AMERICAN INDIVIDUALISM'S EFFECT ON DISCIPLESHIP

IN CHURCH REVITALIZATION:

A MIXED METHODS STUDY

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A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of

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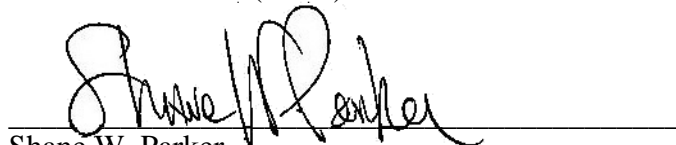
by

John Obert Baker III

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APPROVAL SHEET

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A MIXED METHODS STUDY

John Obert Baker III

Read and Approved by:

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Michael S. Wilder (Chair)

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Shane W. Parker

Date _____

To Brenda, my wife and best friend.

Thank you for your decades of love, understanding, and support.

In memory of my best man at my wedding and the best man I have ever known,

my father, John O. "Jack" Baker, Jr.

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PREFACE

It is difficult to know where to begin when it comes to discussing the influences upon me, and the support received while engaged in this research. The impact of this work upon my understanding of who I am in Christ and who I am in relationship to other brothers and sisters in Christ, through our common unity (community) with Him, has been pervasive. To that end, I want to first give credit to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who has made reconciliation between man and God, and between man and man, possible.

I am forever grateful to my family. Thank you to our children, John IV (and daughter-in-law Hayley), Anna, Elyse, and William, who encouraged me throughout this endeavor. From the time I started this program until now, we have journeyed through four job changes in four different types of ministry in two different states, including a move home to western New York. We were blessed to be able to walk alongside my father as he faced his journey with cancer, sitting with him in his hospice room as he led us in hymn sings. And three days later, we rejoiced as he was taken to be with our Lord. Mom, your faithfulness and love for your husband, family, and the church, has shaped many lives. Thank you for your example of grace-filled living that has impacted countless families and will, prayerfully, ripple forward for generations.

I am deeply grateful for my advisor, Dr. Michael Wilder. He has been a constant encourager, especially as my research and writing lingered, extended due to family and life issues. His excitement during this project was infectious. I was honored to serve alongside him as his Garrett Fellow and Online Teaching Assistant. I am also thankful for Dr. Shane Parker, Dr. Timothy Paul Jones, and Dr. Darryl Wilson. I am a vastly different

person today because of the friendship, guidance, and investment made in me and my ministry by these four men.

I am also grateful for the faith communities and pastoral leaders who embraced me and enriched my understanding of community along the way: Pastor Paul Dickson and Grace Baptist Church, Brockport, New York; Dr. Mike Wiggins and Pine Terrace Baptist Church, Milton, Florida; Pastor John Reed and Faith Baptist Church, Corona, California; Pastor Dan Milroy and Victory Baptist Church, Albion, New York; First Baptist Church, Holley, New York; Pastor Bill Gressette and Shively Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky; Dr. Jim Hamilton, Dr. Denny Burk, and Kenwood Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky; and Pastor Randy Sass and Brockport Free Methodist Church, Brockport, New York.

Finally, words are entirely inadequate to express my appreciation and love for my wife and high school sweetheart, Brenda. You have loved our family and supported us through so many different situations, and in so many different places. For months at a time, you parented our children while I was deployed overseas with the Marine Corps. You diligently and lovingly homeschooled our children and continue to help others do likewise. Through all my various positions and ministries, you have been a loving encourager and a faithful helper. You model the gospel to our family and me daily. I cannot imagine making it through this pursuit without you. I love you!

John O. Baker III

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2015 Barna Research, in conjunction with the Navigators and NavPress, released a report entitled *The State of Discipleship*. The report detailed findings from their comprehensive, multi-phase study of contemporary discipleship.[1] Barna's intent was three-fold: discern the current state of discipleship in the United States, identify hallmarks of transformative discipleship, and develop measures for discipleship outcomes. Their report culminated with suggestions for future discipleship efforts based on key observable cultural macro-trends.

The report indicates that Christian adults in America overwhelmingly view their church's discipleship efforts positively. When asked if their church does a good job helping people grow spiritually, 92 percent gave their church a passing grade.[2] Church leaders, however, disagree strongly with church members. Only 1 in 100 leaders believe that "today's churches are doing very well at discipling new and young believers."[3] When these same leaders assess their own church's discipleship efforts, 8 percent report that

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[1] Barna's research began with an in-depth online interview of 36 educators from Protestant and Catholic seminaries and Bible colleges. Phase 2 included in-depth interviews of leaders from 30 churches and 7 parachurch ministries considered exemplars in discipleship. Phase 3 involved online and telephone interviews of 2,003 self-identified Christians. The final phase of research consisted of 833 online and telephone interviews of Protestant senior pastors and congregational leaders who specialize in discipleship and spiritual growth, referred to in the report as "church leaders." See Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship* (Colorado Springs: The Navigators, 2015), 7.

[2] Fifty-two percent of respondents responded that their church "definitely" was doing a good job, with an additional 40 percent responding "probably." See Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 9.

[3] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 9–10.

they are "doing 'very well' and 56 percent 'somewhat well' at discipling new and young believers."[4]

The Barna report also indicates a high level of spiritual apathy among American Christians. Adult Christians self-reported a 20 percent rate of participation in discipleship activities.[5] Ten percent of Christians agree with the statement that "spiritual growth is 'not too' or 'not at all' important."[6] Shockingly, 70 percent of these respondents replied that they are comfortable with their current level of spiritual maturity. The report concludes that "Among a significant number of Christians today, there is simply no drive to prioritize spiritual growth."[7]

Of the remaining 90 percent of American Christians who believe that spiritual growth is at least somewhat important, 29 percent are not being discipled because they "have not thought about it," and 29 percent "do not believe they need to be discipled by someone else."[8] Barna reports that there is a notable and increasing trend toward discipleship in isolation. More than one-third (37 percent) of adult Christians prefer to engage in discipleship on their own.[9]

Research Problem

A trajectory of apathy regarding discipleship among Christians parallels trends of the diminishing influence of both Christianity and the Southern Baptist Convention

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[4] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 10.

[5] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 10.

[6] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 11.

[7] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 11.

[8] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 11.

[9] Of those who prefer interactive discipleship, one-quarter prefer small groups and 16 percent prefer one-on-one discipleship. Barna notes, "Exemplar church leaders, however, widely consider a one-on-one component essential to fruitful discipleship." See Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 11.

(SBC) in the greater culture of America. American Christians need revitalization, and consequently, American churches need revitalization.[10]

The Church in Post-Christian America

Additional research by Barna indicates that the number of Americans embracing a post-Christian cultural perspective reached 44 percent in 2015, rising a dramatic 7 percent between 2013 and 2015.[11] The Pew Research Center provides Barna with corroboration, reporting that between the years 2007 and 2014 the percentage of the US population that identified as Christian fell nearly 8 percent, from 78.4 percent to 70.6 percent. Pew also noted that the number of persons identifying as unaffiliated (atheist, agnostic, or nothing in particular), experiencing the greatest growth during the seven-year span, rising more than 6 percent from 16.1 percent to 22.8 percent of the US population. Finally, Pew notes that the median age of unaffiliated persons is steadily getting younger, while the median age of mainline Protestants and Catholics continues to rise.[12] These trends of an earlier aged non-affiliation and a later median-aged Christian affiliation foreshadow an accelerating momentum toward a post-Christian culture in America's future.[13]

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[10] The statement—American churches are in need of revitalization, and as a consequence, American Christians are in need of revitalization—is an equally correct statement. These statements recognize the symbiotic relationship between each entity; the church is, in a sense, understood to be comprised of her members, and members are influenced by each other and the community of faith called the local church.

[11] Barna's research included telephone and online interviews with 60,808 adults. See Barna Group, "2015 Sees Sharp Rise in Post-Christian Population," August 12, 2015, https://www.barna.com/research/2015-sees-sharp-rise-in-post-christian-population/. To qualify as "post-Christian," individuals had to meet nine or more of the following factors: do not believe in God, identify as atheist or agnostic, disagree that faith is important in their lives, have not prayed to God (in the last year), have never made a commitment to Jesus, disagree the Bible is accurate, have not donated money to a church (in the last year), have not attended a Christian church (in the last year), agree that Jesus committed sins, do not feel a responsibility to "share their faith", have not read the Bible (in the last week), have not volunteered at church (in the last week), have not attended Sunday school (in the last week), have not attended religious small group (in the last week), do not participate in a house church (in the last year).

[12] Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape," May 12, 2015, http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/.

[13] David Olson notes that the church in America is losing its cultural significance and has been unable to keep pace with population growth. Olson states that between 1990 and 2006 the population of the

The SBC in Decline

      Southern Baptist Churches, representing the largest Protestant denomination in the US, have experienced the effects of America's post-Christian trajectory. In 2014, Kevin Ezell, president of the SBC's North American Mission Board (NAMB), echoed the concern of a looming post-Christian America and the church's inability keep pace with population growth: "In 1900, there was one Southern Baptist church for every 3,800 people in North America. Today, that number is one for every 6,200."[14]

      In 2017, Chuck Kelley, President of The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS), commented, "The SBC is in the midst of a decline that shows no signs of either slowing down or turning around."[15] Kelley's comments were based on a review of the 2016 Annual Church Profile (ACP), which indicated that, despite adding 479 churches, Southern Baptist churches overall reported fewer baptisms, fewer members, and fewer members attending worship services compared to the previous year.[16]

      To further punctuate his concerns, Kelley offered a graphic representing the number of SBC churches and the total reported baptism spanning the years from the SBC's founding to the present. The graphic depicted steady growth in numbers of churches and baptisms until the early 1940s, with a relatively stable baptisms per church ratio.

United States grew by 52 million persons. This increase alone is approximately equal to the total number of persons attending church on any given weekend in 2006. David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 35.

    [14] Kevin Ezell, "Breathing New Life into Dying Churches," *Southern Seminary Magazine*, Summer 2014, 32. Ezell also notes that while the US church:population ratio was 1:2,722 in the south, the numbers in the northeast (1:36,998), west (15:885),and Canada (1:117,925) indicate a widening overall negative trend. Kevin Ezell, "Breathing New Life into Dying Churches," in *A Guide to Church Revitalization*, ed. R. Albert Mohler (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2015), 13.

    [15] Chuck Kelley, "The State of the SBC," June 8, 2017, http://www.drchuckkelley.com/2017/06/08/sbc-state/.

    [16] While the number of churches increased by 1 percent, baptisms decreased by 4.9 percent (280,773 total), membership declined by .5 percent (to 15.2 million), and members attending weekly dropped by 6.75 percent (to 5.2 million weekly). Carol Pipes, "ACP: Churches Up in 2016; Baptisms, Membership Decline," *Baptist Press*, June 8, 2017, http://www.bpnews.net/49005/acp--churches-up-in-2016-baptisms-membership-decline.

While growth in the number of churches continued after 1940, baptism numbers began to fluctuate. Between 1943 and 1959, the number of baptisms rose dramatically, maintaining these high levels until 1987 when the baptisms per church ratio returned to 1943 levels. Baptisms per church remained steady after 1987 until 2000 when baptisms per church declined dramatically. Since that time, the number of churches has increased steadily, and the number of baptisms per year has declined precipitously with no indication of an imminent change.[17] Kelley concludes his assessment of the SBC's decline:

> Discipleship is at the root of our struggles. SBC churches must find strategies to help their people look and live like Jesus in observable ways. Every strategy for evangelism from the first century until today assumes the life with Jesus is different from the life without Jesus. We must live distinctively if we are to be fruitful in reaching people for Christ. There will be no growth in evangelism without a growth in Christlikeness in how Southern Baptists live.[18]

NAMB reports that an average of 17 SBC churches close their doors every week. As many as 90 percent of all SBC churches are in danger, with up to 75 percent already experiencing a plateau or are in decline, and another 15 percent are at risk of joining them. Only 10 to 15 percent of all SBC churches are considered healthy.[19]

The Future of Discipleship

The task before the church can appear daunting, and intentionality is necessary to participate in God's activity to revitalize Christ's bride. Faithful adherence to Scripture and the application of biblical wisdom will be necessary if the church is to engage the culture both inside and outside the church faithfully.

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[17] Kelley, "The State of the SBC," figure 1, "Number of SBC Churches vs Baptisms Per Year (1883-2016).

[18] Kelley, "The State of the SBC." Thom Rainer, Lifeway President and CEO, agrees with Kelley's assessment. Commenting on the decline in baptism numbers for several years, states, "It's clear that evangelism and discipleship are waning." Thom Rainer, quoted in Pipes, "ACP: Churches Up in 2016."

[19] North American Mission Board, "Church Planting: What Is Replanting?" accessed March 10, 2018, https://www.namb.net/church-replanting.

At the close of *The State of Discipleship*, Barna's researchers suggest that three dominant macro-trends be considered regarding future discipleship efforts. The trends were given descriptive names and include the *screen age*, the *distracted era*, and the *shift to self*.

The *screen age* refers to the digital era, which is "creating a new cultural context for and intensifying the pressures facing the Church."[20] Technology has the potential to both support and detract from discipleship, but in either case "there's little doubt [technology is] changing the rules of spiritual formation."[21]

The second macro-trend is the *distracted era*. Anecdotal experience requires little support from research to validate the perception that "people are busier than ever with things like kids' sports, increased workloads, and recreation and leisure activities. Humans simply are over-choiced with ways to spend their time."[22] As a consequence, the definition of "regular churchgoer" has changed significantly, with persons attending church "fewer weekends per year" and consequently becoming "less involved in their faith community's rhythm of communal life."[23]

The final macro-trend affecting discipleship is a *shift to self*, which is "the rise of the individual as the center of everything."[24] According to the report,

> 84% of adults in the U.S. and 66% of practicing Christians agree that "the highest goal for life is to enjoy it as much as possible." 91% of adults and 76% of practicing Christians believe that "the best way to find yourself is to look inside yourself." 97% of adults and 91% of practicing Christians agree that "you have to be true to yourself."[25]

Barna's report concludes with a sobering summary of the task at hand for those who engage discipleship in contemporary American church culture: "If we peel back the

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[20] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 13.

[21] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 13.

[22] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 13-14.

[23] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 14.

[24] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 14.

[25] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 14.

layers, many Christians are using the Way of Jesus as a means of pursuing the Way of Self. Our discipleship efforts must prophetically respond to the "iSpirit" of the age; people must not only convert to become a disciple of Jesus, but also de-convert from the religion of Self."[26] This summary suggests that, for many, becoming a Christ-follower and finding identity, purpose, and meaning outside of one's self, represent two distinct processes. This bifurcation creates tension, and the Christ-follower may relegate the community of faith to a position of secondary importance, or of no importance in their own mind. Such a view of the church, unless countered by a work of the Spirit and the intentional cooperation of the church to produce a redeemed cultural perspective, will inevitably lead to a decline in corporate faith participation. Both churches and individual Christians will continue to lose vitality, either due to a loss of sanctifying community or through the compromise of biblical priorities in order to meet the demands of ever more consumeristic Christians.

Current Status of the Problem

Adam Cohen, commenting on the state of Protestantism in contemporary culture and the tensions between individualistic and collectivistic tendencies, notes,

> At the dawn of the 21st century, despite a moderate resurgence in Evangelical Christianity, the culture has moved into a post-Christian era. For the first time, religious Protestants find themselves a counter-cultural minority within a secular, materialist landscape. In this context, even the most independent of Church traditions are recovering an appreciation for more social notions of religion. Even so, American individualism remains a powerful and ubiquitous force in popular culture that obscures our understanding of the more collectivist notions of religious motivations.[27]

Three years later, Adam Cohen and Peter Hull's research determined that "religious cultures vary in individualistic and collectivistic aspects of religiousness and spirituality."[28] Their findings support the prevailing descriptions of American

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[26] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 14.

[27] Adam B. Cohen et al., "Social versus Individual Motivation: Implications for Normative Definitions of Religious Orientation," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 9, no. 1 (2005): 58.

[28] Adam B. Cohen and Peter C. Hull, "Religion as Culture: Religious Individualism and Collectivism among American Catholics, Jews, and Protestants," *Journal of Personality* 75, no. 4 (August 2007): 709. The research behind this report includes four questionnaire-based studies. Study 1 considered

Protestantism, including the sub-cultural characteristic that Protestants are more

individualistic than Catholics and exceedingly more individualistic than Jews. Protestants'

life-changing experiences are more likely to focus on a personal encounter with God.[29]

To the best of their knowledge, the authors report that their research is "the first clear

evidence that American Jews and Catholics resonate more with collectivistic aspects of

religion and spirituality than do Protestants."[30] Fundamental to this thesis is their

conclusion that "differences in religious groups can be understood as differences in

culture."[31]

Edgar Schein, an established authority in the field of leadership and

organizational change, defines culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned

by a group as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, which

has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members

as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."[32] Schein's

definition is helpful for understanding the pervasive and self-perpetuating nature of cultural

syndromes within groups. Culture is a construct that impacts the whole person (perception,

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community through sampling of Jews ($n = 88$) and Protestants ($n = 72$) from faith communities in Pennsylvania. Study 2 investigated the interrelationship between religiousness, spirituality, and salience of religious identity ($n = 1,364$). The third study rated intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, and the degree of appropriate motivation for religion ($n = 335$). The final study involved an internet sample of Catholics, Jews and Protestants describing meaningful religious experiences ($n = 126$).

