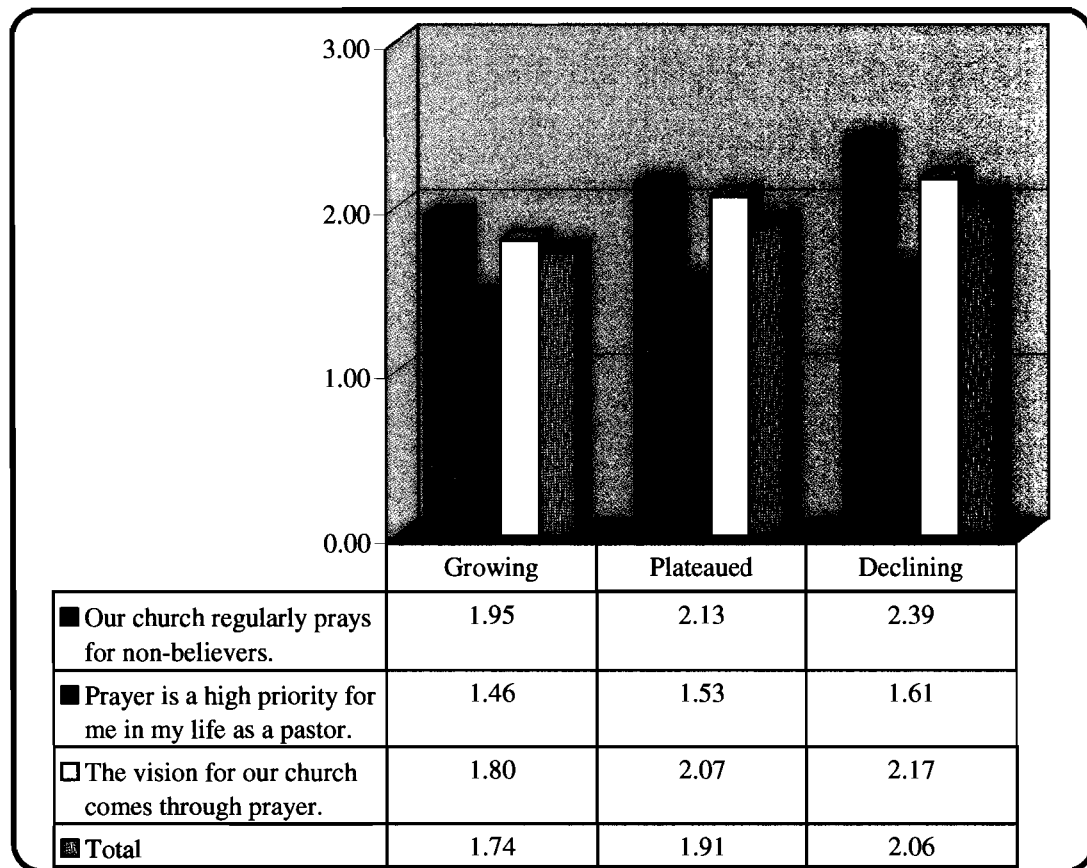


Figure11. Prayer Emphasis

Figure 11 shows there were no significant differences between growing, plateaued, and declining churches in factors of prayer emphasis. The difference was 0.32*m*. An analysis of the three statements showed there was a difference of 0.44*m* between growing and declining churches when asked if the church regularly prays for non-believers. All three classifications of churches rated “prayer as a priority for the pastor” the same. The mean score was 1.53*m*. There was no difference between growing and declining churches when asked if the vision of the church comes through prayer. The mean score was 2.01*m*. It is noteworthy that even though there was not a measurable

difference between the three classifications of churches, the mean scores were consistently higher for plateaued and declining churches than for growing churches.

Factors of Discipleship Training

Barna found, “Only one out of every six people who attend a Christian church is being disciplined” (Barna 2000, 4). Rainer says, in relationship to discipleship, “The most effective assimilation took place where churches were developing disciples through three key foundational elements: expectations, relationship, and involvement” (Rainer 1996, 173). According to Rainer, discipleship training is most effective when a mentor relationship exists. The mentor regularly invests in a person’s life and helps that person to grow spiritually.

The purpose of testing the factors of discipleship training was to determine if the level of training of new believers contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if new believers attend a new members class or are trained by a staff or lay volunteer, if new believers are assigned a mentor, and if the church has a program for new members to minister alongside of a mature Christian.

Figure 12 shows there was a difference of $0.42m$ between growing and declining churches in factors of discipleship training. An analysis of the first statement, “New believers attend a new members class or meet regularly with the pastor or staff,” demonstrates a difference of $0.74m$ between growing and declining churches. When asked if the church has a mentoring program, there was a $0.41m$ difference. There was no difference when asked if the church has new believers to work alongside of a mature Christian. All classifications rated this question high. The mean score was $2.94m$. It is noteworthy that even though there was not a measurable difference between the three

classifications of churches, the mean scores were consistently higher for plateaued and declining churches than for growing churches. It should be noted that all three classifications of churches rated factors of discipleship training high. The average was 2.92m points.

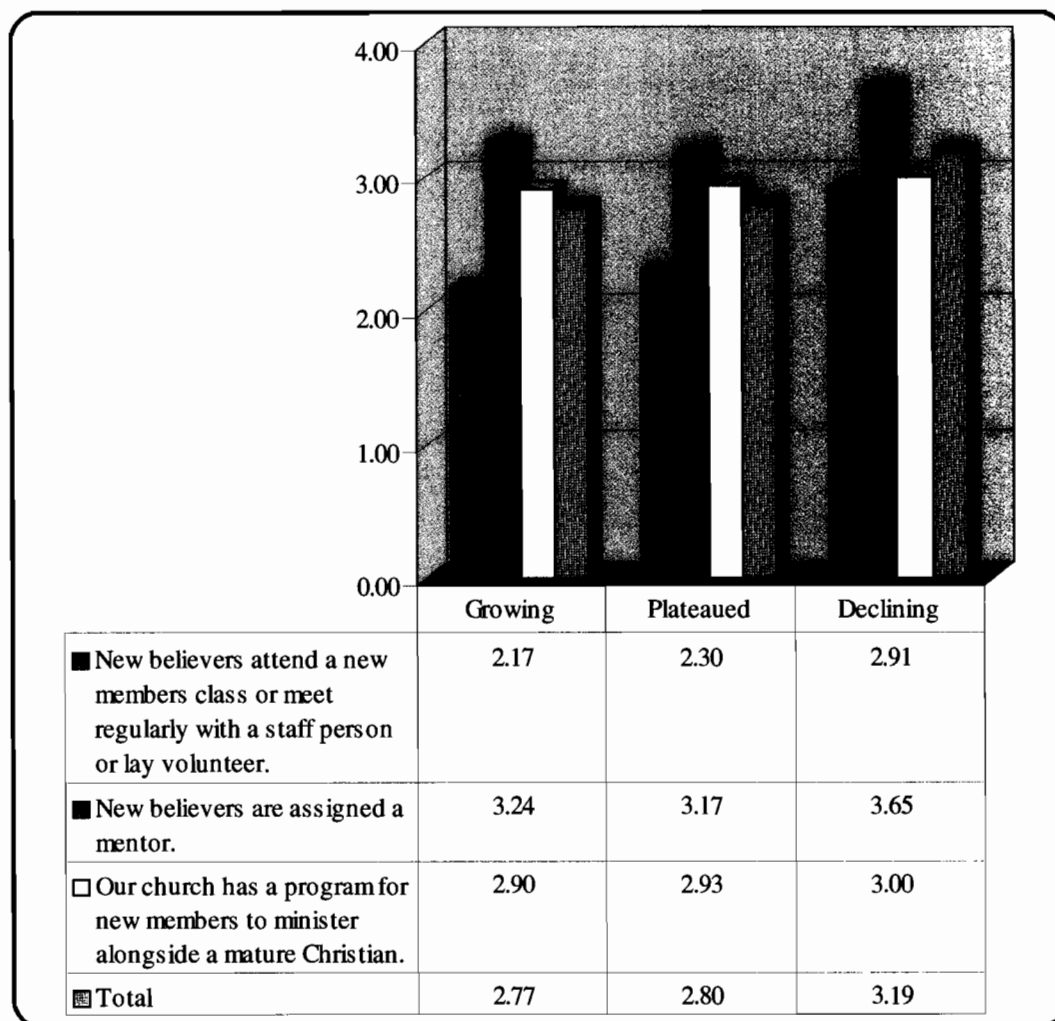


Figure 12. Discipleship Training

Cultural Concerns

Culture is defined as “an artificial, second environment, which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical process, and values” (Niebuhr 1951, 32).

Christianity has not joined culture; it transforms it. Every church has a culture. It is the force behind the decision making and purpose of the church.

The research question was, “What cultural factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?” The question was divided into seven areas of study: factors on inspired worship, factors of evangelism in the church, factors of ministry in the church, factors of fellowship in the church, factors of enthusiasm and growth consciousness in the church, factors of innovation and change in the church, and factors of generational differences in the church.

Table 7. Cultural Factors

	Growing Churches		Plateaued Churches		Declining Churches	
	Mean	St Dev	Mean	St Dev	Mean	St Dev
Factors of inspired worship	1.79	1.01	2.24	0.93	2.30	0.90
Factors of evangelism in the church	1.92	0.86	2.57	0.78	3.03	1.00
Factors of ministry in the church	2.03	1.02	2.46	0.96	2.72	1.12
Factors of fellowship in the church	1.56	0.90	1.87	0.89	2.14	0.91
Factors of enthusiasm and growth consciousness in the church	1.89	0.71	2.48	0.69	2.71	0.99
Factors of innovation and change in the church	2.30	0.93	2.49	0.85	2.83	1.20
Factors of generational differences in the church	2.06	1.28	2.39	1.09	3.48	1.28
Totals	1.94	1.11	2.36	0.99	2.75	1.14

Table 7 shows a mean total difference of 0.81*m* between growing and declining churches. This signifies there was a difference in cultural concerns. The standard deviation scores were 1.11*sd* for growing churches, 0.99*sd* for plateaued churches, and 1.14*sd* for declining churches. These fall within the standard range of deviation. The only exception was in factors of generational differences. Growing and declining churches both had a 1.28*sd*. Generational differences vary greatly from church to church. This is why the standard deviation score was slightly higher in this area of study. The overall standard deviation was 1.21*sd*, which falls within the standard deviation range.

Factors of Inspired Worship

There are various attributes that make inspired worship different from a worship service. “People attending truly ‘inspired’ services typically indicate that ‘going to church is fun’” (Schwarz 1998, 31). Research shows 90 percent of unchurched people say that the friendliness of the congregants was a factor in returning to the church (Rainer 2001, 93) and that inspired worship has a sense of awe surrounding it.

The purpose of testing the factors of inspired worship was to determine if the level of inspired worship in the church contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if going to worship is considered fun, if people coming to worship sense the friendliness of the church, and if there is regularly a sense of awe in worship.

Figure 13 shows there was a difference between growing, plateaued, and declining churches in factors of inspired worship. The total mean difference between

growing and plateaued churches was 0.45m points. The total mean difference between growing and declining churches was 0.51m points.

All three statements showed differences of mean scores between growing and declining churches. When asked if worship was considered fun, there was a mean difference of 0.42m points. When asked if the worship services were friendly, there was a mean difference of 0.65m points. And, when asked if there was a sense of awe in the worship service the mean difference was 0.51m points. Plateaued churches scored a mean difference of 0.67m points when asked if going to worship was considered fun. Their score was higher than declining churches.

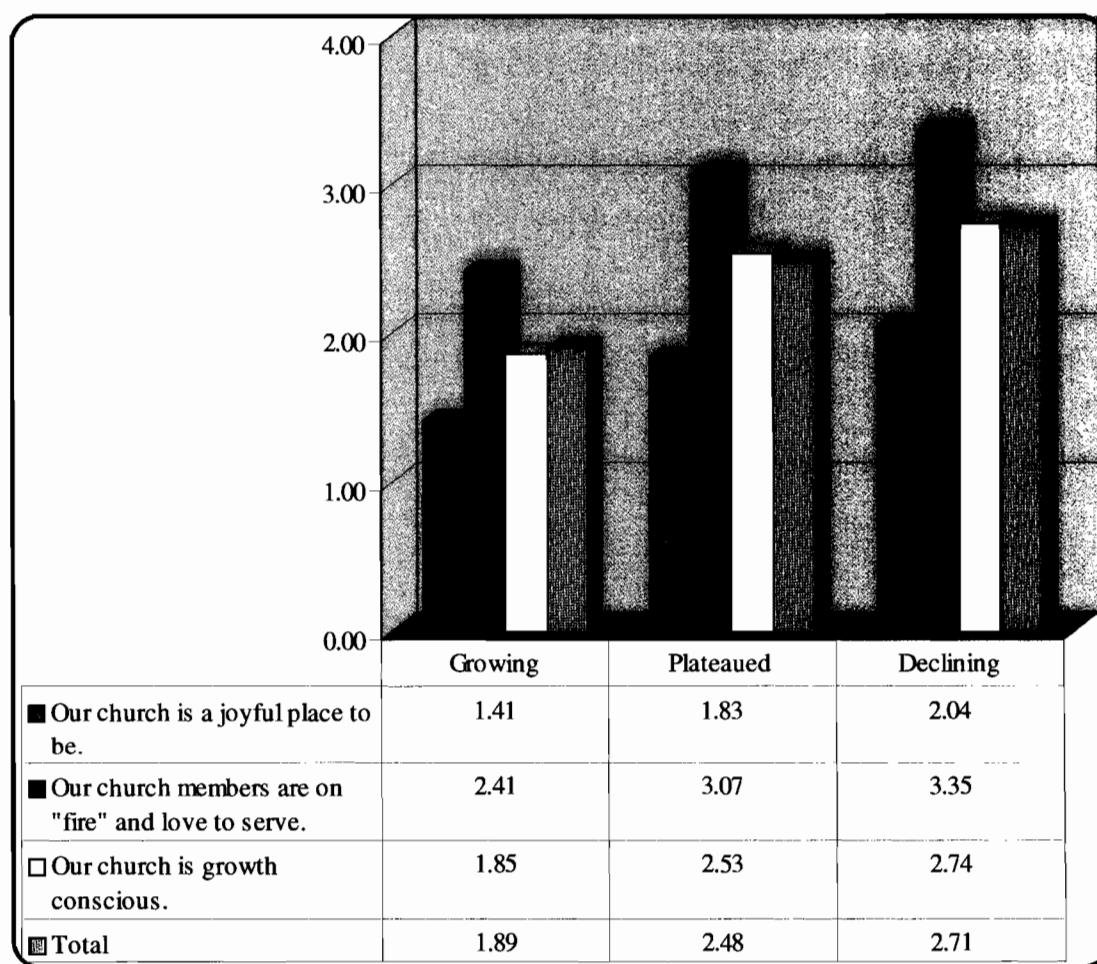


Figure 13. Inspired Worship

Factors of Evangelism in the Church

The “definition of evangelism is ‘to proclaim Jesus Christ as God and Savior, to persuade people to become His disciples, and responsible members of His church” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 51). Schwarz says, “The key to church growth is for the local congregation to focus its evangelistic efforts on the questions and needs of non-Christians” (Schwarz 1998,35).

The purpose of testing the factors of evangelism in the church was to determine if the level of evangelism in the church contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if evangelism is a high priority in the church, if the church has a strategy for reaching non-believers in the community, and if the church regularly has people who accept Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Figure 14 shows there was a 0.65m points difference between plateaued and growing churches and a 1.11m points distinct difference between declining and growing churches in factors of evangelism in the church. This demonstrates there was a difference between growing and plateaued churches and a significant difference between growing and declining churches in relationship to evangelism in the church. When asked if evangelism is a high priority in the church, plateaued churches scored a difference of 0.54m points and declining churches a 0.85m points difference from growing churches. When asked if the church has a strategy for reaching non-believers, plateaued churches showed a difference of 0.59m points and declining churches had a significant difference of 1.16m points over growing churches. And when asked if people regularly accept Christ as their Lord and Savior, plateaued churches scored 0.81m points and declining churches scored 1.31m points above growing churches.

