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CHURCH-SPONSORED SERVICE THROUGH THE
LENS OF SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY:
A CASE STUDY

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CHURCH-SPONSORED SERVICE THROUGH THE
LENS OF SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY:
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To Wanda,
my better half

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRIS Christian Religious Internalization Scale

CL Comparison Level

CLalt Comparison Level For Alternatives

ROS Religious Orientation Scale

SDM Sapiential-Descriptivist Model

SDT Self-Determination Theory

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PREFACE

The long journey to my doctorate in leadership began as a pact with two dear friends and colleagues from Ashland Theological Seminary back in 1993. Fifteen years—and four children—later, my wife Wanda lovingly urged me to pick up the torch again. My decision to enroll at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was driven by the confluence of several factors: it offered one of the few residential programs leading to a Ph.D. where Christian theology and social science are integrated in a seminary setting. Secretly, however, I feared its doctrinal beliefs were more “conservative” than my own.

What I found instead was the best of both worlds. The School of Theology’s deep respect for special revelation is evidenced by the faculty’s corresponding commitment to proper exegesis. They convinced one well-meaning Arminian that Calvin’s high regard for God’s sovereignty is a far safer way to navigate a pilgrim’s progress through a fallen world. On the other hand, the School of Ministries’ deep respect for practical theology is evidenced by the faculty’s commitment to equipping leaders who release all of God’s people for kingdom service. They approach biblical integration as the foundation for *engaging* the world, not a ceiling that *precludes* courageous exploration. Instead of shying away from general revelation, they boldly seek to mine kernels of God’s truth buried deep amid the rubble. The seminary’s holistic philosophy of ministry holds unique promise for stirring the local church to action in the twenty-first century.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Dr. Michael Wilder for working patiently with me through countless drafts. The final product reflects his dedication to scholarly excellence and genuine love for every student. Though he would object to the analogy, I feel like the “disciple” who progresses from student to friend. I also wish to acknowledge Dr. Hal Pettegrew, who demonstrated the power of experiential learning and inspired me to dream. His dedication to the classroom is a beautiful reminder that students are shaped more by one hour of live interaction than reading ten academic articles. These humble servants of God made their greatest impact by fostering the illusion that “I did it myself”. Regrettably, my own failure to develop closer relationships with cohort colleagues diminished the collaborative aspect of my learning experience.

Finally, I want to praise the One who made this incredible experience possible. My research shows that personal drives for autonomy, competence and relatedness find their origin in common grace. Only the elect, however, can discern and experience the ultimate aim of all human motivation—*God Himself*. Accordingly, I dedicate my remaining years “under the sun” to His eternal glory.

George W. Cochran

Louisville, Kentucky
May 2013

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

That 20% of a congregation performs 80% of institutional ministry is an indictment against the church and an embarrassment to leaders (Thumma and Bird 2011, 6). If the call to serve led Jesus to the cross, the call to follow cannot stop at the pew (Matt 10:38-39; 20:28; Luke 9:23-24; Phil 2:8). God's children are uniquely gifted to bless others through grace-filled ministries that glorify Christ and edify His church (1 Cor 14:12; Eph 4:11-16; 1 Pet 4:10). Most discipleship models assume saturation in God's Word will produce spiritual maturity that compels sacrificial service. The gap between orthodoxy and orthopraxy sustained by this misunderstanding may be the greatest source of discouragement among church leaders in the twenty-first century.

An emerging model of adult motivation is poised to challenge the suppositions behind the despair. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) has shown great potential for internalizing Christian beliefs through inherently satisfying activities that unleash spiritual giftedness and stimulate transformative learning. In contrast to the traditional paradigm, SDT postulates that intrinsically motivating ministries may actually *stimulate* Christian formation (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 321). This study probed the rich perceptions and divergent meanings associated with church-sponsored service among a critical array of stakeholders in a thriving evangelical church. In furtherance of the call for a Second Reformation (Ogden 1990, 52), the researcher hopes to stimulate meaningful dialogue on

the need to reform church structures that foster Christian formation through intrinsically motivated, Spirit-empowered service.

Introduction to the Research Problem

Half of America's adult population is alienated from institutional religion (Grossman 2002, 2). Two-thirds describe their faith as "casual" (Barna 2009, 1), and only 26% attend church weekly (Taylor 2011, 1). Relying on 20% of God's people to perform 80% of ministry is one sign of defeat. Contemporary theories of human motivation have much to say about how flawed people grow in a caring community (Ryan and Deci 2000, 55). Satisfying deep-seeded drives for autonomy, growth, and relationship could enhance a congregation's commitment to ministry (Deci 1975, 219). This paradigm shift is sustainable only if an *empowering climate* saturates the church's culture (Baard 1994, 1061).

Perceiving undeveloped believers as marginalized members of Christ's body, this emancipatory study seeks to build awareness of the need to empower all believers to make kingdom contributions through intrinsically motivated service that internalizes their faith. In a vivid portrait of church-sponsored service—gleaned from observations, interviews and documents at a pacesetting evangelical church—SDT's theoretical lens shaped the questions, informed the data, and inspired the cause. In the process, traditional assumptions about servant leadership, Christian formation, and spiritual giftedness were challenged. The study's ultimate aim was to stimulate dialogue on the need to reform a church's motivational climate and organizational structure to empower joyful service that facilitates Christian formation.

The SDT Model

‘Self-regulation’ is the psychological process by which people organize and manage their thoughts, emotions, behaviors and relationships to attain a desired future state (Pintrich and De Groot 1990, 33; Zimmerman 2000, 13). Despite their common ground, theories of self-regulation vary significantly in foci. “Why” theories investigate the reasons people choose a particular behavior (Deci and Ryan 1985a, 115). “What” theories focus on the goals they hope to achieve (Kasser and Ryan 1996, 280). “How” theories examine the mechanisms for attaining them (Boekaerts, Pintrich, and Zeidner 2000). As a meta-theory of human motivation, SDT focuses on the “why” and “what” of self-regulation (Reeve et al. 2008, 223). Undergirding theories include cognitive evaluation, organismic integration, and basic psychological needs (Reeve, Deci, and Ryan 2004, 31). If these components are properly synthesized, SDT researchers can identify the source of autonomous self-regulation and examine the social factors impacting self-actualization (Reeve, Deci, and Ryan 2004, 31).

SDT posits that humans are active, growth-oriented organisms who must integrate their psychic elements into a unified sense of self and community (Ryan and Deci 2000, 55). ‘Internalization’ is the process by which an individual transforms an externally prescribed regulation or value into one that is internally endorsed (Ryan and Deci 2000, 61). Deci and Ryan ponder why a person performs a specific activity by considering the extent to which he or she is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated (Deci 1975, 138). Intrinsic motivation is drawn from activities that are inherently interesting, enjoyable, or satisfying. Because the behavior is undertaken for its own sake, no external reinforcement is required. In contrast, an activity performed to attain a desired goal is said to be extrinsically motivated. While extrinsic motivators are far less potent or

sustainable, they play a vital role in shaping one's coherent identity over time. When an external regulation is fully accepted as one's own, he or she will perform the behavior with a sense of psychological freedom and volition (Ryan and Deci 2000, 60).

Different types of extrinsic motivation are distinguished by the degree to which the regulation of behavior has been internalized (Ryan and Connell 1989, 756). A behavior is *externally* regulated when performed solely to meet overtly external contingencies such as the promise of reward or threat of punishment. Enacting such behavior is typically accompanied by a sense of coercion or pressure. Lacking any sense of volition or autonomy, they emanate from an external locus of causality (deCharms 1968, 273). Another activity might be regulated by the internal pressure of feeling one is "supposed to" perform the behavior. This regulation is said to be *introjected* because the behavior is motivated by threatening compulsions like shame or guilt (Ryan et al. 1991, 62). Since the regulation has not yet been accepted, an external locus of causality still nudges the individual to action.

A fuller form of internalization is achieved when one consciously identifies with an activity's importance or value. Since the behavior is regulated by personally endorsed values or commitments, responses are perceived as more willing and autonomous. For this reason, *identified* regulation crosses the line to an internal locus of causality (Ryan and Deci 2002, 27). No regulation is completely internalized, however, until the behavior is *integrated* into one's coherent sense of self. This requires aligning the regulation with other endorsed values, goals, or ideas. They become acceptable not just for their personal significance, but because they match one's self-identity (Assor et al. 2005, 116).

One of SDT's most significant findings is that intrinsically motivating activities tend to move individuals from external to internal regulation of behavior (Deci and Ryan 1985a, 115). Internalization piques in a relational setting that promotes mutual cooperation and interdependence (Baard 1994, 1061). An intrinsically motivating organizational climate will empower workers to internalize corporate values for sustainable change. By fueling basic drives for autonomy, competency and relatedness, leaders can forge a plausible corporate identity that responds appropriately to environmental pressures (Baard 2002, 273). Christian scholars should not ignore these claims merely because they emanate from a secular pulpit.

Theological Foundation of Study

That the Christian life is designed for growth is obvious (Col 1:10; Heb 5:11-14). We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works prepared in advance (Eph 2:10). Equally clear is that the seeds of human motivation were planted long before the fall. Forming man from dust and breathing life into his soul, God proclaimed his 'image bearer' *very good*—distinguishing humanity in sacredness, dignity, and value (Gen 1:31; 2 Pet 2:12). God endowed Adam with self-awareness, self-determination, and self-expression to multiply His creative works (Gen 1:26-30). The desire to encode humanity with imagination spawned an innate drive for autonomy (Gen 2:16). The cultural mandate to shepherd the earth presupposed a quest for competence (Gen 1:26-28). Declaring "it is not good for man to be alone" (Gen 2:18), God foretold that even the greatest human achievement would be meaningless if it ignores man's deeper longing for relationship. Through mutual interdependence and cooperative effort, Adam and Eve could synergize their individuality under God's sovereign protection and provision. All ingredients for enjoying creation were now in place.

God had a far more glorious plan in mind. Before the foundation of the world, He resolved to magnify Himself through the salvation of His people (Eph 1:4). When Adam chose to eat of the tree, he was snared by the same deceit that cast Lucifer from heaven (Isa 14:12-15). The audacity to turn reason against faith flashed a great divide. By satisfying his desire instead of trusting God, Adam traded a commandment-oriented life of love for a feeling-oriented life of lust (Adams 1973, 118). In the fallout, man's capacity for discernment, understanding, motivation, and relationship was hopelessly distorted (Rom 3:23). Egocentric promotion replaced selfless love, spreading conflict like wildfire (Gen 6:5-6). In the insatiable quest for meaning and purpose, life became an epic tragedy of unfulfilled desires and mounting futility (Gen 3:17; Rom 8:10).

The gospel reveals God's marvelous plan for reconciling all creation under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Redemption's central ramification is renewal of purpose and hope for those who trust in the finished work of the cross (Eph 1:11-14). The atonement not only restores mankind's nobility (Rom 12:1-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11), it elevates God's children *above* Adam's pre-fallen condition (Rom 5:20, 8:20-21; 1 Cor 6:2-3; Col 3:10-11; Rev 3:12; Adams 1979, 180). Spreading the good news of God's forgiveness is a satisfying means to bless others in every sphere of influence (1 Tim 5:8; Eph 4:28). This life transformation is made possible by abiding in Christ, whose Spirit induces God's love in His children's hearts (Gal 5:22; Rom 5:5). The call to reconcile the world as Christ's ambassadors provides hope that God will accomplish His purpose in a way that maximizes His glory (Eph 1:3-10).

An enduring mystery of God's vision is that the road to sanctification is littered with potholes (Matt 24:22). With surprising resilience, the 'flesh'—embodying sin's propensity and practice—can hinder God's Word from transforming a redeemed

heart (Rom 7:14-24; Jer 13:23, 22:21). The quest for holiness collides with sinful lusts the moment a babe in Christ launches his lifelong struggle with the old Adam (2 Pet 2:11; 3:11). There can be no lukewarm response to the call to die (Rev 3:15-16). Every believer must work out his salvation “with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12). God wants His children to change who they *are*, not just how they behave (Eph 4:17-21). Training in righteousness requires putting on the new man as much as putting off the old (Eph 4:22-24). Only rich, experiential grappling with truth moves a convert to follow the way of the cross (Matt 14:29-32; Rom 6:1-14). True knowledge captures both heart and mind so he or she can persevere (Deut 7:9; John 17:3). Walking by faith intensifies the Spirit’s sanctifying work (Luke 24:32; 2 Cor 3:18; Heb 12:2). Over time, an obedient lifestyle bears fruit in a *changed identity* (Luke 6:40; Rom 1:4; 8:29; Heb 5:13). Here resides the inner person known only to God (1 Sam 16:7; 1 Pet 3:4).

The key is to be doers of the Word, not hearers only, as believers strive toward godliness (Jas 1:22; 1 Tim 4:7). Strength and wisdom come “in the doing,” not beforehand (Jas 1:25). God’s Spirit affirms a convert’s heavenly adoption as he co-labors with His Son (Rom 8:16; Heb 10:15). Belief turns to conviction when he “tastes and sees” that Christ is good (Mic 6:8; Heb 6:4-5). As identity moves from self to Christ, he desires to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel (Phil 1:27; Col 2:9-12). No longer satisfied with milk, he longs for meat (Heb 5:11-14). The ultimate hope is for every convert to learn the secret of being content in all circumstances (Phil 4:20). Even trials and persecution are counted pure joy (Matt 5:44; Acts 9:16) when Christ’s victory over the world is real (John 16:33; Rom 8:37).

In the tension between “already” and “not yet,” every redeemed heart beats irregularly to fleshly lusts and holy passions. Meeting “felt needs” or filling an “empty

love tank” under such circumstances is a dangerous proposition. The deepest longings of the human heart must change if humanity is to become all God intends (Powlison 2003, 16). The best way to drive out perverted instincts is to embrace higher priorities (Ps 42:1-2; Rom 5:1-11). Rather than anesthetize His children to all motivation, God redirects their desires heavenward (Jas 4:3-10). The Holy Spirit seeks to write intimate truths on every believer’s heart that will incarnate Christ’s love for others (Gal 5:16-25; Rom 6:16-18). Replacing selfish ambition and ulterior motives with spiritual integrity and moral sincerity purifies the soul (Jas 3:13-18). Those who learn to affirm their significance in ways that please the Father are promised “joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Pet 1:8; Rom 11:36; Grudem 1994, 441). As these righteous desires expel lesser masters from the throne, God’s tarnished image begins to reflect the radiance of His Son (Rom 8:29). The mature disciple who *identifies* with Christ receives a double blessing: satisfying life’s ultimate purpose while glorifying the One who made it all possible (Isa 43:7; 62:5; Pss 16:11; 27:4; 73:25-26; Zeph 3:17-18; John 10:10; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 10:31; Eph 1:11-12; Heb 11:6; Rev 4:11).

These passages suggest God’s chief strategy for turning knowledge into conviction is *experiential learning through stimulating service*. If so, any discipleship model that emphasizes service as spiritual fruit rather than spiritual seed is doomed to fail. Until service becomes a means for growth—not just a sign of arrival—the 20/80 Rule will prevail (Grudem 1994, 1030). Prescribing service as a “cure all” for anemic faith, however, could inject a fatal dose of legalism that inoculates the Spirit’s transformative rule. While faith without works is dead (Jas 2:17, 26), many will be turned away who serve their whole lives (Matt 7:22). It is not enough to figure out what congregants are passionate about—leaders must provide opportunities to challenge their

mental models. Even the Son of God had to experience temptations and sorrows to become the Son of Man (Isa 53:3; Mark 8:31). Jesus chose His disciples to be “with Him,” not just to hear His teachings (Mark 3:14). The servant who becomes like his master not only thinks like him, he shares his values and concerns (Luke 6:40).

The presence of a cognitive element in virtually every biblical example of cognitive dissonance dramatizes service’s pedagogical function in Christian formation (Bowen 2012, 136). Transformative learning occurs when a life crisis creates a ‘disorienting dilemma’ that can only be resolved by changing one’s meaning scheme (Mezirow 1991, 50). Gleaning “teachable moments” from each experience requires a trusted mentor with superior knowledge who endorses the Holy Spirit as primary teacher (Bowen 2012, 181). A wise leader will offer satisfying opportunities for service that unleash spiritual giftedness, deepen spiritual intimacy, internalize doctrinal beliefs, and solidify Christian identity. SDT’s potential for stimulating Christian formation through intrinsically motivating service provided a compelling backdrop to the present study.

Significance of the Study

Precedent literature suggests that internalized regulation of religious practices positively affects domain-relevant behaviors (Sheldon et al. 2004, 479). Given the critical need to nudge congregants toward sustainable service, surprisingly few studies have explored SDT’s potential for enhancing Christian formation through transformative activities (Neyrinck et al. 2005, 81). Nearly two decades ago, Deci and Ryan showed remarkable insight about the implications of SDT research on religious motivation:

The purpose of studying religiosity through a new theoretical lens is not so much to replace or contradict existing work on religious orientations but rather to bring the additional implications of self-determination theory to bear on this important domain of cultural life. Because self-determination theory specifies the social-environmental factors that facilitate internalization, as well as some characteristics

that accompany variations in types of internalization, findings that support its application to religion also implicate new directions for inquiry into the transmission and functions of various types of religious motivation. (Ryan, Rigby, and King 1993, 595)

Their vision foreshadowed the challenge of scrutinizing orthodox faith with empirical instruments. While incredible facts about the universe can be learned through common grace, only those with the mind of Christ can explore life's *immaterial* dimension (Acts 17:22-23; Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 2:10-16; Jas 4:4; Grudem 1994, 659). Matters of the Spirit are metaphysically distinct from any positivistic epistemology (Eph 6:22). Only by faith will one recognize God holds the whole universe together (Ps 121:3-4; John 4:24; Col 1:17) and rewards those who diligently seek Him (Matt 6:33; John 4:34; Acts 10:35; 1 Tim 4:8; Heb 11:6). Life's immaterial dimension is so qualitatively unique that a "second birth" is required (John 3:3, 25; Eph 2:1). Abiding in Christ eventually produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness—heavenly fruit no human could manufacture (John 15:1-11; Gal 5:22). Adoption into God's family also has profound implications on relating to others (John 1:12; Rom 8:14-17; Eph 2:3; Gal 3:23-26). He is building a spiritual house with "living stones" fixed by Christ Himself for a holy priesthood (1 Pet 2:4-10). As head of this forever family, Jesus could turn to His disciples and say, "Behold My mother and My brothers!" (Matt 12:47-49).

Failing to account for motivation's spiritual dimension could be lethal. The same drives that enhance vitality (Ryan and Deci 2008, 702), psychological health (Ryan, Huta, and Deci 2008, 139), wellbeing (Deci and Ryan 2011, 141), self-esteem (Deci and Ryan 1995, 31) and 'mindfulness' (Brown, Ryan, and Creswell 2007, 211) may also mask man's sinful craving for self-reliance (Isa 53:6; Matt 5:3; Rom 3:23; 1 Cor 8:1). The emptiness of self-fulfillment is meant to point to a far greater reality: *satisfaction in Jesus Christ* (Eccl 3:11; Matt 10:39). Increasing a flock's desire to grow, while

weakening their dependence on the Shepherd, actually sabotages God's plan. Only spiritual weapons can destroy earthly strongholds (2 Cor 10:3-4).

Completing what the Father planned and the Son accomplished belongs to Trinity's least understood member (Gen 1:2; Isa 32:14-18). The Holy Spirit has strived since Pentecost to display Christ's love, peace, joy and hope through broken people (John 17:25-26; Acts 1:8; 2:44-47; 1 Cor 13:13; Gal. 5:22; Phil 2:1-2; 4:7). As sinful people become more like Christ, the new Adam is actualized at life's highest level (Ps 37:4; Matt 10:39; John 10:3; Rev 2:17). Sacrificial service, compelled by Christ's love and energized by His Spirit, is a sure sign God is at work (1 Cor 12:7-11). Divinely motivated and Spirit-empowered Christians also serve as "first fruits" of His supreme manifestation in the new heavens and earth (Isa 65:17; Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 1:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:3-4). This study assumed that Deci and Ryan's observations about human motivation reach their apex only in the domain of *Christian formation*. If following God's will is more satisfying than quenching hunger (John 4:34) or living selfishly (Luke 9:24), could mobilizing a congregation's desire to make a difference unleash a treasure trove of passion that transforms a community?

Theological Importance

More than doing great things for God, the church is about making Christ great in His people. Working with fragile tablets, God is determined to turn stone-cold hearts to flesh (2 Cor 3:3). By purifying, empowering and unifying the household of faith, the Holy Spirit manifests God's presence (Rom 8:9-11; 2 Cor 3:6). Only He can openly confront sin's lingering influence without trampling tender egos (Col 1:28-29). This same Spirit strengthens one's inner person to be "rooted and grounded" in truth so that Christ may dwell richly in his heart (Eph 3:16-17; Col 3:16). Envisioned is firm planting that

can withstand strong winds and rain (Adams 2002, 90). Through it all, God stirs within a believer “both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil 2:12-13).

When the Holy Spirit breathes new life into a soul, He plants an imperishable seed with the precise nutrients needed to energize the convert’s kingdom contribution (1 Pet 1:23; Rom 12:6; Heb 10:24). How each one sprouts and blossoms is sovereignly ordained and humanly mediated. Spiritual gifting matures in step with the Giver, blessing others and glorifying Christ along the way (John 16:13-14; 1 Cor 2:11-16). Adoption into God’s family adds a relational dimension unknown to the natural world (John 1:12; Rom 8:14-17; Eph 2:3; Gal 3:23-26). By uniting these supernatural capacities, the Spirit sanctifies service for the church’s edification (1 Cor 12:4-11; 1 Pet 4:10-11). In His gentle hands, grace-filled ministries make stunning arrangements of Christ’s radiant beauty and grace (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Pet 4:10).

The Spirit’s mission is not designed solely for the flock’s comfort—He wants to move wayward souls into willing service (Ezek 36:27; Rom 12:2). Life in the Spirit is God’s plan for every Christian (Gal 5). He desires every believer to bear fruit (Matt 7:16-20; Luke 8:11-15). Obedience is the wellspring of sanctification, separating genuine faith from empty profession (Phil 2:12; Rom 6:19). By fanning desires and energizing action, the Spirit empowers ordinary people to live godly lives. He works in a believer’s life *through* circumstances, not apart from them (Adams 2002, 97). Transformative learning occurs through real-life experiences permitted by God’s sovereign will (Titus 3:4-8; Jas 1:25). Only then may the Spirit stir growth through intimate means that impact a believer’s heart and refine his faith (John 14:26; Rom 8:16). God’s ultimate purpose is to magnify His Son through a vibrant fellowship of ordinary people who display a divine nature that is strangely attractive (Rom 8:19-22; 2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 1:3; 3:1).

That God's presence on earth is constrained by the church's faith is both sobering and real (Num 11:29; Jer 31:31-33; Ezek 36:26-27; Joel 2:28-29). Consigning His Spirit to a minor role in this unfolding drama may be the greatest sin of the present age (Chan 2009, 30). Every person of the Trinity is fully committed to accomplishing God's plan: the Father sends; the Son accomplishes; the Spirit empowers (1 Cor 12:4-6). Thus, the Holy Spirit is coequal and consubstantial with Father and Son in all attributes (Matt 18:19; Acts 5:3-4; Simmons 2006, 62). A stilted view of the Giver invariably leads to a stilted view of the gift. Some scholars contend faulty linguistic treatment of 'charismata' equates spiritual gifting with supernatural abilities (Aker 2002, 60). Barr launched the discussion by accusing traditional New Testament scholarship of failing to distinguish between term and concept (Barr 1961, 59). Years later, Berding demonstrated how the term (χάρισματά) is associated with the same concept in every passage irrespective of its biblical context (Berding 2000, 44). 'Gifts of the Spirit' thus became synonymous with "abilities," "enablements" and "empowerments" (Aker 2002, 62).

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is associated with all sorts of special endowments that blur artificial distinctions between "sacred" and "secular" (Gen 41:38; Exod 31:3-6; Judg 3:10; 14:6; Richards and Martin 1981, 111). The breadth of the Spirit's role in the church age is revived in Pauline literature (Berding 2000, 40). Showing a broad semantic range (1 Cor 1:1; 5:15; 16; 6:23; 11:29; 12:6), χάρισματά is applied to such diverse concepts as "plan of salvation," "eternal life," God's plan for Israel, and "spiritual gifts" (Aker 2002, 57). When synonyms covering the same concept are added, the semantic field breaks wide open. The overarching theme is that spiritual giftedness is designed for *service within community* (1 Cor 12:7). The underlying objective is to mature the body of Christ (Richards and Martin 1981, 112). The question

is not “God, how can I discover the special abilities you have given me?” but “God, where do you want me to serve?” (Berding 2006, 35). In Paul’s exhortation to the Romans, *charismata* is a “concrete expression of grace which may or may not be understood as some kind of special Spirit endowment or manifestation” (Rom 12:3-8; Fee 1994, 606). When members use their gifts for self-fulfillment, they miss a unique opportunity to celebrate the wonderful diversity of God’s family. Only by looking to the interests of others can members model the way of the cross.

Perversion remains an ever-present danger in the hands of fallen people (Phil 2:3-13; Eph 1:17-19). The temptation to worship the created instead of the Creator is strong. The Corinthians used their newfound abilities to establish bragging rights in the kingdom (1 Cor 12:1-14:40). Paul admonished his converts to ponder the eternal significance of spiritual gifts. Similarly, he challenged the Philippians to serve sacrificially so Christ’s Spirit could produce lasting fruit (Phil 2:3-13). Ignoring God’s plan short-circuits divine opportunities to experience resurrection power. Envy of every gift but their own, God’s children end up disconnecting gifts from the Giver, magnifying abilities over stewardship, and elevating product over process. Only a unifying model of spiritual giftedness that embraces the Spirit’s role and personality can mend these deep theological cracks (Barr 1961, 34; Aker 2002, 55; Berding 2000, 37).

The further leaders stray from a biblical model of giftedness, the more marginalized the church becomes. The clog in the wheel is not willingness to serve but *failure to lead*. The notion of “going into ministry,” a special honor reserved for “reverends” who are set apart from the “secular” world, perpetuates a class distinction between “clergy” and “laity” (Ogden 1990, 60). Many pastors seek to play a starring role in God’s redemptive story and then invite members of the congregation to serve in their

supporting cast. This unequal distribution of power quickly devolves into a codependent relationship: members lack confidence to perform ministry; clergy resist sharing responsibilities.

It is still true that the model of congregational life in the minds of most clergy and laity is one in which the minister is the dominant pastoral superstar who specializes in the spiritual concerns of the Christian community, while the laity are spectators, critics, and recipients of pastoral care, free to go about their business because the pastor is taking care of the business of the kingdom. (Lovelace 1979, 224)

Such a view ignores the fact that every member of the body is indispensable to the Spirit's unifying work (1 Cor 12:14-25). If the pastor persists in overestimating his own importance, congregants may become discontent and question God's sovereignty and wisdom (1 Cor 12:23; Rom 9:20-21).

Bestowed on clergy and laity alike, church leadership is uniquely positioned to equip flawed people to join the Spirit in gospel ministry (Eph 4:7-12). As shepherds of a vulnerable flock, they know that internalizing faith is the surest way to prevent the spread of unbelief. A "professional" model of ministry, on the other hand, merely breeds spiritual consumers:

If the church were a restaurant, the believers as customers gorge on the Gospel buffet prepared by their pastors, sucking up spiritual milk prepared for them by the kitchen. The pastors in this scenario see Jesus as the master chef, and they being the only ones qualified to handle the ingredients, prepare the dishes and serve them to the waiting masses. At best, the leaders of the congregation are allowed to bus the tables and pay the bills. This arrangement is comfortable to all those playing the game. It allows the clergy to remain needed and feel special as well as allowing the laity to simply consume the ministry of the pastor. What it doesn't do is empower the followers of Jesus to be active and directly involved in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. (Junkans 2011, 7)

Few leaders today challenge congregants to pour out their talents for God's glory. Far more common is restraining the "coordinated expression of the reality of Christ's body" desperately needed in a hopeless world (Richards and Martin 1981, 112). Until the doctrinal reforms championed by Luther and Calvin actually penetrate a church's

structure, the priesthood of all believers will remain a pipe dream (1 Pet 2:5-9; Tillapaugh 1985; Beckham 1995; Stephens 1999).

In the Second Reformation, “ministry” is no longer reserved for super-spiritual people who perform some mystical activity in a special state of mind (Ogden 1990, 35). Seeing Christ’s body as a living temple inspires converts to embrace a lifestyle of service (Eph 1:22-23; 2:20-22). Church structures move cognitive belief seamlessly into heartfelt action in their quest for a new identity (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 6:12-20). Driven by personal passion, members seize every opportunity to contribute to God’s story. Enlightened leaders find creative ways to encourage baby steps of faith that build momentum. All developmental dimensions—personality traits, learning styles, conflict orientations, life experiences—are redeemed for ministry. Learning what makes a person tick nudges him forward; supporting his efforts cushions the fall. In the end, God is able to weave every unique color into a beautiful bouquet that radiates Christ’s glory.

Theoretical Importance

How Deci and Ryan’s groundbreaking theory could overlook the largest volunteer force in the world is a theoretical quandary. They began with self-regulation, personality development, aspirations and vitality before tackling the social and cultural implications of wellbeing (Deci and Ryan 2008, 14). Today, SDT is invading such diverse arenas as intimacy (La Guardia and Patrick 2008, 367), parenting (Joussemet, Landry, and Koestner 2008, 194), education (Guay, Ratelle, and Chanal 2008, 233), work (Gagne’ and Forest 2008, 225), health (Miquelon and Vallerand 2008, 241), exercise (Wilson, Mack, and Grattan 2008, 250), and even sustaining the planet (Pelletier and Sharp 2008, 210). Across every domain, researchers affirm that autonomously motivated people will embrace organizational goals, assimilate corporate values, and bond with

fellow workers (Baard 1994, 255; Baard and Aridas 2001, 53; Baard, Deci, and Ryan 1999, 12; Deci et al. 2001, 930; Lepper and Henderlong 2000, 257; Gagne 2003, 3). Could meeting psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relationship produce intrinsically satisfying opportunities to internalize faith?

Because SDT has been only marginally applied to churches (Ryan et al. 1993, 586; Baard 1994, 1061; Strahan and Craig 1995, 15; Baard and Aridas 2001, 12; Baard 2002, 255; Assor et al. 2005, 105; Neyrinck et al. 2005, 75; Neyrinck et al. 2006, 321; Sheldon 2006, 209; Granqvist 2007, 590), it would be unwise to experiment with God's people without a proper foundation (Yegeedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 111). Any methodology that increases Christian service without deepening Christian formation could become a "flaming arrow of the evil one" (Eph 6:16). Relying on human strength alone not only dooms the result, it undermines God's sovereign plan (1 Cor 2:3-5; 2 Cor 2:16; 3:4-6).

Given the critical need to nudge congregants toward sustainable service, surprisingly few studies have explored the possibility of internalizing Christian beliefs and practices through intrinsically motivating ministry activities. While a number of consultants specialize in helping Christian leaders (Schaller 1997, 51; Baard and Aridas 2001, 15; Malphurs 2005, 23), few rely on motivation theory as a developmental tool. Only Baard, Associate Professor of Communications and Media Management at Fordham, has tried to harness SDT principles for spiritual growth (Baard 1994, 1061). He could only surmise that membership in growing churches will be characterized by self-determined involvement and enjoyment of the religious experience (Baard 1994, 1061).

The scholarly quest to redeem SDT for God's glory is urgent. Secular researchers who examine religious activity fail to appreciate qualitative differences in the

content of religious belief. Ryan, for example, laments that extant SDT studies do not differentiate “dogmatic” (closed-minded) from “authentic” (open-minded) religiosity (Ryan et al. 1993, 586). The implication is obvious: *no person can dictate how someone else finds true meaning in life*. However, Jesus warned that even the noblest service has no eternal value unless it conforms to God’s will (Matt 7:21-23). In the end, such misguided thinking will dupe billions into mistaking Satan’s intrinsic appeal for a ‘religious experience’ (Rev 12:9, 13:3, 17:16). When the truth is finally revealed, it will be too late (Matt 7: 24-27).

Concerns about these and other philosophical presuppositions should not deter Christian scholars from exploring general revelation that may further God’s cultural mandate. Biblical integration approaches special revelation as the foundation for *engaging* the world, not a ceiling that prevents bold exploration. By harnessing members’ needs for autonomy, competence and relationship, church leaders could empower a dynamic context for internalizing faith that will impact all ministry fronts (Homans 1950, 212). In its wake, thousands of nonprofit organizations would owe the church a debt of gratitude for leading the way.

Research Purpose

Perceiving undeveloped believers as marginalized members of Christ’s body, this emancipatory study sought to build awareness of the need to empower every member to make kingdom contributions through intrinsically motivated service that internalizes genuine faith. The researcher assumed that cognitive faith rarely forges a Christ-identity without special nourishment from transformative experience. At best, controlled regulation of religious behavior produces *introjected* faith: acting religious because “it is the right thing to do.” Various perceptions of church-sponsored ministry held by a critical

array of stakeholders provided rich material for probing service's motivational dimension. In a vivid portrait gleaned from observations, interviews and documents, SDT's theoretical lens shaped the questions, informed the data, and inspired the cause. In the process, traditional assumptions about servant leadership, Christian formation, and spiritual giftedness were challenged. The study's ultimate aim was to stimulate meaningful dialogue on the need to reform church structures that foster Christian formation through intrinsically motivated, Spirit-empowered service. By harnessing deep-rooted needs for autonomy, competence and relationship, the researcher hoped to turn threats meant for evil into heavenly opportunities for good.

Limitations and Delimitations of Study

The scope of this case study was delimited to adult members and adherents of a Southern Baptist church in Louisville, Kentucky. Limiting features of the host church include its brief history, concentration of artists, high proportion of seminarians, young median adult age, widespread community groups, and multi-site operations. Limiting features of the study include the researcher's prior involvement, the focus and quality of interviews, the study's timeline, and SDT's theoretical assumptions. These delimitations and limitations suggest that findings will not be generalizable to youth, non-Christians, or non-evangelical churches.

Despite the study's bounded nature, specific lessons may apply to other situations because "the general lies in the particular" (Erickson 1986). Implications for the church-at-large are significant. Raising awareness of the need to reexamine church-sponsored service is the first step toward examining SDT's potential. Readers learn vicariously when a vivid portrait becomes a prototype they can emulate (Eisner 1991,

1999). By mixing vibrant colors and subtle shades from one church's varied experiences, the researcher hopes to paint a compelling picture for reform.

Research Questions

The study filtered perceptions of church-sponsored service through SDT's lens in order to establish a solid platform for meaningful dialogue on the need for church structures that align joyful service with Christian formation. Seven research questions furthered this emancipatory purpose:

1. In what ways does the church's organizational structure align with each SDT element, as displayed in its documents, online resources, and other media?
2. In what ways do leaders and members describe the church's motivational climate, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
3. In what ways do leaders and members describe experiences with church-sponsored service, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
4. In what ways do leaders and members respond to the use of SDT principles to facilitate church-sponsored service, as displayed in their personal interviews and focus group responses?
5. In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of service in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
6. In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
7. In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of spiritual giftedness in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

Terminology

For purpose of this study, the following definitions are provided:

Autonomous motivation. Intrinsic motivation as well as extrinsic motivators

identified with an activity's value or integrated into one's identity. When people are autonomously motivated, they experience volition or a self-endorsement of their actions (Deci and Ryan 1991, 237).

Christian formation. The Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of self to become like the inner being of Christ (Willard 2002, 10). This study will focus on that aspect of Christian formation most closely related to human motivation: internalizing doctrinal beliefs and practice.

Church-sponsored service. Voluntary ministry activities undertaken by a professing follower of Jesus Christ in service to others (both Christian and non-Christian) that are sponsored and coordinated by his or her local church.

Controlled motivation. External regulation (where behavior is a function of external contingencies like reward or punishment) and introjected regulation (where regulation is partially internalized by external influences like approval, guilt, shame, and self-esteem). When people are controlled, they experience pressure to think, feel, or behave in particular ways (Deci and Ryan 1991, 237).

External regulation. Activities performed to meet overtly external contingencies, such as other people's expectations, the promise of reward, or the threat of punishment. Such behaviors are characterized by an external perceived locus of causality (deCharms 1968, 273).

Extrinsic motivation. Performing an activity to obtain a distinct outcome. Because the activity is undertaken as a means to a desired end, external reinforcement is required (Ryan and Connell 1989, 756).

Identified regulation. Behavior regulated by personally endorsed values or commitments that make compliance more willing and autonomous. For this reason, it is characterized by an internal perceived locus of causality (Ryan and Deci 2003, 253).

Integrated regulation. Activities that are completely assimilated into one's coherent sense of self (i.e., brought into congruence with other values, goals or ideas that the person endorses). Such regulations are not only accepted for their personal significance, but because they fit the individual's self-defining structure (Assor et al. 2005, 105).

Internalization. Inherently active tendencies of "taking in," assimilating and integrating originally external reasons for certain behavior into a coherent and unifying sense of self (Dei and Ryan 1985a, 109).

Intrinsic motivation. Engaging in an activity because it is inherently interesting, enjoyable or satisfying. Because the activity is undertaken for its own sake, no external reinforcement is required (Deci 1975, 98).

Introjected regulation. Activities regulated by internal pressures or compulsions such as feelings of shame, guilt, or self-esteem contingencies. Because one feels he has no choice to resist the activity, the person is still characterized by an external perceived locus of causality (Deci and Ryan 1991, 237).

Religiosity. Demonstration of belief in a supreme Creator as gauged through three dimensions: knowing (cognition in the mind), feeling (affect to the spirit), and doing (behavior of the body) (Cornwall et al. 1986).

Sapiential-Descriptivist Model. Model of biblical integration that provides a fiduciary structure for filtering philosophical and empirical evidence through a reformatory theological lens (Jones 2010, 1). Powlison's taxonomy forms the core of

SDM's model: (1) articulating positive biblical truths into workable framework; (2) applying framework to debunk, expose, and reinterpret alternative models; and (3) redeeming information that survives critical analysis as "biblical wisdom" (Powlison 2010). The resulting revelatory truth affirms an underlying order in creation (Eccl 7:25), contains developmental components (Job 12:12), applies to believers and non-believers alike (Acts 7:22), and elevates the centrality of Christ (Col 1:28).

Self-Determination Theory. An empirically based meta-theory of human motivation, development, and wellness that measures autonomous motivation, controlled motivation, and amotivation as predictors of performance, belonging, and wellbeing (Deci and Ryan 2000, 319).

Transformative learning. Perspective transformation resulting from a 'disorienting dilemma' triggered by a life crisis, major life transition, or accumulation of transformations in meaning schemes over time (Mezirow 1991, 50).

Research Assumptions

The following research assumptions were foundational to the study:

1. The researcher assumed that participants will adequately communicate and accurately represent perceptions of the church's motivational climate, experiences with church-sponsored service, knowledge of the Holy Spirit, awareness of spiritual giftedness, and internalization of Christian beliefs.
2. The researcher assumed that Self-Determination Theory, as posited by Deci and Ryan, is a valid meta-theory of adult motivation that is useful for interpreting participants' responses.

Procedural Overview

The present study sought to paint a vivid portrait of reform from the vibrant colors and subtle shades attached to church-sponsored service by a critical array of stakeholders. The researcher attempted to achieve the construct validity, internal validity,

external validity, and reliability required of a qualitative single case study (Bernard and Ryan 2010, 110). To compensate for differing perspectives among researcher, participants and readers (Creswell 2009, 191), multiple research strategies were employed.

Emancipatory Worldview

The researcher applied the advocacy/participatory model of constructivist inquiry. This worldview “contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher’s life” (Creswell 2009, 9). The study assumed church leaders must hear cries for reform before scholars investigate SDT’s potential. SDT’s theoretical lens was used to shape the questions, inform the data, and inspire the cause.

Qualitative Design

A qualitative research design offers the best means for interpreting church-sponsored service from the stakeholders’ perspective (Yegedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 17). Instead of trying to determine how things “really are,” this inductive inquiry acknowledged the topic’s complexity by constructing themes from personal meaning (Greene and Caracelli 1997). Data collection included in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. As a primary research instrument, the researcher developed openly supportive relationships that facilitated participants’ understanding and cooperation (Creswell 2009, 18).

Case Study Method

To explore varying perceptions of church-sponsored service from leaders and members, the researcher combined social and psychological principles in a single case

study (Creswell 2009, 13). Phenomenological inquiry is well suited for coding qualitative data from personal interviews into themes (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 144). The intent was "to understand people's perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation," rather than to analyze literature in the field of interest (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 139). Purposive sampling of key informants ensured proper collection of meaningful information (Gall, Gall, and Borg 2005, 310). To explore service through the eyes of SDT, the critical case rationale was followed (Gall, Gall, and Borg 2005, 311). Critical theory's concern for unequal power relationships suited the author's advocacy role, while using SDT to explain cultural norms fit the study's purpose (Gall, Gall, and Borg 2005, 381).

The host's community group network served as the unit of analysis for purposes of a selection pool. To ensure all perspectives were heard, a critical array of stakeholders involved in various aspects of church-sponsored service was purposively selected. This sampling size exceeded the minimum for a phenomenological case study (Weller and Romney 1988, 77; Morse 1994, 220) and preserved the data's probative value (Morgan et al. 2002, 76; Guest et al. 2006, 59). Finally, SDT's theoretical grid excluded members having no experience with church-sponsored service and imposed a minimum quota of staff and volunteer leaders (Bernard and Ryan 2010, 362). The study proceeded in three stages.

Stage 1: Data Collection

Data collection progressed through several phases. In the first phase, documents and other media relating to church-sponsored service were analyzed. In the second phase, the researcher made unstructured field observations of church sponsored service. The third and largest phase consisted of thirty-five semi-structured interviews of

leaders and members, representing a sampling of those involved in church-sponsored service at two of the host's four campuses. The researcher focused on participants' subjective experiences, *not* the church's actual performance. The meaning ascribed to prior experiences with church-sponsored service was explored through open-ended conversations following four protocols: (a) collect data in participant's setting; (b) interpret meaning behind data; (c) allow new questions to emerge; (d) build inductive themes (Yegedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 180). Tracking SDT elements sharpened the deductive analysis; asking open-ended questions facilitated the inductive emergence of themes.

In the final phase, the researcher moderated three focus group discussions of theoretical and critical themes emerging from the interviews. This format provided broad emotional support for addressing controversial topics efficiently. Participants were challenged to approach topics in fresh and innovative ways and encouraged to be candid. A high level of trust, combined with strong interviewing skills, generated rich material for meaningful feedback.

Stage 2: Data Analysis

A content analysis approach to categorizing and analyzing data was used in the second stage (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 142). Recording the conversations produced significant "linguistic data" for deciphering participants' perceptions (Krippendorff 1980, 42). They also enabled the researcher to track similarities and differences between leaders' and members' reliance on SDT principles. Standard categories adopted from the precedent literature formed a "framework of constraints" to compile and classify the content (Webb 2001, 9). Once the interviews were recorded, pre-coded and emerging themes were analyzed for relevant characteristics (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 144).

Stage 3: Participative Reporting

Because the study used perceptions and experiences to grasp the significance of church-sponsored service, the emerging data were inherently descriptive (Creswell 2009, 195). “The closeness of interview studies to ordinary life, with their often lively descriptions and engaging narratives, makes an interview report potentially interesting to the general public” (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 268). Findings were communicated primarily through words and images rather than statistical trends (Marshall and Rossman 2006). Tables and figures were used to augment colorful narratives and stimulating quotes. Finally, qualitative trends unique to Christian formation and service were emphasized.

Consistent with an advocacy worldview, the preliminary findings were subjected to participant criticism and feedback (Creswell 2009, 9). Soliciting these comments proved to be an excellent way to expose qualitative defects hidden beneath the surface (Creswell 2009, 191). Validating theoretical and emergent themes at point of delivery also bolstered reliability (Creswell 2009, 9). Such collaborative inquiry acknowledged the study was completed *with* others, not *on* or *to* them (Creswell 2009, 191). By combining methodologies, the researcher attempted to shape a platform for further discussion on the role of service in Christian formation, the need to provide satisfying ministry opportunities, and SDT’s potential for sustaining member commitment.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENT LITERATURE

The following review examines the precedent literature on adult motivation within a cognitive developmental framework. The chapter surveys the development of adult motivational theory before considering various conceptualizations of intrinsic motivation. Next, Deci's original model of intrinsic motivation is compared to Self-Determination Theory as a fully developed meta-theory. SDT's generalizability to religious behavior is then evaluated. After pondering several motivational models of religiosity, the researcher showcases SDT's unique potential for internalizing Christian beliefs.

No evangelical review of the precedent literature on religious motivation would be complete without examining human anthropology, the nature of sin, the role of the Holy Spirit, the purpose of spiritual giftedness, and the importance of servant leadership. The Sapiential-Descriptivist Model of biblical integration (SDM) provided a suitable filter for assessing the empirical data. Sifting SDT's primary ingredients through SDM's criteria produced a holy residue with scriptural consistency. The Lord's skillful application of these principles during His earthly ministry was used to undergird the findings. Finally, the chapter identifies a serious void in the research related to man's immaterial component. Orthodox Christianity is unique in its worship of a triune God: the Father offers saving grace, through an intimate relationship with His Son, that is nurtured by His Spirit. Drives for autonomy, competence and relatedness may reflect God's

common grace, but only the elect can discern and experience the ultimate aim of all human motivation—God Himself.

Motivational Threads Of Adult Learning Theory

With modernity's rediscovery of Platonic pedagogy, scientific inquiry turned to theoretical modeling. According to Torraco (1997, 115), "a theory simply explains what a phenomenon is and how it works." Some psychologists now contend that theoretical modeling is counterproductive because the hypothesis-formulation-testing procedures generated are misleading (Hilgard 1966, 143). The complexities involved in defining both content and process make theorizing about human motivation especially difficult. Because one's perspective is largely shaped by philosophic presuppositions, such distinctions flow more from *interpretation* than definition (Hilgard and Bower 1966, 6). Perhaps the better approach is to gauge a theory's maturity by its "explanatory and predictive functions" (Davenport 1985, 158).

The developmental premise behind most contemporary theories of human motivation draws much from the adult learning context. Assumptions about human beings as rational, materialistic, pragmatic, self-oriented, and self-directed coexist with views that people are irrational, spiritual, altruistic, community-oriented, and other-directed (Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, and Misra 1996). Whereas "education" emphasizes the use of a change agent (teacher) to stimulate change in a recipient (student), "learning" focuses on the person in whom such change is expected. Transforming one's knowledge, understanding, skill, attitudes and values through life experiences is most critical (Ford 2000). After embracing social accountability, "adulthood" undergoes identifiable stages of maturity according to life's dramatic events (Yount 2008, 351).

The earliest attempts to classify adult learning characteristics were cut from a classical philosophic mold. Plato's rationalism foreshadowed Gestalt and cognitive psychology, whereas Aristotle's empiricism laid the foundation for behaviorism (Merriam and Caffarella 1999, 249). When scientific study of the mind emerged in the nineteenth century, psychologists could analyze the higher mental processes of learning experimentally (Hergenhahan 1988, 42). Today, the basic ingredients of behavioral change and experience are routinely mixed into many learning recipes. One observer defines learning as "the act or process by which behavioral change, knowledge, skills, and attitudes are acquired." (Boyd et al. 1980, 100). Another contends that learning defies precise definition because it can variously refer to: (1) mastery of what is already known; (2) clarification of meaning; or (3) the intentional process of testing ideas (Smith 1982, 34). Hence, researchers must take care to distinguish learning as *product* (outcome of experience), as *process* (during experience), and as *function* (behavioral change) (Harris and Schwahn 1961, 1-2).

An Integrated Theory of Adult Learning

Merriam and Caffarella (1999, 250) classify modern learning theories according to five orientations: behaviorist, cognitivist, humanist, social learning, and constructivist. Of these, the humanist emphasis on growth potential strongly resonates with the writer's own paradigm and perspective. However, each orientation adds texture and perspective to a three-dimensional model of adult learning.

Humanist Foundation

Rejecting behavioral fatalism, the humanist stresses an individual's free will, the drive to improve, and the centrality of experience (Rogers 1983). Beginning with

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1970), the intrinsic motivation to grow in knowledge and understanding has been embedded in humanistic learning theory. With the introduction of Rogers' (1983) "client-centered therapy," the shift from teacher to student was irreversible. As in most seismic shifts in ideology, the fault line that views adults as active learners was widening long before Rogers entered the scene. After the American Association for Adult Education was founded in 1926, two philosophical schools emerged for approaching adult learning: scientific and artistic (Knowles et al. 1998). The former sought to discover new knowledge through rigorous investigation; the latter through intuition and analysis of experience. Strongly influenced by Dewey, Lindeman (1926, 8-9) laid the foundation for a systematic theory of artistic adult learning that stressed the learner as principal actor.

Knowles' Andragogy

In contrast to the pedagogical dynamics of formal education, Malcolm Knowles (1970) popularized the term "andragogy" to underscore a fundamental shift in emphasis he observed in adult learners. His set of assumptions about adult learning were that: (1) maturity leads from dependence to independence (2) experience is a paramount teacher (3) which translates to societal tasks (4) that solve practical problems (5) motivated by certain internal factors in each learner (Knowles 1975). Viewed collectively, these assumptions recognize that adults need to know *why* they should learn something before undertaking the exercise (Tough 1979). A mature self-concept freely embraces the responsibility for decision-making, inviting others to discern the learner's capacity to exercise this self-direction.

Self-Directed Learning

The progression toward independence is best fostered through self-directed learning where

. . . the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It involves direct encounter with the phenomenon being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter or only considering the possibility of doing something with it. (Keeton and Tate 1978, 2)

The goals of self-directed learning are: (1) to enhance competencies in self-directed learning (2) to foster transformational learning and (3) to promote emancipator learning leading to social action. While the first has a strong humanistic flavor, the others reflect the constructivist's belief that learning is primarily a process of constructing meaning where people make sense of their experience. Dewey's assumptions about knowledge and experience provide a fitting foretaste of this qualitative dimension. It is "particularly compatible with the notion of self-direction, since it emphasizes the combined characteristics of active inquiry, independence, and individuality in a learning task" (Candy 1991, 278).

Here, learning's motivational dimension is most pronounced. Deci's (1975) groundbreaking construct of intrinsic motivation revealed the depth of man's need and breadth of capacity to deal effectively with his environment. He discovered people engage in two classes of behaviors to gain a sense of competence and self-determination: *seeking* situations that provide optimal challenge; *conquering* the challenges presented (Deci 1975, 57). Intrinsically motivated behaviors flow directly from the desire to experience personal causation (de Charms 1968, 269). When a student believes he is the locus of causality for his own behavior, he is ripe for intrinsic motivation; when the locus of causality is perceived to be external, he shifts to extrinsic rewards (Heider 1958; de

Charms 1968, 328). Thus, self-directed learning will enhance students' competencies, foster transformational learning, and promote social action (Keeton and Tate 1978, 2).

The Role of Critical Reflection

The logical corollary to active learning is critical reflection. Having commissioned an adult to direct his or her own learning activities, it would be irresponsible to launch the ship without providing the necessary equipment to navigate the rough waters ahead. Once factual information is acquired, the adult learner must be able to reflect on the information critically to evaluate its efficacy. Developing this skill will shift the emphasis on learning from transmission of knowledge by the teacher to transformation of knowledge by the learner (McMillan 1987, 37). Part and parcel to the process is identifying and challenging one's assumptions (Brookfield 1987, 7). By raising vital questions, gathering relevant information, thinking open-mindedly about alternatives, and communicating with others effectively, the critical thinker can arrive at well-reasoned conclusions (Foundation For Critical Thinking 2008, 2).

Perspective Transformation

Closely related to andragogy and self-directed learning is transformational theory. First articulated by Mezirow (1978), this nuance in self-direction goes beyond additive knowledge to learning that cognitively shapes people by impacting experience, inner meaning, and reflection. By engaging in critical reflection, the adult learner will often confront the need to confirm or refute assumptions and values that have been deeply held since childhood. If he or she determines a value or assumption is really inauthentic or unjustified, transformative learning opens the door to new or changed meaning schemes (Mezirow 1991b, 111). As a result, the individual undergoes a phase of

“reintegration, reorientation, or equilibrium” that enables practical application of new knowledge (Cranton 1992, 72). According to Mezirow (1991b, 167), becoming critically aware that assumptions often constrain perceptions invariably broadens a person’s perspective. The researcher’s biblical adaptation of Mezirow’s model in the present study acknowledged the Holy Spirit’s role in teaching heavenly principles through everyday circumstances. The cognitive result is a believer’s recognition that one cannot “pour new wine into old wineskins” (Mark 2:22).

The Social Dimension

Crossing both behavioral and cognitive lines were social theorists, who posited that one’s learning capacity could be bolstered by observing others in relational context (Lefrancois 1996). Bandura’s (1976, 392) four-phase model of social learning contributed significant insights about role acquisition in a mentoring relationship: (1) the role model gains the observer’s attention through status, competence, popularity, and affinity; (2) observed behavior is encoded in memory, whether by mental images or verbal descriptions, to recall the experience in the future; (3) learners practice the behavior by organizing responses stored in memory, performing the behavior, and refining it based on feedback; and (4) the observer watches to see if the model’s behavior is reinforced or punished.

Observational learning is specifically operationalized through attention, retention, rehearsal, and motivation (Hergenhahn 1988). Within a “community of practice,” learning flows from values honed by cultural beliefs and behaviors refined by personal experience. A novice is assimilated through role development that culminates in becoming an old-timer (Lave 1988). The integration of humanist and constructionist

orientations in a social context most closely reflects the researcher's unstructured observations about adult learning in theory and practice.

Theories About Adult Motivation

If concepts relating to change, conflict and learning describe *how* people grow, motivation theories explain *why* they act (Lens and Vansteenkiste 2006, 249). This study was premised on the assumption that adult motivation is best understood from a cognitive developmental perspective (Deci 1975, 96; Gergen et al. 1996, 496; Deusch and Coleman 2000, 367). Emphasizing the interplay of cognitive and affective processes, an organismic approach to human development conceptualizes persons as active agents within their environment (Piaget 1951). Voluntary control of choice is the basic premise of all cognitive orientations (Deci 1975, 96). People decide what to do by evaluating likely outcomes from available alternatives (Vroom 1964). As living organisms, they constantly interact with their surroundings to secure the 'nutriments' needed to preserve and enhance social functioning (Deci and Ryan 2002b, 6). These universal needs must be satisfied if they are to persist and thrive (Jacob 1973). Growth occurs through the processes of assimilating and accommodating to their environment. Ultimately, one's personal knowledge about the environment becomes a template for interpreting the data relied upon in making decisions (Polanyi 1958).

Cognitive researchers have identified three dimensions to human motivation. *Extrinsic* motivation describes behavior aimed at contingent outcomes (Deci 1971). People engage in these 'instrumental' activities to attain an end state distinct from the behavior. In contrast, *intrinsically* motivated people engage in certain activities for their inherent pleasure and satisfaction (Deci 1975, 121). Finally, *amotivation* is at work when people display a relative absence of motivation. Perceiving no connection between

behavior and outcome, their inaction betrays any intention or hope of attaining a desired outcome (Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale 1978, 49). Behavioral theories rely upon extrinsic motivation while cognitive theories emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation (Weiner 1992, 224).

Conceptualizations of Intrinsic Motivation

Some pioneering researchers were convinced that affect (emotion) provides the ultimate basis for motivation (McClelland 1965, 321). They believed the strength of a motive depends on the intensity, duration, frequency, and recency of previous affective arousals (Young 1961, 45). Because affective arousal theories minimize the role of choice, Deci emphasized the importance of cognition in human development (Deci 1975, 96). He was particularly fascinated by the mind's interpretive power over the central nervous system. He discovered that intrinsically motivated activities are energized by certain basic internal needs within every individual that are ultimately *insatiable* (Deci 1975, 121). These internally rewarding consequences resonate within the central nervous system apart from any biological tissue function like hunger (Deci 1975, 101). One is moved to act to experience a desired state, not to receive a reward or to avoid punishment (Berlyne 1971). Deci's approach combined three concepts that framed the discussion on intrinsic motivation at that time: drive theory, optimal stimulation, and reduction of uncertainty.

Drive Theory

Early data measuring intrinsic motivation in animals revealed distinct innate drives toward curiosity, manipulation, and exploration (Montgomery 1952a, 50). Many laboratory subjects were drawn to explore novel stimuli in an effort to relieve a 'boredom

drive' resulting from insufficient stimulation (Myers and Miller 1954, 428; Zimbardo and Miller 1958, 43). This novelty attraction was cross-validated in humans through several stimulus-deprivation studies (Bexton et al. 1954, 70; Heron 1956, 65). Some researchers used reinforcement exercises to compare exploratory and manipulative behaviors with reduction in primary drives (Kelley 1972, 1). Others applied the concept of anxiety reduction to explain the human drive toward exploration (White 1959, 297). But intangible drives for curiosity, manipulation, and exploration do not exhibit the same functional properties as biological drives for hunger, thirst, and sex (Hunt 1965, 24; White 1959, 241). Unlike physiological forces, man's intrinsic engine is neither ignited by body tissue deficits nor satisfied with a consummate response (Montgomery 1952a, 50). Thus, drive naming could not explain the dynamics of intrinsic motivation (Deci 1975, 59).

Optimal Stimulation

Another approach posits that humans require an optimal balance of stimulation to function effectively (Deci 1975, 59). Related to this notion are the principles of discrepancy and incongruity (Hunt 1965, 29). Some researchers thought people are motivated to reduce all incongruity or dissonance between stimuli. Festinger, for example, proposed that two dissonant cognitions produce an aversive state compelling people to narrow present gaps and to avoid future situations that create them (Festinger 1957, 29). But not all incongruity is aversive: novel stimulation can actually be rewarding, causing one to approach rather than to evade certain situations (Hunt 1965, 29). These findings imply healthy individuals will sustain incongruence at an *optimal level* to satisfy their psychological need to grow (McClelland 1965, 321). A person is intrinsically motivated "when some cue reintegrates an affective state, initially produced by the

discrepancy between an input and an adaptation level, which leads the person to engage in a behavior for which there is not an extrinsic reward” (Deci 1975, 122). A perceived discrepancy between input and expectation provides the impetus to narrow the gap (Hunt 1965, 10).