[29] Cohen and Hull, "Religion as Culture," 735.

[30] Cohen and Hull, "Religion as Culture," 736. The emphasis of this thesis examines the interplay between personal faith, self-accrual, and corporate expression. Salvific faith is understood to be a personal reality with both individual and corporate manifestations and consequences. Becoming united as a member of a local church, the local expression of the body of Christ, presupposes a prerequisite union of the individual with Christ Himself. For a helpful discussion, using adoption as a contextual construct. See J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 15-34.

[31] Cohen and Hull, "Religion as Culture," 736. While Cohen and Hull apply their findings at the denominational level, I assert that cultural nuances are present at the congregational (collective) and personal (individual) levels as well.

[32] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 18.

cognition, and emotion) and acts as both a lens and filter through which persons discern and engage reality.

Harry Triandis provides helpful general definitions of the cultural syndromes this thesis intends to investigate. Triandis defines individualism as

a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives; are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasize rational analysis of the advantages and disadvantages to associating with others.[33]

By contrast, Triandis defines collectivism as

a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribe, nation); are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by, these collectives; are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals; and emphasize their connectedness to members of their collectives.[34]

The tension between these two cultural syndromes manifests itself in the lives of persons and their respective groups in a myriad of ways. For example, Brian Croft, pastor of Auburndale Baptist Church in Louisville, and Senior Fellow at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Mathena Center for Church Revitalization, believes that meaningful church membership is an essential precursor to church revitalization. Croft explains, "Meaningful membership reminds Christians that walking with Jesus in our daily life must not be done alone. We need each other. We need to be responsible to one another."[35]

Croft also believes that unity, especially expressed intergenerationally through corporate worship, is likewise essential for revitalization to occur.[36] Holley Allen and Christine Ross attribute the high level of age segregation characteristic of American

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[33] Harry Charalambus Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism: New Directions in Social Psychology* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 2.

[34] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 2.

[35] Brian Croft, "Clear the Runway: Preparing Your Church for Revitalization," in Mohler, *A Guide to Church Revitalization*, 29.

[36] Croft, "Clear the Runway," 30-31.

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Christianity to the church's syncretism with American individualism, resulting in an individualistic soteriology that "diminishes the communal aspect of salvation."[37] They conclude, "The excessive individualism of the secular Western culture is fundamentally incompatible with the life of community as depicted in Scripture."[38]

Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, in their work *Comeback Churches*,[39] echo Croft's concern regarding meaningful membership, noting that 53 percent of comeback churches actually "raised the requirements of church membership, challenging people to live out the privileges and responsibilities of the covenant community described in scripture."[40] The authors affirm the importance of vital biblical community, noting, "Intentionally connecting people in community is not an option for the church. It's a biblical mandate— the essence of what it means to be the body of Jesus Christ."[41]

Bill Hull opens *The Complete Book of Discipleship* by suggesting that "non-discipleship 'Christianity' dominates much of the thinking of the contemporary church . . . caus[ing] the church to assimilate itself into the culture."[42] Hull's strong critique of the devastating consequences of syncretism between American culture and the biblical gospel suggests that many individuals are following another gospel, an "American gospel [which] is predominantly activist rather than contemplative and usually moves toward

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[37] Holley Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, "Why Churches Tend to Separate the Generations," *Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 3, no. 2 (January 2013): 9. Allen and Ross's assertion is that individualistic soteriology results in understanding salvation as merely an individual experience without greater consequence.

[38] Allen and Ross, "Why Churches Tend to Separate the Generations," 11.

[39] Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H, 2007). The text is based upon research involving survey responses from 324 churches representing nine denominations.

[40] Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 124. The authors also note that 93.2 percent of comeback churches added a new member's class, and one-third required signing a church covenant.

[41] Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 151.

[42] Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 16.

individualism rather than community."[43] The church is evermore reshaped into a reflection of American individualism and consumerism. Hull pushes back against this trend of cultural conformity, asserting, "Consumer discipleship is an oxymoron. . . . In general, Christians have a heart to serve Christ, but they behave in a way that says, 'It's all about me.'"[44]

Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation's *Transformational Discipleship*[45] pushes deeper into the notion of culture, focusing primarily on appropriate context and perspective as the necessary precursors of biblical discipleship.[46] They suggest that a transformational framework must be centered on "the intersection of truth given by healthy leaders to someone in a vulnerable position."[47] This disposition toward vulnerability, of biblically appropriate humility, confronts and challenges a person's individualistic tendencies, making the application of truth effectual for transformation. They explain, "While God changes people through His truth, people are most likely to receive the transformative truth of God when they are in a vulnerable posture. . . transformation often occurs when disciples are in a posture of weakness, interdependence, and/or with an outward focus."[48]

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[43] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 41.

[44] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 255.

[45] Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville: B & H, 2012). The text is based upon a three-phase study. Phase 1 involved a qualitative survey of twenty-eight recognized experts in the field of discipleship. Phase 2 involved the surveying of one thousand Protestant pastors in the US. The final phase included interviews with four thousand American Protestants.

[46] Geiger discourages the use of their findings for modeling purposes, stating, "The church's proclivity for models alarmingly reveals our shallowness. . . . We believe that transformation across all church models can occur by tapping into the right principles." See Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 60.

[47] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 65.

[48] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 132.

Geiger, Kelley, and Nation's research indicates that transformative outcomes often result when disciples are placed in postures of weakness,[49] suggesting that God uses suffering (Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-7; Rom 8:18), opposition (Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:13), and overwhelming circumstances[50] to produce transformative outcomes in His people. This posture manifests itself both individually and collectively, with Geiger noting that self-identified disciple-makers

> overwhelmingly declared that transformation best occurs when a believer is in an interdependent posture with other believers. . . . [Respondents] were deeply concerned that the timeless truth of maturation in community is subtly being replaced with an American individualistic approach to spiritual growth that constantly promises roots that go deeper without roots that widen into relationships that intermingle.[51]

Geiger takes this concern so seriously that he calls upon discipleship leaders to "slaughter individualism rather than celebrate it,"[52] and to encourage vital community.[53]

Fred Rothbaum et al. provide helpful insights into the differing paths of personal development resulting in the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism. Considering the United States and Japan as representative of individualism and collectivism respectively, Rothbaum et al. consider attachment theory and empirical research related to human nurturing to explain how differences in self-concept are developed and perpetuated within individualism and collectivism. Particularly

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[49] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation write, "The most overwhelming interviews with believers concerning seasons of intense spiritual growth affirms that God uses trials, pain, and suffering to lovingly put His own into a posture of weakness resulting in deep transformation." See Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 133.

[50] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation explain, "Actually, God will give you more than you can handle in your own strength. In His goodness He will allow life to overwhelm you so that you will humbly need His strength and wisdom." Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 141.

[51] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 159.

[52] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 159.

[53] The aspect of God's involvement in revitalization through unplanned and unwanted experiences pushes against definitions of church revitalization, which exclusively consider intentional efforts by leaders to produce organizational change. Geiger's research indicates that an important aspect of revitalization may be the development of an interdependency, an appropriate biblical context of faith and community from which to understand and persevere through difficult circumstances which will inevitably and providentially occur. See Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 157-74.

enlightening is Rothbaum's finding that individualism culminates with "a *trust* in relationships which, ironically, 'helps people out of committed relationships' and into new ones versus *assurance* about relationships—a role-based, socially supported sense of commitment."[54] If individualism produces a tendency toward replacing rather than maintaining enduring relationships, the result of individualism is a cultural detriment to biblical discipleship and stunting of the formation of authoritative community.

The term *authoritative community* is coined by The Commission on Children at Risk. The commission identified a lack of connectedness, including both a lack of "close connections to other people and deep connections to moral spiritual meaning" as the primary causes of psychological disorders among American adolescents.[55] In their report, "Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities," the commission cites neuroscientific evidence and attachment theory to conclude that the "human child is 'hardwired to connect.'"[56] Historically, the need for communities of connectedness has been met by social institutions.[57] However, these institutions have grown significantly weaker over recent decades,[58] resulting in a state of crisis. *Authoritative communities* describe their proposed corrective to the crisis: "Authoritative communities are groups of people who are committed to one another over time and who model and pass on at least part of what it means to be a good person and live a good life. Renewing

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[54] Fred Rothbaum et al., "The Development of Close Relationships in Japan and the United States: Paths of Symbiotic Harmony and Generative Tension," *Child Development* 71, no. 5 (October 2000): 1125, emphasis original.

[55] Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities," 2003, http://americanvalues.org/catalog/pdfs/hwexsumm.pdf, 1.

[56] Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect," 2. The commission's report is based on interdisciplinary deliberations and conferences, a comprehensive literature review, and the evaluation of eighteen commissioned papers by a panel of thirty-three children's doctors, research scientists and mental health and youth service professionals.

[57] The report defines social institutions as groups of people organized around certain purposes. See Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect," 1.

[58] Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect," 2.

and building them is the key to improving the lives of U.S. children and adolescents."[59]

Their report concludes that nothing less than fundamental changes to American society

will remedy the situation.

Kathleen Beagles applied the Commission of Children at Risk report in her

development of a model of adolescent spiritual growth and discipleship.[60] Confirmatory

factor analysis "revealed that the correlation between the latent variables 'Discipleship'

and 'Connecting' . . . was so high as to suggest that these two factors were not distinct."[61]

Ultimately, the term *discipleship* in her model was replaced with the phrase *Connecting*

*with God and Other*s. Beagles applied these findings to the Commission on Children at

Risk, suggesting that the church is the ideal context for the development of authoritative

community.[62]

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of the cultural syndromes

of individualism and collectivism upon church leaders' perspectives of revitalization

through discipleship.

Methodological Overview

An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used, involving the

collection of quantitative data, followed by an explanatory qualitative phase.[63]

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[59] Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect," 2.

[60] Kathleen Beagles, "Growing Disciples in Community," *Christian Education Journal* series 3, 9, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 153. Beagles' method tested The Growing Discipleship in Community Model using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) with data from 8,284 original study participants.

[61] Beagles, "Growing Disciples in Community," 153.

[62] Beagles, "Growing Disciples in Community," 155.

[63] This research is one component of a larger study involving multiple aspects of church revitalization. Phases 1 and 2 were conducted in conjunction with other members of the research pod. Phases 3 and 4 were conducted to further explore my particular emphasis. All of the research instruments

In phase 1, the research began with a quantitative phase of study. A sample of churches meeting a series of qualifying metrics describing revitalized churches was identified.[64]

In phase 2, churches meeting qualification criteria received an invitation to participate in a survey instrument, hosted on SurveyMonkey.com, which asked a series of questions regarding the church's revitalization experience.

In phase 3, respondents to the phase 2 survey who agreed to participate in further research received an invitation to participate in another survey instrument. This survey included the Triandis-Gelfand Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism Scale,[65] which assessed the respondent in four aspects of individualism and collectivism.[66] This assessment instrument, implementing a nine-point Likert scale, was also hosted on SurvetMonkey.com. Phase 3 respondents' assessed levels of individualism-collectivism was compared to personal responses collected in phase 2. Responses were analyzed to discern patterns of perspective among revitalization leaders based on their instrument scores. The results of this analysis were also used to select church leaders that agreed to participate in further research for phase 4 interviews.

In phase 4, a sample of twelve respondents were secured from the selection list developed in phase 3 to be interviewed regarding their revitalization experience. In this

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used were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

[64] Details of these qualifying metrics are provided in chap. 3 of this thesis.

[65] Also referred to as the Cultural Orientation Scale. See Harry Charalambus Triandis and Michele J. Gelfand, "Converging Measurement of Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74, no. 1 (1998): 118-28. This scale is an improvement upon a thirty-two-item scale to which the author's contributed previously. See T. M. Singelis et al., "Horizontal and Vertical Dimensions of Individualism and Collectivism: A Theoretical and Measurement Refinement," *Cross-Cultural Research* 29 (1995): 240-75.

[66] The nature of the instrument calls for personal responses, making this assessment specific to the church leader and not necessarily reflective of the faith community they lead. The instrument provides scores assessing the responding church leader in each of four dimensions of collectivism and individualism (VC, VI, HC, and HI).

explanatory follow-up, the subjective impact of initiatives and events deemed contributory to the church's revitalization by the revitalization pastor were further explored. Interview responses were assessed and described in terms of the leaders' individualistic or collectivistic tendencies. Revitalization pastors were interviewed by means of online video conferencing. Qualitative data collected in phase 4 was analyzed to uncover themes representing these church leaders' experiences of revitalization.

Research Questions

The proposed research was a combination of quantitative instruments and qualitative interviews to answer the following questions related to individualism-collectivism and church leaders' experiences of revitalization through discipleship.

1. What percentage of SBC churches are plateaued or declining?

2. Of those churches which have experienced a decline, what percentage have experienced revitalization?

3. What influence does a revitalization pastor's socio-cultural orientation have upon subjective measures of church revitalization?

4. What influence do revitalization pastors believe key theology expressions have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?

5. What influence do revitalization pastors believe key elements of meaningful membership have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?

6. What influence do revitalization pastors believe key programmatic elements have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?

7. What influence do revitalization pastors believe crisis and opposition have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?

8. What advice would revitalization pastors give to others seeking to revitalize their church?

Conclusion

The precedent literature indicates that churches in general, and SBC churches in particular, are in need of revitalization. The literature also argues that this lack of vitality in the American church is largely due to a lack of vitality among members who are influenced by the overarching cultural syndrome of American individualism. This cultural

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syndrome impacts the individual's understanding of themselves, perspective on reality, and tendencies regarding a myriad of attitudes and interactions. As a result of individualism's impact, faith communities are destabilized and personal sanctification is truncated.

Chapter 2 of this thesis provides a more comprehensive look at the church's need for revitalization, the socio-cultural soil of individualism in which the church in America is called to grow, and the character of community the church is called to embody. Any progress in understanding and overcoming the cultural syndrome of American individualism represents a movement toward a more appropriate biblical context for Christian life, both individually and corporately.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF PRECEDENT LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of the precedent literature has created a sense of both necessity and immensity for me. A sense of immensity is derived from a recognition that the implications of the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism are vast and pervasive, impacting the concept of self, structuring perceptions of reality, and establishing contextual frameworks for relationships. Despite these implications, the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism constructs go largely unrecognized until questioned. Like fish swimming in water, people go about their lives being shaped by the perspective of their culture of origin, which, until questioned, seems like nothing more than an expression of the universal way of things.

A sense of necessity comes from a strong curiosity regarding the effect that American individualism may have upon an understanding of personhood, biblical community, and discipleship. A glance of the precedent literature appears to indicate that American individualism represents an inherently detrimental force against developing and imaging the unity among Christ's followers for which He prayed.[1] Simply "doing life

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[1] John 17:20-23 says,

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

together" as a collocation of individuals is far from unity and the resultant biblical community.[2]

Bill Hull states, "If we're reborn, we'll follow him—unless we're taught that we don't need to."[3] Research and anecdotal evidence on the state of discipleship in precedent literature would seem to indicate that many contemporary Christians must be receiving a message that being a Christian does not involve Christ-following. At the same time, Christians overwhelmingly believe that their local churches are doing a good job of providing discipleship opportunities. Where are Christians receiving a message that good discipleship instruction and non-discipleship practice are compatible?

Such a question seems ridiculous until considered in light of Geiger, Kelley, and Nation's "Transformations Sweet Spot" and its assertion that the posture of the disciple is crucial for biblical outcomes to become realized.[4] Further reading on the subject has overwhelmingly attributed the development of Americans' understanding of self, community, and discipleship to the cultural syndrome of American individualism. American individualism results in a perspective that is at least partially responsible for teaching disciples that they do not need to follow Jesus. This insight propelled my current inquiry, believing that a greater understanding of the effects of individualism on

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[2] Some, having questioned the necessity of this research, respond that the corrective can be summed up as simply "doing life together." However, such a simplistic response can be problematic. Contradictory messages of individualism and collectivism are often seamlessly mixed. Recently, I heard a pastor encourage his congregation with the thought that "Jesus came to save us from self and into the kingdom of God." He then used this point to encourage participation in church small groups, which he described as a place where "no one will judge you and you can come and go as you please." The latter statement is a strong reflection of the cultural syndrome of individualism, conflicting with the self-denial called for by Christ and the pastor's suggestion that Jesus came to save people from just such a perspective of self.

[3] Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 17. Taking a similar posture, Dietrich Bonhoeffer described Christianity as an adherence to the living Christ so complete that discipleship is the necessary consequence. See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 64.

[4] Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 65.

discipleship would result in a greater understanding of individualism's effects upon church revitalization.

Literature Review

This literature review will begin with a consideration of The Great Commission and Christ's command to His followers that they engage in intentional disciple-making. This consideration will be followed by a survey of literature related to church revitalization and empirical studies related to the effects of the cultural syndrome of individualism. Finally, literature describing the current state of discipleship in America, with an emphasis on the detrimental effects of individualism, will be surveyed.

A description of the state of the church and individualism's effect upon discipleship will provide context for comparison. A brief discussion of the concept of culture and the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism will be followed by a comparison of representative characteristics of each syndrome. This general discussion will then be further focused to consider the historical development and attributes of American individualism with emphasis on American religious individualism.