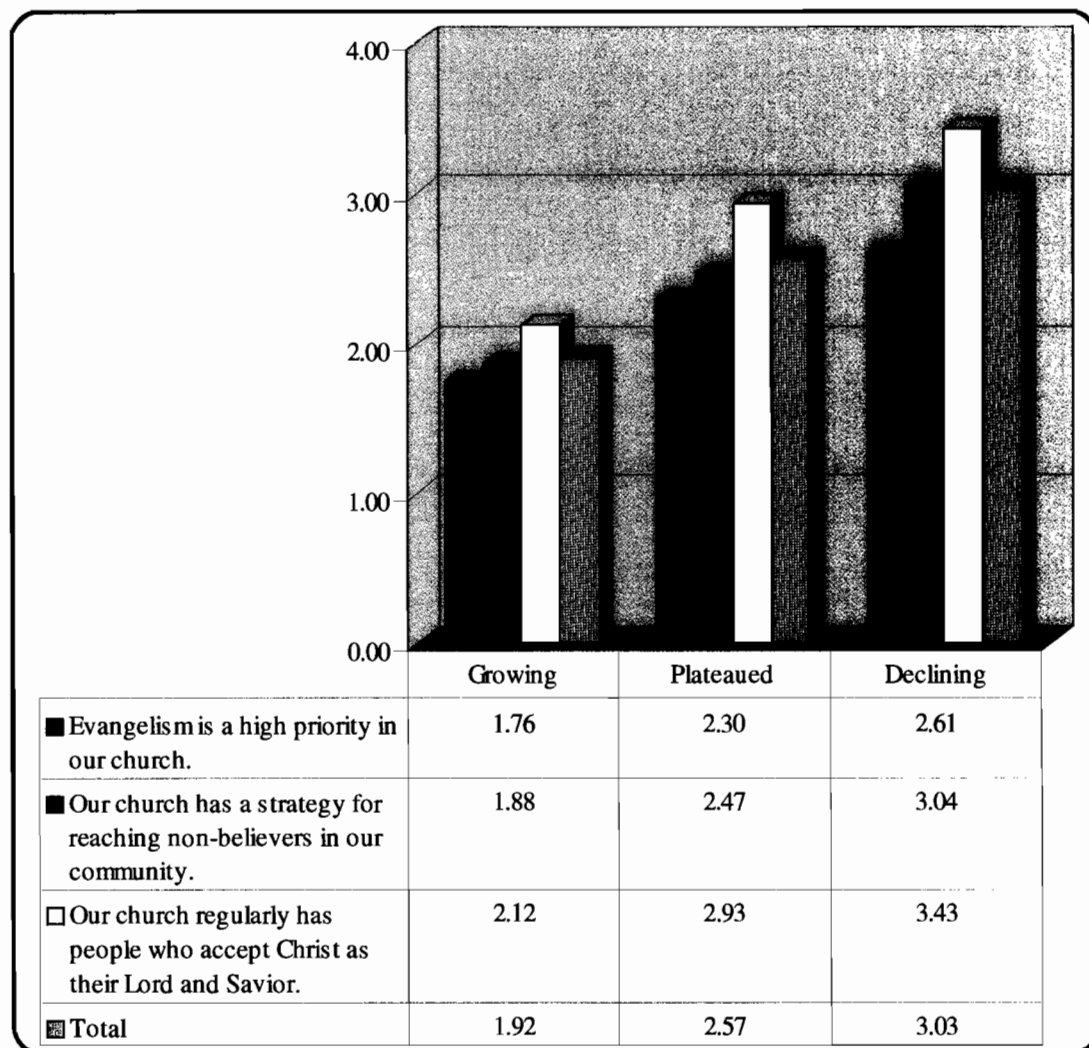


Figure 14. Evangelism in the Church

Factors of Ministry in the Church

“Ministry is demonstrating God’s love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus” (Warren 1995, 104). Wagner says, “Mobilized laypeople are a sign of good church health. The biblical teaching of the church as a body and every Christian functioning as one member or another of that body needs to be implemented for growth” (Wagner 1979, 281-82). In a survey by Rainer, when asked “What keeps you active in the church?” The response was 62% said that ministry involvement kept them in the church (Rainer 2001, 122-23).

The purpose of testing the factors of ministry in the church was to determine if the level of ministering in the church contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if the members are actively involved in ministry, if the church has weekday ministries, and if the lay people perform most of the ministry in the church.

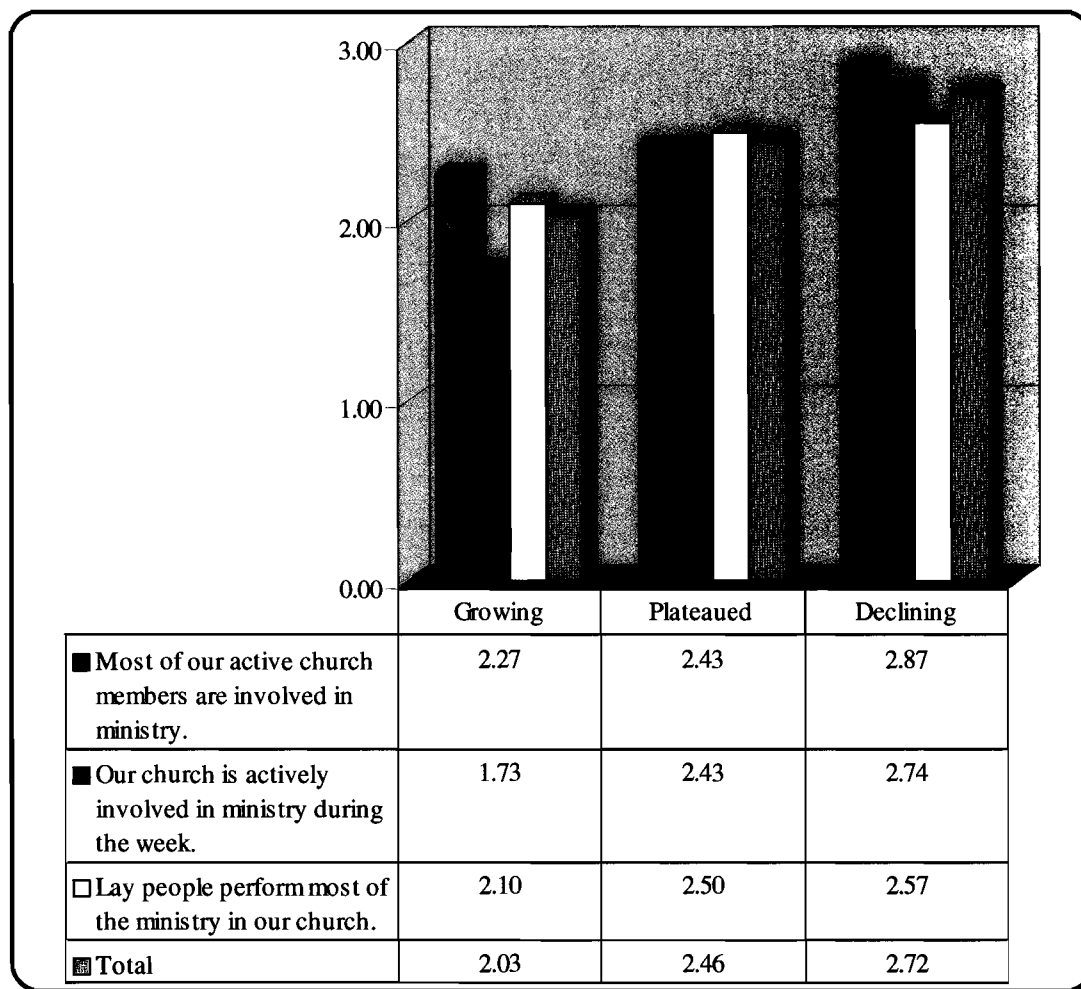


Figure 15. Ministry in the Church

Figure 15 shows there was 0.43m points difference between plateaued and growing churches and 0.69m points difference between declining and growing churches in factors of ministry in the church. When asked if most of the active church members

were involved in ministry, there was a 0.60 m points difference between growing and declining churches. When asked if the church was actively involved in ministry during the week, there was a 0.70 m points difference between growing and plateaued churches and a significant difference of 1.01 m points between growing and declining churches. When asked if laypersons perform most of the ministry, there was a 0.40 m points difference between growing and plateaued churches and a difference of 0.47 m points between growing and declining churches.

Factors of Fellowship in the Church

“To belong” is a necessity of life. Harris says, “The common elements in affiliating with a community tend to be remarkably constant. These are the impetus toward belonging; toward associating with those sharing a common heritage, belief, and way of life; and toward the human need to share” (Harris 1989, 76). The biblical concept of *koinonia* (fellowship) is essential and healthy for church growth. The lack of fellowship will also cause a church not to grow. Schwarz found that growing churches have a higher level of “love quotient” than stagnant or declining ones. He says, “Unfeigned, practical love has a divinely generated magnetic power far more effective than evangelistic programs which depend almost entirely on verbal communication” (Schwarz 1998, 36).

The purpose of testing the factors of fellowship in the church was to determine if the level of fellowship in the church contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if the church functions as a “family of God,” if church members regularly meet together for fellowship and activities, and if church members regularly care for and minister to each other.

Figure 16 shows there was a difference 0.58m points difference between growing and declining churches in factors of fellowship in the church. Declining churches showed 0.63m points difference over growing churches when asked if their church functions as a “family of God.” There were 0.63m points difference when asked if they regularly meet together for fellowship and activities. And, there were 0.48m points difference when asked if their members care for each other and regularly minister to one another. It is noteworthy that plateaued churches, though not showing a difference in any one area, scored higher than growing churches in all areas.

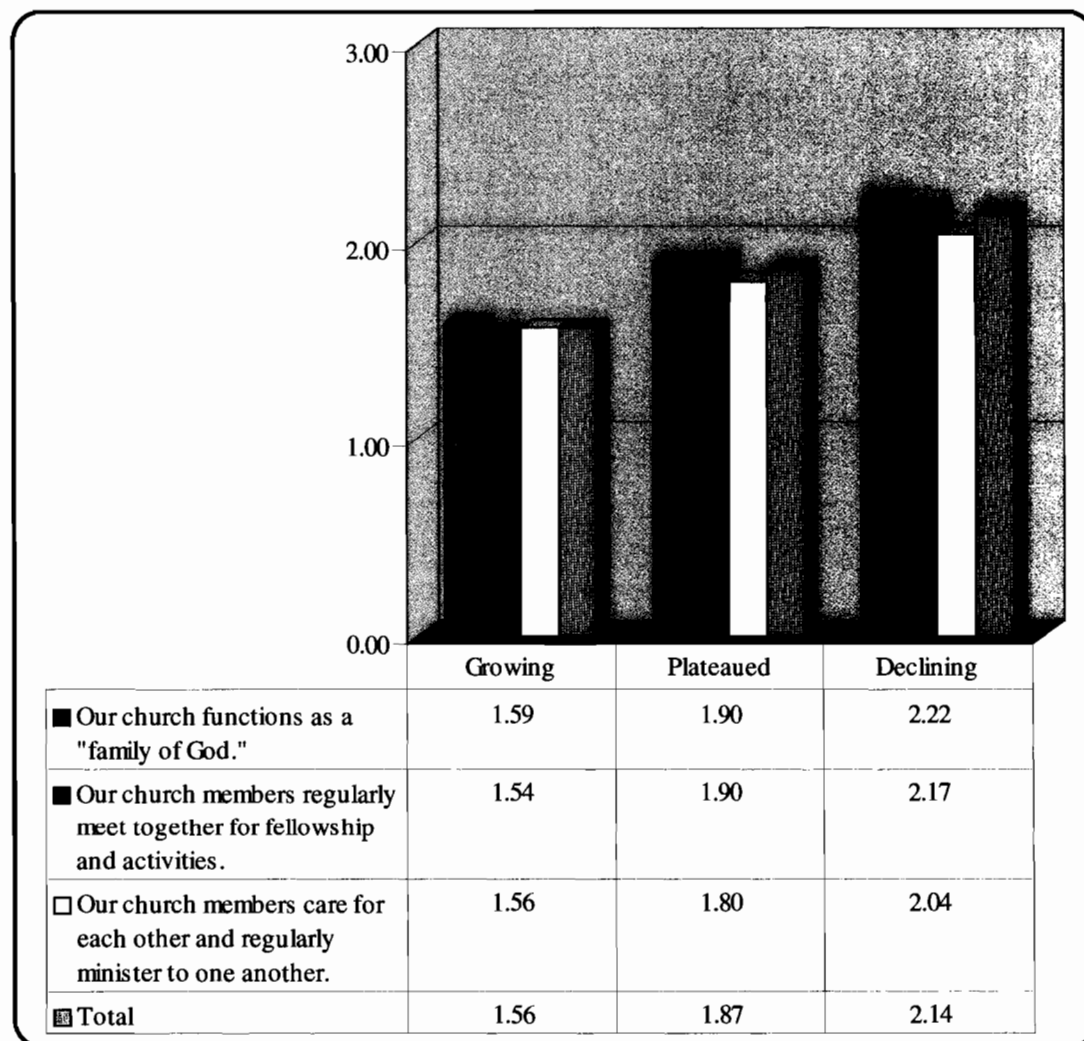


Figure 16. Fellowship in the Church

***Factors of Enthusiasm and Growth
Consciousness in the Church***

“When joy is present, it pervades the entire life of the congregation. It is contagious, infecting every person who relates to the congregation” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 137). Enthusiasm brings healing. “Healing is a feeling of wholeness that leads to greater health, through relationships, worship, prayer and altered life-styles” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 135).

“Growth conscience is a conviction that permeates the Body of Christ that God’s will is for growth, that a church has the opportunity, and responsibility to carry out God’s will regarding those who have yet to believe, and that programs and activities should serve this end” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 102). Schwarz found that when Christians are on “fire,” they enjoy serving and worshipping. And, “there are significant differences in this area between growing and declining churches” (Schwarz 1998, 26).

The purpose of testing the factors of enthusiasm and growth consciousness in the church was to determine if the level of enthusiasm and attitude of growth consciousness in the church contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if the church was a joyful place to be, if church members were on “fire” and love to serve, and if the church was growth conscious.

Figure 17 shows there was 0.59m points difference between plateaued and growing churches and 0.82m points difference between declining and growing churches in factors of enthusiasm and growth consciousness in the church. When asked if their church was a joyful place to be, there was a difference of 0.42m points for plateaued churches and 0.63m points difference for declining churches above growing churches. When asked if their members were on “fire” and love to serve, plateaued churches scored

0.66m points and declining churches scored 0.94m points above growing churches. And, when asked if their church was growth conscious, plateaued and declining churches scored 0.59m and 0.82m points respectively above growing churches.

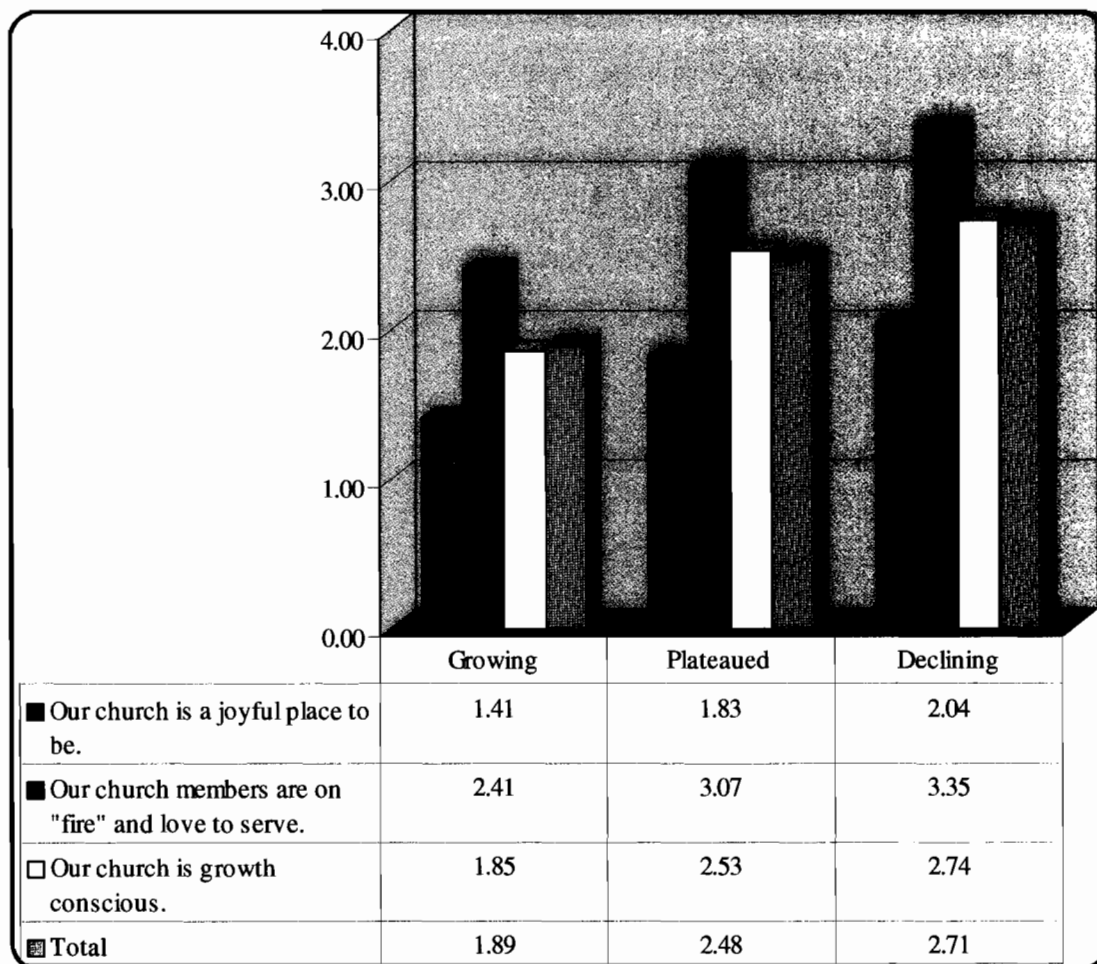


Figure 17. Enthusiasm and Growth Consciousness in the Church

Factors of Innovation and Change in the Church

Churches that are innovative and ready for change sense “optimism, high morale and desire for growth” (Hadaway 1991, 186). They set goals, with growth as a primary aim. They are not afraid of new ideas, innovations and change. The contrast to innovation and change is “people-blindness.” “People blindness is the malady, that

prevents us from seeing the important cultural differences that exist between groups of people” (Wagner 1991, 186). The points were reversed for statements 2 and 3.

The purpose of testing the factors of innovation and change in the church was to determine if the level of innovation and the willingness to change contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if the church was afraid of new ideas, innovation, and change, if the church’s worship and ministry had changed, and if church members had moved out of the community but still travel to the church each Sunday.