Hebb’s physiological perspective caused him to postulate that a person functions most efficiently through optimal *arousal* (Hebb 1949, 121). If arousal is too low, a response that increases it will be strengthened; if too great, a decreasing response is prompted. He reconciled his findings with McClelland’s hypothesis by acknowledging that up to a certain point, threat and puzzle have positive motivating value that turn negative if pushed beyond a certain point (Hebb 1949, 250). Deci likened “optimal arousal” to the basic physiological process underlying optimal incongruity (Deci 1975, 45).

Reduction of Uncertainty

Kagan’s theory of uncertainty reduction took intrinsic motivation to another level (Kagan 1972, 51). He distinguished goal setting (a cognitive representation of future events that will make one feel better) from motive (a cognitive representation of the desired end state). Incompatible cognitive structures, experience, and behavior lead to uncertainty, much like Festinger’s theory of cognitive dissonance (Kagan 1972, 54; Festinger 1957, 29). Unlike McClelland and Hebb, Kagan believed individuals are motivated to *reduce* – not balance – all forms of uncertainty or dissonance (Kagan 1972, 55). By exploring the relationship between autonomy and competency, Deci began to understand why people move toward uncertainty instead of retreating to safety (Deci 1975, 57).

Precursors to Deci's Model

Building on Angyal's (1941, 34) discovery that people increase autonomy by acquiring competency, Deci's groundbreaking construct of intrinsic motivation revealed the breadth of man's need and depth of his capacity to master his environment (Deci 1975, 289). He adopted White's definition of 'competence' as the ability to navigate one's surroundings by means of "exploration, manipulation, attention, perception, thought, and communication" (White 1959, 297). This 'effectance motivation' toward self determination—periodically interrupted by biological needs—prods every person to engage in behaviors that produce feelings of competence or efficacy (Deci 1975, 55).

De Charms sharpened Angyal and White's findings by declaring man strives to be a *causal agent* in changing his environment (De Charms 1968, 57). Intrinsically motivated behaviors flow directly from the desire to feel personal causation (De Charms 1968, 269). Whenever a person believes he is the locus of causality for his own behavior, he is ripe for intrinsic motivation. When the locus of causality is perceived to be external, he shifts to extrinsic rewards (Heider 1958, 79; de Charms 1968, 328). Deci's collaborative work (1972a; Deci, Cascio, and Krusell 1973) added a spatial dimension to the need for challenge. He discovered that people engage in two classes of behaviors to gain a sense of competence and self-determination: *seeking* situations that provide optimal challenge; *conquering* the challenges presented (Deci 1975, 100). These bookends are held in dynamic tension continuously throughout a person's life.

By comparison, Maslow's humanistic model of hierarchical needs assumed that lower needs must be fully satisfied before higher needs become salient (Maslow 1943, 1954). Deci complained that Maslow weighed all needs (both physiological and psychological) on one scale: health vs. sickness (Deci 1975, 58). As a result, his model

overlooked an infant's need for safety and love (Harlow 1953) as well the desire for competence and self-determination (Smith 1969). Subsequent research revealed how intrinsic motivation to control one's fate can differentiate into specific motives as he or she interacts with the environment (Kagan 1972). By confusing basic motivation with these differentiated motives, Maslow's "self-actualization" painted a stilted picture of the human condition (Deci 1975, 85). Upon this foundation, Deci was able to construct a comprehensive model of human behavior that underscores the importance of intrinsic motivation (Deci 1975, 93).

Deci's Model of Intrinsic Motivation

Since it had not been operationalized as a testable proposition, Deci did not introduce his model as a fully developed theory (Deci and Ryan 1985b, 22). Its original components included (1) stimulus input (2) motive (3) goal selection (4) goal-directed behavior (5) reward/satisfaction and (6) feedback. All weave the thread of *choice behavior* into the fabric of cognitive development.

Stimulus Inputs

From a cognitive standpoint, human behavior begins with stimulus inputs to the central information processing system (Deci 1975, 96). These stimuli originate from one's external environment, memory, and internal sources. External stimuli represent conditions present in one's environment. Memory comes into play when one recalls a past situation that is useful in processing a current event in real time. Internal inputs such as blood sugar level, mood, or lack of sleep impede or heighten the cognitive process. Depending on which stimulus inputs capture one's attention, distinct intrinsic and extrinsic deficits emerge.

Motive

Awareness of how to satisfy these deficits provides energy for setting goals and gearing up behavior (Deci 1975, 106). Motives are expressed as cognitive representations (awareness) of desired end states (potential satisfaction) (Deci 1975, 99). Borrowing from Schacter's (1971a) work, Deci warned his model should not be viewed as linear, static, or hierarchical. Rather, it incorporates three conceptualizations of satisfaction awareness: (1) intrinsic motivation; (2) primary drives; and (3) affective states.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsically motivated behavior is any activity driven by the need to feel competent and self-determining in conquering one's environment (Deci 1975, 96). The reward fueling intrinsic motivation is the internal state produced by the activity itself. Since it is a preferred state, the cognitive ability to choose among alternative behaviors is assumed (Irwin 1971, 78). Exhibiting similar goal-direction as extrinsically motivated behavior, intrinsically motivated activities differ in two important ways: (1) feelings of competence and self-determination can only be experienced in one's nervous system tissues; and (2) once these intrinsic rewards are attained, the need for feeling competent and self-determining regenerates (Deci 1975, 122). Hence, intrinsic drives invariably seek new paths to satisfaction unless interrupted by a competing drive or affective process (Deci 1975, 122)

Primary Drives

The recognition that one lacks something considered physiologically or psychologically important sparks the impetus to change. Whereas mechanistic theorists

associate drives with stimuli and responses, cognitive theorists focus on stimuli's ability to flag deficiencies and presage satisfaction (Deci 1975, 96). The extrinsic reward for behavior motivated by a primary drive (food) will cancel a deficit in some non-nervous system tissue (hunger) (Deci 1975, 121). When stimulus inputs involve primary drives that are salient to the awareness of potential satisfaction, they will most likely interrupt intrinsically motivated behavior. Once the goal of satisfaction is attained, the behavior is rewarded and the need reduced or eliminated (Deci 1975, 121).

Affective States

Some classify emotion as a “seriously disturbed affective process” (Young 1961; Zajonc 1980, 151). Others refuse to distinguish the two, drawing a spectrum of organized responses with varying intensity (Leeper 1948; Blechman 1990, 213). As emotions increase, signs of disorganization threaten the motivational process. Expanding these early observations, Deci argued that emotions are both antecedents and consequences of behaviors (Deci 1975, 38). In his model, emotion resides both in the energizing element that precedes behavior and the rewarding element that follows (Deci 1975, 38). Experiencing positive affect from a stimulus input signals satisfaction is in reach. Similarly, the positive affect of achieving a desired goal serves as a reward for engaging in the behavior. As intrinsically motivated behavior nears satisfaction, one can hardly separate positive feelings of competence and self-determination from their affective cues (Deci 1975, 40).

Deci's perspective on emotion differs from affective arousal theories in two important ways. According to McClelland, motives are affectively toned associative networks that *determine* behavior by reintegrating current and past experiences (McClelland 1965, 321). In contrast, Deci believed stimulus inputs produce the affect

needed to inform one's decision in *choosing* behaviors (Deci 1975, 45). Whereas affective arousal theories give emotion a starring role in motivating behavior, he emphasized the actor's freedom in making an informed choice. It follows that intrinsic motivation is ongoing in directing behavior, interrupted only by primary drives when such needs are sufficiently salient. Behavior motivated by emotions will trump both intrinsic and affective needs in response to real time cues from the environment (Simon 1967).

Goal Selection

In the first stage of Deci's model, an individual is made aware of a deficit through some form of stimulus input ("I am hungry"). In stage two, a growing sense that the need can be satisfied provides the impetus to move ("My hunger can be reduced"). In this stage, he evaluates alternative ways to satisfy the need based on their expected end state (Deci 1975, 106). The option that delivers greatest satisfaction at lowest cost is preferred (e.g., "Would I rather cook a meal or drive to a restaurant?"). The valence attributed to each goal (behavior) used to evaluate competing end states (rewards) has been explored through various expectancy theories. Despite significant differences, Atkinson (1954, 359) and Vroom (1964) found a direct relationship between one's expectation about goal attainment and its valence in predicting human behavior. As external rewards become *easier* to achieve, extrinsic motivation increases; the more *challenging* the internal goal, the greater the intrinsic motivation (Deci 1975, 58).

Goal-Directed Behavior

Deci's model also incorporated basic cognitive assumptions about achieving desired goals (Deci 1975, 119). Goals acquire valence according to the rewards—whether

affective or extrinsic—flowing from their attainment (Irwin 1971, 152). Contrary to prevailing thought, Deci found that numerous stimuli intervene to redirect or even terminate an activity in the midst of goal-directed behavior (Deci 1975, 112). In addition to primary drives and affective processes, a significant change in congruity between one's present and desired state is a common catalyst of disruption (Deci 1975, 112).

Rewards and Satisfaction

Rewards associated with goal attainment include (1) extrinsic rewards relating to drives; (2) intrinsic rewards from feeling competent and self-determining; and (3) positive affective processes that enhance one's emotional state. While satisfaction typically follows reward in cognitive theory, the line is difficult to draw with intrinsic and affective rewards. Deci believed satisfaction follows intrinsic rewards by signaling the termination of specific goal-directed behavior (Deci 1975, 121). Using satisfaction as feedback, one evaluates whether a remnant of the "awareness of potential satisfaction" which prompted the behavior lingers (Deci 1975, 122). A critical mass of residual awareness instigates a new sequence of goal-directed behavior. Achieving the expected satisfaction should erase all awareness expended on energizing a behavior sequence (Deci 1975, 125). With respect to extrinsic rewards, the cessation of goal-directed behavior will be clear and prolonged. Intrinsic rewards are another story: as the rapidly changing environment taunts one's need for competence and autonomy, a fresh awareness of deficits materializes (Deci 1975, 129).

Feedback

No cognitive model of human behavior is complete without considering the glue holding it together. Deci recognized that humans are more complex than animals and

their environment less predictable than a laboratory (Deci 1975, 135). To animate his model, Deci builds upon various feedback theories.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory

Cognitive evaluation theory (Deci 1975; Deci and Ryan 1980) extends de Charm's locus of causality analysis by postulating that environmental processes regulate intrinsic motivation according to whether the actor perceives they support or thwart satisfaction of needs. A change in perceived locus of causality moderates one's sense of autonomy. An external locus diminishes intrinsic motivation; an internal focus enhances it. Changes in perceived competence moderate one's sense of competency—increasing competence bolsters intrinsic motivation; decreasing competence hinders it. Positive feedback will increase intrinsic motivation only if the person perceives she is also autonomous (Deci and Ryan 2002b, 11).

Cognitive evaluation theory also distinguishes between contextual events that are *controlling* from those which are *informational*. Because they exert pressure toward specified outcomes, controlling aspects tend to shift perceptions to an external locus of causality (stifling intrinsic motivation). Threats of punishment (Deci and Cascio 1972), deadlines (Amabile, DeJong, and Lepper 1976, 92), imposed goals (Mossholder 1980, 202), surveillance (Lepper and Greene 1975, 129), competition (Deci et al. 1981, 79), evaluation (Smith 1975), and negative feedback (Vallerand and Reid 1984, 94) are controls that decrease intrinsic motivation. Informational aspects, on the other hand, provide feedback that clarifies whether the actor's goal-directed behavior is likely to be satisfied. About this time, other researchers began to confirm that information which facilitates freedom of choice enhances intrinsic motivation (Zuckerman et al. 1978, 443; Swann and Pittman 1977, 1128).

A final influence on Deci's construct involves the interpersonal climate for interpreting environmental stimuli. Positive feedback delivered within a pressuring climate may be interpreted as controlling (Ryan 1982, 450). Conversely, tangible rewards normally considered controlling do not undermine intrinsic motivation when given in a non-evaluative climate that supports autonomy (Ryan, Mims, and Koestner 1983, 736). Thus, certain aspects of one's social context moderate intrinsic motivation by influencing perceptions of competence and autonomy.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Alternatively, cognitive dissonance theory posits that a person who holds discrepant cognitions will experience discomfort until the dissonance falls below a threshold level (Festinger 1957, 18). Deci's model retrofit Festinger's theory to function as feedback (Deci 1975, 161). Those who seek out incongruity or dissonance are attracted to challenge; those who seek to reduce incongruity or dissonance hope to conquer it (Deci 1975, 161). Deci's 'challenge' is much broader than Festinger's 'dissonance,' which is seen as a subset of Hunt's (1965) 'incongruity.' When a person behaves in a manner inconsistent with his internal state without sufficient justification, he will experience cognitive dissonance (Deci 1975, 81). To correct the discrepancy, he may distort his internal state to justify the dissonant behavior. As applied here, he can reduce the dissonance by increasing the intrinsic worth of the task (making a boring task fun).

Self-Determination Theory

After ten years of additional research at the University of Rochester, Deci locked arms with his long-time colleague to launch Self-Determination Theory (Deci and

Ryan 1985b, 38). While many historical and contemporary theories focus on the *amount* of motivation for particular behaviors or activities, SDT differentiates *types*. They found the latter predicts psychological health and wellbeing, effective performance, creative problem solving, and conceptual learning far better.

As a macro-theory of human motivation, SDT addresses such basic issues as personality development, self-regulation, universal psychological needs, life goals and aspirations, energy and vitality, non-conscious processes, the relations of culture to motivation, and the impact of social environments on motivation, affect, behavior, and wellbeing (Deci and Ryan 2008, 14). Empirical refinement of Deci's model added two pieces to the motivational puzzle: (1) the need for extrinsic motivators to ensure healthy change; (2) the power of social influence to sustain it. Through collaboration with other researchers, a final distinction between motivation and goals rounded out SDT's theoretical development (Deci and Ryan 1985b, 55).

Autonomous Motivation

SDT's central distinction is between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation (Deci and Ryan 1987, 1024). *Autonomous motivation* comprises both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivators identified with an activity's value or integrated into one's identity. When people are autonomously motivated, they experience volition or a self-endorsement of their actions. *Controlled motivation* consists of both external regulation (where behavior is a function of external contingencies like reward or punishment) and introjected regulation (where regulation is partially internalized by external influences like approval, guilt, shame, and self-esteem). When people are controlled, they experience pressure to think, feel, or behave in particular ways. Both

autonomous and controlled motivation energize and direct behavior, while amotivation betrays any such intention (Deci and Ryan 1985b, 150).

Need For Relatedness

Relatedness describes a sense of feeling connected with others—caring for and being cared for, belonging to each other individually, and identifying corporately with a shared community (Baumeister and Leary 1995, 497). The need to feel togetherness extends beyond outcomes or status to the depths of psychological wellbeing. (Ryan 1995, 397). As a result, certain aspects of one’s social environment may influence perceptions of competence and autonomy that will decrease intrinsic motivation. For example, children who are monitored by a stranger are less likely to engage in otherwise interesting games (Anderson, Manoogian, and Reznick 1976, 915). Conversely, children who sense the security of a known caregiver will increase their exploratory behavior (Frodi, Bridges, and Grolnick 1985, 1291). While the role of relatedness in energizing intrinsic behavior is subtler than competence and self-direction, it undoubtedly filters a person’s experiences as he or she engages in goal-directed activities (Deci and Ryan 2002b, 14).

Goals of Behavior

In addition to differentiating autonomous and controlled regulation of behavior, SDT distinguishes intrinsic and extrinsic goals (Neyrinck, Lens, and Vansteenkiste 2005, 75). Intrinsic goals are congruent with one’s self-actualizing and growth tendencies (Kasser and Ryan 1996, 280). These inherently satisfying pursuits (personal development, affiliation and community contributions) meet basic psychological needs and produce a greater sense of wellbeing. In contrast, extrinsic goals (financial success, status, physical attractiveness) are less satisfying because they seek

contingent approval or external signs of worth (Ryan and Deci 2002, 59). In the quest to capture others' admiration and positive regard, they promote stressful interpersonal comparisons and deter basic need satisfaction (Sirgy 1998, 227). Thus, extrinsic goals typically lead to ill being (Ryan et al. 1996, 7).

The differentiation between intrinsic versus extrinsic goals is conceptually different from the constructs of autonomous and controlled motivation. People can pursue both intrinsic and extrinsic goals for autonomous or controlled reasons. For example, a "religious" person may donate to church and serve the community (intrinsic goal) either to avoid feeling guilt (controlled regulation) or because she personally values the activity (autonomous regulation). Another person may try to gain approval, status and power within his church (extrinsic goal) either to appease his parents (controlled regulation) or because he finds it personally important (autonomous regulation) to improve his community (intrinsic goal). Empirically, it has been shown that extrinsic goals are usually pursued for controlled reasons and intrinsic goals are normally pursued for autonomous reasons (Sheldon and Kasser 1995, 531). However, *both* dimensions predict variance in wellbeing and positive adjustment (Sheldon et al. 2004, 475).

SDT's Generalizability

In the 1990s, SDT was applied to a wider range of life domains. Research in the areas of sport, education, and health care confirmed that autonomous motivation and controlled motivation lead to very different outcomes (Miquelon and Vallerand 2008, 241; Wilson, Mack, and Grattan 2008, 250). Autonomous motivation tends to yield greater psychological health and more effective performance on heuristic types of activities (Deci and Ryan 2008, 14). It also leads to greater long-term persistence. Later studies, using priming methodologies and implicit assessment methods, showed that

SDT's motivational processes and principles operate at both conscious and non-conscious levels (favoring autonomous motivation for most important outcomes) (Weinstein et al. 2009, 381; Weinstein et al. 2010, 1603; Weinstein et al. 2011, 527).

Cross-cultural research (including both collectivist/traditional and individualist/equalitarian values) has confirmed that satisfying competence, autonomy and relatedness needs transcends all psychological wellbeing (Wang 2009, 313). Empirical work on long-term goals falls into two categories: intrinsic aspirations and extrinsic aspirations (Kasser and Ryan 1996, 280). Intrinsic aspirations include such life goals as affiliation, generativity, and personal development, whereas extrinsic aspirations include such goals as wealth, fame, and attractiveness. An emphasis on intrinsic goals is associated with greater health, wellbeing, and performance (Vansteenkiste et al. 2004, 232).

More recently, SDT researchers have begun to integrate autonomous functioning through studies on 'mindfulness'—open awareness and interested attention to what is happening within and around a person (Brown and Ryan 2003, 822). Promoting mindfulness is theorized to be a central element in psychotherapy that allows inner exploration and reflective examination (Brown 2007, 211). A related concern is energizing people's psychological processes and behaviors (Ryan et al. 2008, 139). SDT is particularly interested in the concept of *vitality* (energy that is exhilarating and empowering, allowing people to act autonomously with persistence) (Ryan et al. 2010, 95). While other theories believe self-regulation and choice *drain* energy, SDT researchers are demonstrating that only controlled regulation depletes it (Moller, Deci, and Ryan 2006, 1024). Actions that lead to need satisfaction actually *enhance* energy available for self-regulation (Ryan and Deci 2008b, 14).

Today, SDT researchers are delving into such diverse areas as relationships (La Guardia and Patrick 2008, 201), parenting (Joussemet, Landry, and Koestner 2008, 194), education (Guay, Ratelle, and Chanal 2008, 233), work (Gagne' and Forest 2008, 225), wellbeing and health (Miquelon and Vallerand 2008, 241), exercise (Wilson, Mack, and Grattan 2008, 250), and sustaining the planet (Pelletier and Sharp 2008, 174). These applications demonstrate that comprehensive theorizing and strong empirical testing improve social practices and personal wellbeing (Deci and Ryan 2008, 14).

In light of the developmental nature of Christian discipleship, SDT's insights about autonomous learning are particularly germane to the challenges facing church leaders. SDT assumes all students possess sufficient inner motivational resources to engage constructively and proactively in learning activities (Reeve, Ryan, and Jang 2008, 228). The extent to which they are activated depends on whether their social environment supports or thwarts the natural tendency to internalize values (Reeve, Ryan, and Jang 2008, 228). Functioning is most positive when they experience high autonomy (Reeve and Jang 2006, 209). While a teacher cannot create these experiences, he can facilitate social conditions that support students' *perception* of free choice (Reeve, Ryan, and Jang 2008, 230).

Examples of autonomy-supportive behaviors include fostering inner motivational resources, providing rationales, relying on informational language, and accepting student perspectives in ways that promote inner endorsement (Reeve, Deci, and Ryan 2004, 31). Transformative learning occurs when a life crisis creates a 'disorienting dilemma' that can only be resolved by changing one's meaning scheme (Mezirow 1991, 50). Students nurtured in an autonomous learning environment become more intrinsically motivated, feel more competent while learning, and develop higher levels of self-esteem

(Deci et al. 1981, 642). They also enjoy learning more and demonstrate higher conceptual skills (Grolnick and Ryan 1987, 890). Most importantly, they become more effective in self-regulation by learning how to internalize extrinsic motivation (Williams and Deci 1996, 115). Thus, a wise leader will offer satisfying opportunities for service that unleash spiritual giftedness, deepen spiritual intimacy, internalize doctrinal beliefs, and solidify Christian identity.

SDT and Religious Behavior

In light of SDT's generalizability, it is surprising that so few studies have been conducted in the domain of religious attitude and behavior (Neyrinck, Lens, and Vansteenkiste 2005, 75). While motivation and religion are popular as separate topics, their intersection has drawn little attention. A PsychInfo search on April 30, 2012 for articles containing the key words "motivation," "religion," and both "motivation and religion" resulted in 90,472, 32,065, and 764 hits respectively. Similarly, most textbooks on motivation do not list religion in their subject index (Deci and Ryan 1985a; Reeve 2001; Heckhausen 1991; Weiner 1992). Only McClelland (1987) and Deci and Ryan (2002) devote entire chapters to the subject.

Conceptualizations of Christian Formation

One explanation is that religious and motivation psychology developed independent conceptualizations and research agendas (Neyrinck et al. 2005, 75). Most studies in the psychology of religion ignore the motivational frameworks that would enrich the researcher's understanding of "religiosity" (Neyrinck et al. 2005, 75). Building on Piaget's (1932) cognitive orientation and Kohlberg's (1981) model of moral development, Fowler (1981) proposed that people move through distinct stages of faith

development over their life span. However, his methodology has come under increasing criticism. Subsequent studies exposed biases relating to education, occupation, income, lifestyle and gender that tarnished the model's prescriptive value (Jones and Wilder 2010, 183). It also neglects other dimensions of Christian formation (Moran and Harris 1998, 62). Finally, Fowler's conceptualization of "other-awareness" differs markedly from the belief content and commitment associated with biblical-orthodox faith (Jones 2003, 40). Consequently, one's Christian maturity may not correspond to one's stage of "faith" (Jones and Wilder 2010, 183).

To conclude that Fowler's observations have no redemptive value would be a mistake. According to Jones and Wilder, several competing theories of faith development describe the same progression: (1) *subjective assimilation* of familial patterns to interpret environmental cues; (2) *instrumental reciprocity* of rules and rituals to achieve positive outcomes; (3) *social conventionality* of personal values to be socially acceptable; (4) *individuating systemization* of these values to construct a distinctive worldview; and (5) *dialogical consolidation* of the worldview with other perspectives to maintain peaceful coexistence (Jones and Wilder 2010, 185). These steps chronicle how to live sensibly in a fallen world (Jones and Wilder 2010, 189). The goal is "cultural-linguistic pluralism," not godly wisdom (Jones and Wilder 2010, 190).

That Scripture is largely silent about the dynamics of faith development adds to the confusion (Jones and Wilder 2010, 162). Theologians are more prone to consider the *nature* of faith than how it *grows* (Jones and Wilder 2010, 164). One contemporary advocate of spiritual discipline describes Christian formation as "the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself" (Willard 2002, 22). Jones and Wilder argue that faith's

developmental quality is already covered by the traditional doctrine of *sanctification*: setting apart every believer “for God’s purposes and restored to the image of God by means of the Holy Spirit’s gracious work in [his or her] life from regeneration through glorification” (Jones and Wilder 2010, 193). Over time, the believer learns to desire only what God desires and to despise all that He hates (Lev 11:44-45; 1 Pet 1:16). Because cooperative effort is required, faith is best nurtured among members of a household of faith striving together to reach maturity in Christ (1 Cor 1:30; Gal 6:10; Phil 1:27; Titus 1:4). This paradigm portrays the dynamic interplay of faith, love, and suffering as concentric rings—not stages of faith—with Christ’s character gradually overtaking one’s self-identity (Jones and Wilder 2010, 195). When such growth is fueled by authentic fellowship, believers can “embrace God’s work among His people” (Jones and Wilder 2010, 195).

That SDT considers religiosity an “important domain of cultural life”—regardless of one’s faith tradition—is a matter of genuine concern among evangelical scholars (Ryan, Rigby, and King 1993, 595; Assor et al. 2005, 105). Deci and Ryan’s broad definition could explain why some empirical findings about external religiosity seem to run counter to the inner dynamics of spiritual life. SDT’s motivational approach to faith development still offers several advantages to Fowler’s conceptualization. Where Fowler’s stages identify *signs* of spiritual maturation, SDT’s unique foci investigate *causes*. SDT envisions active lives charted by daily choices, not passive ones ushered through epochal gateways. SDT researchers are more concerned about why people make choices than where their choices lead. Rather than calculate the trajectory of their decisions, SDT empowers them to chart their own course.

Much is at stake in evaluating SDT's claims. The Old Testament warns that people acquire the values of those with whom they most closely associate (Ps 55:13-14; Prov 22:24-25). The New Testament promotes service as the means and ends of Christian formation (Rom 8:16; Phil 1:27; Col 2:9-12; 1 Tim 4:7; Jas 1:22-25; Heb 6:4-5; 10:15). God's Spirit is particularly active in believers who learn to walk by faith, stirring transformative growth through intimate means that refine their faith (John 14:26; Rom 8:16; Rom 12:2; Titus 3:4-8; Jas 1:25). Church leaders who offer intrinsically motivating ministry opportunities could maintain commitment to service while the Spirit internalizes doctrinal beliefs crucial to Christian formation (Ryan, Rigby, and King 1993, 595).

Motivational Models of Religiosity

Allport (1950, 10) blazed the trail for a motivational approach to religiosity by exposing a bipolar tendency toward religious commitment. In a classic study of authoritarian personality, Adorno noticed that those disposed to "view religion as a means instead of an end" were more prejudiced (Adorno 1950, 733). In contrast, people who approach religion as a "system of more internalized, generalized experiences and values" actively opposed bigotry (Adorno 1950, 733). Allport labeled these contrasting orientations "institutionalized" and "interiorized" (Adorno 1950, 733). An extrinsic orientation is characteristic of those disposed to *use* religion for their own ends. Persons with this bent find religion useful for security and solace, sociability and distraction, or status and self-justification (Kirkpatrick and Hood 1990, 442). Because the creed is held lightly to fit more primary needs, they can turn to God without relinquishing control (Neyrinck et al. 2005, 75).

In a seminal study of Southern Baptists, one of Allport's students found a strong correlation between extrinsic religiosity and racism (Feagin 1964, 3). Subsequent

studies plumbed the depths of this dark side, exposing similar propensities toward prejudice (Amon 1969), dogmatism (Hoge 1972, 369), authoritarianism (Kahoe 1974), and ethnocentrism (Dicker 1977). Years of empirical research have failed to verify the opposite (Hunt and King 1971; Kahoe 1974; Donahue 1985; Kirkpatrick and Hood 1990). In contrast, intrinsic religious behavior is internalized for its own sake (Batson 1976, 29). Embracing a creed wholeheartedly, the individual endeavors to follow it fully in *living out* his faith (Allport and Ross 1967, 434).

No approach to religiosity has made a greater impact on the empirical psychology of religion than Allport's Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) (Meadow and Kahoe 1984). Failure to account for *how* one internalizes religious beliefs, however, has hindered ROS' ability to predict dependent variables like pre-marital intercourse and illegal drug use (Donahue 1985, 415). Combining psychometrically distinct concepts like belief, behavior and motivation further distorted Allport's equation (Gorsuch 1984, 228). The call for stronger theories to "motivate and guide our research in the psychology of religion" inspired several new models (Kirkpatrick and Hood 1990, 460; Maehr and Karabenick 2005). In the process, researchers discovered a wide variety of religious beliefs and practices that play a significant role in most cultures. These activities are driven by personally endorsed values, threatening feelings of guilt, or a sense of duty to meet external norms and demands (O'Connor and Vallerand 1990, 53). Non-self determined religious motivation ("because I should") is positively related to depression and negatively predicts life satisfaction, self-esteem, and sense of meaning in life; the opposite pattern emerges for self-determined religious motivation ("for the pleasure of doing it") (O'Connor and Vallerand 1990, 53).

According to Wulff's (1997, 635) conceptualization, all possible attitudes to

religion are located in a two-dimensional space with two orthogonal bipolar dimensions.

The *Exclusion versus Inclusion of Transcendence* axis refers to the degree to which a transcendental reality is accepted. The *Literal versus Symbolic* axis indicates whether religious content is interpreted literally or symbolically (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 335).

Wulff's model addressed several controversial topics in the psychology of religion, including the relation between religiosity and ethnic prejudice (Allport 1966; Allport and Ross 1967) as well as pro-social behavior (Batson 1976, 29). Duriez' operationalization of Wulff's model answered both questions the same: it is not the degree of religiosity that is related to both variables, but the way in which religion is interpreted (Duriez 2004a, 249; 2004b, 175). The more literal one's cognitive style, the more prejudiced one tends to be; the more flexible in dealing with religious issues, the more interpersonally empathic (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 335). To measure these diverse approaches within a Christian context, Duriez worked with several colleagues to develop the Post-Critical Belief Scale (Duriez, Soenens, and Hutsebaut 2005, 851).

SDT and Religious Motivation

Ultimately, Allport's failure to distinguish regulation and goals served only to *increase* confusion about religious orientation (Neyrinck, Lens, and Vansteenkiste 2005, 75). To fill the void, three SDT pioneers zeroed in on the religious domain (Ryan, Rigby, and King 1993, 586). Their landmark study found that introjected religious regulation relates positively to ill being (anxiety, depression, and somatic complaints) and negatively to wellbeing (self-esteem, identity integration, and self-actualization). The opposite pattern emerges for identified religiosity, yielding positive effects on behavioral outcomes such as church-attendance and financial donation (Baard 2002, 255; Ryan et al. 1993, 586; Strahan and Craig 1995). Organizationally, empowering cultures were found

to stimulate internalized regulation of religious practices that positively affect domain-relevant behaviors and psychological wellbeing (Assor et al. 2005, 105).

SDT researchers have now examined cognitive, affective, and behavioral correlates of internalized regulation of religious practices in several contexts (Assor et al. 2005, 105; Miquelon and Vallerand 2008, 241; Wilson, Mack, and Grattan 2008, 250). According to Assor, people who perform religious behaviors for internalized reasons can adapt to “inconsistencies” in belief and practice (Assor et al. 2005, 105). In contrast, individuals with poorly internalized reasons for religious practices will adopt a rigid perspective, perceiving religious dialogue as a threat to self-worth (Assor et al. 2005, 105). Moreover, autonomous orientation embraces an informational identity style, while controlled orientation adheres to social convention (Soenens et al. 2005, 1; Neyrinck, Lens, and Vansteenkiste 2005, 75). These findings align with the observation that autonomous individuals approach socially relevant information, internal emotions, and others more openly and honestly than control-oriented people (Hodgins and Knee 2002, 87). Assor concluded that one who approaches religious content with an open mind is more likely to grasp its personal relevance and to internalize behavior (Assor et al. 2005, 125). One-sided, literal interpretation of religious content makes internalizing religious behavior more difficult, forcing the individual to introject his belief system (Assor et al. 2005, 125).

SDT researchers are also persuaded that autonomously adopted religious behavior will more likely adhere to belief content and values (Assor et al. 2005, 105). In contrast, a poorly internalized enactment of religious practices produces superficial endorsement. Such behaviors are performed to gain approval or avoid guilt (Deci and Ryan 1991, 237). The more internalized the regulation, the more positively it predicts

faith, prayer, and church attendance (Ryan et al. 1993, 586; Assor et al. 2005, 105).

Internalized religious practices also relate positively to wellbeing, both hedonically (through self-esteem and life satisfaction) and eudaimonically (through self-actualization and identity integration) (Ryan and Deci 2000, 319).

Equally important, SDT researchers believe the tendency to act in an autonomous or controlling fashion predicts religious orientation (Deci and Ryan 1985a, 26). However, they have yet to examine qualitative differences in the content of religious belief (Granqvist et al. 2007, 590). “Dogmatic” religiosity is described as a literal, narrow, closed-minded way of approaching belief contents, while “authentic” religiosity is understood as an open-minded, symbolic way of dealing with religious symbols and messages (Ryan et al. 1993, 594; Duriez and Hutsebaut 2001, 75). These and other fundamental misconceptions about orthodox faith cry out for an evangelical response.

SDT and Christian Formation

Correlational studies involving three Christian samples closely associated SDT’s ‘identification’ with Allport and Ross’ (1967) ‘intrinsic religiosity’ and Batso and Ventis’ (1982) ‘Religion as an End’. Moderate correlations between introjection, extrinsic religiosity, and Religion as a Means suggested Deci and Ryan’s introjection subscale measures something more specific. Both identification and introjection were generally associated with greater church attendance and higher scores on the Doctrinal Orthodoxy Scale (Batson 1976, 29).

Ryan eventually collaborated with two colleagues to develop an empirical instrument for measuring internalization of Christian beliefs and practices (Ryan, Rigby and King 1993, 591). The Christian Religious Internalization Scale (CRIS) assesses an individual’s type of religious orientation and how his or her religious behavior affects

wellbeing and mental health (Hill and Wood 1999, 124). The 36-item preliminary version was administered to two large samples of Christian subjects to assess factor and internal consistency. Initial studies indicated a reliable two-factor structure that could be retained in a shorter version. CRIS' current 12-item questionnaire was adapted from another instrument for measuring academic achievement and pro-social behavior (Ryan and Connell 1989). The abbreviated version was then sampled against four groups of Christian subjects (Ryan, Rigby, and King 1993, 591). As expected, identified regulation exhibited a strong positive correlation with intrinsic motivators and a moderately negative correlation with extrinsic motivators (Ryan, Rigby, and King 1993, 591).

SDT's internal consistency was subsequently validated by the following simplex pattern: identified/ integrated religious regulation correlated positively with introjected regulation and negatively with external regulation (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 323). Neyrinck was able to link internalization of religious practices to one's cognitive viewpoint (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 331). He found that internalized regulation of religious behavior positively predicts adherence to orthodox faith through a flexible, symbolic approach to religious doctrine. The more one appreciates religion's importance, the more flexibly he holds religious beliefs as a mental model (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 331). His findings comport with prior work relating autonomous functioning to an open informational identity and flexible adherence to social convention (Hodgins and Knee 2002, 87).

Given their mild association, Neyrinck conceded some individuals may interpret belief content literally for *internalized* reasons that would surface only by adding threat and criticism to the equation (Neyrinck 2005, 85). He also discovered that internalized religious motivation predicts prayer better than church attendance (Neyrinck

et al. 2006, 78). One who enacts religious activities to avoid guilt or to gain favor with his religious community will interact publicly far more than privately (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 86). This supports the notion that introjected regulation predicts initiation better than maintenance (Ryan, Koestner, and Deci 1991, 185). Finally, Neyrinck found that internalized religious practices positively predict wellbeing (measured by life satisfaction, self-actualization, identity integration and global self-esteem) (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 14). It seems that enacting religious practices for internalized reasons triggers different cognitive approaches to religion, spawns greater engagement in activities, and enhances healthy psychological wellbeing. A wise leader will strive to provide autonomy, competence, and relatedness-supporting environments (Baard and Aridas 2001).

Neyrinck acknowledges several limitations that warrant further investigation. Most important is the need to improve generalizability by replicating his findings beyond Roman Catholicism (Sheldon 2006, 209). A wider range of faith traditions would pair orthodox and strictly literal believers with those less active and more casual. Because of its correlational design, his approach also precludes inferences regarding the direction of effects. Longitudinal research could help clarify the relationship between the personal relevance of religion and one's internalization of religious activities. Finally, the processes underlying established relations between motivational and cognitive approaches to religiosity need to be reconciled (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 97).

SDT's underlying premise remains undeniable: meeting basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness will help internalize an activity's value until it impacts one's identity (Gain and La Guardia 2009, 185). Many assume that applying SDT principles will enhance religious motivation (Miquelon and Vallerand 2008, 241; Wilson, Mack, and Grattan 2008, 250). Some Christian leaders will

undoubtedly embrace SDT as “gospel” for increasing member commitment. While the present study seeks to stimulate meaningful dialogue on the need for reform, it also cautions against swallowing the latest theory like a magical elixir. Before testing SDT’s capacity to sustain member commitment, Christian scholars must first evaluate its *appropriateness* for Christian formation.

Biblical Integration

Regardless of SDT’s allure, human knowledge is no substitute for biblical wisdom (Rev 22:18). Philosophical discussions about human behavior are colored by one’s personality, values, experiences, skills, and perceptions (Nash 1992, 52). Moreover, hidden assumptions and implications undergirding much of today’s research methodologies strain their validity (Slife and Williams 1995, 21). Finally, cause-and-effect relationships are hard to isolate because the conditioning process cannot be observed (Cederblom and Paulsen 2001, 83). These concerns should not dissuade Christian scholars from conducting empirical research in furtherance of God’s cultural mandate.

Having proclaimed the material universe “very good,” God calls His children to explore it in ways that please Him (Gen 1:31). If one humbly seeks spiritual discernment, God has promised to supply practical skills grounded in the pure and peaceable absolutes of His revealed will (Jas 1:5; 3:13-17). Scientific research that demonstrates God’s wisdom and skill is one way to glorify Him (Ps 111:2; Grudem 1994, 389). Another is to gain understanding that helps leaders serve His kingdom more effectively. The time is ripe for researchers grounded in biblical theology and enlightened by the Spirit to harness SDT’s power for God’s glory.

The Sapiential-Descriptivist Model

Most integration models apply biblical theology like a *knife*, carving out suspicious findings that mar a study's sheen. True integration uses biblical theology as a *filter*, preventing philosophical suppositions from infecting its core (Jones 2010). The Sapiential-Descriptivist Model of biblical integration (SDM) seeks to further God's cultural mandate by recovering golden nuggets of truth buried deep within contemporary empirical research. According to orthodox Christian theology, God communicates to mankind through "general" and "special" revelation" (Erickson 1998). Garrett distinguishes the terms as follows:

General revelation is that disclosure of God which is available to all human beings through the created universe (nature) and in the inner nature of human beings (conscience). On the contrary, "special" revelation is the historical disclosure of God to the people of Israel and in Jesus Christ. The distinctly Christian revelation of God is, therefore, special or historical revelation. (Garrett 2000, 768)

SDM provides a reformative theological lens for spotting revelatory jewels amid philosophical and empirical rubble (Jones 2010, 1). Too often, "descriptive" research becomes prescriptive on application even when the findings are contradictory (Jones 2010, 1). Modern psychology, for example, teaches deterministic behaviorism in theory while training counselors to help subjects navigate life's challenges (Gelso 1970, 271). Other values that drive a theory may reflect man's sinful nature (e.g., confusing 'autonomy' with freedom). To address these concerns, SDM insists on aligning any revelation about human development with what is known about the mind of God.

Powlison's construct for biblical counseling forms the core of SDM's model (Powlison 2001, 31). His taxonomy assumes that orthodox Christianity contains comprehensive internal resources for constructing a biblical model of personality and change distinct from secular psychologies (Powlison 2001, 34). These 'COMPIN'

principles include (1) articulating positive biblical truths into workable framework; (2) applying framework to debunk, expose, and reinterpret alternative models; and (3) redeeming information that survives critical analysis as ‘biblical wisdom’ (Powlison 2001, 32). The resulting revelatory truth affirms an underlying order in creation (Eccl 7:25), contains developmental components (Job 12:12), applies to believers and non-believers alike (Acts 7:22), and elevates the centrality of Christ (Col 1:28) (Jones 2010, 1).

SDM’s ‘principle of suspicion’ augments COMPIN’s formula. In a fallen world, orderly patterns can be sinful or righteous. Consequently, data collected from alternative models can only be descriptive. Complexity of knowledge moves hierarchically through a physical-cognitive-socioethical-doxological continuum. The lower the stratum, the more likely biblical wisdom can be universally observed; the higher the stratum, the more likely biblical faith is required. The highest truth—that all human development should conform to the image of Jesus Christ—is incomprehensible apart from God’s Word. The reformative theologian knows that every alternative model is teleologically bankrupt.

SDT and General Revelation

Sifting SDT’s revelation about autonomous motivation through SDM’s filter produces a holy residue with scriptural consistency. While certain philosophical presuppositions (such as man’s inherently good nature) must be rejected, SDT’s basic intrinsic motivators survive critical analysis. Deci and Ryan’s descriptive data hover at the cognitive level on the knowledge continuum. They also assume an underlying order to creation (Ryan and Deci 2000, 319), developmental components that apply to all persons (Deci and Vansteenkiste 2004, 23), and intervention through divine agency

(Assor et al. 2005, 117). The following synopsis compares SDT's premises, objectives and principles to God's special revelation about human development.

The Premise

SDT's psychological bias is that human nature is basically good (Deci and Ryan 2000, 229). Each individual is uniquely gifted, desires to grow mentally and emotionally, simultaneously seeks autonomy and a sense of belonging, and is most productive when higher needs for accomplishment, affiliation and power are being addressed in relation to others (Ryan 1995, 397). In contrast, a theological understanding of anthropological development recognizes that every individual struggles between desiring good and doing evil (Rom 7:17-24). Each person is uniquely gifted, desires to grow mentally and emotionally, simultaneously seeks autonomy and a sense of belonging, and is most productive when striving for life's higher needs in relationship to God and others (Matt 6:25-33; Rom 12:6; Gal 5:1; Eph 4:13). Satisfaction rests in relying upon—and identifying with—*Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, for whom and in whom all creation derives its meaning and purpose (Matt 19:26; John 15:5-7; Gal 3:16; Col 1:17).

The Objective

Psychologically, SDT seeks to facilitate a sense of wellbeing by cultivating one's desire for "self-*actualization*" (Ryan and Frederick 1997, 529). It assumes the ultimate conclusion of human personality development is an emotionally, mentally, and socially mature adult who embraces an instinctive need to control his destiny (Deci and Ryan 2000, 227). The end in mind is positive social adjustment based on autonomy and self-fulfillment (Deci and Ryan 1995, 31). Theologically, the objective of empowering individuals is to bring glory to Jesus Christ by maximizing a church's effectiveness

through “self-*denial*” (Matt 16:25). The instinctive need to control personal destiny is rooted in the sin principle (Rom 7:7-13). While harnessing an individual’s desire for growth and maturity may improve social behavior, scripture warns that any expectation of self-fulfillment is unfounded (Rom 7:14-22). Attaching identity to “self” will bring disappointment because life’s circumstances and sin’s curse frustrate realization of goals (Rom 7:23). Only those who yield their creative talents to the transforming power of the Creator will ever realize their divine destiny— actualizing the new Adam in order to reflect Christ’s image (Rom 7:24-25).

The Principle

Psychologically, SDT’s principle is based on empirical research relating to human experience and behavior. Based on these studies, scientists have concluded that every human being is endowed with unique talents, interests and desires; needs to grow and contribute in meaningful ways; and yearns to experience a sense of belonging to a like-minded community. Theologically, these empirical findings find eternal significance in the doctrines of *imago Dei* (Gen 1:27), priesthood of believers (1 Pet 2:4-10), justification (Eph 2:8), sanctification (John 17:16; 1 Cor 1:30), ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:7-11), the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27-31), and the servant model of leadership (Luke 22:32; John 13:8). If “all truth is God’s truth,” the only plausible response to the embodied integration of Deci and Ryan’s work is to redeem it for His glory.

Point of Integration

While orthodox Christianity’s understanding of man’s ultimate meaning and purpose clashes radically with humanistic psychology, they both draw from the same well. Cravings for autonomy, competence and relationship have defined the human

condition since God first breathed life into Adam's soul. Primordial drives for self-determination were not extinguished or condemned by the fall (Matt 6:20; Luke 15:7; 1 Thess 4:3). The real question is whether they are used for good or evil. In the enemy's hands, they become yokes that steer people toward self-absorption and eternal destruction. In the Spirit's hands, they provide tools for empowering God's children to love others and mature in Christ. The prevalence of the 20/80 Rule suggests the contemporary church has been losing a civil war for the soul.

Whether SDT can advance God's kingdom in ways that glorify Jesus Christ remains to be seen. Because most researchers are blind to man's *immaterial* dimension, it behooves Christian scholars to explore how basic drives for autonomy, competence and relatedness align with God's redemptive plan. Examining the relationship between intrinsically motivating ministry activities and internalization of Christian beliefs is particularly urgent. Long before man began to unlock the mysteries of human motivation, the Lord had perfectly modeled these principles. Jesus challenged His disciples to mobilize their resources for Kingdom advancement as shrewdly as heathens plot self-promotion (Luke 16:1-14). He taught that protecting the flock from worldly affections is the mark of a true shepherd. He stressed that God wants every aspect of man's being—especially the deepest longings of his heart—to glorify Him. Only the *new* Adam is truly free to glorify the One who makes it all possible.

Jesus Christ: The Ultimate Case Study

If drives for autonomy, competence and relationship are heavenly gifts, one would expect the Master Teacher to weave them into the rich fabric of His earthly ministry. Long before SDT's effectiveness could be empirically measured, the Son of God demonstrated its potency with the apostles. Christ's invitation to life everlasting is a

call to intimacy, authenticity, struggle, commitment, and response. The dynamic interplay of these variables forms a strong community for advancing a Christian counter-culture under hostile conditions. Jesus' emphasis on relatedness is particularly well suited for establishing kingdom values behind enemy lines.

Need for Relationship

The Lord consistently demonstrates that intimacy is more important than servitude. Learning occurs as the disciples respond to the Master's needs, model themselves on His way of life, assist in His ministry, and receive His instruction (Collinson 2004, 32). Leaving normal routines behind, the disciples encounter fresh experiences foreign to a classroom. Jesus seamlessly enters each apostle's private pain, adapting His influence to the student's receptivity (Bennion 1980, 28). He understands that growth progresses from inside out (Matt 23:25-26). Jesus' ability to gaze into the human heart often prompts Him to lovingly confront hypocrisy (John 2:24-25). He does not hesitate to expose evil intent (Matt 9:4), divided loyalty (Matt 12:25), improper motive (Mark 12:15) or deceptive means (Luke 5:22; 6:8; 9:47). Neither does He judge people by their frailties. After sharing life in close proximity, the Lord refuses to define His followers by the struggles that bind them. The Twelve become His closest friends, often stealing them from the crowds for rest and relaxation (Mark 6:31-32; 3:7).

Through it all, Christ challenges conventional thought and presuppositions that obscure kingdom realities (John 6:53). He warns that anyone who wishes to follow Him "must deny himself, and take up his cross daily" (Luke 9:23). More than assenting to the wisdom of His teaching, this requires 'knowing' the Teacher Himself (John 6:69). The Lord senses that emotion and intellect are inextricably intertwined in the *imago Dei* of flawed humanity. In response, the disciples commit themselves wholeheartedly to

being His followers (Collinson 2004, 30). A key step in the journey is allowing the freedom to fail. The disciples' failure to deliver an epileptic boy from demon possession jolts their understanding of true faith (Mark 9:14-29). They are also slow to discard worldly values like popularity (Mark 1:36-37), power and position (Mark 10:35-41), competitiveness (Mark 9:33-34), and wealth (Mark 10:24-26). Jesus replaces these paradigms with Kingdom values. Soon they learn that no one content with *pondering* great teaching has a place at the Master's feet; only those intent on *doing* the Father's will can be molded in the potter's hands (Mark 4:33; Matt 7:24).

Autonomy and Competence

The relational context of Jesus' ministry sets the stage for deep Christian formation. The Messiah knew He had a brief time to move the apostles from extrinsic religion (avoiding hell) to intrinsic faith (loving God). He begins by stressing an individual's free will and drive to improve. The Lord nudges His students from dependence to independence in the performance of personal ministry, using experience as a personal tutor to solve practical problems and dislodge conventional wisdom. By engaging the disciples in critical reflection, Jesus confronts the need to refute assumptions and values held since childhood. Transformative learning opens their eyes to suppositions constraining their perspective; fresh meaning schemes open the door to new wineskins holding Kingdom concepts.

Change begins with a developing openness toward something different that dramatizes the gulf between real and ideal. The desire to maintain an optimal balance of stimulation soon gives way to the need to sustain incongruence at a peak level to satisfy the disciples' psychological need to grow. Troubled by discrepant cognitions, they experience discomfort until the dissonance from past choices is reduced. The perceived

discrepancy between input and expectation provides the impetus to move toward the gap. Eventually, each disciple undergoes a phase of reintegration, reorientation, or equilibrium that enables practical application of Kingdom values (John 15:13-15). Assimilation occurs when they incorporate aspects of the environment into their preexisting cognitive structures. Through accommodation, their cognitive structures adapt to novel cues from a higher reality.

The disciples' capacity to grow is bolstered by observing the Lord and each other in an intimate social context. Initially, Jesus wins their attention through status, competence, popularity, and affinity. Over time, they observe and encode the Master Teacher's behavior for future reference after His departure. The Lord sends His students in pairs to practice Kingdom values, trusting they will store experiences in their collective memory and refine their behavior based on feedback from the field. Anticipating His violent death, Jesus knows that ultimate obedience must wait for His resurrection and the Spirit's empowering.

In the meantime, the Lord refines the community of practice that will contextualize Kingdom values and beliefs for succeeding generations. As new converts are introduced to the faith community, they embrace an intentional process of assimilation for acquiring cognitive tools like an apprentice. Learning occurs through collaborative purpose, social interaction, and authentic context. A profound sensitivity to human individuality allows the Master Teacher to draw upon intrinsic motivational factors that bring inherent pleasure and satisfaction to each disciple. Eventually, all but Judas move from fearing the Son of God to loving the Son of Man (Matt 26:14-15). As these values envelop the wider community galvanized by God's Spirit, a strong bond allows this budding counterculture to blossom against all odds.

Redemptive Purpose

The gospel reveals God's marvelous plan for reconciling all creation under the lordship of Jesus Christ. A central implication of common grace is that Deci and Ryan have stumbled upon universal truths about the way God stirs His people to action. In the grand narrative of His relationship to fallen humanity, a redemptive purpose for intrinsic motivation may be found that is counterintuitive to behavioral science. When Satan tested the Lord in the wilderness, He revealed the highest calls of the human heart—to depend on Him alone, to trust solely in His leadership, and to worship Him in spirit and truth with childlike faith (Matt 4:24-25). This life transformation is made possible by abiding in Christ, whose Spirit induces God's love in His children's hearts (Gal 5:22; Rom 5:5). When Christ returns to reign over the new heavens and earth, God's story will be finally consummated (Rev 21:3-4).

Focus of Current Study

Because it has been only marginally applied to churches, testing SDT's hypothesis through experimental research that correlates variables is both unwise and premature (Yegeedis et al. 1999, 111). More appropriate is exploratory research predicated on the assumption that researchers need to know more about SDT's applicability to Christian formation. Baard, the only evangelical scholar who has applied SDT to enhance member involvement, has not taken this critical step. Perceiving undeveloped believers as marginalized members of Christ's body, the researcher applied SDT's theoretical framework to shape the questions, inform the data, and inspire the cause. Focus groups formed from these participants established a platform for further discussion on the role of service in Christian formation, the need to provide satisfying ministry opportunities, and

SDT's potential for sustaining commitment. The intent was to build awareness about the need to develop an action agenda for reform that empowers ordinary people to make lasting contributions to God's kingdom. In the process, traditional assumptions about the role of the Holy Spirit, the nature of spiritual gifts, and the dynamics of Christian formation were reexamined.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The foregoing literature suggests church leaders may internalize Christian beliefs by creating inherently satisfying activities that unleash spiritual giftedness and stimulate transformative learning (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 321). Because SDT has been only marginally applied to churches, it would be unwise to test SDT's hypotheses through experimental research (Yegeedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 111). As a preliminary measure, this study explored the rich perceptions and divergent meanings attached to church-sponsored service held by a critical array of stakeholders in a thriving evangelical church. A secondary objective was to explore similarities and differences between leaders' and members' reliance on SDT principles. This chapter outlines the procedures and methods employed, as well as the study's instrumentation, population, sampling procedures, and delimitations. The chapter closes by considering several limitations to generalizability. Strict adherence to these and other controls helped to preserve the study's construct validity and reliability (Bernard and Ryan 2010, 110).

Research Questions Synopsis

In keeping with the foregoing research foci, seven research questions were considered:

1. In what ways does the church's organizational structure align with each SDT element, as displayed in its documents, online resources, and other media?
2. In what ways do leaders and members describe the church's motivational climate, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

3. In what ways do leaders and members describe experiences with church-sponsored service, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
4. In what ways do leaders and members respond to the use of SDT principles to facilitate church-sponsored service, as displayed in their personal interviews and focus group responses?
5. In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of service in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
6. In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
7. In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of spiritual giftedness in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

Research Design Overview

Because philosophical presuppositions influence research objectives, it is important to acknowledge the larger context from which the study draws its perspective (Slife and Williams 1995, 211). In contrast to postpositivism's cause-effect deterministic philosophy, social constructivists believe individuals interpret the environment according to multiple meanings associated with their experience (Creswell 2009, 8). Interpretivist epistemology relies heavily on participant views to build a rich understanding of the subject (Gall, Gall, and Borg 2005, 305). Varying perceptions of the same reality affirm that sensory inputs are interpreted and assimilated differently by each person. Left unchecked, significant misperceptions have been known to impact major life decisions.

In the present study, the researcher found that perception *was* the participant's reality until he or she learned otherwise. Alice recalled one particularly painful incident involving a couple in her community group. For some unknown reason, the pair launched

a personal attack against her and her husband that soon became an obsession. Despite all efforts to understand the offense, the couple refused to reconcile. Various leaders investigated the matter and could find no rational basis for the attacks. Instead, the pair was referred to counseling to determine what was clouding their perception. By that time, the damage had already been done—the growing conflict had broken up a fractured community group.

Because of the human tendency to filter reality, a collaboration of divergent viewpoints is usually more instructive than the sum of each story. In facilitating the focus groups, the researcher paid close attention to two inquiries regarding participant perceptions: (1) Is there a ‘perception gap’ between leaders and members? (2) If so, how will leaders respond to the revelation? Making the researcher a central instrument in the process was the best way to leverage his or her cultural and historical biases (Creswell 2009, 8).

Advocacy/Participatory Worldview

The study’s foundation rests upon the *advocacy/ participatory model* of constructivist inquiry. This worldview “contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher’s life” (Creswell 2009, 9). The present inquiry assumed church leaders must hear cries for reform before Christian scholars investigate SDT’s potential. Perceiving immature believers as marginalized members of Christ’s body, the researcher seeks to build awareness of the need to develop an action agenda for reform that will empower every believer to make lasting contributions for God’s kingdom.

The empowerment motif provided a compelling backdrop for exploring perceptions of church-sponsored service among a critical array of stakeholders. Many

evangelical church leaders would scoff at the idea of ‘liberating’ millions of people who have been declared free in Christ (John 8:36; 19:30). Those in the trenches of front-line ministry know that experience does not always follow doctrine. The researcher hoped to challenge his audience to reexamine God’s desire to shine through ordinary people who exhibit extraordinary grace. The ultimate aim was to stimulate dialogue on the need to reform a church’s motivational climate and organizational structure to empower joyful service that facilitates Christian formation (Ogden 1990, 52). Using SDT’s theoretical lens to pave the way for experimental research on Christian formation was a secondary objective.

The study’s emancipatory purpose aligned with the researcher’s spiritual giftedness. The gift of mercy has enhanced his ability to express compassion for those facing difficult situations (Luke 10:30-37). A gift for encouragement has enabled him to inspire broken people to follow Christ (Acts 14:21-22; 16:40; 20:1). Together, they produce a strong affinity for those who fall and healing words to pick them up. These gifts have defined the researcher’s ministry for twenty years. They fueled his passion for empowering ordinary people to become heroes for Christ. They shaped his values as a spiritual counselor and small group facilitator. They energized a law practice that saw statewide reform. One could conclude that an advocacy/participatory orientation reflects both the researcher’s natural bent and divine calling.

Bias toward Reform

The researcher’s varied experiences as a ministry leader also explain his yearning for reform. As a young believer, he quickly grasped that Jesus came to serve—not to be served—and called His followers to do likewise. To his surprise, he found most members were content to remain in the pew. After sharing his alarm with a church elder,

the veteran believer laughed heartily and posed a question that would haunt the researcher for decades: “*Haven’t you ever heard of the 20/80 Rule?*” Formally known as the “Pareto principle,” this rule posits that 80% of effects come from 20% of their causes (Juran 1992, 68). Juran named the principle after Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, who had observed in 1906 that 80% of Italy’s land was owned by 20% of its population. He claimed Pareto’s mathematical formula could also predict productivity and profits, pitting the “vital few” against the “trivial many” (Juran 1992, 68). As later articulated by Koch (2004), 80% of profits come from 20% of customers; 80% of complaints come from 20% of customers; 80% of profits come from 20% of time spent; 80% of sales come from 20% of products; and 80% of sales are made by 20% of staff.

The predictive value of the 20/80 Rule in matters of the Spirit, however, is anything but certain. Scripture portrays service as a mark of genuine faith. “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28). Before He ascended, the Lord instructed His disciples to follow His example (Luke 22:24-27). Relying on 20% of members to perform 80% of ministry signals a deep dysfunction that threatens the church’s health and witness. According to the present study, even a highly effective church can be blind-sided by this insidious invasion. How could God’s plan go so wrong? Why do so few leaders recognize this crisis?