The last section of this review will briefly consider the biblical imagery of the New Testament church with an emphasis on the concept of *koinonia*. Implications regarding the nature and character of individual Christians and collective faith communities, as described in Scripture, will also be considered.

The result of this literature review will be a clearer understanding of the tension between American individualism and Scripture with regard to fundamental personhood and community. By noting the detrimental effects of the prevailing American culture upon individual Christians and the church, it will be asserted that those efforts and events that result in a church becoming more collectivistic in culture and praxis will produce a more biblically-appropriate context for the life of the disciple, personally and corporately,

producing church revitalization.[5] A resulting research hypothesis that churches which experience revitalization do so by overcoming elements of American individualism will then be examined to see if there is merit to this assertion.

The Great Commission and Discipleship

After His resurrection and before His ascension to the Father, Jesus met with His followers for one last statement of mission.[6] In Matthew's gospel, Jesus' final words to His followers communicated an authoritative call to action: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:18b-20).

Evangelism and discipleship. While the text undoubtedly includes aspects of evangelism, the primary emphasis of the passage argues for intentional discipleship of those who have already made an initial response to the gospel. The term translated "make disciples" ($\mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\epsilon\acute{u}\sigma\alpha\tau\epsilon$) is a unique expression, used only four times in the New Testament. A form of the word is used in Acts 14:21,[7] being translated "made many disciples." This phrase is preceded in verse by the phrase "preached the gospel"

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[5] It is not asserted that becoming fully collectivistic is an appropriate or even possible response. Both cultural syndromes have their unbiblical tendencies for which they need the gospel to penetrate and redeem them. The argument presented is that, starting from a cultural perspective that is highly individualistic, a move toward collectivism would represent an opportunity for a church subculture to move in a direction more consistent with the demands of Scripture, producing a relatively more vital experience for all.

[6] Military personnel consider this type of briefing as expressing "commander's intent." What is the overriding objective? When all planning becomes questionable in the heat of battle, what should be the focus of mission that guides actions? The Great Commission would seem to indicate that being a faithful disciple who engages in making faithful disciples in community would qualify as just such a commander's intent.

[7] Acts 14:21 says, "When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch."

(εὐαγγελίζεσΟαι), indicating that evangelism and disciple-making are two related but different activities.[8]

Craig Keener suggests that Christ's Great Commission is a single "imperative surrounded by three subordinate participial clauses—which is to say, one command that is carried out in three ways."[9] According to Keener, the means of accomplishing the command of making disciples at a minimum involves "going," "baptizing," and "teaching."[10]

Personal and corporate. Jacques Matthey notes that the Great Commission's baptismal formulation "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." is uniquely and overtly Trinitarian (Matt 28:19b). He suggests that this formulation implies that baptism has both personal and corporate aspects. Participating in baptism indicates that the new disciple is being initiated into, and will actively participate in, a faith community. Matthey writes, "The mention of baptism in 28:19 implies that to be a disciple means to be a member of a clearly defined people, the Church, with its structures, a certain institutionalization, a tradition, and a specific lifestyle either from the ethical or from the material point of view."[11]

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[8] Jacques Matthey notes the other two Matthean uses in 13:52 where a teacher of the law "has become a disciple" and in 27:57 where the rich man "who has become a disciple" asked Pilot for Christ's body. Matthey adds, "Both acts are courageous in such a troubled political situation. We find here the commitment aspect of discipleship, the open testimony that one is a follower of Jesus." Jacques Matthey, "The Great Commission according to Matthew," *International Review of Mission* 69, no. 274 (April 1980): 168.

[9] Craig S. Keener, "Matthew's Missiology: Making Disciples of the Nations (Matthew 28:19-20)," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12, no. 1 (January 2009): 3.

[10] Keener acknowledges that the original construction allows for "going" to be part of the command "make disciples," thereby reducing the means of fulfillment to baptizing and teaching. This does not detract from the command, other than to make disciple-making an ongoing command to be fulfilled in whatever locality Christians finds themselves. Keener, "Matthew's Missiology," 3.

[11] Matthey, "The Great Commission according to Matthew," 170.

Authority and submission. In addition to community participation, Christians are commanded to submit to instruction intended to enable the disciple to be obedient to all of Christ's teaching. Hull observes two aspects of submission within Christ's command. First is a submission by the new disciple to declare their faith by being baptized publicly. The second involves the submission of the new disciple to the process of learning and living out the transformation that the Holy Spirit is performing in their life.[12] This second submission also requires the simultaneous submission of at least one other person as a disciple-maker, each simultaneously obeying their Lord's command in the Great Commission to be a teacher and, by implication, to be taught.

The Great Commission represents a command given within a larger statement of authority. Jesus prefaces His command with the statement that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt 28:18b). This brings encouragement for those who obediently engage in discipleship and disciple-making, recognizing that the one who has all authority is "with [them] always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20b). Conversely, a lack of participation as a disciple and as a disciple-maker represents a rejection of Christ's authority in heaven and earth. Jesus' direct context is to command his followers' participation based on His authority, with a secondary context of protection and encouragement to those who faithfully obey His command. Matthey notes, "There can be no doubt for any reader of Matthew's Gospel that Christians are called to make disciples of the kingdom."[13]

There would be a palpable sense of vitality within churches today if followers of Christ obediently engaged in authentic community as active disciples and obedient disciple-makers. Discipleship within the active community would not be viewed as a program or an ancillary attachment but would represent the very core of what it means to

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[12] Hull recognizes aspects of accountability and submission to others' instruction as a requirement for learning to occur. Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 29.

[13] Matthey, "The Great Commission according to Matthew," 168.

be a Christian. Unfortunately, this is not the case. In terms of church vitality, the church in America is in decline and lacks vitality.[14] The Great Commission can hardly be central to the contemporary church's identity when Barna Group reports that 51 percent of churchgoers have never heard of the Great Commission, and another 31 percent are either unsure or cannot recall what it means.[15]

Individualism and Church Revitalization

Brian Croft, pastor of Auburndale Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, and Senior Fellow at the SBTS Mathena Center for Church Revitalization, believes there are five crucial areas to consider when navigating a process of church revitalization. These considerations include authority, leadership, membership, unity, and worship.[16] It is significant to note that all five of these considerations involve interpersonal interaction and relationships among members. Reflecting on the importance of vital church membership, Croft suggests that "meaningful membership reminds Christians that walking with Jesus in our daily life must not be done alone. We need each other. We need to be responsible to one another. Membership provides the structure for this community life that is found all throughout the New Testament."[17]

[14] NAMB reports that an average of seventeen SBC churches close their doors every week. As many as 90 percent of all SBC churches are in danger of joining them, with up to 75 percent either plateaued or in decline, and another 15 percent at risk of joining them. Only 10 to 15 percent of all SBC churches are considered healthy. See NAMB, "Church Planting: What Is Replanting?" accessed March 10, 2018, https://www.namb.net/church-replanting.

[15] It is important to note that Barna's survey assessed familiarity with terms and not their underlying concepts. This being acknowledged, it can be argued that an emphasis on such a central issue would produce a familiarity with standard terms related to the subject. Barna performed qualitative interviews with 2,633 individuals, asking, "Have you heard of the Great Commission?" Fifty-one percent replied "no," 25 percent seemed to recall the term but could not explain the concept. Six percent were unsure they had ever heard the term. Only 17 percent were familiar with the passage. See Barna Group, "51% of Churchgoers Don't Know of the Great Commission," March 27, 2018, https://www.barna.com/research/half-churchgoers-not-heard-great-commission/.

[16] Brian Croft, "Clear the Runway: Preparing Your Church for Revitalization," in *A Guide to Church Revitalization*, ed. R. Albert Mohler, Jr (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2015), 26-31.

[17] Croft, "Clear the Runway," 29.

Croft continues by suggesting that unity, especially expressed intergenerationally through corporate worship, is essential for church revitalization.[18] Holley Allen and Christine Ross believe that the high level of age segregation that characterizes American Christianity, and which Croft implies would indicate a lack of revitalizing unity, reflects the church's emulation of American culture. Allen and Ross see age segregation as indicative of the church's adoption of individualism, resulting in the privatization of faith: "One such influence on the onset of age segregation in the church is the dominant cultural ideology of individualism . . . evidence of which is seen in worship wars between generations, but is also revealed in an individualistic soteriological stance that diminishes the communal aspect of salvation."[19] Allen and Ross conclude, "The excessive individualism of the secular Western culture is fundamentally incompatible with the life of community as depicted in Scripture."[20] Foundational community-creating events, such as the Exodus, Jewish feast days, and Pentecost, are impossible to experience in isolation.

Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, in their work *Comeback Churches*, acknowledge the fundamentally covenantal and communal nature of the church as described in Scripture: "Biblically, the church is not comprised of some who are in covenant community and some who are not."[21] Scripture presents the church as comprised of members who actively

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[18] Croft, "Clear the Runway," 30-31.

[19] Holley Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, "Why Churches Tend to Separate the Generations," *Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 3, no. 2 (January 2013): 9. The authors suggest that the application of McGavran's Homogeneous Units Principle for church growth, developed in the collectivistic cultural context of India castes and applied in an individualistic American culture, resulted in churches forming generational cohorts. See Allen and Ross, "Why Churches Tend to Separate," 10-11. See also Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).

[20] Allen and Ross, "Why Churches Tend to Separate," 11. The authors suggest that foundational experiences which define and heighten a sense of community require elements of community to exist in advance of the event. Community building requires communal experiences.

[21] Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H, 2007), 3. The work is based on a mixed-methods, quan-qual study involving 324 churches identified as experiencing significant growth through conversion.

engage in covenantal community. Stetzer and Dodson note that 53 percent of comeback churches "raised the requirements of church membership, challenging people to live out the privileges and responsibilities of the covenant community described in scripture."[22] Of thirty barriers to programmatic growth through evangelism provided by their text, nine hindering factors express a clear individualistic perspective.[23]

Comeback Churches suggests that, in order to experience revitalization, churches require personal and corporate spiritual energy, missional restructuring, and long-term commitment to change, implemented "in an ongoing process of personal and corporate repentance and revitalization, keeping their focus on mission."[24] The importance placed on simultaneously addressing both individual and corporate aspects of revitalization speaks to the dual nature of discipleship. Stetzer and Dodson believe that the link between conversion and community is so fundamental that aspects of community precede and may be fundamental to conversion: "With few exceptions, people come to Christ in steps, and those steps usually involve conversation and community with believers. There really are two conversions—first to community . . . and then to Christ."[25] They later note, "Intentionally connecting people in community is not an option for the church. It's a biblical mandate—the essence of what it means to be the body of Jesus Christ."[26] Toward this end, they recommend the development of small groups of discipleship to create a

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[22] Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 124. The authors also note that 93.2 percent of comeback churches added a new member's class, and one-third required signing a church covenant. See Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 124. Their work suggests that a return to aspects of biblical community are necessary for revitalization to occur.

[23] These factors include believing the church is just for them, pastors more concerned about self-interests, people work for their own honor, people think of prayer, giving and fasting as being for themselves, lack of unity, lack of love, and people substituting self-made religion for biblical religion. See Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 12-13.

[24] Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 54.

[25] Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 120.

[26] Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 151.

context of closeness and togetherness, suggesting that community building represents

aspects of both cause and effect regarding conversion and vitality.

In *From Embers to Flame*, Harry Reeder recounts his experience as pastor of a

church in need of revitalization. As a result of his own personal Bible study, Reeder came

to understand Revelation 2 as a case study of the revitalization of the church at Ephesus.

Reeder, offering a "remember, repent, and recover" paradigm for church revitalization,

comments,

> If ever there was a church that went from a flame to embers, it was Ephesus. Jesus
> did not say that the church was without hope nor did he say it should be closed
> down. Instead, he provided for us a paradigm for revitalization. He told us that a
> body of believers can arrest its decline and go back from embers to a flame if its
> leadership will teach it simply to remember, repent, and recover.[27]

Brandon Conner expands upon Reeder's study by enlarging the scope of considerations

in his dissertation "Church Revitalization: Insights from the Ministry of the Apostle

Paul." In his work, Conner sought to "develop a biblical and theological understanding of

church health by examining Paul's ministry via his letters and extracting principles

leading to the revitalization so desperately needed in American churches today."[28]

Connor's work is organized around McGavran's three-factor sets of church growth:

contextual factors (understanding a church's unique social context), institutional factors

(knowing and loving the church), and spiritual factors (the unique works of God).[29] Of

particular significance is Conner's emphasis on institutional unity. Citing Ajith Fernando,

Connor notes the tendency of Christians who

> are often too quick to abandon their church, organization, small group, friend, or
> spouse when the going gets tough. People would rather split than go through the
> frustrations of working through the problems. This tendency results in shallow
> relationships, which in turn result in minimal depth to the fruit of their labors. In

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[27] Harry L. Reeder and David Swavely, *From Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004), 31.

[28] Brandon Edward Conner, "Church Revitalization: Insights from the Ministry of the Apostle Paul" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 13-14.

[29] Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 19.

fact, learning to pay the price of commitment is a key to developing deep fruit in ministry anywhere in the world.[30]

Individualism-Collectivism Research

Nearly three decades ago, C. Kirk Hadaway published findings of his empirical research on church revitalization.[31] His results demonstrated that performing an assessment of just eleven characteristics of a given church will predict that church's revitalization status (stagnant or breakout) with nearly 96 percent accuracy.[32] The report indicates that "smaller churches, younger churches, churches in areas of population growth, or where affluent new residents are moving in, all have certain advantages over churches which lack these characteristics."[33] Despite these advantages, Hadaway concludes that the primary factors related to new growth are evangelism and goal setting.[34] Of particular importance to this thesis is the nature of the responses substantiating this finding. Factors ascribed to goal setting and evangelism represent a grouping of survey responses related

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[30] Ajith Fernando, *Jesus Driven Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 24, cited in Conner, "Church Revitalization," 98.

[31] C. Kirk Hadaway, "From Stability to Growth: A Study of Factors Related to the Statistical Revitalization of Southern Baptist Congregations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30, no. 2 (1991): 181-92. At the time, Hadaway was serving as the urban/church growth specialist for the Sunday School Board of the SBC. Hadaway's method began with questionnaire responses from 184 SBC churches which were determined to have been plateaued according to annual Uniform Church Letter (later renamed the Annual Church Profile [ACP]) information. Churches which had plateaued, defined as less than 5 percent change in membership between the years 1978 and 1983, or any single year during the span, were identified. Next, attendance data for these churches between the years 1983 and 1986 were analyzed to determine which churches continued in a plateaued state, which were "Breakout Churches." All breakout churches and a sampling of stable churches were given surveys, and their responses were assessed using multiple discriminant analysis.

[32] Hadaway, "From Stability to Growth," 190. Hadaway's research was based on a hypothesis that non-transferable and situationally specific characteristics of exemplar churches could not be formulaically reproduced to initiate revitalization. He also questioned whether factors related to church growth were identical to factors which, if encouraged, would produce revitalization. Eleven critical characteristics included: church size, enrollment ratio, biological additions, congregational conservatism, age structure, year organized goal setting, evangelism/outreach, challenging sermons, year pastor joined, and new resident affluence.

[33] Hadaway, "From Stability to Growth," 191.

[34] Hadaway, "From Stability to Growth," 191.

to either the church's increasing sense of collective community or efforts to expand their community.[35]

Individualism and relational instability. Rothbaum et al. provide a helpful summary of research highlighting cultural differences between individualism and collectivism in the report, "The Development of Close Relationships in Japan and the United States."[36] Contrasting paths of personal development in individualistic and collectivistic cultures, the report suggests that individualism culminates in adulthood with "a *trust* in relationships which, ironically, 'helps people out of committed relationships' and into new ones versus *assurance* about relationships—a role-based, socially supported sense of commitment."[37] Individualism leads to relational instability, producing a sense of freedom and the belief that walking away from relationships can be appropriate. Individualism's "trust in relationships" is a presumption by the individual that relationships can either endure their departure or that relationships of equal significance can be easily remanufactured. These trajectories within individualism culminate in a relational perspective that is detrimental to the enduring community (see figure 1).

Individualism's trajectory toward the destruction of community was highlighted by The Commission on Children at Risk in their report, "Hardwired to Connect: The New

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[35] Hadaway, "From Stability to Growth," 189. The goal-setting scale combined responses to five questions, including whether (1) the church sets membership growth goals, (2) the church has reevaluated its programs and priorities, (3) the church has had a High Attendance Sunday, (4) the church has had an increase or decrease in goal-setting emphasis, and (5) most adult Sunday School classes set growth goals. The evangelism scale combined responses to fifteen separate survey items. Among those included in the scale were variables dealing with an increased or decreased emphasis on evangelism, prospect visitation by the pastor, whether the church has a regular prospect visitation program, whether the church has participated in a programmed growth or evangelistic campaign, overall involvement of members in outreach, and others.

[36] Fred Rothbaum et al., "The Development of Close Relationships in Japan and the United States: Paths of Symbiotic Harmony and Generative Tension," *Child Development* 71, no. 5 (October 2000): 1121-42. Significant contributions to this thesis appear under the section providing an overview of individualism and collectivism later in this review. However, this detail of the contrasting paths of development between individualism and collectivism is specifically pertinent to the overall thesis development.

[37] Rothbaum et al., "The Development of Close Relationships," 1125.

Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities."[38] Responding to rising rates of "mental problems and emotional distress among US children and adolescents," the report indicts a lack of "close connections to other people and deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning."[39] The commission's report cites evidence, primarily neuroscientific, indicating that the "human child is 'hardwired to connect.' We are hardwired for other people and for moral meaning and openness to the transcendent. Meeting these basic needs for connections is essential to health and to human flourishing."[40] Historically this need for connectedness was met by social institutions[41]; however, "in recent decades, the U.S. social institutions that foster these two forms of connectedness for children have gotten significantly weaker,"[42] resulting in the current crisis. The commission coined the term "authoritative communities" to describe their proposed corrective: "Authoritative communities are groups of people who are committed to one another over time and who model and pass on at least part of what it means to be a good person and live a good life. Renewing and building them is the key to improving the lives of U.S. children and adolescents."[43] The report concludes, suggesting that nothing less than fundamental changes to American society, with a return to an emphasis upon community, will remedy the situation.

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[38] Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities," 2003, accessed October 17, 2017, http://americanvalues.org/catalog/pdfs/hwexsumm.pdf. The commission was an independent initiative sponsored by Dartmouth Medical School, the YMCA and the Institute of American Values, addressed the American crisis of community The commission's report is based on interdisciplinary deliberations and conferences, a comprehensive literature review, and the evaluation of eighteen commissioned papers by a panel of thirty-three children's doctors, research scientists and mental health and youth service professionals.

[39] Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect," 1.

[40] Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect," 2.

[41] The report defines social institutions as groups of people organized around certain purposes. See Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect," 1.

[42] Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect," 2.

[43] Commission on Children at Risk, "Hardwired to Connect," 2.

Kathleen Beagles applied the findings of the Commission on Children at Risk in a secondary analysis of data related to adolescent spiritual growth and discipleship.[44] Beagles considered the Growing Discipleship in Community Model, developed using an initial analysis of study data (see figure 2).[45]
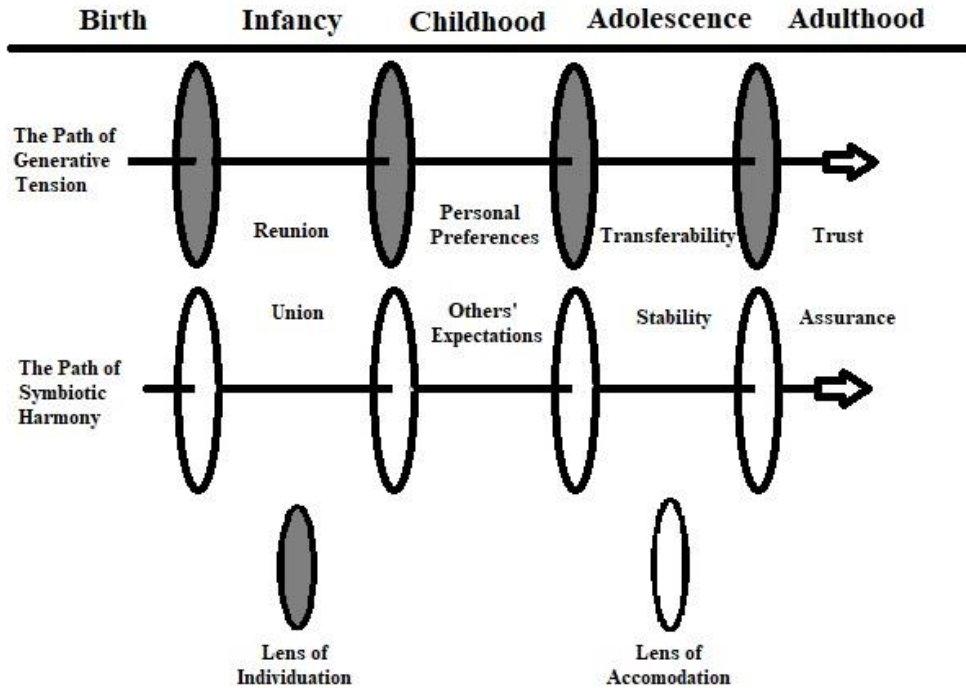
Figure 1. Paths of symbiotic harmony and generative tension

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[44] Kathleen Beagles, "Growing Disciples in Community," *Christian Education Journal* series 3, 9, no. 1 (January 2012): 153. Beagles' method tested The Growing Discipleship in Community Model using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) with data from 8,284 original study participants.

[45] Figure 2 adapted from Beagles, "Growing Disciples in Community," 153.
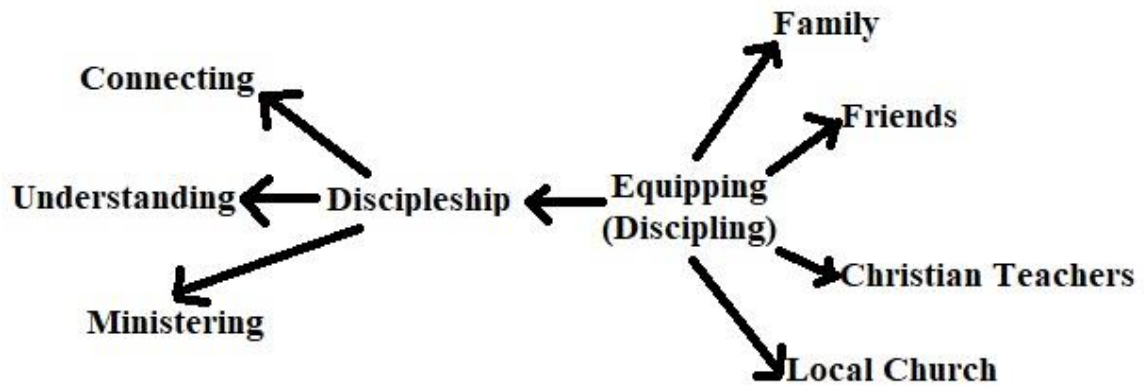
Figure 2. Growing disciples in community model (hypothesized)

Confirmatory factor analysis "revealed that the correlation between the latent variables 'Discipleship' and 'Connecting' in the initial hypothesized model . . . was so high as to suggest that these two factors were not distinct."[46] Discipleship and connecting with God and others were deemed to be virtually synonymous. The resulting model modifications replaced "discipleship" with "Connecting with God and Others," as depicted in figure 3.[47]
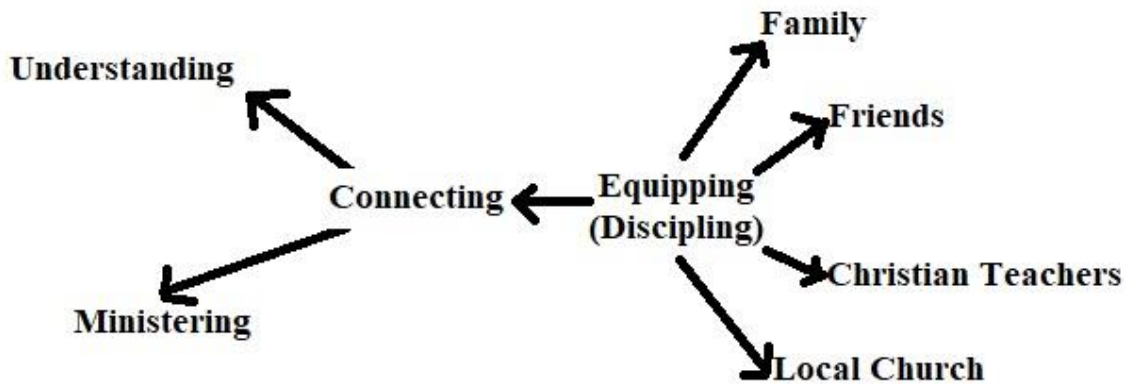
Figure 3. Growing disciples in community model

Beagles' analysis also supported the Commission's suggestion regarding authoritative community, noting that the attitudes expressed by adult equippers toward

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[46] Beagles, "Growing Disciples in Community," 153.

[47] Figure 3 adapted from Beagles, "Growing Disciples in Community," 154.

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disciple-making explained 72 percent of the connecting variable. Similarly, connecting

explained 42 percent of understanding and 29 percent of ministering, respectively. As a

result, Beagles validates the church as an ideal context for the development of functional,

authoritative community.[48]

Faith communities as cultures with degrees of individualism and

collectivism. Cohen and Hull, in their report "Religion as Culture: Religious Individualism

and Collectivism among American Catholics, Jews, and Protestants," propose that

"religious cultures vary in individualistic and collectivistic aspects of religiousness and

spirituality."[49] Helpful to the development of this thesis is their claim that "groups of

people that share religious identity can be meaningfully viewed as sharing cultural models

and indeed as members of different cultures."[50] Their findings support dominant

descriptions of American Protestantism, including their finding that

> Protestants are more individualistic than Catholics and especially Jews. Their life-changing experiences are more likely to focus on a personal encounter with God. In contrast, the experiences of Catholics, and particularly of Jews, are more likely to be centered around the collective. . . . Results converge to suggest that intrinsic religiosity is tapping individualistic religious outlooks, whereas extrinsic religiosity is much more related to the collective.[51]

The report suggests that, to the best of their knowledge, their research is "the first clear

evidence that American Jews and Catholics resonate more with collectivistic aspects of

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[48] Beagles, "Growing Disciples in Community," 155.

[49] Adam B. Cohen and Peter C. Hull, "Religion as Culture: Religious Individualism and Collectivism among American Catholics, Jews, and Protestants," *Journal of Personality* 75, no. 4 (August 2007): 709. The research behind this report includes four questionnaire-based studies. Study 1 considered community through sampling of Jews ($n = 88$) and Protestants ($n = 72$) from faith communities in Pennsylvania. Study 2 investigated the interrelationship between religiousness, spirituality, and salience of religious identity ($n = 1,364$). The third study rated intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, and the degree of appropriate motivation for religion ($n = 335$). The final study involved an internet sample of Catholics, Jews, and Protestants describing meaningful religious experiences ($n = 126$).

[50] Cohen and Hull, "Religion as Culture," 712.

[51] Cohen and Hull, "Religion as Culture,"735.

religion and spirituality than do Protestants."[52] Fundamental to this thesis is the report's

conclusion that their findings represent "evidence that differences in religious groups can

be understood as differences in culture."[53]

Individualism and Discipleship Literature

The formulation of this thesis was nurtured through a broad reading of

contemporary discipleship literature, noting the frequency with which individualism was

cited for its negative impact on discipleship and church vitality.

Individualism in the church as syncretism. At the midpoint of the twentieth

century, Chad Walsh addressed the demise of modern civilization and spoke prophetically

of the current post-Christian culture. Noting the waning influence of Christianity upon

culture since the Renaissance, Walsh called for a return to Christianity in order to rescue

civilization.[54] Sixty-four years later, Howard Senkbeil responded somewhat soberly to

Walsh, suggesting that the opportunity for cultural preservation through the adoption of

Christianity may have passed. Senkbeil's assessment was based on the level of syncretism

existing between secular culture and the contemporary church.[55] Senkbeil notes that

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[52] Cohen and Hull, "Religion as Culture," 736.

[53] Cohen and Hull, "Religion as Culture," 736.

[54] Responding to warnings regarding the inevitable demise of Christianity, Chad Walsh countered with a hopeful note premised upon a return to Christianity, stating, "Perhaps the present sad state of Western civilization arises largely from the watering-down and outright rejection of Christianity. In that case, a return to Christianity may be the price a reluctant world will have to pay if it wants civilization at all." Chad Walsh, *Early Christians of the 21st Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1950), 9-10, cited by Harold Senkbeil, "Engaging Our Culture Faithfully," *Concordia Journal* 40, no. 4 (September 2014): 292-93.

[55] Senkbeil ultimately diagnoses the contemporary church as suffering under the sin of acedia, rooted in and enabled by a culture of expressive individualism. Senkbeil, "Engaging Our Culture Faithfully," 304. Dorothy Sayers described Acedia (often misidentified as sloth) as "the accomplice of the other sins and their worst punishment. It is the sin which believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, loves nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and only remains alive because there is nothing it would die for." Dorothy Sayers, *The Other Six Deadly Sins* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1974), 108.

Christians "have embraced the expectations and norms of culture and begun to remodel the church in the image and likeness of the world—and in that, expressive individualism takes precedence over everything else."[56] In virtually every aspect of her identity and practice, "the American church seems to have adopted the culture's focus on expressive individualism, which threatens—tsunami-like—to engage and submerge it in a sea of subjective self-interest."[57]

To aid the church in overcoming the damaging and distorting effects of individualism, Senkbeil encourages Christians to differentiate between the influence of culture and the commands of Scripture, to intentionally step away from culture's influence and undertake the Augustinian effort to "sort out what belongs to the city of man and what belongs to the city of God."[58] Senkbeil suggests that this represents an especially significant challenge for conservative churches "where accommodation and modification of the faith to reflect the cultural individualism of our time" has surreptitiously worked itself into virtually every standard of thought and practice.[59]

Individualism and division. Stephen Hong suggests that the contemporary church suffers from chronic disunity to such an extent that division "has become an

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[56] Senkbeil, "Engaging Our Culture Faithfully," 296.

[57] Senkbeil, "Engaging Our Culture Faithfully," 297.

[58] Senkbeil, "Engaging Our Culture Faithfully," 313. See also Saint Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, in *Writings of Saint Augustine*, vols. 6-8 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1950). Michael Emerson and Christian Smith suggest that the process of differentiating biblical commands from cultural sensibilities may be especially difficult for Evangelicals: "Because evangelicals view their primary task as evangelism and discipleship, they tend to avoid issues that hinder these activities. Thus, they are generally not countercultural." A tendency toward countercultural avoidance for the sake of evangelism and discipleship would appear to be counterproductive. Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford Press, 2000), 21.

[59] While Senkbeil's concern for conservative churches seems counterintuitive, his concern for liberal churches is even more dire, suggesting that they "are in danger of dropping the baton altogether, abandoning the faith once delivered to the saints." He concludes, noting, "Our culture presents a notoriously fluid target, shifting with every passing fashion. The maxim holds true: 'If you marry the culture, you are destined to become an early widower.'" Senkbeil, "Engaging Our Culture Faithfully," 298.

acceptable part of the culture of the church."[60] Hong identifies a self-perpetuating cycle

of division, rooted in individualism, which results in decreasing holiness (see figure 4).[61]

According to Hong,

> the increase in individualism in the body of Christ has resulted in a decrease in
> sanctification. Unsanctified, individualistic attitudes and actions then resulted in
> more disunity in the body of Christ as it splits into more and more denominations.[62]
> The reality of this disunity has influenced the church's ecclesiology, which has been
> modified to justify divisiveness. Then because of these theological modifications,
> individualism has been enabled even more and the downward spiral has continued.[63]

Hong extrapolates the consequences of this modified ecclesiology upon discipleship, a

construction where individuals pick and choose elements a la carte and form their own

self-selected style of Christianity. Far from "contend[ing] for the faith that was once for

all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) these constructions tend to eliminate unpleasant

doctrines and practices while emphasizing more pleasurable options.[64] The effect is to

eliminate opportunities to be admonished, challenged, and encouraged by other Christians

(Col 3:16), thereby circumventing Christ's ministry through His church of producing

disciples ever more fully conforming to His image (Rom 8:29). Hong attributes this

tendency directly "to the rise of hyper-individualism in the church. . . . As the individual

is overemphasized, the community is inevitably deemphasized, and the results can be

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[60] Stephen A. Hong, "Reversing a Downward Spiral: Strengthening the Church's Community,
Holiness and Unity through Intentional Discipleship," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 15, no. 1 (January
2012): 89.

[61] Adapted from Figure 1, "The Downward Spiral of the Church," as displayed on Hong,
"Reversing a Downward Spiral," 90.

[62] Hong refers to the development of denominations, suggesting division between churches. I
assert that the same forces of division that result in the separation of churches are active interpersonally
within a given faith community and act to separate individuals as well.

[63] Hong, "Reversing a Downward Spiral," 90-91.

[64] Hong, "Reversing a Downward Spiral," 93.

seen in the fragmentation of the church that has taken place since the time of the

Reformation and, more recently, the Enlightenment."[65]
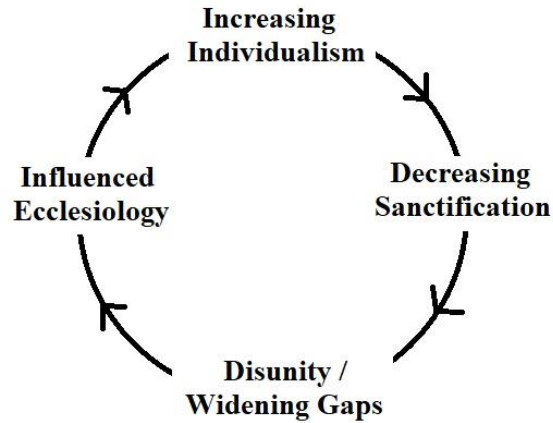
Figure 4. The downward spiral of the church

Individualism and non-discipleship Christianity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer

describes Christianity as an adherence to the living Christ so complete that discipleship is

the necessary consequence.[66] He continues,

> Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship,
> and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ. It
> remains an abstract idea, a myth that has a place for the Fatherhood of God but
> omits Christ as the living Son. A Christianity of that kind is nothing more or less
> than the end of discipleship.[67]

Bill Hull opens *The Complete Book of Discipleship* by suggesting that the

church may have reached Bonhoeffer's end of discipleship, noting, "Non-discipleship

'Christianity' dominates much of the thinking of the contemporary church . . . caus[ing]

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[65] Hong, "Reversing a Downward Spiral," 93. Hong uses the term hyper-individualism to describe an "attitude among Christians that people are saved as individuals into a private relationship with God, neglecting the idea that they have been added to the community of the church and that their relationship with God is meant to take place from within that community. This attitude usually includes the idea that the church exists primarily to provide services to establish and encourage each member's private faith." See Hong, "Reversing a Downward Spiral," 91.