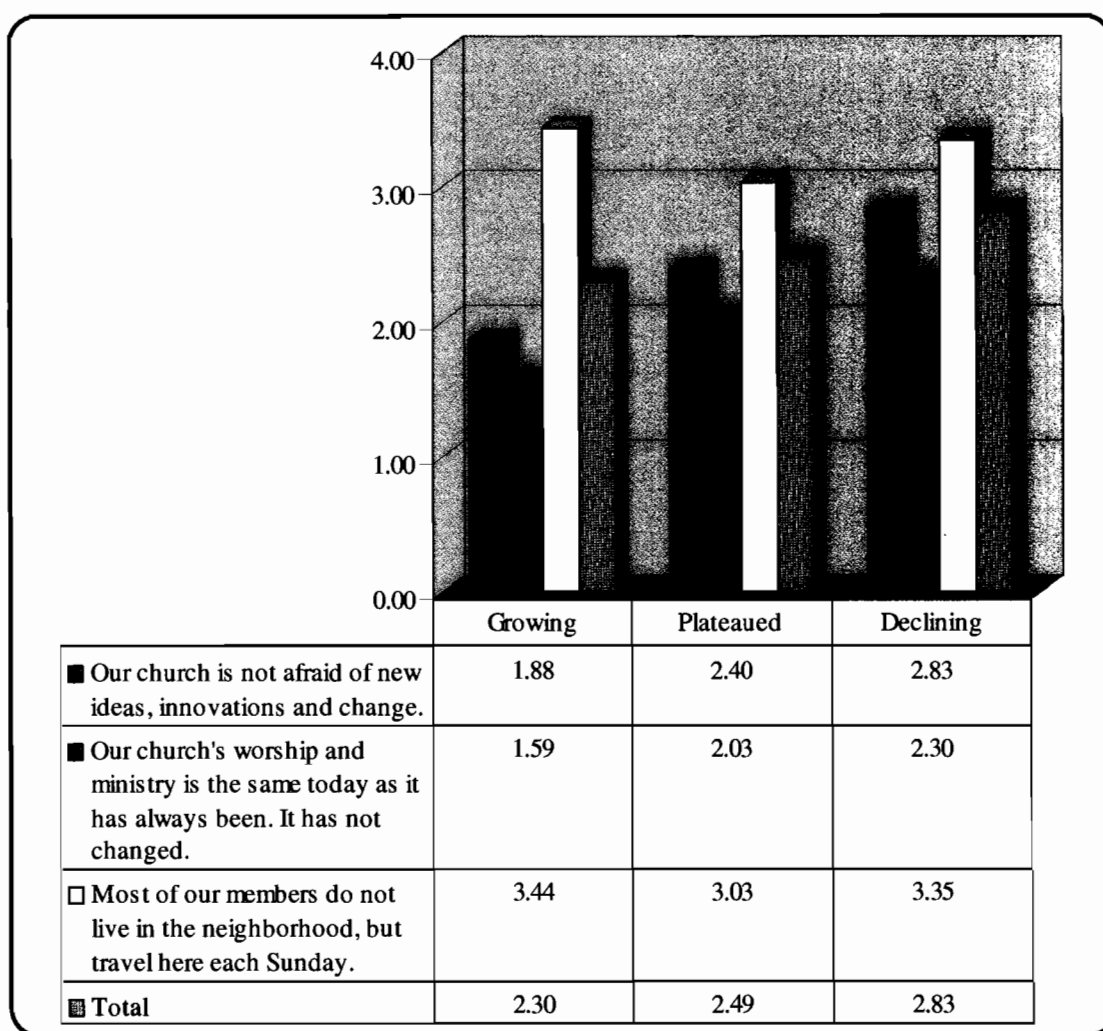


Figure 18. Innovation and Change in the Church

Figure 18 shows there was 0.53m points difference between growing and declining churches in factors of innovation and change in the church. When asked if the church is not afraid of new ideas, innovations, and change, there was a difference of 0.52m points for plateaued churches and 0.95m points difference for declining churches over growing churches. When asked if church worship and ministry is the same today as it has always been, plateaued and declining churches scored 0.44m and 0.71m points respectively above growing churches. When asked if most of the members do not live in the neighborhood but travel here each Sunday, there was no difference between growing, plateaued, and declining churches.

Factors of Generational Differences in the Church

Today our churches are being plagued with generational differences. Two groups of people, the elderly and the baby boomers, are being affected. Hadaway found, “Churches, which were dominated by the elderly, were less likely to experience breakout growth” (Hadaway 1991, 186). They suffer from old blood, “churches in which young people are virtually absent” (Barna 1993 33-38). The second group is baby boomers. They are disappearing from churches. This group should provide the greatest leadership and financial support, but in many communities today they have quit going to church.

The purpose of testing the factors of generational differences in the church was to determine if generational differences contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if the church consisted primarily of senior adults, if the church lacked middle-aged workers, and if the church had an active youth and children’s ministry program. Points were reversed for statements 1 and 2.

Figure 19 shows there was a distinct difference of 1.42m points between growing and declining churches in factors of generational differences in the church. When asked if the church consists of primarily senior adults, there was a distinct difference of 1.50m points difference for declining churches compared to growing churches. When asked if the church lacks middle-aged leaders, declining churches scored a distinct difference of 01.32m points above growing churches. And, when asked if the church has an active youth and children's ministry program, plateaued and declining churches scored a difference of 0.54m and 1.44m points higher than growing churches. This was the highest ratio of point differences between growing and declining churches.

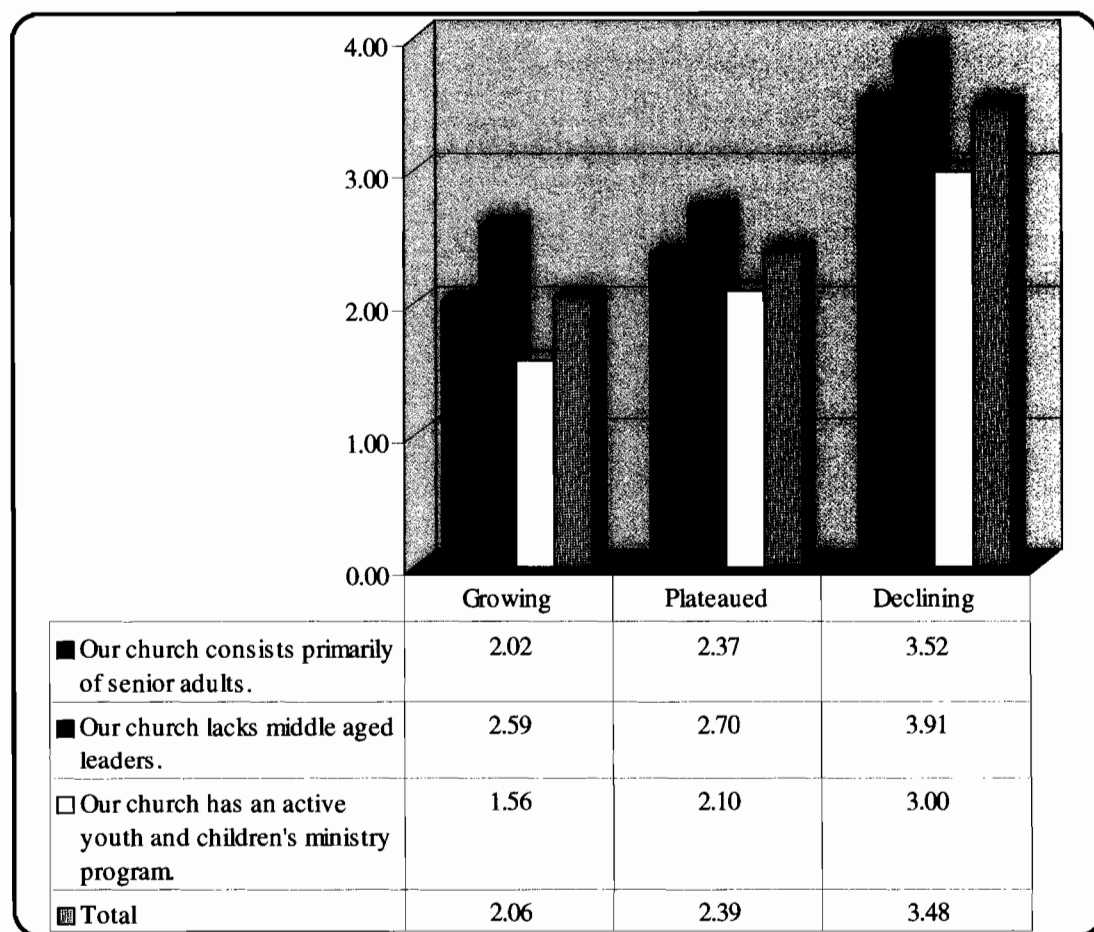


Figure 19. Generational Differences in the Church

Demographic Concerns

Today's churches are affected by demographic changes in the community. This factor is important because, "Most still prefer to attend churches that are fairly close (the median distance appears to be between one and three miles.) The dependency on surrounding neighborhoods causes churches largely to mirror the population growth patterns occurring in these area" (Hadaway 1982, 373).

There are many contextual factors that affect church ministry. Many of these demographic factors do not affect church growth or decline but help the church minister to its community. Household types, education, occupation, marital status, and language spoken in the home are variables that can determine how the church ministers to its community. Researchers list three social factors that can affect church growth and decline: Population growth represents one of the primary contextual factors affecting church growth. Change in racial diversity may affect local growth. And, high rates of immigration in a county may influence church growth through the aggregate effects of individual migrant behavior (Stump 1998, 639).

The research question was: What demographic factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center? The question was divided into four areas of study: Factors of population growth or decline in the community, factors of ethnic changes in the community, the effects of pastoral tenure, and the effects of the church's longevity.

Table 8 shows a mean total difference of 0.59*m* between growing and declining churches. This signifies there was a difference in demographic concerns. The standard deviation scores were 1.18*sd* for growing churches, 1.12*sd* for plateaued churches, and 1.34*sd* for declining churches. The standard deviation for declining

churches was higher than the range set of 1.25*sd*. This was because of the diversity of communities in the area of demographic concerns. The overall mean score of standard deviation was 1.21*sd*. This falls within the standard range of deviation of 1.25*sd*. The effects of pastoral tenure and the effects of the longevity of the church were single questions asked to the pastor. The results were compared to the classification the pastor gave of his church, growing, plateaued, or declining. These results will be discussed later in the chapter.

Table 8. Demographic Concerns

	Growing Churches		Plateaued Churches		Declining Churches	
	Mean	St Dev	Mean	St Dev	Mean	St Dev
Degree of population growth or decline in the community	2.72	1.16	2.81	1.10	3.32	1.40
Degree of ethnic changes in the community	2.96	1.21	3.41	1.14	3.54	1.27
Totals	2.84	1.18	3.11	1.12	3.43	1.34

Factors of Population Growth

“Population growth represents one of the primary contextual factors affecting church growth” (Stump 1998, 639). “Every year almost one-fifth of the nation’s population moves” (Barna 1993, 33-38). “Member growth brings with it satisfaction, optimism, and the sort of positive feeling that newcomers find attractive. Yet when there are few newcomers available because the population has stabilized, church growth typically slows” (Hadaway 1982, 373). Price found that a 1% or 2 % change per year in population generally represents a stable population. “If the growth or loss is 3% to 5%,

the change is significant and makes it difficult for a church to continue its usual programs” (Price 1995, 118).

The purpose of testing the factors of population growth in the community was to determine if decline in population growth contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if the church was located in a growing community, if the community had lost homes due to unforeseen situations, and if new members were regularly added to the church because they had moved into the community. Points were reversed for statement 2.

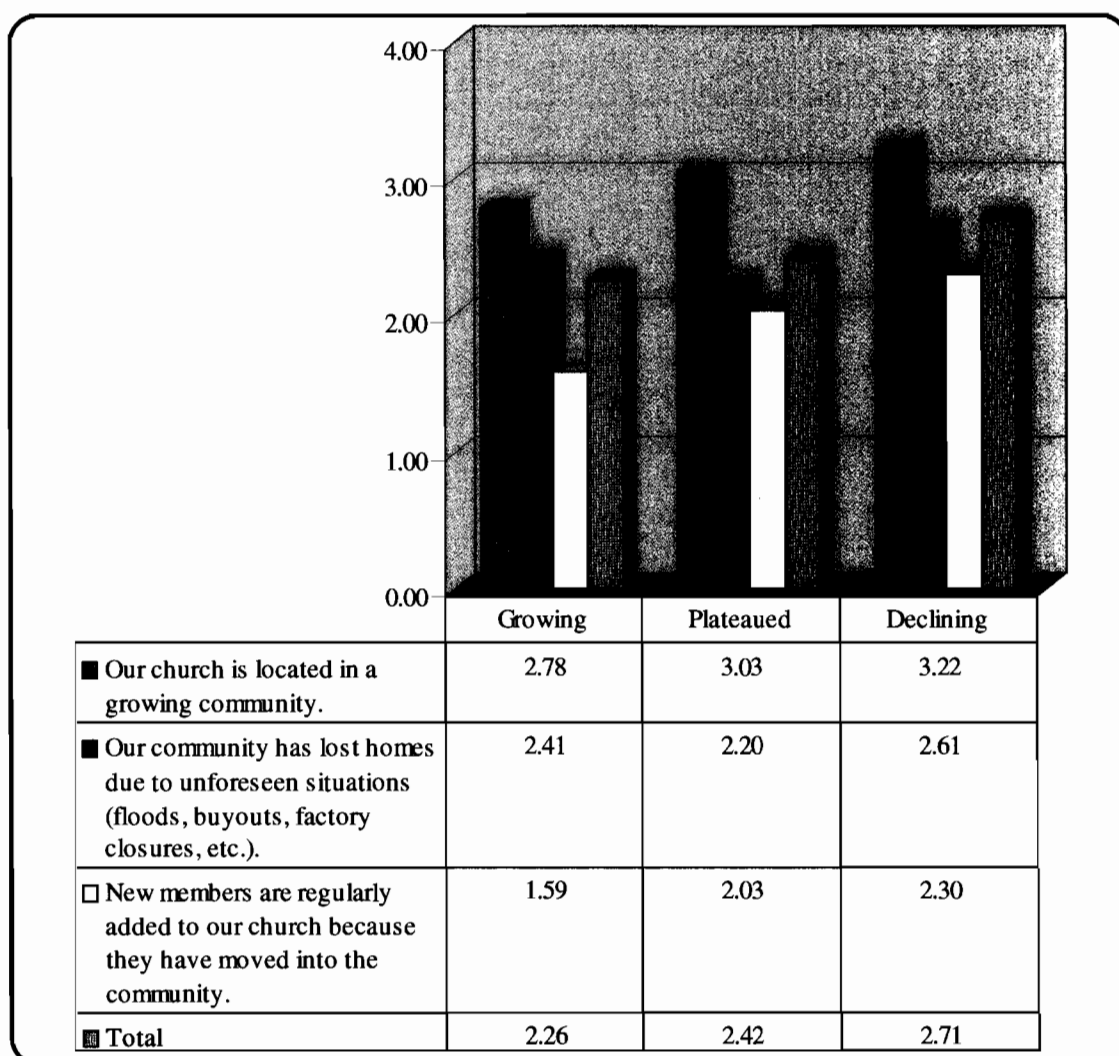


Figure 20. Population Growth

Figure 20 shows there was 0.45m points difference between growing and declining churches in factors of population growth in the community. When asked if their church was in a growing community, declining churches score was 0.44m above growing churches. Homes lost to the community due to unforeseen situations (floods, buyouts, factory closures, etc.), was not a measurable factor in church growth or decline. When asked if new members are regularly added because they have moved into the community, declining churches mean score was 0.71m points higher than growing churches.

Factors of Ethnic Change

Change in racial diversity may affect local growth when the church is made up of one ethnic group. Research found, “An increase in the proportion of minority group members within a local population may limit the growth potential of most of these churches. Even if a county’s population is growing rapidly, if it is also becoming more racially diverse, the overall increase in population may contribute little to growth” (Stump 1998, 639). “Prejudice and the tendency of churches to be homogeneous compound the problems, and the result is that many churches in transitional communities either die or merge with churches in another part of the city” (Hadaway 1981, 83).

The purpose of testing the factors of ethnic change in the community was to determine if the changes in the ethnicity of the community contributed to church decline. Three statements were given for pastoral response to determine if neighborhoods surrounding the church were considered multi-ethnic, if the church reflected the ethnicity of the neighborhood, and if most members live in the neighborhood around the church.

Figure 21 shows there was a difference of 0.45m points between plateaued and growing churches, and a difference of 0.58m points between declining churches and

growing churches in factors of ethnic changes in the community. The majority of the churches in all three classifications indicated that their churches were located in multi-ethnic communities. When asked if the church reflects the ethnicity of the neighborhood, plateaued churches scored 0.61m points and declining churches scored 0.86m points higher than growing churches. When asked if their members live in the neighborhood around the church, declining churches scored a difference of 0.51m points above growing churches.

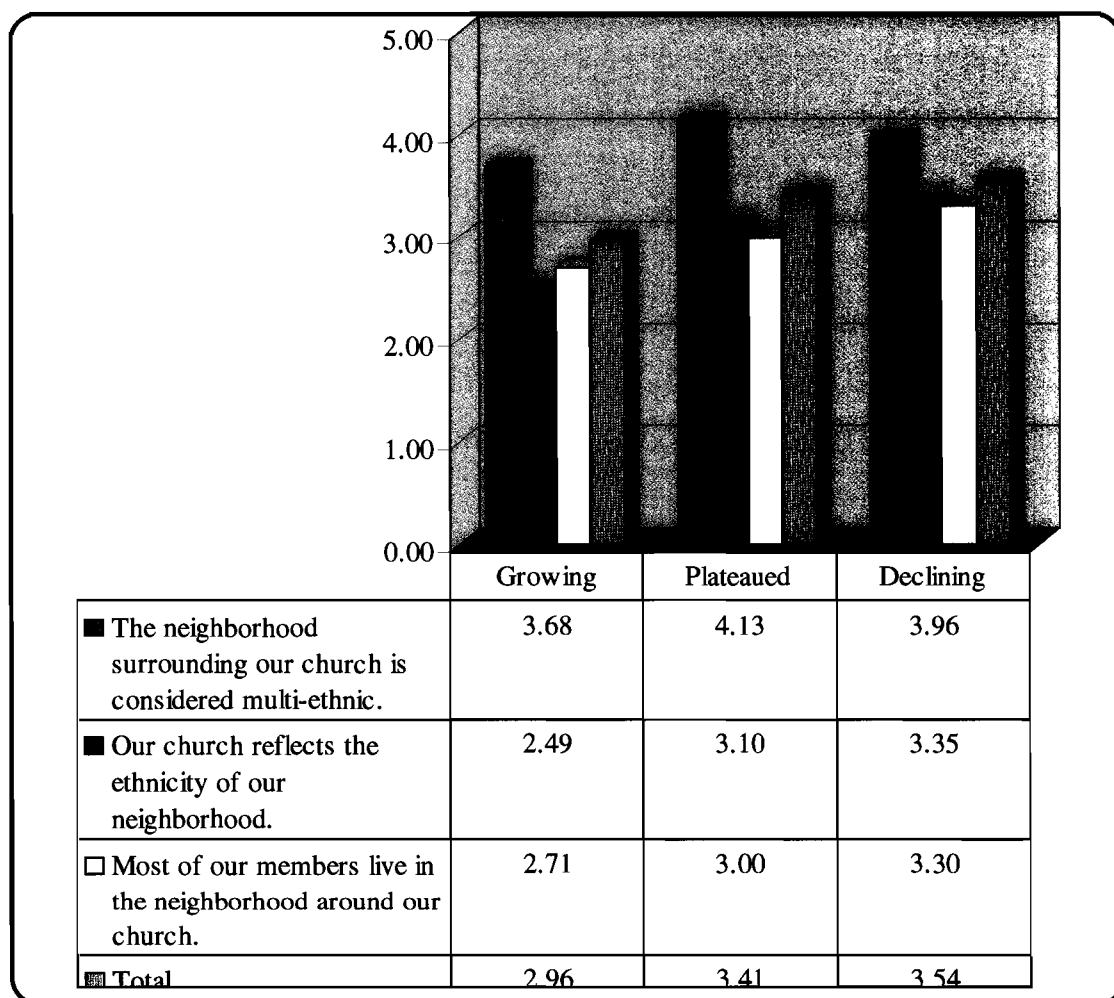


Figure 21. Ethnic Changes in the Community

Effects of Pastoral Tenure

It has been found that “the typical pastor has his or her greatest ministry impact at a church in five through fourteen years” (Barna 2002, 119). Callahan found, “The most productive years of any staff person begin about year five, six, or seven” (Callahan 1983, 51). The average tenure of a pastor is 3.8 years. Rainer discovered, “The average tenure of an unchurched-reaching pastor is 11.8 years” (Rainer 2001, 146).