As the researcher assumed various leadership roles, answers to these compelling questions began to surface. Realizing that clergy and laity live in two different worlds was key to unlocking the puzzle. Clashing opinions often boiled down to differing perspectives: a successful business leader might be seen a threat; a traditional pastor could be deemed archaic. He found truth in both views. Sensing a divine call to

this challenging topic, he left a promising banking career to pursue a seminary degree in ministry management. Through a hybrid curriculum of M.Div. and M.B.A. courses, he was exposed to Organization Development and systems theory. The topic of his Master's Thesis was "The Theology of Empowerment." For the next twenty years, he helped numerous churches and nonprofit ministries face a variety of leadership issues. He learned firsthand that a professional model of ministry often *enabled* a low commitment to ministry. The same bias that seeks to affirm the researcher's conviction exposes the need to affirm the trustworthiness of his findings.

Qualitative Design

Among various domains, SDT has only been marginally applied to churches (Ryan et al. 1993, 586; Baard 1994, 1061; Strahan and Craig 1995, 15; Baard and Aridas 2001, 12; Baard 2002, 255; Assor et al. 2005, 105; Neyrinck et al. 2005, 75; Neyrinck et al. 2006, 321; Sheldon 2006, 209; Granqvist 2007, 590). Before experimenting with SDT's variables, more must be known about its applicability to Christian formation (Yegeedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 104). Sojourn Community Church's cultural dynamics made it a prime candidate for a qualitative study.

Qualitative research is useful for "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell 2009, 4). It seeks to understand human experiences from the perspective of those who experience them (Yegeedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 17). Instead of trying to determine how things "really are," this inductive inquiry acknowledges a topic's complexity by constructing themes from personal meaning. It is also well suited for acquiring knowledge to develop a hypothesis (Yegeedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 105). A good design will be grounded in the literature, consistent with existing

knowledge, internally consistent, and practically feasible (Yegedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 123). Focusing on a particular ‘real life’ situation is its hallmark (Greene and Caracelli 1997). Data collection includes in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. As a primary research instrument, the researcher develops openly supportive relationships to facilitate the participants’ understanding and cooperation (Creswell 2009, 18).

For several reasons, a qualitative research design provided the best framework for interpreting church-sponsored service from the stakeholders’ perspective (Yegedis, Weinbach and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 17). First, the researcher’s participation in a variety of church roles enabled him to contribute special knowledge and experience about its culture. Second, his relationship with leaders and members opened avenues not otherwise available. Third, an endorsement from the church’s service coordinator provided greater access to thorny issues. Fourth, the impact of traditional service on a highly effective enterprise could be explored qualitatively. Finally, the researcher could examine the extent to which member misperceptions affect commitment to service.

Case Study Method

The best way to filter conflicting perceptions of church-sponsored service through SDT’s lens is to establish an inviting platform for meaningful dialogue. More than any other qualitative method, case studies allow the researcher to explore a “program, event, activity, process, or one of more individuals” in depth (Creswell 2009, 13). Rather than examine the facts, a case study provokes reasoned debate based on conflicting opinions. A well-executed study provides meaningful insight into feelings and experiences a quantitative radar would never detect. According to Merriam (2002, 179), a case study is primarily ethnographic (group culture), sociological (social interaction),

historical (organizational change) or psychological (thoughts and emotions).

Form followed substance in the present study: personal interviews used psychological protocols to elicit rich perceptions and meaning; focus groups followed ethno-sociological principles to evoke lively interaction. Phenomenological inquiry is well suited for coding qualitative data from personal interviews into themes (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 144). The intent is "to understand people's perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation," rather than simply analyzing literature in the field of interest (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 139). Because most people find it difficult to be candid, winning the participants' trust was essential (Yegeedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 138). Bridging this divide required a nonjudgmental attitude, strong interview skills, and professional ethics (Yegeedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 139). Much can be learned from a particular case study despite its bounded nature (Merriam 2002, 179). Because "the general lies in the particular," specific lessons may apply to other situations (Erickson 1986). Readers learn vicariously when a vivid portrait becomes the prototype to emulate (Eisner 1991, 1999).

Selection Criteria

The appropriate criteria for selecting a case depend on the study's context and objective (Given 2008, 697). Common strategies include highlighting a key characteristic, capturing a conceptual rationale, and seizing an emerging opportunity (Gall, Gall, and Borg 2005, 311). Among available options, the *critical case* rationale is best suited for exploring a theory in a single study (Gall, Gall, and Borg 2005, 381). This conceptual approach seeks a "decisive" example that will clarify which of several explanations for the phenomenon is most plausible (Flyvbjerg 2004, 426). To ensure the data collected actually address the questions presented, the researcher must select a

program or process that is “typical, unique, experimental, or highly successful” as the unit of analysis (Merriam 2002, 8).

Sojourn Community Church’s unparalleled growth provided ideal conditions for exploring the role of church-sponsored service in Christian formation. The conceptual rationale for a critical case approach was compelling: if most members in a *thriving* church have not experienced the formative benefits of intrinsically-motivated service, the same can be said for *less* effective churches. To use a popular analogy: “If a health fanatic can’t resist this dessert, someone with a sweet tooth certainly won’t!” To ensure all perspectives were filtered through the same lens, the sampling pool was confined to the church’s extensive adult fellowship network. The researcher excluded congregants with no prior service experience and attempted to balance leaders and members in the selection process.

Case History

Twelve years ago, Sojourn Community Church (Sojourn) began with a few teens and young adults who longed to see the gospel transform everything: individuals, families, the city of Louisville, and the world. Many were visual artists yearning to create works that express their faith, serve their church, and renew their culture. Others were musicians who longed to write, perform, record and lead contemporary, classic and ancient hymns, psalms and other songs of lament, praise and godly instruction. Hungry for Christ, they believed “Sojourn” is not just a destination—it is a way of life. Members are challenged to invest their time, talent, and treasure for others. Across Louisville, Kentucky, and Southern Indiana, adults “live out the gospel together” by processing the sermon, deepening relationships, praying for needs, and serving others. Unlike other church activities, these weekly “community groups” are meant to deepen the roots of

fellowship beyond the world's superficial ties.

One couple the researcher met seemed to epitomize the church's holistic approach. For years, church-sponsored service for Larry and Heather meant packaging the gospel in "drive-by" programs better suited for soothing consciences than showing Christ's love. That all changed when the church's youthful energy inspired them to try something different. For two years now, the pair have shared life's highs and lows with an immigrant mother and her children. Nothing about the assignment was attractive in the traditional sense. They knew that investing their lives with no strings attached would be costly. They did not know how such a "messy" ministry could transform *them*. They have learned things about themselves they would not have any other way. In the process, their faith grew by leaps and bounds. Today, their newfound friend can be found next to her husband at church, working hard to reconcile a marriage. For Larry and Heather, the joy of seeing a changed life has been well worth the cost.

Through stories like these, the name "Sojourn" has come to represent an unwavering commitment to the Bible, an uncompromising drive to work for the city's best and the Kingdom's highest, a passion to redeem art and culture, and a love for the least of these (Matt 25:40). Over three thousand "members, adherents, seekers and skeptics" gather weekly to hear the gospel, restore relationships, celebrate the arts, and worship Jesus. According to the church's literature, the gospel is Sojourn's central passion because it changes everything (Rom 1:16). All other values rest on this foundation: *God's Word* as spiritual source (John 5: 39); the *church* as covenant community (Acts 20:28); *Louisville* as heartfelt mission (2 Cor 5:14); *humility* as honest posture (1 Pet 5:5); *prayer* as proven lifeline (Luke 11:1); and *renewal* as way of life (Col 3:23).

Multi-Site Strategy

After extensive prayer and study, church elders concluded that a multi-campus model of ministry is the best way to saturate Louisville with the gospel. Sojourn currently maintains four campuses: Midtown, East, J-town and New Albany. To contextualize the gospel in every neighborhood, there can be no ‘second class’ campus. The viability of multi-site operations hinges on interconnecting links crossing leader unanimity, core strength, functional location, healthy systems, flexible structures, and committed support. A cross-section of campus leaders is charged with preserving the church’s vision by meeting regularly, leveraging resources, preparing sermons, collaborating on problems, and sharing a budget. The following measures are designed to strike a balance between fierce independence and bureaucratic rigidity:

Elder led. Under the sovereign direction of Jesus Christ, a team of elders from the various sites will lead the way. Some of the elders are paid while others are not. All will be responsible for teaching, leading, praying, envisioning, and shepherding a church scattered in multiple locations. Some will preach and teach at various campuses while others will have a specific campus assignment. All shoulder together the leadership for the entire church in their designated responsibilities. Coming together regularly, the elders will support one another in prayer, share ministry resources, hold one another accountable, prepare sermons together, address problems as a team, and share a common budget.

Deacon served. While elders are dedicated to the work of teaching, leading, praying, and shepherding, the deacons are devoted to serving in all other areas of the church. These areas include men’s and women’s ministries, family, youth, and children’s

ministries, worship arts, facilities, counseling ministries, urban renewal, benevolence, mercy ministries, missions and church planting ministries, and many more. Deacons are typically campus-specific (i.e., they engage in ministry at particular sites and not system-wide).

Member responsive. The church will maintain a single church body with biblically designated congregational responsibilities. As the elders lead with authority, the congregation will respond with wisdom and humility (confirming elders, disciplining members, affirming the budget, approving constitutional changes). Family meals that cross campus lines should foster unity, affirm identity, and centralize congregational health. When visitors step onto a campus, they should experience worship that is truly Christian and wholly biblical.

Community Group Network

The plausibility structure for accomplishing the church's vision is a vibrant community group network. Spiritual growth, accountability and soul care are meant to occur organically as people strive to love the Lord and their neighbors. As articulated by one leader dedicated to community life:

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship – the context where we apply the gospel to our lives, while changing in gospel-character and building redemptive relationships. It is a committed group of believers (reflecting their identity as family) who live out Jesus' call to go and make disciples (reflecting their identity as missionaries). This is done in a specific area of the city, or even a particular culture, to demonstrate the Gospel in the way we care and love (reflecting our identity as servants) for one another and the neighborhood. As a community and individuals we pray for (reflecting our identity as worshippers) others and expose them to the gospel through word and deed (reflecting our identity as learners) – both to those who believe it and to those who do not. (Maine 2011, 3)

The church's group life coordinator provided all statistics on Community Group (CG) life relied upon by the researcher. He reported that fully 63% of Midtown adults (down from

75%) currently belong to a network of 48 groups. Recruiting members to help launch new campuses appeared to be the main cause for Midtown's uncharacteristic decline. A secondary factor was group closure due to natural attrition or disciplinary action. In 2011, eight new groups were born and the same number closed. As a result, overall growth shrank from 15% to 10%. A plurality of eight elders, known as "Shepherding Pastors," oversee Midtown's network. Each is responsible for several "Group Life Deacons," who meet quarterly as a cohort. In turn, each Group Life Deacon convenes a cluster of CG leaders bi-monthly for care, training, and prayer.

As "front-line" shepherds, CG leaders encourage members to embrace the gospel and to mature biblically. By modeling their faith, CG leaders personify gospel transformation and draw members to Christ. Existing leaders are encouraged to recruit "FAT" members (those who are faithful, available, and teachable) who also show leadership potential. Eligible candidates are invited to become the leader's apprentice. Through guided learning, they are encouraged to explore how the opportunity lines up with their gifts, philosophy and identity. A Midtown class dubbed "Membership 201" is another reliable source of candidates. Of 125 members who went through the series last year, 63% now serve as a CG leader. Those who decide to come on board look forward to formal training twice a year.

Sojourn's elders have placed all bets for Christian formation, intimate fellowship, and community outreach squarely on CG's shoulders. According to Jacob: "Facilitating service has been mostly delegated to CG leaders." The church's multi-site strategy includes, "reaching the city as a church of groups." Hoping to create a culture of service, leaders recently restructured the cycle of group life to include community outreach every six weeks. As pictured in the Community Life Ministries handbook,

Community groups are ideally networked into neighborhood clusters based on their geographical location. A cluster of groups that work together in a single neighborhood widen their gospel presence, deepen their commitment to reach their neighborhood, and achieve a much larger impact than groups working alone.

Groups are encouraged to “clean up the streets, volunteer at local non-profit agencies, businesses, nursing homes and homeless shelters.” To achieve the church’s bold mandate, community groups must be able to rely on consistent leadership. According to the Community Group coordinator, the current tenure for CG leaders is less than two years. Those who are unable or unwilling to delegate their responsibilities invariably suffer burnout. Others simply relocate after graduating from seminary. A few of the younger leaders may succumb to false expectations about shepherding older members. Though trained to embrace this “baptism of fire” with patience and humility, not everyone proves up to the task.

Church-Sponsored Ministries

Sojourn’s multi-site operations offered several analytic frameworks for a case study—single campus, between campuses, and whole church. The church’s website describes its multi-dimensional approach to church-sponsored service as follows:

There are lots of ways to catch a vision for how the gospel changes everything. Simply jump in at any time by serving at one of our church-wide events, such as a Medical Clinic, Adoption Seminar or Fall Festival. Perhaps you are a learner and want to take one of our classes. If you love to serve, come to any Mercy Monday and hit the streets right away. Or if you can't imagine going at it alone, get into a community group to get started.

Believing the church’s organizational climate will be most pronounced at its original campus, the researcher recruited the majority of participants from Midtown and looked to New Albany for the rest. Ministries covered include SEED, Mercy Monday, Medical Clinic, Fall Festival, Handyman, Connect, SojournKids, Pastor’s School, Jefferson Street Baptist Center, Gospel Counseling, and Worship Team. It should be noted that all of

Sojourn's 'mercy ministries' have been shaped by the complexity of cross-cultural poverty surrounding the church's original campus. According to Pastor Ivey, Midtown's urban context impacted leaders' "perception of how unique giftings can or should best be deployed in ways that address very real cultural differences or nuances." Following is the synopsis of each ministry provided by its coordinator or described in the literature.

SEED. The church's website poses a provocative question: "What would a church look like if it were structured and designed to be all about God's Word and good deeds?" The answer is equally stimulating:

Seed is a ministry created to bring structure to the church's desire to be all about God's Word and good deeds. *It is about re-engineering the church for action.* Like Jesus, we desire to proclaim the kingdom and to heal. Helping set the poor free spiritually is just the beginning of the glorious Gospel message, serving others though acts of mercy and compassion is the rest of the message. When we look around our city, we see a lot of assets. But when we slow down long enough to take a really good look, we discover a world of unmet needs and a people who hunger for change. On one hand, Seed is about loving our neighbors holistically – meeting them where they are spiritually and physically. On the other, Seed is about exposing the church to ministry that is calling you to invest your time, talents and resources into ministries that are slowly changing the city.

Mercy Monday. Every Monday night, members can 'plug in' and get equipped for face-to-face ministry in the city. Mercy deacons accompany groups as they do home visitations, prayer walking, and projects in the city. The website invitation to join this pathway to ministry is straightforward: "Meet at our Midtown Campus at 6:30 p.m., and we'll finish by 8:30 p.m."

Medical Clinic. This ministry is touted as one where "anyone and everyone can get involved. Be a family advocate, assist with medical forms, serve a warm meal, join the salon/spa, give away much needed clothing, food, or personal hygiene

items. There are literally dozens of ways you can join us.” Services include general health checks, blood pressure checks, glucose/diabetes checks, dental/hearing/vision screenings, chiropractic care, warm meals, clothing, groceries, haircuts/nail polishing/massages and basic medicine. The last clinic drew over 200 servants and numerous doctors, nurses, dentists, chiropractors, and other medical professionals. The church was able to serve over 220 residents. Within days after an event, one can read posts or view a Vimeo about the participants’ transformative experience. Pastor Nathan Ivey estimates medical services worth over \$1 million have been provided through this ministry to date.

Fall Festival. Every year, hundreds of Midtown Campus Community Group members distribute thousands of flyers and extend personal invitations to countless neighbors. They return to firepits in the parking lot and S’mores close at hand. The fires and sweet treats are a great context for groups to interact with one another, and many people hang out until late in the evening. The 400 cakes passed out during the cakewalk—not to mention countless hamburgers, hotdogs, popcorn, cotton candy—are a tangible blessing to the many neighbors who attend. A variety of stations fill the parking lot with attractive options for all ages—ranging from live music under a tent to interactive games for children. It has been estimated that over 2,000 residents from the communities served by Midtown have attended these events. Some have become members and now volunteer to serve. Recently, the New Albany campus started its own tradition across the river in Indiana.

Handyman. An offshoot of SERVE, this “hands on” ministry gives men who are handy with home repair and remodeling a chance to bless fellow members and community residents with their talents. Handyman’s special mission is to provide general

maintenance for members' and neighbors' homes. Services include electrical repairs, plumbing repairs, painting projects, carpentry work, wheel chair ramps, handrails, and yard maintenance. According to Larry, Handyman's co-founder, this ministry enjoyed an initial surge of activity but was recently placed on hold due to lack of commitment.

Connect. This is the quickest way to jump into service at Sojourn. According to its web page: "Whatever gifts, experiences, and skills you have, we have many ways for you to serve." Members work alongside others, forge new relationships, connect with the church family, and serve as a gateway to the community. The Greeter Team helps everyone who comes through the church doors feel welcome. Members of the Hospitality Team work hard behind the scenes to make sure there is a hot cup of coffee or a cold cup of water for anyone who wants it. Many members who begin serving at Sunday Connect join other ministries when new opportunities arise.

SojournKids. The vision of Sojourn's children's ministry is "for the fame of God to fill the whole earth through the formation of people into the likeness of Jesus as they live out Jesus' Great Commission." In 2010, key leaders from the student and children's ministry teams collaborated on a four-part strategy. Participants are asked to (1) *create* welcoming environments for building relationships with children and families; (2) *connect* children and families to Jesus and His community; (3) *grow* with children and families by helping them take the next step in their spiritual journey; and (4) *send* children's and family ministry leaders on mission. This year, 300 children attended VBS (30% from Germantown/Shelby Park). Starting 2013, they hope to launch a special needs ministry where specially trained "buddies" will provide various types of personal assistance to families attending Midtown.

Pastor's School. This program may be Sojourn's most innovative. It began six years ago with the Emerging Leader Institute (ELI). ELI possessed a bold vision of preparing godly men for pastoral ministry. ELI offered intensive training once a month to prospective elders within the church family. ELI tended to start out strong but end with a limp. The pastors would become overwhelmed with their pastoral responsibilities, leading to a drop-off in the second half of the curriculum. ELI participants would also lose steam due to life issues and a lack of interest. Overall, the commitment level tended to wane. To address these concerns, the staff revamped the program to what is now called "Pastor's School." Targeting men of all stripes with pastoral potential, "Pastor's School" meets at 6:00am on Thursday mornings for ten months out of the year. Since the revisions, steady progress has been made. Last year, 80 men enrolled in Pastor's School and 65 graduated. Job relocations and familial circumstances were the major source of attrition rather than voluntary dropout. In an effort to further refine Pastor's School, both pastors and directors have continued to revise the curriculum for clarity's sake, as well as its application process, in order to invest in those men God has gifted for the ministry. In a cutting-edge project coordinated by Michael Wilder, Pastor's School now offers up to 18 hours of credit for students enrolled in Southern Seminary's Master of Divinity program. This partnership reflects the school's commitment to invest its resources in practical ways that serve its primary stakeholder—the local church.

Jefferson Street Baptist Center. The Day Shelter at Jefferson Street Baptist Center near downtown Louisville (JSBC) is a service ministry open to men and women who are currently homeless or struggling financially. Although Sojourn members sit on the board, "Jeff Street" operates as an independent Section 501(c)(3) nonprofit

organization. JSBC serves over 150 homeless guests per day and hosts 60,000 individual visits per year. Guests are provided a drug free, safe environment in which they may access our laundry room, showers, storage room, mail and phone services, or just enjoy some hot coffee and a light breakfast. They are also paired with appropriate services (housing, job, educational) in order to become more employable and to gain permanent housing. Advance Louisville is a 12-24 week gospel-centered ministry for men desiring change. It confronts life-controlling problems and empowers men to change through Christian discipleship, Biblical counseling, vocational and life skills training, helpful relationships to assist along the journey and a connection to the local church. A related program, Advance 180°, offers a 6-month residential version for men whose lives are out of control as a result of drugs, alcohol or some other destructive behavior. Current needs surpass what JSBC's full-time staff is capable of responding to holistically. Volunteers from area churches help with meals, serve as mentors, teach classes, and show Christ's love through practice and teaching. Through financial contributions and member involvement, Sojourn's commitment to this urban ministry remains strong.

Care and counseling. Sojourn's ambitious care and counseling ministry is driven by a bold vision: *equipping the church to be loving members of a gospel community*. Pastor Robert Cheong, the visionary behind the dream, has been working tirelessly with his wife Karen to build a critical mass of leaders eager to champion the cause. Their efforts are already bearing fruit. The church's Campus Shepherding Training (CST) program identifies potential ministry leaders at each campus for development into shepherds who nourish their flock with the gospel. This comprehensive program offers separate tracks for Gospel Basics, Redemption Groups, and Pre-Marital Care. Since Fall 2011, the number of people involved as leader or apprentice has ballooned from 8 to 46.

During the same period, pre-marital counseling jumped 50% (from 39 to 60). Care referrals are beginning to decentralize as well. While 65% of 106 referrals in 2011 were handled at Midtown, only 58% of 120 referrals in 2012 stayed there. The church's shift from "counseling" to "care" is also taking hold: fully 80% of Midtown's requests were resolved at the community group level. Today, many churches and ministries—local and regional—are benefiting from Sojourn's example. CST has raised the bar on gospel training for both "ground war" and missionary leaders alike. The next challenge is figuring out a way to accommodate the demanding schedules of non-staff volunteers.

Worship team. From the beginning, Sojourn has been blessed with a wealth of creative artists, writers, and performers. Brooks Ritters' vision for the church's highly respected worship ministry says it all: "To see more brothers and sisters of different race and ethnicity joining their voices together, singing to the Lord with thankfulness in their hearts to Him, without worry of musical style or preferences." According to the ministry's webpage,

We as a church are blessed to have so many gifted servants who desire to use their gifts to bless the rest of the body of believers. So, in order to keep this ministry active and vital, we look forward to meeting with those that want to use their musical abilities to lead the church in corporate worship.

If the crowds that flock to every tryout are any indication, serving on the worship team is seen as an honor.

Congregational Commitment

By all accounts, it is an exciting time to be a member of Sojourn Community Church. It has a compelling vision, legendary talent, and electrifying energy. God has opened storehouses of facilities and resources in miraculous ways, and phenomenal growth is occurring on all fronts. No longer the "new kid on the block", people travel

near and far to probe its secrets. By 2020, elders envision a family of seventy-five hundred people—gathered in five locations across greater Louisville—drawing thousands of people into a relationship with Christ and multiplying equally passionate congregations around the globe. Hoping to mainstream the church’s DNA, the elders are even forging a worldwide network of church planters.

Gauging the congregation’s commitment to the church’s bold vision is another matter. Like an iceberg, far more indicia of congregational health are hidden beneath the surface of church activity than what is publicly displayed. Two historic indicia used by consultants are breadth of contributions and participation in service. Both measures have dramatically improved at Sojourn in recent years. For a long time, most members and adherents contributed little or nothing to church operations. By 2012, the number of members who gave under \$500 annually shrank to 35%. Though still higher than churches with a wider age distribution, leaders are encouraged by the progress. As stated in the annual report,

The goal for Sojourn Community Church is not that 100% of members give > \$7,000; rather, it is that we would be a people that is ever-growing and constantly pursuing creative ways that we can scheme for God’s Kingdom with our finances. By God’s grace, we have seen % growth in each of these categories since last year.

To buttress their optimism, leaders reported that 662 first-time givers had joined the rolls in 2012.

Sojourn’s corporate commitment to local ministry proved equally difficult to read. That an ambitious campaign of campus expansion gave rise to a burgeoning infrastructure is hard to deny (80% of its \$4 million budget in 2013 is earmarked for staff and facilities). However, these numbers do not capture the church’s true ministry philosophy or account for all structures that further its mission. (For example, Midtown’s Ministry Fund subsidized 50% of this year’s Fall Festival.) From the researcher’s

perspective, leaders view corporate giving as a launch pad for strategic impact. Their ultimate aim is to raise grateful servants who joyfully and generously invest time, talents, and treasures in loving their neighbors. To gauge the effectiveness of Sojourn's strategy, one would have to quantify the earthly and heavenly impact of 3,000 lives.

Despite these encouraging signs, *all 35 participants reported that most members are not participating in a church-sponsored ministry*. Elders seem to have tried everything possible to increase congregational commitment. Notable examples include casting a compelling vision, establishing a core identity, laying a theological foundation, promoting key opportunities, challenging member participation, and providing local accountability. Barring a divine revelation, they can only pray that more people will be inspired by God's grace and Jesus' example.

Population

This study's theoretical population consists of members and adherents of all U.S. evangelical churches who are age twenty-one and older. As explained in the "Delimitations" section below, the researcher conducted a case study of one southern evangelical church containing a sampling pool of several hundred adults (based on public records) from Midtown's general population. To further narrow the study's scope, the researcher employed the purposive sampling method.

Sampling

An effective case study relies on purposive sampling of key informants who are "information-rich" about the topic at hand (Gall, Gall, and Borg 2005, 310). To ensure all perspectives were heard, the researcher and host selected a critical array of thirty-five stakeholders involved in various aspects of church-sponsored service from

Sojourn's Midtown and New Albany campuses. This size exceeds the minimum required for a phenomenological case study (Weller and Romney 1988, 77; Morse 1994, 220) while preserving its probative value (Morgan et al. 2002, 76; Guest et al. 2006, 59). Consistent with the study's objectives, the case was bound by time and place, time and activity, and definition and context (Creswell, 2003; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Pastor Nathan Ivey, Midtown coordinator of ministry and community life, graciously agreed to serve as the host's liaison. His responsibilities included,

1. Reviewing case study's purpose on church's behalf (Appendix 3)
2. Authorizing case study on church's behalf (Appendix 4)
3. Participating as staff leader from Midtown.
4. Meeting with researcher to resolve field issues.
5. Providing qualitative feedback on interview questionnaires.
6. Assembling documents reflecting church's view on role of service.
7. Nominating 12-20 interview candidates (one-half of research pool).
8. Providing qualitative feedback on preliminary findings.
9. Relaying the church's official response to the conclusions.

Three primary objectives drove the participant selection process: giving leaders and members an equal voice; attaining the level of trust needed for open and honest reflection; and soliciting diverse perceptions of a common experience (Krueger and Casey 2000). Candidates were also required to have served in at least one church-sponsored ministry. In response to approximately 60 invitations (35 host/25 researcher), 35 individuals agreed to participate. The church provided 17 of 19 leaders, while the researcher recruited 15 of 16 members (9 from his own community group). This balance of leaders and members produced a critical array of stakeholders involved in various aspects of church-sponsored service across three interconnecting circles of influence (Figure 1).

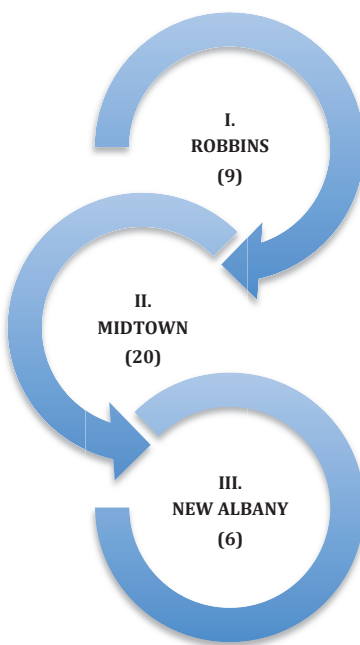


Figure 1: CG circles of influence

Group I (consisting of 1 leader and 8 members) was drawn from the researcher's own community group. Because of their high level of trust, these individuals were eager to contribute and willing to share. They also afforded a unique opportunity to explore service as a shared experience. The Robbins CG made up 25% of the interview pool. Group II (consisting of 14 leaders and 6 members) was drawn from staff positions and other community groups at Midtown. Notwithstanding the original campus' highly developed culture, the researcher expected greater diversity in perceptions and experiences among Group II members. These individuals accounted for 58% of the participant pool. Finally, Group III (consisting of 4 leaders and 2 members) was drawn from the New Albany campus. Among the "satellite" campuses, New Albany's demographics seemed most closely aligned with Midtown's population. This segment also enabled the researcher to determine whether perceptions of service at a newer

campus differed qualitatively from a more established environment. Individuals from this group comprised 17% of the total pool.

Delimitations and Limitations on Generalizability

The study's scope was delimited to adult members and adherents of one Southern Baptist church in Louisville, Kentucky. Limiting features of the host church include its brief history, concentration of artists, high proportion of seminarians, young median adult age, urban setting, widespread community groups, and multi-site operations. Limiting features of the study include the researcher's prior involvement, the focus and quality of interviews, the study's timeline, and SDT's theoretical assumptions. These delimitations and limitations suggest that findings will not be generalizable to youth, non-Christians, or non-evangelical churches.

Quantitative conceptualizations of generalizability do not account for other legitimate methods used in qualitative or mixed methods research (Merriam 2002, 29). Despite the proposed study's bounded nature, specific lessons may apply to other situations because "the general lies in the particular" (Erickson 1986). Readers can learn vicariously when a vivid portrait becomes a prototype they can emulate (Eisner 1991, 1999). Raising awareness of the need to reexamine church-sponsored service is the first step toward examining SDT's potential. Implications for the church-at-large are significant. By mixing vibrant colors and subtle shades from one church's varied experiences, the researcher was able to paint a compelling picture of reform.

Research Instrumentation

As described in the "Research Procedures" section below, data collection consisted of four phases. The researcher employed a descriptive research method that

involved the use of three "instruments." Instrumentation in the first two phases included on-site visits, collecting data from the church website, requesting copies of the events calendars, staff handbooks, curricula, job descriptions, evaluating church documentation, observing a community group function, participating in a church-sponsored service opportunity, and requesting notes from member meetings. On-site visits enhanced the researcher's understanding of the church's promotional effort to advance institutional service and provided a natural means for evaluating leader attitudes and behaviors.

Instrumentation for Phase Three of data collection entailed semi-structured interviews of all participants. The researcher conducted face-to-face, open-ended conversations following pre-coded theoretical protocols (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). While focused on perceptions of church-sponsored service, a secondary objective was to detect qualitative references to SDT elements. In each section, some of the questions (and subsequent probes) were derived from categories offered in the literature review. Table 1 lists the SDT elements of intrinsic motivation that are germane to this study.

Table 1: SDT classifications

SDT TENET	SDT ELEMENT
Intrinsic motivation	Autonomy
Intrinsic motivation	Competence
Intrinsic motivation	Relatedness

To determine whether the motivational climate for service was perceived as predominately controlling or autonomy supportive, each element was evaluated qualitatively according to the participants' perceptions. Instrumentation for the final phase of data collection consisted of moderating focus group discussions where leaders and members reflected on service's motivational dynamics, evaluated the church's current model of institutional service, and collaborated on biblical solutions. Further details on this instrumentation are provided in the Focus Groups section below.

Research Procedures

The following paragraphs outline and describe the process followed by the research. The case study proceeded in three stages.

Stage 1: Data Collection

The data collection stage consisted of four distinct phases: document assembly, unstructured observations, personal interviews, and focus group discussions. Although these phases were intended to be sequential, they sometimes operated concurrently.

Phase 1: Assembly of Documents

In the initial phase, written and audio-visual materials related to church-sponsored service were assembled. Colors from public documents (e.g., training brochures) were mixed with hues gleaned from private materials (e.g., internal memoranda) to paint a cultural portrait of service at Sojourn (Creswell 2009, 180). This image formed a backdrop for observing participant interaction and ministry engagement.

Phase 2: Unstructured Observations

In the second phase, the researcher took field notes of the participants' behavior and activities at the research site (Creswell 2009, 181). Unstructured observation "puts you where the action is, lets you observe behavior in a natural context (behavior that might be otherwise impossible to witness), and lets you collect any kind of data you want" (Bernard and Ryan 2010, 41). It allows the researcher to experience the lives of the people studied as much as possible. These real-time observations were supplemented by an archived history of the church's organizational structure, culture, and climate compiled from the researcher's own experiences. Previous roles included participation as member or leader of ten ministries: SEED (trainee), Mercy Monday (visiting neighbors), gospel counseling (marital strife), premarital counseling (engaged couples), teaching (seminars), medical clinics (host), small group coaching (mentoring CG leader), Redemption Groups (participant and apprentice), strategic planning (chair of counseling committee), and corporate legal counsel (liability issues).

Phase 3: Personal Interviews

The third and largest data collection phase involved thirty-five semi-structured interviews of leaders and members, representing a cross-section of those involved in church-sponsored service at two church campuses. An interview is "literally an *inter view*, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 2). Interview quality depends more on skill and judgment than systematic methodology (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 17). According to postmodern epistemology, "the certainty of knowledge is less a matter of interaction with a nonhuman reality than a conversation between persons" (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 53). A successful interview is about entering the subject's setting, interacting

collaboratively, finding meaning in themes, capturing the complexity of nuances, allowing for ambiguity, responding to new insights, and opening new doors (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 28). In doing so, the researcher took care not to compromise his biblical worldview of absolute truth.

It is also important to note that the study focused on participants' *perceptions* of reality, not the host's actual *performance*. Particular attention was paid to how participants viewed the host's institutional structure for personal ministry. This required positioning the researcher among the subjects, bringing his personal values to the table, analyzing the context or setting, and consciously interpreting the data (Creswell 2009, 17). To explore the meaning ascribed to prior experiences with church-sponsored service, the qualitative interviews followed four protocols: (a) collect data in participant's setting; (b) interpret meaning behind data; (c) allow new questions to emerge; (d) build inductive themes (Yegedis, Weinbach, and Morrison-Rodriguez 1999, 180). Feedback from an expert panel, consisting of two professors and the church coordinator, determined which questions should be restructured before interacting with participants.

Pre-coding the interviews for SDT elements introduced a deductive dimension to the inductive process. Krippendorff observes that interview responses are a significant type of "linguistic data" that can be analyzed via content analysis (Krippendorff 1980, 42-43). In the present study, all personal interviews and focus group sessions were recorded on videotape to track similarities and differences between leaders' and members' reliance on SDT principles (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 142). Standard categories were adopted from the precedent literature to form a "framework of constraints" for compiling and classifying content (Webb 2001, 9). Coding the dialogue in this manner bolstered sorting and analysis while preserving the integrity of the interviewee's ideas (Leedy and Ormrod

2005, 187). Tracking SDT references also suggested certain qualitative relationships deserving of further attention that may lead to subsequent experimental research on Christian formation.

Phase 4: Focus Groups

Because lively interaction evokes spontaneous and expressive opinions, focus groups are vital tools for exploring any new domain (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 150). This format also provides broad emotional support for addressing controversial topics in an efficient manner (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 150). Small groups interact through participative interviews that encourage divergent viewpoints (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 150). The moderator's task is to create an inclusive atmosphere for divulging personal beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes on a specific topic (Chrzanowska 2002). The aim is to feed off the group's chemistry in a collaborative effort to reconcile apparent discrepancies (Bernard and Ryan 2010, 40).

Participants from the interview process were randomly divided into three focus groups to ensure adequate representation of divergent perspectives. Participants were then asked to discuss theoretical and critical themes emerging from the interviews. They were also encouraged to express their opinions candidly and to approach each issue innovatively. A high level of trust, combined with strong interviewing skills, generated rich material for meaningful feedback. By following these measures, the researcher was able to establish a platform for further discussion on service's role in Christian formation, the need for leaders to provide satisfying ministry opportunities, and SDT's potential for internalizing Christian beliefs.

Stage 2: Data Analysis

After the personal interviews and focus group discussions were recorded, themes and recurring patterns were analyzed for relevant characteristics (Leedy and Ormrod 2005, 144). Despite his biblical view of an objective reality, the researcher expected divergent interpretations based on participants' subjective understanding of their life experiences. Both approaches employ methods for interpreting the meaning behind human communication. Concepts related to credibility, dependability and transferability have been used to describe various aspects of trustworthiness (Berg and Welanders Hansson 2000). Credibility deals with how well the data and processes of analysis address the study's intended focus (Polit and Hungler 1999). Transferability, on the other hand, refers to 'the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other settings or groups' (Polit and Hungler 1999, 717). Choosing participants with various experiences increases the possibility of shedding light on the research question from a variety of aspects (Patton, 1987; Adler and Adler, 1988). In the present study, qualitative principles associated with trustworthiness were used to gauge the researcher's selection and interpretation of what participants shared (Downe-Wamboldt 1992). Through a variety of genders, ages and experiences, he hoped to garner a rich variation in understanding the relevant phenomena.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is "the longest established method of text analysis among the set of empirical methods of social investigation" (Titscher 2000, 55). Selecting the appropriate "unit" to analyze is a critical step in the process (Mertens 1998). Since interviews were the primary data source, the researcher could consider every word or phrase or focus on selected excerpts (Feeley and Gottlieb 1998). Whole interviews were

reviewed for inductive patterns that qualify as “meaning units” (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, 32). Assigning a code to each unit enabled the researcher to approach the data in new and different ways (Burnard 1991, 462). Constellations of words or statements with similar meaning were then grouped together under higher order headings (Burnard 1991, 462). By creating themes, related meanings could be organized into appropriate categories (Polit and Hungler 1999). To remain flexible, the researcher also had to judge what variations were most appropriate for the problem at hand (Weber 1990). His strategy was to identify representative quotations before soliciting participants’ feedback and agreement. Clear descriptions of the cultural context, participant selection, and analytic process helped to pave the way. By weaving “quotable quotes” into a rich narrative, the researcher hoped to hold the audience’s interest while processing the study’s qualitative findings.

Inter-Coder Reliability

Deffner (1986) classified content analysis methods into three broad types: human-scored schema, individual-word-count systems, and computerized systems using artificial intelligence. Individual-word-count systems classify the text by assigning words to pre-specified semantically equivalent categories. Frequency counts or occurrences of words in each category are then analyzed to determine the relative concern given each category by the text’s author (Weber, 1990). In the human-scored approach, coders are asked to classify the text according to specific categories. Trustworthiness is achieved by demonstrating the extent to which multiple coders code the text in the same way.

Human coding is preferred when subjective coding by humans is more valid than objective coding by machines. Such was the case in the present study. Creating a comfortable environment for participants to relay subjective perceptions of church-

sponsored service was a primary objective. Exploring experiences that cloud one's perception of reality was especially important. Integral to the process was allowing a participant's responses to steer the interview. The amount of time spent on a particular concept was less meaningful than the *consistency* of participant responses.

Trustworthiness was achieved by following nine protocols:

1. Semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to probe pre-coded themes regarding intrinsic motivation (autonomy, competency, relatedness) without inhibiting the inductive development of other themes.
2. The researcher transcribed "quotable quotes" during the interview or while observing the participant's voice inflection and body language by videotape.
3. Participants were invited to review their "quotable quotes" for quality feedback, modification, and final approval.
4. To qualify as an inductive theme, a minimum of nine participants (25% of the research pool) had to contribute to a "meaning unit." In the rare instance that a single comment related to multiple units, it was applied accordingly.
5. Prior to each focus group, participants were invited to review the researcher's proposed list of interview themes for quality feedback, modification, and final approval.
6. During each group session, the researcher challenged participants to compare the proposed themes for logical consistency by attempting to "put the pieces together" into an integrated picture of Christian service.
7. The same process was followed with each focus group to further enhance reliability.
8. Subsequent to the focus groups, participants were invited to review the researcher's proposed group findings for quality feedback, modification, and approval.
9. Finally, two human coders were asked to validate the entire process by reviewing abstracted quotes, determining their agreement with proposed themes, independently matching quotes to appropriate themes, collaborating on separate findings, attempting to resolve differences, discussing their findings with researcher, and reaching consensus as a group (Appendix 5).

By following these measures, consensus was achieved on the accuracy of what participants communicated, the prevailing themes that emerged, and their logical consistency as a whole. Participants were most unified in their reliance on classic indicia

of intrinsic motivation—81% of leaders and 84% of members employed SDT imagery to describe their idealized conception of Christian service. By comparison, 43% of leaders and 35% of members contributed to eighteen meaning units identified by the researcher. From the vibrant colors and subtle shades attached to church-sponsored service by both groups, the researcher attempted to paint a vivid portrait of reform.

Stage 3: Participative Reporting

Because the study explored perceptions and experiences as a means of grasping the significance of church-sponsored service, the emerging data was inherently descriptive (Creswell 2009, 195). “The closeness of interview studies to ordinary life, with their often lively descriptions and engaging narratives, makes an interview report potentially interesting to the general public” (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 268). Findings are communicated primarily through words and images rather than statistical trends (Marshall and Rossman 2006). Qualitative trends unique to Christian formation and service are particularly emphasized.

Consistent with its emancipatory purpose, all preliminary findings were subjected to participants’ constructive criticism and quality feedback (Creswell 2009, 9). Soliciting comments through follow up interviews is an excellent way to expose qualitative defects hidden beneath the surface (Creswell 2009, 191). This collaborative inquiry acknowledges the study was completed *with* others, not *on* or *to* them (Creswell 2009, 191). To compensate for differing perspectives held by the researcher, participants and readers (Creswell 2009, 191), multiple research strategies were employed.

Triangulation

Evidence from different data sources was used to build a coherent justification for emerging themes. Principal measures included examining the host's documentary evidence, reviewing its organizational structure, observing ministry activities, conducting personal interviews, moderating focus group discussions, soliciting participant feedback, establishing code reliability, and engaging the researcher's own experiences as ministry leader and participant.

Member Checking

Participants were asked to review themes for accuracy and feedback. To ensure consistency, input was solicited from participating leaders and members after each data collection phase. Initially, the researcher transcribed critical quotes from the interviews and asked participants to review the statements for accuracy, making any modifications necessary to capture their true intent. Next, participants were asked to provide qualitative feedback on seven overarching themes inductively drawn from the interviews. The same process was repeated for the focus groups. Finally, the researcher asked participants to provide constructive feedback on the study's preliminary findings. As a result of this participatory approach, members perceived they were full partners in the study.

Rich Descriptions

Findings were conveyed using rich, thick descriptions that transport readers to a realistic setting as a shared experience. The researcher's principal method was to synthesize personal responses into a metanarrative. A secondary strategy was buttressing proposed themes with sufficient quotes to gauge whether classifications appear suitable. Finally, biographical sketches of each participant—derived from interviews and self-

disclosure—helped contextualize their diverse perceptions and reveal the possibility of bias.

Clarifying Biases

Because the study focused on perceptions, attribution error and other forms of bias came with the territory. By consistently distinguishing subjective perception from objective reality, the researcher hoped to avoid any appearance of critiquing church leaders or Sojourn's effectiveness. The researcher also disclosed his own background, experiences, and opinions so his personal biases would be clearly understood. Lack of neutrality in the subject matter could easily skew the study's results.

Discrepant Information

Accordingly, a guiding research principle was to disclose any information that contradicted an expected theme. Because the researcher has extensive experience with the subject, he expected most of his assumptions to be validated. However, any evidence that negated or challenged a previously held principle was fully divulged.

Peer Debriefing

Just as reviewing a study's theoretical and emergent themes bolsters reliability (Creswell 2009, 9), subjecting findings to "peer review" or "peer examination" buttresses its validity (Merriam 2002, 26). Initially, three doctoral colleagues were invited to participate, but each was forced to decline due to pressing schedules. Roy Andrews, Chair of Multnomah University's Department of Educational Ministries, graciously agreed to serve in their place. Andrews has been intimately familiar with the researcher's vision for empowering the laity since becoming his spiritual formation partner at Ashland

Theological Seminary in 1990. A specialist in spiritual gifts, his dissertation at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School dealt with rethinking seminary education. Michael Wilder, Associate Professor of Leadership and Ministry (as well as Associate Vice President for Doctoral Studies) at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, provided valuable academic feedback as the study progressed. Wilder's own dissertation examined short-term missions as a critical component of youth ministry. Co-author of "Transmission: Making Disciples Through Short Term Missions," Wilder has led the charge in promoting Christian service as a means to enhance Christian formation.

Audit Trail

Finally, trustworthiness was strengthened by use of an audit trail. Merriam (2002, 27) notes that "an audit trail in a qualitative study describes in detail how the data was collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry." This record was maintained through a concise research journal, developed throughout the course of data collection and analysis processes.

Conclusion

The foregoing strategies were intended to produce a trustworthy case study with repeatable results. The ability to analyze the data in the foregoing manner provided the necessary information to answer seven research questions. The researcher's ultimate aim was to stimulate meaningful discussion on the role of service in Christian formation, the need to provide satisfying ministry opportunities, and SDT's potential for sustaining commitment.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

By exploring the meaning attached to church-sponsored service held by a critical array of its stakeholders, this study sought to advocate an action agenda for reform that empowers ordinary people to make lasting contributions to God's kingdom through intrinsically satisfying ministry activities. The present chapter describes how the study's data was compiled and analyzed. The findings and displays will be addressed in conjunction with the research question to which they pertain. The overall strengths and weaknesses of the methodology will also be disclosed.

Compilation Protocol

The study proceeded in three stages. In the first stage, data was gathered from relevant documents, unstructured observations, personal interviews, and focus group discussions. Using the critical case rationale, thirty-five stakeholders involved in various aspects of church-sponsored service were selected from the church's community group network at its Midtown and New Albany campuses. Although only 60 candidates were invited (35 church/ 25 researcher), the 19 leaders and 16 members who responded were sufficiently diversified by gender, age, role, and location.

It is important to note that the researcher focused on participants' subjective experiences, *not* the church's actual performance. The meaning ascribed to prior experiences was explored through open-ended conversations following four protocols: (a) collect data in participant's setting; (b) interpret meaning behind data; (c) allow new

questions to emerge; and (d) build inductive themes. Each interview was recorded in order to identify theoretical and emergent patterns. After completing the interviews, the researcher moderated three focus group discussions that further explored and refined these themes. Each group contained a cross-section of viewpoints to enrich the dialogue.

In the study's second stage, themes and patterns emerging from personal and group interaction were analyzed for relevant characteristics. In the final stage, the researcher employed colorful narratives and stimulating quotes to highlight prevailing themes. Qualitative trends unique to Christian formation and service were particularly emphasized. True to the study's participatory mindset, all preliminary findings were subjected to participant and peer review. The former required participant feedback to affirm the report's integrity; the latter entailed a construct validity review by a professor of educational leadership at Multnomah University specializing in spiritual gifting. After reviewing the quotations for accuracy, participants were encouraged to clarify, supplement, or amend the responses to reflect their true intent.

Demographic and Sample Data

From a general population of all members and adherents of U.S. evangelical churches age twenty-one and older, the study's sampling pool included 2,508 members and adherents of a fast-growing Southern Baptist congregation in Louisville, Kentucky (Rainer 2013, 1). The host's unique demographics include its brief history, young average age, performing arts culture, seminary presence, widespread fellowships, and multi-site operations.

Participant Demographics

To a large extent, Sojourn's story is a patch quilt of individual experiences and

perceptions. Using its community group network as a sampling pool, participants were recruited following the critical case conceptual rationale. Although only 60 candidates were invited (35 church/ 25 researcher), the 19 leaders and 16 members who responded were sufficiently diversified by gender, age, role, and location. Because some have moved or changed roles, the researcher focused on their particular role at a distinct point in time. The participants' demographic profile is summarized in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: Leader demographics

ALIAS	AGE	FAITH*	CAMPUS	SOURCE
Alice	40	1981	New Albany	Sojourn
Ashley	48	1982	Midtown	Sojourn
Betty	65	1959	New Albany	Sojourn
Charlie	66	1948	New Albany	Sojourn
Daniel	42	1977	Midtown	Sojourn
Edward	51	1971	Midtown	Sojourn
Emily	26	1996	Midtown	Sojourn
Fred	41	1998	New Albany	Sojourn
Grant	30	1987	Midtown	Sojourn
Heather	56	1990	Midtown	Sojourn
Jacob	32	1992	Midtown	Sojourn
John	26	1999	Midtown	Sojourn
Joseph**	29	2002	Midtown	Sojourn
Larry	60	1964	Midtown	Sojourn
Matthew	28	1992	Midtown	Sojourn
Michael	27	2003	Midtown	Researcher
Ryan	30	1992	Midtown	Sojourn
Victor***	43	1982	Midtown	Researcher
William**	32	2006	Midtown	Sojourn

*Year converted **staff ***Robbins community group

Table 3: Member demographics

ALIAS	AGE	FAITH*	CAMPUS	SOURCE
Amber	31	1992	Midtown	Researcher
Anna	79	1942	Midtown	Researcher
Austin	29	1997	Midtown	Sojourn
Frank	29	1997	Midtown	Researcher
Henry**	54	1974	Midtown	Researcher
Julie**	27	2008	Midtown	Researcher
Justin**	46	2010	Midtown	Researcher
Karen	28	1992	Midtown	Researcher
Kathy**	58	1966	Midtown	Researcher
Kevin	32	1988	Midtown	Sojourn
Lauren	25	2002	Midtown	Researcher
Molly**	54	1971	Midtown	Researcher
Robert	58	1973	New Albany	Researcher
Sally	44	1976	New Albany	Sojourn
Sarah	37	2007	Midtown	Researcher
Tyler**	29	2008	Midtown	Researcher

*Year converted **Robbins community group

Biographical information from the interviews was used to convey each participant's unique perspective and experience. In addition, the researcher invited them to answer the following questions in their own words:

1. What ministries were you involved in *before* coming to Sojourn?
2. What ministries have you participated in at Sojourn?
3. What role did you play in each ministry?
4. How does serving at the church compare with your prior experiences?
5. How well does your own community group function?

Together, these sources formed personal profiles that enable readers to contextualize interview responses and group interaction. Following is each profile, organized by leader and member groups.

Leaders

Joseph. This 29-year-old Christian (2002) joined a community group soon

after coming to Sojourn (Midtown) three years ago. He quickly began serving in SojournKids and Mercy Monday, eventually leading and multiplying several community groups. A recent graduate of Southern Seminary, he came on staff early in 2011 as an intern and was installed as “community group deacon” (overseeing five community groups with his wife). Last November, he joined the staff part-time as pastoral assistant. In addition to prioritizing his pastor’s schedule, he has been heavily involved in community group training. Subsequent to the interview, he relinquished the position to prepare for a church plant. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I was involved in an Ohio church plant. I led worship, men’s studies, and family groups (similar to CG). I was also given a chance to preach periodically. Since coming here, I’ve been blessed with plenty of service opportunities: teaching at SojournKids, helping out with Mercy Monday, playing Guitar/Keys/Vocals for the worship team, cohort leader at Pastor’s School, apprentice at Gospel Basics, participating in Redemption Groups, and providing pre-marital care. I’ve also held various roles in community group life—first as a CG leader, then as deacon for other leaders, and finally Group Life Intern. It all culminated with a part-time staff position as Nathan Ivey’s Pastoral Assistant. My wife shared most of these roles as well. Unlike my prior experiences, the leaders equipped me well to fulfill these roles. They also encouraged me to focus on one ministry area so I could hone my calling instead of burning out. Due to lack of leaders, all of us need to sacrifice in order to carry on the work of ministry. This past year, the whole staff was called to rest more. Pastor Daniel, Chad, and Nathan have been great pace setters, and now our culture is changing. Each community group under our care has distinct strengths and weaknesses. Thankfully, leaders and members alike humbly desire to grow. As in all of Christian life, it ebbs and flows: refusal to follow pastoral wisdom usually produces godly sorrow and repentance. All the while, their core identity—as family, worshippers, witnesses, servants, and learners—continues to sharpen.

William. This 32-year-old Christian (2006) holds a key staff position (Midtown) in service. Four years after joining Sojourn, he became active in the Seed ministry. Since coming on board a year ago, he has focused on equipping the church to serve in local ministries. He supervises no other staff or intern. Instead, he prefers to build “core teams” through discipling relationships. His greatest joy is seeing changed

lives, the church's "first line of defense." In his own words,

I was involved in very little prior to Sojourn. I'd only been a Christian for a year or so. During that time, I attended a very traditional church in Lexington where there was little opportunity for "service." At the church, there were teaching responsibilities and that was about it. I'd sporadically served meals at a homeless mission while there, but it was a sterile, awkward thing at the time. Since coming here, I've been heavily involved in Connect, our care and counseling ministry, and SEED. At Connect, I would talk to folks in the gallery who were alone or just serve coffee. I eventually led the 5 o'clock team. As a counselor, I sometimes meet with members or attenders needing care. I also help with training events like Redemption or Gospel Basics. After nearly five years as a deacon, I was asked to assume leadership of SEED. It's easier to get "plugged in" to serving here, with a lot more depth behind it. There are service areas with clear-cut pathways, and some with a more "choose your own adventure" feel—something for everyone. My CG is a wonderful community: a place to love, be loved, and to cultivate a holistic life around Christ's gospel. Anyone looking for a "perfect" community, however, will invariably walk away disappointed and bitter.

Emily. This 26-year-old Christian (1996) has been on full-time staff (Midtown) since 2010. Trained as a professional architect, she was eager to tackle new challenges beyond the corporate world. Today, you will find her at the center of operations. With so many "creatives" at Sojourn, she has learned to be flexible because "we all think differently." In her own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I led high school students throughout my college career at Texas A&M. I also worked at Christian camps during the summer. Once I came here, I got involved with the Women's and College ministries. I taught at Women's School whenever asked by the leaders, Nora Allison and Amanda Edmondson. Here, I've been offered great opportunities to grow. I've also learned what it means to serve the Lord in different capacities. Seven months ago, I locked arms with three other leaders to launch a college community group from the ground up. We began hanging out at U of L and looked for students at Midtown's 7 o'clock service. Today, 15-20 students attend weekly. They're beginning to grasp the importance of doing life together, and some intentional discipleship has resulted.

Matthew. This 28-year-old Christian (1992) brings prior staff experience from Northeast Christian Church. Since coming to Sojourn (Midtown) three years ago, he and his wife have been involved with Seed and Mercy Monday. Reared in Christian homes,

both have a strong desire to step out of their comfort zone in order to engage the lost.

Today, they head up a thriving outreach ministry to women in the Adult Entertainment industry. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, my wife and I launched a parachurch ministry to women in the Adult Entertainment industry. Since coming here, I've participated in Mercy Mondays. I've also held leadership positions in Gospel Basics and Redemption Group. It's been a joy to serve alongside other Christians who love the poor in spirit. We joined a community group only three months ago, but it seems to work very well. We're journeying together amidst our pain and suffering.

Michael. This 27-year-old Christian (2003) is far more mature than most men his age. He has been attending Sojourn (Midtown) since fall 2007. A year later he joined the Mercy classes, helped out with the monthly "Feed and Seed" potluck lunch, and served in SEED. He has never been one "just to attend." When two groups merged to form what would become the Robbins community group (joining three generations), he crazily agreed to share leadership responsibilities. The experience was wonderfully challenging, and he learned a lot about himself. Two years later, he joined a new group forming in his Shelby Park community. In his own words,

I was very involved with two churches before coming to Sojourn. I took part in outreach/evangelism, an Easter drama, and a high school bible study. I also coordinated a missions fundraiser. My leadership roles expanded throughout my college career at a Christian university. Examples include focus group leader, Life group leader, food drive coordination team, mission trips leadership team, and student government. During one particular summer, I worked for an urban home repair ministry as their construction manager. When I came here, I got involved in SEED. It wasn't long before I became the ministry rep for my community group and led an administrative review of its organizational structure. Next, I helped launch the Handyman ministry, sharing leadership responsibilities for a year. Finally, I began co-leading my first community group. Serving has given me a more holistic view of real people. While other ministry experiences focused on a single need, Sojourn emphasizes serving in word and deed. Seeing how my role contributed to a bigger vision helped me feel connected and critical. Overall, I'd say my community group functioned well. We shared our lives and worked through some tough things together. Though we were a diverse group—married and single, young and old, Caucasian and African American—the gospel bound us together like a thread.

Daniel. This 42-year-old Christian (1977) has been Sojourn's deacon of missions and prayer advocacy for over a year. After joining the church seven years ago, he began serving coffee in the foyer during Sunday worship to meet other believers outside his community group. A self-described "people pleaser," he felt naturally drawn to Seed and the benevolence ministry. He was particularly stirred when his mentor "got his elbows into it with us." In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I was involved with Fellowship of Christian Athletes because of my coaching responsibilities. I also found time to participate in a street ministry and short-term missions. Since coming here, I've been involved with Connect, Seed, the prayer ministry, and international missions. My roles have included serving coffee, praying during worship, interceding for a family, and managing benevolence as a deacon. Service here is more connected to the gospel, more intentional, and better supported. I have also been blessed with excellent community groups. We strive to serve each other, investing as much as our daily schedules allow. Moving from encouraging/nurturing/challenging each other in Christ to serving together for His sake has been difficult.

Jacob. This 32-year-old Christian (1992) has been involved with Sojourn (Midtown) from the beginning. When Pastor Daniel began describing a church "for the overchurched and the unchurched," he was sold. Ever since, he has tried to help Daniel execute his vision. Today, he reminisces on the equal importance of quality *and* quantity of time in community. In his own words,

Before coming to Sojourn, I led a middle school ministry at a large church and did several speaking engagements at local churches. I've served in a variety of ministries here—liturgist, lead coach for community groups, launching international missions, elder. Our church is much more rooted foundationally in Christ. Leaders are constantly fighting for service to not be rooted in our own fame and glory, but rather God's. My previous encounters with service were more "I want to serve so I am known in this church." This contrasts with "I want to serve because Christ served me." I believe the church is fighting constantly to live out the latter. From this vantage point, my own community group functions very well.

Victor. This 43-year-old Christian (1982) started attending Sojourn (Midtown) four years ago with his new bride. It was not long before he started handing out leaflets at the medical clinic and she began serving in childcare. Having been nurtured in different traditions, both have been stretched by serving here. When the leader of the Robbins community group announced plans to join a new group in his own neighborhood, he and his wife were asked to take the reins of leadership. After much prayer, they agreed. Subsequent to the interview, they stepped down in order to concentrate in other ministry areas. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I served in a variety of roles—acolyte and usher at Advent Episcopal Church, leader in Young Life, part-time youth director in two Presbyterian churches, summer staff at Young Life's Windy Gap camp. Since coming here, I've served as usher, after-service counselor in the Prayer Room, CG leader, and member of the Bates/Sojourn cooperative prayer ministry. While our church shares many similarities with Young Life, its focus on the poor (as well as all who are hurting) is unique. As former leader of my community group, I'd rather not comment on its effectiveness.