[66] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 64.

[67] Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 65.

the church to assimilate itself into the culture."[68] The consequence of Christless

Christianity is nothing less than a loss of distinction between the church and the prevailing

culture from which she has been called, and to whom she is to be both salt and light (Matt

5:13-16). Among his concerns, Hull reserves his strongest critique for the devastating

consequences of syncretism between American culture and the biblical gospel, resulting

in an "American gospel [which] is predominantly activist rather than contemplative and

usually moves toward individualism rather than community."[69] Hull pushes back against

this trend of cultural conformity to individualism and consumerism, asserting,

> Consumer discipleship is an oxymoron. . . . In general, Christians have a heart to
> serve Christ, but they behave in a way that says, "It's all about me." Sermons,
> worship services, children's programs, and the length of the service have all been
> designed around the demands of church members. The culture tells us that the
> consumer is always right, and at church, the members are the customers.[70]

Consumeristic attitudes stand in stark contrast to the submissive servanthood which Christ

commanded of those who claim His name (Mark 10:45f). Individualism, and its economic

outworking of consumerism, place the individual at the center of his life narrative and his

perception of reality. Hull is quick to correct this notion, reminding his reader that "We

are not the central figure of this story; it is God's story. We're attached to God by

prepositions: He is in us, with us, for us, and does things to us. We're not the subject or

the verb: we're the object."[71]

Ogden's critique of contemporary discipleship. Greg Ogden describes the

contemporary state of discipleship as superficial,[72] suggesting that Christians and the

church are responsible for the problems present in the greater culture and not vice-versa.

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[68] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 16.

[69] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 41.

[70] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 255.

[71] Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 256.

[72] Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 22.

He cites syndicated columnist Cal Thomas as stating, "The problem in our culture . . .

isn't the abortionists. It isn't the pornographers, or drug dealers, or criminals. It is the

undisciplined, undiscipled, disobedient, and Biblically ignorant Church of Jesus Christ."[73]

Ogden presents six biblical benchmarks which he asserts represent an appropriate

community of disciples and contrasts these standards to the contemporary reality (see

table 1).[74]

Ogden suggests several causes for the low state of contemporary discipleship,

four of which are significant for the purposes of this research. The first causal consideration

is the relegation of discipleship to programming,[75] which tends to be knowledge-based

and wrongly "operate[s] on the assumption that if someone has information, having that

information will automatically lead to transformation."[76] This paradigm generally involves

a few leaders preparing and attendees passively consuming information with little personal

accountability. Ogden notes that this form of participation produces little result because

"the preached word needs the context of community, where meaning can be discussed

and bold implications for our lives heard."[77]

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[73] Syndicated columnist Cal Thomas, quoted in Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 23.

[74] See Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 25-32.

[75] Ogden writes, "In today's church we have replaced person-centered growth with programs as the means of making disciples. By programs I mean the structured group methods we use to herd large groups of people through a system. Examples of programs are age-graded Sunday schools, adult education classes, small-group ministries, need-based seminars or highly structured discipleship programs." Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 43.

[76] Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 43. This unfortunate understanding was accelerated by an emphasis on the cognitive domain of learning at the expense of the affective domain in the middle of the twentieth century. Educational practices became infatuated with the speedy accumulation of facts. However, the affective domain is more significant in the development of beliefs and values, taking extended periods of time to develop. See Benjamin S. Bloom, David R. Krathwohl, and Bertram B. Masia, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook II: Affective Domain* (New York: David McKay, 1964).

[77] Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 44.

Table 1. Ogden's comparison of Scripture and contemporary issues in discipleship

What Scripture Describes	The Current Reality
The church filled with proactive ministers	The majority of church members are passive recipients, viewing services as a consumer, arriving with a reviewer's mentality.
Followers of Jesus engaging in a disciplined lifestyle	Only a small percentage of believers participate in spiritual growth practices.
Discipleship affecting all aspects of life	Faith is considered personal and private.[78]
Christian community as force for countercultural engagement	Isolated individuals with lifestyles and values that in large part reflect the culture in which they are embedded.
The church is an essential organism, and Christ indwells her.	The church is viewed as an optional institution and unnecessary for discipleship.[79]
Biblically informed people whose lives are founded on revealed truth	People who are biblically ignorant, living in syncretistic compromise[80]

Second, Ogden suggests that the malaise in discipleship is due to the reduction of the Christian life to the attainment of eternal benefit without acknowledging the simultaneous call to transformation and obedience: "Reducing the Christian life to embracing the gift of forgiveness has made obedience to Jesus in daily life an irrelevance."[81] He calls upon disciple-makers to consider their culpability, suggesting that they "at least consider the possibility that this poor result is not in spite of what we teach and how we teach, but precisely because of it?"[82] In response, Ogden implies that

[78] Ogden continues, stating, "The motif of the kingdom means that there is not a scintilla of life that does not come under the authority of Jesus Christ." Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 28.

[79] Ogden, noting the dilemma of tenuous commitment by community members, asks, "How do you call people to the discipline of discipleship when they can easily walk on you? Unless there is a covenantal understanding of a believer's relationship with a community, how can people be formed into Christlike disciples?" Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 33.

[80] Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 33. Ogden cautions that general ignorance of the Bible's content and Christians' tendency to hold convictions that contradict clear biblical teaching, suggest that "no assumptions can be made about what people know or the beliefs they hold." See Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 34.

[81] Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 47.

[82] Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy* (San Francisco: Harper, 1998), 40, quoted in Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 47.

discipleship needs to be reframed from programs and information into the context of "an apprentice relationship with Jesus."[83]

Next, Ogden notes a corporate responsibility, suggesting that poor discipleship outcomes are due to an unwillingness on the part of churches to call people to discipleship, fearing that people will abandon churches that place expectations upon them. He criticizes contemporary church leadership for their abandonment of calls for radical responses of surrender and submission.[84] Instead, he accuses leaders of

> start[ing] with a low bar and try[ing] to entice people by increments of commitment, hoping that we can raise the bar imperceptibly to the ultimate destination of discipleship. In our post-Christian world, the common wisdom is to lure seekers to our message by helping them see the faith's relevance to life's daily challenges. This usually means appealing to self-interest, felt needs, personal fulfillment or a person's search for happiness. Oftentimes the message received is that it is all about me, not about finding me only as I lose myself into Jesus.[85]

Finally, Ogden suggests that an ecclesiology which does not view the church as fundamentally a discipleship community is also partially responsible for the discipleship malaise: "We live in a time of radical individualism that has torn the heart out of Christian community."[86] Individualism's resulting privatization undermines the love (John 13:34-35) and demonstrable unity which are to be characteristic of true disciples, and which act to validate Christ's Divine commission (John 17:20-23).

Non-transformational discipleship. Echoing the words of Bonhoeffer, Geiger, Kelley, and Nation sum up contemporary deficiencies in discipleship through the use of the term *nontransformational discipleship*: "Discipleship apart from Jesus is non-

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[83] Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 47. See also Stanley Hauerwas, "Discipleship as a Craft, Church as a Disciplined Community," *The Christian Century*, October 2, 1991, 881-84.

[84] Recall Stetzer and Dodson's finding that raising expectations contributes to revitalization. Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 12-13.

[85] Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 50. These words harken back to Willard's suggestion that the context and method in which discipleship occurs bears at least some responsibility for the outcomes experienced. See Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy,* 40.

[86] Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 51.

transformational. . . . The discipleship may provide education, improve behavior, increase happiness, add value, or make the disciple more skilled at a craft. But these are just changes. It's the reskinning of the same thing on the inside."[87] The purpose of discipleship is not superficial but transformational (metamorphosis) (Rom 12:1-2). Geiger, Kelley, and Nation note that in the course of their research they "observed two common yet flawed views that unfortunately impact a church's likelihood to make disciples that are transformed: equating information with discipleship and viewing discipleship merely as behavioral modification."[88]

Geiger, Kelley, and Nation's work pushes deeper into the notion that an appropriate context for and perspective on discipleship are prerequisites for appropriate biblical discipleship to occur.[89] He suggests that the likelihood of appropriate discipleship is increased through the implementation of a transformational framework centered upon "the intersection of truth given by healthy leaders to someone in a vulnerable position."[90] This posture of vulnerability is accredited by the authors with making the transmission and application of truth effectual: "While God changes people through His truth, people are most likely to receive the transformative truth of God when they are in a vulnerable posture . . . transformation often occurs when disciples are in a posture of weakness, interdependence, and/or with an outward focus."[91] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation's research indicates that transformative outcomes often result when disciples are placed in postures

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[87] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 8.

[88] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 18.

[89] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation discourage the use of their findings for modeling purposes, stating, "The church's proclivity for models alarmingly reveals our shallowness. . . . We believe that transformation across all church models can occur by tapping into the right principles." Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 60.

[90] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 65. This compliments Ogden's suggestion, noted earlier, that disciple-makers consider whether their content and method are responsible for the current state of discipleship.

[91] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 132.

of weakness,[92] suggesting that God uses suffering (Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-7; Rom 8:18), opposition (Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:13), and overwhelming circumstances[93] to produce transformative outcomes in His people. Expressing thankfulness for, let alone accepting a position of personal weakness, is counter-intuitive in an individualistic culture of self-sufficient autonomy. However, "Believing the gospel requires weakness on the part of the believer. Think about the core message of the gospel regarding the condition of people—it's one of absolute powerlessness."[94]

The power of posture is also expressed through the effectiveness of communal interdependence for transformative discipleship. Participants in Geiger, Kelley, and Nation's research, which self-identified as disciplers,

> overwhelmingly declared that transformation best occurs when a believer is in an interdependent posture with other believers. . . . [Respondents] were deeply concerned that the timeless truth of maturation in community is subtly being replaced with an American individualistic approach to spiritual growth that constantly promises roots that go deeper without roots that widen into relationships that intermingle.[95]

Geiger, Kelley, and Nation takes this concern for interdependent relationships so seriously that he calls upon discipleship leaders to "slaughter individualism rather than celebrate it,"[96] and to encourage vital community which perfects (Phil 1:3-6; Acts 2:42),[97] protects (Heb 3:12-13), and preaches.[98]

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[92] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation state, "The most overwhelming interviews with believers concerning seasons of intense spiritual growth affirms that God uses trials, pain, and suffering to lovingly put His own into a posture of weakness resulting in deep transformation." See Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 133.

[93] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation emphasize their point by saying, "Actually, God will give you more than you can handle in your own strength. In His goodness He will allow life to overwhelm you so that you will humbly need His strength and wisdom." Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 141.

[94] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 146. See also Eph 2:1-3.

[95] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 159.

[96] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 159.

[97] Based on an understanding of *koinonia* as expressing partnership for spiritual growth. See Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 163.

[98] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation note, "Jesus promised that the world would understand the gospel because of the love and unity of believers (John 13:35; 17:23). From a missiological standpoint

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory
of Personal Development

Urie Bronfenbrenner posited a bioecological system theory for understanding human development, described by Jennifer Boemmel and Joan Briscoe as a "combination of the child's biological disposition and environmental forces coming together to shape the child's development."[99] In this constructivist approach, it is the individual being formed whose perspective is of ultimate significance in development.[100] The individual child is viewed as a set of various internal and interacting systems. This individual is likewise embedded within a nested environment, comprised of levels of external influence. The more proximate the influence on the embedded individual, the more immediate and influential its effect upon the perspective of the individual being developed.

One of the simplest representations of ecological development theory is through visualizing the person as existing within concentric circles of influencing systems (see figure 5). The systems closest to the individual exist within the microsystem level. Microsystems are relationships such as parent-child, child-child, child-teacher, etc. that involve "direct contact and interaction with the child."[101] This influence, exerted by microsystems, is bidirectional, shaping the child, and simultaneously being shaped by the child.[102]

Christian community is a statement of the gospel in the culture: We are known as His by our unity. Therefore, the end result of authentic Christian community is not community itself but mission." Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 168.

[99] Jennifer Boemmel and Joan Briscoe, "Web Quest Project Theory Fact Sheet of Urie Bronfenbrenner," National-Louis University, accessed December 8, 2019, http://ruby.fgcu.edu/courses/twimberley/EnviroPol/EnviroPhilo/FactSheet.pdf, 1.

[100] Lawrence Shelton writes, "What is developmentally important is the ecosystem as the person perceives and experiences it. So, to understand development we must attempt to *see the ecosystem from the perspective of the developing person in whom we are interested*." Lawrence Shelton, *The Bronfenbrenner Primer: A Guide to Develecology* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 14, emphasis original.

[101] Boemmel and Briscoe, "Web Quest Project Theory Fact Sheet," 1. The authors further state that "no system can be considered a microsystem in this theory if it is not in direct contact with the child for a substantial period of time."

[102] Laura Berk explains this bidirectionality: "Bronfenbrenner emphasizes that to understand child development at this level, we must keep in mind that all relationships are bidirectional. That is, adults

The next level of influence on the individual depicted in the figure is the mesosystem, which Laura Berk describes as "encompass[ing] connections between microsystems, such as home, school, neighborhoods, and child-care center, that foster children's development."[103] The mesosystem is not a similar yet more encompassing set of systems than the microsystem; rather, it represents the relationship between microsystems. Bronfenbrenner used the analogy of a set of Russian nesting dolls to describe his developmental theory.[104] However, these and other analogies tend to create misunderstanding, as they fail to capture the degree to which relationships between systems impact each other. Lawrence Shelton explains,

> In develecology, the layers or levels are not simply bigger or smaller. Each is of a different kind. The microsystem is one level, but the next level, the mesosystem, is not merely a larger microsystem; it is the relationship among the settings of the smaller "nearer" level, or microsystems. The two levels . . . are, in fact, different, the larger consisting of the relationships among the smaller, and thus incorporating the smaller, not existing independently of it, as the nesting dolls do.[105]

Boemmel and Briscoe describe the exosystem, which envelopes the mesosystem, as a set of "social settings that affect the child but do not include the child, such as parent's workplace or health services in the community."[106] They conclude their descriptions with the macrosystem "consisting of things that influence and sometimes support the child within the environment such as cultures, norms, and laws."[107] Finally,

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affect children's behavior, but children's biologically and socially influenced characteristics (their physical attributes, personalities, and capacities) also affect the behavior of adults." Laura Berk, *Child Development*, 5th ed. (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2000), 27.

[103] Berk, *Child Development*, 28.

[104] Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 3.

[105] Shelton, *The Bronfenbrenner Primer*, 11.

[106] Boemmel and Briscoe, "Web Quest Project Theory Fact Sheet," 1.