The purpose of testing the effects of pastoral tenure was to determine if longevity of the pastor had any effects on growing, plateaued, or declining churches.

The statement stated, “I have been the pastor for <1 year, 1-4 years, 5-9 years, 10-24 years, or 25+ years.” This was compared to the classification of the church.

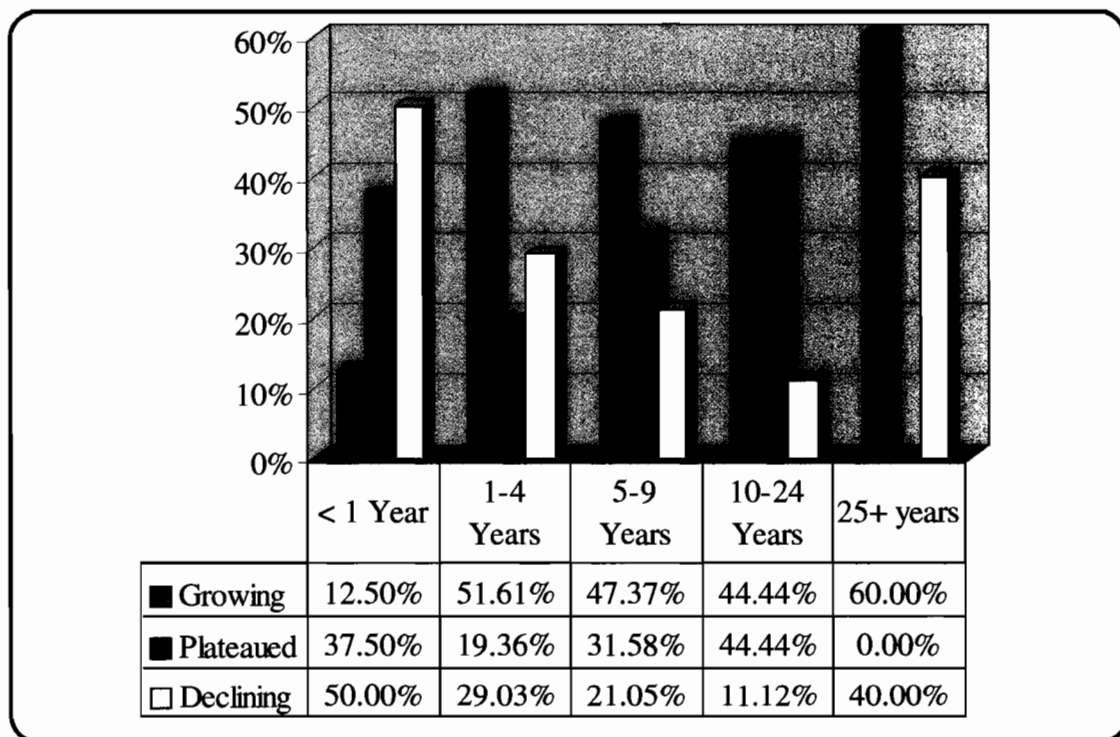


Figure 22. Pastoral Tenure

Figure 22 shows the majority of the pastors in declining churches continued to experience decline through the first four years of their service. Beginning the fifth year

there was a decrease in the number of churches declining. The rate stays constant until the pastor has served 25+ years and then the rate of church growth began to decline. The difference of growing compared to declining churches after the pastor had served 25+ years could be related to the pastor leaving the church if it was in decline. More study needs to be made in this area due to the fact that only five of the one hundred pastors were in this category.

Effects of Church Longevity

Churches typically go through four stages of life. The start-up stage brings excitement and people want to join in the excitement. The growth phase set up goals and a structure appears. The mature phase establishes itself in the community. The last stage, the decline phase, “happens when the activities of an otherwise successful organization become so inflexible in the pursuit of efficiency and continuity that the organization loses touch with the changing needs of its clients or the community (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 130). Nanus and Dobbs also found, “Instead of moving into the fourth phase and declining or prolonging the maturity stage through renewal, organizations have one other alternative. An organization can transform itself into a new entity, with an entirely new vision and mission and a dramatically different operating style” (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 132).

The purpose of testing the effects of church longevity was to determine if the longevity of church had any effects on growing, plateaued, or declining churches.

The pastor was asked to indicate the length of time the church had been established. This was compared to how the pastor classified the church. The results, displayed in figure 23, show churches established between 0 and 4 years are growing

churches. Only one church showed it was plateaued and none were classified as declining. Between 5 and 9 years some churches began to decline. From 10 and 24 years, churches either grew or plateaued. Churches began to decline again after they were 25 + years old. Not all older churches were in decline. Many were growing or plateaued.

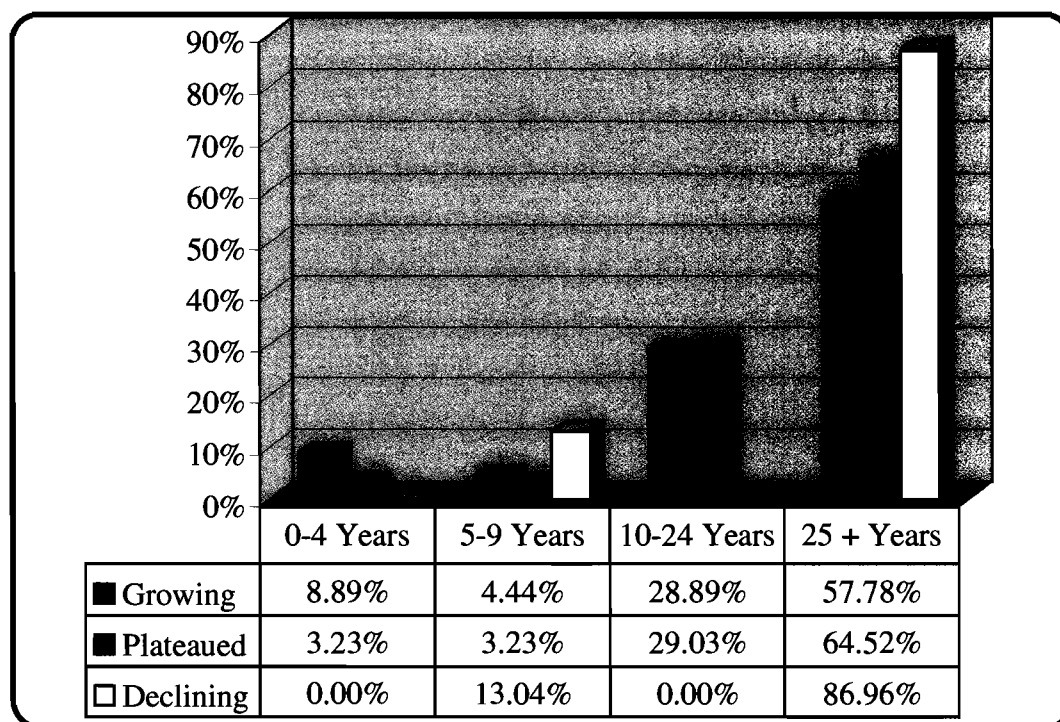


Figure 23. Church Longevity

***Differences Between Growing, Plateaued,
and Declining Churches***

The research question asked, “What differences are there between declining churches in comparison to growing and plateaued churches?”

Declining churches face a multitude of factors. Demographic concerns, ethnic changes in the community and the level of population growth in the community are three of the greatest influences on church decline. Cultural factors are also of a great concern. The greatest of these are generational differences, emphasis on evangelism in the church,

innovation and change, ministry in the church, and enthusiasm and growth consciousness. Leadership and organizational concerns show the need for discipleship training for new believers.

Table 9 is a list of factors affecting the declining churches. It lists the most pressing issues in a descending order and gives another perspective on factors facing declining churches. Declining churches have a problem with ethnic change in the community, generational differences, population growth, discipleship training, evangelism, innovation and change, ministry, and enthusiasm and growth consciousness.

Table 9. Comparison of Mean Scores

	Declining Churches	Plateaued Churches	Growing Churches
Ethnic Change	3.54	3.41	2.96
Generational Differences	3.48	2.39	2.06
Population Growth	3.32	2.81	2.72
Discipleship Training	3.19	2.80	2.77
Evangelism	3.03	2.57	1.92
Innovation and Change	2.83	2.49	2.30
Ministry	2.72	2.46	2.03
Enthusiasm and Growth Consciousness	2.71	2.48	1.89
Pastoral Authority	2.38	2.36	2.01
Inspired Worship	2.30	2.24	1.79
Laity Involvement and Training	2.14	1.94	1.77
Fellowship	2.14	1.87	1.56
Pastoral Leadership	2.09	1.74	1.42
Prayer Emphasis	2.06	1.94	1.74
Immorality	2.04	2.46	2.67
Small Group Adult Bible Study	1.99	1.84	1.60
Biblical Soundness	1.23	1.23	1.13

Another way to look at this is to look at what growing churches are doing differently from declining churches. Looking at table 11 from the bottom of the list and going upward, growing churches are strong in biblical soundness, small group adult Bible study, prayer emphasis, pastoral leadership, fellowship, lay leadership and training, inspired worship, pastoral authority, enthusiasm and growth consciousness, and ministry.

Plateaued churches need changes also. They need to look very closely at the results of declining churches. They scored less than declining churches, but more than growing churches. Changes are inevitable or they could find themselves also declining.

One problem facing growing and plateaued churches is staff and lay leadership immorality and youth sexual immorality.

Evaluation of the Research Design

The research design was effective. The use of the Internet proved to be very useful. All surveys had to be filled out in full in order for the results to be counted. The survey took approximately five minutes to fill out. The Internet survey proved to be more efficient than the mailed out surveys. This may be because the surveys were mailed to churches of denominations whose pastors did not participate in the Internet survey.

Approximately fifty percent of the e-mail survey responses were completed online in response to the first and second e-mails they received. Pastors who had not responded were personally contacted. E-mail addresses were verified and corrected if necessary and the researcher spoke directly to the pastor or left a message on the pastor's voice mail. In order to be more effective, the pastors should have been contacted first, before any e-mails were sent out.

The Quask program was easy to use. The online survey was simple to create and download on the web site. E-mail addresses were entered into Quask and the program kept track of the responses received. This process made it difficult to control how many times the e-mail was sent to the pastors. Some pastors who answered in the first mail out continued to receive requests to complete the survey. It would have been easier to coordinate the e-mail contacts from a regular program such as Outlook. The benefits of using Quask were ease of downloading the responses, converting the information into an Excel worksheet, and basic statistical analysis of data received for each statement. The statistical analysis provided through Quask was not very helpful. Most of the statistics had to be sorted and grouped according to each area of study through other means.

The survey yielded the responses the researcher thought it should. The statements clearly reflected the differences or lack of difference between growing, plateaued, and declining churches.

There was one mistake made on the Internet survey. At the beginning of the survey, under "General Information" and "Check the denomination of your church," the research assistant, while creating the Internet survey, inadvertently listed two Church of God on the list rather than one Church of God and one Church of Christ. This could have hampered the survey for pastors of the Church of Christ. To correct the situation, fifty-one other correct surveys were mailed out to the pastors of the Church of Christ and only three surveys were returned completed.

Two statements should be replaced or rewritten.

Under "Biblical and Theological Concerns," "Doctrine of the Bible," the first statement was, "The Bible is the written revelation of God through holy men and

women.” Five pastors, who rated all of the other response under “Biblical Soundness in the Church” with a 1, rated this statement with a 5. Two of the responses were from the mailed out surveys and were returned with the word woman circled. Answers were changed in accordance to other statements in that area. The statement should be changed to, “The Bible is the written revelation of God.”

Under “Cultural Factor Concerns,” “Factors of innovation and Change in the Church,” the third question states, “Most of the members do not live in the neighborhood but travel here each Sunday.” The researcher believes various churches interpreted this statement in different ways. Growing churches scored this question as agree because many of their members travel to their churches each Sunday and that is why they are growing. Plateaued churches have had some members move and travel to the church each Sunday. Their ministry would mainly be to the community and very few people travel to their churches each Sunday. Declining churches have had their members move away but continue to travel to the church each Sunday. They have not changed to minister to their community. The statement does not adequately reflect the innovation and change in all churches and should be replaced with another statement that better reflects the reality of the churches today.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This research analyzed the factors contributing to the decline of protestant churches in a metropolitan center. One hundred churches responded to the survey. In all, nineteen factors within the areas of concern were researched and analyzed. The conclusion was that there are numerous factors which contribute to church decline. Barna found in his research that not one single factor could be blamed for church decline (Barna 1993, 32). This research concludes the same thing. Church decline is the accumulation of many factors.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to identify the biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic factors contributing to the decline of churches in a metropolitan center. The research questions are as follows:

1. What biblical and theological factors have led to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
2. What leadership and organizational factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
3. What cultural factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
4. What demographic factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?
5. What differences are there between declining churches in comparison to growing and plateauing churches in a metropolitan center?

Research Implications

There are many factors found to be significant to church decline. The factors have been analyzed and compared to growing, plateaued and declining churches. The following are the conclusions and implications of this research.

Biblical and Theological Concerns

The research question was “What biblical and theological factors have led to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?” The question was divided into three areas of study: degree of biblical soundness in the church, degree of immorality in the church’s leadership and youth, and degree of pastoral authority in the church.

Factors of Biblical Soundness in the Church

The purpose of testing biblical soundness in the church was to determine if false teachings and false doctrines contributed to church decline.

The conclusion of the study showed that in the metropolitan center of Houston, Texas, there appears not to be a problem with biblical soundness. Most churches and denominations are preaching the Bible as the infallible Word of God. They believe God is Creator and Jesus is the Son of God. They preach and teach salvation by grace. Neither growing, plateaued, nor declining churches had a problem with biblical soundness. It does not appear to be a factor in church decline.

Factors of Immorality in the Church

The purpose of testing the factors of immorality in the church was to determine if immorality among the leadership and the youth contributed to church decline. Jude, in his letter to the churches, warned them that sexual immorality was creeping into the

church just as it had in Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them. Carpenter says, “Today, a ‘Fourth Great Apostasy’ may have begun to emerge in the mid-twentieth century. It begins again wooing erstwhile evangelicals from their Puritan heritage. It appears to be an attack on evangelical moral standards” (Carpenter 2001, 666).

The conclusion of this research indicates the problem of immorality among leadership and youth was not present in declining churches and was not a factor causing church decline. The problem of immorality, however, was present in growing and plateaued churches. It appears in this research that immorality among the leadership is not affecting church growth.

Factors of Pastoral Authority in the Church

The purpose of testing the factors of pastoral authority in the church was to determine if the level of pastoral authority contributed to church decline. Jude says that one of the problems facing the first century church was defiance of authority, “In the same way these men reject authority . . . and perished in the rebellion of Korah” (vv. 8,11).

The conclusion of this research was that there was not a statistical difference between declining and growing churches in factors of pastoral authority in the church. Many pastors of declining churches, however, said that there were leaders in the church stronger than the pastor who dictated how the church functions. It appears that even though pastors say they have pastoral authority to make decisions, church leaders are undermining that pastoral authority. One of the strengths of growing churches was that the pastors had the authority to make decisions and other leaders in the church did not control them.

Leadership and Organizational Concerns

The research question was, “What leadership and theological factors have led to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?” The question was divided into five areas of study: factors of pastoral leadership in the church, factors of laity involvement and training in the church, factors of small group Bible study, factors of prayer emphasis, and factors of discipleship training.

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistical difference between declining churches and growing churches in the areas of leadership and organizational concerns.

Factors of Pastoral Leadership

The purpose of testing the factors of pastoral leadership in the church was to determine if pastoral leadership or the lack of it contributed to church decline. Rainer says that pastoral leadership “is a major factor in the church growth process” (Rainer 1993, 185).

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistical difference between declining churches and growing churches in factors of pastoral leadership. Three factors necessary for a pastor to lead the church are vision, mission and ministry. The pastor must have a vision of where the church is going, then that vision must be organized into a mission statement, and finally the vision must be executed by putting the vision into practice through ministry. According to Barna, “Management without visionary leadership leads to ministry that is mechanical, passionless, predictable and limited” (Barna 1993, 35). Rainer stated, “A visionary pastor is a major contributor to the growth of a church” (Rainer 1993, 193). This research demonstrated that pastors of

declining churches had problems with each area of pastoral leadership. They lacked vision, organization, and execution. Pastors of growing churches stated that pastoral leadership was an important aspect of church growth.