Ashley. This 48-year-old Christian (1982) is heavily involved in Sojourn's (Midtown) counseling and care ministries. In addition to gospel counseling, she and her husband work together in shepherding care group leaders. She speaks fondly of growing in Christ early in her faith through Campus Crusade, and is a passionate advocate for mentoring relationships that challenge converts to embrace service as a lifestyle. In her own words,

I have served in a variety of ways over the years—from leading women's bible studies, to one-on-one mentoring, to cross cultural missions. Currently, I'm deeply committed to our care and counseling ministry. Closely related is my role in shepherding Care Group leaders (which vacillates between caring for group members, caring for group leaders, and personal mentoring). My husband and I often serve as a team, encouraging couples in their marriages; other times, I help single women work through personal struggles. Serving here has been very different from my prior experiences. Instead of "Christian duty"—doing certain things to gain approval from God or man—service reflects a deeper understanding of my continual need for the gospel and the church's model, evaluating that

experience is a little harder. Everyone in my CG is close in age and serves a leadership role in the care ministry. The bad news is that we haven't designated a leader or met consistently because of taxing schedules. The good news is that our care is stronger because no one leads by "default." We simply strive to love and encourage one another by bearing each other's burdens.

Edward. This 51-year-old Christian (1971) is Ashley's husband. His journey of service at Sojourn began with the Connect ministry. He has particularly enjoyed serving in various roles in the care ministry. When an elder invited him to participate in pastor's school, he seized the opportunity. Today, he is an elder himself. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I had a variety of service experiences—Campus Crusade, youth group leader, missions team, and elder. Once we came here, I started serving on the Connect team before moving to Care and Counseling. Soon after, I became a group leader for Gospel Basics and Redemption group. Finally, I was chosen to be an elder. My diverse roles—including participant, group leader and groups pastor—expanded my perspective. Serving at our church brings more opportunities to work with a larger number of people. I was encouraged to get involved much more than at other churches. I was also given more formal training to help me develop. The first community group we attended was very healthy because it had a good mix of age groups. One member challenged everyone to share his or her story, and the rest was history. From then on, we deepened our understanding and became very close. I will always remember it as a tight-knit group who really cared for each other.

Ryan. This 30-year-old Christian (1992) has been attending Sojourn (Midtown) since 2006. He served in various leadership positions before coming here. He and his wife quickly began serving with SojournKids. Since then, he has focused on group life—moving from apprentice, to leader, to deacon. He jokingly shares that "Life is messy – it's people!" Finding it "hard to get a rhythm," he notes that CG leaders are frequently called to give more than they receive from community life. Watching people hurt and struggle is particularly hard. In his own words,

Before Sojourn I was involved in multiple parachurch organizations but had never really gotten plugged into the local church. These were mainly discipleship roles with other guys. Since coming here, I have been involved in most of the ministries:

SojournKids, Connect, Seed, International Missions, and Group Life (my wife also does SojournMusic). The bulk of my service has been in Group Life as apprentice, leader, and deacon. Comparing the two is sort of like comparing apples and oranges—they are both fruit—but don't have much more than that in common. Ministry before this church and ministry now looks and feels super different. A big part of that is the fact that now I serve mostly with my wife. However, another difference is that before it was just hanging out, talking about Jesus. Although the idea is the same now, it was much easier in college to spend time with someone at any point. Now, it is mixed in with the craziness of life. Evaluating my own community group experience is harder, because I've been a part of so many. I would say they have all functioned fairly well but in different areas. Currently, our group functions well as a family, sharing meals and the burdens of life. We don't, however, live on mission as a group, mainly because everyone in the group is already serving a ton outside of our group.

Fred. This 41-year-old Christian (1998) never lost his childlike faith. Before Christ, people would have seen a very different man—introverted, aloof, and selfish. Today, his greatest joy is showering God's love on those who need it most. Four years ago, he and his wife began attending Sojourn, joining the New Albany launch a year later. After first helping out with Fall Festival, he dabbled with the youth group before gravitating to benevolence ministries like Mercy Monday. He describes his launch into CG leadership as "providential." He and his wife hosted a bible study in their home that slowly evolved into a community group. More than anything, he longs for those in need of God's love to experience the same grace he has felt. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, our family volunteered at Wayside Homeless Shelter on our own. I also served as a deacon and taught various men's classes at church. After coming here, I became involved with the Mercy and Seed ministries. This, in turn, led to serving at Fall Festival, the medical clinics, benevolence, and Connect. I also volunteered at Jeff Street [an urban residential facility for homeless men] before settling in as a Community Group leader. Since then, I've tried to help in a variety of ways—financial support, food donations, building relationships with homeless men, interviewing candidates for benevolence, and helping new people to connect. Serving at our church has been very different from anywhere else. Instead of helping because we're "supposed to" or to maintain a certain image, our church leaders have a better understanding of grace. Ministry is a joyful, loving, outflow of our transformation in response to God's love, mercy and grace. My community group experience lags behind this ideal a bit. We probably serve as much as anyone, but we're not "zealous for good works." Our sense of community will only go

deeper as we learn to share more openly.

Grant. Ever since this 30-year-old Christian (1987) gave his life to Christ as a child, the Lord has been shaping his childlike faith. When he joined Sojourn eight years ago, there were fewer than 300 members. He began serving at Jefferson Street almost immediately, where he discovered the wonderful world of “messy ministry.” His ability to lead has matured in step with the church’s growth. A two-year stint as CG apprentice introduced Grant to community life, followed by two more as a CG leader. For the last three years, he’s been guiding other CG leaders as their dedicated deacon. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I was a youth leader at the church I grew up in before college. Since coming here, I’ve been involved with SojournKids (servant), community groups (CG leader and deacon), greeting (pre-Connect), discipling a fatherless boy, maintaining the 930, and gallery openings (servant). Through it all, this church has been a beautiful life-changing experience. We are blessed to be part of a tremendous community group who love each other really well!

John. This 26-year-old Christian (1999) personifies Sojourn’s bright future. He is thoughtful, articulate, and passionate about leadership. Recently, John came on staff as a part-time intern. His diverse responsibilities include coordinating the Connect follow-up team, assisting the campus pastor, and helping out with Pastor’s School. He also finds time to serve as a community group leader. John started volunteering with Connect soon after coming to Midtown and has deepened his commitment ever since. He enjoys the camaraderie and loves meeting new people.

Before coming to Sojourn, I served on staff with a college campus ministry instead of joining a local church. For two years, I discipled students, engaged in evangelistic conversations, and trained others to do the same. When I came here, the conviction to live out my faith as a committed member of a local body was renewed. I have invested most of my time in Connect and Community Life. On Connect’s hospitality team, I went from ushering and parking to coordinating follow-up requests. For the last year, my main role in Community Life has been

leading a community group. At times, church leadership seems slow-paced and complex compared to campus ministry. Still, there are plenty of opportunities to do what I love most—evangelistic conversation, discipleship, and teaching. In contrast, developing leaders and accelerating discipleship has been a real struggle in my community group. While we like to have fun, serving our neighbors seems to be a low priority. Instead, we volunteer for large events as a group. I would like to see more people enter our group through relational connections. My first step has already begun: meeting regularly with two members showing leadership potential for one-to-one discipleship.

Charlie. This 66-year-old Christian (1948) exhibits the calm tenacity of someone who has journeyed with Christ long enough to have “seen it all.” Years as a bivocational Methodist pastor before coming to Sojourn (New Albany) had a lot to do with it. He was drawn to Seed and Mercy Ministries from the start. Before long, he was asked to design the church’s corporate model of benevolence. These days, Charlie’s greatest joy is teaching practical skills to guys at Jeff Street and “seeing the light come on.” He and his wife lead a community group, where he is still learning how to “let discussions run their course.” In his own words,

I was baptized as a United Methodist infant and confirmed into church membership at age 12. I was a Sunday School Teacher for many years. I also chaired our UMC Education Committee and the Council on Ministries. After being called into ministry in my early forties, I pastored rural churches for 14 yrs. For most of that time, I led a "two point charge" while taking 20 semesters of classes for "Local Lay Pastors." At Sojourn, I started off with Seed and Mercy before helping to devise a benevolence plan. When my wife and I joined New Albany, we volunteered for Connect and became community group leaders. I enjoy serving at Sojourn because it is "Bible based" (not just social) and there is genuine enthusiasm about evangelical outreach and the Gospel’s true purpose, not just a program. I view Nathan Ivey as a bit of a mentor and I have been amazed at how he has given himself over to this Gospel emphasis. Our Community Group is a work in progress. After spending a lot of time analyzing our purpose, we all agreed it is about fostering safe Christian friendships that nurture gospel living.

Betty. This 65-year-old Christian (1959) has more energy and enthusiasm than most people half her age. She is also Charlie’s wife. Soon after moving to the New Albany campus, Betty volunteered to help a friend launch a ladies’ group. After several

women joined in the fellowship, the group pondered how they could reach out to their community. The answer was to partner with local charities. One by one, every local organization approached was very receptive to their offer of help. Over time, the ladies' group became one of New Albany's bright spots. Their greatest achievement was a chili cook-off that drew 300 people from the community. However, the wealth of ideas hatching in Betty's mind defy the matronly stereotype she often battles. It has also strained the transition from Midtown to New Albany. Despite her experience and proven track record, she has not been able to find her place. Betty would love to show younger women how to "be creative and think multi-dimensionally." In her own words,

Before coming to Sojourn, I was co-director of a bible school for three years. During that time, I also taught some classes and was the designated "bible story teller." I was active in various teacher organizations and served in a variety of other ways. During my off time, I gave weekly children's lessons at church and spoke to various women's groups. At New Albany, I helped launch the women's Seed outreach program. As co-director, I was responsible for maintaining relations with the charities we supported. Organizing our first chili cook-off and the women's gift exchange were two personal highlights. Our community group emphasizes bible teaching more than share and care. Not everyone gets a chance to speak, which is aggravated by the fact we don't break up the men and women for a separate share time.

Larry. This gregarious 60-yr old Christian (1964) brings fervor and intensity to every job, from serving as a police officer to managing a factory. His ultimate joy is seeing others come to Christ when he took time to care. Sensing a call to the inner city, Larry persuaded Heather to give Sojourn (Midtown) a chance five years ago. Since starting with SERVE, the Lord has taken the couple on an incredible ride of faith. Today, they are blazing a trail for family discipleship—a "no strings attached" investment in hurting families who long to experience Christ's touch. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I was always involved in youth sports ministries. Once I came here, I started volunteering for the Handyman ministry and was trained to be a premarital counselor. My roles normally involve helping and teaching. Serving at

Sojourn has plumbed the depths of my spiritual needs more than all of my prior experiences combined. My community group does a good job of keeping me on track as well.

Heather. This 56-yr old Christian (1990) still marvels at how the Lord chose to save her when most hearts are already hardened. Her merciful spirit perfectly balances her husband's intensity. A nurse by profession, she struggles with caring for others without "managing their care." She has proven to be a faithful mentor and selfless friend to marginalized women. In her own words,

Before Sojourn (Midtown), I was involved in women's ministry, mainly facilitating bible studies and shepherding a small group. Once we came here, I started volunteering at SEED and found plenty of ways to make a difference. I meet weekly with younger women, assist with women's ministry (e.g., Christmas gift exchange), serve as a deaconess, and do premarital counseling. Today, my role at SEED is to assist women and families in need of the gospel. They come to us with financial and physical needs; I point them to the Cross and figure out the rest through God's grace. Serving at Sojourn has been completely different from what I'm used to—it is gospel centered and long term. Currently, I'm meeting with a single mom looking for personal guidance and gospel care from an older sister. Most Saturdays, I still drop by to encourage and pray with a precious family that I shared life with for two years. Through such experiences, I have grown tremendously as a servant and gospel counselor. Although it's definitely stressful at times, the change I've seen in my own heart has made it all worthwhile. My community group has been more than a blessing—they're a lifeline! We have dealt with everything from finances, to marital problems, to unbelief. It may require a lot of time and energy, but I can't think of a better way to live out our call to gospel-centered lives.

Alice. This 40-yr old Christian (1981) laughs easily and seems perfectly comfortable sharing from her heart. After years of serving the Lord, she confessed: "I have never been into the traditional church format. I like Sojourn because it lets you be real." Soon after joining Midtown five years ago, she and her husband started a home bible study so they could mentor a young couple in their neighborhood. Today, they lead a whole community group at New Albany. In her own words,

Prior to Sojourn, we went every month to Wayside Christian Mission to help those

going through treatment. I also taught a children's Sunday school class and participated in VBS. Since coming to Sojourn, I have served at the medical clinic (as a nurse), fall festival, benevolence, Sunday medical team, and Connect. My husband and I also lead a community group. The idea of daily mission—as opposed to event driven evangelism—is what we have been trying to point our Community group toward for a long time. We are finally beginning to see signs of a deeper understanding of community and what it means to serve others out of an overflow of who Christ is in our lives.

Members

Kevin. This 32-year-old Christian (1988) brushes off all stereotypes.

According to the filmmaker's own website, he "enjoys documenting social justice issues, punching those issues in the face and experiencing the adventures in between, all while enjoying a good beer." He's been with Sojourn (Midtown) from the beginning, sharing life with an intimate group of fellow leaders. At first, he played drums for the burgeoning worship team. Soon after, he joined the media team. Eventually, he led a community group and became a deacon. Today, he and his wife are heavily involved in Midtown's care and counseling ministry. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I was deeply involved with Young Life and participated in church planting. Through it all, I always found creative ways to turn my filmmaking talent into a Christ-honoring ministry. After I came here, I became a community group leader and deacon of multi-media. My wife and I also dove into Midtown's care ministry, splitting our time between pre-marital and marital counseling. Some of my experiences have been new (e.g., counseling), while others simply apply my gifts where needed most (e.g., media & design). Until recently, our community group functioned well. Over the last three years, however, growth has stagnated for several reasons: my wife and I haven't provided strong leadership, the people who participate the most don't contribute much to the mission, and we talked about dismantling the group for greener pastures.

Anna. This 79-year-old Christian (1942) boasts of being Sojourn's oldest member. You could never tell from the gleam in her eye. At first, she resisted being interviewed because she is not currently involved in a church-sponsored ministry. It did

not take long to see that serving is in her blood. Shortly after coming here three years ago, she and a friend decided to volunteer for the nursery. Showing their love for kids, they gravitated toward the simple things—rocking, feeding, changing. Her two greatest joys are watching children play and soothing a crying baby. In her own words,

Throughout my life I have taught Sunday School classes to toddlers and preschoolers, sang in church choirs, served on a board of elders, and participated on a worship music team. After coming to Sojourn, I worked with SojournKids in the nursery until I injured my ankle. I also served food at two of the Fall Festivals and was a guide at two of the Medical Clinics. My service experience in these areas has been very gratifying. I believe our church is right on the mark for an evergrowing community church! I was also very pleased with my community group experience. Like any group, people leave for one reason or another. However, the bond we formed will keep us together in spirit. Hopefully, we'll reform and continue in the near future.

Amber. This 31-year-old Christian (1992) has been coming to Sojourn for five years. She joined her community group one year later. Until recently, however, she had not found a comfortable spot in ministry. That all changed three months ago, when the call went out for people to respond to the growing number of “connect cards.” These are written requests for assistance from members of the community who had attended a medical clinic. In a strange way, she liked being pulled from her comfort zone to talk about real issues with real people. In her own words,

Before coming to Sojourn, I volunteered at the Ronald McDonald Family Room in Norton Suburban Hospital. I checked families in and did light housekeeping, answering questions and maintaining the Family Room. Here, I've volunteered at two medical clinics, two fall festivals, and Jeff Street ministry. At the festivals, I helped with food and games. At Jeff Street, my community group served food to the marginalized. During a clinic, I help out with food and the family care room. After it's over, I join the follow up team. As a Sojourn advocate, I call people who turn in Connect Cards. I answer their questions and try to build relationships (in and out of church) if they're willing. It's awesome to be a part of the church community—serving side by side with others. The bridge that we strive to build with those outside the church is very apparent. I greatly enjoy being a part of a ministry whose ultimate goal is bringing others to Christ. This is not something I could experience at the hospital. My new CG is also encouraging. I haven't experienced all the ins and outs yet, but the group functions very well. It consists mainly of singles in their

mid-20s to early 30s. The married couple who lead are very knowledgeable, and no one is shy about speaking up. I really like how when guys and girls break out they call it “confession time”—they aren't kidding, because we really confess! It's cool to be real with other girls in the group. We do a service project once a month, usually Scarlet Hope. The interaction between everyone is fun and goofy, but also understanding and serious when it's time to dig into the Word. The overall feel of the group is very welcoming. Being so close to home allows me to pour into my own neighborhood. I really like how we stress that.

Lauren. This 25-year-old Christian (2002) speaks her mind when it comes to matters of the faith. Having grown up in a middle class suburban Christian community, she has witnessed all forms of church hypocrisy. She started attending Sojourn with her parents soon after returning from a two-year teaching stint in Vietnam. Before long, she decided to give community group life a try. Over a period of several months, Lauren became increasingly frustrated and disenchanted. Calling the fellowship “shallow” and “inwardly focused,” she stopped attending the weekly CG meetings. Eventually, she left the church altogether. In her own words,

I wasn't involved in an official ministry before coming to Sojourn. Mainly, I volunteered to teach English in Vietnam. I tried serving with the Connect team after I started coming here. Because it was poorly organized, I quickly became confused about what I was supposed to be doing. I quit going after three stints. Our church offers few opportunities to serve, and most of these take place in or around the building. Besides the health clinic, we aren't really challenged to go out to the community. With the kind of talent we have, the possibilities are endless—ESL classes for immigrants, job training for abused women, eating disorder support groups—to name a few. Aren't these the very reasons for church? Past churches I attended offered far more volunteer opportunities without the wealth of creative, talented, and driven young people. My experience with community group was no better. The members were nice (at least superficially) but very cliquish. I thought we'd spend time together outside of the weekly meeting, but it never happened. They weren't excited about meeting new people, and didn't support each other as family outside the group. We just got together once a week and talked about last Sunday's sermon. If you are going to call something a "community group," I think you should have more activities that focus on the community. I wasn't really interested in being in a bible study, I just wanted a group to share life experiences with and support each other through good and bad times. Over time I became frustrated and just I stopped going.

Karen. This 28-year-old Christian (1992) grew up as a missionary kid, facing adolescence in a dormitory with other teens. She started attending Sojourn six years ago, joining a community group two years later. It did not take long to get involved—she made a lot of friends serving coffee on the Connect team for two years. Her love for children led to volunteering for VBS. Soon thereafter, she joined SojournKids to fill a need. The children’s pastor was especially helpful. He made her feel welcome, was encouraging, and friendly. In her own words,

In my previous involvement with church I served on the worship team, leading music. At Sojourn, I have participated in SojournKids, Seed, Visual Arts, and Connect. My role in SojournKids has ranged from watching infants to teaching five-year olds. I have also served two and three-year olds at VBS. I served on Seed’s medical clinic committee, organizing food for three clinics and assisting with music for another. I served on Connect for about 2 1/2 years, making coffee and greeting people. My experiences here have been great. I had to take the initiative at first, but constant encouragement from elders and other leaders kept me going. Today, I serve on the committee for the new art gallery. I also volunteer for special events. I joined a community group soon after joining the church, then dropped out for awhile and joined another with my husband. I think our community group functions very well. There is a lot of open dialogue where many people participate. In our girl and guy time, we try to go deep and to open up with one another. Only about half the group currently serves at the church. To help everyone get involved and appreciate the importance of serving, we’re exploring ways to serve together.

Frank. This 29-year-old Christian (1997) is Karen’s husband. From his gentle demeanor, you would never know he doubles as lead guitarist in a popular rock band. His quiet spirit betrays an inner turmoil: pleasing others or pursuing his passion. He finds it particularly difficult to “fit in” without losing himself. Music has always been a major part of his life and identity. He is comfortable working alone or in a small group. He longs to advance God’s mission by touching the marginalized at a heart level. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I went on high school mission trips to experience Kentucky’s

urban poverty firsthand. These inner city summer camps allowed us to teach residents the gospel while renovating their homes. It took me awhile to find my niche here. It started not long ago with performing worship songs at the medical clinic. Our team is able to decide which songs to play, how to organize the arrangement, and when to play. More recently, I joined the music ministry's development program. I'm still working out what that will look like with one of the leaders. I have to say that serving as an adult has been a mixed blessing. On one hand, this is the first time I've had to audition for a service opportunity. On the other, I've never had the freedom to jump in and create a position like I did. My community group has undergone several leadership and membership changes in the last year. As a result, I don't think we've been serving the church effectively. Now that leaders and members are stabilizing, we're starting to challenge the group to get more involved.

Kathy. This 58-year-old Christian's (1966) love of life is contagious. If her mother's faith inspired her to go deep, her commitment as staff with Campus Crusade challenged her to go long. Growing up as one of ten children in a home where Jesus was both known and served, the gift of "giving back" became a way-of-life. She has particularly fond memories of ministering as a teenager with the Agape Singers and years later serving as a missionary to Africa. Today, in the midst of full-time Kingdom service, she is realizing her mother's vision for the inner city while breaking down racial and cultural barriers. One of her favorite sayings is: "We come into worship and go out to serve!" In her own words,

When it comes to my church experience and walk with Christ, I am (by God's grace) known as a "Timothy"—I accepted Jesus as my personal Savior at an early age, and in the midst of growing have served Him ever since! Billy Graham once noted that too many Christians try to fulfill what God has promised "in the flesh." Because I love the Lord and live by His Word, I choose to experience His "Spirit-filled" life every day. For 33 years, I have been in full-time Christian ministry. Now I'm in a season of encouraging the church as she lives out God's heart for the poor! Serving through the church is my life. Because it's both challenging and time consuming, I joined a church three years ago where I can commit in other ways. God uses Sojourn as my "filling station" to help keep me focused! Although my community group is changing from the 'mixed motley crew' that made us unique, I'll always cherish our rich fellowship, prayer, bible study, and worship--all the blessings of an extended family! From that source of joy, I hope our new group does a better job of challenging a "faith that works." Like many churches, we tend to emphasize evangelism over discipleship. Good works are an overflow of faith

however, and this will continue to be a “God thing” our church teaches the Word and we reason to follow God’s heart for the world and the poor. Not only will this make a difference in the lives of all saints, it will [help](#) demolish the 20/80 Rule in church ministry.

Justin. This 46-year-old Christian (2010) is refreshingly blunt about what he believes. His sense of duty leaves little room for excuses. By the same token, once Justin commits to a task, you can count on his wholehearted participation. Known for his “quotable quotes,” he only speaks when needed and sticks to the point. In his own words,

Before Sojourn, I did not participate in any ministry at a church. Once I became a member, I felt compelled to participate. I started off by committing to serve as an usher for four months. Because I received clear instructions, it was easy to follow the guidelines and expectations. The second ministry I joined was the Handyman group. Here I discovered a void in leadership and poor communications. I took it upon myself to do the best I could. This situation continues to be frustrating, and my participation is now sporadic. I am constantly looking for ways to stay motivated. I also started attending a community group almost immediately after visiting Sojourn. In the beginning, it was an unusual experience, but yet a welcoming one. Most of these groups are filled with humans, so I searched for a group of compatible people. This proved to be difficult. In a matter of four years, I attended eight groups. Most are led and attended by very young people, who have faced little more than going to school and getting married. It took awhile before I realized that the bond of fellowship in Christ is most important. Since that revelation, I’ve stayed with the same group for almost an entire year. Most members serve well individually; now we have to work on serving together.

Henry. This 54-year-old Christian (1974) is a polished, articulate communicator. A seasoned engineering consultant, he seems as comfortable advising executives in a boardroom as he does teaching adults in a Sunday School class. He is also versatile—soon after becoming a wine connoisseur, he decided to get a realtor’s license. He questioned some of the decisions made by Sojourn’s young leaders, but also tried to be part of the solution. In the end, he felt like his voice was being ignored. He and his wife now worship elsewhere. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I held a variety of leadership positions in Christian ministry—adult Sunday School teacher, youth group leader, deacon of missions—to name a

few. I also helped out with benevolent ministries like food pantry and homeless shelter. I even served as a small group facilitator and host. After coming here [Midtown], I started off with Mercy Monday before my wife and I agreed to host the Robbins community group. For me, serving at Sojourn was something of a paradox: on one hand, there is very little structure; on the other, very little leeway is given to accomplish your task. In retrospect, it would be dishonest to say our community group functioned well. To admit it operated poorly is closer to the truth.

Molly. This 54-year-old Christian (1971) lights up any room she enters. She is also Henry's wife. Having seen enough hypocrisy and legalism to last a lifetime, her heart yearns for authentic fellowship where brothers and sisters genuinely love each other in Christ. She also knows firsthand what it feels like to be ostracized and marginalized. That is why her greatest joy is serving the poor, the needy, and the homeless. In her own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I volunteered at a homeless ministry for men called St John Center. Once I came here [Midtown], I got heavily involved in my community group, which my husband and I ended up hosting for over a year. The Robbins community group didn't work as well it should have because the format was too restrictive and the leadership too inexperienced. Not enough time was dedicated to truly getting to know and trust one another. The age gaps among the group were just too wide to be closed due primarily to differences in communication styles and philosophy of what spiritual community should look like. I felt my home was just a convenience to be used and it didn't matter whether I was there or not. In the end, my husband and I decided to move on. Now, I split my time between St. John's and Scarlet Hope—two equally vital ministries that allow me to serve both men and women. If I ever engage in community group again, I will pray, research, and question those in authority before I participate.

Robert. This 58-year-old Christian (1973) freely admits he can turn cynical with little prompting. His formative years as a believer were ideal. He and his wife were deeply involved in a vibrant movement that stressed two practices rarely found in church today—intense mentoring relationships and Spirit-filled ministry. His mastery of God's Word is matched only by his vast experience in the field. The challenge of leading a large secular institution was icing on the cake. Through it all, his passion for the "least of

these” has never dimmed. His experience at Sojourn (New Albany) has been less bright. From Robert’s vantage point, his knack for improving church life—normally a blessing from God—is beginning to feel like a curse. He feels marginalized, disempowered, and alienated. In his own words,

In other churches, in other cities, I was invited and allowed to participate in a number of ways within my gifting. I have been blocked from such participation here, except for being asked to lead a home group, which I am glad to do. In my experience at Sojourn, only professionals and the orbit of interns, seminarians, and deacons are allowed to participate in most things. It seems to me that laity is allowed to hand out bulletins and make coffee. My service experience has been far less than at other churches (bigger and smaller) in other cities. Other churches welcomed the help in carrying the load and tried to match gifts with needs. Sojourn seems to eschew such attempts to help, having more than enough professionals and paraprofessionals to do the job the way they want it done. Our first home group yielded both friends and fellowship. Because we had an outward focus, we were actually helping people. Then, a pastor stopped by and suggested we should start attending a group closer to home. We soon discovered that members of our new group have known each other since childhood. To make matters worse, the leader was a top-down seminarian: "I can't be your friend. I am your leader." Our arrival had stretched the group to the limit. When the leader split us in two without consulting anyone, people became angry. Their dissatisfaction, combined with his frustration, led the leader to resign without warning. I was asked to lead the newly constituted group—mostly people from our original fellowship. Today, few of the dozen who attend are from Sojourn. Our main challenge has been physical healing: a stroke here, heart problems there, a few broken bones. Through it all, Grace and Mercy have prevailed. A friend’s miraculous recovery from stroke is one for the ages!

Julie. This 27-year-old Christian (2008) is warm, caring, and unpretentious. She is also a brand-new mother. She and her husband came to Sojourn (Midtown) four years ago. Two years later, they joined the Robbins community group. Initially, she tried her hand at greeting people during worship with coffee and tea. Wanting to help with an obvious need, she began serving in the nursery and stayed two years. Except for the shortage of workers, it was a great opportunity to meet other people and get connected. Today, she enjoys serving at a medical clinic whenever she can. In her own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I worked in a variety of nurseries. I kept up the tradition when I

came here. I also volunteered at health fairs and an occasional fall festival. My roles were equally varied: watching kids, performing massages (my profession), and setting up food. I really enjoy serving here because everyone has a good attitude and joyful spirit. As far as seasonal ministries, there's a huge need to reach out to neighbors, and it seems like everyone loves ministering to them. On the down side, the nursery is really understaffed. When you're overwhelmed by your job, it's hard to enjoy the kids. My community group did pitch in when we heard about a need, but I wish we were more proactive in finding new ways to serve.

Tyler. This 29-year-old Christian (2008) is Julie's wife and a proud dad. He's trying to cut back on the extensive travel required of an IT who services several retail stores. He is grateful to Campus Crusade, where he "did a lot of cool stuff" early in his faith and made lifelong friends. He fondly remembers being challenged by his mentor to jump into street evangelism. He jokes that parachurch ministries "breed people to be like that." In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn [Midtown], I took part in several short-term ministries like food drives and street ministries. After coming here, I continued to volunteer for a variety of projects—community events and volunteer relief work, to name two—but nothing steady. I've always preferred serving as a regular worker rather than leading a ministry. I like serving here because we're able to meet a lot of the practical needs for those who need it most. My community group is especially quick about responding to calls for help.

Sarah. This 37-year-old Christian (2007) has high energy and a sharp wit. One can tell that when she decides to get involved in a cause, things are going to change. Soon after joining Sojourn (Midtown) five years ago, she volunteered for the nursery. She felt it was where the church could use her most, and she sincerely appreciates the parents. Hearing 30 babies cry in unison was stressful, but watching them grow up made it all worthwhile. It was not long before she moved to the Connect team, eventually trying her hand at VBS. In her own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I served in the nursery at numerous churches. Once I came here, I got involved with SojournKids (both nursery and 3-year olds). I also man the Powerpoint slides during the 7p.m. service. Serving at our church has helped me

get to know a lot of different people and to build a sense of community. In other experiences I've had, I didn't meet a lot of people or develop close friendships with the people I was serving with. I've had a wonderful experience with my community group this past year. Our leaders send out weekly emails with prayer requests and updates about what is going on in our group. We've done at least three service projects together as a group (e.g., the girls recently prepared a meal for Scarlet Hope and hung out with the ladies). My only complaint is we never start on time and end up going late!

Austin. This 29-year-old Christian (1997) started attending Midtown five years ago, joining a community group soon thereafter. His no-nonsense demeanor reflects the conviction that service is “more about action than feeling.” He believes all Christians should “step out in faith and just do it.” It did not take long for him to show up at SojournKids. Over the next year or two, he made a lot of friends. Today, he serves in a unique area of gifting: financial coaching. He loves “seeing the light bulb go off” when people track their spending. In his own words,

Prior to Sojourn, I was never involved in a formal ministry. Since coming here, I’ve volunteered for SEED, provided financial coaching, and helped out with Sojourn Kids. At Sojourn, I find that Christ is the center and focus of every ministry, not the ministry itself. I am also very pleased with my community group experience.

Sally. This 44-year-old Christian (1976) built a strong reputation for creative marketing before seizing a unique opportunity to branch out in Louisville from her life in California. Two years after moving to Louisville, she and her husband had still not found a church that balances growth in Christ with loving your neighbor. Her daughter challenged her to check out Sojourn. It was not long before Sally was helping out with medical clinics, serving in the nursery (Titus 2 mom’s group), running Powerpoint slides during service, and assisting with Recovery Groups. Still, she longed to encourage hurting women who desperately needed to understand their identity in Christ Jesus. The last ministry—now called “Redemption Groups”—led Sally to undergo intensive training

and many “life changing” experiences as a counselor. Though she still struggles with bouts of anxiety, she has learned “it’s all about meeting that one person God wants you to meet.” In her own words,

My past ministry involvement includes working in a nursery and counseling on a crisis hotline. I was growing in my faith, but I wasn’t fully committed to my church family. I always waited for the big, “Ah ha!” moment to serve in a big way. It has been a long road, and God was definitely preparing me for His service. Once I committed to join the New Albany launch, my SEED leader and I started a women’s group to deepen our fellowship and learn about our community’s needs. That led to supporting various local charities through the Southern Indiana Women’s Fellowship and SEED. This year, I’m coordinating New Albany’s Women’s Christmas Gift Exchange. It’s a great way to combine my gifts of administration, hospitality, and mercy. My newest community group (third one due to multiplying) hopes to make service a key part of our identity. In past CG’s, we have stuck with one outreach ministry on a monthly basis so we could build deeper relationships.

Summary

Subsequent to the interviews, eight leaders and eleven members from the participant pool (twelve men and seven women) were divided into three focus groups that convened separately (Appendix 6). The researcher moderated the sessions (Appendix 7) with help from an Assistant Moderator (Appendix 8). Guided by seven themes derived from the interviews (Appendix 9), the researcher prompted each group to explore the meaning behind the propositions and their relationship as a cohesive message (Appendix 10). Highlights from their interaction were then distributed to each group for qualitative feedback (Appendix 11, Appendix 12, and Appendix 13). Points of agreement were reduced to preliminary findings on the role of church-sponsored service (Appendix 14). Finally, participants were invited to provide constructive feedback before drawing the study’s conclusions.

Findings and Displays

Seven research questions were used to organize the display and communication of findings. These questions were designed to explore divergent perceptions held by a critical array of leaders and members regarding opportunities for service offered by the host church. Following each question, the researcher summarizes the findings. Next, the descriptive data are presented, followed by a discussion of their possible meaning and relevance to the study. Any theoretical lens used for interpreting the data is also disclosed. To protect their privacy, participants were assigned fictitious names.

Research Question 1

In what ways does the church's organizational structure align with each SDT element, as displayed in its documents, online resources, and other media?

Summary of Findings

When first viewed through SDT's theoretical lens, Sojourn's ministry structure appears to be an organizational enigma. Juxtaposed with certain autonomy-supportive elements are classic indicia of a controlling climate. While most documentation and pastoral initiatives align with SDT's organizational values, extrinsic incentives for achieving corporate goals were also found. In contrast to its highly developed model of church-sponsored service, Sojourn's structure for encouraging personal ministry is less defined. Ultimately, choosing to formalize church-sponsored services over undergirding personal ministries may inhibit the kind of intrinsically motivated, Spirit-empowered service needed for Christian formation.

Introduction

The first question examined Sojourn's organizational structure from the perspective of Self-Determination Theory. Primary sources included field visits; data from the church's website; content from staff handbooks, curricula, job descriptions and other documentation; community group functions; and church-sponsored services. This

documentary review provided a non-threatening means for analyzing the church's view of institutional service and the attitudes and behaviors exhibited by leaders. Particular attention was paid to how structural forces encourage or suppress participation in ministry.

Theoretical Lens

The ultimate expression of corporate personality is its organizational structure. It is the skeleton that holds all movement together. Through structural controls, church leaders establish expectations for what members will do to achieve corporate objectives. Because the strategy of empowerment is to regain productivity through people, organic structures are best suited for maximizing flexibility and adaptability. Characteristics include less specialization, fewer procedures, equal access to information, and fewer status distinctions. The resulting structure looks more like interconnected mini-enterprises than a centralized hierarchy.

A central tenet of Self-Determination Theory is that social environments significantly impact personal motivation, performance and wellbeing (Black and Deci 2000, 740). "Autonomous" environments are distinguished from those perceived as "controlling." Although both produce motivated action, the resulting behaviors reflect different levels of perceived autonomy and coercion. Autonomy-supportive social contexts promote self-determined motivation, healthy development, and optimal functioning (Black and Deci 2000, 740). Such behaviors are fully endorsed because they are interesting (intrinsic motivation) or personally important (identified regulation). Conversely, feeling controlled involves acting with a sense of pressure (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 229). Coercive demands and reward contingencies (external regulation) or a sense of guilt or obligation (introjected regulation) can pressure an individual to perform

preferred behaviors that are not personally endorsed.

According to Ryan and Deci (2002, 151), leadership practices that promote perceptions of autonomy include allowing individual choice; encouraging experimentation and self-initiation; fostering exploration, risk-taking, and persistence; offering optimal challenges; providing non-judgmental feedback; giving meaningful rationale for requested behavior; acknowledging feelings; and providing opportunities for cooperative learning. By demonstrating confidence in his followers, an empowering leader also bolsters feelings of relatedness and competence (Deci and Ryan 2000, 227).

In contrast, leaders who rely on positional authority tend to behave (deliberately or otherwise) in coercive, pressuring, and authoritarian ways to impose a specific and preconceived way of thinking and behaving (Ryan and Deci 2002, 153). While such external forces may prompt the desired response, subordinates perceive a loss of control that undermines their psychological needs and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In the end, they feel compelled to respond in ways that thwart their own needs in order to satisfy the leader's expectations (Mageau & Vallerand 2003, 883).

Descriptive Data

The first research question drew upon the researcher's understanding of Sojourn's structure as informed by the documentary evidence and SDT literature. Some of the language employed in the church's materials aligns closely with SDT's organizational values. For example, a handout for prospective members states that,

Gospel freedom walks the line between Legalism and License. Christ followers have freedom to discern and decide in various situations. It is not a blanket freedom, but one that requires dependence upon the Spirit, attention to the Scriptures, and wisdom from the community.

A literature piece for the SEED ministry put it another way: “While the church must care for the poor, the Bible gives Christians freedom in deciding the extent and the manner in which they do so, either directly or indirectly.” It adds that community group members “serve according to their assets, desires and strengths.” The online introduction to community group life takes this concept even further:

Within a group, spiritual growth, accountability and soul care can occur organically as members learn together how to love the Lord with all their heart as well as love one’s neighbors as one’s self. Groups are not only the primary entry point for community within Sojourn but truly represent the church at a personal level. Belonging to a group is the way to truly be a part of Sojourn. Groups also serve as a means of reaching others for Christ, recognizing that seeing the gospel lived out in a caring community serves as a powerful testimony to the radical love of God (John 13:34-35).

Daniel Montgomery, the church’s lead pastor, shared how gratifying these connections can be in the church’s 2012 report:

One thing I love about this community is how pastors, leaders and members work together and live for the mission. This plays out in a wide variety of ministries across our campuses: community groups, the arts, women’s ministries, SojournKids, Sojourn International, and countless others.

That Sojourn Community Church is autonomy-supportive is more than a marketing statement. After visiting its Midtown campus, one contemporary critic of the church in America reported encountering authentic community:

The many people I have met who attend this beautiful congregation of Christ followers have shown me that through the intentional nature of their community groups and community focus, Sojourn has become a voice of truth and love in the city of Louisville through building relationships and helping those in need, both physically and spiritually. (Henry 2012, 93)

Nonetheless, some indicia used by SDT researchers to identify a controlling environment were also found. For example, several extrinsic incentives for achieving corporate goals (“We can’t keep growing if we don’t make budget”) were interspersed among the autonomy-supportive cues (“You can choose how and when you want to contribute”)

(Black & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989). The juxtaposition of these autonomous and controlling signals made it difficult to draw a clear conclusion about the host's organizational structure. The church's conviction that leadership should be centralized under a plurality of elders accountable to God challenges the core of SDT's theoretical construct. Pursuant to Sojourn's constitution, senior leadership is vested in a governing board of "elders/ pastors" who serve as intermediaries between God and His people (see Figure 2).

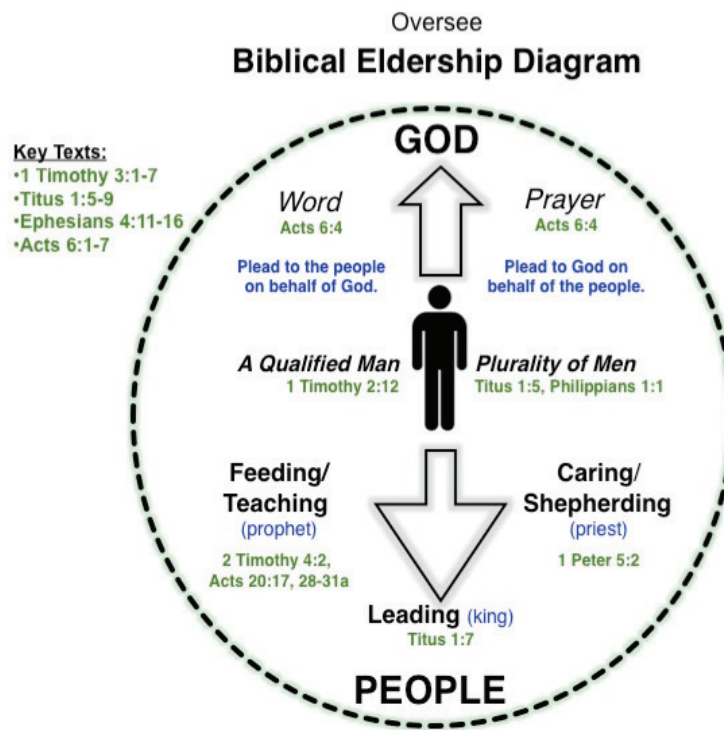


Figure 2: Sojourn's eldership diagram

These qualified men—exhibiting mature faith and upright character—carry on Christ's tripartite role of prophet, priest, and king by pleading to the people on God's behalf and vice versa. Specific responsibilities that could be perceived as controlling include ruling the church (1 Tim 5:17), giving account to God (Heb 13:17), teaching

sound doctrine (Titus 1:9), refuting false teaching, protecting against false teachers (Acts 20:17-31), and disciplining unrepentant members (Matt 18:15-17). Practices likely perceived as supporting personal autonomy include praying for members, caring for people (1 Pet 5:2-5), living exemplary lives (Heb 13:7), teaching the Bible correctly, and working hard. Duties that appear to combine features of both include properly exercising God's authority (Acts 20:28) and rightly using money and power.

In response, members are expected to link the church's gospel commitment to the community's wellbeing. New members covenant to form authentic community; clarify each person's blessings and responsibilities; encourage consistency, accountability and loving unity; and accomplish God's will for the church. Members also promise to uphold the elders' teaching; preserve unity and peace; participate in corporate worship; join a community group; give regularly, sacrificially and joyfully; commit to the Sojourn family; help fulfill the church's vision, mission and values; use their spiritual gifts; and submit to church discipline. In exchange for their commitment, leaders promise to strive toward a healthy congregation where every member lives out the gospel and encourages others to follow. Practical training for accomplishing these objectives is offered through several venues:

1. *Men's Ministry*—equips men to be leaders in their homes, families, jobs and society. It also hosts a yearly Men's Retreat and operates a Handyman Ministry.
2. *Sojourn Women*—provides opportunities for all women to be equipped by God's Word and encouraged by His people to live out the gospel in their vital roles as women, wives and mothers. It also sponsors training in how to feed from God's Word and offers courses on foundational truths that shape lives and impact relationships.
3. *Porterbrook*—Sojourn's church-wide training curriculum for understanding how the gospel transforms lives and relationships to experience the abundant life Christ promised.
4. *Foundations*—fifteen-week leadership development series for men and women.

5. *Pastor's School*—training men to serve, lead, plant or work within the local church.

Through these and other means, elders hope to instill five “core identities” derived from the gospel: (1) live for Christ’s glory (*worshiper*); (2) seek each other’s mutual development in Him (*learner*); (3) care for each other as brothers and sisters (*family*); (4) serve others with their lives (*servant*); and (5) restore all things to Christ (*missionary*). These identities are intended to shape how members live in community according to the following behaviors:

1. *We Listen*—we actively listen to God daily and at specific times in community. We regularly interact with God’s Word, His Spirit, creation, and as Sojourn Gathered.
2. *We Celebrate*—we celebrate God’s incredible outpouring of love and life to us every Sunday at Sojourn Gathered and throughout the week in Group Life.
3. *We Pray*—we pray for Christ’s peace in our neighborhood, greater Louisville, our nation, and the entire world. We pray His Spirit guides us in sharing the Good News about the coming kingdom and brings healing, restoration and reconciliation.
4. *We Bless*—we bless others through our actions and our words. We ask God to show us whom to bless each week in our families, jobs, recreational activities and neighborhoods.
5. *We Rest*—we enjoy periods of rest and reflection, allowing God to recharge our tired bodies and minds.

At one level, the church’s understanding of “servant” seems to incorporate the traditional understanding of Christian ministry—leaders prioritize corporate and community needs, then recruit people to fill them. For example, the membership handout emphasizes the institutional dimension of gospel service:

We are servants of God who serve others with our lives because Christ Himself came to serve and to give His life for us. Our primary expression of this as a church is the pathways to service in our various ministries, and the many projects coordinated through Seed, our Louisville renewal ministry (Matthew 20: 25-28; 25:31-46; John 13:1-17; Philippians 2:5:11; 1 Peter 2:16).

Needs endorsed by the elders are typically communicated “from a distance” (e.g., pulpit announcements, website resources, email communications, or mass mailing). By choice

and design, church-sponsored options have remained relatively constant in recent years. Some—such as Mercy Monday, the Medical Clinic, Handyman Ministry and Jefferson Street—directly impact the surrounding community. Others—like Sunday Connect, SojournKids, Worship Team, and Gospel Counseling—focus on helping the congregation become better servants. “Up close” leadership takes place throughout Sojourn’s community group network. Week by week, church staff disseminate discussion questions to help members process Sunday’s sermon for personal application. Through an informal gift assessment instrument, CG leaders then nudge members into an endorsed ministry. Interested persons need only fill out a Connect Card, visit the information booth, sign up for classes, or scan “News & Events” on the church’s website for new opportunities.

At the same time, evidence abounds that leaders do not limit Christian service to church-sponsored choices. Various documents and teaching materials approach service as a sign of authentic faith. A membership lesson on spiritual giftedness sets the tone. Described as a “special grace of the Spirit from God,” biblical gifts are touted for their ability to benefit mankind and enhance Christian growth. In a 2008 sermon called “Be the Church: Use Your Gifts,” lead Pastor Daniel Montgomery proclaimed that believers “belong to each other” as interdependent members of Christ’s body. He noted that if everyone exercised their spiritual gifts, ordinary members could join seminary graduates in “being the church.” His challenge to apply members’ gifts to church-sponsored services came with a promise: “Get in the game, you’ll come to understand your role more fully.” Montgomery’s newly released book on Christian formation, co-authored with Sojourn’s Worship Pastor (Montgomery and Cosper 2013, 152) shows his understanding of personal ministry continues to expand:

We’re guilty of glamorizing service. The same impulse that makes us into

facebraggers and position-jockeys looks for opportunities to serve that are high-profile or highly esteemed. We gravitate toward service that has high visibility, looking for opportunities to serve that elicit compliments. Yet we ignore the simple, boring everyday opportunities to serve family, friends, and people who can never pay us back. We might fly across the world to feed children in a ghetto but ignore our neighbors who need help carrying in their groceries God wired us up with unique gifts that provide avenues for unique service. Sometimes this gets overly complicated, and we're told we are to "discover our spiritual gifts," a process that requires taking tests and learning a new language (like what the "gift of helps" means). But frankly, it doesn't have to be nearly that complicated. Ask yourself, "What am I good at?" Ask the same question to some people who know you well, and then ask, "How can I serve people with that gift?"

Montgomery's description of service envisions the whole world as a stage, with one's unique makeup cueing each servant when and how to enter a scene. This imagery aligns well with SDT's emphasis on 'going with the flow' according to how people are wired. What is less clear from the documentation and researcher's personal observations is the extent to which personal ministry is guided by "up close" leaders or enriched by transformative learning. For the most part, it appeared leaders simply trust that members will take the initiative to serve those within their sphere of influence.

Discussion

SDT researchers have found that an organizational structure perceived as autonomy-supportive will produce higher commitment from members than one viewed as controlling. In that regard, leadership practices that appear to elevate corporate programs over personal calling fuel perceptions of a controlling environment with low expectations of personal commitment. These and other common impediments to Christ-honoring service have not gone unnoticed at Sojourn. In a recent blog, Montgomery asked: "What would a church look like if it were structured and designed to be all about God's Word and good deeds?" His answer: *It would be engineered for action*. Rallying behind

Montgomery's challenge, the elders are determined to decentralize ministry authority for neighborhood deployment.

Based on the researcher's personal observation, two institutional obstacles may be blurring the church's bold vision. The first is a leadership model that rejects clergy/laity distinctions in theory while appearing in some instances to reinforce them in practice. Generally, this philosophical orientation assumes that executive leadership is reserved for seminary-trained men called to full-time pastoral ministry (Junkans 2011, 7). Proponents cite the need to set men apart called by God for "ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4). The data clearly reflect leaders' sincere desire to maintain ministry structures that further the priesthood of all believers. In a random sampling of sermons on service, the researcher found that unbiblical distinctions between "clergy" and "laity" were dispelled at every opportunity. In a particularly poignant message on September 7, 2008, Montgomery debunked the whole notion of a "professional" model of ministry:

What comes to mind when you think, "church"? If what comes to mind is primarily some kind of organization or institution or building—or even some personality—then you think of ministry as something that is primarily done by the professionals. When we think of church through the institutional lens, ministry is for the professionals. And those who are gifted, they need to go to seminary. They're on varsity, and they got the letterman jacket. They are leaders and teachers and preachers, right? You may serve in the church, but you're primarily a spectator. But if you see church as a body—the body of Christ—with Jesus Christ as the Head, everybody does ministry. For ministry to occur, everyone needs to do their part and your posture is one of a participant. It's not like you're the "laity," and the real serious ministers are the "clergy." That's not a New Testament distinction we see. The whole body is the called ones of God.

On other occasions, Montgomery has drawn freely from his "street" experiences before Christ to communicate the gospel in earthy language members can digest. Equally significant is that Cosper, Sojourn's co-founder, has been able to articulate the Christian life powerfully without any college degree or seminary training. That fully one-half of the elders are unpaid laity affirms the church's commitment extends beyond its founders.

Finally, the establishment of a “pastors school” to develop leaders throughout the congregation has gone a long way toward realizing their dream.

SDT’s theoretical construct of an empowering organization, however, leaves little room for bold plans or good intentions. Dark perceptions can obscure even the brightest reality (Deci and Ryan 1991, 237). A significant concern regarding Sojourn is that virtually all pastors on staff are seminary trained. More often than not, online descriptions of the church’s ministry functions are also written by seminarians. The same can be said of the video productions shown at all services. Seminarians also fill many of the “up close” teaching positions, sometimes doubling as CG leaders. Finally, a large seminary near Midtown’s campus ensures an abundant supply of “clergy in training.” Despite Montgomery’s caution about placing students into leadership, a steady stream of seminarians continue to seek challenging ways to satisfy the school’s service requirement. Another measure of the seminary’s influence is Sojourn’s publication ministry. Among several books written in recent months, four of five authors are seminary-trained. Arguably, this statistic merely reflects the need for proper training in the “ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4). Nonetheless, some members could view the seminary’s dominance as disempowering.

Closely related to perceptions of a professional model of ministry is an expansive view of eldership that could be seen as controlling tasks beyond a shepherd’s responsibility. While it is noble to desire this high calling, eldership brings heavy responsibilities (1 Tim 3:1; 4:16). Paul warned the Ephesian elders to “[b]e on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). By feeding sheep what they really need, a good shepherd can strengthen the weak, heal the

diseased, and mend the brokenhearted (Ezek 34:1-6). Arguably, the mandate to feed and teach God's flock includes articulating His vision for a distinct congregation living in a real community at a precise moment in redemptive history. Because elders must account for every soul, members should "esteem them very highly in love" (1 Thess 5:12; Heb 13:17). Embracing Christ's commission to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19) is the highest form of submission. As personal expressions of a broader call, all ministries flow out of this fundamental directive.

It has been the researcher's experience, however, that the line separating mission from ministry can be easily blurred. According to his orientation, these functions are meant to serve *complimentary* roles (Rom 14:1-12; 1 Cor 12:12-13). The first addresses matters of faith; the second involves serving with faith. One requires submission to God's authority; the other assumes freedom in the Spirit. Striking a healthy balance in a growing congregation may require separation of leadership functions. *Elders* instruct, inspire, and convict "from a distance"; *facilitators* encourage, challenge, and correct "up close." Sharing these tasks does not abrogate the shepherd's responsibility before God (John 21:15-17). It simply recognizes that elders are prone to take on *more* than God intended out of their deep love for Christ's sheep. The resulting church structures empower members to experience ultimate fulfillment and freedom in Christ (John 8:32).

Sojourn's model of church-sponsored service appears to straddle the fence between mission and ministry. The standard menu of endorsed ministries offered in recent years may be steering members into venues unrelated to giftedness or personal interest. By setting ministry priorities and endorsing specific options, Sojourn's elders

could end up stifling members' ability to shape their own kingdom contribution. Such programmatic approaches unwittingly tend to restrain novel expressions of grace in favor of corporate unity. Brad Lomenick, lead visionary and President of Catalyst, believes every person who receives salvation is personally called to glorify God through a unique set of divinely-ordained passions, skills, and gifts:

Every Christian has two callings in life: a spiritual one to salvation and also a vocational calling. Life is too short to miss either one. Your two callings are separate but inseparable. The first informs the way you'll live out your second calling. The realization of what Christ has done for us produces a compulsion to live for Him. When we talk about one's "calling," we're speaking about the vocational kind that answers this question: "I've decided to follow God, but how does He want me to use my gifts and passions?" (Lomerick 2013, 5)

Lomerick adds that "calling isn't a pot of gold to be found at the end of a rainbow. It's not buried deep beneath the ground in unmarked soil. God wants us to use our gifts and passions, and He's placed them in plain sight" (Lomerick 2013, 13). Rather than *constrain* members' quest for significance, an empowering mission will *launch* diverse ministries infused with passion and transformed by experience. According to a noted professor of missions at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, blurring the line between mission and ministry has serious implications:

[N]o one else is a proper judge of your place of service—not a pastor, professor, parent, mission agency, or boss. Only God should be allowed to guide you in the fulfillment of your calling. It won't make sense to the world, but we do not serve the world or seek its approval. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. (Sills 2012, 1)

Sills' solution—relying only on God to guide members toward their call—introduces a whole new set of problems. In the researcher's biblical adaptation of SDT's motivational model, the responsibility for articulating the church's vision, mission and values remains with those called to shepherd God's flock. The elders' prime directive is to protect Christ's bride while advancing His mission (2 Cor 12:15; 1 Pet 5:1-3). To pave the way,

they must instill “common goals, common values, the right structure, and the ongoing training and development [members] need to perform and to respond to change” (Mohler 2012, 118).

Unlike Sojourn’s highly developed program for church-sponsored service, structures for encouraging and sustaining personal ministry are less defined. All responsibility for challenging, encouraging, placing, and supporting community service has been delegated to the church’s vast community group network. The elders’ strategy affirms the importance of nurturing Christ-honoring service in an intimate community of faith. Over time, they hope CG members learn to share their ministry goals and hold each other accountable for serving their neighbors. In some instances, the elders’ plan is working beautifully. Pastor Ivey provided the most dramatic example:

In my CG over just the past two weeks, members have intrinsically served one another in the following ways outside or in addition to any formal gathering or church-sponsored service: provided meals to new moms and dads, provided hospitality and meals for each other, helped repair each others homes, given counsel on a variety of topics including vocation, death of a family member, finances, fear and loss, as well as sending flowers to a group member and together assisting neighbors with benevolence. All of this is non-sponsored ministry and takes place in varying degrees in every group fostering an environment where formation and maturity take place. Community as an organic structure is the primary context for Spirit-empowered service. This is why such emphasis is placed on community and groups.

In the researcher’s personal experience, however, such activity rarely occurs. Besides emphasizing service as a lifestyle during membership class and expounding its importance from the pulpit, there is little evidence that leaders actively oversaw non-sponsored ministry. Most members could not answer *whether* their partners are involved in community service, much less name the ministry or understand its significance. Neither is there a compelling sense that members who do serve are operating out of their spiritual giftedness. Over a period of three years, in fact, the researcher observed only one

instance where a CG member used the informal gift assessment guide provided for this purpose. Without such structures, many members lack the extrinsic motivation to serve on a consistent basis. Corporate ignorance about members' involvement in personal ministry could also perpetuate perceptions that the 20/80 Rule prevails.

When viewed through SDT's theoretical lens, Sojourn's ministry structure could be described as an organizational enigma. Juxtaposed with certain autonomy-supportive elements are classic indicia of a controlling climate. While most of the church's documentation and pastoral initiatives align with SDT's values, extrinsic incentives for achieving corporate goals also exist. Because God's recipe for kingdom leadership combines "autonomous" and "controlling" ingredients, it would be foolish to measure Sojourn's structure by SDT's yardstick too rigidly. However, if left unchecked, misperceptions about the church's ministry climate could lead to confusion and conflict. Choosing to micromanage church-sponsored services—instead of undergirding personal ministries with appropriate structures—will only inhibit the free flow of intrinsically motivated, Spirit-empowered service needed for Christian formation. As shown in the next inquiry, Sojourn's potential for Christ-honoring service may hinge more on perspective and experience than riveting sermons and noble intentions.

Research Question 2

In what ways do leaders and members describe the church's motivational climate, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

Summary of Findings

Half the participants said Sojourn is the best church they ever encountered. Commonly cited reasons include penetrating all of life with the gospel, dealing with sin openly and honestly, meeting people where they are, preaching from the bible, and showing genuine compassion for others. When the topic turned to motivational climate, differences in perspective emerged between leaders and members. Most lay leaders felt empowered for

the task, while some staffers saw their intrinsic motivation decrease. Among those who do not lead, 10 of 17 used disempowering language to describe the church's ministry structure. Older participants were more likely to describe a hierarchical institution that is seminary-dominated. Such perceptions run counter to the researcher's understanding of Sojourn's true ministry philosophy. Channeling the church's energy through the community group network was a separate theme. Because community group leaders make natural mentors, participants felt Sojourn's elders should reassess the current plan for recruiting, equipping, and developing true shepherds.

Introduction

The second question applied the same SDT elements to compare how leaders and members perceived the motivational climate for church-sponsored service. It turned out to be the only significant clash of perspectives between leaders and members, with most of the static coming from a handful of older participants who felt marginalized. Consistent with the study's qualitative orientation, the researcher invited all stakeholders to speak up, to offer suggestions for improvement, and to be straightforward with their constructive criticism. Encouraging participants to challenge the status quo in this manner empowered them to contribute to their church's future. The researcher hoped the contrast between the church's reality and God's ideal for church-sponsored service would create a sense of urgency for systemic change. Topics covered through personal interviews and focus group discussions included whether any leader has attempted to get to know the participant, whether a leader has attempted to understand the participant's passion, whether a leader has attempted to place the participant in ministry based on his or her gifts, passions, and life experience, and suggestions for enriching church-sponsored services.