[107] Boemmel and Briscoe, "Web Quest Project Theory Fact Sheet," 1.

the term ecosystem is used to capture the coexistence of multiple macrosystems and their

impact through interaction with each other.
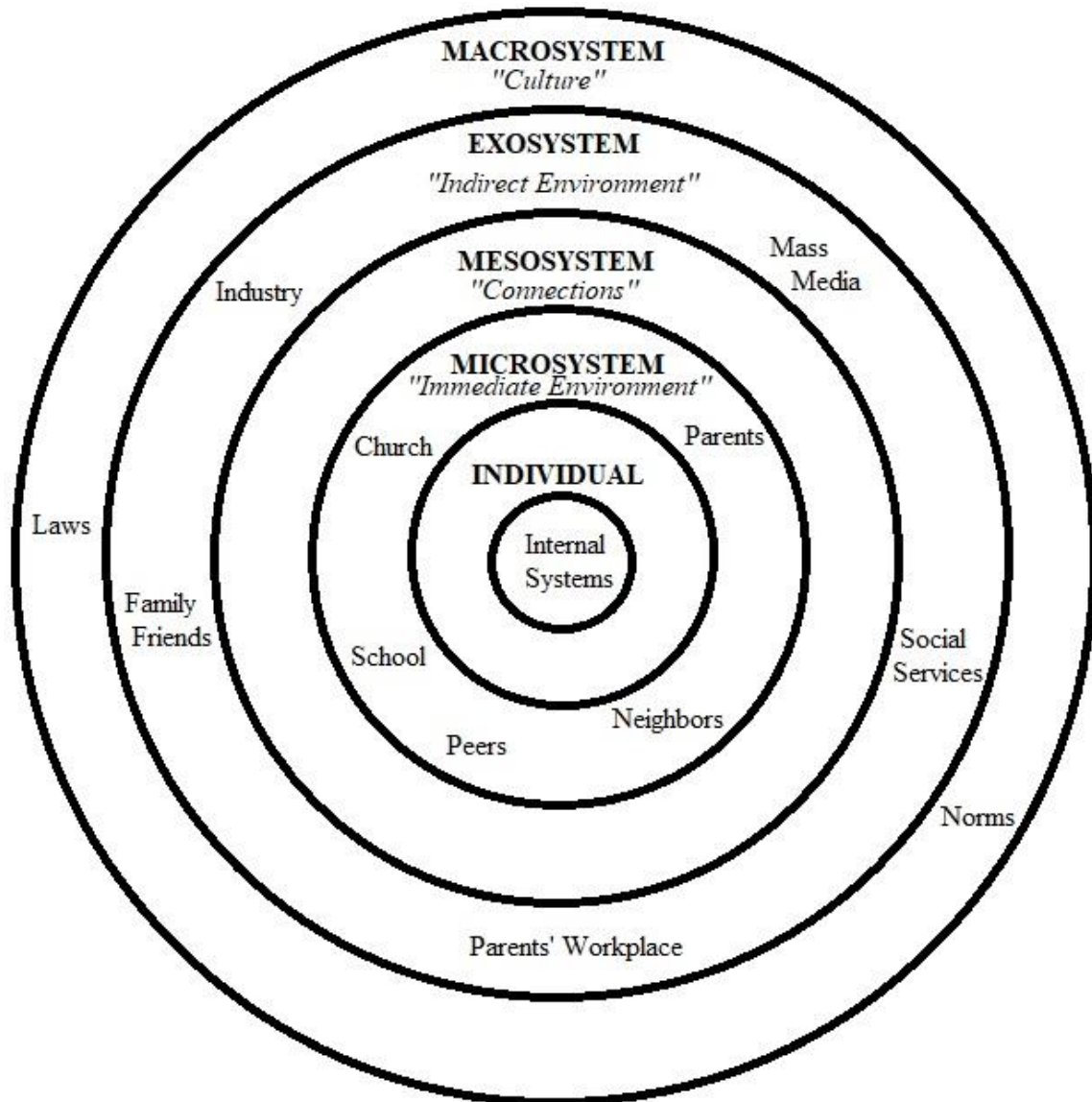
Figure 5. One depiction of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory

Most significant to this thesis is a consideration of culture (the macrosystem)

and its effects upon individuals. Bronfenbrenner defined the macrosystem as

> the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given
> culture or subculture, with particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of
> knowledge, material resources, customs, lifestyles, opportunity structures, hazards

and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems. The macrosystem may be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture.[108]

Also significant to this thesis is Shelton's observation that all conceptualizations of Bronfenbrenner's theory depict the macrosystem (culture) far removed from the individual. Shelton notes that, in actuality, "the developing person is constantly immersed in the macrosystem."[109] While the impact of the microsystem may appear to be more proximal, these relationships are themselves contextualized according to the norms of the overarching macrosystem. Shelton continues,

> One way the macrosystem functions is to make it likely we will create new microsystems that are similar to our previous, familiar microsystems. We explain to ourselves our tendency to replicate our experience and institutions by saying, "this is the way things ought to be," or "the way that works best." But it is possible that we are just recreating what is familiar. It is possible that, in fact, we have never experienced or thought of any other way to do things… The beliefs and assumptions of the macrosystem shape how we behave, how our microsystem operates, and what we experience as we grow up. The macrosystem, therefore, shapes the very nature of our view of the world we participate in and how we participate in it.[110]

Bronfenbrenner's theory suggests that the default orientation for individuals, organizations, and relationships will be that of the culture within which they are currently embedded. Individuals, organizations, and relationships that are counter-cultural will be viewed as contrary to what is considered "best" or in violation "oughtness." As such, it would be expected that individuals and churches embedded in individualistic cultures would be individualistically oriented by default, and counter-cultural efforts toward collectiveness would be resisted. Additionally, it would not be surprising if efforts implemented by individuals and churches to move toward collectivism, embedded within a culture of individualism, were themselves conceived and implemented from within the

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[108] Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Ecological Models of Human Development," in *International Encyclopedia of Education*, ed. T. Husen and T. Postlethwaite (Oxford: Pergamon/Elsevier Science, 1994), 1644.

[109] Shelton, *The Bronfenbrenner Primer*, 99.

[110] Shelton, *The Bronfenbrenner Primer*, 99.

sociocultural syndrome of individualism, thereby potentially working contrary to their own purposes.

Cultural Considerations

The encouragement of the precedent literature for Western Christians to step outside of their enculturated perspective of individualism and pursue biblical discipleship is a task fraught with inherent difficulty. Harry Triandis, sharing the metaphor of lenses used by Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, notes that "all humans are ethnocentric," and as a result, "our *kulturbrille* (cultural glasses) filter out some facts and sensitize us to others."[111]

Edgar Schein further explains these filtering and reinforcing effects in his definition of culture. Schein defines culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."[112] Schein's definition is helpful in establishing an understanding of the pervasive and self-perpetuating nature of cultural syndromes. Culture functions as both a product of the past and as a conditioner of the future.[113] Culture is a construct that impacts the whole person (perception, cognition, emotions, etc.) and acts as both a lens and a filter through which persons discern and engage reality. Individuals within a cultural context inherently presume the correctness of their perspective and perpetuate themselves by enculturating new members into their construct. The result is an overarching context by which persons

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[111] Harry Charalambus Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism: New Directions in Social Psychology* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 145.

[112] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 18.

[113] A. L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn note, "Culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand as conditioning elements of further action." See A. L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Random House, 1952), 357.

consider the standards and practices of their own enculturation to be normal and, until challenged, universal.

Individualism and community. Gerry Heard suggests that individualism and community represent two "broad and influential values in the American experience which exist in tension with one another."[114] Individualism considers how persons exist in relative isolation with only incidental references to others, whereas community considers persons within the context of relationships. Heard continues, noting that community "gives attention to that side of the self that calls for an acknowledgment of others and the part that they play in one's existence."[115]

Individualism and collectivism. The terms individualism and collectivism[116] are widely used and have meanings that are often unique and nuanced. Triandis provides helpful general definitions for each. He defines individualism as

> a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives; are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasize rational analysis of the advantages and disadvantages to associating with others.[117]

By contrast, Triandis defines collectivism as

> a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribe, nation); are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by, these collectives; are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals; and emphasize their connectedness to members of their collectives.[118]

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[114] Gerry C. Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions: An Examination of Individualism and Community in American Society* (Malibar, FL: Kreiger Publishing, 1990), 1.

[115] Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions*, 3. Heard uses the term "community" in a manner consistent with collectivism.

[116] A primary assumption of this research effort is that collectivism represents a cultural syndrome that tends to influence persons toward participation in vital community, whereas individualism tends to influence persons away from participation in vital community.

[117] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 2.

[118] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 2.

For ease of review, it is helpful to contrast these constructs in tabular form. A survey of Triandis' work results in a series of distinctions between individualistic and collectivistic perspectives. Table 2 contains factors that result in tendencies toward the cultural syndromes of individualism or collectivism (see table 2).[119] Table 3 describes characteristic of each syndrome (see table 3.)[120]

Table 2. Factors that produce tendencies toward collectivism or individualism

Factor	Tends toward Individualism	Tends toward Collectivism
Density of population	Large, Dispersed	Small, dense
Group type	Open	Closed
Number of choices	Large	Small
Affluence	Greater	Lesser
Cultural complexity	High	Low
Number of in-groups	Increasing	Decreasing

Table 3. General characteristics of individualistic and collectivistic cultures

Attitudes	Individualists	Collectivists
View of history	Unimportant	Important
View of self	Independent of specific collectives	Contingent on the collective
Valued attributes	Personal	Collective's
Conflicting priorities	Submit to personal priority	Submit to collective's priority
Obligations	Do what is enjoyable and/or contracted based on cost-benefit analysis	Sacrifice in order to perform their duty and are socialized to do so
Relational resilience	Maintain relationships only when deemed personally advantageous	Maintain relationships despite the cost - separation produces anxiety
Worship form	Individual worship	Group worship
Understanding of salvation	Personal relationship w/the Divine	Linked to relatives
Religious institutions	Intermediaries are unnecessary	Membership essential

[119] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 58-59.

[120] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 9-12, 138-39.

The International Economic Association, recognizing the dramatic impact of these cultural syndromes upon world economies, provided their members with a summary of differences between the two cultural syndromes (see table 4).[121]

Table 4. Psychological characteristics of individualism and collectivism

	Individualism	Collectivism
Vision of self	*Independent self*	*Interdependent self*
Mode of self-knowledge	Through introspection	Through evaluation of others
Self-consistency and adaptability	Emphasis on self-consistency at the cost of rigidity	Emphasis on adaptability at the cost of self-consistency
Need for self-enhancement and self-serving bias	Strong, critical for self-esteem	Less important, emphasis on the malleability of self
Control strategies	Primary control: change the world	Secondary control: adapt self to environment
Emotional awards	Associated with actions helping individuals to stand out	Associated with interpersonal harmony
Forms of thinking	*Analytical*	*Holistic*
Attention Focus	Objects more than background	Objects together with background
Style of reasoning	Associations based on abstract logical rules	Associations based on contextual or functional relationships
Biases	Fundamental attribution error, noun bias	No fundamental attribution error or noun bias
Comprehension	Attention to the explicit meaning of words	Attention to implicit meaning, tone and body expressions
Behavioral differences	*Behavior of Individualists*	*Behavior of Collectivists*
Effort versus ability	Emphasis on ability, reallocation of tasks in response to failure	Emphasis on effort, more effort in response to failure
Stick out or fit in	Sticking out very important	Conformity of overarching importance
Choice	Autonomy of choice	Taking group interests into account
Relational differences	*Equal behavior*	*Ingroup versus outgroup*
Choices imposed by others	Resented	Liked if from ingroup, strongly resented from outgroup
Loafing	Equal with all	Less with ingroup than with outgroup
Trust	Equal with all	Ingroup more than outgroup
Relational mobility	High	Low

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[121] Yuriy Gorodnichenko and Gerard Roland, "Understanding the Individualism-Collectivism Cleavage and Its Effects: Lessons from Cultural Psychology," in *Institutions and Comparative Economic Development*, International Economic Association Series 150-51 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 27.

The "both-and" experiences of people compound the difficulty of assessing cultural trends toward individualism or collectivism. Triandis notes that social scientists have "discovered that people are typically both individualists and collectivists. The optimum states of mental health are linked to the balance between these tendencies."[122]

Despite the fact that persons tend to move between individualistic and collectivistic characteristics as contextually appropriate, individuals are internally[123] and culturally influenced to construct a concept of self, which emphasizes either the individualized self or the collectivized others.[124] The individual is both influenced by and an influencer of culture, interacting with others and perpetuating modes of thinking, feeling and behaving, forming what Triandis refers to as "automatic ways of reacting to specific situations. The shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles, and behaviors are aspects of culture."[125]

Cultural resilience and narrative. A universal tendency toward ethnocentrism partially explains cultural resiliency and the enduring nature of self-concept. Triandis explains that people unwittingly engage in the process of cognitive conversion. Cognitive conversion occurs when a person, raised in a particular cultural context, transforms situations in their life and reinterprets them according to the context in which they were

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[122] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 2. Triandis summarizes a general thesis based on pragmatism, suggesting that collectivism be favored in situations that involve face-to-face situations with small groups over long periods of time. He also suggests individualism be favored in situations dealing with large collectives and economic priorities. See Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 170-71.

[123] Triandis suggests that personal individual differences have the potential to push people further in the direction of movement past what would be considered the cultural mean. He uses the example of an individualistic culture's tendency toward awakening democratic cognition. While that may represent the cultural mean, individual differences can push the past democratic cognition further into narcissism. See Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 180.

[124] Triandis states, "Culture has a broad influence on individuals. It tends to push individuals in a particular direction." Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 180.

[125] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 4.

raised.[126] As a result, situations that might otherwise produce tension, engage reflection, and produce a desire for change are reinterpreted into a more comfortable understanding. This process of reinterpretation ultimately supports the person's existing value system and current concept of self, minimizing, or even eliminating the perceived need to change.

Brown explains a similar cultural phenomenon using the concept of narrative. He asserts the existence of a compulsive human drive to overcome discomfort caused by ambiguity resulting in the creation of explanatory narratives of their lives and the world. These narratives piece together the events of a person's life into a cohesive whole, explaining their situations and their decisions. This narrative includes both socially common and personally unique elements. Brown explains;

> Each of us has a different narrative that has many threads woven into it from our shared culture and experience of being human, as well as many distinct threads that explain the singular events of one's personal past. All these experiences influence what comes to mind in a current situation and the narrative through which you make sense of it. . . . We gravitate to the narratives that best explain our emotions. In this way, narrative and memory become one. The memories we organize meaningfully become those that are better remembered. Narrative provides not only meaning but also a mental framework for imbuing future experiences and information with meaning, in effect shaping new memories to fit our established constructs of the world and ourselves.[127]

Attachment and cultural syndromes. Attachment theory suggests that the nature of the infant-caregiver relationship is significant for both the development of personality and the nature of future relationships throughout the individual's life. The acceptance of attachment theory as a means for understanding human relationships and connections throughout a person's lifespan is substantial.[128] Constantine Sedikides and

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[126] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 5.

[127] Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 110-11.

[128] Fred Rothbaum, Gilda Morelli, and Natalie Rusk note, "So compelling are the findings [of decades of attachment research] that attachment theory has reshaped developmental psychologists' understanding of what constitutes healthy relationships for humans around the world." Fred Rothbaum, Gilda Morelli, and Natalie Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping—The Interplay of Cultural Similarities and Differences," in *Advances in Culture and Psychology*, vol. 1, ed. Michele Gelfand, Chi-yue Chiu, and Ying-yi Hong (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 153-54.

John Skowronski note, "According to attachment theory . . . the quality of infant-caregiver interactions results in mental working models . . . that shape the self-concept, direct affect regulation, and organize cognition, emotion, and behavior in adolescent and adult relationships."[129]

The seminal works on attachment are found in the combined writings of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth.[130] Bowlby provide groundbreaking theory development in his work, *Attachment*.[131] Throughout the text, Bowlby attempts to integrate "ethology, cybernetics, information processing, developmental psychology, and psychoanalysis . . . [having the effect of] revolutioniz[ing] our thinking about a child's tie to the mother and its disruption through separation, deprivation, and bereavement."[132]

According to Ainsworth, natural curiosity by the child results in exploration and learning, but it also produces insecurity for the child. The child will continue to explore despite this sense of insecurity if there is confidence on her part that the caregiver will be available to her when necessary.[133] Over time the caregiver becomes a "secure base" from which the child departs to explore for increasing durations. The caregiver also functions as a "safe haven" into which the child can return whenever she feels threatened. Repetition of this detachment-reattachment paradigm results in increasing periods of detachment, which are interpreted by the caregiver as maturation.

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[129] Constantine Sedikides and John Skowronski, "Evolution of the Symbolic Self: Issues and Prospects," in *Handbook of Self and Identity*, ed. Mark R. Leary and June Price Tangney (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 605.

[130] Mary Ainsworth and John Bowlby, "An Ethnological Approach to Personality Development," *American Psychologist* 46, no. 4 (April 1991): 333-41.

[131] John Bowlby, *Attachment*, Attachment and Loss, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

[132] Inge Bretherton, "The Origins of Attachment Theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth," *Developmental Psychology* 28, no. 5 (1991): 759.

[133] Bretherton, "The Origins of Attachment Theory," 759.

In his second major work on attachment, *Separation Anxiety and Anger*, Bowlby supports the notion of attachment as fundamental to personality development, writing, "Adult personality is seen as a product of an individual's interactions with key figures during all his years of immaturity, especially of his interactions with attachment figures."[134]

Sociocultural influences upon self-construal. The assumption of classical attachment theory's universality remained virtually unopposed until late in the twentieth century when Rothbaum et al. published "The Development of Close Relationship in Japan and the United States."[135] In this work, the authors suggest that the pattern of attachment described by Bowlby was far from universal and that presuming as much was itself a manifestation of a Western individualistic cultural bias.[136]

Using the now-familiar metaphors of lenses and pathways, Rothbaum et al. described how cultural syndromes could be understood as two lenses, "one emphasizing accommodation and one emphasizing individuation—leading to distinctive paths of development."[137]

Development of individualism. Rothbaum et al. concede that the path of development more typical in Western individualistic cultures is generally consistent with attachment as described by Bowlby. Within this syndrome, children experience

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[134] John Bowlby, *Separation Anxiety and Anger*, Attachment and Loss, vol. 2 (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 208.

[135] Rothbaum et al., "The Development of Close Relationships."

[136] Far from sounding accusatory, Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk seem to acknowledge the effects of cognitive conversion by recognizing the potential for any researcher to exhibit tendencies toward favoring the norms of their own cultural history: "If attachment research had its origin in cultures that prioritize interdependent selves, and if those cultures enjoyed the scientific dominance that the West currently enjoys, it is possible that current theories would hypothesize that qualities like proper demeanor and accommodation, rather than autonomy and exploration, are universal consequences of security." Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 169.

[137] Rothbaum et al., "The Development of Close Relationships," 1123.

development "characterized by a continual tug between the desire for proximity and closeness with primary attachment figures on the one hand, and the desire for separation and exploration of the surrounding world, including new relationships, on the other hand."[138] The child must mediate the conflicting desires of relatedness through proximity with a desire for learning, which requires separation and exploration.[139]

Within individualism, a sense of security is experienced when separation is followed by reattachment, producing a more independent view of self. This view of self is separate and distinct from others, resulting in a predisposition toward autonomy. The resulting individual is characterized by a tendency to analyze the components of her world as isolated pieces,[140] and social relationships, as Shinobu Kitayama, Sean Duffy, and Yukiko Uchida note, tend to be "governed by instrumental goals of separated selves."[141]

The analytical nature of the individualistic self also produces a tendency to view the world through a first-person, egotistical perspective.[142] Experiences of independent personal discovery result in an assumption that discovered truth is equally true for everyone.[143] Persons that experience community from within an individualized Western

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[138] Rothbaum et al., "The Development of Close Relationships," 1123.