Factors of Laity Involvement and Training

The purpose of testing the factors of laity involvement and training in the church was to determine if the level of laity involvement and training contributed to church decline. Rainer asked the question in a survey, “What keeps you active in the church?” The response was 62% said that ministry involvement kept them in the church (Rainer 2001, 122-23).

The conclusion of this research was that there was not a statistically significant difference between growing and declining churches in factors of laity involvement and training. Even though there was not a statistical difference between growing and declining churches, there were some differences in the responses of two of the statements. Declining churches stated they lacked the development of lay leadership and they lacked the regular training of lay workers. These are two important elements in laity involvement in the church. According to McGavran, “If a church is serious about the Great Commission, the involvement of laity is of utmost importance. The growth of each church is uniquely dependent on its laity” (McGavran and Arn 1977, 105). Schwarz, in his research found, “Leaders of growing churches concentrate on empowering other Christians for ministry” (Schwarz 1998, 22). This research indicates growing churches have laity involved in the ministry of the church, they are training them, and that this is a priority for the church.

Factors of Small Group Adult Bible Study

The purpose of testing the factors of small group adult Bible study was to determine if the level of adult Bible study contributed to church decline. Heinecke, Hunter and Luecke found, “Small groups serve the church’s ministry in two ways. First, they provide an infrastructure for congregations in which people can interact, grow in their prayer life together, meet fellowship needs, and study the Bible in depth. Second, they serve as an avenue for outreach” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke 1991, 65).

The conclusion of this research was that there was not a statistically significant difference between growing and declining churches in factors of small group adult Bible study. There was one difference between growing and declining churches in one of the statements. A significant number of declining churches stated that their small adult Bible study groups did not meet regularly. This is significant because of Hadaway’s findings: “Sunday School was rated and was most central to the discriminant function and contributed to the function more substantially than did any other variable” (Hadaway 1991, 186). Rainer also found, “ministering through small group” to be a key factor for evangelistic churches (Rainer 1993, 221-22). In this study, growing churches stated small group adult Bible study was a priority for them.

Factors of Prayer Emphasis

The purpose of testing the factors of prayer emphasis was to determine if the level of prayer emphasis in the church contributed to church decline. According to Rainer, “Though the forms of prayer ministries vary, the leaders of these evangelistic churches stress that their personal prayer lives and prayer ministries of the church are inevitably tied to the winning of souls to Christ” (Rainer 1996, 15).

The conclusion of this research was that there was not a statistical difference between declining and growing churches in factors of prayer emphasis. There was one difference between growing and declining churches in one of the statements. Declining churches scored statistically differently from growing churches when asked if they prayed for non-believers in the community. Growing churches stated praying for non-believer was important. Shawchuck and Rath state, “Discernment is a decision-making process that seeks faithfully to involve God in the decision-making. It is a process built upon silence and prayer, and a searching of the Scriptures to discover the missional direction and ministries toward which God may be leading the church” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 47). This research demonstrated that prayer emphasis for the non-believer was a priority for growing churches.

Factors of Discipleship Training

The purpose of testing the factors of discipleship training was to determine if the level of training for new believers contributed to church decline. Rainer’s research indicates, “Incorporation and active discipleship in the local body were seen as essential” (Rainer 1996, 170).

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistical difference between declining and growing churches in factors of discipleship training. Barna’s research found, “only one out of every six people who attend a Christian church is being discipled” (Barna 2000, 4). This research concludes the same as Barna, that discipleship training is weak in all churches, and almost non-existent in declining churches.

Cultural Concerns

The research question was, “What cultural factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center?” Culture has been defined as “an artificial, second environment, which man superimposes on the natural” (Niebuhr 1951, 32). The question was divided into seven areas of study: factors on inspired worship, factors of evangelism in the church, factors of ministry in the church, factors of fellowship in the church, factors of enthusiasm and growth consciousness in the church, factors of innovation and change in the church, and factors of generational differences in the church.

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistical difference between declining and growing churches in all factors related to cultural concerns.

Factors of Inspired Worship

The purpose of testing the factors of inspired worship was to determine if the level of inspired worship in the church contributed to church decline. The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistical difference between declining and growing churches in factors of inspired worship.

Usually, the first point of contact of a visitor with the church is in the worship service. People look for three things: Was the service fun? Fun means it was an exciting worship service and not boring. Schwarz found in his research, “People attending truly ‘inspired’ services typically indicate that ‘going to church is fun’” (Schwarz 1998, 31). Was the church friendly? Friendly means the people were welcomed and made to feel a part of the service. And, was there a sense of awe in the worship? Awe means it was inspired and the people left feeling they had received a message for themselves from

God. This research demonstrated that growing churches had these three characteristics in their worship services. Plateaued and declining did not. Plateaued churches said, “Their worship services were not fun.” Declining churches rated all three characteristics as missing from their worship services. This research showed that in growing churches these factors were a part of the worship experience: having fun, having a worship that is friendly, and having a sense of awe throughout the service.

Factors of Evangelism in the Church

The purpose of testing the factors of evangelism in the church was to determine if the level of evangelism in the church contributed to church decline. Growing churches are described as those having “a heart for reaching the lost” (Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke 1991, 25).

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistically significant difference between declining and growing churches in factors of evangelism in the church. God made the church alive. Alive means there is always a regeneration process going on. In the body, old cells die off and new cells are born. What happens when no new cells are born? The body dies. Evangelism is the regeneration of the church’s body. Without it the church dies. This research indicated that growing churches were in the regeneration process, plateaued churches were maintaining, and declining churches were dying. This research showed that evangelism was one of the key focal points in growing churches. It was one of the growing churches’ priorities.

Factors of Ministry in the Church

The purpose of testing the factors of ministry in the church was to determine if the level of ministering in the church contributed to church decline. According to Hunter,

“Churches with ministries to the needs of unchurched pre-Christian thereby build more bridges to the people, have greater credibility with them, find them to be much more receptive, and experience many more ‘natural’ opportunities for faith sharing’ (Hunter 1996, 33). Shawchuck and Rath’s studies showed “In a high-quality comprehensive church, ministries are offered at most times of the day and utilize most of the available space in the church buildings” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 76).

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistical difference between declining and growing churches in factors of evangelism in the church. This research indicated that one of the weaknesses of the declining church was the church involved in ministry during the week. Growing churches set ministry as a priority in the church. Ministry must become much more than the happenings on Sunday morning. It should go far beyond this. It must become the church ministering and helping their members and the community during the whole week. We live in a society that is hurting. There are families that need our help. Their needs are real. There are people who are living isolated and lonely lives and they are crying out for help. There are families that are living without hope. Christians do not live an isolated life from the world. Our members and visitors are real. Jesus is the only hope. The church and its members must show this love to its neighbors and the world. The church must begin to care for one another and to reach our hurting world. Jesus says, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:14-16). Our ministry is to serve others in the name of Jesus.

Factors of Fellowship in the Church

The purpose of testing the factors of fellowship in the church was to determine if the level of fellowship in the church contributed to church decline. According to Shawchuck and Rath, “The high-quality congregation acts as a family, or as a neighbor in the community, in the best sense. Community in the life of the congregation has two foci: (1) the congregation’s life together and (2) its relationships to the community in which it is located and serves” (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 94). Harris, speaking of the community of the church, says, “Although it may not be reached, the ideal embodied in community is the movement toward unity and union with others” (Harris 1989, 76).

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistical difference between declining and growing churches in factors of fellowship in the church. Fellowship in the church is fundamental for a healthy productive church. People must enjoy being together, playing together, worshipping together, and serving one another. They must act as the “family of God.” This research indicated that declining churches lack fellowship. They act more as an institution rather than as the family of God. Growing churches stated that fellowship among its members was a priority.

Factors of Enthusiasm and Growth Consciousness in the Church

The purpose of testing the factors of enthusiasm and growth consciousness in the church was to determine if the level of enthusiasm and attitude of growth consciousness in the church contributed to church decline. Schwarz found in his research that Christians are on “fire” in growing churches. They enjoy serving and worshipping. His research indicated, “There are significant differences in this area between growing and declining churches” (Schwarz 1998, 26). McGavran says, “Growth conscience is a

conviction that permeates the Body of Christ that God's will is for growth, that a church has the opportunity, and responsibility to carry out God's will regarding those who have yet to believe" (McGavran and Arn 1977, 102).

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistical difference between declining and growing churches in factors of enthusiasm and growth consciousness in the church. This was one of the most striking contrasts between growing, plateaued, and declining churches. According to Shawchuck and Rath, "When joy is present, it pervades the entire life of the congregation. It is contagious, infecting every person who relates to the congregation" (Shawchuck and Rath 1994, 137). Enthusiasm begins with the pastor and staff. They must be enthused to be a child of God and to be at church. It comes from planning. When the church has a vision and is working on that vision, and there is progress toward that vision, then there is enthusiasm. Growth consciousness plays a role in enthusiasm. When there are new faces, people are becoming believers in Christ, and the church is reaching its community, there is an atmosphere of enthusiasm in the church. This research indicated that declining churches lacked enthusiasm and growth consciousness. Growing churches stated their church had enthusiasm and a growth consciousness.

Factors of Innovation and Change in the Church

The purpose of testing the factors of innovation and change in the church was to determine if the level of innovation and the willingness to change contributed to church decline. Wagner found one of the church growth diseases is people-blindness: "the malady, that prevents us from seeing the important cultural differences that exists between groups of people living in geographical proximity to one another – differences

that tend to create barriers to the acceptance of our message” (Wagner 1996, 60). Barna’s research found one symptom of a declining church is “resistance to change” (Barna 1993, 37).

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistical difference between declining and growing churches in factors of innovation and change in the church. Change is not easy. People like the same old things. It brings comfort to them and they do not have to learn anything new. Buildings begin to look old and outdated. The same songs are sung each Sunday and people sit in the same pew around the same people and grow old together. Innovation and change brings new life and growth to the church. It brings disequilibrium and people begin to build toward equilibrium, which causes growth and enthusiasm. This research indicated that declining churches were not innovated and resisted change. Growing churches were more willing to change.

Factors of Generational Differences in the Church

The purpose of testing the factors of generational differences in the church was to determine if generational differences in the church contributed to church decline. Hadaway in his research found, “Churches, which were dominated by the elderly, were less likely to experience breakout growth than those dominated by baby-boomer adults” (Hadaway 1990, 186). According to Barna, a symptom of declining church is “churches in which young people are virtually absent” (Barna 1993, 36).

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistically distinct difference between declining and growing churches in factors of generational differences in the church. A red flag should go up if the church scored high on generational differences. Senior adults are not the problem. Seniors are a benefit to the church. They

add wisdom and ministry and help support the church financially. There must be ministry for senior adults in communities where senior adults live. The problem arises if there are few or no young and middle-aged adults and few or no children and youth. This church will die within the next few years unless ministry begins to happen in the regeneration phase. This research indicated that declining churches suffer from not having middle-aged leaders and a children and youth programs. Growing churches were composed of all ages and had ministry appropriate for them.

Demographic Concerns

The research question was: What demographic factors have contributed to the decline of the Protestant church in a metropolitan center? The question was divided into four areas of study: degree of population growth or decline in the community, degree of ethnic changes in the community, the effects of pastoral tenure, and the effects of the church's longevity.

The conclusion of this research was that there was a statistically distinct difference between declining and growing churches in factors of the demographic concerns.

Factors of Population Growth in the Community

The purpose of testing the factors of population growth in the community was to determine if decline in population growth in the community contributed to church decline. Stump lists three demographic factors that can affect church growth and decline: population growth, change in racial diversity, and high rates of immigration in a county

(Stump 1998, 639). Barna's says, "Every five years almost one-fifth of the nation's population moves" (Barna 1993, 33).

The conclusion was that there was a difference between growing and declining churches in factors of population growth in the community. Kirk Hadaway says, "Few churches realize that previous growth was due primarily to demographic factors, so they tend to turn inward and blame themselves or their pastors, rather than beginning to reach out to the unchurched people in their communities" (Hadaway 1982, 380). Many growing churches can attest that new communities bring new dynamics and new members to the churches. Statistics prove this reality.

This research supported previous studies that population growth does affect church growth. Declining churches were located in non-growth populated areas. Growing churches were usually located in growth areas. The question is, what happens when people are not looking for new church homes and the church becomes plateaued or declining? The answer is simple, but the work is difficult. Churches must go after the people rather than wait for the people to come to them. Plateaued and declining churches will have to find out the needs of the community and minister to them. Churches ministering and reaching the community will be healthy and productive churches.

Factors of Ethnic Changes in the Community

The purpose of testing the factors of ethnic change in the community was to determine if the changes in the ethnicity of the community contributed to church decline. According to Hadaway, "Churches tend to suffer when the social composition of their neighborhoods begins to change" (Hadaway 1982, 373). According to Stump, "Changes in racial diversity may affect the local church. High rates of immigration in a county may

influence church growth through the aggregate effects of individual migrant behavior” (Stump 1998, 639).

The conclusion was that there was a difference between growing, plateaued, and declining churches in factors of changes in the ethnicity of the community. It is not unusual to see multi-ethnic neighborhoods in metropolitan centers. Most new neighborhoods are multi-ethnic. Churches in older neighborhoods can find their church membership is no longer reflective of the ethnicity of the neighborhood surrounding them. Growing, plateaued, and declining churches are faced with how they will minister to their community. This research demonstrated that declining churches have not learned how to deal with the ethnical changes in their community. Growing churches have done a better job adapting to these changes.

Effects of Pastoral Tenure

The purpose of testing the effects of pastoral tenure was to determine if longevity of the pastor had any effects on growing, plateaued, or declining churches. According to Barna, “The typical pastor has his or her greatest ministry impact at a church in five through fourteen years” (Barna 2002, 119).

The conclusion of this research agrees with past studies that pastoral tenure does affect church growth. Pastoral tenure does matter. Pastors seem to experience a difficult time the first five years of ministry. The church may continue to show decline or may plateau. Pastors serving more than five years appear to experience the greatest growth. Pastors serving for more than twenty-five years may experience church decline. This is not always the case. Many pastors develop a new vision for the church and work

toward that vision. Pastoral longevity can be beneficial because church members do not have to go through the experience of looking for and changing pastors.

Pastors need to be willing to stay the course. Rainer found, “The average tenure of an unchurched-reaching pastor is 11.8 years” (Rainer 2001, 146). Statistics show that being willing to stay will bear fruit and churches will become healthy and productive in due time.

Effects of Church Longevity

The purpose of testing the effects of church longevity was to determine if the longevity of church had any effects on growing, plateaued, or declining churches. According to Nanus and Dobbs, “Decline happens when the activities of an otherwise successful organization become so inflexible in the pursuit of efficiency and continuity that the organization loses touch with the changing needs of its clients or the community” (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 130). The conclusion of this research was that church longevity could have an effect on church growth and decline.

Statistics show that new churches grow and older churches decline. What is encouraging is that many older churches are growing. Nanus and Dobbs say, “Instead of moving into the fourth phase and declining or prolonging the maturity stage through renewal, organizations have one other alternative. An organization can transform itself into a new entity, with an entirely new vision and mission and a dramatically different operating style” (Nanus and Dobbs 1999, 132). “Leaders lead the church back to its original dream and then help it to redream new dreams for today” (Baker, Brown, and Dale 1991, 6). The research shows many churches have done that and are healthy and productive churches today.

It is easier to serve a new church because of the excitement of being a new entity and serving in a new neighborhood where people are looking for a church to serve and worship. Serving in older churches can have its benefits also. Older churches are usually debt free, they have a group of core members willing to contribute to the ministry, and many are ready for a change. They are ready to serve alongside of a pastor with a vision. Paul told Timothy, “To kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you” (2 Tim 1:6). Perhaps, that is the best advice to give to an older church in decline. “Kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you.”

Differences between Growing, Plateaued, and Declining Churches

The research question asked, “What differences are there between declining churches in comparison to growing and plateaued churches in a metropolitan center? The conclusion is that declining churches face a multitude of factors. The differences between growing, plateaued and declining churches can be seen in figure 24.

Ethnic changes and population growth are contextual factors that churches have no control over. That does not mean they have no options. Knowing these factors can help the church minister to the needs of their members and their community. This research indicates that cultural factors have a greater influence on church decline than any other area. Generational factors, discipleship training, evangelism, innovation and change, ministry, inspired worship, laity involvement and training, and fellowship are all cultural factors that can be changed in the local church. The research indicates that the key is pastoral leadership and pastoral authority. These are two factors that are present in growing churches.