Descriptive Data

Sojourn was selected as a "highly effective" Christian enterprise for good reason. By all accounts, the church's vision of neighborhood service was forged through

earnest prayer, robust discussion, and humble reflection. “Sojourn” now represents an unwavering commitment to the Bible, an uncompromising drive to work for the city’s best and the Kingdom’s highest, a passion to redeem art and culture, and a love for “the least of these.” For the most part, participants reinforced this glowing picture of church life. Approximately one-half shared that Sojourn is the best church they ever encountered. This experience was most pronounced in a couple of older participants who had been exposed to a variety of faith traditions. According to Alice,

I have never been into the traditional church format. I like Sojourn because it lets you be real. The leaders don’t expect you to be perfect, so I never have to put on a happy face. I’m free to be who I am. I’m able to grow with God at *His* pace, not somebody else’s.

Attractive features cited by other participants include penetrating all of life with the gospel, dealing with sin openly and honestly, meeting people where they are, preaching from the Bible, and showing genuine compassion for others. Sarah’s comment captured the overriding sentiment: “Sojourn might be the first church that I have no reservation recommending to my non-Christian friends.”

When the topic turned to motivational climate, however, differences in perspective began to emerge between leaders and members. Perceptions among staff leaders revealed varying degrees of inner turmoil. William, a full-time staffer, observed that, “Being paid for my work frees me up financially to do what I love.” Citing the church in Acts, Joseph added, “It allows me to pay attention to my role.” At the same time, being a vocational minister presents some unique challenges. For example, Joseph found leading others who face real-world commitments difficult at times:

The idea of clocking in muddies my motivation sometimes. Because we all live busy lives, it’s difficult to find an entry point into a different world. I don’t want to live in a silo, [but] I don’t want to lump my high standards on others. I want to see how faithful they’re going to be, *then* they can build something.

His observation comports with SDT findings that extrinsic motivators like a paycheck tend to *reduce* intrinsic satisfaction in the activity (Ryan and Deci 2002, 27). Recalling his own leadership experience, Kevin agreed: "The most frustrating thing about dealing with people is that I want to solve their problems so I can see some fruit." He constantly battles the nagging feeling that "I can't get ahead of the game." Lamenting there is "no quick payoff" in ministry, William confessed "I feel like a failure most days. I struggle with disconnecting, and forgetting how to relate." Joseph is still haunted by Andy Stanley's ominous warning:

The day you get sick of calling people to action is the day you'll get through, because people are dumb like sheep—stiff necked and prone to wander.

Lay leaders were not immune to these pressures. Ryan, a community group coach, summed it up: "Life is messy because we're dealing with people." He struggles with "giving more than receiving, [finding it] hard to get a rhythm, and the weight of seeing people struggle and suffer." It was not always this way. Jacob, a lay elder who helped found the church, recalled a time when "meaningful relationships didn't compromise the gospel." More than 'Kill-your-TV' month, he missed "being in each other's homes and sharing our lives."

In contrast, 10 of 17 members used disempowering language at some point when describing the church's ministry structure. "The way the church is currently set up," volunteered Sarah, "a new member has to take the initial step before leaders can find a suitable ministry." She finds this approach unrealistic:

People are coming to church not really knowing what to do outside of church. When I came to Christ, I didn't know anything about community. I came from a background of partying—"praying" and "bible study" sounded so boring to me.

Betty shared the same sentiment in the New Albany group: “I wish leaders would personally *ask* more people to serve.” Her husband Charlie chimed in that “too often, leaders just try to fill slots.” He recalled a vivid contrast to bolster his point:

When I headed my church’s education committee, it was very difficult to get Sunday School teachers. So, when we were starting a young adult class, we decided we would really look at people and see who really fit. When we were all done, I was able to approach somebody and say, ‘We think you would be perfect for this ministry’. This not only affirmed their value—it gave them a sense that God was *calling* them to serve.

Alice immediately resonated with Charlie’s story: “I have to admit. A part of me wants to be affirmed, be recognized, to feel needed. It definitely helps motivate me to serve.”

These comments led to a fruitful discussion about service’s dual roles—blessing others with the gospel; blessing ourselves with spiritual growth. Some claimed cheerful obedience is the mark of a mature disciple; others warned less committed followers will not serve without prodding. Fred could not help wondering aloud,

Instead of waiting for members to take initiative, what if leaders said ‘Come along with me’? I think they’d be much more willing to get involved. It would also be more of a learning experience. The leader could see what the member is really good at; the member could be exposed to ministry’s relational dimension. Even if that particular opportunity wasn’t a good fit, they’d both grow spiritually and deepen their bond.

Fred’s question led the group to consider two images from scripture on the relational dynamic between leaders and members. The first is that of family: like parents, church leaders should model their faith and provide safe opportunities for members to learn and grow. The second involves a schoolhouse: like a master teacher, an effective leader provides learning opportunities that challenge a member’s mental model. Both images assume an intimate relationship where the leader knows the member’s makeup and the member trusts the leader’s judgment.

Against these hopeful images, Robert’s experience at Sojourn seems to have

undermined his sense of personal calling. He claimed, “Leaders maintain tight controls. The same group of people manages everything.” He added: “Our leaders aren’t open to different points of view.” The message he walked away with? “This is the way we roll—if you don’t like it, too bad.” Robert’s perceptions are likely tainted by “attribution error” (judging others when they fail but attributing personal weakness to circumstances). This 58-year-old believer freely admits his cynicism about leadership requires little prompting. Years earlier, he participated in a Christian movement that stressed two practices rarely found today: intense mentoring relationships and Spirit-filled ministry. Ever since the movement fizzled out, Robert has not been able to duplicate the experience. His knack for improving church life—once a blessing from God—has become a cross to bear. Small wonder he feels marginalized, disempowered, and alienated.

Only two participants who do not share Robert’s struggle perceived that leaders are obsessed about “losing control.” Lauren, a young woman returning to church after a long hiatus since her college days, offered this insight:

The most sustainable programs are those that help the church [because] you can control what you’re exposed to. Sojourn tends to squash organically grown movements.

Citing a corporate “aversion to programs,” Henry complained that Mercy Monday was “really chaotic” because it lacked “clear and consistent goals.” The result: “I felt marginalized, [as if] they weren’t looking for people like me.” He added that even ministries with clearly defined goals sometimes had rigid controls.

Among the most vibrant observed by the researcher was the care and counseling ministry pioneered by Pastor Robert Cheong. Known for his stringent emphasis on training, budding counselors learn quickly that veering from the script is highly discouraged. Because the counselor-counselee relationship is fraught with

personal, spiritual and legal risks, there is ample ground for Cheong's concern. Jesus' warning to the apostles in the first century still rings true today: "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matt 10:16). As a sanctioned ministry of the church, the need for biblical consistency and uniform methodology is paramount. Though some may deem such constraints "controlling," they provide life-giving structure for gospel ministry in a fallen world. To encourage greater participation, Cheong recently added interactive dialogue and role-playing to the curriculum. These and other progressive measures are designed to maximize a counselor's personal autonomy within a highly regulated environment.

Other church programs that could operate more autonomously sometimes lacked resources or authority to address emerging needs. The researcher observed this tension firsthand when the Robbins community group tried to obtain insurance to join a major disaster relief effort in Indiana. After several emails with administrative staff, the group's SEED coordinator was still unable to pinpoint the right person to hear their request. Before the connection was made, another team from a sister congregation invited the Robbins volunteers to join their own relief effort. While obtaining insurance bears little relation to Sojourner's attitude about serving, the obstacles encountered were still interpreted as lack of support. On another occasion, the researcher decided to explore the possibility of forming a social group for older members. With an unusually youthful population, many of Sojourner's seniors end up serving as mentors, coaches, or other leadership roles. The need to balance their service with personal care and peer fellowship soon became evident. At that time, church elders were stressing the need to diversify CG groups by race, gender, and age. Equally important was their desire to structure CG's

network as neighborhood gatherings. After much thought and prayer, the elders decided that starting a peer fellowship at this juncture could undermine these important strategies.

These examples illustrate the dynamic interplay between structure's role and perception's significance in an empowering environment (Black and Deci 2000, 740).

While no autonomous climate can be sustained without appropriate restraints, intrinsic motivation will dissipate if these structures are perceived as "controlling." A sense of guilt or obligation can pressure an individual to perform preferred behaviors that are not personally endorsed (Deci and Ryan 2000, 229). Such behaviors are rarely internalized because they are perceived as externally imposed (Deci and Ryan 1985a, 120). In contrast, providing non-judgmental feedback, giving meaningful rationale for requested behavior, acknowledging feelings, and providing opportunities for cooperative learning promote perceptions of autonomy (Deci and Ryan 2000, 227). By aligning corporate goals with intrinsically satisfying tasks, organizational success becomes personally appealing (Amabile, DeJong, and Lepper 1976, 92).

Sojourn's current model of church-sponsored service is a case in point. Based on the data, the researcher believes that key structural realignments could significantly enhance participation in personal ministries that promote Christian formation through transformative learning. One story, more than any other, illustrated the need to reexamine the church's current approach. Over a journey spanning twenty years, the Lord had called Molly to minister to homeless men. As she described her passion, Molly's lips began to quiver and her posture straightened.

I suffered from mental illness and have often felt like an outcast, so I identify with these men. It's refreshing because I have nothing to hide. I can be Molly, not anybody else—no mask or show. I can engage in deep conversations. It's the real deal—life and death issues. I feel like I'm in the middle of God's will, like an oasis in the desert. I experience the joy of the Lord firsthand.

When Molly heard about Sojourn, she and her husband began attending and were instantly drawn to its youthful enthusiasm. The couple took part in various ministries before settling in as community group hosts. All the while, Molly's first love never wavered. Only now, she envisioned serving the homeless *through her church*, not with a parachurch ministry. Molly longed to serve side-by-side with other members of her church family. She was also excited about the chance to share the joy of serving "the least of these" with some of Sojourn's younger women.

One day, she decided to share her vision with a Connect leader. At every turn, the conversation seemed to turn back to Sojourn's program for ministry. Scarlet Hope—a ministry to women caught up in the Adult Entertainment industry—was mentioned, but Molly was already volunteering there. Jeff Street seemed to best fit her needs. The leader enthusiastically endorsed this inner city residential ministry to men who would otherwise be roaming the streets of Louisville. Molly responded she was called to serve men who remain on the street without any shelter to call home. This give-and-take discussion went on for an hour before Molly gave up trying to fit her vision into the church's plan. Recounting the whole ordeal in her focus group, Molly wept openly: "Why was I being pushed so hard to follow the *church's* agenda? Didn't the Lord set us *free*?"

By all accounts, Molly's experience was an anomaly. Her perception of the leader's response ignored Sojourn's genuine desire to empower members for personal ministry. Had she continued to press for help, the researcher believes Molly would have found a creative solution. (If nothing else, she could have assembled a team of women from the church's community group network for practical mentoring.) If such perceptions spread, however, a growing segment of Sojourners could be discouraged by visions of a

hierarchical ministry structure. Appearing to lead from a distance would only widen the gulf. From the researcher's perspective, many members seem content to feed off Pastor Daniel's enthusiasm week-after-week without processing the message or implementing its truths. Kathy, a career inner-city missionary, made a telling comment on this point: "Rarely in my church experience are leaders able to transfer truth to practice because we don't respect differences and celebrate common faith." She explained there is no better way to appreciate an individual's uniqueness in the common bond of faith than belonging to an intimate group of diverse believers who are guided by a committed leader. Trying to impart truth any other way, she felt, is a waste of time. Consequently, Kathy refuses to let her demanding ministry schedule trump her community group commitment.

The church's unusually high concentration of young adults and seminarians proved to be a particular challenge for the older generation. Six of fifteen participants over age 40 shared critical perceptions of these segments. While Sojourn's "over forty" population continues to expand, finding a niche commensurate with their experience can prove difficult. According to Justin: "Our culture is way too heady and academic: heavy on theory, light on application." He believes the seminary community is "not as open to different points of view." Robert adds that a clergy mentality "emasculates people by not valuing their experiences." Because leaders put a premium on theological knowledge, he believes lack of seminary training is a barrier to entry. The assumption that seminary students are placed on a fast track to leadership—whether real or imagined—adds salt to the wound. As described by Victor,

I think of Louisville as the NFL of theology with all of its seminary grads, professors and current students. Moving here and not having this background it is easy to feel like you're JV.

The abundance of youthful leaders presented a different set of challenges. As Molly explained:

It's a problem when elders are in their 20's and 30's. Some suffer the arrogance of youth, bringing little life experience to the table. Others assume people don't know anything. One sign of maturity is when you realize you know *nothing*.

Henry chimed in: "Elders should be *elders*, having life experience and believing children." He wondered aloud whether some leaders "felt the older generation hasn't done a good job." One New Albany retiree felt she had simply "lost her place."

According to Betty,

I want to be asked to serve and they don't here. I don't feel like there's a place for me, even though I have experience and a proven track record. I'm frustrated because I have so many ideas but no traction. It's like being a steam engine pinned down with steel bands.

Two leaders expressed sympathy for their concerns. Jacob shared: "While young people orient easily to community, they lack skills and maturity for effective ministry. Seminary students, on the other hand, make good bible teachers but either lack social skills or don't want to leave their ivory tower."

Once again, perception trumped reality. According to church records, the average age for elders is 38—much higher than perceived by older participants. More importantly, the vast majority of leaders at Sojourn would be shocked to hear some of the foregoing stories. Nothing would give them greater joy than seeing every segment of the church population working together to advance the gospel. Two in particular stood out in participants' minds. Daniel reported that working with Pastor Nathan Ivey was empowering from the start:

I first got into ministry in response to Nathan Ivey's challenge. I was initially just looking to share experiences with other believers. Nathan got his elbows into it with us. He was like Paul—he gave you his *whole self*, not just the gospel.

Similar comments could be heard about Jared Kennedy, Midtown's Pastor for SojournKids. "Jared was really, really nice," said Karen. "He makes you feel welcome—he's encouraging, friendly and helpful." Other signs imply leaders already recognize the formative benefits of Christian service. Jonah Sage, New Albany's campus pastor, praised the experiential value of his pastoral residency in a recent blog:

I learned more in one year as Sojourn's pastoral resident than I did in three years as a theology student. As a result of intense testing, great successes and heart breaking failures, I have a clearer picture of pastoral ministry and a greater desire to shepherd God's people than ever before. I love God more than ever. I desire to know and be like Jesus more than ever. My residency program changed me forever and I count it as one of the greatest gifts God has ever given me.

Chad Lewis, Sojourn's Midtown pastor, made a similar observation when preaching on 1 Timothy 5: "As we step out in faith to serve others, God changes our *own* hearts—revealing our selfishness and other sin." From the researcher's perspective, several participants seemed ripe to respond to this challenge. Alice provided one of the most dramatic examples:

The impact of what I have learned at Sojourn has reached beyond our walls—I now realize that all people I come in contact with regularly are my mission field. Sojourn allows me the freedom to express my gifts inside the church but has also made me realize that we are to *be* the church and has freed me to serve with passion and use my gifts in daily life. I have seen that "as I am going" in daily life, this is where my gifts were intended to be used and have the most impact on a personal level with coworkers, neighbors, friends, and family. Likewise I have the freedom either on my own or with fellow Christians to serve in areas that God has given me the heart for, such as the homeless, shut-ins, and the poor without having to be a church sanctioned event.

These and other indicia strongly suggest that perceptions of a controlling environment do not reflect Sojourn's true ministry philosophy. Neither was any participant naïve enough to equate ministry fulfillment with total freedom. "Because of the way the church was structured in the New Testament," noted one group member, "we've entrusted our elders

to pray faithfully and to trust them to determine what the needs are in our community.”

He then posed this question:

If you’re [head of SEED], how in the world are you going to find out the gifting of somebody and what they do, or be willing to entrust them with wherever their gifting led them, if they’re not even willing to help with communion?”

Every participant seemed to appreciate the importance of maintaining some level of structure. Sally explained: “Sojourn provided the platform and training to serve in ways that God placed on my heart and has allowed me opportunities to serve beyond my dreams!” Sarah added: “We can’t just let everybody create ministries however they like.

It should relate somehow to Sojourn’s mission.” She explained:

It would be difficult for a leader to cater to everyone. If we just let everyone do what they want, we would have chaos. We have to be able to meet known needs. If no one helps with kids, how are parents going to come to the service?

Members from Group I arrived at the same conclusion:

The church needs structure and order. It makes more sense to steer people into a few areas and then match them according to their gifts. The elders encourage people to serve their neighbors where they’re at. That gives us great freedom to serve your neighbor, especially as part of your own community group.

At the same time, everyone conceded more could be done to increase the congregation’s commitment to church-sponsored services. While the member interview is intended to guide everyone into gift-based ministry, little follow up occurs down the road. As shared in Group II, “I don’t think people are being developed enough so they can serve where they’re skilled.” According to Sarah, “It begins by taking more initiative in nudging members to serve. Leaders should help people plug into service based on their giftedness during membership class.” Based on years of leadership experience, Henry cautioned that,

We have to be careful about using church language. Even using the term ‘giftedness’ can sound scary and confusing to a new Christian. It’s like saying: ‘Okay, now you’re a Christian—go find your life calling and plug in’.

Channeling the church's energy through the community group network turned out to be one of the study's strongest themes. Because community group leaders make natural mentors, participants felt the elders should reassess their strategy for recruiting, equipping, and developing true shepherds. Currently, Sojourn does not require CG leaders to have all the answers or to be the most mature. They only ask that they display faith in Christ, love their members, practice confession and repentance, and see ministry as a mutual blessing. According to Pastor Ivey, shortcutting the maturing process may cost more than it is worth:

It takes time for leaders to develop and mature and we have a proven record of that development. Our most mature leaders were once not so, and made a lot of mistakes as God grew them through ministry experience as well as oversight by deacons (coaches) and elders. The most proven and principled leaders are affirmed as deacons and some as elders. They are given broader responsibilities (as coaches and/or pastors) due to their maturity and ability to develop younger leaders according to 2 Tim. 2:2. With such numerical growth as experienced at Sojourn coupled with our emphasis on evangelism, the church has large numbers of young believers. Leadership [is] always a challenge in our context!

Nonetheless, most participants thought a CG leader who is viewed as a peer would not be able to stir members into service. They want a leader who has gone before them.

Research Question 3

In what ways do leaders and members describe experiences with church-sponsored service, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

Summary of Findings

The researcher found little differentiation between leaders' and members' perspective on church-sponsored service. In contrast to benevolence, all agreed the mark of Christian service is honoring Christ. Only He calls, leads, equips and instructs members of a faith community to glorify God through obedient service empowered by His Spirit. Without exception, leaders and members conceded that service is critical to the Christian life. Before serving, they tended to be inwardly focused, judgmental, fearful, and hypocritical. After serving, they learned how sinful and weak they really are, real faces began to replace old stereotypes, they clarified their true passion, they experienced the Holy

Spirit's comfort and peace, and they witnessed God's sovereignty and faithfulness. Participants distinguished two types of Christian service—"house chores" and "personal ministry"—stressing the need to balance both. All participants were adamant that the 20/80 Rule has no place in church life. Nonetheless, the perception that most Sojourners are not serving in a church-sponsored ministry was unanimous. A unified solution eluded all three focus groups. Commonly cited factors include unsupervised ministries, inadequate relationships, ignorance, and busyness. Disagreement arose over whether leaders or members should take the service initiative.

Introduction

The third question explored how leaders and members describe prior experiences with church-sponsored service. Topics covered through personal interviews and focus group discussions included current or past involvement with church-sponsored service on their faith journey (whether at Sojourn or a prior church), perceptions based on the participant's experience, what he or she learned from each experience, and how the experience could have been improved. Finally, participants were encouraged to describe their own "dream ministry" and to conjecture on what it would take to make it happen.

Participants uniformly conceded that service is critical to the Christian life. As framed by one leader, "If someone looks at your calendar, it should be obvious that you love the Lord." That most calendars display a different picture was also assumed. According to Kevin, "If you've been at Sojourn for any number of years, you'll see the same people serving in a lot of the same areas." Sally recalls one particularly telling incident in her daughter's community group: "One week, twenty-three people turned out for a sumptuous meal; the next week, two returned to serve." Apparently, someone had suggested the group meet at a community center in order to help those looking for work with their resumes. Whether the low turnout was due to lack of consensus, the challenging agenda, or simply inconvenience was never determined. Daniel offered his own take on the gap between ideal and real:

The mentality that we are consumers is overpowering. It's absolutely the air we breathe—twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week—outside of God's dramatic intervention.

Group II participants felt the real challenge was devising a plan that galvanizes the whole congregation. According to Sarah, "None of us can disagree with [the need to get more people serving]—how we do that is the million dollar question." As with motivational climate, perception drove solution. Sarah explained "there's a lot of new Christians in this church who have never served. They've been raised in the consumerist culture of 'entertain me' and they don't know any different." Victor added "Sojourn's leaders tend to emphasize the call of giving financially more than the call to give of your time and talents."

One member of the group identified a different impediment: "Church-sponsored services always involve the same five or six choices. No one gets credit for serving outside of these areas." The ensuing discussion led participants to distinguish two types of service in a healthy Christian life: *house chores*—general tasks in furtherance of a church's mission irrespective of giftedness; *personal ministry*—specific calling from the Holy Spirit based on a believer's unique makeup. All participants agreed every member should take part in family chores so they do not become burdensome. Some reported that sharing chores also promotes social relationships that open doors to personal ministry.

When prompted by the researcher, discussion turned to what makes service uniquely "Christian." Group II participants identified the following sequence of events: (1) In response to the Cross; (2) believers seek to honor Christ; (3) who calls, leads, equips and instructs; (4) members of a faith community; (5) to glorify God through obedient service; (6) that is empowered by His Spirit. Participants felt that balancing

house chores and personal ministry would avoid two extremes: becoming a hypocrite by engaging only in church-sponsored services; failing to glorify God by idolizing one's gifts. Group III stressed such options should not be seen as "either-or." For example, helping out with Vacation Bible School is a natural outflow of assembling together.

According to Betty,

[Doing the house chore] wasn't part of my bag, but *somebody* had to take care of it as part of the Body. It would be like refusing to help someone who's bleeding to death because you're not a nurse.

At the same time, some perceived that members who never venture outside the church doors are prone to adopt a maintenance mentality. Charlie likened it to "fishing in a bathtub." Their discussion soon widened to the church at large. After experiencing an exciting birth, and seeing times of dramatic growth, could Christendom be stuck in "maintenance mode"—waiting for Christ's return? Fred interjected lack of persecution and great prosperity as additional factors. Ultimately, the group realized they were asking the same question in different ways: how can leaders keep motivating people without burning out *themselves*? Betty's observation touched a chord: "It's like we're trying to change everything with old wineskins."

Montgomery's 2008 pulpit confession that 20% of Sojourn's members are performing 80% of its ministry sparked an equally fruitful discussion. All 35 participants—leaders and members alike—affirmed that Christian service satisfies an inward purpose no less important than spreading the gospel. *Before* serving, participants spoke of being inwardly focused, judgmental, fearful, and hypocritical. *After* serving, they learned how sinful and weak they really are, real faces began to replace old stereotypes, they were able to clarify their true passion, they experienced the Holy Spirit's comfort and peace, and they witnessed God's sovereignty and faithfulness

firsthand. All agreed that serving alone produces a genuine humility that is foreign to the world (Eph 4:2). In light of their common testimony, participants concurred that the 20/80 Rule has no place in church life.

Paradoxically, *leaders and members were also unanimous that most adults are not presently serving in a church-sponsored ministry*. Not a single person could affirm that a majority of adults participate in services endorsed by the elders. That most personal ministries escape Sojourn's radar added to their uncertainty. In fact, the researcher found no evidence of a concerted effort to obtain an accurate gauge of the congregation's involvement in Christian service. The *perceived* gap between 'real' and 'ideal' service generated the liveliest discussion in all three groups. Robert began by contending that countless members are ministering in numerous ways that go unnoticed. Other participants gravitated toward Christianity's relational component. For example, Michael observed that some members

. . . may not feel a part of the group yet. It's both an identity thing and a social thing. They have no one who knows them or nudges them to serve.

Victor agreed: "There's nobody that comes alongside them to encourage them to serve." Such relationships are vital because people "tend not to act alone." Closely related was the theme of ignorance. According to Amber,

Because Sojourn approaches service differently from what [some people] are used to, maybe [leaders] don't know or understand what [members] are comfortable with. A lot a people don't know their spiritual gift.

Whether "busyness" was a legitimate factor in the congregation's commitment became a debate about accountability. Most agreed with Justin's frank assessment: "He's wearing a badge that says, 'I wanna do what I wanna do'."

A strategy for dethroning the 20/80 Rule proved equally elusive. Two argued the whole church family should play a part. Said one: "We have to *want* to serve; we

need to ignite that fire somehow.” Another clarified that “for those who come to church on Sunday and go home, it’s up to leaders to help them discover what they would be good at.” A third chimed in: “I think that falls on everybody – to be concerned for each other’s growth.” Others contended the responsibility rests squarely on the member’s shoulders. One surmised, “They don’t know what they’re good at, so they use that as an excuse.” Another added, “When I was growing up, it was expected that everyone would serve.” Matthew made this challenge: “We must transition from ‘Come and see’ to ‘Go and die’.” Kathy clarified, “The first is a follower; the second is a disciple.” Standing alone was Matthew: “This person may be at a different point in his or her spiritual journey. We can’t say where they should be. Only God knows their circumstances.” Instead of making assumptions, he admonished both sides to exercise grace.

Research Question 4

In what ways do leaders and members respond to the use of SDT principles to facilitate church-sponsored service, as displayed in their personal interviews and focus group responses?

Summary of Findings

While no leader was perceived as relying solely on extrinsic motivators, several participants sensed pressure to think, feel, or behave in ways that further the church’s mission. SDT’s potential for eradicating the church’s perception gap was most evident when participants described their “dream ministry.” Picturing service in an ideal world struck a chord with every participant—young and old, male and female, leader and follower alike. Threaded through every response was a desire for empowered ministry. Positive associations with SDT principles were also consistently high across the board. The qualitative data suggest both leaders and members desire to advance the church’s mission through challenging ministries that offer true freedom, real understanding, and genuine relationships. While an autonomy-supportive environment may grab the congregation’s attention, participants agreed that only intrinsically satisfying service opportunities would keep it.

Introduction

The fourth question examined the ways leaders and members respond to the use of SDT principles in Christian service. In particular, the researcher looked for evidence of autonomy, competency, and relatedness—intrinsic motivation’s primary drives. Previous questions had exposed divergent perceptions concerning the church’s organizational structure, motivational climate, and church-sponsored services. While no leader was accused of relying solely on extrinsic motivators, several participants sensed some pressure to think, feel, or behave in ways that further the church’s mission. Whether or not intended, such regulations fuel perceptions of an external locus of causality (Deci and Ryan 1991, 237). In contrast, inherently interesting, enjoyable, and satisfying activities require little reinforcement because they are perceived as internally controlled (Deci 1975, 15).

Descriptive Data

SDT’s potential for erasing the church’s perception gap was most evident when participants described their “dream ministry.” With each response, leader/member distinctions began to fade. All savored the rare opportunity to imagine service in a perfect world. SDT’s signature ingredients seasoned every conversation. Their language, tenor, energy, and body language evoked classic images of intrinsic motivation. Jacob spoke of forming a “punk rock ministry” with a gleam in his eye. Though she loves her position, Emily can hardly wait to “use [her] administrative gifts in a church plant.” Lauren’s dream is to “help with a social enterprise, like organizing immigrants, to launch money-making businesses.” Fred was enthused about ministering to “homeless people, or *anyone* who needs to feel the love of Christ!” Austin yearns to provide “multi-unit affordable housing where tenants can be disciplined.” Karen talked about “facilitating experiential

learning for those who would never be able to [learn] otherwise.” Julie was excited about “combining health/wellness for spiritual and physical healing.” Amber wants to “join the Connect team to call girls requesting follow up” or “to work with my co-workers like a missionary”—either one is “scary and exciting.”

One story stood out from the rest in showcasing SDT’s potential for launching personal ministry. Frank’s *desire* to serve was strong:

We’re all called to serve because it’s our responsibility to show the gospel to our community. This requires active submission to God’s will. If we have the desire, love is behind it—unlike the televangelists who leave a bitter taste in their mouths. Serving shows you how gracious God is. If you’re willing, serving can meet you wherever you are. Only then can you experience the joy of impacting someone and seeing the difference it makes. Serving together also reinforces the concept of family. [All in all], it’s a more relatable gospel.

Three years after joining Sojourn, however, Frank remained on the sideline. He lamented that none of the opportunities offered by leaders held any appeal:

None seemed to fit my personality and interests. I needed a better idea of what was involved. I have bouts of social anxiety, so it’s difficult for me to ask for help. Being properly informed takes more than a one or two line description. I needed more information—to be able to explain where I’m strong, where I’m weak, and where I want to grow. I didn’t know what I was supposed to do and afraid I’d mess up. It needed to be more personal, to address my concerns, and to give me some assurance. Not being given a pre-defined role would have made a *huge* difference. I felt like I was being asked to board a passing ship. If I had five or ten minutes with a coordinator, it would have been enough.

Desperate to get involved, Frank began to wonder if he could channel his love for music to corporate worship. He described his tryout for the worship team as a “disaster”: the songs were unfamiliar, his guitar picking rusty, and the pressure—mostly self-imposed—was palpable. Graciously, the ministry leader steered Frank to the youth band to get more experience. He wasted little time before emailing his contact. Over the next few weeks, the pair traded voicemail messages but failed to connect. Eventually, Frank just dropped the idea.

Frank's wife felt his pain. With Connect and SojournKids, Karen had seen "God work in different ways and how relationships develop." Because Frank is shy, she knew it would be "difficult for him to find a place in ministry he's comfortable with." Frank would prefer working with a small group of friends in an informal setting, blessing everyday people with his favorite songs. After much prayer, a thought popped into Karen's head: "*Why not serve together in a music ministry at the medical clinic?*" Her idea clicked immediately. Frank added,

I'm really excited about providing music for the medical clinic! There's less pressure, it's more informal, less structured, and there's tons of non-believers there. I'm also thrilled to serve together with Karen. She's more outgoing, but we have this thing in common. Because we're picking the songs, we feel a connection to it. We're doing songs we're already familiar with. We can play to our strengths. Now I can be a blessing like someone was to me when I first walked into Sojourn.

Frank's perception was not unique. Serving with no strings attached struck a chord with every participant—young or old, male or female, leader or follower. Threaded through every response was their desire for *empowered ministry*. Empowerment's ability to unifying diverse perspectives was evident in every image. All conveyed the sense of being liberated to use their God-given wings to fly. As pictured by Robert,

Empowering means equipping, strengthening, providing tools, bursting bubbles, breaking strongholds. It's giving me a clear path to do what I'm *gifted* to do.

The variety of responses served to amplify empowerment's multifaceted sparkle. Participants spoke of "having a voice in how I use my abilities" (Jacob), "being encouraged, affirmed, and informed" (Emily), "being able to do the things you think need to be done" (Henry), "being immune to troubles" (Justin), "being affirmed, well trained, and confident" (Fred), "feeling trusted, freed to fully pursue" (Daniel), "being given options and responsibilities" (Sarah), "supporting members to achieve, providing tools, being flexible, and allowing opportunity to fail" (Michael). "As a result," Amber said,

“you feel like nothing can stop you.” Unanimity returned when participants described the benefits of empowerment. According to Sarah: “It appeals to my creativeness, but there’s more work and challenge.” Intrinsic motivation saturated Karen’s description:

It draws you in till you’re invested. It invests you into [serving], making you feel more of a connection. It secures a long-term commitment. This is more sustainable because you’re going to *want* to do it.

Such cravings have defined the human condition from the beginning of time. Satisfaction rests in relying upon—and identifying with—*Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, for whom and in whom all creation derives its meaning and purpose (Matt 19:26; John 15:5-7; Gal 3:16; Col 1:17). As participants began to describe motivation’s immaterial dimension, their comments became strikingly similar.

True Freedom

SDT seeks to facilitate a sense of wellbeing by cultivating one’s desire for “self-*actualization*” (Ryan and Frederick 1997, 529). In contrast, a theological understanding of human motivation acknowledges the struggle between desiring good and doing evil (Rom 7:17-24). Empowerment for ministry that does not require “self-*denial*” sabotages God’s plan (Matt 16:25). The emptiness of self-fulfillment is meant to point to a far greater reality (Eccl 3:11; Matt 10:39). Those who yield their talents to the Creator’s transforming power begin to actualize the new Adam by radiating Christ’s image (Rom 7:24-25). In the present study, participants understood their drive for autonomy as a quest for freedom in Christ. Though a desire to control their environment was clearly evident, they freely acknowledged the tendency to sin. The more they followed the Spirit, the more liberated they felt. God’s promise of true freedom transcended all distinctions. Appendix 15 contains a comprehensive list of quotes by leaders and members describing the need for autonomy.

Real Understanding

Because every human being is endowed with unique talents, interests and desires, God instills a corresponding drive to grow and contribute in meaningful ways. As expected, the drive to master ministry was not reserved for members. The need to supplement cognitive knowledge with real life experience was a transcendent theme. Michael acknowledged that “book knowledge can only go so far.” Matthew concurred that leaders need to get some “street smarts” (real world experience). William summed it up best: “Reading a book on dancing is no substitute for dancing.” Serving in Christ’s name, according to Joseph, plays “a huge sanctifying role.” Edward chimed in that “serving is where the rubber meets the road.”

At the same time, all agreed the experience can be highly motivating. Fred’s challenge was right on target: “Serving is faith in action—it’s an *adventure* to follow Christ!” Karen observed “God can use service to change your attitude.” Contrary to SDT’s prediction, exposing her weaknesses instilled greater confidence in God. Apparently, the presence of a sovereign power has curbed the urge to control her environment. Sally experienced the same revelation. Through serving, she had been “privileged to see miracles”:

I realized it’s really God at work, and to focus on Christ. Like serving alongside a woman who was once in a shelter—only *God* does that! I know it’s not me doing it, so I get out of the way.

Appendix 16 contains a comprehensive list of quotes by leaders and members illustrating how the drive for increasing competence can be satisfied vicariously through a caring God.

Genuine Relationships

SDT's theoretical lens was most evident when participants began talking about belonging to a like-minded community. As with drives for autonomy and competence, the longing for genuine relationship transcended leader-member distinctions. Still, sharing life together can be intimidating. Alice, a CG leader, recalled how one couple in her group struggled with marital difficulties but wanted to be left alone. Alice warned that a failed marriage affects everyone in the body of Christ. The couple ultimately divorced and went their separate ways, and the group is still dealing with the repercussions. The believer's unique call to deep fellowship is aptly illustrated in the quotes contained in Appendix 17. Across the board, participants showed a strong attraction for intrinsically motivating ministry. Positive associations with SDT principles were consistently high for leaders and members alike (Table 4):

Table 4: Reliance on STD imagery

SDT ELEMENT	LEADER AFFIRMATION	MEMBER AFFIRMATION
Relatedness	18 (94%)	15 (88%)
Autonomy	15 (77%)	14 (82%)
Competency	14 (72%)	14 (82%)

Taken together, the qualitative data suggest that leaders and members share the same overarching desire for Christian service: to advance the church's mission through challenging ministries that offer true freedom, real understanding, and genuine

relationships. SDT's two-fold response to their experience has equally significant spiritual implications: an autonomy-supportive environment may grab the congregation's attention, but only intrinsically satisfying service opportunities will keep it.

Research Question 5

In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of service in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

Summary of Findings

The influential role played by church-sponsored service in Christian formation was the study's most significant finding. Before they began serving, all participants reported a general tendency to be self-centered, judgmental, fearful, and hypocritical. As a result, failing to serve had actually caused *disservice* to Christ's name. Leaders and members generally agreed that serving yielded more accurate pictures of themselves and others, more outward focus, joy of blessing and partnering with others, new life perspective, firsthand glance of God of work, accelerated growth, and greater proficiency. Conviction of personal weakness and spiritual maturation scored highest in both groups. Views on accountability for service hinged largely on prior exposure to mentoring: those without mentors gave it a negative spin; those with mentors swore it was critical to growth. Participants unanimously concurred that accountability should take place within a caring relationship. Since members are called to share life together in community groups, both leaders and members agreed that CG leaders would make natural mentors.

Introduction

The fifth question explored how leaders and members describe the role of service in Christian formation. Topics covered through personal interviews and focus group discussions included current or past involvement with church-sponsored service, a description of the activity and the participant's role, why the participant chose a particular ministry, what the participant learned through the service opportunity, the meaning attributed to the experience, what kept the him or her involved, and how the experience could have been improved. The theoretical lens used by the researcher to interpret the data is also disclosed.

Theoretical Lens

Bandura (1989, 1175) demonstrated that much learning occurs through observation before a person begins to make overt responses. Individuals are motivated to achieve when presented with models who demonstrate mastery of desired skills. Within a “community of practice,” learning flows from contextualized activities reflecting cultural beliefs and behaviors accumulated over time (Lave and Wenger 1991). A novice assimilates corporate knowledge through role development that culminates in becoming an expert or old-timer. Such ‘situated learning’ enables people to acquire and refine cognitive tools like an apprentice (Brown, Collins and Duguid 1989, 32). Learning occurs through collaborative social interaction that relies more on active perception than conceptual abstraction (Brown, Collins and Duguid 1989, 33).

Descriptive Data

The influential role played by church-sponsored service in Christian formation may be this study’s most significant finding. Before they began serving, all participants reported a general tendency to be inwardly focused, judgmental, fearful, and hypocritical. As a result, failing to serve had actually caused *disservice* to Christ’s name. After serving, participants made several life-changing discoveries. Victor’s account of passing out flyers is a fitting example:

[My wife and I] handed fliers to a couple of teenage girls on the street. When we asked if there was anything that we could pray about, they exchanged glances and one said: ‘Yes, our boyfriends were arrested about 45 minutes ago.’ I felt led by the Holy Spirit to pray immediately. When we finished, we were surprised that both gave us a big hug and thanked us. We walked across the street to rejoin our group with a deep feeling of joy and purpose. We were celebrating our second wedding anniversary that night. It was the best/closest moment we had had up to that time in our marriage. We had gone to dinner the night before at P.F. Changs and received terrible service. Serving God that night, instead of focusing on ourselves, was a stark contrast. Serving definitely bridges the gap between the church and the world.

Following are inductive themes from the interviews that are germane to Christian formation. (A sampling of the rich variety of participant responses can be found in the corresponding appendix.)

1. Serving gave participants a more accurate picture of themselves. (Appendix 18)
2. Serving gave participants a more accurate picture of others. (Appendix 19)
3. Serving turned participants' focus outward. (Appendix 20)
4. Participants experienced the joy of blessing others. (Appendix 21)
5. Participants discovered the joy of working with others. (Appendix 22)
6. Participants began to see life differently. (Appendix 23)
7. Participants were able to see God at work. (Appendix 24)
8. Participants' spiritual growth accelerated. (Appendix 25)
9. Participants became more confident and proficient. (Appendix 26)

As shown in Table 5, leaders and members remained mostly unified on the role of Christian service. These firsthand accounts reinforce how God often speaks to individual hearts through unique circumstances that embed universal truths.

Table 5: Themes involving Christian service

THEME	LEADERS	MEMBERS
Serving gives me a more accurate picture of myself	14 (70%)	9 (53%)
My spiritual growth accelerates	14 (70%)	9 (53%)
I become more proficient and confident	12 (62%)	4 (23%)
I am able to see God at work	11 (57%)	7 (34%)
I experience the joy of blessing others	9 (47%)	7 (34%)
Serving gives me a more accurate picture of others	9 (47%)	6 (30%)
I begin to see life differently	8 (43%)	9 (53%)
Serving turns my focus outward	8 (43%)	9 (53%)

Like the pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, participants believed that one must actually engage in service to experience its blessings. Strength and wisdom come “in the doing,” not beforehand (Jas 1:25). The two highest scores on this measure affirm

what the researcher observed during the interviews—*service that exposed a believer's heart invariably accelerated Christian formation*. Participants' low affirmation of increasing competence had two equally plausible explanations: the opportunity was not based on giftedness or the server was already proficient in that area. Six participants noted that an intimate relationship with an admired leader had enriched their experience. In Ashley's case, the difference was dramatic:

In Campus Crusade, I was placed with a mentor almost immediately. This relationship was invaluable to my early growth as a Christian. We had numerous one-on-one meetings, and I had lots of questions. I looked up to her, and we became like family. After we established our relationship, she challenged me to host a bible study in my dorm room. It was scary because I hadn't even told my roommate I was a Christian. Initially, I did it to emulate my mentor and to fit in with other believers. Now [thirty years later], I'm motivated by love for God and others.

The parachurch ministries mentioned in the interviews (particularly Campus Crusade and Fellowship of Christian Athletes) appeared to adopt the same paradigm of service. Even the strategic steps to victory followed the same path. Focus Group I participants described the following sequence of events:

1. Each convert was assigned a personal mentor soon after coming to faith.
2. The mentor and mentee developed a relationship based on mutual love and respect.
3. The mentor encouraged the mentee to embrace a lifestyle of service.
4. The mentor challenged the mentee to learn through various life experiences.
5. The mentor supported the mentee in ways that stimulate Christian formation.

These characteristics are reminiscent of Paul's apostolic ministry. Without modeling what he taught "up close," his authenticity could be questioned (2 Cor 10: 10-11; 11:6; 12:6). Paul's letters may have been effective "from a distance," but only an intimate relationship with each congregation could explain their loving response (2 Cor 8:7). Two thousand years later, Sojourn's experience affirms that perception remains a powerful influence in congregational life. Alice shared an example:

At Sojourn, the idea of "community" has been constantly pounded into our heads for the last five years. Week after week, Pastor Daniel and others have come up

with compelling illustrations of what it means to identify as God's people. Yet, after all this time, it still hasn't sunk in with our community group. It's frustrating when you have to keep going back time and time again, but I guess that's why we're called "sheep"—we have to dig into people's lives by teaching, rebuking, loving, and encouraging them, no matter what! We lead by example, one way or the other.

The researcher found that participant views of accountability hinged largely on prior exposure to mentoring. Four participants who had never enjoyed a mentoring relationship employed negative imagery with legalistic overtones to broach the subject. In contrast, all six participants having mentors swore that being held accountable by a trusted leader had been critical to their growth. Robert explained that "because I loved my mentor, I didn't mind him holding me accountable. I didn't want to let him down." His experience affirms one of SDT's most significant organizational findings: if the climate is perceived as empowering, subordinates will more likely embrace leadership practices normally considered "controlling" (Ryan, Mims, and Koestner 1983, 736). Conveyed outside a caring relationship, the same behaviors may be interpreted as pressure to conform. With respect to accountability, Group I participants responded better to guidance from a mentor than leadership from the pulpit.

Stirred by such testimonials, members pondered the possibility of adopting the parachurch model to broaden participation in service at Sojourn. Two participants surmised that holding people accountable could actually topple the 20/80 Rule. Sarah lamented that "having a committed person walking with me and checking on me is huge because she would have held me accountable." Daniel thought such relationships could serve as "training wheels" to remove anxiety about trying something new. Others were less optimistic about changing the church's culture. Kevin challenged everyone to look at the big picture:

Before you get into mentoring, we must determine the *elders'* expectations. They may only expect 20-30% of members to commit to service. What if their

expectation was that everyone serves? This foundation would change everything else.

Believing all members are critical to body ministry, Sojourn's elders actually endorse service as a lifestyle. However, no one in Group I (with no elder or staff representative) could answer Kevin's question. For his part, Henry was unwilling to bind the church's growth to a leader's capacity. His alternative?

The Church's role should be to encourage, inspire, and instill the joy of service. New Christians need to be mentored and need to serve. It's a serious problem when leaders don't know who I am or don't value what I have. I found 'mentorees' weren't becoming mentors.

All agreed the goal of "being conformed to the image of Christ" had proved elusive.

Three participants thought lack of accountability should take the lion's share of the blame. Kathy, a longtime inner city missionary, agreed:

We're not challenged enough. Right upfront, leaders should have new converts count the cost. Jesus saves us for a purpose, so serving should start immediately. The world is so focused on holding our attention, we forget to die to self. Coming home to Christ is one thing; growing up in Him is another. Spirit and flesh are like two fighting dogs: the one you feed will win.

At that point, Matthew shared his own concern:

I've always been a little leery of the word 'mentor' because it implies the person has 'arrived' spiritually, when we all know no one's perfect. There is a tendency in human nature to look up to a mature person, to put him on a pedestal. We all have been given the Holy Spirit, whose role is to change our desires to match *His* desires. That mentor may be saying 'You need to serve', which comes out as obligation, but the Holy Spirit could be changing my desires from the inside so that I'm transitioning from 'I have to' to 'I want to'. A mentor would never be able to change my desire. That could mean going in another direction or at a different pace than what my mentor thinks. This also harks back to the point that we're actually souls inhabiting bodies, not the other way around. As a leader, we have to communicate known needs to the people's brains and ears, then the Spirit can convict their hearts and empower them to respond. Once leaders determine the needs our church should address, they should ask the Holy Spirit to change the people's desires to align accordingly.

Michael tempered Matthew's concern with another observation:

Sometimes God speaks through the people in our lives. That's why God's given us the body – to spur us on, to disciple each other. It can be just two people meeting together, encouraging and challenging each other to good works. I think that's an integral part of growing in our walk leading to service.

“One way to avoid idolizing a mentor,” offered Austin, “is to make the relationship a ‘two-way street’, freely acknowledging we can learn from each other.” Since members are called to share life together in community groups, both leaders and members agreed CG leaders would make natural mentors.

Research Question 6

In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

Summary of Findings

Discussions of the Holy Spirit were unique for two equally paradoxical reasons. The Third Person of the trinity was rarely mentioned in participants' initial responses. Just as predictably, God's Spirit captured center stage before the discussion closed. When participants focused on Christian formation, five themes emerged: the Spirit *empowers* for personal ministry, *equips* for effective ministry, *guides* for lasting ministry, *enlightens* for joyful ministry, and *humbles* for Christ-honoring ministry. Generally lower affirmation rates associated with the Holy Spirit suggest participants were less experienced or comfortable discussing this topic. The strongest showing—humbling believers for Christ-honoring ministry—comports with service's high rating as a formative exercise. Taken together, these themes share a common foundation: the Holy Spirit is essential in all aspects of service.

Introduction

The sixth question explored how leaders and members describe the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian formation. Topics covered through personal interviews and focus group discussions included whether church-sponsored service has made a difference in the participant's faith development, whether serving has made him or her more aware of the Holy Spirit, whether the participant believes God has blessed him or her with special abilities or passions, and how the participant would describe them.

Discussions of the Holy Spirit were unique for two equally paradoxical reasons. The Third Person of the trinity was rarely mentioned in participants' *initial* responses, whether during a personal interview or in a focus group discussion. Even when attention turned to gifts, the Holy Spirit was eerily absent. Michael explained that, "our default mode is not to mention or consider the Holy Spirit." Daniel agreed:

It's very easy to get drawn into artificial signs of success and failure. If this keeps up, the Holy Spirit could show up on the back of a milk carton!

Just as predictably, God's Spirit captured center stage before the discussion *closed*. The abbreviated dialogues on the Holy Spirit undertaken by all three groups suggest that participants were generally less experienced or comfortable discussing this topic. Nonetheless, five distinct themes emerged about the Holy Spirit's role in Christian service. The strongest showing—humbling believers for Christ-honoring ministry—comports with service's high rating as a formative exercise (see Table 6).

Table 6: Themes involving the Holy Spirit

THEME	LEADERS	MEMBERS	APPENDIX
The Spirit <i>humbles</i> me for Christ-honoring ministry	11 (55%)	7 (40%)	31
The Spirit <i>guides</i> me for lasting ministry	6 (29%)	5 (29%)	29
The Spirit <i>enlightens</i> me for joyful ministry	5 (26%)	5 (29%)	30
The Spirit <i>empowers</i> me for personal ministry	5 (26%)	5 (29%)	27
The Spirit <i>equips</i> me for effective ministry	4 (21%)	6 (35%)	28

Perceptions of the Holy Spirit's role varied little between leaders and members. Samples of their rich descriptions may be found in the corresponding Appendix. In Group III, Charlie was reminded of 1 Cor 12:11: "But one and the same Spirit works all these [gifts], distributing to each one individually just as He wills." Although every believer is uniquely gifted (Eph 4:7), he stressed they all have the same Source. Taken together, these themes share a common foundation: *the Holy Spirit is essential in all aspects of service*. He alone separates worldly deeds from Christian ministry (Gal 5:16-18), aligns personal satisfaction with corporate mission (Eph 4:3), and turns human weakness into godly strength (2 Cor 12:9). His objective is equally clear: glorifying Jesus Christ as Son of God (John 16:14).

Research Question 7

In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of spiritual giftedness in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

Summary of Findings

Participants' uncertainty about giftedness was higher among leaders than members, due in part to their holistic view of the topic. Participants who encountered their giftedness through serving demonstrated a deeper understanding of its role and a broader application to daily life. Those who took an inventory to learn their gifts were less satisfied with how it matched their personality and interests. Fewer than half of the participants felt their current ministry was a strong match for their gifts. All reported they were more likely to exercise their gifts when moved by the Spirit spontaneously than when volunteering for church-sponsored services. With few exceptions, those aware of their gifts used biblical categories to describe them. Apart from service and mercy, distribution of biblical gifts was virtually indistinguishable between leaders and members. Both groups acknowledged the importance of spiritual gifts in the life of every believer. As with discussions about Christian service and the Holy Spirit, perceptions about giftedness marshaled several distinct themes: spiritual gifts emphasize the server's uniqueness, energize for action, make serving joyful, and build up the church. As with the Holy Spirit, participants exhibited less familiarity with spiritual giftedness than with Christian service in general. Still, leaders and members remained generally positive, especially when describing how

their gifts fuel service. What these gifts are, and how they are to be used, was less clear.

Introduction

The final question explored how leaders and members describe the role of spiritual giftedness in Christian formation. Topics covered through personal interviews and focus group discussions included awareness of their spiritual gifts, description of their gifts, how they discovered them, how well they match current ministry, and how important they are to service. Those who are unaware of their giftedness were asked whether they have received instruction on spiritual gifts, their present understanding of the subject, and their level of interest in learning more.

The researcher was surprised to find uncertainty about giftedness higher among leaders (37%) than members (26%). In some cases, this anomaly could be explained by a holistic view of giftedness that transcends classification. With that notable exception, little other variance was found between leaders' and members' gift experiences. Across the board, few participants used a traditional gifts inventory to learn their gifts. As shown in Table 7, real-life experience was the preferred tutor for both leaders (80%) and members (73%).

Table 7: Discovery of giftedness

ROLE	INVENTORY	EXPERIENCE
LEADER	3	11
MEMBER	3	8

Only two participants remembered receiving formal instruction or self-study on spiritual gifts. However, leaders and members alike responded positively when asked if they were interested in learning more about the topic. Participants who had encountered their giftedness through the crucible of ministry demonstrated a superior understanding of its role and wider application to life. Those who deciphered their gifts by taking an inventory, on the other hand, seemed less satisfied with how they matched their personality and interests. Fewer than half the participants felt their current ministry was a strong match for their gifts. All reported they were more likely to exercise their gifts when moved spontaneously by the Spirit than when volunteering for a church-sponsored ministry. With only three exceptions, those aware of their gifts opted to use biblical categories to describe them. Among the seven gifts cited, the most prevalent were leadership/ administration (10), service (7), and mercy (5). Nine participants (4 leaders/5 members) described a single gift, twelve (7 leaders /5 members) had two gifts, and two (both leaders) claimed three. Except for service and mercy, distribution of biblical gifts was virtually indistinguishable between leaders and members (see Table 8).

Table 8: Distribution of spiritual gifts

GIFT	LEADERS	MEMBERS	TOTAL
Leadership	5	5	10
Serving	6	1	7
Mercy	4	1	5
Hospitality	2	2	4
Teaching	2	2	4
Encouragement	2	1	3
Discernment	0	1	1

Across the distribution, leaders and members alike acknowledged the importance of spiritual gifts in the life of every believer. According to Alice, “If I didn’t have my spiritual gifts, I would not be who I am now.” As with the Holy Spirit, participants tended to exhibit less familiarity with spiritual giftedness than Christian service in general. Consequently, several affirmations seemed more theoretical than experiential to the researcher. Still, leaders and members alike were generally positive, especially when describing how gifts had fueled their service. What these gifts are, and how they are to be used, was less clear. Perceptions about giftedness marshaled several distinct themes (see Table 9). Illustrative responses can be viewed in the corresponding appendices.

Table 9: Themes involving spiritual giftedness

THEME	LEADERS	MEMBERS	APPENDIX
Spiritual gifts <i>energize</i> me for action	8 (50%)	5 (29%)	33
Spiritual gifts make serving <i>joyful</i>	7 (36%)	3 (17%)	34
Spiritual gifts emphasize my <i>uniqueness</i>	6 (31%)	5 (29%)	32
Spiritual gifts <i>build up</i> the church	5 (26%)	5 (29%)	35

Uniting these divergent perspectives was the tension between a church's mission and a believer's role. As Daniel noted, "Every elder has a niche. Not everyone is like me – Type A. I told Pastor Daniel, 'Tell me your vision, and I'll execute it!'" Group I's discussion opened with a controversial claim one participant heard from Billy Graham years ago: "Three-fourths of believers don't know they *have* a spiritual gift." The notion that his statement has been stripped of its shock value set the stage for a lively dialogue. Lauren's observation was soundly affirmed: "A happy congregation is one that feels like they're useful." William added: "Something in us wants to please God." The ripple effects of inner desire could reach the most distant congregant. "Spiritual gifting," said Anna, "is the Lord's way of calling us to action and being filled with the Holy Spirit." Could intrinsically satisfying, Spirit-empowered ministries turn uncommitted consumers into mature disciples?

Summary of Research Findings

In contrast to the traditional paradigm, SDT postulates that intrinsically motivating ministries may actually *stimulate* Christian formation (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 321). This study probed the rich perceptions and divergent meanings associated with church-sponsored service among a critical array of stakeholders in a thriving evangelical church. Descriptive data, consisting primarily of words and images, were used to report perceptions of church-sponsored service held by a critical array of stakeholders. Qualitative trends unique to Christian formation and service were particularly emphasized. Several observations about church-sponsored service emerged from the researcher's interpretation of relevant documents and participant perceptions. Participants were then invited to provide constructive feedback on these inductive trends.

As the researcher reflected on participants' comments, the emergent themes

began to assume a logical order. Foundational to the whole discussion was a shared belief that church-sponsored service is critical to Christian formation. A church with only 20% of its organs functioning is in critical condition. This led to the realization that God strategically positions leaders to nudge members into service. Those who are less mature will never experience service's formative blessing unless someone comes alongside whom they trust. Close behind was the acknowledgment that facilitating transformative service opportunities is far more attractive than filling slots. One problem is that leading from a distance—when not coupled with intentional coaching—merely widens the gap between perception and reality. Older members with prior leadership experience seemed especially vulnerable to feeling marginalized. Upgrading community group leaders from peers to mentors presented a 'win-win' scenario. Founded on mutual love and respect, these up-close facilitators can develop intimate relationships that challenge members to embrace a lifestyle of service. The leader knows what makes the mentee tick; the mentee has faith in the mentor's superior experience. Finally, the Holy Spirit must be given a central role if service is to become truly transformative. As members experience God's Spirit firsthand, their energy is revived and their commitment is renewed. In Chapter 5, the researcher discusses each conclusion in detail. Implications of the current research will also be addressed.

Evaluation of Research Design

On one hand, qualitative research offers a unique opportunity to explore the meaning ascribed by various individuals or groups to a social or human problem. An inductive inquiry acknowledges the complexity of human perception, attitudes, and behavior by constructing themes from personal meaning. A major premise of the present study was that church leaders must hear the cry for reform before Christian scholars will

experiment with SDT's potential. Case studies are ideal for acquiring foundational knowledge leading to a hypothesis. A qualitative approach enabled the researcher to initiate supportive relationships that facilitate understanding and cooperation. Moreover, participation in a variety of church roles added special knowledge and experience about its culture. Finally, the host's unparalleled growth provided a chance to explore service's role in Christian formation at a highly effective church. Closely related was assessing the extent to which a thriving ministry climate can overcome the 20/80 Rule.

On the other hand, a single case study is sharply focused. The host church had a unique history, concentration of artists, high proportion of seminarians, young median adult age, widespread community groups, and multi-site operations. Additional limiting features included the participants' homogeneity, the researcher's prior involvement, the quality of the interviews, the study's timeline, and SDT's assumptions. These delimitations and limitations suggest that findings will not be generalizable to youth, non-Christians, and non-evangelical churches. Much can be learned despite the study's bounded nature. By mixing vibrant colors and subtle shades from varied experiences, the researcher has attempted to paint a compelling picture of reform.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Sojourn's experience with institutional service should sound a warning to every congregation in America: *Pareto's 20/80 Rule has no place in the church of Jesus Christ!* Because the Lord's presence is manifested in His followers' love, serving one another shows He is alive and well (John 13:35; 1 Cor 12:25-26; 13:1-3). The leader's challenge is to provide attractive opportunities for Spirit-filled ministry that will foster transformative learning and promote genuine relationships. Given the importance of Christian formation, the lack of intrinsically motivating choices on a church's service menu is nothing short of a crisis. Charlie, a New Albany leader, summed it up best: "If 80% of my body wasn't functioning, I'd be on life support!" Until leaders grasp service's unique potential for internalizing faith, they can only hope that cognitive belief will somehow sprout a Christ identity.

There is no room to waffle on this litmus test of congregational health. If a highly effective church has been unable to engage most members in church-sponsored service, less-effective churches are probably facing the same problem. Thankfully, Sojourn's story does not end there. Though few cries for change erupted during the interviews, the need for reform was evident in their stories. William, one of the leaders, put it best: "Reading a book on dancing is no substitute for dancing." Just as sitting in the pew fosters ungodly attitudes that betray Christ's character, transformative service promotes Christian formation that magnifies His beauty. Participants concurred that

challenging members to pursue their calling through intrinsically satisfying service would help God's Spirit advance Christ's mission. Based on the qualitative data, the researcher drew eight conclusions.