[139] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Copings," 184-85.

[140] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Copings," 179.

[141] Shinobu Kitayama, Sean Duffy, and Yukiko Uchida, "Self as Cultural Mode of Being," in *Handbook of Cultural Psychology*, ed. S. Kitayama and D. Cohen (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 140.

[142] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 180.

[143] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 181. In fact, the assumption is often made that "what is in their head is also in the head of others." The Western individual, having a notion of discovered truth, thus tends to view the actions of others which are inconsistent with that truth as irrational. Since each person has the same understanding of truth, actions deemed inappropriate represent an inability or unwillingness to respond correctly. See Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 184.

context learn for their own benefit rather than for the group and are typically encouraged to question, explore, and express skepticism.[144]

Development of collectivism. Rothbaum et al. suggest that by contrast, the path of connection and relatedness more typical among Eastern collectivist cultures is "characterized by a continual pull toward adapting the self to fit the needs of others."[145] The Eastern collectivist concept of appropriate nurturing reflects an embedded identity of interdependence. Rothbaum et al. found that Japanese caregivers promote symbiotic harmony through indulgence of the child, producing a complete dependence of the child upon the caregiver. The child's needs are proactively met, often before public signaling behaviors are evidenced by the child. The self-identity formed within the child through this embedded relatedness has lasting effects, producing the "interdependent relationships of later childhood and adulthood."[146]

A person nurtured within a collectivist context will view herself as fundamentally a part of the greater group, resulting in relationships which Rothbaum et al. describe as allowing the person to adjust and respond "to social contingencies."[147] Kitayama, Duffy, and Uchida note that a person so nurtured operates "embedded in interdependent contexts," exercising the ability and concern to respond according to the nature of relationships.[148] A pattern of social awareness progressively develops. Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk suggest that this social awareness allows individuals "to adjust or

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[144] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 184.

[145] Rothbaum et al., "The Development of Close Relationships," 1123. A decade after *The Development of Close Relationships in Japan and the United States*, Rothbaum would reaffirm this understanding, noting, "In many communities, especially in East Asia, security has more to do with continuous union (than with separations and reunions), and goals of learning have more to do with accommodation (than with exploration)." See Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 157.

[146] Rothbaum et al., "The Development of Close Relationships," 1123.

[147] Kitayama, Duffy, and Uchida, "Self as Cultural Mode of Being," 140.

[148] Kitayama, Duffy, and Uchida, "Self as Cultural Mode of Being," 163.

accommodate themselves to others' expectations and to demands from the environment."[149]

A collectivistic concept of the self produces a more holistic manner of thinking, resulting in a tendency to view the world and situations through a third-person perspective, and the ability to adopt multiple viewpoints.[150] Individuals learn about themselves through others. Rothbausm, Morelli, and Ruck describe the development of this self-awareness through primary emphasis on understanding "what others see and know to be true."[151] Young children in collectivist communities are responsible for integrating themselves into activities, often through intergenerational modeling.[152] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Ruch note that caregivers "use talk of memories to teach moral lessons, to resolve conflicts between the child and significant others, and to establish the child's proper place in his or her social world."[153]

Measuring degrees of individualism-collectivism. Geert Hofstede first introduced a measure of individualism in 1980.[154] The term *individualism* was used to represent the placement of societal importance on individuals, individual interests, and the achievement of individual goals. *Collectivism* represented the placement of societal importance on groups, group interests, and group achievement. Hofstede presented these two syndromes as opposite poles on a one-dimensional continuum, supporting the assumption that a high measure of individualism simultaneously represented a low measure of collectivism, and vice-versa.

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[149] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 179.

[150] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 180.

[151] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 181.

[152] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 184.

[153] Rothbaum, Morelli, and Rusk, "Attachment, Learning, and Coping," 185.

[154] Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980).

Fifteen years after Hofstede's one-dimensional measure, Triandis proposed adoption of a multidimensional understanding of individualism-collectivism based on four characteristics of the self: independent, interdependent, same, and different. Associating independence with individualism and interdependence with collectivism, Triandis added the terms *horizontal* and *vertical*. *Horizontal* was used to describe sameness and connotes a personal preference for equality. The term *vertical* was used to describe difference and to connote an acceptance or even preference for personal distinction. The resulting four dimensions of the Triandis construct are horizontal individualism (HI), vertical individualism (VI), horizontal collectivism (HC), and vertical collectivism (VC).[155]

Keeping with his "both/and" approach to syndrome orientation, Harry Triandis and Michele Gelfand developed an instrument which ranks a respondent within all four domains, allowing for the assessment of each domain independently. Triandis and Gelfand performed extensive research to validate their four-domain construct, publishing "Converging Measures of Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism" in 1998.[156] The authors note several general findings from their studies.

> In our samples, we saw that the vertical individualists stressed competition and hedonism even more than the horizontal individualists; the horizontal individualists stressed self-reliance. The vertical collectivists seemed to be more authoritarian and traditional but also stressed sociability; the horizontal collectivists stressed sociability, interdependence, and hedonism.[157]

While considering the practical implications of their research, Triandis and Gelfand recommend that future researchers use the four-domain construct in research involving social and organizational psychology: "Predictions can be made regarding how

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[155] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 44. In an appendix, the author provides an instrument for assessing an individual's score for all four dimensions of the INDCOL construct. Also see The Society for Judgement and Decision Making, "Horizontal & Vertical Individualism & Collectivism II," accessed April 14, 2020. http://www.sjdm.org/dmidi/Horizontal_&_Vertical_Individualism_&_ Collectivism_II.html.

[156] Harry Charalambus Triandis and Michele J. Gelfand, "Converging Measurement of Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74, no. 1 (1998): 118-28.

[157] Triandis and Gelfand, "Converging Measurement," 125.

VI and HI and VC and HC would relate to topics such as attributions, conformity, persuasion, leadership, conflict and justice, group processes, and gender."[158] Biblical community involves all these aspects of interpersonal dynamics. Given this encouragement, and noting the volume of published research referencing the sixteen-question instrument provided by Triandis and Gelfand, their Culture Orientation Scale (COS) was selected for use in this research (see appendix 1).[159]

American Individualism

After considering the general causes and attributes of both individualism and collectivism, it is instructive to consider details of the immediate context in question; namely, American individualism. While many attributes of American individualism conform to the characteristics described previously, the history and development of America's unique brand of individualism, with consideration to the development of American religious individualism, is significant in regard to the proposed research.

Colonial communalism. Nearly four hundred years ago, John Winthrop spoke to the members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony before they disembarked in the New World. As their pastor, Winthrop encouraged his flock to "entertain each other in brotherly affection . . . abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of each other's necessities. . . . We must delight in each other, make others' conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labour and suffer together, always having before our eyes . . . our community as members of the same Body."[160]

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[158] Triandis and Gelfand, "Converging Measurement," 125.

[159] I have found this instrument referred to as the Individualism and Collectivism Scale, the Cultural Orientation Scale, and the Horizontal & Vertical Individualism & Collectivism Scale II. For continuity, the instrument, as found on Triandis and Gelfand, "Converging Measurement," 120, will be referred to as the Culture Orientation Scale (COS). While discussion of the Triandis-Gelfand instrument in literature reviews is common, I am unaware of any discipleship or church revitalization research which utilizes this instrument as part of their methodology.

[160] John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," in *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*, ed. Conrad Cherry (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 42,

Alexis de Tocqueville coined the term *Individualisme* in the early 1830s as a

means of describing his observations in America. De Tocqueville describes his socio-

cultural observation as

> an innumerable multitude of men, alike and equal, constantly circling around in
> pursuit of the petty and banal pleasures with which they glut their souls. Each of
> them withdrawn into himself, is almost unaware of the fate of the rest. Mankind, for
> him, consists in his children and his personal friends. As for the rest of his fellow
> citizens, they are near enough, but he does not notice them. He touches them but
> feels nothing. He exists in and for himself, and though he still may have a family,
> one can at least say that he has not got a fatherland.[161]

Heard summarizes this as the American "disposition to separate oneself from the mass of

one's fellow human beings and to appeal only to the solitary effort of one's own

understanding."[162] De Tocqueville held the concern that "if individualism were allowed

to operate within the American spirit without any restrictions, it would eventually lead to

widespread selfishness and isolation."[163] Despite his concerns, de Tocqueville was also

hopeful that a sense of duty and sacrifice for the common good[164] would result in a

countervailing force due to citizens serving in public office at all levels of government.[165]

Philip Brown ascribes the decline of American culture to a loss of colonial

communalism, noting,

> Puritan communalism was abandoned for incessant personal striving. The individual
> was awarded priority over the collective, but the purely personal was given priority
> over a transcendental individual. Individual came to mean personal particularity
> rather than singularity of thought. . . . Instead of recognizing as the Founders did

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quoted in Robert N. Bellah, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), xxxv.

[161] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J. P. Mayer, trans. George Lawrence
(New York: Anchor, 1969), 692.

[162] Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions*, 18.

[163] De Tocqueville, quoted in Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions*, 18.

[164] See Donald L. Gelpi, *Beyond Individualism: Toward a Retrieval of Moral Discourse in
America* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 1.

[165] Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions*, 19. De Tocqueville feared that an
individualistic ethos would "sap public virtues" and "betray democratic America into crude egotism." See
Gelpi, *Beyond Individualism*, 1.

that self-interest was a real but destructive force in the world that required other real countervailing action, modern Americans have abandoned any efforts to contain it.[166]

In 1996, Robert Bellah noted, "Much of what has been happening in [American] society has been undermining our sense of community at every level."[167] To explain this shift from community to self, Bellah suggests,

> Perhaps the crucial change in American life has been that we have moved from the local life of the nineteenth century—in which economic and social relationships were visible and, however imperfectly, morally interpreted as parts of the larger common life—to a society vastly more interrelated and integrated economically, technically and functionally. Yet this is a society in which the individual can only rarely and with difficulty understand himself and his activities as interpreted in morally meaningful ways with those of other, different Americans.[168]

Bellah explains, "Individualism, the first language in which Americans tend to think about their lives, values independence and self-reliance above all else."[169]

Richard Devane, assessing individualism from a European context and following its effect on the North American continent, asserts that ultimate culpability for contemporary individualism rests with the Protestant Reformation: "Europe finds itself in its present plight owing to the nihilistic individualism or atomism that had its origin mainly in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and for which the Renaissance had, to some extent, prepared the way. This individualism is three-fold—(1) religious, (2) political, and (3) economic."[170] Religious individualism acted as the precipitator of the other major expressions of individualism. Devane explains, "Religious individualism

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[166] Philip R. Brown, *Authentic Individualism: A Guide for Reclaiming the Best of America's Heritage* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 145-46.

[167] Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, xxx.

[168] Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, 50.

[169] Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, viii.

[170] Richard S. Devane, *The Failure of Individualism: A Documented Essay* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), xvi. It is important to note that Devane is an ardent critic of the Reformation and presents his argument from a clearly Roman Catholic perspective. As such, Devane considers the Reformation to be a break from Christianity, resulting in a weakening of Christian witness and a destabilization of the legitimate ecclesiastical authority of the Pope. Devane considers religious, political and economic individualism to be "the three basic causes of the world's present unrest," and lays accountability for this situation at the feet of the Reformers. See Devane, *The Failure of Individualism*, xvii.

entered into the souls and minds of the English, created an intensely individualistic mental atmosphere and outlook, and thereby facilitated the development of Individualism in Politics and Economics."[171]

American religious individualism. Devane asserts that it was the Protestant Reformation that produced the dissolution of the previous organically structured collectivistic society in Europe: "The Reformation was an emphatic assertion of the individualist element which had been overshadowed by the authority of tradition and of the organization. The central doctrine of the Reformation was the universal priesthood of believers, a doctrine in implication individualistic and democratic."[172]

Heard concurs with Devane's assessment, stating, "[Americans'] religious thinking has been largely shaped by Protestant Christianity which to a great extent has promoted an individualistic approach to God."[173] Acknowledging the strong influence of biblical imagery on American communal thinking, Heard notes a shift in emphasis due to the Reformation's influence on interpreting biblical imagery:

> The Hebrew concept of the covenant in the Old Testament is presented more in terms of being a collective agreement. The individual's relationship with God is understood more from a perspective of group belonging and the way the group relates to God. In the New Testament, however, the person's relationship to God is viewed more as an individual decision.[174]

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[171] Devane, *The Failure of Individualism*, xi. The conviction of Devane's Roman Catholic orientation is further expressed by his association of Protestantism as being synonymous with religious individualism. Additionally, he refers to regions of Europe that followed Reformation teachings into Protestantism as "lost to the faith." See Devane, *The Failure of Individualism*, 30.

[172] Devane, *The Failure of Individualism*, 28-29. It should be noted that, in context, Devane's assertion that the doctrine of the Priesthood of the Believer is democratic in nature and should not be interpreted as complimentary.

[173] Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions*, 5.

[174] Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions*, 9. Heard's statement that the New Testament's perspective is one of individual decision is at the crux of this research. The tension is not in whether this individualistic bent is present, but rather if such a bent is appropriate. Heard would suggest that the individualistic interpretation of New Testament passages is eisegetical.

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This perspective, taken to its extreme, sets a trajectory by which the individual becomes the determiner of their associations, both horizontally with others and vertically with God. Such a perspective would have devastating consequences upon the church. As Devane comments, "If a Protestant be really logical in his full acceptance and application of Private Judgement, he must be necessarily opposed to institutional or corporate religion."[175]

It is within the "peculiarly American"[176] framework of Revivalism that sources note a self-perpetuating, ever more encompassing, cycle of religious individualism.[177] During the seventeenth century in America it became normative to require an individual experience of personal salvation to become a church member in Massachusetts.[178] Heard finds a shift toward individualized religion during the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century, noting, "Preachers such as Jonathon Edwards and George Whitfield called upon people to repent of their sins, avoid eternal punishment, and be joined with God. These sermons made little to no reference to community ideas."[179] Bellah describes this shift from individualism to consumerism: "In the eighteenth century, it was possible for individuals to find the form of religion that best suited their inclinations. By the nineteenth century, religious bodies had to compete in a consumer's market and grew or declined in terms of changing patterns of individual religious taste."[180] The effect was to change the

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[175] Devane, *The Failure of Individualism*, 34. It is this tension, the biblical call to community and the individualistic bent to isolationism and autonomy, which form the basis of this research consideration.

[176] Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, 233.

[177] For example, Heard suggests that the numerous revival movements in America indicate an individualistic approach to God. See Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions*, 5.

[178] Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, 232-33. The purpose of this thesis is not to argue against personal salvation or individual holiness, but to highlight a change in church practice. A strong argument could be made that the desire to ensure a redeemed membership was an appropriate corrective. What is significant to this thesis is the shift from a community affirmation of discipleship lived out, to an individual affirmation of an experience, as evidence of salvation.

[179] Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions*, 5.

[180] Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, 233. Bellah also notes in this section that "many of the most influential figures in nineteenth century American culture could find a home in none of the existing religious bodies, though they were attracted to the religious teachings of several traditions," offering Emerson,

nature of many churches from a disciplined community to an organization of ever-increasing free association that "would eventually override all efforts at church discipline."[181]

Heard suggests that a monumental consequence of American individualism is a shift in understanding the very nature of revelation:

> [Religious individualism's] basic character is that a person's religious experiences are for the most part restricted to a direct relationship with God. A person's encounter with the Divine is defined as being one which completely or primarily involves the individual and God. In this approach revelation to an individual through other people, society, or nature is given very little consideration. . . . The other characteristics of religious individualism are to a great extent an outgrowth of this view of Divine revelation.[182]

This understanding of the nature of revelation extends into corporate church life when preaching, worship, and prayer are valued more than teaching and education because the former are thought to be aspects of practice where God encounters the person individually. Also, though fellowship may be enjoyable, religious individualism deems it unnecessary because fellowship is not considered an experience with God[183] nor part of the essential process of personal salvation.[184]

Thoreau and Whitman as examples. See Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, 233. This suggests one of the few instances in the precedent literature where the individualistic demands of the religious consumer failed to find legitimate expression within a recognized faith community. For more on the perspective that the church is responsible for division due to a rejection of individualism, see Donald Capps, *The Depleted Self: Sin in a Narcissistic Age* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

[181] Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, 233. Persons would rather disassociate than undergo correction. Stanley Hauerwas suggests that this same dilemma faces contemporary faith communities, noting that persons who understand themselves individualistically will deem church discipline as draconian and an over-reach of church authority. He suggests implementing a narrative of discipleship similar to medieval craftsmen and apprentices as more palatable to the contemporary disciple's self-concept. See Hauerwas, "Discipleship as a Craft," 883-84.

[182] Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions*, 14.

[183] This individualistic understanding of fellowship stands in stark contrast to the way Jennifer McBride describes Bonhoeffer's understanding of the church as the "continued incarnation of Christ in the world," whereby "Jesus makes himself known to the world here and now through cruciform community." Jennifer M. McBride, "Christ Existing as Concrete Community Today," *Theology Today* 71, no. 1 (April 2014): 93.