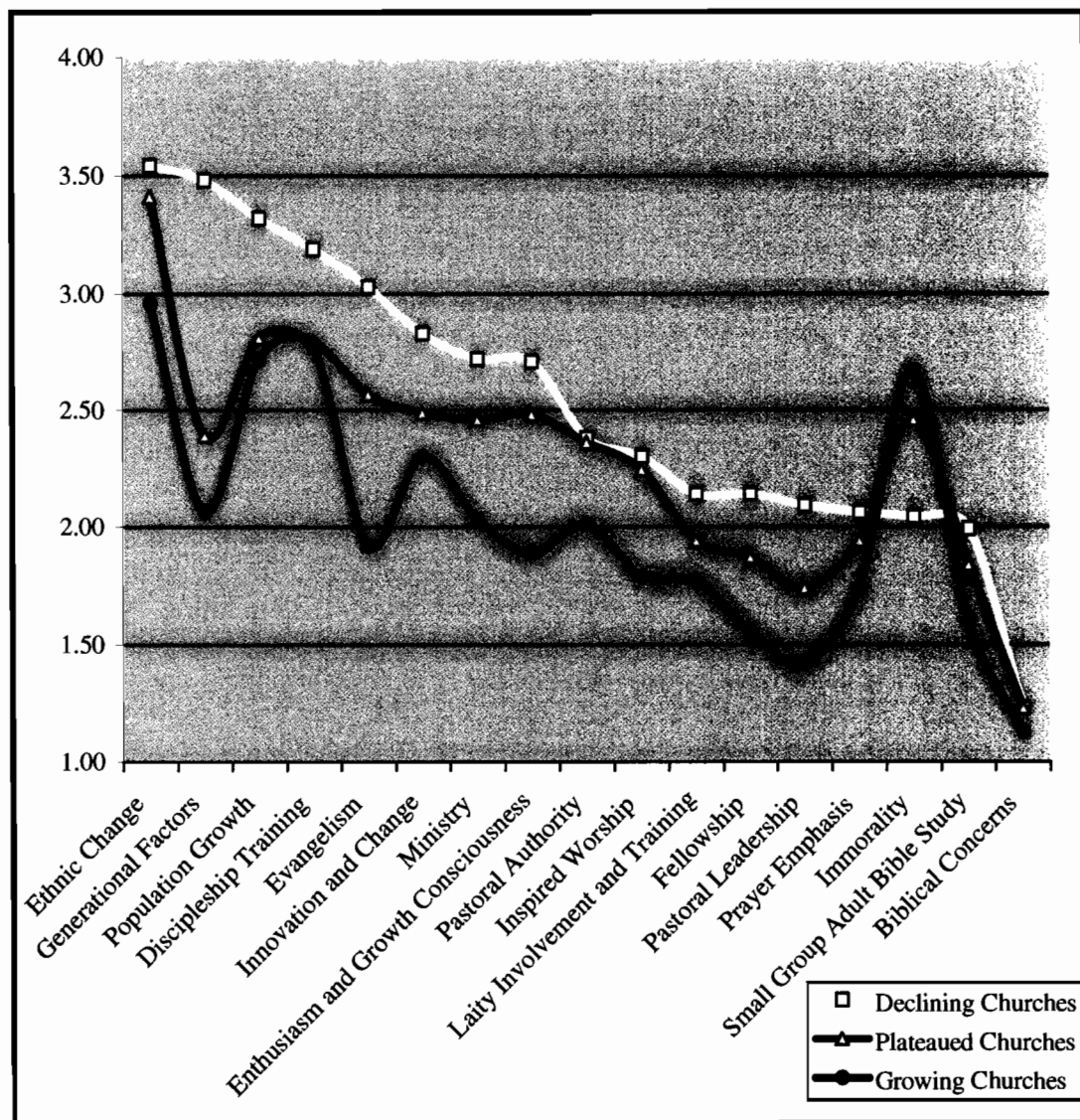


Figure 24. Chart of Mean Scores

Another way to look at Figure 24 is to look at what growing churches are doing differently than declining churches. Growing churches have strong pastoral leadership. There is fellowship in the church. The laity is involved in ministry and is trained. The church has inspired worship services. There is enthusiasm and a growth consciousness in the church. Ministry is occurring throughout the week. They are not afraid of innovation and change. They have an emphasis on evangelism. And, the pastor has authority to lead the church.

In conclusion, this research indicates that the pastor must have a vision to lead the church through pastoral authority. Lay leaders and lay workers and new converts need to be discipled and trained. The church must do the work of an evangelist. All of these things must be bathed in prayer. The church must develop inspired worship, ministry, fellowship, and Bible study for all the people. Innovation, change, enthusiasm, and growth consciousness must become everyday words. And above all, the integrity of the of God's Word must be taught and preached.

Research Application

This researcher began his study with this statement, "An unprecedented period in the life of the North American church began in the mid-1960s. For the first time since records allow us to recall, many major denominations actually stopped growing in membership and began to decline, and the growth rate of most others slowed considerably" (Hoge and Roozen 1979, 17). Many churches are in decline or are dying. Some have already closed their doors. The problem is not limited to any single denomination or a particular part of the country, but all denominations throughout the United States are seeing signs of church decline.

The intention of this study was to develop an understanding of the factors contributing to the decline of churches. While not exhaustive, biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic factors make up a large spectrum of possible causes. Some research has occurred in a few of these areas. Demographic studies found various reasons for church decline. Most of these studies were dated over ten years ago. Through this study this researcher wanted to find the root

of the causes of church decline. A wide spectrum of subject matters were tested. Nineteen factors were surveyed.

A medical doctor spends time studying patient symptoms before he discovers a cure. In the last few years countless books have been written on how to grow a church without knowing what the real factors that led to church decline were. The desire of this researcher was to discover the factors causing church decline so that effective interventions can be developed.

Jude, in his Epistle, calls the people to revival because of the problems in the church. When revival comes, other problems seem to diminish. Salvation becomes the central focus again. Donald Luidens says, “There are congregations (perhaps entire denominations) which are in dire need of ground-breaking revival. They may have lost their sense of calling, they may be communities in disrepair. There are also individuals whose faith has flagged, and who need the breath of renewal and, hope – a reclaiming of the Good News” (Luidens 1996, 1078). It is the desire of this researcher that revival will come to the church.

Church decline is real and it needs to be addressed in a way that churches can be helped to overcome these factors of decline. Some others suggestions are:

1. Seminaries need to address the causes of church decline in classes on church growth.
2. Denominations need to develop methods of helping church leaders and perhaps even invest in personnel in the declining churches to lead them out of decline.
3. This survey can be developed as a tool for evaluating the problems churches in decline are facing.
4. Courses in pastoral leadership need to be taught on the field.
5. Books dealing with the real issues of church decline need to be written.

6. Pastors need encouragement to work through church decline and be willing to stay the course in the church long enough to see the church turn around and begin to grow into a healthy church ministering to their community.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions and applications presented above, further suggestions of investigation are as follows:

1. Conduct a similar study in a different metropolitan center to see if the findings are the same.
2. Conduct a similar study in a small town setting and/or in a rural setting to see if the findings are the same.
3. Conduct a study evaluating the vision of the pastor, the mission of the church, and its correlating ministries.
4. Conduct a study on pastors that have served over 25 years. Little data is available and the study would have to be enlarged to a larger geographical area.
5. Conduct a new study on the effects of ethnic changes and how they affect the church today. Most studies were old and do not reflect the realities of the twenty-first century.
6. Conduct a study on the effects of immorality on the churches. Growing and plateaued churches had higher rates of immorality than declining churches. It appeared there was no effect on church growth.
7. Conduct a study on growing churches that have turned around from declining churches to see what characteristics were present and what steps were taken to turn the church around.

APPENDIX 1

WRITTEN SURVEY TO CHURCHES

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the factors contributing to the decline of churches in a metropolitan center. The research is being conducted by Ira Jones, for the purpose of a dissertation research. In this research, you will be asked to respond to a variety of statements. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your response. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this survey, checking the appropriate box below, and providing your e-mail address or signature, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

- ☐ I agree to participate
- ☐ I do not agree to participate

Signature: _____

E-mail or address: _____

Survey of Growing, Plateaued, and Declining Churches

Pastor,

Thank you for participating. Please answer the survey to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers. The information gathered and the success of the survey depend on each pastor doing a thorough job of evaluating his or her church.

General Information

Check the denomination of your church.

☐ Church of God; ☐ Presbyterian; ☐ Methodist; ☐ Baptist; ☐ Lutheran;
☐ Assembly of God; ☐ Christian; ☐ Church of Christ; ☐ Episcopal; ☐ Nazarene

Our church is an established (chartered, constituted, incorporated, etc) church.

☐ Yes; ☐ No

We have been an established church for:

☐ 0-4 years; ☐ 5-9 years; ☐ 10-24 years; ☐ 25+ years

I have been the pastor for:

☐ <1 year; ☐ 1-4 years; ☐ 5-9 years; ☐ 10-24 years; ☐ 25+ years

Our church is located:

☐ In the city limits of Houston, Texas; ☐ Outside the city limits of Houston, Texas

I would classify my church as:

☐ Growing – Our church has grown 10% or more in attendance in the past 5 years.
☐ Plateaued – Our church has neither grown nor declined more than 10% in attendance in the past 5 years.
☐ Declining – Our church has decline more than 10% in attendance in the past 5 years.

Respond to the following statements:

SA–Strongly agree, A–Agree, SWA–Somewhat Agree, D–Disagree, SD–Strongly disagree


Statements	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
God is both all loving and all judging.					
Most of our members live in the neighborhood around our church.					
Our church has a program for new believers to minister alongside a mature Christian.					
I have a vision for the direction of our church.					
Humanity cannot save itself.					
The Bible is relevant for today's society.					
Most of our members do not live in the neighborhood, but travel here each Sunday.					

Statements	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
Our church functions as a "family of God."					
Our church has a strategy for reaching non-believers in our community.					
Jesus and God are one.					
Immoral lay leadership has affected our church.					
The pastor has the responsibility to see that the lay workers are trained.					
New believers attend a new members class or meet regularly with a staff person or lay volunteer.					
Evangelism is a high priority in our church.					
Most of our active church members are involved in ministry.					
Our church is not afraid of new ideas, innovations, and change.					
Our community has lost homes due to unforeseen situations (floods, buy-outs, factory closures, etc).					
God is Creator and is active today.					
An immoral pastor or staff has affected our church.					
Our ministries of the church are aligned with our mission statement.					
Our church regularly prays for non-believers.					
When people come to worship, they sense the friendliness of our church.					
Our church members care for each other and regularly minister to one another.					
Our church has an active youth and children's ministry program.					
The neighborhood surrounding our church is considered multi-ethnic.					
The Bible, God's Word, does not change.					
There are some in the church who regularly undermine my pastoral authority.					
Lay workers are regularly trained for ministry.					
The vision for our church comes through prayer.					
There is regularly a sense of awe in our worship service.					
Our church members are on "fire" and love to serve.					
Our church lacks middle-aged leaders.					
Our church reflects the ethnicity of our neighborhood.					

Statements	SA	A	SWA	D	SD
God has power over all things.					
Many youth in our church are sexually active.					
Our small group Bible studies meet for prayer, fellowship, and Bible study.					
Going to worship is considered fun in our church.					
Our church's worship and ministry is the same today as it has always been. It has not changed.					
Our church regularly has people who accept Christ as their Lord and Savior.					
New members are regularly added to our church because they have moved into the community.					
Jesus is more than a prophet. He is the only Son of God.					
There are leaders in the church stronger than I am and dictate how our church functions.					
Salvation is by the grace of God.					
New believers are assigned a mentor.					
Our church is located in a growing community.					
Our church is actively involved in ministry during the week.					
Our church is growth conscious.					
The Bible is the written revelation of God through holy men and women.					
Prayer is a high priority for me in my life as pastor.					
Our church has developed a mission statement.					
Salvation is free, but a person must ask to receive it.					
Our church members regularly meet together for fellowship and activities.					
Our church consists primarily of senior adults.					
Jesus walked on earth, died, and was resurrected.					
As pastor, I have authority to make decisions.					
Developing lay leadership is a high priority for our church.					
Our church has adult small Bible study groups that meet regularly.					
Our church is a joyful place to be.					
Lay people perform most of the ministry in our church.					
The Bible is the source of study in our small groups.					

APPENDIX 2

ONLINE SURVEY TO CHURCHES



Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the factors contributing to the decline of churches in a metropolitan center. The research is being conducted by Ira Jones, for the purpose of a dissertation research. In this research, you will be asked to respond to a variety of statements. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your response.


Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time

By your completion of this survey, checking the appropriate box below, and providing your e-mail address, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

☐ I agree to participate

☐ I do NOT agree to participate

E-Mail address:




 survey

Survey of Growing, Plateaued, and Declining Churches

Pastor,
Thank you for participating. Please answer the survey to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers. The information gathered and the success of the survey depend on each pastor doing a thorough job of evaluating his or her church.




 survey

GENERAL INFORMATION

Check the denomination of your church.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church of God | <input type="checkbox"/> Assembly of God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Presbyterian | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Methodist | <input type="checkbox"/> Church of God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baptist | <input type="checkbox"/> Episcopal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lutheran | <input type="checkbox"/> Nazarene |



 **Survey**



GENERAL INFORMATION (continued)


Our church is an established (chartered, constituted, incorporated, etc) church.

☐ Yes ☐ No

We have been an established church for:

☐ 0-4 years ☐ 5-9 years ☐ 10-24 years ☐ 25+ years

 **Survey**



GENERAL INFORMATION (continued)


I have been the pastor for:

☐ <1 year ☐ 1-4 years ☐ 5-9 years ☐ 10-24 years ☐ 25+ years

Our church is located:

☐ In the city limits of Houston, Texas ☐ Outside the city limits of Houston, Texas





GENERAL INFORMATION (continued)

I would classify my church as:

☐ Growing - Our church has grown 10% or more in attendance in the past 5 years.

☐ Plateaued - Our church has neither grown nor declined more than 10% in attendance in the past 5 years.

☐ Declining - Our church has declined more than 10% in attendance in the past 5 years.

Respond to the following statements.

God is both all loving and all judging.


☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree


Most of our members live in the neighborhood around our church.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church has a program for new believers to minister alongside a mature Christian.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree





I have a vision for the direction of our church.




☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Humanity cannot save itself.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

The Bible is relevant for today's society.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Most of our members do not live in the neighborhood, but travel here each Sunday.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church functions as a "family of God."

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church has a strategy for reaching non-believers in our community.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Survey

Most of our members do not live in the neighborhood, but travel here each Sunday.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church functions as a "family of God."

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church has a strategy for reaching non-believers in our community.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Survey

Jesus and God are one.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree


Immoral lay leadership has affected our church.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

The pastor has the responsibility to see that the lay workers are trained.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree



Survey

New believers attend a new members class or meet regularly with a staff person or lay volunteer.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree


Evangelism is a high priority in our church.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Most of our active church members are involved in ministry.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree



Survey

Our church is not afraid of new ideas, innovations, and change.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our community has lost homes due to unforeseen situations (floods, buy-outs, factory closures, etc).

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

God is Creator and is active today.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Survey

An immoral pastor or staff has affected our church.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our ministries of the church are aligned with our mission statement.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church regularly prays for non-believers.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Survey

When people come to worship, they sense the friendliness of our church.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church members care for each other and regularly minister to one another.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church has an active youth and children's ministry program.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Survey

The neighborhood surrounding our church is considered multi-ethnic.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

The Bible, God's Word, does not change.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

There are some in the church who regularly undermine my pastoral authority.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Survey

Lay workers are regularly trained for ministry.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree


The vision for our church comes through prayer.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

There is regularly a sense of awe in our worship service.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree



Our church members are on "fire" and love to serve.


☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree


Our church lacks middle-aged leaders.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church reflects the ethnicity of our neighborhood.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree





God has power over all things.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree


Many youth in our church are sexually active.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our small group Bible studies meet for prayer, fellowship, and Bible study.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree



Going to worship is considered fun in our church.




☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church's worship and ministry is the same today as it has always been. It has not changed.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church regularly has people who accept Christ as their Lord and Savior.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

New members are regularly added to our church because they have moved into the community.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree


Jesus is more than a prophet. He is the only Son of God.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

There are leaders in the church stronger than I am and dictate how our church functions.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree



Salvation is by the grace of God.




☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

New believers are assigned a mentor.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church is located in a growing community.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church is actively involved in ministry during the week.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree


Our church is growth conscious.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

The Bible is the written revelation of God through holy men and women.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree



Prayer is a high priority for me in my life as pastor.




☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church has developed a mission statement.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Salvation is free, but a person must ask to receive it.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church members regularly meet together for fellowship and activities.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church consists primarily of senior adults.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Jesus walked on earth, died, and was resurrected.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Survey

As pastor, I have authority to make decisions.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Developing lay leadership is a high priority for our church.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Our church has adult small Bible study groups that meet regularly.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Survey

Our church is a joyful place to be.



☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

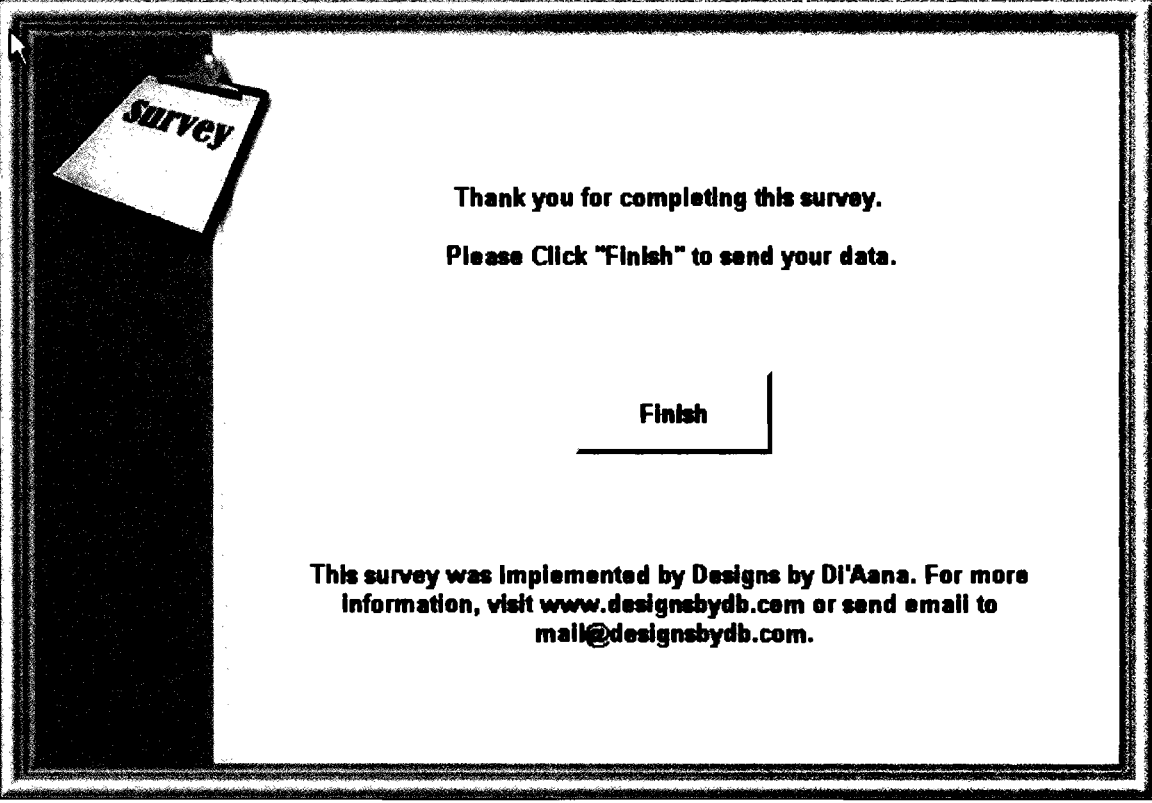
Lay people perform most of the ministry in our church.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

The Bible is the source of study in our small groups.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

A survey completion screen with a dark vertical bar on the left containing a clipboard icon with the word "Survey" on it. The main area is white and contains text thanking the user and a "Finish" button.