Christian Service Was Viewed as Critical to Christian Formation

Participants agreed that service's ability to enhance Christian formation shares equal importance with spreading the gospel. In order to edify the church, the whole congregation must exercise their spiritual gifts in step with the Giver. Christ alone calls, leads, equips and instructs members of a faith community to glorify God through obedient service that is empowered by His Spirit. Service that exposed a believer's true heart invariably accelerated spiritual growth. Before serving, participants said they were more inwardly focused, judgmental, fearful, and hypocritical. After serving, they learned the depths of their sin, replaced old stereotypes with real faces, clarified their passions, experienced the Holy Spirit, and witnessed God's faithfulness. Members' low affirmation of increasing competence, however, suggested their gifts were underutilized or they were ready for new challenges. Participants distinguished "family chores" from "personal ministry" as two forms of legitimate service. The first implies a shared responsibility for perpetuating the church's infrastructure; the second makes room for personal calling based on giftedness. Participants felt that balancing both areas would avoid two extremes: engaging in service to ease the conscience; disconnecting personal ministry from the church's mission.

Church Structures Did Not Always Align with Leaders' Philosophy

One problem is that most indicia of congregational health are hidden beneath

the surface of church activity (Lindgren and Shawchuck 1984). Perception's ability to cloud reality was dramatically illustrated when Christ announced His earthly mission. With Jesus' childhood emblazoned in their minds, religious leaders could not fathom how He could be the messiah (John 1:46; 6:42). Such perceptions are especially potent for thwarting challenges to long-held mental models. Frustration begins with uneasy feelings that fill one's mind with questions about their source until the person acts upon his emotive state (Louis 1977). Conflict moves to the interpersonal level when one person attributes negative motives or intent to another through parallels drawn from past experience (Sillars 1980, 180). Assumptions or inferences based on meanings, causes, or outcomes could easily exacerbate the conflict. People label others' behavior in subconscious ways that deflect personal responsibility and externalize negative attributes to avoid blame. The resulting "attribution error" takes credit for positive outcomes and blames others for problems.

A shepherd who fails to acknowledge perception's power over reality will never truly know the sheep under his care (John 10:27). Based on the researcher's personal observation, most leaders at Sojourn are strong at seizing opportunities, taking risks, recognizing contributions, celebrating victories, and fostering collaboration. Now they must enable members to take the same initiative by overcoming crippling misperceptions lacking any context. While a moving sermon may inspire and convict, only ownership in the enterprise will sustain member involvement. Despite elders' noble intentions, conflicting signals about autonomy and control could make personal progress feel like swimming upstream. At one extreme, formal structures steer members toward a standard menu of church-sponsored services that may not align with their personality, gifts or passion. At the other, little structure is provided for members to design, launch,

and sustain intrinsically motivating ministries based on their special makeup or unique background. Neither avenue promises to deliver transformative learning on the road to Christian formation. Contrary to Sojourn's sincere desire, members who follow "from a distance" appear more likely to view such structures as "controlling." If these perceptions spread, the overcommitted may burn out while the uncommitted fade away.

Beyond God's grace and the moving of His Spirit, the church's vision calls for a deep commitment from every member that is *internally driven*. Seeds of empowerment must take root in each member in order to germinate a ministry structure that saturates the church's culture. A fresh appreciation of each person's unique potential, desire, and role in ministry is a critical step in regaining lost ground. Equally important is "up close" facilitators who will inspire, challenge, encourage, support, and guide these adventures in a loving relationship of mutual accountability. Although beyond the scope of this case study, a formal gap analysis represents a critical component of the church's strategic plan. According to three consultants dedicated to congregational transformation, the "creative tension" that results is critical to a church's future:

Change is driven when a significant gap exists between a vision of the future that people sincerely desire to achieve and a clear sense that they are not achieving that vision. As the recognition grows, so does their willingness to change their perspective and to try new approaches. This is the point at which they are experience creative tension. The discipline to generate and sustain this driving force is indispensable for change leaders. (Herrington, et al. 2000, 100).

To remain effective, leaders must be willing to peel back layers of interaction—events, trends, structures, and mental models—that promote or inhibit Spirit-led service.

Older Members Were More Likely to Feel Marginalized And Disconnected

Sojourn's youthful congregation has been an obvious blessing in many ways.

As Fred pointed out,

Much of the younger generation is not pre-churched, so they say, ‘Let’s do this community thing instead of Sunday School. They’re okay for change; they’re okay with trying something new. ‘Whatever, let’s do it; I’m on board’.

That a joyful band of ‘twenty-somethings’ who launched the church would be enthusiastic, innovative, idealistic and inquisitive came as no surprise. That many were also mature beyond their years was less expected. Some came from the local seminary; others were attracted to the church’s holistic gospel. Most owe their transformation to its stimulating environment.

Paradoxically, this phenomenon appears to have alienated a number of “baby boomers” in the church, particularly those accustomed to leadership roles. While two older participants seemed disgruntled about losing head seat at the table, two others simply came off as feeling lost. A few shared a sense of guilt by association—after all, the church’s prominence in society slipped away on their generation’s watch. The most extreme case exhibited classic symptoms of attribution error: a lifetime of experiences was now clouding every perception. In his cynical mind, every opportunity had a blemish.

Willow Creek’s (Hawkins and Parkinson 2007) groundbreaking evaluation of their ‘seeker sensitive’ model suggests this segment of the church population may require more personal attention. The study divided church attendees into four groups by level of spiritual formation: those who are “exploring Christianity,” those who are “growing in Christ,” those who are “close to Christ,” and those who are “Christ-centered.” Members in the first two categories benefitted most from church-sponsored ministries. In contrast, more mature believers were often “stalled” in their spiritual growth or “dissatisfied” with what the church was doing to help them grow. Those who felt stagnant (16% of those surveyed) came mainly from the “close to Christ” category, whereas the dissatisfied

(10% of participants), came from the most “Christ-focused” segment (i.e., active evangelists, volunteers, and church donors). They were also most likely to report they are considering leaving the church (Hawkins and Parkinson 2008, 76). Willow Creek’s researchers made two important observations about this last group: 1) They felt their church did not “keep them on track” for Christian formation and 2) Church leaders had not “helped them find a spiritual mentor” (Hawkins and Parkinson 2008, 76).

In contrast, church-sponsored ministries had the most influence at the beginning of a person’s spiritual growth process. This handholding approach appears to be necessary in the early stages of spiritual growth. As members matured, the institutional church became less central to their development. The study concluded that, “our analysis paints the picture of the church being too preoccupied with the early growing years, leaving the spiritual adolescents to find their own way – without preparing them for the journey” (Hawkins and Parkinson 2008, 121). These findings suggest Sojourn should explore more creative ways to tap into this rich reservoir of talent and experience. That leaders have rejected a programmatic approach to discipleship—the model associated with the “baby boomer” generation—further exacerbates the problem. One biblical approach is to treat older members like mothers and fathers who yearn to share their wisdom with younger siblings (Prov 1:8-9; 1 Tim 5:1). In return, they will be more likely to grow “temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, [and] in perseverance” (Titus 2:1).

Leading from a Distance Widened the Perception Gap

Clashing perceptions of the church’s motivational climate was the only instance where qualitative differences separated leaders and members. Several experiences tended to reinforce member perceptions that the church maintained a

hierarchical structure. These and other conflicting signals appear to be inhibiting the corporate commitment to serve. Leadership from the pulpit that was not intimately reinforced during the week tended to solidify these perceptions. Such views appeared to ignore the host's ministry philosophy and to baffle its leaders. At every turn, a leader's desire to empower others was matched only by uncertainty of how to meet the challenge. News of participants' perceptions prompted a mixed response from leaders: two appeared to become defensive while several others invited the most cynical criticism. The latter group felt that encouraging open and honest feedback could lead to a greater reality. For their part, most participants agreed that modeling a leader's faith within the confines of an intimate relationship would go a long way to solving the problem.

Participants Were More Responsive to Transformative Opportunities

At the same time, not all opportunities to serve in the local church are created equal. Maximizing service's educational value requires clear intentionality and loving guidance. Members will more likely respond to challenging assignments from a leader they have come to know and admire. The leader's intimate awareness of a member's journey, in turn, enables him to craft service opportunities that unleash spiritual giftedness and promote transformative learning. These truths suggest all forms of Christian service—whether formal or informal—should be channeled through the local church. If so, leaders must reexamine the current paradigm of church-sponsored ministry. Instead of filling slots, they should get to know their people. Breaking the mold requires an intimate relationship.

They Also Wanted a Trusted Mentor Who Would Challenge Them to Serve

Participant views of leader accountability hinged on their prior exposure to mentoring. Those without mentors tended to interpret the term negatively, on par with legalism. Those with mentors said that being held accountable by a respected leader was key to their growth. The latter group came to Christ through a parachurch ministry with a radical service paradigm. Each had been challenged by an “up close” leader to embrace a lifestyle of service early in their faith. Should the church adopt a mentoring model, all agreed that community group leaders who are *properly prepared* would fit the bill. Several participants felt that more could be done to recruit, equip, and hold these candidates accountable as under-shepherds. To avoid falling into idolatry, others thought the relationship should stress *mutual* learning and encouragement.

All Believed Intrinsically Satisfying Service Opportunities Could Sustain Personal Ministry

SDT’s potential for eradicating the church’s perception gap was most evident when participants began describing their “dream ministry.” Both leaders and members alike displayed a strong preference for inherently interesting, enjoyable, or satisfying activities that require little external reinforcement. Their language, tenor, energy and body language rallied around intrinsic motivation’s classic cues. Sensitivity to God’s Spirit and personal gifting was also enhanced. All sensed that intrinsically satisfying opportunities for personalized ministry would stimulate many who have not participated in church-sponsored service to step out of the pew.

Participants Also Affirmed That Transformative Service Requires the Holy Spirit

When participants referred to the Spirit's role in Christian formation, their remarks were both positive and varied. All agreed the Holy Spirit empowers believers for personal ministry, equips believers for effective ministry, guides believers for lasting ministry, enlightens believers for joyful ministry, and humbles believers for Christ-honoring ministry. These themes led to an inescapable conclusion: the Holy Spirit is essential in every aspect of service. He alone separates worldly deeds from Christian ministry, and aligns personal ministry with corporate mission.

Each of the foregoing findings, distilled from the researcher's interpretation of the qualitative data, appears to support SDT's hypothesis about autonomous motivation. It is hoped that Sojourn's experience with church-sponsored service will stimulate meaningful dialogue on the need to reform church structures that foster Christian formation through intrinsically motivated, Spirit-empowered service.

Research Purpose

Perceiving undeveloped believers as marginalized members of Christ's body, this qualitative study sought to build awareness of the need to develop an action agenda for reform that empowers ordinary people to make lasting contributions to God's kingdom through intrinsically motivating service. Mixing theoretical and theological hues painted a three-dimensional picture of the issues explored, people studied, and changes needed. The researcher used SDT's lens to shape the questions, inform the data, and inspire the cause. The study's ultimate aim was to stimulate dialogue on the need to reform a church's motivational climate and organizational structure in order to empower joyful service that facilitates Christian formation.

Research Questions

The following research questions furthered the study's emancipatory purpose:

1. In what ways does the church's organizational structure align with each SDT element, as displayed in its documents, online resources, and other media?
2. In what ways do leaders and members describe the church's motivational climate, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
3. In what ways do leaders and members describe experiences with church-sponsored service, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
4. In what ways do leaders and members respond to the use of SDT principles to facilitate church-sponsored service, as displayed in their personal interviews and focus group responses?
5. In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of service in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
6. In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
7. In what ways do leaders and members describe the role of spiritual giftedness in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

Research Implications

Because the researcher sought to build awareness about deficiencies in the current paradigm of church-sponsored service, the study's implications are necessarily diverse. Two in particular are emphasized here. The first is that *knowledge of the truth will not sprout a Christ-identity without special nourishment from transformative experience*. Jesus knew that genuine conversion involves far more than "belief in His name" (John 2: 23-25). In the parable of soils, He warned that intellectual assent must be internalized if faith is to yield a bountiful crop (Matt 13: 3-9). Accordingly, those who follow Jesus must embrace a lifestyle of service that glorifies God (Matt 4:19). SDT's

discovery that intrinsically motivating activities tend to internalize religious behavior could revolutionize the church’s approach to sanctification in the twenty-first century (Deci and Ryan 1985a, 120). SDT suggests that ordinary believers can forge a Christ identity through inherently satisfying ministries that will internalize their faith (Figure 3).

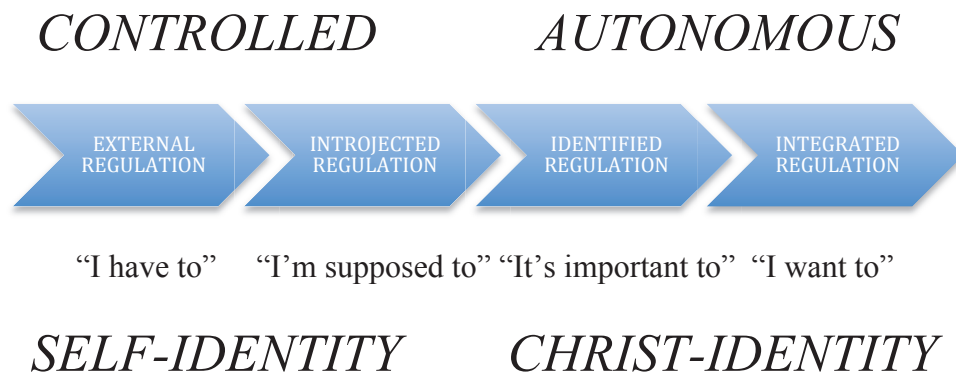


Figure 3: Internalization of Christian faith

Religious behavior is *externally* regulated when performed solely to meet overtly external contingencies such as the promise of reward or threat of punishment. Because it is typically accompanied by a sense of coercion or pressure, it lacks any sense of volition or autonomy (deCharms 1968, 273). For the same reason, feeling one is “supposed to” perform certain religious activity (*introjected* regulation) also feels controlling even though the pressure comes from within (Ryan et al. 1991, 62). Only when the practice is fully accepted as one’s own (*identified* regulation), will the convert acquire a sense of psychological freedom and volition (Ryan and Deci 2000, 60). Since the behavior is regulated by personally endorsed values or commitments, his or her responses feel more willing and autonomous (Ryan and Deci 2002, 27). Full *integration* requires aligning the religious practice with other endorsed values, goals, or ideas that

comprise one's coherent sense of self. They become acceptable not just for their personal significance, but because they match one's self-identity (Assor et al. 2005, 116). The conclusion is inescapable: meeting basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness through intrinsically motivating service will embed Christian values deep in the believer's heart (Gain and La Guardia 2009, 185).

Theologically, it is tempting to compare SDT's stages to the soils in Jesus' parable. Filtering the Lord's own explanation through SDT's theoretical lens produces an interesting corollary:

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road [*external religious regulation*]. The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away [*introjected religious regulation*]. And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful [*identified religious regulation*]. And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty [*integrated religious regulation*]. (Matt 13:19-23)

If such a relationship is empirically demonstrated, it could explain why many genuine converts fail to mature as disciples despite their sincere conviction about the importance of following Christ. Intrinsically motivated church-sponsored service may also place an unregenerate heart face-to-face with his or her lack of genuine faith. While such learning opportunities may not violate Christ's admonition about separating wheat and tares (Matt 13:29), less careful leaders could fall prey to questioning a member's conversion.

However, there is currently no adequate basis upon which to assess a causal connection. a wise church leader will offer satisfying opportunities for service that unleash spiritual giftedness, deepen spiritual intimacy, internalize doctrinal beliefs, and solidify Christian

identity—trusting any increase to God.

The second implication is that any theology that divorces Spirit from service is dangerously unbiblical. Because a unified self-identity is forged by environmental influences, how believers spend their time is critical. Every life experience either affirms or challenges one's mental model of faith. Unless redeemed by God's Spirit, even autonomous activities could conform to the spirit of the age. Ultimately, this study is about allowing God's Spirit to empower ordinary believers for ministries that manifest God's grace in a skeptical world. Just as Christ's followers received power at Pentecost, His Spirit must pour forth in every generation. Sojourn's experience suggests the best way to overcome inertia in the pew is *to create intrinsically motivating opportunities to serve*. SDT advocates satisfying service that sustains a believer's walk until his or her Christian beliefs are internalized. Could harnessing members' deep-rooted need for autonomy, competence and relationship turn threats meant for evil into heavenly opportunities for good?

Research Applications

Because the proposed research followed the confines of a case study, its findings cannot be generalized to youth, non-Christians or non-evangelical churches in any traditional sense. Neither was the study intended to measure SDT's potential for increasing commitment to service. Instead, the researcher sought to build awareness of the need to empower all believers to make kingdom contributions through intrinsically motivated service that internalizes their faith. In the process, traditional assumptions about servant leadership, Christian formation, and spiritual giftedness were challenged. The study's ultimate aim was to stimulate dialogue on the need to reform a church's motivational climate and organizational structure to empower joyful service that

facilitates Christian formation. By mixing vibrant colors and subtle shades from one church's varied experiences, the researcher hoped to paint a compelling picture for reform.

Research Limitations

Despite his biblical view of an objective reality, the researcher focused primarily on the participants' subjective responses. Respondents' attitudes were relevant only in how they interpreted the meaning behind their experiences. The study was also limited by the researcher's observations regarding the documents reviewed, interviews conducted, and cultural dynamics. No longitudinal observation of the process of training or embedding in the culture of the church was attempted.

Further Research

The researcher applied the critical case rationale to perceptions of service at a pacesetter church to showcase the need for a 'Second Reformation' (i.e., where personal ministry is structured according to the priesthood of all believers). By doing so, he hoped to stimulate meaningful dialogue on service's formative role, the need to provide satisfying ministry opportunities, and SDT's potential for sustaining members' commitment. The study's specific findings suggest the following candidates for future research on Christian formation (as distinguished from "religiosity").

Applying SDT tenets to other faith traditions is a logical way to broaden its generalizability throughout Christendom (Sheldon 2006, 209). Incorporating samples from fundamentalist, liberal, Pentecostal, evangelical and other traditions may also help to isolate differences in motivational climate at an institutional level. Some relationships worthy of attention are motivational climate and service commitment; gift awareness and

propensity to serve; gift awareness and internalizing faith. A survey of “best practices” for promoting autonomous service (seeking challenge) within team ministry (sharing challenge) in order to spur Christian formation (conquering challenge) could shed much light on SDT’s potential. An argument can also be made for reexamining clergy-laity distinctions, the professional model of ministry, seminary curricula, and its relationship to the church.

The tendency of older members to feel controlled or marginalized deserves special attention. Willow Creek’s landmark studies overlooked a key motivational question: Are these stakeholders more likely to throw in the towel because they are too *mature* for church-sponsored services or *weary* of them? The first looks at tailoring opportunities to formative development; the other questions the paradigm’s premise. Finally, pairing ministry participation with faith internalization should open the door to experimental research on SDT’s capacity to enhance Christian formation.

Despite all the hype over intrinsic motivation, researchers should not assume extrinsic motivators have no place in the lifelong process of internalizing faith. SDT empirically verifies what empowering leaders already know—using godly means to accomplish righteous ends will always be necessary and appropriate. Though man was created to cherish His Name, extrinsic motivators have marked every turn in the relationship—Adam’s disobedience brings death; the First Advent calls for repentance; the Second Advent warns of judgment; the new creation promises heavenly treasure. Specific extrinsic desires noted by Grudem (1994, 757) include keeping a clear conscience (Rom 13:5), being a “vessel for noble use” (2 Tim 2:20-21), helping others come to Christ (1 Pet 3:1-2), receiving present blessings (1 Pet 3:9-12) and seeking heavenly rewards (Matt 6:19-21). Even Paul conceded that Christianity is pointless

without eternal hope (1 Cor 15:13-19; 30-31).

In reality, those who fear the consequence of displeasing God often resolve to follow His ways *before* delighting in them (Ps 111:10; Acts 5:11). When duty turns to joy, the capstone of spiritual maturity—identifying with Christ—seals a believer’s transformation “from glory to glory” (2 Cor 3:18). The prevalence of the 20/80 Rule is a sober reminder that heavenly rewards stir few believers to sustained action. Whether there is an optimal mix of extrinsic and intrinsic motivators for enhancing Christian formation remains to be seen. In the final chapter, findings from the present study are used to forge a motivational model of church-sponsored service. By offering an alternate reality of Christian ministry, the researcher hopes to stimulate meaningful dialogue leading to structural reforms.

CHAPTER 6

A MOTIVATIONAL MODEL OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

This study began with the controversial premise that undeveloped believers are marginalized citizens in God's kingdom. If the call to serve led Jesus to the cross, the call to follow cannot stop at the pew (Matt 10:38-39; 20:28; Luke 9:23-24; Phil 2:8). The rescue plan was equally provocative—unleashing passions through satisfying ministry. According to a critical array of servants at one pacesetting church, both observations are worthy of further consideration. Their story suggests that structuring service around Christian formation could finally emasculate the 20/80 Rule. Dubbed the “Pareto principle,” it posits that 20% of causes will always produce 80% of the results in every social context (Juran 1992, 68). When applied to Christian service, it predicts that 20% of the church's members will perform 80% of its ministries.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), an emerging meta-theory of human motivation, has shown great potential for internalizing Christian beliefs through inherently satisfying activities that unleash spiritual giftedness and stimulate transformative learning. By fueling basic drives for autonomy, competency and relatedness, leaders can forge a plausible corporate identity that responds appropriately to environmental pressures (Baard 2002, 273). SDT's most significant finding is that intrinsically motivating activities tend to move individuals from external to internal regulation of behavior (Deci and Ryan 1985a, 120). In contrast to the traditional paradigm, SDT postulates that such activities may actually *stimulate* Christian maturity (Neyrinck et al. 2006, 321). In this final chapter,

the researcher proposes a new archetype of Christian service that integrates SDT principles with biblical truths about Christian formation. The resulting model provides hope that elders may be able to guide converts along a four-phase process that integrates orthodox faith into a Christ identity (Figure 3):

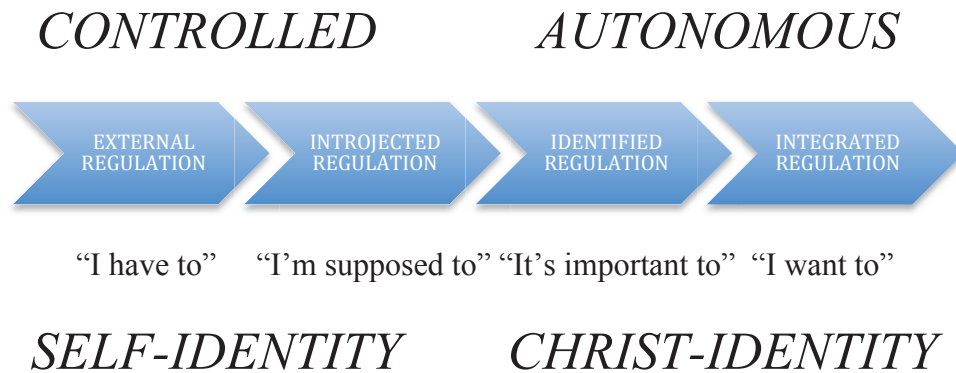


Figure 3: Internalization of Christian faith

The motivational model presented below synthesizes five principles from the study's qualitative data under the "SERVE" acronym (Figure 4). A common assumption in each component is that an intrinsically motivating church climate will empower members to assimilate kingdom values for sustainable change. After discussing each module, the researcher will provide a brief glimpse of how the component might look in the hypothetical "Church of Tomorrow." The model has two practical implications for church-sponsored ministry: (1) no single motivational principle can defeat the 20/80 Rule; (2) taken together, however, they form a logical construct that could revolutionize Christian discipleship in the twenty-first century.

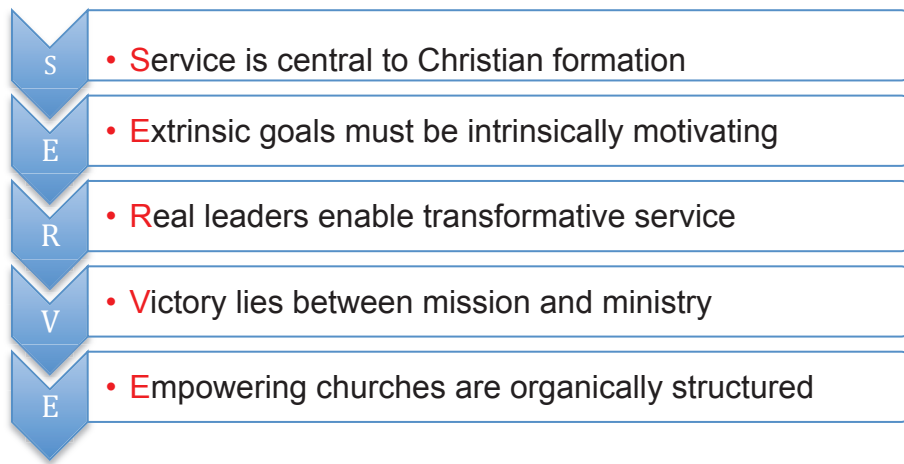


Figure 4: Motivational model of Christian service

Service Is Central to Christian Formation

The foundation of a motivational model for Christian service is that the 20-80 Rule has no place in church life. If the call to serve led Jesus to the cross, the call to follow cannot stop at the pew (Matt 10:38-39; 20:28; Luke 9:23-24; Phil 2:8). Hearing the Word without acting on it is the greatest deception ever devised (Jas 1:22). “Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (Jas 1:27). When John the Baptist wondered if Jesus was the expected One, Jesus pointed to His merciful service in the Spirit’s power:

Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them (Matt 11:4-5).

God wants His children to change who they *are*, not just how they behave (Eph 4:17-21). The deepest longings of the human heart must change if humanity is to become all God intends (Powlison 2003, 16). Training in righteousness requires putting on the new man as much as putting off the old (Eph 4:22-24). Only rich, experiential grappling with truth

moves a convert to follow the way of the cross (Matt 14:29-32; Rom 6:1-14). Walking by faith intensifies the Spirit's sanctifying work (Luke 24:32; 2 Cor 3:18; Heb 12:2). Over time, an obedient lifestyle bears fruit in a *changed identity* (Luke 6:40; Rom 1:4; 8:29; Heb 5:13). Here resides the inner person known only to God (1 Sam 16:7; 1 Pet 3:4).

The key is to be doers of the Word, striving together toward godliness (Jas 1:19-25; 1 Tim 4:7). Rather than anesthetize His children to all motivation, God redirects their desires heavenward. Strength and wisdom come “in the doing,” not beforehand (Jas 1:25). Belief turns to conviction when they taste and see that God is good (Mic 6:8; Heb 6:4-5). Those who learn to *identify* with Christ receive a double blessing: satisfying life's ultimate purpose while glorifying the One who makes it all possible (Isa 43:7; 62:5; Pss 16:11; 27:4; 73:25-26; Zeph 3:17-18; John 10:10; Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 10:31; Eph 1:11-12; Heb 11:6; Rev 4:11).

These passages suggest God's chief strategy for turning knowledge into conviction is *experiential learning through stimulating service*. If so, any discipleship model that emphasizes service as spiritual fruit rather than spiritual seed is doomed to fail. Until service becomes a means for growth—not just a sign of arrival—the 20/80 Rule will prevail (Grudem 1994, 1030). In a motivational model, service is no less central to Christian formation than God's Word, prayer, or fellowship. It recognizes that every member plays an integral role in preserving body health (1 Cor 12:12-31). In order to edify the church, the whole congregation exercises their spiritual gifts in step with the Giver (1 Cor 12:1-14:40).

SDT's premise is that all persons are born with a natural desire to learn, to grow, and to master their environment. These tendencies thrive only when basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are satisfied. When

deprived of these “nutriments” for well-being, intrinsic motivation begins to wither—like a plant without air, water, and light. While orthodox Christianity’s understanding of man’s ultimate meaning and purpose clashes radically with humanistic psychology, they both draw from the same well. Cravings for autonomy, competence and relationship have defined the human condition since God first breathed life into Adam’s soul. Primordial drives for self-determination were not extinguished or condemned by the fall (Matt 6:20; Luke 15:7; 1 Thess 4:3). The real question is whether they are used for good or evil. In the enemy’s hands, they become yokes that steer people toward self-absorption and eternal destruction. In the Spirit’s hands, they provide tools for empowering God’s children to love others and mature in Christ. The prevalence of the 20/80 Rule suggests the contemporary church has been losing a civil war for the soul.

Whether SDT can advance God’s kingdom in ways that glorify Jesus Christ remains to be seen. Because most researchers are blind to man’s *immaterial* dimension, it behooves Christian scholars to explore how basic drives for autonomy, competence and relatedness align with God’s redemptive plan. Long before man began to unlock the mysteries of human motivation, the Lord had perfectly modeled these principles. Jesus challenged His disciples to mobilize their resources for Kingdom advancement as shrewdly as heathens plot self-promotion (Luke 16:1-14). He taught that protecting the flock from worldly affections is the mark of a true shepherd. He stressed that God wants every aspect of man’s being—especially the deepest longings of his heart—to glorify Him. Only the *new* Adam is truly free to glorify the One who makes it all possible.

SDT speaks of aligning church-sponsored services with Christian formation in two practical ways. First, it assumes leaders who offer intrinsically satisfying service opportunities will maintain an empowering climate for self-motivation that sustains

personal involvement. Second, it predicts those who continue to serve will gradually integrate the activity's values into their personal identity. The first observation has great potential for nudging congregants out of the pew; the second offers hope for keeping them active until they learn to identify with Christ. Both hypotheses challenge the traditional notion that spiritual formation progresses in linear fashion—from head (knowledge), to heart (conviction), to hands (action). This paradigm of Christian formation assumes service is the fruit of a new life, borne of truth and nurtured through conviction, manifesting a divine reality (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Traditional model of Christian formation

In contrast, SDT implies a symbiotic relationship where growth in any developmental area has multi-dimensional impact. This paradigm acknowledges the *interplay* of knowledge, conviction, and action as causative agents (Figure 6).

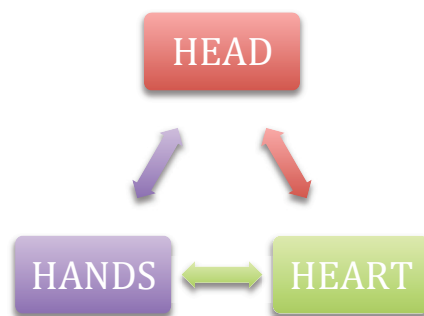


Figure 6: SDT model of Christian formation

Biblical support for SDT's paradigm can be found in the letter to the Hebrews. Continually feeding on the "milk" of God's Word had caused members to act like infants who are "dull of hearing" (Heb 5:11). Solid spiritual food was reserved for the mature, who "*because of practice* have their senses trained to discern good and evil" (emphasis added) (Heb 5:14). The same congruence of faith and service was Paul's prayer for the Colossians:

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light (Col 1:9-12).

Paul discovered that *attempting* to live consistently with his identity in Christ had yielded a righteousness that *internalized* his conviction. Truth may steer the believer's affection, but only obedience can enrich it (Eph 4:14; 2 John 1:1-6). To gain true understanding, every experience must be filtered through God's Word and applied to one's own heart (2 Pet 1:19-21).

Though service shares equal billing with worship, study and fellowship in most churches today, its formative value has been lost over the centuries. In a motivational model of Christian service, congregational health is measured by commitment to sustainable service. Church structures advance personal ministries throughout the week in a variety of creative ways. To increase ministry involvement without extrinsic motivators, leaders must tap into the power within.

A Glimpse at the Centrality of Service

In the Church of Tomorrow, serving Christ seems as natural as breathing. The elders are convinced that Christian service is no less important than worship, prayer, or God's Word

in the life of a growing disciple. They know that only Spirit-led, gift-empowered service can draw people out of the pews to pursue life-changing experiences that will internalize their faith. Every church structure is designed to channel the whole congregation—fresh converts and old warriors alike—into intrinsically satisfying ministries that deepen their Christ-identity. The church’s unwavering commitment to ‘service as a lifestyle’ often makes life hectic and confusing, but no one would have it any other way. Having tasted God’s rich plan for Christian formation, they find it hard to believe that the 20/80 Rule was once considered “business as usual.”

Extrinsic Goals Must Be Intrinsically Motivating

To a large extent, the Christian life is simply one response to a divine reality.

The motivation behind all spiritual growth—whether stirred by God’s Word or stimulated by sacrificial service—is growing appreciation for His grace (Titus 2:11-15). The transcendent reality is that God generates all spiritual activity—whether sanctified by His Word, seasoned with His grace, or empowered by His Spirit. A proper understanding of service’s role in Christian formation begins by acknowledging that God created human motivation *before* the Fall. Breathing life into Adam’s soul, God proclaimed his ‘image bearer’ *very good*—distinguishing humanity in sacredness, dignity, and value (Gen 1:31; 2 Pet 2:12). He was endowed with self-awareness, self-determination, and self-expression to multiply His creative works (Gen 1:26-30).

The desire to encode humanity with imagination spawned an innate drive for autonomy (Gen 2:16). Faith in His provisions propelled humanity to explore what He created. The cultural mandate to shepherd the earth presupposed a quest for competence (Gen 1:26-28). The drive to conquer the earth was balanced by the responsibility of stewarding what he subdued. Declaring “it is not good for man to be alone” (Gen 2:18), God foretold that even the greatest human achievement would be meaningless if it ignores man’s deeper longing for relationship. Through mutual interdependence and cooperative effort, Adam and Eve could synergize their individuality under God’s

sovereign protection and provision. All ingredients for enjoying creation were now in place.

God had a far more glorious plan in mind. Before the foundation of the world, He resolved to magnify Himself through the salvation of His people (Eph 1:4). When Adam chose to eat of the tree, he was snared by the same deceit that cast Lucifer from heaven (Isa 14:12-15). Just as Satan had dared to ascend to God's throne, the first man made in His image dared to question God's judgment (Gen 3:4-6). The audacity to turn reason against faith flashed a great divide. By satisfying his desire instead of trusting God, Adam traded a commandment-oriented life of love for a feeling-oriented life of lust (Adams 1973, 118). In the fallout, man's capacity for discernment, understanding, motivation, and relationship was hopelessly distorted (Rom 3:23). Freedom meant running far from God rather than trusting in His wisdom. Instead of building altars for worship, man fought to be "king of the hill." As egocentric promotion replaced selfless love, conflict spread like wildfire (Gen 4:5-8; 6:5-6). In the insatiable quest for meaning and purpose, life became an epic tragedy of unfulfilled desires and mounting futility (Gen 3:17; Rom 8:10).

The gospel reveals God's marvelous plan for reconciling all creation under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Long before SDT's effectiveness could be empirically measured, the Son of God demonstrated its potency with the apostles. Christ's invitation to life everlasting is a call to intimacy, authenticity, struggle, commitment, and response. The dynamic interplay of these variables forms a strong community for advancing a Christian counter-culture under hostile conditions. Jesus' emphasis on relatedness is particularly well suited for establishing kingdom values behind enemy lines. Through His life, death and resurrection, the human spirit can still bow to God's kingdom rule. The atonement

not only restores mankind's nobility (Rom 12:1-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11), it elevates God's children *above* Adam's pre-fallen condition (Rom 5:20, 8:20-21; 1 Cor 6:2-3; Col 3:10-11; Rev 3:12; Adams 1979, 180). Redemption's central ramification is renewal of purpose and hope for those who trust in the finished work of the cross (Eph 1:11-14). This life transformation is made possible by abiding in Christ, whose Spirit induces God's love in His children's hearts (Gal 5:22; Rom 5:5). Spreading the good news of God's forgiveness is a satisfying means to bless others in every sphere of influence (1 Tim 5:8; Eph 4:28).

By God's grace, these basic psychological drives are accessible to every human being in order to energize and sustain meaningful behavior. Intrinsic motivation's fullest expression, however, is reserved for those who have been "born again" of the Spirit from above (John 3:3). Only God's spiritual children can sanctify these drives by considering others more important than themselves (Phil 2:3). Jesus' own model of transformative service set this bar high:

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil 2:5-6).

A life of loving, obedient service transformed the Creator of the universe into One who genuinely identifies with humanity (Matt 18:11). Filtering the biblical account of man's evolving relationship with God through SDT's theoretical lens yields two important insights. First, it affirms that the basic drives behind intrinsic motivation existed prior to the fall. Second, it suggests that God instilled these motivational elements for a heavenly purpose. SDT's view of the redemptive progression of God's glorious plan is depicted in Table 10.

Table 10: Redemptive progression of intrinsic motivation

EVENT	AUTONOMY	COMPETENCE	RELATEDNESS
CREATION	Mandate to glorify God by exercising reason and imagination under His sovereignty	Mandate to glorify God by conquering and stewarding the earth under His leadership	Mandate to glorify God through mutual cooperation under His care
FALL	Temptation to glorify self by following impulse and fantasy	Temptation to glorify self by gaining “wisdom” to build own kingdom	Temptation to glorify self by competing with others for rule
REDEMPTION	Life depends on every word that proceeds from God’s mouth!	Do not put God’s leadership to the test!	True fellowship in the body of Christ leads to worshipping God alone!
CONSUMMATION	God’s children exercise true freedom under lordship of Christ in fullness of His glory	God’s children steward new heavens and earth under lordship of Christ in fullness of His glory	God’s children are perfectly united under lordship of Christ in fullness of His glory

The call to reconcile the world as Christ’s ambassadors provides hope that God will accomplish His purpose in a way that maximizes His glory (Eph 1:3-10). Those with ears to hear understand that true freedom lies in dying to self (Luke 9:23; John 12:24; Rom 6:11; Gal 5:24). Serving under His lordship is not just a *foretaste* of things to come—it *is* the new reality (Eph 1:3-14; 2:22; Allison 2012, 97).

A Glimpse At Intrinsically-Motivating Ministry

There was a time when serving at the Church of Tomorrow meant selecting from a menu of church-sponsored options for helping the community that the elders thought were most important. Some of the older members still remember how filling these slots sometimes felt like pulling teeth. Sustained commitment was even harder to achieve, particularly when a volunteer's giftedness did not match the ministry's needs. When the elders decided to adopt a motivational model of service, congregational participation initially *declined*. Once the leadership infrastructure for mentoring relationships was in place, however, member involvement took a dramatic turn. As people shared life together in an intimate setting, they learned what makes each person tick and challenged each other to trust the Lord's plan for Christian formation. Intrinsically motivating opportunities grabbed their attention, and transformative experiences kept them there. Through it all, trusted leaders helped members reflect on what the Holy Spirit was trying to teach them. Today, the blessing of serving others at the Church of Tomorrow propels members out of the pew with little reinforcement.

Real Leaders Enable Transformative Service

The prevalence of the 20/80 Rule in contemporary Christian service suggests the church is losing a civil war for the soul. When sin entered the world, so did man's capacity to divorce belief from action (Gen 4:3-10). Sin's contagion is to blame others or circumstances for the fallout instead of looking into one's own heart (Gen 3:12-13). This tendency does not diminish once a person comes to Christ (Col 1:28-29). To the extent leaders fail to maintain congruence between faith and practice, they enable the enemy to establish a foothold. In contrast, a motivational model of ministry acknowledges that the tiniest seeds planted by God can overtake the world. The genius of His plan is transforming the *person*, not his position (Matt 13:31; 17:20; 23:25-26; Luke 13:19). To be effective witnesses of God's reconciliation, Christ's ambassadors must first "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor 5:18-20). By fanning desires and energizing action, the Spirit empowers ordinary people to live godly lives. He works in a believer's life *through* circumstances, not apart from them (Adams 2002, 97). Just as conviction stirs desire, intrinsically motivating activities help internalize faith until one

identifies with Christ. Transformative learning occurs through real-life experiences permitted by God’s sovereign will (2 Cor 3:12-18; Titus 3:4-8; Jas 1:25). His ultimate purpose is to reflect the image of His Son (Rom 8:19-22).

Transformative service that is led by the Spirit is rich soil for a bountiful crop (Luke 8:4-15). Like the conductor in a heavenly symphony, God orchestrates personal ministry to produce His greatest glory. The rhapsody of Christian service has three divine movements: (1) God *convicting* His children to celebrate their own inadequacy; (2) God *compelling* His children to love one another by grace; (3) God *calling* His children to bless the world with merciful deeds (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Overflow of kingdom service

The crescendo in God’s composition is *genuine faith*, played out through righteous lives that honor His perfect will (Jas 2:22-23). Sacrificial service that combines genuine compassion with moral excellence cannot help but display the divine in ordinary people (2 Pet 1:4-8). Ministry that moves “inside-out” in this manner authenticates Christ’s message so believers can speak with authority into others’ lives (Matt 28:18-20). When a whole church reflects God’s glory, a great harvest of souls is sure to follow (John

4:35). What better way to affirm the congregation's salvation, enrich their faith, and prevent spiritual despair (2 Pet 1:10-11)?

This quiet revolution demonstrates that Jesus came to establish a kingdom unlike any known to man (John 18:36). While earthly empires exert authority *over* subjects, God's rule advances *under* their authority. His strategy was foreshadowed in Jesus' parable about infectious growth: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." As Boyd (2006, 29) explains,

The central goal of Jesus' life was to plant the seed of this new kingdom so that, like a mustard seed, it would gradually expand. Eventually that kingdom would end the rule of Satan and reestablish God, the Creator of the world, as its rightful ruler. . . Jesus planted the seed of the kingdom of God with his ministry, death, and resurrection and then gave to the church, the body of all who submit to his lordship, the task of embodying and living out this distinct kingdom. . . As we allow Christ's character to be formed in us—as we think and act like Jesus—others come under the loving influence of the kingdom and eventually their own hearts are won over to the King of Kings. The reign of God is thus established in their hearts, and the kingdom of God expands. That process [will] culminate in the return of the King accompanied by legions of angels, at which time Satan's rule will end, the earth will be purged of all that is inconsistent with God's rule, and his kingdom of love will be established once and for all.

Transformative learning—rooted in word and deed—brings full satisfaction in the "living and true God" (Rom 8:18; Phil 3:15; Col 2:2; 1 Thess 1:9; 3:10). Only *serving* in Christ's name renews the spirit (2 Cor 4:16), exposes motives (1 Thess 2:4), increases love (1 Thess 3:12), and establishes holiness (1 Thess 3:13). Through a gradual change in identity, God strategically positions every believer for maximum impact. Moving from personal comfort to God's glory enables His children to endure suffering, overcome trials, and grow in faith (Rom 12:21; 2 Thess 1:4-5; Jas 1:2-4). When transformed hearts reach critical mass, the world's socio-political system will implode and Jesus will return

triumphantly (Acts 1:6-8). A bouquet of flowers in a field of thorns will be hard to ignore.

A Glimpse at Transformative Service

A popular slogan at the Church of Tomorrow takes its cue from John the Baptist: “*For Christ to increase, we must decrease.*” Those who are honest freely attest to the accuracy of the motivational research on Christian search. Before they adopted a lifestyle of service, they were inwardly focused; once they began serving, the Lord opened their eyes. In Mary’s own words, “I still remember the day the homeless men I serve became real people who are no different from me.” At first, this revelation produced a crisis of belief—she wondered how anyone with so much pride could pretend to follow Jesus. After several conversations with her CG leader and friends, Mary realized she was in good company. The humility that followed revolutionized the way she approached personal ministry. Today, Mary is more authentic about her struggles, more comfortable with her failures, and more excited about her gracious God.

Victory Lies between Mission and Ministry

Though God sovereignly put all things under Christ’s feet, He commissioned the church to manifest His wisdom to a skeptical world (Matt 28:18-20; Eph 1:22-23; 3:10). To do so, the household of faith must proceed in orderly fashion (1 Cor 14:13-18). The church maintains peace and harmony only when led by Christ and consumed by His gospel (1 Cor 12:4-5). The enemy will employ every scheme possible—from legalism to license—to sabotage the church’s glorious enigma: *unity through diversity* (2 Cor 2:11). Freedom in Christ is no license for God’s children to go their own way. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (Prov 14:12). The golden calf is a grim reminder of what happens when shepherds merely cave in to majority rule (Exod 32:21-29; 1 Cor 10:6). Those not controlled by the Spirit in the church age run the same risk:

For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. (2 Tim 4:3)

At the same time, leadership practices that place corporate programs over personal calling breed an institutional tendency to force round pegs into square holes. Instead of inspiring the uncommitted to unleash personal passions, they stir the overcommitted to fill pressing needs. Dismayed by a widening gulf of commitment among members, many leaders quietly embrace the 20/80 Rule as a stark reality of church life. In the process, they forget that proper stewardship of God's gifts invariably produces members who actually *serve* (Eph 3:2).

A Motivational View of Mission

The tension between freedom and control in the life of a church is not accidental. According to Howell (2003), it is what makes Christian “slavery” most liberating. In a doctoral seminar on the servant/shepherd model of leadership, Wilder (2011) recounted Howell's reasoning:

The Greek term for servant is pejorative because they valued *personal autonomy*. The NT's Redeeming God dignifies our service because he is *Lord*. This God deserves our obedience, submission, worship and commitment as His grateful servants.

Howell implies that the best way to avoid license or legalism is to appreciate God's grace. Biblical unity requires mutual dependence on “one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:4-6). A noted professor of missions at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary offered this helpful clarification:

[N]o one else is a proper judge of your place of service—not a pastor, professor, parent, mission agency, or boss. Only God should be allowed to guide you in the fulfillment of your calling. It won't make sense to the world, but we do not serve the world or seek its approval. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. (Sills 2012, 1).

Empowering leaders understand that congregational diversity displays Christ's unique

ability to rally dissimilar people for a heavenly cause (Rom 14:1-12; 1 Cor 12:12-13). Because “there are a variety of gifts” but “the same God [working] all things in all persons” (1 Cor 12:4-6), they refuse to constrain novel expressions of His grace for the sake of ‘corporate harmony’ (Eph 4:7). Neither do they confuse discipline that restores health with conformity that devastates growth (Rom 14:15). To the contrary—enlightened leaders encourage everyone to “make room” for their gifts in shaping the personal ministry to which each is called (Prov 18:16-17; Rom 12:6).

Injecting near-sighted minds with such God-sized vision is no small task. Service opportunities that unleash passion and stimulate growth are both risky and intense. In a motivational model, a facilitative leader is far more effective than a ministry manager. Separating “doctrinal unity” from “practical diversity” is his first priority. The first addresses *matters* of faith; the second concerns *serving* with faith. One involves submitting to God’s delegated authority; the other requires freedom in the Spirit. While willing obedience preserves life, external regulations only bring death (2 Cor 3:6).

A Motivational View of Liberty

The danger of confusing law and grace has been evident throughout the church age. Barnabas’ humbling experience was an early wakeup call on man’s tendency to conform. Amid rising persecution, this Cyprian Levite sold all his land to support Christianity’s controversial cause (Acts 4:36-37). He also became Paul’s first ally, vouching for his conversion and even joining his first missionary journey (Acts 9:27; 13:2). Over time, Barnabas’ reputation as one “full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” spread throughout Christendom (Acts 11:24). When Paul refused to give Mark a second chance in the field, Barnabas refused to compromise his convictions (Acts 15:36-40). By the time Peter was shunning Gentile converts, however, the table had turned. Paul was

shocked to find the Son of Encouragement caught up in the controversy (Gal 2:11-13). To keep peace with those in power, it seemed like the whole congregation had abandoned the gospel (Gal 2:12).

In every generation since that dark hour, the “just by faith” have been tempted to rebuild what the cross destroys (Gal 2:18-21; 5:1). Man’s propensity to meet others’ expectations is most visible in Christian fellowship. Members who feel pressured to mask their true selves reduce the gospel to behavioral outcomes. Others who shirk all forms of accountability confuse grace with human license. False perceptions of a controlling environment negate leaders’ best intentions; confusion over autonomy’s real purpose invites open rebellion. These tensions serve a divine purpose: *Christ is most glorified when God’s people rally behind His Spirit to mobilize their diverse gifts for the common good* (Rom 8:5-13; 1 Cor 12:7).

True freedom requires breaking free of sin’s power in order to follow God’s will (1 Cor 7:22; 1 Pet 2:16). Using Christian liberty to serve one another in love is a sure sign of corporate maturity (Gal 5:13; 1 Pet 1:22). If so, the health of an entire congregation could hinge on a leader’s ability to distinguish “mission” from “ministry.” According to God’s Word, these functions are meant to serve *complimentary* roles. When combined with SDT’s revelations about intrinsic motivation, leaders and members alike will be challenged to revisit long-held assumptions about church-sponsored service. In the researcher’s biblical adaptation of SDT’s motivational paradigm, intrinsically satisfying ministries rest upon a solid missional foundation (Table 11).

Table 11: Mission Versus Ministry

ELEMENT	MISSION	MINISTRY
Holy Spirit	Mind of Christ	Spiritual gifting
Leadership	Shepherd	Facilitator
Emphasis	Doctrine	Service
Structure	Controlling	Autonomous
Authority	Centralized	Decentralized
Relationships	Unity	Diversity
Motivation	Extrinsic	Intrinsic

A motivational view of a church's mission acknowledges it has no identity apart from Christ. As described by Moltmann (1993, 64):

It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill to the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church, creating a church as it goes on its way.

The notion of being sent by God is central to a church's identity and definitive of its purpose (Allison 2012, 147). A church on *missio Dei* will "relate to its surrounding world, near and far, as a community of the coming reign of God" (Hunsberger 2003, 109). In SDT's model, a clear vision of what the church is called to *be* encourages members to take ownership of what they are called to *do*. Confusing the two leads either to rigid conformity or dangerous license. Distinguishing them ensures the most complex multi-site maneuver will not derail the whole train. *True freedom in Christ requires complete faith in His provisions*. In a holistic view of service:

1. Those who share the mind of Christ will not divorce the gift from the Giver;
2. The same Spirit who unites their cause equips each for Christ-honoring service;

3. The same leader who keeps the flock in line encourages each to explore the field;
4. The same boundaries drawn for their safety enable each to grow with confidence.

From this foundational view, the autonomous and controlling ingredients found in a church's mortar make perfect sense. Unlike their first parents, followers of the Way do not exploit their freedom by coveting what is forbidden. They understand a united community of faith shines far brighter than competing flames, for there are no soloists in heaven (Rev 19:1). Their leaders know that scaling the highest peak of achievement requires plumbing the deepest depths of the human heart: it is easier to *pull* a rope than to push it.

A Motivational View of Leadership

The identity of leadership Christ embraced was that of a servant (Mark 10:45). Jesus showed great contempt for religious leaders who negate the Truth with their own hypocrisy (Matt 23: 13-33). He warned that “whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Matt 23:8-12). To drive the point home, Jesus washed the disciples' feet the very night He was betrayed (John 13:12-17). According to Stott (1985, 26),

Jesus' main reason for emphasizing the leader's servant role relates to the intrinsic worth of human beings—the presupposition underlying his own ministry of self-giving love, which is an essential element in the Christian mind.

Because people are made in God's image (Gen 1:27), leadership must be understood in relational terms that value the dignity of each member. To accomplish the church's relational task, leaders are called “to prepare God's people for works of service” by changing their world inside out (Matt 28:19-20; Eph 4:8-12; Heb 6:1). The goal is to empower others to experience ultimate fulfillment and freedom in Christ (John 8:32). Thus, a servant leader will share authority (Matt 20:25-28), show compassion (2 Tim

2:24-26), identify with Christ (Matt 3:17), sense His purposes (Luke 5:32; 4:43; 19:10) and shepherd His flock (Matt 15:24).

The further leaders stray from Christ's example, the more marginalized the church becomes. The clog in the wheel is not willingness to serve but *failure to lead*. The notion of "going into ministry," a special honor reserved for "reverends" set apart from the "secular" world, perpetuates a class distinction between clergy and laity (Ogden 1990, 60). Many pastors seek to play a starring role in God's redemptive story and then invite members of the congregation to join their cast. This unequal distribution of power quickly devolves into a codependent relationship: members lack confidence to perform ministry; clergy resist sharing responsibilities.

It is still true that the model of congregational life in the minds of most clergy and laity is one in which the minister is the dominant pastoral superstar who specializes in the spiritual concerns of the Christian community, while the laity are spectators, critics, and recipients of pastoral care, free to go about their business because the pastor is taking care of the business of the kingdom. (Lovelace 1979, 224)

If a pastor persists in exaggerating his own importance, members will begin to question God's wisdom (1 Cor 12:23; Rom 9:20-21). Such a view forgets that every member of the body is indispensable to the Spirit's unifying work (1 Cor 12:14-25). For the same reason, management techniques for increasing commitment that squeeze out the Holy Spirit offer a "cure" worse than the "disease." Relying on human strength alone not only dooms the result, it undermines God's plan (1 Cor 2:3-5; 2 Cor 2:16; 3:4-6). Only ministries mobilized by His Spirit can trace Christ's every move.

Depending on how leaders approach sanctification, they either assist or obstruct a congregation's growth. Paying lip service to the priesthood of all believers does little to establish an environment where everyone meaningfully contributes. Couching spiritual rewards and punishment in eschatological language may produce

bursts of extrinsic motivation, but there is no lasting change without *ownership* in the process. Pastors steeped in co-dependency must learn to encourage members to take greater risks in shouldering ministry tasks.

Bestowed on clergy and laity alike, church leadership is uniquely positioned to equip flawed people to join the Spirit in gospel ministry (Eph 4:7-12). As shepherds of a vulnerable flock, they know that internalizing faith is the surest way to prevent the spread of unbelief. The introduction of a cognitive element in virtually every biblical example of cognitive dissonance dramatizes service's pedagogical function in Christian formation (Bowen 2012, 136). In the postmodern age, learning will be more experiential than dogmatic. Thus, intimate relationships will surpass institutional authority as the favored environment. While serving shoulder-to-shoulder on a community group project is certainly beneficial, any model of church-sponsored service that ends there will miss God's ideal. Gleaning "teachable moments" from each experience requires a trusted mentor with superior knowledge who endorses the Holy Spirit as primary teacher (Bowen 2012, 181). Optimal conditions for lasting change include caring friends who encourage the mentee through community affirmation to embark on personal exploration with a biblical mindset. Transformative learning occurs when a life crisis creates a 'disorienting dilemma' that can only be resolved by changing one's meaning scheme (Mezirow 1991, 50). A wise leader will offer satisfying opportunities for service that unleash spiritual giftedness, deepen spiritual intimacy, internalize doctrinal beliefs, and solidify Christian identity. Above all else, he will remove any obstacle to the *Spirit's* starring role.

A Motivational View of the Spirit

More than doing great things for God, the church is about making Christ great in His people. Working with fragile tablets, God is determined to turn stone-cold

hearts to flesh (2 Cor 3:3). By purifying, empowering and unifying the household of faith, the Holy Spirit manifests God's presence (Rom 8:9-11; 2 Cor 3:6). The Spirit personally energizes Christian ministry to make Himself known, understood, and evident in the household of faith (1 Cor 12:8-11; 2 Cor 3:3). Only He can openly confront sin's lingering influence without trampling tender egos (Col 1:28-29). This same Spirit strengthens one's inner person to be "rooted and grounded" in truth so that Christ may dwell richly in his heart (Eph 3:16-17; Col 3:16). Envisioned is firm planting that withstands strong winds and rain (Adams 2002, 90). Through it all, God stirs within a believer "both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Phil 2:12-13).

The Spirit's mission is not designed solely for the flock's comfort—He wants to move wayward souls into willing service (Ezek 36:27; Rom 12:2). Life in the Spirit is God's plan for every Christian (Gal 5). He desires every believer to bear fruit (Matt 7:16-20; Luke 8:11-15). Obedience is the wellspring of sanctification, separating genuine faith from empty profession (Phi 2:12; Rom 6:19). By fanning desires and energizing action, the Spirit empowers ordinary people to live godly lives. He works in a believer's life *through* circumstances, not apart from them (Adams 2002, 97). Transformative learning occurs through real-life experiences permitted by God's sovereign will (2 Cor 3:12-18; Titus 3:4-8; Jas 1:25). God's ultimate purpose is to reflect the image of His Son (Rom 8:19-22).

A Motivational View of Gifts

Spiritual gifts are tangible evidence that God is actively at work in His people for their common good (1 Cor 12:6-7). When the Holy Spirit breathes new life into a soul, He plants an imperishable seed with the precise nutrients needed to energize the convert's kingdom contribution (1 Pet 1:23; Rom 12:6; Heb 10:24). How each seed

sprouts and blossoms is sovereignly ordained and humanly mediated. Spiritual gifting matures in step with the Giver, blessing others and glorifying Christ along the way (John 16:13-14; 1 Cor 2:11-16). Adoption into God’s family also adds a relational dimension unknown to the natural world (John 1:12; Rom 8:14-17; Eph 2:3; Gal 3:23-26). By uniting these supernatural capacities, the Spirit sanctifies service for the church’s edification (1 Cor 12:4-11; 1 Pet 4:10-11). In His gentle hands, personal ministries radiate Christ’s beauty and grace (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Pet. 4:10). Kindling these heavenly seeds may be the church’s next frontier (2 Tim 1:6).

A systematic approach to the delivery of Christian ministry involves the interplay of three components: provider (*gifts*), beneficiary (*needs*), and mechanism (*ministry*). The components’ shape, size and weight are subject to numerous variables. For example, “giftedness” in the traditional model is confined to biblical classifications that represent only a small portion of an individual’s general makeup. In a motivational model, giftedness encompasses *all* that makes a person unique, not just his or her supernatural abilities. This dynamic relationship is represented in Figure 8.

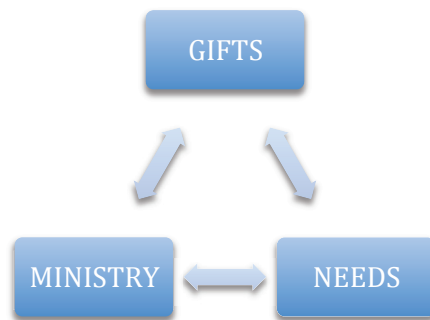


Figure 8: Systemic components of service delivery

In the classic model of Christian service, ministry is leader-driven and

institutionally structured. Service is also contextualized according to supply and demand. Leaders initiate the process by determining the church's vision, mission and values. The resulting grid is used to screen a variety of congregational and community needs competing for church-wide sponsorship. Finally, interested members are encouraged to channel their service through a formal ministry structure (Figure 9).