Survey

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please Click "Finish" to send your data.

Finish

**This survey was implemented by Designs by DI'Aana. For more
information, visit www.designsbydb.com or send email to
mail@designsbydb.com.**

APPENDIX 3

FIRST E-MAIL SENT TO PASTORS

Subject: Ira Jones - Church Survey

Dear Pastor,

Let me introduce myself, I am Ira Jones, Pastor of Wooster Baptist Church, Baytown, Texas. I am conducting a survey of growing, plateaued and declining churches in the metropolitan center of Houston, Texas.

I need a favor from you. I need you to go online and complete the survey. This is an important survey that I believe will help many churches. It may even help yours. I need your assistance to get this vital information. The information I am asking for is not personal. It is about your church's ministry. The survey is completed on the web site and is not downloaded onto your computer. The results are sent immediately to me.

Please, press on this link. It will take you to the online survey.

[Pastor's survey on growing, plateaued, and declining churches](#)

Thank you and may God richly bless you and your ministry.
Ira Jones

For questions I can be reached at:
Home phone:
E-mail:

APPENDIX 4

SECOND E-MAIL SENT TO PASTORS

Subject: Update 2- Survey on growing, plateaued, and declining churches

Dear Pastor,

I want to thank all of the pastors that have participated. Thus far approximately 45 pastors have responded. This number needs to triple to have a successful survey. Therefore, I am asking all pastors that have not participated to take five minutes of your time and complete the survey. As stated before, the surveys received will be used to complete a dissertation study and will be held in strict confidence.

The survey is completed on the web site and is not downloaded onto your computer. The results are sent immediately to me.

Your assistance is appreciated. Press on this link. It will take you to the online survey.

[Pastor's survey on growing, plateaued, and declining churches](#)

Thank you for your participation.
Ira Jones

For questions I can be reached at:
Home phone:
E-mail:

APPENDIX 5

THIRD E-MAIL SENT TO PASTORS

Dear Pastor,

I am praying for your church. I ask you to pray for mine, Wooster Baptist Church, Baytown, TX. I also need a favor from you. I need you to go online and complete the survey. This is an important survey that I believe will help many churches. It may even help yours. I need your assistance to get this vital information. The information I am asking for is not personal. It is about your church's ministry. The survey is completed on the web site and is not downloaded onto your computer. The results are sent immediately to me.

Press on this link. It will take you to the online survey.

[Pastor's survey on growing, plateaued, and declining churches](#)

Thank you and may God richly bless you and your ministry..
Ira Jones

For questions I can be reached at:
Home phone:
E-mail:

APPENDIX 6

LETTER MAILED TO PASTORS

Dear Pastor,

Let me introduce myself, I am Ira Jones, pastor of Wooster Baptist Church, Baytown, Texas. I am conducting a doctoral dissertation survey of growing, plateaued and declining churches in the metropolitan center of Houston, Texas. I need your help. Please take five minutes of your time to complete the survey. The information I am asking for is not personal. It is about your church's ministry. The survey can be completed in paper form or may be completed by going to the web site www.irajonesministries.com/churchsurvey. (Pastors completing the survey on the web site do not need to fax or mail the survey back. It will be sent immediately to my e-mail address.)

Upon completion of this survey please mail it in the self-addressed stamped envelope or fax it back to me at 281-421-0435:

Surveys must be completed and mailed or faxed back to me by January 12 to be included in the study.

For questions, I can be reached at:

Cell phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Thank you for your participation,
Ira Jones

APPENDIX 7

RESULTS OF SURVEY “GROWING, PLATEAUED, AND DECLINING CHURCHES”

1	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Plateaued
2	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Plateaued
3	Agree	Lutheran	No	5-9 years	5-9 years	Growing
4	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Plateaued
5	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Declining
6	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	25+ years	Declining
7	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Declining
8	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
9	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
10	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Growing
11	Agree	Methodist	Yes	5-9 years	25+ years	Declining
12	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	<1 year	Declining
13	Agree	Church of God	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
14	Agree	Baptist	Yes	0-4 years	1-4 years	Growing
15	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Growing
16	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Plateaued
17	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Growing
18	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Plateaued
19	Agree	Baptist	Yes	0-4 years	<1 year	Plateaued
20	Agree	Baptist	Yes	0-4 years	1-4 years	Growing
21	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Plateaued
22	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
23	Agree	Baptist	Yes	5-9 years	1-4 years	Declining
24	Agree	Baptist	Yes	5-9 years	5-9 years	Growing
25	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Plateaued
26	Agree	Baptist	No	10-24 years	5-9 years	Plateaued
27	Agree	Baptist	Yes	0-4 years	1-4 years	Growing
28	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Plateaued
29	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Growing
30	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Plateaued
31	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
32	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Plateaued
33	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	<1 year	Declining

SA - Strongly Agree A- Agree SWA - Somewhat Agree D - Disagree SD - Strongly Disagree

1	SA	D	D	SWA	SA	SA	SA	A	D	SA	A	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	D	D	SA	SD	A
2	A	A	D	SA	SA	SA	D	SWA	SA	SA	D	A	SA	A	D	SWA	D	SA	D	A
3	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	A	SD	SA	SD	A
4	SD	D	D	SA	SA	SA	D	A	D	A	D	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	SD	SA
5	SWA	SD	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SD	SA	SA	A	A	D	SA	SA	SD	SWA
6	SA	D	SWA	SA	A	SA	A	A	D	A	SD	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	SD	A
7	A	A	D	SA	SA	SA	SWA	D	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SD	SA
8	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	A	D	D	SA	SWA	SA
9	SA	A	D	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	D	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SD	SWA
10	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	A	D	A	A	A	A	SA	D	SA	SD	SA
11	SA	SD	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	A	SA	SD	SA	SD	SA
12	A	A	A	A	A	A	SD	SA	A	SA	SD	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	SD	SA	SD	A
13	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	A	SA	D	A	A	A	A	SWA	SA	SA	A	A
14	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	A	SA	SD	SA
15	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SD	SA
16	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA
17	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	A	A	A	SA	SA	A	A	A	A	A	A	SA	SA	A
18	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	A	A	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	A	A	A	A	SA	SA	SA
19	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	A	A	A	SA	A	A	D	SA	SA	A
20	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	A	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	D	SA	SD	SA
21	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	D	SA	SWA	A	A	SWA	D	SA	SA	SWA
22	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	D	A	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	D	SWA
23	A	A	A	SWA	SD	SA	D	A	A	SA	SD	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SD	SWA
24	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	A	SA
25	A	A	SWA	A	SA	SA	D	A	SWA	SA	D	SWA	D	D	SWA	SWA	D	SA	D	SWA
26	SA	D	D	A	SA	SA	A	SWA	D	SA	A	A	D	D	SWA	SWA	D	SA	SWA	D
27	SA	D	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A	SWA	SWA	A	D	SA	SWA	SA
28	SA	D	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SD	A
29	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	A	SA	SD	SA	A	A
30	A	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	SWA	A	SA	SWA	A	SWA	D	A	D	A
31	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	D	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	D	SA	D	A
32	A	A	A	A	A	A	SWA	A	A	SA	A	A	A	A	A	A	SWA	A	A	A
33	SA	SWA	D	A	SA	SA	SWA	D	D	SA	SWA	A	A	D	SWA	SWA	D	SA	SD	SWA

SA - Strongly Agree A- Agree SWA - Somewhat Agree D - Disagree SD - Strongly Disagree

1	SWA	A	SWA	A	A	SA	A	D	D	SWA	SWA	D	D	SA	D	SD	D	D	SD	D
2	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	A	A	D	D	A	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	A	D
3	A	A	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	A	A	A	SWA	SA	SA	SD	SA	A	SA	A	A
4	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	D	A	A	SA	SWA	D	SWA	SA	D	SWA	SWA	SD	SWA	A
5	SA	SWA	SA	D	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	A	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SD	SA	SWA	D	D	SD
6	D	SA	A	D	SWA	A	D	A	A	A	SWA	D	D	SA	D	A	SWA	A	SWA	D
7	A	D	SWA	A	A	SWA	A	A	SA	SWA	D	SA	SD	SA	D	A	SWA	SD	SD	SD
8	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	D	A	SA	D	SA	SA	SD	SWA	D
9	SWA	A	A	A	SD	A	D	SA	A	A	A	D	SA	SA	SWA	SA	A	D	D	SWA
10	SWA	SA	SA	SA	A	D	D	SA	SA	SA	A	D	A	D	A	SA	A	D	SA	A
11	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	A	A	A	SWA	A	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	SD
12	A	A	SWA	SWA	SD	SA	SD	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	A	D	SA	SD	SA	A	SD	SWA	SD
13	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	A	SA	A	A	D	SA	SA	D	SWA	SA	SD	A	SWA
14	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SA	D	SA	D
15	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SD	SA	SA	A	A	D	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	D	SA	SWA
16	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	A	A	SA	SWA	SA	SA	A	A	D	A	D
17	SWA	SA	A	A	A	SA	D	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SA	D	SA	SWA	SD	A	SWA
18	A	A	A	A	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	A	A	A	A	SA	SWA	SA	D	D	SWA	SWA
19	A	SWA	A	SWA	D	SA	A	A	A	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	A	SWA
20	SA	A	A	SWA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	A	A	A	SA	SA	D	SA	SWA	SA	A	D
21	A	A	A	SWA	A	SA	D	A	A	SWA	SWA	D	D	SA	D	D	A	D	SWA	D
22	SA	SA	A	A	A	SA	SD	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SA	D	SWA	A	D	SWA	D
23	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	D	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	D	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	D
24	SA	SA	A	SA	D	SA	SD	A	SWA	SWA	D	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	D	SA	D
25	SWA	A	A	A	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	SWA	D
26	D	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SWA	D	SWA	D	D	SWA	D	SA	D	SWA	SWA	D	SD	D
27	D	A	A	A	A	SA	D	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	D	D	SA	SD	A	SWA	D	D	D
28	SA	SA	SA	A	A	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	D	D	SD	SA	D	SA	A	D	D	SD
29	SA	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	D	SWA	A	A	A	D	SWA	SA	SWA	A	A	SD	SA	D
30	A	A	A	A	A	SA	A	A	A	A	D	D	SWA	SA	SWA	A	SWA	D	A	D
31	A	A	A	A	SWA	SA	D	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	D	D	SA	D	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA
32	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	D	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA
33	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	A	A	SWA	D	A	D	D	D	D	SA	D	D	D	A	D	D

SA - Strongly Agree A - Agree SWA - Somewhat Agree D - Disagree SD - Strongly Disagree

1	SA	A	SA	SWA	SD	D	SWA	SA	A	SA	SD	A	SWA	SA	SD	D	SD	A	D	SA
2	SA	D	SA	D	A	D	SWA	A	SWA	SA	D	SWA	SD	SA	A	A	A	A	D	SA
3	SA	A	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	A	SA	A	A	SA	SA	A	SA
4	SA	SD	SA	SWA	SD	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	D	A	SD	SA	SA	A	SA	A	SWA	A
5	SA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA
6	SA	D	SA	D	D	A	D	SA	SA	SA	A	D	A	SA	SA	A	A	A	A	A
7	SA	SD	SA	SD	A	SWA	SWA	A	SA	SA	A	A	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SWA	SA
8	SA	SD	SA	A	D	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA
9	SA	SD	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SWA	A	D	SA	A	SA	SA	A	A	SA
10	A	D	SA	D	D	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	D	SA	SWA	SA	SA	A	A	SWA
11	SA	A	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA
12	SWA	SD	SA	SWA	D	A	A	A	SA	A	SA	SWA	A	SA	A	SWA	A	A	D	A
13	SA	D	SA	SWA	SWA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	D	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SWA	A
14	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
15	SA	D	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA
16	SA	D	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SWA	A
17	SA	D	SA	SWA	SD	A	A	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SWA	SA	A	A	A
18	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	A	SA	SA	A	SA	SWA	A	A	A	SWA	SA
19	SA	A	SA	A	A	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	A	A	SWA	A	A	SWA
20	SA	SD	SA	A	SA	A	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	A	SA	SA	A	SA	SA
21	SA	D	SA	D	D	A	SWA	SA	A	SWA	SA	A	SWA	SA	SWA	A	D	A	SWA	SA
22	SA	D	SA	D	SD	A	A	SA	SWA	A	SA	A	D	SA	A	A	SWA	A	SWA	A
23	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SWA	SD	SA	SWA	SA	D	SA	SWA	SWA
24	SA	SD	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA
25	SA	D	SA	D	D	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SWA	A	A	D	SA	SWA	SA	SA	A	A	A
26	SA	SWA	A	D	SWA	D	D	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	A	D	SA	A	A	A	A	SWA	SA
27	SA	D	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	SWA	A	SA	A	D	SA	SA	SA	A	A	A	SA
28	SA	SD	SA	D	A	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA
29	SA	D	SA	A	A	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	A	A	A	A	A	SA
30	SA	D	SA	D	A	SWA	SWA	SA	A	A	D	SWA	SD	SA	SWA	A	A	A	SWA	A
31	SA	D	SA	D	SWA	SWA	A	A	SA	SA	SD	A	SWA	SA	A	SWA	SWA	SA	SWA	SA
32	A	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SA	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
33	SA	SWA	SA	D	A	SWA	D	A	SA	A	SA	SWA	A	SA	D	D	D	SWA	SWA	D

34	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Declining
35	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Plateaued
36	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	1-4 years	Growing
37	I Do NOT agree to participate					
38	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Plateaued
39	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Growing
40	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Declining
41	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
42	Agree	Church of God	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Plateaued
43	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Declining
44	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Plateaued
45	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Declining
46	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Declining
47	Agree	Nazarene	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Plateaued
48	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Growing
49	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Plateaued
50	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Plateaued
51	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Growing
52	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Declining
53	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	<1 year	Plateaued
54	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Declining
55	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Growing
56	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	5-9 years	Growing
57	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	25+ years	Growing
58	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Plateaued
59	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Declining
60	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	<1 year	Declining
61	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
62	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Declining
63	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Plateaued
64	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Growing
65	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	10-24 years	25+ years	Growing
66	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Plateaued

	SA - Strongly Agree			A - Agree			SWA - Somewhat Agree			D - Disagree			SD - Strongly Disagree							
34	SA	A	SD	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SD	SA	SD	SA	SD	SD	SD	SA	SA	SA	SD	SD
35	D	D	SWA	SA	SA	SA	D	SWA	SWA	A	A	SA	SWA	SWA	D	SWA	SD	SA	A	A
36	SA	D	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SD	SA	A	SA	A	SA	D	SA	SD	SA
37																				
38	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	SWA	A
39	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SWA	SA	A	SWA	SA	SA	A	SA
40	SA	D	A	A	SA	SA	A	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SA	D	SWA	SWA	D	SD	SA	SD	SWA
41	SA	SWA	D	SWA	SA	SA	D	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SWA	D	D	D	SWA	SD	SA	A	SWA
42	SA	SD	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SA	A	A	SA	SWA	SA	SD	A
43	SWA	SD	A	A	SA	SA	A	A	SWA	SA	SD	SWA	A	SWA	D	D	SWA	SA	SD	A
44	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	SA	A	SWA	SWA	SA	D	SA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	SA	D	SWA
45	A	D	A	A	SA	SA	SA	A	D	SA	A	SA	SD	A	A	A	A	SA	D	A
46	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	SA	A	A	SWA	SA	D	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	SA	D	SWA
47	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SD	SA
48	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SD	SA
49	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SD	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	SD	SA	D	SWA
50	SA	A	SWA	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	A	SA	D	A	SWA	A	A	A	SWA	SA	D	A
51	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SD	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA
52	SA	SWA	D	SA	SA	SA	SWA	D	D	SA	SA	SWA	A	D	SD	D	A	SA	SA	D
53	SWA	SD	D	SA	SA	SA	A	A	SWA	A	SD	A	SWA	SWA	A	A	D	A	SD	A
54	SA	SD	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	A	D	SWA	SA	SD	SWA
55	A	D	SWA	A	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A	A	SWA	SA	SD	SA
56	SA	D	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SD	SA
57	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SD	SA
58	SA	A	A	A	SA	SA	D	A	SWA	SA	A	A	SA	A	SWA	SWA	D	SA	SD	SWA
59	A	SWA	D	A	SA	SA	A	A	D	SA	SD	SWA	SA	D	A	D	SD	SA	SD	A
60	SA	D	SD	D	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	A	D	A	SD	D	SWA	SWA	D	SA	D	D
61	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	A	SA	D	SA	A	SA	A	SA	D	SA	SD	SA
62	SA	SWA	D	A	SA	SA	SWA	A	SWA	SA	SD	SA	D	SWA	SA	A	D	SA	SD	A
63	A	A	SWA	A	SA	SA	SWA	A	SWA	SA	D	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SD	SWA
64	A	SWA	SD	SA	SA	SA	A	A	SWA	SD	SD	A	A	SWA	SWA	SA	D	SA	SD	SA
65	A	SWA	A	A	SA	SA	SWA	D	A	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	D	SA	D	SA
66	SWA	SA	SWA	A	SA	A	SD	SWA	A	SA	D	A	SA	A	D	D	SWA	SA	SD	A

	SA - Strongly Agree			A- Agree			SWA - Somewhat Agree			D - Disagree			SD - Stongly Disagree								
34	A	SA	SA	SD	SA	D	D	SD	SWA	SWA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	D	SD	SD	
35	A	SWA	A	A	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SWA	SWA	SD	D	SA	SWA	SA	A	SD	SWA	A	
36	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SD	A	A	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	D	SWA	SWA	SD	A	D	
37																					
38	A	A	A	SA	SA	SA	D	A	SA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SWA	A	SWA	SD	A	SWA	
39	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	A	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	A	SD	A	A	
40	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	A	SA	D	SWA	D	D	D	SA	A	SA	D	SA	SWA	SWA	D	D	
41	D	SWA	A	SWA	A	SA	SWA	D	SWA	SWA	D	A	SWA	SA	SWA	D	SWA	D	D	D	
42	A	A	A	D	SWA	SA	SD	A	SA	SWA	A	D	D	SA	SD	D	SWA	A	D	SWA	
43	A	A	A	SWA	A	SA	D	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	D	SA	D	A	SWA	D	D	D	
44	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	A	A	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	D	A	SWA	A	SWA	D	A	A	
45	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	SD	SWA	SD	
46	SWA	SA	A	A	A	SA	D	A	SWA	A	A	D	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	A	D	SWA	SWA	
47	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	A	A	SWA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	D	A	D	
48	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SWA	SA	D	SA	SA	SD	SA	SWA	
49	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	SWA	SA	A	SD	SWA	SWA	
50	SA	SA	SA	A	A	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	
51	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	A	SA	A	SA	SD	A	SA	D	A	SA	SD	SA	A	
52	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SA	D	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	D	SA	D	SWA	SWA	D	SWA	D	
53	SWA	A	A	A	A	A	SD	A	SWA	A	SWA	A	SWA	A	D	A	SA	SD	D	D	
54	SWA	A	SWA	D	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	SWA	D	SA	SD	SA	D	A	SWA	D	D	SD	
55	SA	A	SWA	SWA	A	SA	D	SWA	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	D	D	D	D	D	D	
56	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SD	A	SA	SA	A	SD	A	SA	SD	SA	A	D	A	A	
57	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	SD	SA	D	SWA	A	SWA	
58	SWA	A	A	A	SA	SA	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	D	D	SA	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	
59	A	A	A	SWA	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	A	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	
60	D	A	SWA	SD	SWA	SA	A	D	A	D	D	D	SWA	SA	SD	D	SWA	D	D	D	
61	SA	A	A	A	A	SWA	A	SA	SA	A	A	A	SD	SA	SWA	SA	A	D	SWA	D	
62	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SWA	SWA	D	SWA	D	SWA	SA	D	SWA	SWA	D	D	D	
63	A	A	A	SWA	D	A	SWA	SWA	A	A	SWA	SWA	A	SA	A	A	A	D	SWA	SWA	
64	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SA	SD	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	SWA	SA	A	SWA	A	SD	SWA	SWA	
65	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	D	SA	A	SA	SWA	SD	SA	A	
66	SWA	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	D	A	SWA	A	D	D	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	A	

	SA - Strongly Agree					A- Agree		SWA - Somewhat Agree			D - Disagree			SD - Stongly Disagree								
34	SA	SD	SA	A	SD	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SWA	SA		
35	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	A	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	SWA	A	SA	SWA	SWA	SA		
36	SA	SD	SA	SA	SD	A	A	SA	A	SA	SA	SWA	D	SA	SA	A	A	SA	A	A		
37																						
38	SA	D	SA	D	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	SA		
39	SA	SD	SA	SD	SWA	SA	SA	SD	A	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA		
40	SA	D	SA	SWA	D	D	SWA	SA	A	D	SA	SWA	D	SA	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA		
41	SA	SWA	SA	D	D	A	SWA	SA	SWA	A	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	A	D	A	SWA	D	A		
42	SA	SD	SA	D	SWA	SD	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	D	SWA	A	SWA		
43	SA	D	SA	SWA	A	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	D	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	SA		
44	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	A	A	SWA	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	SD	SA	SWA	A	A	A	A	A		
45	SA	D	SA	SD	SD	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	A	A	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	A	A		
46	SA	D	SA	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SA	A	A	SA	A	A	A	A	SA	SA	A	A	A		
47	SA	SD	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA		
48	SA	SD	SA	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA		
49	SA	SWA	SA	D	D	A	SWA	SA	A	A	SA	A	D	SA	A	A	A	A	A	SA		
50	SA	D	SA	D	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	A	SWA	A	A	A	SA		
51	SA	SD	SA	A	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA		
52	SA	SWA	SA	D	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	A	A	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	A		
53	SA	SD	SA	SWA	D	A	A	A	A	A	A	SA	D	SA	A	A	A	SA	A	A		
54	SA	SA	SA	A	SD	SWA	D	SA	A	A	SA	SWA	A	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SD	SA		
55	SA	D	SA	SWA	D	A	D	SA	SA	A	SA	SWA	D	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	A		
56	SA	SD	SA	SWA	D	SA	A	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA		
57	SA	D	SA	A	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA		
58	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	D	SA	SA	A	A	A	SWA	A		
59	SA	D	SA	SD	SA	SWA	D	SA	A	A	SD	A	SWA	SA	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	SD	SA		
60	SA	A	SA	D	A	D	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	SA	A	SWA	D	SWA	A	D		
61	SA	D	SA	SWA	D	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	A	A	SA		
62	SA	D	SA	SD	SD	SWA	D	SA	A	D	SA	A	D	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA		
63	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	D	A	SWA	A	SA	SA	D	A	A	SA	SWA	A	A	A	SWA	A		
64	SA	SD	SA	D	A	A	A	SA	A	A	SD	A	D	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	A	SA		
65	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	A	SA	D	SA	D	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA		
66	SA	SWA	SA	A	SA	A	A	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	D	SA	A	A	A	A	SWA	A		

67	Agree	Lutheran	Yes	25+ years	<1 year	Plateaued
68	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	<1 year	Declining
69	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Declining
70	Agree	Presbyterian	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Growing
71	Agree	Presbyterian	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Plateaued
72	Agree	Church of Christ	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Growing
73	Agree	Episcopal	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Plateaued
74	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
75	Agree	Church of Christ	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Growing
76	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	25+ years	Growing
77	Agree	Church of Christ	Yes	10-24 years	<1 year	Growing
78	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Declining
79	Agree	Presbyterian	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
80	Agree	Baptist	Yes	5-9 years	5-9 years	Declining
81	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	1-4 years	Plateaued
82	Agree	Baptist	Yes	5-9 years	1-4 years	Plateaued
83	Agree	Christian	Yes	0-4 years	10-24 years	Growing
84	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Growing
85	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Declining
86	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Growing
87	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Growing
88	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Declining
89	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Growing
90	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Plateaued
91	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Growing
92	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Growing
93	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
94	Agree	Methodist	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Plateaued
95	Agree	Methodist	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Growing
96	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
97	Agree	Methodist	Yes	25+ years	1-4 years	Growing
98	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	5-9 years	Growing
99	Agree	Baptist	Yes	10-24 years	10-24 years	Growing
100	Agree	Baptist	Yes	25+ years	10-24 years	Plateaued

	SA - Strongly Agree			A- Agree			SWA - Somewhat Agree			D - Disagree			SD - Strongly Disagree							
67	SA	SWA	D	A	SA	SA	D	A	SWA	SA	D	A	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	SA	SWA	SWA
68	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	D	SWA	D	SA	D	SA	SA	A	D	D	SA	D	D	SA
69	SA	D	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	D	SA	SD	SA	SA	A	SWA	SA	SD	SA
70	SA	D	SD	SA	SA	SD	A	D	D	SA	SA	SA	D	SD	SD	SD	SD	SA	SD	SD
71	SA	SWA	D	SA	SA	SA	D	A	A	SA	SD	SWA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SD	A
72	SA	SD	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	D	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SA
73	SA	SWA	D	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	D	A	SA	SWA	SD	SA	D	A
74	A	A	D	A	SA	SA	D	A	SWA	SA	SWA	A	SWA	A	SWA	A	D	SA	A	A
75	SA	SWA	D	A	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	SWA	SA	D	SA	SA	A	D	SA	SWA	SWA
76	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SD	SA
77	SA	SWA	D	A	SA	SA	SWA	A	D	SA	A	A	D	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	SA	A	A
78	A	A	A	A	A	A	D	A	A	A	A	A	D	A	D	SWA	D	A	SWA	A
79	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	D	A	SA	SA	A	A	D	SA	D	A
80	SA	SD	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SD	A	D	SWA	A	SA	SD	SWA
81	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	A	A	SWA	D	A	A	SA	A	A
82	SA	SWA	D	A	SA	SA	A	SA	D	SA	SD	A	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	D	SA	SD	SWA
83	SA	A	A	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	D	SA	A	A	A	A	D	SA	D	A
84	A	SWA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	D	SA
85	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	D	SA	SWA	SA	D	SA	A	A	A	SWA	D	SA	A	A
86	SA	SWA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SWA	A	SWA	SA	A	A
87	SWA	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	A	A	SWA	A	A	A	SA	SA	SA	A
88	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	D	SA	SWA	A	D	SWA	D	SA	D	A
89	SA	D	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SWA	SA	A	A	SWA	SA	D	SA	SWA	SA
90	SA	D	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	A	SA	D	SA	SWA	A	A	SWA	SWA	SA	D	A
91	A	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	D	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SD	SA	SD	A
92	SA	A	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	A	A	SA	SD	SA	SWA	SA
93	A	D	D	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	A	SA	SA	A	A	SWA	A	A	A	SA	D	A
94	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	A	SWA	SA	D	SA	SWA	A	A	SWA	D	SA	SD	A
95	SA	A	SD	SA	SA	SA	A	A	D	A	A	A	A	SWA	D	A	SD	SA	SD	A
96	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SD	A
97	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	D	A	SWA	SWA	A	SA	SA	A
98	SA	SWA	D	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	SD	SA	D	SWA	A	SA	SWA	SA	A	SA
99	SA	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	A	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	A	A
100	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	A	A	SA	D	SA	SD	SA

	SA - Strongly Agree					A- Agree		SWA - Somewhat Agree				D - Disagree		SD - Stongly Disagree							
67	SWA	A	A	A	A	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SWA	D	D	SWA	SA	A	A	A	A	SWA	A	
68	A	SA	SA	D	D	SA	D	D	SA	A	D	SA	SA	SA	D	D	SA	SA	D	D	
69	A	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SD	SA	A	SWA	A	SA	SD	SA	SWA	SA	A	SD	SA	SD	
70	SD	A	A	D	A	SA	SA	D	SWA	D	SD	A	SWA	SA	D	A	D	SWA	D	D	
71	A	A	SA	SA	D	SA	SD	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SD	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SD	D	A	
72	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	D	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	D	D	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SWA	
73	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	D	SA	A	A	A	A	SD	SA	D	A	D	D	SA	SWA	
74	SWA	A	A	A	SWA	A	D	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	D	A	SA	A	A	A	D	SWA	A	
75	SWA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	A	D	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SA	SA	A	A	SD	SA	SWA	
76	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SD	SA	SWA	
77	SWA	SWA	A	SA	D	SA	D	A	D	D	SWA	SD	A	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	D	A	A	
78	A	A	A	D	SWA	A	SD	D	A	A	SWA	A	D	A	D	A	A	D	SWA	SWA	
79	A	A	A	SA	SA	SA	D	A	SWA	A	A	SD	D	SA	D	SA	SA	SD	A	A	
80	A	SWA	SWA	D	SWA	SA	A	SWA	A	SWA	D	A	SD	SA	A	SWA	A	SD	SWA	SWA	
81	SWA	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SWA	A	SWA	SWA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	D	SA	SWA	
82	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	D	SWA	A	SWA	D	SWA	D	SA	D	SA	SWA	D	D	D	
83	A	A	A	A	A	SA	D	SWA	SA	A	A	A	A	SA	D	A	D	D	SWA	SWA	
84	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	D	SA	A	
85	SA	A	SA	SWA	SA	SA	D	A	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	
86	SA	SA	SA	A	A	SA	SWA	A	SA	SA	A	D	SA	SA	A	D	SA	D	SA	SWA	
87	SWA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	A	A	A	SA	A	A	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	SD	A	A	
88	SWA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	D	SWA	A	A	D	A	D	SA	A	A	SWA	D	SWA	D	
89	A	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SD	A	SA	SA	SA	SD	A	SA	SWA	D	SA	SD	SA	D	
90	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SWA	D	SA	SWA	SWA	D	SWA	SA	D	SWA	SWA	D	A	SWA	
91	SA	SA	A	A	SD	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	D	A	SA	SD	SA	SWA	
92	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	D	SA	SA	A	A	SD	A	SA	A	SA	A	SD	SA	SWA	
93	D	SA	A	SWA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A	A	SWA	SA	D	SA	SWA	A	A	SD	SWA	SWA	
94	A	A	A	A	SA	A	D	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	SA	SWA	SA	A	D	SWA	SWA	
95	D	A	A	A	A	SWA	D	SWA	A	SA	D	D	D	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SD	D	D	
96	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SD	A	SA	SA	A	SWA	A	SA	D	SA	SA	SD	SWA	A	
97	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	A	A	SA	A	SWA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	A	D	A	SWA	
98	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	D	A	A	A	SWA	D	SWA	SA	D	A	A	SD	D	A	
99	SA	SA	A	SA	A	SA	A	A	A	A	A	D	D	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SD	A	SWA	
100	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	A	A	SA	A	SWA	SA	A	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SD	A	SWA	

	SA - Strongly Agree		A - Agree		SWA - Somewhat Agree		D - Disagree		SD - Strongly Disagree											
67	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	A	A	SWA	SA	SA	A	A	A	D	SA	A	SWA	A	A	SWA	SA
68	SA	D	SA	D	D	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	D	SA	SA	SA
69	SA	D	SA	SD	SD	A	A	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
70	SA	SWA	SA	D	A	A	D	SA	SA	A	SA	A	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	A	D	D	SA
71	SA	D	SA	SWA	D	SA	A	SA	SWA	SA	A	SWA	SD	SA	SWA	A	SA	A	A	SA
72	SA	SD	SA	D	D	SWA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
73	SA	D	SA	D	SWA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A
74	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	A	A	A	SA	A	SA	A	A	SD	SA	A	A	A	A	SWA	A
75	SA	A	SA	SD	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SWA
76	SA	SD	SA	SA	SWA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
77	SA	A	SA	D	SA	A	A	SA	SWA	SD	SA	A	SD	SA	SWA	A	SA	A	A	A
78	A	D	A	D	A	SWA	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	SWA	A	A	A	A
79	SA	D	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A
80	SA	SD	SA	SD	A	A	SWA	SA	A	A	A	SWA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	A	A	D	A
81	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	SA	A	A	SA	SWA	SD	SA	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	A
82	SA	SD	SA	A	SD	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	A	A
83	D	A	SA	A	SWA	SWA	SWA	A	A	A	A	A	SWA	SA	A	A	A	A	D	SA
84	SA	D	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA
85	SA	SA	SA	A	SD	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	A	A	A	SA	A
86	SA	D	SA	SWA	SWA	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	SA	A	D	SA	A	SA
87	SA	D	SA	D	SA	A	A	SA	A	A	A	SA	D	SA	SWA	A	A	SA	SWA	A
88	SA	A	SA	D	SD	D	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	A	A	A	SWA	SA
89	SA	D	SA	D	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	D	SA
90	SA	D	SA	D	D	A	D	SA	SA	A	SA	A	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA
91	SA	SD	SA	D	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
92	SA	SWA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SD	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
93	SA	SD	SA	D	SA	SWA	A	SA	A	A	SA	A	SWA	SA	A	A	A	A	A	SA
94	SA	SWA	SA	SWA	D	A	A	A	SA	SA	A	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA
95	SWA	SD	SA	D	D	SWA	SWA	A	A	A	A	SWA	SD	A	SA	A	A	A	A	SWA
96	SA	SD	SA	SWA	SA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SWA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA
97	SA	SWA	SA	A	D	SWA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA
98	SA	D	SA	D	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	A	SA	SA	D	SA
99	SA	D	SA	D	SWA	A	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	A
100	SA	SD	SA	SA	D	A	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	D	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	A	SA

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DECLINE OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN A METROPOLITAN CENTER

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This research analyzed the factors contributing to the decline of protestant churches in metropolitan centers. Houston, Texas, was named as the metropolitan center.

The research concern is that there is a lack of current and recent knowledge of factors leading to the decline of Protestant churches in metropolitan centers. The purpose of this study was to identify the biblical and theological, leadership and organizational, cultural, and demographic factors contributing to the decline of Protestant churches.

Precedent literature reviews the literature written in the area of church growth and decline. Five areas are researched: Church growth specialists is a review of leading contributors to the church growth movement. Biblical and theological concerns is a review of God's loving relationship with his people and the people's rebellion and decline. Leadership and organizational concerns is a review of the effects of leadership and organization on the churches today. Cultural concerns is a review of the effects of culture on the church today. It reviews both Christianity in culture and culture in the church. And, demographic concerns is a review of how demographic changes have affected the church. It reviews the contextual factors leading to church decline and the life-cycle of the church.

The methodological design of the study was a survey of Protestant churches in Houston, Texas. The sampling of 542 churches was taken from 842 Protestant churches of nine major denominations. A Likert response scale survey was created based on the research found in the precedent literature. Two surveys were created and distributed: an electronic response survey the pastors responded to online and a paper survey mailed out to the churches.

The analysis of findings reviewed the one hundred churches that responded to the survey. In all, nineteen factors within the areas of concern were researched and analyzed. The results demonstrate that biblical and theological concerns illustrate no differences between growing and declining churches. Leadership and organizational concerns, cultural concerns and demographic concerns all demonstrate a difference between growing and declining churches.

The conclusion was that there are many factors that contribute to church decline. The declining churches had numerous factors that were contributing to the decline. Decisive actions must be taken for the churches to turn into healthy and productive growing churches.

KEYWORDS: Church decline, church demographics, church growth, church growth specialists, church longevity, culture, evangelism, laity, leadership, organization, pastor longevity, plateaued church, prayer, and worship.

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