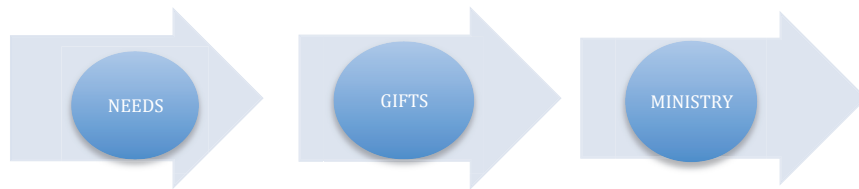


Figure 9: Traditional paradigm of Christian service

In contrast, SDT's model of Christian service (as biblically adapted by the researcher) is member-driven and organically structured. Leaders assume God has sovereignly called their unique assembly to initiate His particular agenda for a specific community. As a result, the polar connections between giftedness and ministry are *reversed*. Now, ministry is driven by members' experience, personality, giftedness, and passions—not the other way around (Figure 10).

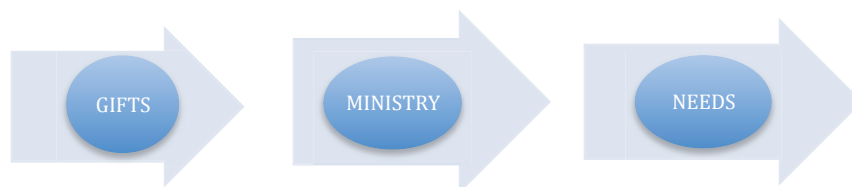


Figure 10: SDT paradigm of Christian service

For the same reason, ministry vehicles are custom-tailored to their driver. Because form follows function, no “cookie cutter” method will do. However, responsibility for articulating the church’s vision, mission and values remains with those called to shepherd God’s flock. These mature leaders understand Satan is an “angel of light,” looking to devour well-meaning believers with deceptive beliefs and destructive practices (2 Cor 11:3-4; 14-21; 1 Pet 5:8). Their prime directive is to protect Christ’s bride while advancing His mission (2 Cor 12:15; 1 Pet 5:1-3). According to Mohler (2012, 47), this is more art than science:

Leadership is the consummate human art. It requires nothing less than that leaders shape the way their followers see the world. The leader must shape the way followers think about what is *real*, what is *true*, what is *right*, and what is *important*. Christians know that all truth is unified, and so these concerns are unified as well. Leaders aim to achieve lasting change and common alignment on these questions.

To pave the way, leaders should instill “common goals, common values, the right structure, and the ongoing training and development [members] need to perform and to respond to change” (Mohler 2012, 118). Because elders must account for souls under their care, members should joyfully submit to these initiatives (1 Tim 5:17-25; Heb 13:17).

A Motivational View of Ministry

Charting a church’s course, however, means nothing unless everyone grabs an oar. An enlightened leader will exercise God’s authority in ways that *build up* the household of faith, not tear it down (2 Cor 10:8; 13:10). By feeding sheep what they really need, a good shepherd can strengthen the weak, heal the diseased, and mend the brokenhearted (Eze 34:1-6). This epiphany sparks another—the call to leadership

encompasses pastoral care *and* practical coaching. Pastors instruct, inspire, and convict “from a distance”; facilitators encourage, challenge, and correct “up close.” Sharing these tasks does not abrogate the shepherd’s responsibility to God (John 21:15-17). Rather, it recognizes they are prone to take on *more* than God intended because they love Christ’s sheep.

Jethro drew this line centuries ago after watching Moses resolve petty disputes from dawn to dusk: “You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone” (Ex 18:18). The apostles made the same distinction by appointing “seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom” so they could devote themselves “to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). Among the elders’ ‘feeding and teaching’ tasks today, one could argue that establishing God’s vision for a particular congregation living in a real community at a precise moment in redemptive history is most critical. Fred, a community group leader at Sojourn’s New Albany campus, acknowledged the enormity of the task at hand:

Sometimes I think there’s a big disconnect here. Alice and I know several people personally who know the Word better than us and can outquote us on scripture any day of the week. But service—caring for others, their neighbors, evangelism—is not there, it’s zero. There’s too much knowing, and not enough *doing* God’s will.

To maintain a healthy balance, gifted lay leaders within the congregation must be invited to climb aboard. According to several participants, entering an intentional relationship with an admired leader soon after conversion would encourage members to adopt a lifestyle of service. Grounded in mutual love and respect, the mentor nudges his or her mentee into challenging ministries that promote transformative learning under the Spirit’s guidance.

At the same time, a motivational model of ministry releases elders to become “leaders of leaders.” By mentoring the facilitators, they are able to preserve their own authenticity and to bridge the divide separating clergy from laity (Heb 13:7). The coherent team that emerges will be able to maintain a healthy tension between mission and ministry, regardless of the church’s size or complexity (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 2000, 109). Emphasizing gifts and passions offers greater autonomy; decentralizing decisions increases competency. Confidence in “personal calling” increases in step with members’ capacity to discern truth and error. Even failure becomes a teachable moment for displaying Christ’s love and grace (Phil 1:27-30). Through a variety of church-sponsored services, congregants learn to blossom where planted as each experiences Christ firsthand (Ps 92:12-13; Phil 4:12).

Ministry by motivation is not a modern invention. During His earthly ministry, the Lord consistently demonstrated that intimacy is more important than servitude. Learning occurred as the disciples responded to the Master’s needs, accepted His way of life, assisted in His ministry, and received His instruction. Leaving normal routines behind, the disciples encountered fresh experiences foreign to a classroom. Jesus seamlessly entered each apostle’s private pain, adapting His influence to the student’s receptivity. He understood that growth progresses from inside out (Matt 23:25-26). He does not hesitate to expose evil intent (Matt 9:4), divided loyalty (Matt 12:25), improper motive (Mark 12:15) or deceptive means (Luke 5:22; 6:8; 9:47). Neither does He judge people by their human frailties. After sharing life in close proximity, the Lord refused to define His followers by the struggles that bind them. The Twelve became His closest friends, often stealing them from the crowds for rest and relaxation (Mark 6:31-32; 3:7).

The relational context of Jesus’ ministry set the stage for deep Christian

formation. The Messiah knew He had a brief time to move the apostles from extrinsic religion (avoiding hell) to intrinsic faith (loving God). He began by stressing an individual's free will and drive to improve. The Lord nudged His students from dependence to independence in the performance of personal ministry, using experience as a personal tutor to solve practical problems and to dislodge conventional wisdom. By engaging the disciples in critical reflection, Jesus confronted the need to refute assumptions and values held since childhood. Transformative learning opened their eyes to suppositions constraining their perspective; fresh meaning schemes opened the door to new wineskins holding Kingdom concepts.

Change began with a developing openness toward something different that dramatizes the gulf between real and ideal. The desire to maintain an optimal balance of stimulation soon gave way to the need to sustain incongruence at a peak level to satisfy the disciples' psychological need to grow. Troubled by discrepant cognitions, they experienced discomfort until the dissonance from past choices was reduced. The perceived discrepancy between input and expectation provided the impetus to move toward the gap. Assimilation occurred when they incorporated aspects of the environment into their preexisting cognitive structures. Through accommodation, their cognitive structures adapted to novel cues from a higher reality. Eventually, all but Judas move from fearing the Son of God to loving the Son of Man (Matt 26:14-15). As these values enveloped the wider community galvanized by God's Spirit, a strong bond allowed this budding counterculture to blossom against all odds.

A Glimpse at Motivational Ministry

The biggest breakthrough in Tomorrow's ministry happened over breakfast. The Missions Pastor had decided to meet quietly with the Ministries Coordinator at a local Perkins to talk about how this "motivational" approach to ministry was really going to

work. Both seemed concerned that the elders had finally bitten off more than they could chew. Once the men realized they were on the same page, their fears began to flow: “Isn’t this just going to create chaos?” “How can we manage custom-tailored ministries?” “Won’t people want to quit their jobs and do this full-time?” The more they talked, the more they realized how much they needed each other. “By following a mission-ministry model,” they wondered, “could they unleash a reservoir of talent that energizes the church’s whole mission?” They especially liked that members didn’t have to go halfway around the globe to get a wakeup call. With the help of a trusted leader, they could discover their passion and craft a ministry in their own back yard. Both immediately thought of Charlie, one of the church’s oldest members. For years, he regretted missing “God’s call to Africa” back in college. Soon after the church adopted the elders’ model, Charlie’s CG leader wondered aloud if his love for remote control airplanes could somehow turn into a ministry. At first, Charlie could only scoff at the idea. Today, he heads up a neighborhood club of six airplane enthusiasts—each with his own set of challenges and dreams—and the men are forming deep bonds of friendship. The CG leader grinned and said, “*To hear Charlie talk, you’d swear he’s their pastor!*”

Empowering Churches Are Organically Structured

The implication is obvious: *shepherding God’s flock requires empowering His sheep for Spirit-led ministry*. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Eph 2:10). While a moving sermon may inspire and convict, commitment to church-sponsored ministry requires identifying with its mission. Knowledge of the truth will not sprout a Christ-identity without special nourishment from transformative experience. At best, controlled regulation of religious behavior produces “introjected” faith—acting religious because it is the right thing to do. According to SDT, a wise church leader will offer satisfying opportunities for service that unleash spiritual giftedness, deepen spiritual intimacy, internalize doctrinal beliefs, and solidify Christian identity. Moving to a motivational model of ministry, however, presents formidable challenges. According to SDT, an organization’s structure is shaped by one of two opposing forces—controlling or autonomous. Behaviors are rarely internalized in a controlling environment because they are perceived as externally imposed (Deci and Ryan 1985a, 109). Conversely, internally

regulated activities tend to be assimilated over time (Assor et al. 2005, 105). The bridge connecting both is *identified regulation*: external influences that unleash internal drives. Aligning church goals with intrinsically satisfying tasks will make corporate success personally appealing.

The backbone of sustainable change is a flexible structure. An organic system optimizes human productivity without sacrificing corporate adaptability. Through appropriate controls, leaders advance corporate expectations without quashing personal spirit. Characteristics include less specialization, fewer procedures, equal access to information, and fewer status distinctions. When personally endorsed values and commitments are perceived as internally controlled, compliance becomes more willing and autonomous (Ryan and Deci 2003, 253). Autonomous members are more likely to embrace organizational goals, assimilate corporate values, and bond with peers (Baard 1994, 255; Baard and Aridas 2001, 53; Baard, Deci, and Ryan 1999, 12; Deci et al. 2001, 930; Lepper and Henderlong 2000, 257; Gagne 2003, 3).

The Spirit of Empowerment

An empowering church recognizes that people are its most precious capital—capable of thinking, analyzing, inventing, and innovating in their quest for purpose and meaning (Baard 1994, 1061). Seeing this untapped reservoir of talent and energy, leaders ponder what would happen if everyone contributes. Appreciating each person's unique potential, desire, and importance is a good place to begin. Thus, an empowering church leader:

1. Treats members as adults—exchanging information freely, inviting full participation, and embracing redemptive failure (Baard 1994, 1061);
2. Maintains 'autonomy supportive' conditions for instilling their initiative, volition and integrity (Deci and Ryan 2012, 24);

3. Spreads authority, responsibility, and accountability in ways that intrinsically motivate members to exercise increasing cooperation and autonomy over their spiritual formation and personal ministry;
4. Prizes their participation, shares corporate power, encourages teamwork, and promotes mutual goals;
5. Enhances their contribution by sharpening skills and expanding their knowledge; and
6. Maintains optimal conditions for making members' involvement intrinsically satisfying.

By consistently following such measures, any church can become a dynamic organism of interrelated members who rally around a unified purpose. Decentralizing power and authority appropriately is key to the cultural transformation. Guided change requires strengthening relationships, connecting sources, and taking initiative. Corporate objectives are advanced through syncopated efforts that elevate *process* over *product*. Leaders keep an open line of communications on all information needed to perform expected tasks. In place of static relationships, there is a free flow of information, personnel, and materials (Fremont and Rosenzweig 1979, 275). The result is a warm climate of trust, cohesiveness, support, and innovation. In a spirit of continuous improvement, leaders invite all stakeholders to speak up, to offer suggestions, and to constructively criticize. When members challenge the status quo, they sense they can actually *do* something about it. By responding appropriately to environmental conditions, this highly adaptive church will maintain a healthy equilibrium (Brown and Harvey 2006, 41). According to SDT, the foundation for empowering service that produces Christian formation has five pillars: (1) Service is central to Christian formation; (2) Extrinsic goals must be intrinsically motivating; (3) Real leaders enable transformative service; (4) Victory lies between mission and ministry; and (5) Empowering church are organically structured.

A Glimpse At Empowering Structures

“Proof of the pudding” in Tomorrow’s desire to transform ministry was the elders’ determination to conform all church structures to the motivational model. They insisted on reevaluating *everything*—statement of beliefs, philosophy of ministry, worship services, teaching curriculum, ministry placement, community group life. Members were invited to participate through ‘appreciative inquiries’ (intimate gatherings that celebrate the church’s heritage and envision its future). The elders stressed working in teams toward mutual goals that sharpen congregants’ skills, expand their knowledge, and increase autonomy over personal ministry that is attractive but challenging. Trained facilitators encouraged all concerned to share their greatest hopes and fears openly and honestly. The congregation’s overwhelming response was far beyond what the elders had hoped or expected. Instead of undermining the church’s mission, the plethora of innovative ideas that emerged made success actually palpable. Risking everything for the congregation’s feedback, the Church of Tomorrow empowered every member to experience service as Christ intended.

The Second Reformation

Christian scholars should not dismiss SDT’s claims merely because they emanate from a secular pulpit. If they reflect universal truths about the way God stirs people to action, these principles could revolutionize Christian discipleship in the twenty-first century. In the Second Reformation, “ministry” will no longer be reserved for super-spiritual people who perform some mystical activity in a special state of mind (Ogden 1990, 35). Driven by personal passion, members seize every opportunity to contribute to God’s story. Enlightened leaders find creative ways to encourage baby steps of faith that build momentum. By moving cognitive belief seamlessly into heartfelt action, church structures nudge members down the road leading to a Christ identity (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 6:12-20). All developmental dimensions—spiritual gifts, personality traits, learning styles, conflict orientations, transformative experiences—are redeemed for authentic ministry. By sharing power, encouraging self-leadership, providing meaningful choices, developing confidence and fostering genuine accountability, leaders can generate enough power to light a city.

APPENDIX 1

MEMBER INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to explore perceptions of church-sponsored service among a cross-section of leaders and members involved in various aspects of service available to community group members at Sojourn Community Church. For purposes of this study, “church-sponsored service” means:

“Voluntary ministry activities undertaken by a professing follower of Jesus Christ in service to others (both Christian and non-Christian) that are sponsored and coordinated by his or her local church.”

The research is being conducted by George Cochran in order to satisfy his dissertation requirement at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. You will be asked to participate in two ways.

First, you will undergo an hour-long interview that will be audio- and/or videotaped to assist in the researcher’s note taking. The main purpose of the interview is to explore your understanding of the role of church-sponsored service based on your own perceptions and experiences. A secondary purpose is to see how your responses line up with a popular theory of adult motivation called Self-Determination Theory. Next, you will join 5-12 other participants to discuss themes and patterns that emerge from the interviews. This focus group will be one of two facilitated by the researcher.

Any information you provide during these sessions will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of the personal interview and focus group session, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

[] I agree to participate

[] I do not agree to participate

Background Information

State your biological age: _____

Circle your gender: Male Female

State your spiritual age*: _____

**For our purposes, a “Christian” is one who has decided to trust in Jesus Christ’s death, burial and resurrection for his or her salvation from sin.*

Interview Questions

Are you currently involved in church-sponsored service? Yes___No_____ If so:

What ministry is it?

What is your role?

How did you learn about it?

Why did you choose this ministry?

What has the experience been like?

What makes you keep coming back?

How could it be better?

b. *If “No”:*

Have you served in a ministry before? (at this or any other church) Yes _____ No _____ If so: _____

Could you describe what it was?

What made you get involved?

Would you like to be involved in ministry again? Yes_____ No_____

If so, what are you waiting for?

What would it take to get you involved?

If not, why not?

2. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Do you know what your spiritual gift(s) is (are)? Yes ___ No ___ If so:

Could you describe it (them) in your own words?

How did you learn about your gift(s)?

Has serving helped you understand your gift(s) more? Yes ___ No ___ How?

Has serving helped you use them more? Yes ___ No ___ How?

Has serving helped you develop them more? Yes ___ No ___ How?

Has serving made you more aware of the Holy Spirit? Yes ___ No ___ How?

Has knowing your gifts made any difference? Yes ___ No ___ How?

b. If “No”:

Has anybody ever talked to you about spiritual gifts before? Yes ___ No ___ If so:

What is your understanding of spiritual gifts?

If not, do you know what I mean by a spiritual gift? Yes ___ No ___

Have you ever studied the subject? Yes ___ No ___

Are you interested in learning more about it? Yes ___ No ___

Do you feel God has blessed you with certain abilities or passions? Yes ___ No ___
If so, how would you describe them?

3. DREAM MINISTRY

If you could dream up the perfect ministry for you, what would it look like?

What makes it so perfect for you?

Why aren't you doing it now?

What would it take to make it happen?

4. ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

Have Sojourn leaders tried to get to know you? Yes ___ No ___ How?

Has any leader tried to figure out what you're passionate about? Yes ___ No ___ How?

Have Sojourn leaders tried to find a place in ministry for you that matches your gifts, passions, and life experience? Yes ___ No ___ How?

How can we do better?

Is there anything else you'd like to add before we close our interview?

When our preliminary findings are compiled, we would like you to review them and give us your honest feedback. Would you be willing to do that? Yes ___ No ___

APPENDIX 2

LEADER INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to explore perceptions of church-sponsored service among a cross-section of leaders and members involved in various aspects of service available to community group members at Sojourn Community Church. For purposes of this study, “church-sponsored service” means:

“Voluntary ministry activities undertaken by a professing follower of Jesus Christ in service to others (both Christian and non-Christian) that are sponsored and coordinated by his or her local church.”

The research is being conducted by George Cochran in order to satisfy his dissertation requirement at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. You will be asked to participate in two ways.

First, you will undergo an hour-long interview that will be audio- and/or videotaped to assist in the researcher’s note taking. The main purpose of the interview is to explore your understanding of the role of church-sponsored service based on your own perceptions and experiences. A secondary purpose is to see how your responses line up with a popular theory of adult motivation called Self-Determination Theory. Next, you will join 5-12 other participants to discuss themes and patterns that emerge from the interviews. This focus group will be one of two facilitated by the researcher.

Any information you provide during these sessions will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of the personal interview and focus group session, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

[] I agree to participate

[] I do not agree to participate

Background Information

State your biological age: _____

Circle your gender: Male Female

State your spiritual age*: _____

**For our purposes, a “Christian” is one who has decided to trust in Jesus Christ’s death, burial and resurrection for his or her salvation from sin.*

Staff position? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes--

Title: _____

Campus: _____

Reports to: _____

Years held: _____

Primary area of leadership:

_____ Community Group network _____ Church-sponsored ministry

Community Group name: _____

Ministry name: _____

Ministry Purpose: _____

Describe your leadership role:

Interview Questions

How long have you been a member at Sojourn? _____

What other church-sponsored activities are you currently involved in (whether as leader or member)?

What other church-sponsored activities have you participated in (whether as leader or member)?

How were you recruited for your current position?

Why did you accept this role?

What training did you receive?

What has the experience been like?

What have you learned from this experience so far?

What makes you keep coming back?

What's been the most frustrating thing about leading others?

What additional training would help you the most?

2. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Do you know what your spiritual gift(s) is (are)? Yes ___ No ___ If so:

Could you describe it (them) in your own words?

How did you learn about your gift(s)?

Has leading helped you understand your gift(s) more? Yes ___ No ___ How?

Has leading helped you use them more? Yes ___ No ___ How?

Has leading helped you develop them more? Yes ___ No ___ How?

Has leading made you more aware of the Holy Spirit? Yes ___ No ___ How?

How well does your current leadership role match your giftedness?

Is there another ministry you'd rather be involved in? Yes ___ No ___ If so, what & why?

3. ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

What is your philosophy of ministry?

What is your philosophy of leadership?

Have you tried to get to know the people you lead?* Yes ___ No ___ If so, how?

**If you oversee many people, stick to your closest sphere of influence.*

Have you tried to figure out what they are passionate about? Yes ___ No ___ If so, how?

Do you know their spiritual gifts? Yes ___ No ___ If so, could you name a few?

Have you tried to match their roles and assignments to their giftedness? Yes ___ No ___
If so, how?

Is there anything else you'd like to add before we close our interview?

When our preliminary findings are compiled, we would like you to review them and give us your honest feedback. Would you be willing to do that? Yes ___ No ___

APPENDIX 3

DISCLOSURES OF CASE STUDY

Researcher: George W. Cochran
Seminary Supervisor: Dr. Michael Wilder
Sojourn Contact: Nathan Ivey

Background. That 20% of a congregation performs 80% of ministry is an indictment against the church and an embarrassment to leaders. If the call to serve led Jesus to the cross, the call to follow cannot stop at the pew. God's children are uniquely gifted to bless others through grace-filled ministries that glorify Christ and edify His church. Most discipleship models assume saturation in God's Word will produce spiritual maturity that compels sacrificial service. The gap between orthodoxy and orthopraxy sustained by this misunderstanding may be the greatest source of discouragement among church leaders in the twenty-first century.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) has shown great potential for internalizing Christian beliefs through inherently satisfying activities that unleash spiritual giftedness and stimulate transformative learning. In contrast to the traditional paradigm, SDT postulates that intrinsically motivating ministries may actually *stimulate* Christian formation. My study will probe the rich perceptions and divergent meanings associated with church-sponsored service among a critical array of stakeholders in a thriving evangelical church. In furtherance of the call for a Second Reformation, I hope to stimulate meaningful dialogue on the need to reform church structures that foster Christian formation through intrinsically motivated, Spirit-empowered service.

Objectives. (1) to explore perceptions of church-sponsored ministry opportunities held by 25 leaders & members drawn from Sojourn's community group network. (2) to evaluate Sojourn's motivational climate and view of service's role through SDT's theoretical lens. The study will address the following questions:

1. How does Sojourn's organizational structure align with each SDT element, as displayed in its documents, online resources, and other media?
2. How do leaders and members describe the church's motivational climate, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
3. How do leaders and members describe experiences with church-sponsored service, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

4. What, if any, are the similarities and differences between leaders and members in the frequency and reliance on each SDT element, as displayed in their personal interviews and focus group responses? (NOTE: a subsequent revision replaced “frequency and reliance on” with “respond to the use of” in light of the study’s qualitative orientation.)
5. How do leaders and members describe the role of service in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
6. How do leaders and members describe the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?
7. How do leaders and members describe the role of spiritual giftedness in Christian formation, as displayed in their personal interview and focus group responses?

Stage 1 – Data Collection

The study’s initial stage will proceed in four phases over the summer:

Phase 1. Document review of written, visual, and digital materials. This will include all website links, public documents (e.g. Constitution), and private documents (e.g. Committee minutes).

Phase 2. Unstructured observation of different facets of church-sponsored service. Researcher may also participate in function (e.g. Mercy Monday, Seed, Medical Clinic, etc.).

Phase 3. One-hour interview of each stakeholder using semi-structured outline (Appendix 1). Participants will represent cross-section of Sojourn demographics (age, gender, campus, staff, volunteer, etc.). Minimum quota of leaders (2-3 staff; 2-3 volunteer). You will help me select up to one-half of participants. I would also like you to participate as one of the staff leaders.

Phase 4. Two focus group discussions of themes that emerge from interviews. Participants will be purposefully placed to ensure lively interaction and dialogue. I will moderate.

Stage 2 – Data Analysis

Once the interviews are transcribed, themes and recurring patterns will be analyzed and coded for relevant characteristics. To fortify the analysis, I will use one of the many software programs now available for this purpose.

Stage 3 – Participative Reporting

Findings will be communicated primarily through words and images rather than statistical trends. In addition to colorful narratives and stimulating quotes, tables will be used to report the frequency, emphasis, similarities, and dissimilarities of SDT references. Qualitative trends unique to Christian formation will also be emphasized. The

preliminary findings will be subjected to every participant's constructive criticism and quality feedback before finalizing my report.

APPENDIX 4

SOJOURN PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

May ____, 2012

George W. Cochran
2016 Sherwood Avenue
Louisville, KY 40205

Re: Authorization for Case Study at Sojourn Community Church

Dear George:

I am pleased to confirm you have been authorized to conduct a qualitative case study at Sojourn Community Church on church-sponsored service in satisfaction of your dissertation requirement at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. This authorization carries the following conditions:

1. You obtain all necessary faculty approvals at the Seminary;
2. You adhere to the parameters outlined in your presentation (Exhibit A);
3. No substantive changes are made without my prior written approval;
4. You obtain each participant's consent prior to an interview;
5. You conclude your field work no later than October 1, 2012;
6. You allow me the opportunity to review your preliminary findings;
7. The study cannot be used for any other purpose without Sojourn's approval.

I'm excited about the possibilities and pray your original work will enhance the church's effectiveness to Christ's glory.

Sincerely,

(Executed original on file)
Nathan Ivey
Midtown Pastor of Community Life

APPENDIX 5

CONFIDENTIAL CODE REVIEW

INSTRUCTIONS

1. COMPLETE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS SEPARATELY.
2. WHEN BOTH OF YOU ARE DONE, COMPARE YOUR RESULTS.
3. DISCUSS ANY DIFFERENCES OF OPINION.
4. DECIDE INDEPENDENTLY WHETHER TO CHANGE ANY ANSWER.
5. SIGN WHERE SHOWN.
6. SUBMIT THE FINALIZED REVIEW TO THE RESEARCHER.

I. ROLE OF SERVICE IN CHRISTIAN FORMATION

CODING THEMES:

1. *Serving gave participants a more accurate picture of themselves.*
2. *Serving gave participants a more accurate picture of others.*
3. *Serving turned participants' focus outward.*
4. *Participants experienced the joy of blessing others.*
5. *Participants discovered the joy of working with others.*
6. *Participants began to see life differently.*
7. *Participants were able to see God at work.*
8. *Participants' spiritual growth accelerated.*

INSTRUCTIONS: AFTER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUOTES, INDICATE THE FIRST AND SECOND CLOSEST THEME CODE YOU BELIEVE IT MATCHES:

“Serving is very humbling—like the Cross”
“Serving removed the blinds so I humbly saw my true self”
“Serving helped me see my limitations”
“I learned I’m the same as everyone else”
“Serving brought me to the end of myself”
“I didn’t realize how much my old nature was still there”
“Serving brought me face to face with myself”
“I learned how weak I am”
“I learned my need for God’s grace”
“I learned I wasn’t as patient as I thought”
“I learned what I truly believe”
“I realized my own constant need of grace”
“Serving showed me I take everything for granted”

“Only by serving did I learn what a control person I am”
 “Only through serving was I able to get over my dry time spiritually”
 “Serving got rid of selfishness”
 “My inward conviction of sin was magnified”
 “I was forced to face my rebelliousness”
 “I learned the worst response is exactly how I treat Christ”
 “I realized the comforts of this world grab our hearts”
 “I’d still be selfish – not giving anything to anybody”
 “I was trying to do things in my own strength”
 “I realized I was editing people who are ‘too far out’”
 “I needed to get some street smarts”
 “I learned that we all think differently”
 “I grew a lot by leading people not like myself”
 “Service took me beyond ‘cookie cutter’ faith”
 “I wouldn’t have been exposed to real needs”
 “I broke the stereotypes and found real people like me”
 “I learned everyone is needy regardless of their appearance”
 “I learned all kids are the same if placed in the right environment”
 “As you serve others, you begin to forget your own problems”
 “I became less judgmental and kinder”
 “The experience took me out of myself”
 “It connected me with people in a way I’d never be connected”
 “It made me feel a part of the church universal”
 “You have to be willing to be wrong”
 “I learned to appreciate differences”
 “I learned to be more accepting, patient and forgiving”
 “Serving authenticates our message” (Fred)
 “I learned how many desperate, hurting people there are in the world” (Fred)
 “I would be less compassionate and bored with my faith” (Fred)
 “It was a joy to see people recognize Christ’s generosity”
 “It caused non-believers to wonder, ‘What’s with these people?’”
 “I was also able to witness joy in those we served”
 “Serving provided an easy way to have unbelievers in my life”
 “When I wasn’t not serving, I felt empty”
 “Serving calms my conscience”
 “I felt the joy of being in the zone”
 “At first he was a homeless person—now I’m serving a brother”
 “I experienced the joy of impacting someone”
 “I realized how little acts of service can change somebody’s world” (Fred)
 “You’d think they had been healed of blindness or leprosy” (Fred)
 “Serving together is like two guys in the same platoon”
 “It allows others to probe my own heart”
 “It helped me develop relationships and fellowship naturally”
 “We were able to discover who we really were”
 “It’ allowed me to develop deep friendships based on a common bond”
 “I was able to become friends with a mentor and feel plugged in”
 “The less I was held accountable, the more comfortable I became”
 “Had I not served, I wouldn’t know half the people I know”

“Serving builds camaraderie”
 “It reminds you that we’re members of a family”
 “Serving together reinforces the concept of family”
 “Serving has “a huge sanctifying role”
 “Once the gospel took root, I saw all my life as service”
 “The grace of God is the only motivation that lasts”
 “It helped me to see that faith is a long pursuit”
 “Serving has also changed my narrow view of spiritual gifting”
 “It reminded me of God’s grace”
 “Through serving, I experienced joy”
 “I learned not to expect anything in return”
 “I learned to take more risks”
 “I learned to be more sensitive to others’ needs”
 “It made me realize, ‘The Creator can use me!’”
 “I learned I can serve people I don’t like!”
 “It helped me do what I feel like the Lord wants me to do”
 “When I’m serving, “I feel fully alive”
 “I was able to appreciate different perspectives”
 “I got to talk to strangers and discovered my inner desire and calling”
 “To get you have to give – it’s the ‘glory to suffering’ ratio”
 “I can empathize with people going through things I never experienced”
 “It shows there’s great need, bigger than us”
 “God can reveal Himself, His love and care to people
 “God can use us, and is ready to bless us, *whatever* our role”
 “Serving has helped me experience “the depth of God”
 “Without serving, I wouldn’t have “seen God at work”
 “Only then did I learn that God’s big enough”
 “Serving gave me a confidence in God”
 “Serving brings me closer to the Holy Spirit”
 “He leads me to unexpected places”
 “I’ve learned you can’t predict where the blessing will be
 “It taught me to never underestimate size – there’s a little guy named David”
 “God doesn’t just fill the gap – He does the whole thing!”
 “I saw how other people stepped in so that God could provide the food”
 “I saw God work in different ways and how relationships develop”
 “Serving “showed me how gracious God is”
 “I can see where God used sin to grow me”
 “You can’t become a mature Christian without serving”
 “Serving increased my commitment to faith”
 “At first I was super uncomfortable, then it decreased”
 “I realized I needed to step out in faith and just do it”
 “That’s part of the miracle of service”
 “Serving helped me grow in character”
 “I may not have stayed true to the Lord”
 “If I hadn’t served, I would be really aloof”
 “I’d be more shallow and weak, less appreciative”
 “I would have stayed a selfish, inwardly focused, a schmuck”
 “My failure pointed to my sheer need for Him”

“I would never have learned to die to self”
“Serving is the tangible outcome of what we profess”

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT’S ROLE IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

CODING THEMES:

1. *The Spirit empowers believers for personal ministry.*
2. *The Spirit equips believers for effective ministry.*
3. *The Spirit guides believers for lasting ministry.*
4. *The Spirit enlightens believers for joyful ministry.*
5. *The Spirit humbles believers for Christ-honoring ministry.*

INSTRUCTIONS: AFTER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUOTES, INDICATE THE FIRST AND SECOND CLOSEST THEME CODE YOU BELIEVE IT MATCHES:

“When I’m empowered by the Spirit, I do things I wouldn’t normally do”
“If you’re dead, you’re dead. The Spirit has to bring life”
“This leads to sustained commitment”
“I learned that nothing I did to serve her could save her”
“It was the power of the Holy Spirit, not my ability”
“Spiritual gifts are “fruit of the Spirit”
“Without the Holy Spirit, I couldn’t even recognize my gift”
“When exercising my spiritual giftedness, “my heart can be glad”
“The Spirit prompts me and it boomerangs”
“The Holy Spirit is like the drummer in the band”
“Walking in the Spirit is simply following your calling”
“If we’re less aware of the Holy Spirit, we’re less likely to pray
“Only by the power of the Spirit can I joyfully proclaim: ‘I cook for strippers!’”
“When exercising my spiritual giftedness, my heart can be glad”
“The Spirit changes my desires to match His desires”
“The Spirit is [transforming] me from ‘I have to’ to ‘I want to’”
“The Spirit can convict my heart and empower me to respond”
“The Spirit will glorify the Son, and the Lord will draw the elect”
“You can tell the works of man because Christ is not glorified”
“One mark of the Spirit is desiring anonymity, expecting nothing in return”

III. THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

CODING THEMES:

1. *Spiritual gifts emphasize the believer’s uniqueness.*
2. *Spiritual gifts energize believers for action.*
3. *Spiritual gifts make service joyful.*
4. *Spiritual gifts build up Christ’s body.*

INSTRUCTIONS: AFTER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUOTES, INDICATE THE FIRST AND SECOND CLOSEST THEME CODE YOU BELIEVE IT MATCHES:

“Giftedness includes different desires and passions”
 “God made us all different”
 “God wired me this way”
 “A man’s gift will make room for him”
 “God plays to our strengths”
 “That’s why God gives us interests and personalities”
 “Giftedness includes different desires and passions”
 “Spiritual gifts help us live out our faith”
 “Spiritual gifts act as roadmaps for serving well”
 “Spiritual gifts aren’t just a part of serving, they’re all of it”
 “You need to operate at the giftedness level”
 “Gifting is about putting our heart into it”
 “If you know your gifts, you’d have to try hard”
 “It should be our desire to do something”
 “You should be able to enjoy your area of service”
 “Spiritual gifting allows me to get joy out of special love”
 “When I’m operating out of my gifts, I don’t get frustrated easily”
 “Spiritual gifting is the ability to look at everything in you as a blessing”
 “Spiritual gifts are meant to build us up in love, requiring greater dependence”
 “We are called to different areas by our gifts”
 “It’s not about knowing yourself more, but knowing who you are in Christ”
 “They’ll thrive in different situations because they feel they can contribute something”
 “Spiritual gifts allow the Body to work together” (Fred)

IV. FIVE POSSIBLE CONCLUSIONS FROM THE DATA

INSTRUCTIONS: READ EACH CONCLUSION, REVIEW THE STATEMENTS MADE UNDER IT, THEN INDICATE WHETHER YOU “AGREE” OR “DISAGREE” THESE STATEMENTS SUPPORT THE CONCLUSION.

1. *Church sponsored service is a critical component of Christian formation.* Participants agreed that enhancing Christian formation shares equal importance with spreading the gospel in justifying Christian service. Before serving, participants said they were more inwardly focused, judgmental, fearful, and hypocritical. After serving, they learned the depths of their sin, replaced old stereotypes with real faces, clarified their passions, experienced the Holy Spirit, and witnessed God’s faithfulness. Participants distinguished “family chores” from “personal ministry” as types of service. Both respond to Christ, who calls, leads, equips and instructs members of a faith community to glorify God through obedient service that is empowered by His Spirit. Participants felt that balancing these areas would avoid two extremes: becoming a hypocrite by engaging only in church-sponsored services; failing to glorify God by idolizing one’s gifts.
2. *Leaders and members have conflicting perceptions of Sojourn’s climate.* Perceptions of Sojourn’s motivational climate for service differed qualitatively between leaders and members. Some experiences tended to reinforce member perceptions that Sojourn maintains a hierarchical structure. Certain segments of the church’s population,

particularly the elderly, report feeling alienated by a disproportionate presence of youth and seminarians. Leadership from the pulpit that was not intimately reinforced during the week further tended to solidify perceptions of a controlling environment. At the same time, there is significant evidence to suggest that such perceptions do not reflect Sojourn's true leadership philosophy. These conflicting signals could be suppressing the corporate commitment to serve.

3. *CG leaders should be challenging members to embrace a lifestyle of service.*
Participant views of accountability hinged on prior exposure to mentoring. Those without mentors tended to interpret the term negatively, on par with legalism. Those with mentors said that being held accountable by a respected leader was key to their growth. Most came to Christ through a parachurch ministry that followed a radical paradigm of service. Within a mentoring relationship, each was challenged to embrace a lifestyle of service early in their faith. Should Sojourn elect to adopt the parachurch model, participants agreed that CG leaders would make natural mentors. Some believed more could be done to recruit, equip, and hold candidates accountable for becoming true shepherds. To avoid falling into idolatry, members cautioned this relationship should also be a "two-way street" of mutual learning and encouragement.
4. *Creating intrinsically satisfying opportunities to serve may stimulate the uncommitted.*
Participants from every segment of the population displayed a strong preference for inherently interesting, enjoyable, or satisfying activities that require no external reinforcement. SDT's potential for eradicating Sojourn's perception gap was most evident when participants began describing their "dream ministry." With each response, distinctions between leaders and members began to vanish. Their language, tenor, energy and body language displayed classic signs of intrinsic motivation. Sensitivity to God's Spirit and personal gifting was also enhanced. All felt that intrinsically satisfying opportunities for ministry could stimulate those who have previously not served to step out of the pew.
5. *Mobilizing God's people for service requires an intimate relationship with His Spirit.*
When participants referred to the Spirit's role in Christian formation, their remarks were both positive and varied. All agreed the Holy Spirit empowers believers for personal ministry, equips believers for effective ministry, guides believers for lasting ministry, enlightens believers for joyful ministry, and humbles believers for Christ-honoring ministry. These themes led to an inescapable conclusion: the Holy Spirit is essential in every aspect of service. He alone separates worldly deeds from Christian ministry, and aligns personal ministry with corporate mission.

I HEREBY VERIFY THAT I FOLLOWED THE RESEARCHER'S INSTRUCTIONS
WHEN CONDUCTING THIS CODING REVIEW:

(Executed original on file)

REVIEWER

DATE

APPENDIX 6

FOCUS GROUPS*

Sojourn Focus Group I
August 5, 2012 (9 -11 a.m.)
Midtown Missions Room

LEADERS	MEMBERS
Daniel	Henry
Victor	Molly
	Kevin
	Sarah
	Robert
	Amber
	Justin

Sojourn Focus Group II
August 12, 2012 (9 -11 a.m.)
Midtown Missions Room

LEADERS	MEMBERS
Matthew	Frank
Michael	Karen
	Austin
	Kathy

Sojourn Focus Group III
December 2, 2012 (9 – 11 a.m.)
New Albany Prayer Room

LEADERS	MEMBERS
Charlie	
Betty	
Fred	
Alice	

*Names are fictitious

APPENDIX 7

MODERATOR'S ROLE

- *Set the tone*
 - Create warm and friendly environment
 - Help participants to relax and feel safe
 - To be open-minded/ consider alternatives
 - Encourage deep, creative thinking
- *Ask sequential questions (general to specific)*
 - Open-ended (start discussion)
 - “What is the main problem here?”
 - Follow up (get details/ expand answer)
 - “How significant is the problem?”
 - “What does that mean?”
 - “How did it happen?”
 - “What causes the problem?”
 - “What did you do?”
 - Probing (clarify answer)
 - “Please tell me more”
 - “Please give me an example”
 - “Please help me understand”
 - Don’t ask “Why?”
 - Avoid “that’s good” or “excellent”
 - Go back to experience, not forward to future
 - Prompted (cue to aid recall)
 - “You mentioned Connect. What about Mercy Monday?”
- *Use subtle controls*
 - Experts -- “Thank you. What do other people think?”
 - Dominant talkers -- “Let’s have some other comments.”
 - Shy participants -- Make eye contact; call on them; smile at them.
 - Ramblers -- Stop eye contact; jump in during inhale.

APPENDIX 8

ASSISTANT MODERATOR'S ROLE

- *Bring supplies*
 - Back pack with computer
 - Plates, napkins, etc.
 - List of participants
 - Name plates
 - Handouts
- *Prepare room*
 - Set up donuts & plates, etc.
 - Arrange seating in “U-shape”
 - Arrange nameplates
 - Set up I-Movie
- *Prior to meeting*
 - Set up directional sign
 - Welcome participants as they arrive
 - Remind about coffee
 - Direct to Missions Room
- *During meeting*
 - Sit in designated location
 - Monitor I-Movie
 - Take notes of key points
 - Monitor time
 - Keep moderator on track
 - Ensure sequential questioning
 - Correct moderator's mistakes
- *After meeting*
 - Stop & save I-Movie
 - Clean up room
 - Debrief with moderator
 - Hand over notes

APPENDIX 9

EMERGING THEMES

1. Even though Sojourn is the best church I ever attended, most members still don't serve in ministry.
2. A major reason for our lack of servants is a professional model of ministry that elevates "clergy" over "laity."
3. Sojourn's centralized hierarchy ultimately constrains the free exercise of spiritual giftedness for personalized ministry.
4. Instead of creating new ministries that are fueled by members' passions, leaders tend to rely on the general call of service to meet current needs.
5. The irony is that I've learned things through serving (e.g. the Holy Spirit, my sinfulness, God's faithfulness) that I wouldn't have learned any other way.
6. Now I wish I had a spiritual mentor who challenged me to embrace a lifestyle of service early in my faith journey.
7. I would be strongly attracted to intrinsically motivating opportunities for service that match my personality, interests, giftedness and life experience.

APPENDIX 10

FOCUS GROUP HANDOUT

I. OPENING (9:00-9:15)

1. Welcome

- a. Thanks for being a part of our focus group!
- b. This is Part Two of your participation in the study
- c. Most of you already know each other, but let's go around the circle
- d. Tell us your name, your favorite vacation spot, and why
- e. We're taking a fresh look at the role of service for Christians
- f. Over the next 2 hrs, important insights will be made

2. Set the Stage

- a. I conducted 25 interviews (11 leaders/ 14 members)
- b. Focused on perceptions and experiences about serving
- c. Several themes emerged that I shared with you
- d. We have two objectives this morning:
 - i. To explore the meaning behind the themes
 - ii. To see how they all fit together
- e. Payoff: fresh insights about service that could help our elders

3. Ground rules

- a. WE WANT YOU TO DO THE TALKING
 - i. We need everyone to participate
 - ii. I may call on you if we haven't heard from you
- b. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS
 - i. Every person's experiences and opinions is important
 - ii. To get the whole picture, we need all perspectives
 - iii. That means everyone must have an equal voice
 - iv. So, speak up--whether you agree or disagree
- c. THIS REQUIRES MUTUAL RESPECT
 - i. We want you to feel comfortable

- ii. This is NOT a debate
- iii. We're not here to solve a problem
- iv. All we need are open minds & hearts
- v. To really listen & learn from each other

d. WHAT'S SAID IN THIS ROOM STAYS HERE

- i. We're recording the session so we don't miss any comments
- ii. We'll talk on first name basis, but won't use any name in report
- iii. Please turn off your electronic devices
- iv. Speak loudly

Prayer -- Ice-breaker

(9:15-9:25)

Now that you've opened your eyes, close them again.... It's Sunday morning. You just heard a stirring call to worship. You're feeling energized by the music. Suddenly, the pastor announces we need more servants for VBS. *What goes through your mind?*

II. DISCUSSION

Many of you said Sojourn has been your best church experience yet.

What makes us so different?

(9:25-9:35)

1. One obvious goal of serving is to spread the gospel. But your interviews revealed another reason. You painted a picture that was as different as night and day:
 - Before serving, Christians tend to be inwardly focused, judgmental, fearful, and hypocritical.
 - After serving, we realize we're just as sinful as those we've been avoiding; we discover the Holy Spirit; we clarify our passions; we see God at work.

In other words, serving blesses us with spiritual growth. But that presents a dilemma:

Despite Sojourn's growth, most members are not involved in ministry.

How do you explain this disconnect?

(9:35-9:50)

FOR THE REMAINDER OF OUR TIME TOGETHER, WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT FOUR THEMES. TELL ME WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE, THEN EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER.

Theme 1: *Sojourn's centralized structure inhibits the free exercise of spiritual giftedness for personalized ministry.*

- Leaders maintain tight controls

- The same group of people manages everything
- Our leaders aren't open to different points of view (9:50-10:05)

Theme 2: *Instead of creating new ministries fueled by members' passions, leaders rely on the general call of service to meet known needs that are promoted by the church.*

- None of the opportunities fit my personality and interests
- Not being given a pre-defined role would have made a huge difference
- Serving has to start from inside of a person, with desire (10:05-10:20)

Theme 3: *We should each have a spiritual mentor who challenges us to embrace a lifestyle of service early in our faith journey.*

- At Sojourn, we're not challenged enough upfront
- Serving pushed me out of my comfort zone
- Because I loved my mentor, I didn't mind being held accountable (10:20-10:35)

Theme 4: *Leaders should offer intrinsically motivating opportunities for service that match a person's personality, interests, giftedness and life experience.*

- A happy congregation is one that feels like they're useful
- Service should be fun—something you want to do, not have to do
- Spiritual gifts act as roadmaps for serving well
- You don't get frustrated easily, you see everything as a blessing, and your heart is glad (10:35-10:50)

III. CLOSING

1. Give opportunity for further input
 2. Thank participants
 3. Our goals were to explore the meaning behind our interview themes and to see how they all fit together. Along the way, we hoped to gain some fresh insights about Christian service to share with our elders. *Do you think we accomplished what we set out to do?*
 4. *Of everything we discussed, what do you think is the most important?*
 5. Promise to share preliminary findings
 6. Explain how data will be used
- Dismiss with prayer (volunteer) (11:00 a.m.)

APPENDIX 11

FOCUS GROUP I – HIGHLIGHTS

1. *The pastor announces we need more servants for VBS. What goes through your mind?*

- “I’m too busy”
- “Who do you contact?”
- “Is that something I could possibly do?”
- “I don’t want to work with children”
- “I’m done with children’s ministry!”
- “I need to know more information”

[NOTE: This exercise illustrates how “serving” is usually interpreted negatively. Focus of this study is to make Christian service inherently positive.]

2. *Many of you said Sojourn has been your best church experience yet. What makes us so different?*

- “Our leaders try to live the gospel”
- “The elders really try to shepherd the flock”
- “They challenge people to bring the gospel into all aspects of life”
- “I’ve never been to a church where membership is so committal”
- “I’ve never been to a member meeting that talks about sin openly”
- “Other places make it easy to play church and to hide the shameful things”
- “Our faith is more deliberately approached throughout the week”
- “We’re not afraid of real life messes or the brokenness behind the curtain”
- “Our leaders make a real effort not to live in that fake world”
- “That takes some courage and a real desire to be real”

3. *Despite Sojourn’s remarkable growth, most members are not involved in ministry. How do you explain this disconnect?*

Clarification of original question

- “The disconnect isn’t that big because Christians serve in all kinds of ways”
- “Church-sponsored services [at Sojourn] always involve the same five or six choices” and “no one gets credit for serving outside of these areas”
- Picturing an iceberg, participants agreed that while church-sponsored services are

- the visible part of community life, many personal activities occur below the surface without the church's knowledge, support or involvement.
- Participants also distinguished two types of service:
 - "Family chores" (temporary or infrequent tasks related to church life) that do not require spiritual giftedness
 - "Personal ministry" (specific calling of the Holy Spirit that incorporates a believer's spiritual gifts, personality, skills, life experience and passion) for long-term service
 - Both types of service share the following qualities unique to Christianity:
 - (1) They are motivated to honor Jesus Christ;
 - (2) In loving response to the Cross;
 - (3) Through the power of His Spirit;
 - (4) Who calls/leads/equips/instructs;
 - (5) Members of the community of faith;
 - (6) To glorify God with obedient service
 - Both types of service are necessary for maintaining a balanced spiritual life:
 - To solidify our family identity, everyone should submit to the elders' call to pitch in with family chores when necessary
 - Doing a family chore can also open the door to your personal calling
 - It also puts you in relationship with fellow believers
 - Balancing both areas of service will avoid two extremes--
 - Breeding hypocrisy by engaging only in church-sponsored services
 - Failing to glorify God through our weaknesses by idolizing our gifts

Insights on revised question

- "If you've been at Sojourn for any number of years, you'll see the same people serving in a lot of the same areas"
 - "The mentality that we are consumers is overpowering, and it's absolutely the air we breathe, 24 hrs. a day/7 days a week, outside of God's dramatic intervention in our mindset"
 - "There's a lot of new Christians in this church who have never served; they've been raised in the consumerist culture of 'entertain me' and they don't know any different"
 - Our leaders tend to emphasize the call of giving financially more than the call to give of your time and talents
4. *Sojourn's centralized structure constrains the free exercise of spiritual giftedness for personalized ministry.*
- "I don't even know who our deacons are"
 - Instructions from our elders tend to travel from pulpit to pew
 - They come off feeling like 'demands' or 'pressure'
 - The reason is there's no vibrant leader/member relationship behind it

- Even though not intended, we perceive these as ‘top-down’ orders
 - In our current structure, a community group leader is the most natural mentor for those members who belong to his or her group
 - This will require CG leaders to become true ‘shepherds’ of their ‘flock’
 - Elders should rethink how we recruit, equip and hold CG leaders accountable
5. *Instead of creating new ministries fueled by members’ passions, leaders rely on the general call of service to meet known needs.*

The reality

- “People are coming to church not really knowing what to do outside of church”
- “When I came to Christ, I didn’t know anything about ‘community’. I came from a background of partying, and praying or bible study sounded so boring to me”
- The way the church is currently set up, a new member would have to take the initial step before leaders can help find a suitable ministry
- “If you’re Josh Thomas, how in the world are you going to find out the gifting of somebody and what they do, or be willing to entrust them with wherever their gifting led them, if they’re not even willing to help with communion?”
- “Because of the way the church was structured in the New Testament, we’ve entrusted our elders to pray faithfully and to trust them to determine what the needs are in our community”

The ideal

- Leaders should take more initiative in nudging members toward service
 - We don’t take full advantage in the membership class of helping people plug in to service based on their giftedness
 - Our church doesn’t actively support personal ministries enough.
 - “We also have to be careful about using church language. Even using the term ‘giftedness’ can sound scary and confusing to a new Christian. It’s like saying: ‘Okay, now you’re a Christian—go find your life calling and plug in’”
6. *We should each have a spiritual mentor who challenges us to embrace a lifestyle of service early in our faith journey.*
- “Having a committed person walking with me and checking on me [early in faith] is huge because she would have held me accountable”
 - Only one participant’s church experience included a personal mentor who nudged him into service as a lifestyle:
 - “I came from a rebellious background. My wife and I joined a church movement that included a deliberate discipleship model that set a pattern for my life. It disciplined me and caused me to develop habits that have stuck with me to this day. It was huge”

- “In the early days, my pastor would call and ask ‘What did the Lord show you today?’ Out of love for him, I wanted to give an answer that was real”
 - “Overlaying that into the church context would be very helpful”
 - “Before you get into mentoring, we must determine the elders’ expectations. They may only expect 20-30% of members to commit to service. What if their expectation was that everyone serves? This foundation would change everything else”
7. *We should offer intrinsically motivating opportunities for service that match a person’s personality, interests, giftedness and life experience.*
- We do believe God wants to use all we have that makes us unique
 - We also believe that many who aren’t currently serving would respond well to opportunities that match their passions
 - Instead of always beginning with the need, it makes a lot of sense to begin with the person
 - Such an exploration would work best in a mentoring relationship
 - Since we are called to ‘do life together’ in community groups, we should rely on CG leaders to serve as natural mentors.

APPENDIX 12

FOCUS GROUP II -- INSIGHTS

1. *The pastor announces we need more servants for VBS. What goes through your mind?*

- “I’m too busy right now”
- “I really enjoyed that when I was younger; now it’s someone else’s turn”
- “I’m already serving somewhere else”
- “I love little ones, but I’m already involved in other things”
- “I’m expecting a baby; I can’t do it right now”
- “Other people are more qualified”

[NOTE: This exercise illustrates how “serving” is usually interpreted negatively. Focus of this study is to make Christian service inherently positive.]

2. *Many of you said Sojourn has been your best church experience yet. What makes us so different?*

- “This is the first church that preached the Bible instead of their opinions without really having any Scripture to back it up”
- “It’s straight from the Word, not topical”
- “The music, the people—who are so friendly—but mostly because we’re in the Word”
- “It meets people wherever they are, and invites them to join without pretending they’re somebody else”
- “It wasn’t until my wife and I experienced the Seed ministry that we knew these people had real compassion...we saw the true heart of the church”
- “I’m in full-time inner city ministry, and I needed somewhere I could be fed...so I’m giving from a well that is overflowing and doesn’t run dry”
- “I’m just excited that I found a church that I can bring my kids and grandkids”
- “It might be the first church that I have no reservation recommending to my non-Christian friends”
- “But I’m still not excited about inviting my friends of a different ethnicity...it doesn’t consume me, but I struggle with that”

3. *Despite Sojourn’s remarkable growth, most members are not involved in ministry. How do you explain this disconnect?*

- “They may not feel a part of the group yet”

- “They have no one who knows them or nudges them to serve”
 - This relational dimension is important because we won’t act alone
 - It’s both an identity thing and a social thing
 - We may not be carrying out the real functions of a community group
 - “This person is at different point in his or her spiritual journey”
 - We can’t say where they should be at – only God knows their circumstances
 - “They’re too busy doing other things”
 - “There is no accountability”
 - “We don’t work to be saved, but because we are saved”
 - “We have to want to serve; we need to ignite that fire somehow”
 - “When I was growing up, it was expected that everyone would serve; nowadays, leaders are allowing more input” and giving more space
 - “Because Sojourn approaches service differently from what we’re used to, maybe they don’t know or understand what they’re comfortable with”
 - “A lot a people don’t know their spiritual gift”
 - “They don’t know what they’re good at, so they use that as an excuse”
 - “There’s nobody that comes alongside them to encourage them to serve”
 - “For those who come to church on Sunday and go home, it’s up to leaders to help them discover what they would be good at”
 - “I think that falls on everybody – to be concerned for each other’s growth”
 - “We must transition from ‘Come and see’ to ‘Go and die’”
 - “The first is a follower; the second is a disciple – there needs to be a shift”
4. *Sojourn’s centralized structure constrains the free exercise of spiritual giftedness for personalized ministry.*
 5. *Instead of creating new ministries fueled by members’ passions, leaders rely on the general call of service to meet known needs.*
 6. *We should each have a spiritual mentor who challenges us to embrace a lifestyle of service early in our faith journey.*
 7. *We should offer intrinsically motivating opportunities for service that match a person’s personality, interests, giftedness and life experience.*

APPENDIX 13

GROUP III - HIGHLIGHTS

C = Charlie

B = Betty

F = Fred

A = Alice

B - “I wish leaders would personally *ask* more people to serve”

C – “Too often, leaders just try to fill slots”

C – “When I headed my church’s education committee, it was very difficult to get Sunday School teachers. So, when we were starting a young adult class, the committee decided we would really look at people and see who really fit. When we were all done, I was able to approach somebody and say, ‘We think you would be perfect for this ministry’. This not only affirmed their value—it gave them a sense that God was *calling* them to serve.”

A - “I have to admit a part of me wants to be affirmed, to be recognized, to feel needed. It definitely helps motivate me to serve”

A – “It wasn’t part of my bag, but we had to take care of it as part of the body”

B – “It would be like driving by someone who’s bleeding to death after an accident”

C – “[The 20/80 Rule] should be seen as a crisis, because it’s the beginning of the end. If 80% of my body wasn’t functioning, I’d be on life support.”

F – “Instead of waiting for members to take initiative, what if leaders said ‘Come along with me’? I think they’d be much more willing to get involved. It would also be more of a learning experience. The leader could see what the member is really good at; the member could be exposed to ministry’s relational aspect. Even if that particular opportunity wasn’t a good fit, they’d both grow spiritually and deepen their bond.”

C - “St. Vincent was built with zeal at some point, with widows’ mites—little people working their jobs, contributing what they can. How proud they must have been when that all came together. And yet, because of demographics, suddenly you have this empty building that’s being sold off to a different group. What happened? Does the Holy Spirit move in demographics?”

A – “Somebody should step up to the plate when there’s a need”

F - “Much of the younger generation is not pre-churched, so they say, ‘Let’s do this community thing instead of Sunday School. They’re okay with change; they’re okay with trying something new. They say, ‘Whatever, let’s do it; I’m on board!’”

B - “It’s like we’re trying to change everything with old wineskins.”

F – “Sometimes I think there’s a big disconnect here. Alice and I know several people personally who know the Word better than us and can outquote us on scripture any day of the week. But service—caring for others, their neighbors, evangelism— is not there, it’s zero. There’s too much knowing, and not enough *doing* God’s will.”

APPENDIX 14

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- 1 Church-sponsored service is a critical component of Christian formation.
2. Participants were more responsive to transformative service opportunities.
3. Leading from a distance widened the gap between perception and reality.
4. Older members were more likely to feel marginalized and disconnected.
5. Participants want a mentor who challenges them to embrace a lifestyle of service.
6. Participants thought intrinsically satisfying service may stimulate the uncommitted.
7. Participants assume the Holy Spirit plays a central role in transformative service.

APPENDIX 15

PARTICIPANT QUOTES REGARDING AUTONOMY

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (15)

- "I can see where God used sin to grow me" (Fred)
- "I was trying to do things in my own strength" (Fred)
- "Ministry is a joyful, loving, outflow of our transformation" (Fred)
- "Serving helped me to see my limitations and confess my weaknesses (Michael)
- "I like helping members achieve by providing the tools they need" (Michael)
- "I also think it's important to be flexible, allowing opportunities to fail" (Michael)
- "I learned how weak I am" (Matthew)
- "I learned to rest in the Holy Spirit" (Matthew)
- "When I'm empowered by the Spirit, I do things I wouldn't normally do" (Matthew)
- "Spiritual gifts are "fruit of the Spirit" (Matthew)
- "It reminded me of my need for God's grace" (Matthew)
- "We all have been given the Holy Spirit" (Matthew)
- "The Holy Spirit changes our desires to match *His* desires" (Matthew)
- "Only the Spirit can convict their hearts and empower them to respond" (Matthew)
- "We're actually souls inhabiting bodies" (Matthew)
- "I learned I wasn't as patient as I thought" (Joseph)
- "We are to serve one another through our God-given desires" (Joseph)
- "I learned that nothing I did to serve her could save her" (Joseph)
- "It was the power of the Holy Spirit, not my ability" (Joseph)
- "Through serving, God revealed my heart and I was able to release it" (Betty)
- "Through serving, I've learned that things don't have to go my way" (Betty)
- "Serving forces you out of your comfort zone" (Betty)
- "I feel like I'm a steam engine that's pinned down with steel bands" (Betty)
- "Serving has driven home the truth that I'm not above or beyond sin" (Ryan)
- "A higher commitment requires a heart change from the Spirit" (Ryan)
- "If we're less aware of the Holy Spirit, we're less likely to pray (Ryan)
- "Serving brought me face to face with myself" (Daniel)
- "Serving brought me to the end of myself" (Daniel)
- "I didn't realize how much my old nature was still there" (Daniel)
- "It's chiseling away at self" (Daniel)
- "I learned to pray first, think methodology later" (Daniel)
- "I like feeling trusted, freed to fully pursue" (Daniel)
- "Through serving, I discovered what really satisfies me" (Charlie)

“Through serving, I experienced a paradigm shift: *everything* is God’s!” (Charlie)
 “Once the gospel took root, I saw all my life as service” (William)
 “The grace of God is the only motivation that lasts” (William)
 “I try to motivate from grace, not guilt” (William)
 “If someone has a good idea, I say: “Go for it” (William)
 “The idea of clocking in muddies my motivation sometimes” (William)
 “Some opportunities have a more ‘choose you own adventure’ feel” (William)
 “God wired me this way” (William)
 “Serving has also changed my narrow view of spiritual gifting” (Ashley)
 “Serving helped me to see that faith is a long pursuit” (Ashley)
 “Serving both scary and strangely attractive” (Ashley)
 “The Spirit prompts me and it boomerangs” (Ashley)
 “My failure pointed to my sheer need for Him” (Ashley)
 “Service reflects a deeper understanding of my continual need for the gospel” (Ashley)
 “God can use us, and is ready to bless us, *whatever* our role” (Victor)
 “Giftedness includes different desires and passions” (Emily)
 “Serving has shown me how desperately I need Christ to work” (Grant)
 “I want to serve because Christ served me” (Jacob)
 “There are plenty of opportunities to do what I love most” (John)
 “I like having a voice in how I use my abilities” (Jacob)
 “I like being encouraged, affirmed, and informed” (Emily)
 “I tend to serve where I feel the Lord needs me most” (Larry)
 “I really enjoyed youth ministry because I could model Christ to parents” (Larry)
 “My greatest joy is seeing people come to Christ” (Larry)
 “Though I still struggle with patience, my desire to encourage usually wins out” (Larry)
 “At first, my service was superficial -- now it’s from my heart” (Larry)
 “Empowerment is the ability and direction to perform a task” (Larry)
 “I love serving where my particular personality and gifts can be used” (Heather)
 “Knowing that I’m furthering His kingdom became a joy” (Heather)
 “I kept coming back because I felt God calling me to it” (Heather)
 “If you’re discipling a family, you have to be self-motivated” (Heather)
 “Getting more people to serve requires a change of heart” (Heather)
 “Without my gift of mercy, I wouldn’t have the patience for this ministry” (Heather)

Members (14)

“Serving is very humbling—like the Cross” (Karen)
 “Serving removed the blinds so I humbly saw my true self” (Tyler)
 “Serving showed me I take everything for granted” (Tyler)
 “Only by serving did I learn what a control person I am” (Sarah)
 “My inward conviction of sin was magnified” (Kevin)
 “I was forced to face my rebelliousness” (Kevin)
 “Serving helped me discover who I really am” (Molly)
 “Serving helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses” (Molly)
 “Had I never served, I’d still be arrogant and judgmental” (Molly)
 “Only by serving did I get off self” (Sarah)
 “Serving in the medical clinic pushed me out of my comfort zone” (Amber)

“Serving gets rid of selfishness” (Justin)
 “We’re not ‘pretty’ bad—we’re *bad!*” (Robert)
 “I learned from serving that you ain’t all that” (Robert)
 “I learned how selfish my fears really were” (Karen)
 “Through serving, I experienced joy” (Henry)
 “I learned not to expect anything in return” (Henry)
 “When I wasn’t not serving, I felt empty” (Sarah)
 “Serving calms my conscience” (Sarah)
 “I feel like I’m in the middle of God’s will” (Molly)
 “When serving, I feel like an oasis in the desert” (Molly)
 “I experience the joy of the Lord firsthand” (Molly)
 “I can be myself, not somebody else” (Molly)
 “We were able to discover who we really are” (Molly)
 “It helped me do what I feel like the Lord wants me to do” (Anna)
 “When I’m serving, ‘I feel fully alive’” (Julia)
 “I got to talk to strangers and discovered my inner desire and calling” (Amber)
 “He leads me to unexpected places” (Justin)
 “God doesn’t just fill the gap – He does the whole thing!” (Robert)
 “I saw how other people stepped in so that God could provide the food” (Karen)
 “Even when it seems we don’t have enough, it always works out” (Sally)
 “God showed me it’s the little things—I don’t have to be a leader” (Sally)
 “If you’re willing, serving can meet you right where you are” (Frank)
 “Serving is refreshing because there’s nothing to hide” (Molly)
 “If you’re dead, you’re dead—the Spirit has to bring life” (Robert)
 “We need to be drunk in the Spirit” (Kathy)
 “A gift is something God has blessed me with *personally*” (Sally)
 “Without the Holy Spirit, I couldn’t even recognize my gift” (Anna)
 “When exercising my spiritual giftedness, ‘my heart can be glad’” (Sarah)
 “The Holy Spirit is like the drummer in the band” (Sarah)
 “Walking in the Spirit is simply following your calling” (Robert)
 “This leads to sustained commitment” (Robert)
 “The Spirit keeps my motives pure” (Justin)
 “He leads me to unexpected places” (Justin)
 “Only by the power of the Spirit can I joyfully proclaim: ‘I cook for strippers!’” (Molly)
 “When exercising my spiritual giftedness, my heart can be glad” (Sarah)
 “The Spirit changes my desires to match His desires” (Sarah)
 “The Spirit is [transforming] me from ‘I have to’ to ‘I want to’” (Karen)
 “Service should be fun—something you *want* to do” (Karen)
 “You should *enjoy* serving” (Kevin)
 “The Spirit will glorify the Son, and the Lord will draw the elect” (Robert)
 “You can tell the works of man because Christ is not glorified” (Robert)
 “One mark of the Spirit is desiring anonymity, expecting nothing in return” (Robert)
 “God made us all different” (Julie)
 “A man’s gift will make room for him” (Robert)
 “God plays to our strengths” (Karen)
 “That’s why God gives us interests and personalities” (Karen)
 “God plays to our strengths” (Karen)
 “That’s why God gives us interests and personalities” (Karen)

“Spiritual gifts act as roadmaps for serving well” (Kevin)
 “A man’s gift will make room for him” (Robert)
 “Spiritual gifts aren’t just a part of serving, they’re all of it” (Robert)
 “You need to operate at the giftedness level” (Robert)
 “Serving has to start from inside a person—with his or her desire” (Amber)
 “Gifting is about putting our heart into it” (Tyler)
 “If you know your gifts, you don’t have to try hard” (Tyler)
 “It should be our desire to do something” (Julie)
 “You should be able to enjoy your area of service” (Julie)
 “Spiritual gifting allows me to get joy out of special love” (Julie)
 “When I’m operating out of my gifts, I don’t get frustrated easily” (Julie)
 “Spiritual gifting is the ability to look at everything in you as a blessing” (Justin)
 “Spiritual gifts are meant to build us up in love, requiring greater dependence” (Joseph)
 “We are called to different areas by our gifts” (Julie)
 “It’s not about knowing yourself more, but knowing who you are in Christ” (Kathy)
 “They’ll thrive because they feel they can contribute something” (Karen)
 “I found creative ways to turn my filmmaking talent into a ministry” (Kevin)
 “I greatly enjoy being part of a ministry that brings others to Christ” (Amber)
 “I had to take the initiative at first, but constant encouragement kept me going” (Karen)
 “I can decide which songs to play, how to organize them, and when to play” (Frank)
 “I’ve never had the freedom to jump in and create a position like I did” (Frank)
 “Serving through the church is my life” (Kathy)
 “Because I received clear instructions, it was easy to meet expectations” (Justin)
 “I am constantly looking for ways to stay motivated” (Justin)
 “There was very little leeway to accomplish your task” (Henry)
 “The format was too restrictive and the leadership too inexperienced” (Molly)
 “I have been blocked from participating” (Robert)
 “Other churches welcomed the help and tried to match gifts with needs” (Robert)
 “I wish we were more proactive in finding new ways to serve” (Julie)
 “Why was I being pushed so hard to follow the *church’s* agenda?” (Molly)
 “Leaders maintain tight controls-- The same group manages everything” (Robert)
 “Instructions from our elders tend to travel from pulpit to pew” (Robert)
 “The clergy emasculates people by not valuing their experiences” (Robert)
 “The message was: ‘Don’t buck the system, or I’m coming after you’” (Robert)
 “The most frustrating thing is that I want to solve their problems so I see fruit” (Kevin)
 “He’s wearing a badge that says, ‘I wanna do what I wanna do’” (Justin)
 “None [of the service opportunities] fit my personality and interests” (Frank)
 “I needed to explain where I’m strong, where I’m weak, where I want to grow” (Frank)
 “I like being able to do the things you think need to be done” (Henry)
 “I like having options and responsibilities” (Sarah),
 “As a result, you feel like nothing can stop you” (Amber)
 “It appeals to my creativeness, but there’s more work and challenge” (Sarah)
 “It draws you in till you’re invested” (Karen)
 “This is more sustainable because you’re going to *want* to do it (Karen)
 “I would never have learned to die to self” (Kathy)

APPENDIX 16

PARTICIPANT QUOTES REGARDING COMPETENCE

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (14)

- “Spiritual gifts help us live out our faith” (Michael)
“Service took me beyond ‘cookie cutter’ faith” (Michael)
“Book knowledge can only go so far” (Michael)
“I learned to foster community outside the weekly meeting” (Michael)
“Nobody learns as much as the teacher learns” (Charlie)
“I learned that I often put the cart before the horse” (Fred)
“I need to be affirmed, well trained, and confident” (Fred)
“Serving put me in tough situations” (Fred)
“Serving is faith in action—it’s an *adventure* to follow Christ!” (Fred)
“Serving expanded my world” (Betty)
“Serving helps me to see things from a different point of view” (Betty)
“Serving has made me more compassionate” (Betty)
“Serving impacted my prayer life” (Betty)
“I discovered that Jesus Christ heals in many ways” (Betty)
“I needed to get some street smarts” (Matthew)
“I realized the comforts of this world grab our hearts” (Matthew)
“It takes non-believers coming at you” (Matthew)
“Only then did I learn that God’s big enough” (Edward)
“Serving increased my commitment to faith” (Edward)
“Serving gave me the faith to believe that even small seeds can bear fruit” (John)
“Through serving, you show that you get it” (Charlie)
“Serving has given me a deeper grasp of the gospel” (Grant)
“Serving results in more fruit because the gospel infects everything” (Grant)
“Serving has ‘a huge sanctifying role’”(Joseph)
“From serving, I learned how to communicate the gospel simply” (Joseph)
“I learned if I have to keep explaining, I may not know myself” (Joseph)
“Serving helped me to catch things, observe, ask questions” (Joseph)
“Reading a book on dancing is no substitute for dancing” (William)
“I learned not to look only at results” (William)
“After awhile, I got a lot more comfortable walking the streets” (Victor)
“Serving is where the rubber meets the road” (Edward)
“When we first serve, we’re super uncomfortable, then it decreases” (Edward)
“I learned I really have to *believe* what I share” (John)

“Learning doesn’t take place in a vacuum” (Charlie)
 “The church’s role should be to provide training wheels” (Daniel)
 “I learned not to get drawn into artificial signs of success and failure” (Daniel)
 “I’ve been offered great opportunities to grow” (Emily)
 “I’m not good at laying out the gospel like some of my friends” (Larry)
 “Serving has grown me a lot in the gospel” (Heather)
 “Serving has helped me learn to be generous” (Heather)
 “God has really stretched me through serving” (Heather)

Members (14)

“Those with little life experience suffer the arrogance of youth” (Molly)
 “I discovered I need an initial push” (Julie)
 “But for serving, I’d be less effective, more self-focused, and less motivated” (Sally)
 “I learned all kids are the same if placed in the right environment” (Austin)
 “You have to be willing to be wrong” (Karen)
 “God can use service to change your attitude” (Karen)
 “I learned to take more risks” (Henry)
 “I was able to appreciate different perspectives” (Justin)
 “To get you have to give – it’s the ‘glory to suffering’ ratio” (Robert)
 “From serving I learned financial coaching is a gift from God” (Austin)
 “It made me realize, ‘The Creator can use me!’” (Molly)
 “It shows there’s great need, bigger than us” (Robert)
 “Serving gave me a confidence in God” (Molly)
 “I’ve learned you can’t predict where the blessing will be (Justin)
 “It taught me to never underestimate size – there’s a little guy named David” (Justin)
 “Serving “showed me how gracious God is” (Frank)
 “People don’t really understand the working of the Holy Spirit” (Molly)
 “Serving is great because *He’s* great” (Austin)
 “Serving should be motivated by the Holy Spirit, not selfish” (Frank)
 “Serving has taught me you never know what God has planned” (Sally)
 “I realized it’s really God at work, and to focus on Christ” (Sally)
 “Through serving, I’ve been privileged to see miracles” (Sally)
 “Like serving alongside a woman who was once in a shelter—only *God* does that” (Sally)
 “I know it’s not me doing it—I get out of the way” (Sally)
 “I learned to be more accepting, patient and forgiving” (Karen)
 “Only through serving was I able to get over my dry time spiritually” (Amber)
 “You can’t become a mature Christian without serving” (Robert)
 “I realized I needed to step out in faith and just do it” (Austin)
 “That’s part of the miracle of service” (Robert)
 “Serving helped me grow in character” (Frank)
 “I may not have stayed true to the Lord” (Anna)
 “One sign of maturity is when you realize you know *nothing*” (Molly)
 “Those with little life experience suffer the arrogance of youth” (Molly)
 “Service is a necessary part of the Christian life” (Kathy)
 “I learned about gifting through living in general” (Sally)
 “Serving provides a context for my faith” (Sally)

“It’s easier to say it than do it—then we *think* we did it!” (Tyler)
“I’m a firm believer in hands-on experience—you get practical knowledge” (Karen)
“You learn a lot from serving—like the fact that kids get nose bleeds!” (Karen)
“After changing 30 million diapers, you know what it’s like” (Karen)
“It’s very humbling—you learn that kids are very unpredictable” (Karen)
“After agreeing to lead a medical clinic, I got over the fear and enjoyed it” (Karen)
“I learned it’s okay to mess up” (Karen)
“You can read all day about thermodynamics, but a lab reveals it solidly” (Frank)
“Serving provides a higher level of learning—application” (Frank)
“I like serving because we’re able to meet practical needs” (Tyler)
“Our culture is way too heady: heavy on theory—light on application” (Justin)
“Louisville is the NFL of theology: it’s easy to feel like you’re JV” (Victor)
“I didn’t know what I was supposed to do and afraid I’d mess up” (Frank)
“Because we’re picking the songs, we feel a connection to them” (Frank)
“Empowering means providing tools, bursting bubbles, breaking strongholds” (Robert)
“We’re not challenged enough” (Kathy)
“I felt the joy of being in the zone” (Kevin)

APPENDIX 17

PARTICIPANT QUOTES REGARDING RELATEDNESS

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (18)

- "Without serving, I wouldn't know how to encourage people" (John)
"Serving has taught me how to handle conflict better" (Emily)
"Leading others in community is one of the most formative things I've done" (Grant)
"God can reveal Himself, His love and care to people" (Victor)
"Spiritual gifts allow the Body to work together" (Fred)
"We are to serve one another through our God-given desires" (Joseph)
"I learned from experience it's not my agenda but taking cues from others" (Michael)
"Because I serve, I know God better" (John)
"Serving has allowed me to experience God's grace in my life" (John)
"If I hadn't served, I would be really aloof" (Daniel)
"I'd be more shallow and weak, less appreciative" (Victor)
"I would have stayed a selfish, inwardly focused, a schmuck" (Ashley)
"I have seen God working through others in so many ways" (Fred)
"When serving, I can feel the Holy Spirit working in a mystical way" (Grant)
"Serving makes me feel like I'm plugging into God" (Betty)
"Serving made me feel like I'm bringing a dandelion to my Father" (Betty)
"Serving just feels like Kingdom work" (Betty)
"Serving has helped me experience 'the depth of God'" (Ashley)
"Without serving, I wouldn't have 'seen God at work'" (Ashley)
"I learned I'm the same as everyone else" (Daniel)
"I learned my need for God's grace" (Matthew)
"I realized my own constant need of grace" (Ashley)
"I learned the worst response is exactly how I treat Christ" (Daniel)
"I'd still be selfish – not giving anything to anybody" (Edward)
"I realized I was editing people who are 'too far out'" (Fred)
"One day I realized: 'Who am I making this about--me or God?'" (Joseph)
"I learned we tend to make it all about us, not the Holy Spirit" (Ashley)
"Serving made me realize I'm tempted to rely on my own strength" (John)
"If I hadn't served, I'd have a much narrower outlook" (Betty)
"I learned I can be self-reliant sometimes" (Betty)
"I used to look for man's approval" (Grant)
"I learned that a lot of us have a self-centered mindset" (Grant)
"Serving has shown me how selfish I am" (Grant)

“Without serving, I would be completely self-focused” (Grant)
 “I would be less compassionate and bored with my faith” (Fred)
 “I learned that we all think differently” (Emily)
 “I grew a lot by leading people not like myself” (Michael)
 “I wouldn’t have been exposed to real needs” (Daniel)
 “I broke the stereotypes and found real people like me” (Victor)
 “I learned everyone is needy regardless of their appearance” (Edward)
 “I learned that life is messy because we’re dealing with real people” (Ryan)
 “Serving exposed me to many people’s lives I wouldn’t have been a part of” (Grant)
 “Serving helps me to empathize with others more” (Fred)
 “It made me feel a part of the church universal” (Emily)
 “Serving puts us out of ourselves” (Emily)
 “I learned to appreciate differences” (Karen)
 “I learned how many desperate, hurting people there are in the world” (Fred)
 “I learned we can’t edit people out because of how they appear” (Fred)
 “Serving opened up my life by inviting the unlovable to come in” (Joseph)
 “I didn’t want to be isolated from non-believers” (Daniel)
 “Serving takes you to places you never would’ve gone” (Betty)
 “I identify with many of the homeless men I serve” (Molly)
 “Serving helps you not to think about yourself so much” (Betty)
 “Serving got rid of selfishness” (Justin)
 “Serving showed me how much I was needed” (Sarah)
 “I’m also less likely to be cliquish” (Sarah)
 “We don’t know what people are working on or how God is using them” (Sally)
 “Serving has brought me to places I wouldn’t have gone myself” (Sally)
 “It was a joy to see people recognize Christ’s generosity” (Daniel)
 “It caused non-believers to wonder, ‘What’s with these people?’” (Victor)
 “I realized how little acts of service can change somebody’s world” (Fred)
 “You’d think they had been healed of blindness or leprosy” (Fred)
 “Serving allows me to reach out to others experiencing the same thing” (Fred)
 “I learned the greatest need is to spend time caring for people” (Charlie)
 “Building someone’s self-esteem brings out the image of God” (Charlie)
 “I love seeing someone succeed” (Betty)
 “I never knew putting a hand on a shoulder could be so important” (Betty)
 “Serving gave me a heart for people” (Grant)
 “Serving together is like two guys in the same platoon” (Daniel)
 “It allows others to probe my own heart” (Matthew)
 “I was encouraged by others’ praise and growth” (Michael)
 “Only through serving can you find your place” (Betty)
 “I can empathize with people going through things I never experienced” (Fred)
 “Being in the middle of physical/spiritual pain is heart wrenching” (Matthew)
 “My CG is a wonderful place to love, be loved, and cultivate a holistic life” (William)
 “They’re beginning to grasp the importance of doing life together” (Emily)
 “It’s been a joy to serve alongside other Christians who love the poor in spirit” (Matthew)
 “We’re journeying together amidst our pain and suffering” (Matthew)
 “Seeing how my role contributed to a bigger vision helped me feel connected” (Michael)
 “The gospel bound us together like a thread” (Michael)
 “We strive to serve each other, investing as much as our daily schedules allow” (Daniel)

“We strive to love and encourage one another by bearing each other’s burdens” (Ashley)
 “We were a tight-knit group who really cared for each other” (Edward)
 “Our group functions well as a family, sharing meals and the burdens of life” (Ryan)
 “We are part of a tremendous community group who love each other” (Grant)
 “There are plenty of opportunities to do what I love most” (John)
 “I don’t feel like there’s a place for me” (Betty)
 “I struggle with disconnecting, and forgetting how to relate” (William)
 “Some members don’t serve because they don’t feel part of the group” (Michael)
 “Such relationships are vital because people tend not to act alone” (Michael)
 “I looked up to her, and we became like family” (Ashley)
 “Sometimes God speaks through the people in our lives” (Michael)
 “That’s why God’s given us the body – to spur us on” (Michael)
 “It can be just two people, encouraging and challenging each other” (Michael)
 “He also brought different people into my life with different perspectives” (Larry)
 “People have many acquaintances and few friends” (Larry)
 “Serving gives you an opportunity to show God’s love to others” (Heather)
 “It involves lifting one another to get through life” (Heather)
 “God showed me I shouldn’t judge others because I don’t know their situation” (Heather)

Members (15)

“Until we start serving, we’re afraid of the outside world” (Lauren)
 “Had I not served, I’d still be afraid to bump into profanity and gay people” (Lauren)
 “I learned I have a hard time accepting unconditional love” (Robert)
 “I learned to be more sensitive to others’ needs” (Henry)
 “Serving provided an easy way to have unbelievers in my life” (Amber)
 “As you serve others, you begin to forget your own problems” (Lauren)
 “I became less judgmental and kinder” (Lauren)
 “The experience took me out of myself” (Lauren)
 “I was also able to witness joy in those we served” (Justin)
 “At first he was a homeless person—now he’s a brother” (Karen)
 “I experienced the joy of impacting someone” (Frank)
 “I learned that teaching kids a song can be special” (Karen)
 “I can be a blessing like someone was to me” (Frank)
 “It helped me develop relationships and fellowship naturally” (Molly)
 “It allowed me to develop deep friendships based on a common bond” (Justin)
 “I was able to become friends with a mentor and feel plugged in” (Austin)
 “The less I was held accountable, the more comfortable I became” (Kevin)
 “Had I not served, I wouldn’t know half the people I know” (Sarah)
 “Serving builds camaraderie” (Robert)
 “It reminds you that we’re members of one big family” (Anna)
 “Serving together reinforces the concept of family” (Frank)
 “Serving allows me to develop deep friendships based on a common bond” (Justin)
 “The dwelling place of God now is His *people*” (Robert)
 “Serving connects you with people in a way that you’d never be connected” (Robert)
 “I formed deep bonds with my mentor by serving together” (Robert)
 “It’s important to serve in church because you’re members of a family” (Karen)

“It invest *you* into serving, making you feel more of a connection” (Karen)
 “Team ministry lets someone to step up and fill in where you’re weak” (Karen)
 “I learned I can serve people I don’t like!” (Molly)
 “Serving brings me closer to the Holy Spirit” (Justin)
 “I saw God work in different ways and how relationships develop” (Karen)
 “There are plenty of opportunities to do what I love most” (Anna)
 “It’s awesome to be a part a community—serving side by side with others” (Amber)
 “I just wanted to share life experiences through good and bad times” (Lauren)
 “In our girl and guy time, we try to go deep and to open up with one another” (Karen)
 “I’ll always cherish our rich fellowship, prayer, bible study, and worship” (Kathy)
 “I realized that the bond of fellowship in Christ is most important” (Justin)
 “Not enough time was dedicated to truly getting to know and trust one another” (Molly)
 “Having a committed person walking with me and checking on me is huge!” (Sarah)
 “I really enjoy serving because everyone has a good attitude and joyful spirit” (Julia)
 “Serving has helped me get to know a lot of people and to build community” (Sarah)
 “I identify with these men—it’s refreshing because I have nothing to hide” (Molly)
 “They feel like demands because there’s no relationship behind it” (Robert)
 “It’s serious when leaders don’t know who I am or don’t value what I have” (Henry)
 “You avoid idolizing a mentor by making the relationship a two-way street” (Austin)
 “Serving makes you feel more connected” (Karen)

APPENDIX 18

SERVING GAVE PARTICIPANTS A MORE ACCURATE PICTURE OF THEMSELVES

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (14)

- “Serving helped me see my limitations and confess my weaknesses (Michael)
- “Serving has driven home the truth that I’m not above or beyond sin” (Ryan)
- “Serving helped me see my limitations” (Michael)
- “I learned I’m the same as everyone else” (Daniel)
- “Serving brought me to the end of myself” (Daniel)
- “I didn’t realize how much my old nature was still there” (Daniel)
- “Serving brought me face to face with myself” (Daniel)
- “It’s chiseling away at self” (Daniel)
- “I learned how weak I am” (Matthew)
- “I learned my need for God’s grace” (Matthew)
- “I learned I wasn’t as patient as I thought” (Joseph)
- “I learned what I truly believe” (Joseph)
- “I realized my own constant need of grace” (Ashley)
- “I learned the worst response is exactly how I treat Christ” (Daniel)
- “I’d still be selfish – not giving anything to anybody” (Edward)
- “I was trying to do things in my own strength” (Fred)
- “I realized I was editing people who are ‘too far out’” (Fred)
- “One day I realized: ‘Who am I making this about--me or God?’” (Joseph)
- “I learned we tend to make it all about us, not the Holy Spirit” (Ashley)
- “Without serving, I would think I’m better than I am” (John)
- “Serving made me realize I’m tempted to rely on my own strength” (John)
- “Through serving, I discovered what really satisfies me” (Charlie)
- “Serving forces you out of your comfort zone” (Betty)
- “Through serving, God revealed my heart and I was able to release it” (Betty)
- “Through serving, I’ve learned that things don’t have to go my way” (Betty)
- “If I hadn’t served, I’d have a much narrower outlook” (Betty)
- “I learned I can be self-reliant sometimes” (Betty)
- “I used to look for man’s approval” (Grant)
- “I learned that a lot of us have a self-centered mindset” (Grant)
- “Serving has shown me how selfish I am” (Grant)
- “Without serving, I would be completely self-focused” (Grant)
- “I would be less compassionate and bored with my faith” (Fred)

“I learned that I often put the cart before the horse” (Fred)
 “I love serving where my personality and gifts can be used” (Heather)
 “He taught me a lot about myself—that I’m sinful, prideful, and stingy” (Heather)
 “If I hadn’t served, I’d still be full of myself and acquiring things” (Heather)
 “I’d also still be struggling between the world’s way and God’s way” (Heather)
 “I’m not good at laying out the gospel like some of my friends” (Larry)
 “Serving has shown me that I’m chief sinner of all sinners” (Larry)
 “I realized I’m no less a sinner than the one I’m serving” (Larry)
 “I realized how easy it was to put myself above God” (Larry)
 “Once I began serving, He slapped me around a little and I woke up” (Larry)
 “Had I not served, I would be less compassionate, angrier, and less patient” (Larry)
 “From serving, I learned how ugly I am” (Alice)
 “I also learned how easily self-centeredness and sin can creep into it” (Alice)

Members (9)

“Serving is very humbling—like the Cross” (Karen)
 “Serving removed the blinds so I humbly saw my true self” (Tyler)
 “Serving showed me I take everything for granted” (Tyler)
 “Only by serving did I learn what a control person I am” (Sarah)
 “My inward conviction of sin was magnified” (Kevin)
 “I was forced to face my rebelliousness” (Kevin)
 “Serving showed me that I take everything for granted” (Tyler)
 “Those with little life experience suffer the arrogance of youth” (Molly)
 “Serving helped me discover who I really am” (Molly)
 “Serving helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses” (Molly)
 “Had I never served, I’d still be arrogant and judgmental” (Molly)
 “Only by serving did I get off self” (Sarah)
 “I discovered I need an initial push” (Julia)
 “Serving in the medical clinic pushed me out of my comfort zone” (Amber)
 “Serving gets rid of selfishness” (Justin)
 “I learned I have a hard time accepting unconditional love” (Robert)
 “We’re not ‘pretty’ bad—we’re *bad!*” (Robert)
 “I learned from serving that you ain’t all that” (Robert)
 “I learned how selfish my fears really were” (Karen)
 “But for serving, I’d be less effective, more self-focused, and less motivated” (Sally)

APPENDIX 19

SERVING GAVE PARTICIPANTS A MORE ACCURATE PICTURE OF OTHERS

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (9)

- "I learned that we all think differently" (Emily)
- "I grew a lot by leading people not like myself" (Michael)
- "I broke the stereotypes and found real people like me" (Victor)
- "I learned everyone is needy regardless of their appearance" (Edward)
- "I learned that life is messy because we're dealing with real people" (Ryan)
- "Serving exposed me to many people's lives I wouldn't have been a part of" (Grant)
- "Serving helps me to empathize with others more" (Fred)
- "God showed me I shouldn't judge others because I don't know their situation" (Heather)
- "It's frustrating when people make bad choices: one step forward; five back" (Heather)
- "Walking with people can be messy, especially if they have a hidden agenda" (Larry)
- "You can't 'motivate' people to serve—only make them thirsty" (Larry)

Members (6)

- "I learned all kids are the same if placed in the right environment" (Austin)
- "Through serving, I learned to be more sensitive to others' needs" (Henry)
- "Too many ministries have an agenda: Jesus didn't put condition on healing" (Henry)
- "Serving helped me to be more merciful and gracious" (Molly)
- "Had I not served, I wouldn't know half the people I know" (Molly)
- "I identify with many of the homeless men I serve" (Molly)
- "We're afraid we'll bump into profanity, gay people, people who hate you" (Lauren)
- "The first time I went to Vietnam, I became less judgmental and kinder (Lauren)
- "Through serving, I was able to appreciate different perspectives" (Justin)
- "It's all about meeting that one person God wants you to" (Sally)

APPENDIX 20

SERVING TURNED PARTICIPANTS' FOCUS OUTWARD

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (8)

- "It made me feel a part of the church universal" (Emily)
- "Serving puts us out of ourselves" (Emily)
- "Serving authenticates our message" (Fred)
- "I learned how many desperate, hurting people there are in the world" (Fred)
- "I learned we can't edit people out because of how they appear" (Fred)
- "Serving opened up my life by inviting the unlovable to come in" (Joseph)
- "I didn't want to be isolated from non-believers" (Daniel)
- "Serving takes you to places you never would've gone" (Betty)
- "Serving expanded my world" (Betty)
- "Serving helps me to see things from a different point of view" (Betty)
- "Serving helps you not to think about yourself so much" (Betty)
- "Serving has put me in situations I didn't think I'd be comfortable with" (Heather)
- "Had I not served, I never would've walked side-by-side with real poverty" (Heather)
- "I never would have seen how some people struggle" (Heather)
- "Through serving, I learned how to guard my heart" (Larry)
- "I wouldn't have been exposed to real needs" (Daniel)
- "I learned I'm not the only person out there who's been hurt" (Alice)

Members (9)

- "Had I not served, I'd still be afraid to bump into profanity and gay people" (Lauren)
- "Until we start serving, we're afraid of the outside world" (Lauren)
- "Serving got rid of selfishness" (Justin)
- "Serving showed me how much I was needed" (Sarah)
- "I'm also less likely to be cliquish" (Sarah)
- "We don't know what people are working on or how God is using them" (Sally)
- "Serving has brought me to places I wouldn't have gone myself" (Sally)
- "I identify with many of the homeless men I serve" (Molly)
- "I learned to appreciate differences" (Karen)
- "I learned to be more sensitive to others' needs" (Henry)
- "Serving provided an easy way to have unbelievers in my life" (Amber)
- "As you serve others, you begin to forget your own problems" (Lauren)

“I became less judgmental and kinder” (Lauren)

“The experience took me out of myself” (Lauren)

“I’m also “less likely to be clique-ish” (Sarah)

“Without serving, I never would have learned their real needs” (Anna)

APPENDIX 21

PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCED THE JOY OF BLESSING OTHERS

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (9)

- "It was a joy to see people recognize Christ's generosity" (Daniel)
- "It caused non-believers to wonder, 'What's with these people?'" (Victor)
- "I realized how little acts of service can change somebody's world" (Fred)
- "You'd think they had been healed of blindness or leprosy" (Fred)
- "Serving allows me to reach out to others experiencing the same thing" (Fred)
- "I learned the greatest need is to spend time caring for people" (Charlie)
- "Building someone's self-esteem brings out the image of God" (Charlie)
- "I love seeing someone succeed" (Betty)
- "I never knew putting a hand on a shoulder could be so important" (Betty)
- "Serving gave me a heart for people" (Grant)
- "Serving gives you an opportunity to show God's love to others" (Heather)
- "It's stressful, gratifying, emotional, time-consuming, and beautiful" (Larry)
- "I don't always feel like serving, but I've never once regretted going" (Alice)
- "There's nothing that can replace seeing a real face" (Alice)

Members (7)

- "Through serving, I experienced joy" (Henry)
- "I was also able to witness joy in those we served" (Justin)
- "When I wasn't not serving, I felt empty" (Sarah)
- "Serving calms my conscience" (Sarah)
- "I felt the joy of being in the zone" (Kevin)
- "At first he was a homeless person—now he's a brother" (Karen)
- "I experienced the joy of impacting someone" (Frank)
- "I feel like I'm in the middle of God's will" (Molly)
- "When serving, I feel like an oasis in the desert" (Molly)
- "I experience the joy of the Lord firsthand" (Molly)
- "I can be myself, not somebody else" (Molly)
- "I learned that teaching kids a song can be special" (Karen)
- "I can be a blessing like someone was to me" (Frank)

APPENDIX 22

PARTICIPANTS DISCOVERED THE JOY OF WORKING WITH OTHERS

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (6)

- "We need to have others probe into our hearts" (Matthew)
- "Serving together is like two guys in the same platoon" (Daniel)
- "It allows others to probe my own heart" (Matthew)
- "I was encouraged by others' praise and growth" (Michael)
- "Only through serving can you find your place" (Betty)
- "It can be just two people, encouraging and challenging each other" (Michael)
- "It involves lifting one another to get through life" (Heather)
- "He also brought different people into my life with different perspectives" (Larry)

Members (9)

- "It helped me develop relationships and fellowship naturally" (Molly)
- "We were able to discover who we really are" (Molly)
- "It allowed me to develop deep friendships based on a common bond" (Justin)
- "I was able to become friends with a mentor and feel plugged in" (Austin)
- "The less I was held accountable, the more comfortable I became" (Kevin)
- "Had I not served, I wouldn't know half the people I know" (Sarah)
- "Serving builds camaraderie" (Robert)
- "It reminds you that we're members of one big family" (Anna)
- "Serving together reinforces the concept of family" (Frank)
- "Serving allows me to develop deep friendships based on a common bond" (Justin)
- "The dwelling place of God now is His *people*" (Robert)
- "Serving connects you with people in a way that you'd never be connected" (Robert)
- "I formed deep bonds with my mentor by serving together" (Robert)
- "It's important to serve in church because you're members of a family" (Karen)
- "It invests *you* into serving, making you feel more of a connection" (Karen)
- "Team ministry lets someone to step up and fill in where you're weak" (Karen)
- "You avoid idolizing a mentor by making the relationship a two-way street" (Austin)

APPENDIX 23

PARTICIPANTS BEGAN TO SEE LIFE DIFFERENTLY

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (8)

- "I needed to get some street smarts" (Matthew)
- "I realized the comforts of this world grab our hearts" (Matthew)
- "It takes non-believers coming at you" (Matthew)
- "Serving has "a huge sanctifying role"(Joseph)
- "Once the gospel took root, I saw all my life as service" (William)
- "The grace of God is the only motivation that lasts" (William)
- "Serving has also changed my narrow view of spiritual gifting" (Ashley)
- "I can empathize with people going through things I never experienced" (Fred)
- "Being in the middle of physical/spiritual pain is heart wrenching" (Matthew)
- "Through serving, I experienced a paradigm shift: *everything* is God's!" (Charlie)
- "He changed my character: I realized God owns it all" (Heather)
- "Serving has taught me to just pray for my daily bread" (Heather)
- "God has taught me a lot through other people" (Alice)
- "There is always something I walk away with from that experience" (Alice)
- "Sometimes, God puts me in a role to serve for *my* benefit, not theirs" (Alice)

Members (9)

- "Even when it seems we don't have enough, it always works out" (Sally)
- "God showed me the little things in everyday life make the difference" (Sally)
- "I learned not to expect anything in return" (Henry)
- "You have to be willing to be wrong" (Karen)
- "I learned to take more risks" (Henry)
- "I learned I can serve people I don't like!" (Molly)
- "It helped me do what I feel like the Lord wants me to do" (Anna)
- "When I'm serving, "I feel fully alive" (Julia)
- "I was able to appreciate different perspectives" (Justin)
- "I got to talk to strangers and discovered my inner desire and calling" (Amber)
- "To get you have to give – it's the 'glory to suffering' ratio" (Robert)
- "From serving I learned financial coaching is a gift from God" (Austin)

APPENDIX 24

PARTICIPANTS WERE ABLE TO SEE GOD AT WORK

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (11)

- "I learned to rest in the Holy Spirit" (Matthew)
- "I learned to pray first, think methodology later" (Daniel)
- "It reminded me of my need for God's grace" (Matthew)
- "God can reveal Himself, His love and care to people" (Victor)
- "God can use us, and is ready to bless us, *whatever* our role" (Victor)
- "Serving has helped me experience 'the depth of God'" (Ashley)
- "Without serving, I wouldn't have 'seen God at work'" (Ashley)
- "Only then did I learn that God's big enough" (Edward)
- "I can see where God used sin to grow me" (Fred)
- "I discovered that Jesus Christ heals in many ways" (Betty)
- "Serving makes me feel like I'm plugging into God" (Betty)
- "Serving made me feel like I'm bringing a dandelion to my Father" (Betty)
- "Serving just feels like Kingdom work" (Betty)
- "Serving has shown me how desperately we need Christ to work" (Grant)
- "When serving, I can feel the Holy Spirit working in a mystical way" (Grant)
- "I have seen God working through others in so many ways" (Fred)
- "Anything I invest in another person, God pours right back from heaven" (Heather)
- "Through serving, I learned God is so big!" (Heather)
- "I learned through serving I can *never* out-give God" (Larry)
- "Serving taught me more about who Christ really is" (Alice)

Members (7)

- "It made me realize: 'The Creator can use me!'" (Molly)
- "It shows there's great need, bigger than us" (Robert)
- "Serving gave me a confidence in God" (Molly)
- "Serving brings me closer to the Holy Spirit" (Justin)
- "He leads me to unexpected places" (Justin)
- "I've learned you can't predict where the blessing will be" (Justin)
- "It taught me to never underestimate size – there's a little guy named David" (Justin)
- "God doesn't just fill the gap – He does the whole thing!" (Robert)
- "I saw how other people stepped in so that God could provide the food" (Karen)

“I saw God work in different ways and how relationships develop” (Karen)
“Serving “showed me how gracious God is” (Frank)
“People don’t really understand the working of the Holy Spirit” (Molly)
“Serving is great because *He’s* great” (Austin)
“God can use service to change your attitude” (Karen)
“Serving should be motivated by the Holy Spirit, not selfish” (Frank)
“Serving has taught me you never know what God has planned” (Sally)
“I realized it’s really God at work, and to focus on Christ” (Sally)
“Through serving, I’ve been privileged to see miracles” (Sally)
“Like serving alongside a woman who was once in a shelter—only *God* does that” (Sally)
“I know it’s not me doing it—I get out of the way” (Sally)

APPENDIX 25

PARTICIPANTS' SPIRITUAL GROWTH ACCELERATED

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (14)

- "Serving has grown me a lot in the gospel" (Heather)
- "Service took me beyond 'cookie cutter' faith" (Michael)
- "Serving increased my commitment to faith" (Edward)
- "If I hadn't served, I would be really aloof" (Daniel)
- "I'd be more shallow and weak, less appreciative" (Victor)
- "I would have stayed a selfish, inwardly focused, a schmuck" (Ashley)
- "My failure pointed to my sheer need for Him" (Ashley)
- "Serving is the tangible outcome of what we profess" (Fred)
- "We can't rest on yesterday's righteousness" (Victor)
- "Serving helped me to see that faith is a long pursuit" (Ashley)
- "Because I serve, I know God better" (John)
- "Serving has allowed me to experience God's grace in my life" (John)
- "Serving gave me the faith to believe that even small seeds can bear fruit" (John)
- "Through serving, you show that you get it" (Charlie)
- "Serving has made me more compassionate" (Betty)
- "Serving impacted my prayer life" (Betty)
- "Serving has given me a deeper grasp of the gospel" (Grant)
- "Leading others in community is one of the most formative things I've done" (Grant)
- "Serving put me in tough situations" (Fred)
- "Serving is faith in action—it's an *adventure* to follow Christ!" (Fred)
- "God has really stretched me through serving" (Heather)
- "Through serving, I have grown more patient, caring, and understanding" (Larry)
- "It also helped me to have a closer walk with Christ day-by-day" (Larry)
- "If I had never served, how would the Holy Spirit have captured my heart?" (Alice)

Members (9)

- "I would never have learned to die to self" (Kathy)
- "I learned to be more accepting, patient and forgiving" (Karen)
- "Only through serving was I able to get over my dry time spiritually" (Amber)
- "You can't become a mature Christian without serving" (Robert)
- "I realized I needed to step out in faith and just do it" (Austin)

“That’s part of the miracle of service” (Robert)
“Serving helped me grow in character” (Frank)
“I may not have stayed true to the Lord” (Anna)
“One sign of maturity is when you realize you know *nothing*” (Molly)
“Service is a necessary part of the Christian life” (Kathy)
“God showed me it’s the little things—I don’t have to be a leader” (Sally)
“I learned about gifting through living in general” (Sally)
“Serving provides a context for my faith” (Sally)

APPENDIX 26

PARTICIPANTS BECAME MORE CONFIDENT AND PROFICIENT

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (12)

- "From serving, I learned how to communicate the gospel simply" (Joseph)
- "Serving has taught me how to handle conflict better (Emily)
- "Reading a book on dancing is no substitute for dancing" (William)
- "Book knowledge can only go so far" (Michael)
- "I learned to foster community outside the weekly meeting" (Michael)
- "After awhile, I got a lot more comfortable walking the streets" (Victor)
- "I learned if I have to keep explaining, I may not know myself" (Joseph)
- "Serving is where the rubber meets the road" (Edward)
- "When we first serve, we're super uncomfortable, then it decreases" (Edward)
- "I learned I really have to *believe* what I share" (John)
- "Without serving, I wouldn't know how to encourage people" (John)
- "Learning doesn't take place in a vacuum" (Charlie)
- "I learned not to look only at results" (William)
- "A changed life is our first line of defense" (William)
- "I learned from experience it's not my agenda but taking cues from others" (Michael)
- "The church's role should be to provide training wheels" (Daniel)
- "I learned not to get drawn into artificial signs of success and failure" (Daniel)
- "Serving helped me to catch things, observe, ask questions" (Joseph)
- "Serving both scary and strangely attractive" (Ashley)
- "Nobody learns as much as the teacher learns" (Charlie)
- "Serving results in more fruit because the gospel infects everything" (Grant)
- "I thought I had to have a plan—God only wanted me to show up" (Heather)
- "I learned I don't have to 'do' things for people, just show Christ's love" (Heather)
- "Through serving, the Lord strengthened my weakness as a communicator" (Alice)

Members (4)

- "If you're willing, serving can meet you right where you are" (Frank)
- "It's easier to say it than do it—then we *think* we did it!" (Tyler)
- "Serving is refreshing because there's nothing to hide" (Molly)
- "I'm a firm believer in hands-on experience—you get practical knowledge" (Karen)
- "You learn a lot from serving—like the fact that kids get nose bleeds!" (Karen)

“After changing 30 million diapers, you know what it’s like” (Karen)
“It’s very humbling—you learn that kids are very unpredictable” (Karen)
“After agreeing to lead a medical clinic, I got over the fear and enjoyed it” (Karen)
“I learned it’s okay to mess up” (Karen)
“You can read all day about thermodynamics, but a lab reveals it solidly” (Frank)
“Serving provides a higher level of learning—application” (Frank)

APPENDIX 27

THE SPIRIT EMPOWERS BELIEVERS FOR PERSONAL MINISTRY

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (5)

- "When I'm empowered by the Spirit, I do things I wouldn't normally do" (Matthew)
- "I learned that nothing I did to serve her could save her" (Joseph)
- "It was the power of the Holy Spirit, not my ability" (Joseph)
- "A higher commitment requires a heart change from the Spirit" (Ryan)
- "We all have been given the Holy Spirit" (Matthew)
- "The Holy Spirit changes our desires to match *His* desires" (Matthew)
- "Only the Spirit can convict their hearts and empower them to respond" (Matthew)
- "We're actually souls inhabiting bodies" (Matthew)
- "Until God lays it on your heart, your service will be superficial" (Larry)
- "He also gives me supernatural energy to finish the task" (Larry)
- "The Holy Spirit sometimes has me do or say things that aren't from me" (Alice)
- "Sometimes the Spirit has people divulge all kinds of things to me also"

Members (5)

- "If you're dead, you're dead—the Spirit has to bring life" (Robert)
- "We need to be drunk in the Spirit" (Kathy)
- "A gift is something God has blessed me with *personally*" (Sally)
- "Serving helped me "understand my strengths and my weaknesses" (Molly)
- "Serving "gave me a confidence in God" (Molly)
- "It made me realize: "The Creator can use me!" (Molly)
- "When I'm serving, I feel fully alive" (Julia)

APPENDIX 28

THE SPIRIT EQUIPS BELIEVERS FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (4)

- “Spiritual gifts are “fruit of the Spirit” (Matthew)
- “If we’re less aware of the Holy Spirit, we’re less likely to pray (Ryan)
- “Without my gift of mercy, I wouldn’t have the patience for this ministry” (Heather)
- “Serving makes me feel like I’m plugging into God” (Heather)
- “I thought I had to have a plan—God only wanted me to show up” (Heather)
- “I learned I don’t have to ‘do’ things for people, just show Christ’s love” (Heather)
- “Through serving, I learned that God provides” (Heather)
- “A man’s gift makes room for him” (Robert)

Members (6)

- “Without the Holy Spirit, I couldn’t even recognize my gift” (Anna)
- “Spiritual gifting is one way of being filled with the Holy Spirit” (Anna)
- “When exercising my spiritual giftedness, “my heart can be glad” (Sarah)
- “Let go and let God—let people be free because the truth will set you free” (Molly)
- “When serving I felt the joy of being ‘in the zone’” (Kevin)
- “They’ll thrive because they feel they can contribute something” (Karen)
- “Through serving, I realized it’s really God at work” (Sally)

APPENDIX 29

THE SPIRIT GUIDES BELIEVERS FOR LASTING MINISTRY

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (6)

- "The Spirit prompts me and it boomerangs" (Ashley)
- "The Holy Spirit gives me peace and prompts me to pray more" (Heather)
- "We came to Sojourn because we sensed God calling us to the inner city" (Larry)
- "I tend to serve where I feel the Lord needs me most" (Larry)
- "When serving, I can feel the Holy Spirit working in a mystical way" (Grant)
- "God's pursuit of me allows me to pursue others" (Grant)
- "Serving is faith in action—it's an *adventure* to follow Christ!" (Fred)
- "I kept coming back because I felt God calling me to it" (Heather)
- "God's walking me through some things even now" (Heather)
- "I constantly pray for the Spirit's guidance" (Alice)

Members (5)

- "The Holy Spirit is like the drummer in the band" (Sarah)
- "Walking in the Spirit is simply following your calling" (Robert)
- "This leads to sustained commitment" (Robert)
- "The Spirit keeps my motives pure" (Justin)
- "He leads me to unexpected places" (Justin)
- "Jesus never conditioned his help on acceptance of his message" (Lauren)
- "Serving helps me to do what I feel like the Lord wants me to do" (Anna)

APPENDIX 30

THE SPIRIT ENLIGHTENS BELIEVERS FOR JOYFUL MINISTRY

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (5)

- “We are to serve one another through our God-given desires” (Joseph)
- “I love serving where my particular personality and gifts can be used” (Heather)
- “Serving brings me closer to the Holy Spirit” (Justin)
- “Knowing that I’m furthering His kingdom became a joy” (Heather)
- “A changed life is our first line of defense” (William)
- “If we’re not careful, the comforts of this world grab our hearts” (Matthew)
- “I learned to rest in the Holy Spirit” (Matthew)

Members (5)

- “Only by the power of the Spirit can I joyfully proclaim: ‘I cook for strippers!’” (Molly)
- “When exercising my spiritual giftedness, my heart can be glad” (Sarah)
- “The Spirit changes my desires to match His desires” (Sarah)
- “The Spirit is [transforming] me from ‘I have to’ to ‘I want to’” (Karen)
- “Service should be fun—something you *want* to do” (Karen)
- “You should *enjoy* serving” (Kevin)
- “I experience the joy of the Lord firsthand” (Molly)
- “People don’t really understand the working of the Spirit” (Molly)
- “I simply enjoy doing it” (Austin)
- “*It’s* great because *He’s* great” (Austin)
- “My inward conviction of sin is magnified and I’m forced to deal with it” (Kevin)
- “God showed me the little things in everyday life make the difference” (Sally)

APPENDIX 31

THE SPIRIT HUMBLER BELIEVERS FOR CHRIST-HONORING MINISTRY

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (10)

- "Our default mode is not to mention or consider the Holy Spirit" (Michael)
- "Without the Spirit, we are drawn into artificial signs of success and failure" (Daniel)
- "The Holy Spirit could show up on the back of a milk carton!" (Daniel)
- "The Holy Spirit has made me appreciate just how fallen I really am" (Larry)
- "Once I began serving, He slapped me around a little and I woke up" (Larry)
- "Through serving, God revealed my heart and I was able to release it" (Betty)
- "Serving helped me to see my limitations and confess my weaknesses (Michael)
- "Serving has driven home the truth that I'm not above or beyond sin" (Ryan)
- "I learned I'm the same as everyone else" (Daniel)
- "Serving brought me face to face with myself" (Daniel)
- "It's chiseling away at self" (Daniel)
- "I learned how weak I am" (Matthew)
- "I learned my need for God's grace" (Matthew)
- "I realized my own constant need of grace" (Ashley)
- "I was trying to do things in my own strength" (Fred)
- "I realized I was editing people who are 'too far out'" (Fred)
- "One day I realized: 'Who am I making this about--me or God?'" (Joseph)
- "I learned we tend to make it all about us, not the Holy Spirit" (Ashley)
- "Serving made me realize I'm tempted to rely on my own strength" (John)
- "Once I began serving, He slapped me around a little and I woke up" (Larry)
- "Through serving, God taught us how to lead with grace and mercy" (Alice)
- "He is teaching us to love well and forgive well" (Alice)

Members (7)

- "The Spirit will glorify the Son, and the Lord will draw the elect" (Robert)
- "You can tell the works of man because Christ is not glorified" (Robert)
- "One mark of the Spirit is desiring anonymity, expecting nothing in return" (Robert)
- "We can 'push out' the Spirit" (Molly)
- "Serving removed the blinds so I humbly saw my true self" (Tyler)
- "Serving showed me I take everything for granted" (Tyler)

“My inward conviction of sin was magnified” (Kevin)
“I was forced to face my rebelliousness” (Kevin)
“I discovered I need an initial push” (Julia)
“Serving in the medical clinic pushed me out of my comfort zone” (Amber)
“Serving gets rid of selfishness” (Justin)
“I learned I have a hard time accepting unconditional love” (Robert)

APPENDIX 32

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EMPHASIZE THE BELIEVER'S UNIQUENESS

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (5)

"Giftedness includes different desires and passions" (Emily)

"God wired me this way" (William)

"Through serving, I discovered what really satisfies me" (Charlie)

"Every elder has a niche" (Jacob)

"Not everyone is like me – Type A" (Jacob)

"Serving has also changed my narrow view of spiritual gifting" (Ashley)

"If I didn't have my spiritual gifts, I would not be who I am now" (Alice)

Members (5)

"God made us all different" (Julie)

"We are called to different areas by our gifts" (Julia)

"A man's gift will make room for him" (Robert)

"God plays to our strengths" (Karen)

"That's why God gives us interests and personalities" (Karen)

"Leaders should highlight service opportunities and go on a talent search" (Sarah)

"I got to talk to strangers and discovered my inner desire and calling" (Amber)

APPENDIX 33

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ENERGIZE BELIEVERS FOR ACTION

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (8)

- "Spiritual gifts help us live out our faith" (Michael)
- "Though I struggle with patience, my desire to encourage usually wins out" (Larry)
- "I told Pastor Daniel: Tell me your vision, and I'll execute it" (Jacob)
- "I wanted to break from the corporate world and use my gifts for the church" (Emily)
- "My dream ministry is to use my talents in a church plant" (Emily)
- "Leaders should take time to determine what members are passionate about" (William)
- "The Spirit prompts me and it boomerangs" (Ashley)
- "Moving to St. Vincent was great – we had to be on our game!" (John)
- "Serving makes me feel like I'm plugging into God" (Betty)

Members (5)

- "God plays to our strengths" (Karen)
- "That's why God gives us interests and personalities" (Karen)
- "Spiritual gifts act as roadmaps for serving well" (Kevin)
- "A man's gift will make room for him" (Robert)
- "Spiritual gifts aren't just a part of serving, they're all of it" (Robert)
- "You need to operate at the giftedness level" (Robert)
- "Serving has to start from inside a person—with his or her desire" (Amber)
- "Spiritual gifting is the Lord's way of calling us to action" (Anna)

APPENDIX 34

SPIRITUAL GIFTS MAKE SERVICE JOYFUL

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (7)

- "Without my gift of mercy, I wouldn't have the patience for this ministry" (Heather)
- "I love serving where my particular personality and gifts can be used" (Heather)
- "My dream ministry is to use my talents in a church plant" (Emily)
- "My personal dream is to head up a punk rock ministry" (Jacob)
- "Experiencing His grace is the result of service" (William)
- "Something in us wants to please God" (William)
- "My dream ministry is preaching/teaching/discipling--raising up other leaders" (John)
- "My perfect ministry would be helping people who can't help themselves" (Charlie)
- "Serving makes me feel like I'm bringing a dandelion to my Father" (Heather)
- "Serving feels like I'm giving back" (Larry)
- "My dream ministry is building up doubting people with the gospel" (Larry)
- "Once you serve, feelings of fulfillment far outweigh the sacrifices made" (Larry)

Members (3)

- "Gifting is about putting our heart into it" (Tyler)
- "If you know your gifts, you don't have to try hard" (Tyler)
- "It should be our desire to do something" (Julie)
- "You should be able to enjoy your area of service" (Julie)
- "Spiritual gifting allows me to get joy out of special love" (Julie)
- "When I'm operating out of my gifts, I don't get frustrated easily" (Julie)
- "Spiritual gifting is the ability to look at everything in you as a blessing" (Justin)

APPENDIX 35

SPIRITUAL GIFTS BUILD UP CHRIST'S BODY

(Numbers shown in brackets indicate how many participants contributed to the researcher's understanding of the topic.)

Leaders (6)

- "Spiritual gifts allow the Body to work together" (Fred)
- "I wanted to use my gifts and talents for the church body" (Emily)
- "Giftedness was affirmed in my life by others" (Emily)
- "I told Pastor Daniel: Tell me your vision, and I'll execute it" (Jacob)
- "I was encouraged by others' praise and growth" (Michael)
- "I really desire to see people using gifts and skills" (Michael)
- "We need to have others probe into our own hearts" (Matthew)
- "We found a way where we both could use our gifts" (Victor)

Members (5)

- "Spiritual gifts are meant to build us up in love, requiring greater dependence" (Joseph)
- "We are called to different areas by our gifts" (Julie)
- "It's not about knowing yourself more, but knowing who you are in Christ" (Kathy)
- "They'll thrive because they feel they can contribute something" (Karen)
- "Serving should be motivated by the Holy Spirit, not selfish" (Frank)

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ABSTRACT

CHURCH-SPONSORED SERVICE THROUGH THE LENS OF SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY: A CASE STUDY

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Given the critical need to nudge congregants toward sustainable service, surprisingly few studies have explored the possibility of internalizing Christian beliefs and practices through intrinsically motivating ministry activities. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), an emerging meta-theory of adult motivation, such activities consistently move individuals from external to internal regulation of behavior regardless of domain. Perceiving undeveloped believers as marginalized members of Christ's body, this emancipatory study seeks to build awareness of the need to empower all believers to make kingdom contributions through intrinsically motivated service that internalizes their faith. Designed as a qualitative single case study, it explores the rich perceptions and divergent meanings associated with church-sponsored service among a critical array of stakeholders in a thriving evangelical church. In a vivid portrait gleaned from observations, interviews and documents, the researcher uses SDT's theoretical lens to shape the questions, inform the data, and inspire the cause. In the process, traditional

assumptions about servant leadership, Christian formation, and spiritual giftedness are challenged.

Chapter 1 introduces the research problem, its theological foundation, and practical significance. It also defines the research questions while plotting the study's limitations. Chapter 2's examination of the precedent literature recounts the history of motivational theories in general before focusing on SDT's evolution as a meta-theory. The author also addresses the need for a reliable model of biblical integration to separate the "wheat" of general revelation contained in SDT principles from the "chaff" of man's wisdom. Chapter 3 presents the research design, defines the population, establishes the selection criteria, and outlines the instrumentation. Chapter 4 analyzes the findings, while Chapter 5 presents the researcher's conclusions. Finally, Chapter 6 offers a motivational model of Christian service based on the study's findings. The study's ultimate aim is to stimulate meaningful dialogue on the need to reform church structures that foster Christian formation through intrinsically motivated, Spirit-empowered service.

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