[184] Heard, *Basic Values and Ethical Decisions*, 14-15. While Heard uses language which understands salvation as a process, many Christians consider salvation to be an event in time. The distinction

Bellah agrees with Ernst Troelsch's suggestion[185] that American religious experience more accurately aligns with a sectarian ideology produced by ontological individualism. Americans start from a perspective of the primacy of the individual from which they begin to construct their understanding of an appropriate relationship in and with a faith community. Within this framework it is "hard to comprehend the social realism of the church—the idea that the church is prior to individuals and not just the product of them."[186] The idea of the church as a manmade organization, combined with a truncated understanding of God's means of revelation, have contributed to an over-arching macro-culture of individualism under which churches struggle to realize biblical community. Bellah elaborates,

> The sect type has been present in America virtually from the beginning, including the Protestant denominations with the largest numbers, and has, in many ways, been the dominant mode of American Christianity. The sect views the church as primarily a volunteer association of believers. The individual believer has a certain priority over the church in that the experience of grace is temporally prior to admission to membership . . . the influence of the sects on American society has been enormous. They are the major source of our individualism and of the pervasive idea that all social groups are fragile and in need of constant energetic effort to maintain. There is a deep, though also ironic, relationship between the spirit of the sects and the utilitarian individualism that has been so important in the American past. The world that the sects find so uncongenial today is in part their own creation.[187]

In this assessment, Bellah's words foreshadow the warnings and declarations of Ogden and Geiger, Kelley, and Nation discussed earlier, that the current culture is not due to a lack of Christians being present, but a lack of true Christian presence. The believer's

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is helpful in considering the person's perspective on God's involvement in their salvation with individualists tending to lean more toward self-determination. For a helpful discussion on the language of conversion and its implications, see Gordon T. Smith, *Transforming Conversion: Rethinking the Language and Contours of Christian Initiation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010).

[185] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, trans. Oliver Wyon (London: George Allen, 1911), 1:328-82.

[186] Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, 244.

[187] Bellah, *Habits of the Heart*, 244-45. Devane agrees with Bellah and Troelsch, stating, "The religious individualism of Luther and the Reformers shattered the religious unity of Europe and is responsible, to a great extent, for the widespread religious indifferentism and neo-paganism today, and for the secularization of society." See Devane, *The Failure of Individualism*, xvi.

understanding is preconditioned in an unbiblical direction, and because a believer often senses the experience of salvation in time prior to their self-association with a local church as a member, the individual appears to precede and thereby considers himself as the producer of his faith community.[188]

A. G. Suderman provides a worthy summary of the effect of individualism upon the Christian faith and witness:

> The Enlightenment ideals of individual autonomy, that is the ontological existence of oneself independent from others, along with the principle of freedom or freedom from constraints and restrictions including others, have been so thoroughly embraced that the Christian message has been molded and distorted in order to fit with and embrace the modern liberalist focus on the individual—the salvation of the individual being the ultimate goal. With the individual as the focus, the church simply becomes a vehicle or a tool for the individualized message whilst providing the emotive experience needed so that individuals may come to experience, believe, and be saved by this 'gospel.' The whole Christian imagination, therefore, becomes shaped by these modern notions which have infiltrated and corrupted the church and its witness, the most extreme being the relegating of the religious to the private realm.[189]

Biblical Personhood, Community, and the Church

The literature considered thus far has presented American religious individualism's concept of the person as atomistic, embracing the notion of completeness even when isolated, and easily disconnected from associations which the individual deems unbeneficial. This image stands in stark contrast to the nature of personhood and community described in Scripture.

To highlight the contrast between Scripture and lived experience, a brief discussion of personhood and community from Scripture will be presented. The intent is to show that the current state of the church and discipleship does not meet the ontological

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[188] Such notions stand in opposition to theological concepts such as sovereignty, election, union with Christ, the church universal, etc. The issue with which Southern Baptists must wrestle is the fact that the individualism plaguing the church is in large part an overcorrection caused by the Reformation, a critical turning point in their faith's historical narrative.

[189] A. G. Suderman, "Overcoming Modernity's Individualism: Becoming a Community of Peace in the Face of Violence," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 32, no. 2 (November 2011): 33.

or teleological expectations expressed in Scripture. The implication of this comparison is that the church is what God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit declared her to be, and she is to fulfill the purposes that He established for His bride.

A Christian understanding of community is rooted in God's purposes and activity, as revealed in Scripture. Robert Banks summarizes these activities and purposes:

> God is trinity in community. He created male and female in community, who would increase their community through children. He established his community Israel. He redefined that community through Jesus Christ to accept the entire world and all peoples. The mandates of God for human behavior are directed toward life in his community. God will someday bring together his entire community which spans both distance and time, and he will establish a new Jerusalem for his people to dwell. In essence, God is the author and perfecter of community. He establishes its boundaries, its identity, its membership, and its future.[190]

The early church described in Acts 2 is often referenced as a model of biblical community. Acts 2:42 states, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." The word translated "fellowship" is the Greek word *koinonia*. Norma Corry explains that the word *koinonia* can also be translated as "community," with etymological roots that trace back to the concept of commonality.[191] J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida place *koinonia* in the semantic domains of "give" (a subdomain of possess, transfer and exchange and translated as "share" [192]) and of "associate" (translated as "close association, fellowship"[193]). The concept of *koinonia* is richer and more intentional than the casual discourse that often passes for fellowship, carrying an emphasis on the coming together of persons for mutual participation.

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[190] Robert Banks, "The Biblical Approach to Community," *Christian Education Journal* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 18-28, as summarized in Darin Kennedy, "A Theology of Small Groups," *Restoration Quarterly*, January 1, 1996, 176.

[191] Norma Anne Corry, "Koinonia: The Genesis of the Pauline Construct" (MA thesis, Arts University of the Witwatersrand, 1997), 2.

[192] Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (Cape Town: Bible Society, 1989), 566-72, cited in Corry, "Koinonia," 4.

[193] Louw and Nida, 446, cited in Corry, "Koinonia," 4.

Genesis 1:26a reads, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'" These words from the opening chapter of Genesis present God as a plurality of persons in relationship (*koinonia* or *communio*) yet comprising one God.[194] It is God who creates man as His image-bearer. God condescends to relate to His creation, and after placing him in Eden assesses Adam's existence as a unique, singular individual to be unsatisfactory.[195] Ray Anderson notes, "The picture of the solitary Adam in Genesis 2 is one of self-alienation rather than self-fulfillment. . . . The divine image is not a religious quality of the individual person, but a spiritual reality expressed through the interchange of persons in relation."[196]

Determining to provide a relational other for Adam, God places every previously created creature before him for his consideration. Finding no appropriate mate, God creates Eve as an intimate relation, not from dust as He had previously created, but from Adam himself (Gen 2:22). The Divine intention for the enduring nature and intimacy of this

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[194] Admittedly, an extensive discussion of alternative interpretations of Gen 1:26a is outside the scope of this research. Zizioulas speaks of Trinitarian Community as foundational ontology: "It would be unthinkable to speak of the 'one God' before speaking of the God who is 'communion,' that is to say, of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity is a primordial ontological concept and not a notion which is added to the divine substance or rather which follows it. . . . The substance of God, 'God,' has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion." J. D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), 17. Jenkins refers to the Trinity as "base community." See Margaret Jenkins, "Towards Koinonia in Life," *The Ecumenical Review* 45, no. 1 (January 1993): 94.

[195] Gen 2:18 reads, "Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'"

[196] Ray S. Anderson, *Self-Care: A Theology of Personal Empowerment and Spiritual Healing* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1995), 238. Suderman presents an applicable summary of Zizioulas' extension of Trinitarian ontology and its consequence on personhood according to Eastern Orthodox theology:

> True ontology . . . arises from God who is relational as God is Triune, the communion of three persons. "Person" therefore possesses some form of ontological reference that "individual" is not able to possess. This, argues Zizioulas, is due to the difference in their existence; "individual" refers to a human being in their biological state of existence, an existence that leads to individualism, whereas 'person' refers to a human being in an ecclesial state of existence, an existence that is defined through relationship. Everyone, he argues, is born into the biological state of existence. In other words, everyone is born into the world as an individual, but not everyone becomes a person as personhood can only come about when one becomes part of the church. (Zizioulas, *Being as Communion,* 40-59, summarized by Suderman, "Overcoming Modernity's Individualism," 35)

relationship is communicated through Genesis 2:24: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."[197]

The fall recorded in Genesis 3 represents a loss of intimate relationship between man and God and between man and woman. It is God who, in the form of the *protoeuangelion*[198] foreshadows the coming of His Christ as His ultimate plan to restore His relationship with mankind, as well as mankind's relationships with each other, through the gospel (2 Cor 5:16-21; Eph 2:11-22).

It is Jesus's prayer to the Father that his disciples, both present and future, experience the full restoration of interpersonal and Divine *koinonia*. In a section commonly referred to as Jesus's high priestly prayer, Jesus prays,

> I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. (John 17:20-23)

Robert Gundry describes the oneness Jesus prayed for as "a oneness of active love for one another; and this love is to unite them so closely that they are living inside one another's skin."[199] The effect of this demonstrable unity is an unbelieving world knowing and believing that the Father sent Jesus into the world, loves Jesus, and loves Jesus' followers. Gundry concludes that this oneness, between Jesus and His believers and between believers and one another, "is both the purpose and the result of receiving Jesus' glory."[200] Sylvia Collinson provides an excellent summary of the nature of the New Testament church.

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[197] Note that Cain's response to God's question regarding Abel's absence—"I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"—in Gen 4:9, appears to be the first statement of individualism recorded in Scripture. Eve's act of eating the forbidden fruit in Gen 3:6 would qualify if Adam's absence during the initial event is assumed.

[198] Gen 3:15 reads, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

[199] Robert H Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 443.

[200] Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament*, 443.

Those who relate to God in and by faith are called out (*ekklesia*) into an assembly of believers, the body of Christ (Acts 2:44-47; 1 Cor. 12:12), the household and dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:19-22), a family of brothers and sisters (Heb. 3:1), "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Pet. 2:9). These all indicate that the gathering of believers is indispensable to the concept of belief. The church is a worshipping, serving (Mt. 25:40), living and growing community. The New Testament allows for no isolated believers (Heb. 10:24,25). Each member is important, having spiritual gifts to be used for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7) and a contribution to make to the building up (*oikodomed*) of the body. Love and loyalty in action between members is their aim (Gal. 6:10). All members are servants of Christ together, whatever their social status, gender, age, or ethnicity.[201]

**Standing Between What Is
and What Should Be**

Christians are called by their Lord to be united, to be intimately connected to one another, and with Him, in a vital, life-giving relationship. Research, combined with anecdotal experiences by many, indicates that American Christians and the American church are existing far from this ideal. Precedent literature would suggest that the overarching cultural tendencies of individualism, the culture of origin for American Christians, predisposes one to form utilitarian relationships between themselves and others, and between themselves and God. This research intended to press into this suggestion to see if churches that experience revitalization do so by overcoming elements of American individualism. This initial research looked at the effect of the revitalization leaders' own orientation and its impact on their perspective regarding their church's revitalization.

Definitions

Church revitalization. Church revitalization is a change of culture and praxis by members of a church community, after a period of church plateau or decline, that leads to greater church health and numerical growth.[202]

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[201] Collinson roots the vital relationship between Christians in the Trinity, adding, "The relational nature of the triune God leads to those in his 'image' living in relationship as covenant partners with God and each other." Sylvia Wilkey Collinson, "Making Disciples and the Christian Faith," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 29, no. 3 (July 2005): 245.

[202] This definition is based heavily on Hudson's definition, with the exclusion of the idea of intentionality. See Joseph Stephen Hudson, "A Competency Model for Church Revitalization in Southern Baptist Churches: A Mixed Methods Study" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 30. This modification is intended to allow for consideration of Divinely appointed culture-changing

Collectivism (COL). Harry Triandis defines *Collectivism* as

a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribe, nation); are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by, these collectives; are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals; and emphasize their connectedness to members of their collectives.[203]

Culture. Schein explains that *culture* is "a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."[204]

Disciple. The term *disciple* comes from the term *methetes*, designating a learner or follower, usually committed to a significant master. Michael Wilkins writes that *methetes* "is the primary term used to refer to Jesus' followers and is a common referent for those known in the early church as believers, Christians, brothers/sisters, those of the way, or saints."[205] As such, a *disciple* is not a particular type of Christian but is a term which should be descriptive of all Christians.

Discipleship. Discipleship is the state of being a disciple. This term describes the ongoing life of the disciple, as well as the broader narrative of Christian experience, understood as a lifelong process of becoming an ever more complete disciple of Jesus.[206]

Horizontal collectivism (HC). Horizontal collectivism is a collectivistic socio-cultural orientation that values similarities, common goals, and interdependence, which

events, beyond the intention yet capitalized upon by leadership, resulting in greater health and numerical growth. For a helpful discussion of differing approaches to defining church revitalization, see Hudson, "A Competency Model," 22-29.

[203] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 2.

[204] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 18.

[205] Michael Wilkins, *Following the Master* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 38.

[206] See Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 35. Barna notes, "The most common term selected by Christian adults and church leaders alike to describe *the process of spiritual growth* is 'becoming more Christ-like,'" with discipleship as a close second, followed by sanctification and spiritual growth. See Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship* (Colorado Springs: The Navigators, 2015), 19-20.

believes all community members should be equal, resulting in a tendency to resist submitting to authority.

Horizontal individualism (HI). Horizontal individualism is an individualistic socio-cultural orientation that values individual uniqueness, self-reliance, and distinction from groups, with little interest in personal status.

Individualism (IND). Triandis defines *individualism* as

a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives; are primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights, and contracts they have established with others; give priority to their personal goals over the goals of others; and emphasize rational analysis of the advantages and disadvantages to associating with others.[207]

Syndrome. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *syndrome* as "a group of signs and symptoms that occur together and characterize a particular abnormality or condition."[208] The term's use in this thesis is intended to mirror this usage in the precedent literature and is not meant to convey any derogatory connotation.

Vertical collectivism (VC). Vertical collectivism is a collectivistic socio-cultural orientation that values similarities, common goals, and interdependence, with an interested in-group integrity and competition with out-groups, resulting in a tendency to submit to authority for the good of the in-group.

Vertical individualism (VI). Vertical individualism is an individualistic socio-cultural orientation that values individual uniqueness, self-reliance, and individual distinction from groups, with a high interest in earned personal status, resulting in a tendency to compete with others.

Research Hypothesis

Ed Stetzer suggests, "With few exceptions, people come to Christ in steps, and those steps usually involve conversation and community with believers. There are really

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[207] Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 2.

[208] Frank C. Mish, ed., *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2004), 726.

two conversions—the first to community . . . and then to Christ."[209] Stetzer is suggesting

that individuals generally experience a transformative encounter with the gospel after

experiencing a change in relationship relative to a biblical faith community. In a very real

sense, the gospel incarnated by the community is the communicated message which

validates the tenants of the gospel they articulate. After a transformative response to the

gospel, the individual is a new Christ-follower (disciple) who is called to engage in the

process of progressive sanctification in community (discipleship).[210]

Considering the current status of the church, the SBC, and discipleship in

America, it is not difficult to discern the immensity of the task before the church.

Americans are culturally predisposed to reject or minimize the very type of interactions

that Stetzer suggests are the usual precursors to evangelism, conversion, and discipleship.

God has declared the redeemed to be part of the church and has designed and

decreed that one of the defining characteristics of Christ's church is to be unity

demonstrated through biblical community. Persons who experience true conversion are

called to turn from their focus on self (deny themselves) and submit to God's purposes

for their lives, both individually and in community. This necessitates a process of cultural

transformation to overcome inherent tendencies (both personal and cultural) that oppose

or devalue biblical community.

The precedent literature's propensity to vilify American individualism strongly

suggests the appropriateness of adopting an alternative perspective. In addition, recognizing

that tenants of American individualism stand in stark contrast to tenants of appropriate

discipleship and biblical community has compelled this inquiry into potentially more

appropriate cultural constructs. This would suggest that any movement away from

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[209] Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 120.

[210] For this research, the term *discipleship* is more accurately understood to express the manner of life engaged by a truly redeemed and biblically appropriate disciple. When referring to activities intended to facilitate a more appropriate biblical perspective on life as a disciple, the terms discipleship *programs*, *methods*, or other such qualifying terms are used.

individualism and toward a more collectivistic perspective by Christians and the church would be appropriate. To this end, I suggest that churches in America that experience revitalization through discipleship do so by overcoming elements of America's unique brand of Western individualism. Restated in the positive, churches in America, which experience revitalization through discipleship, do so by strengthening elements of collectivism as a corrective to American individualism.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The existing literature on church revitalization not only reveals the need for church revitalization but also identifies discipleship as a key component of the revitalization process. Revitalization literature frequently offers indictments of individualism; however, a need exists to not only obtain quantitative results relating to church revitalization but to explain these results in terms of socio-cultural orientation and participant perspectives related to the role of discipleship in this process.[1] This study sought to fill that need.

This chapter describes the methodology employed in this study. The state of existing literature on the role of socio-cultural orientation and discipleship in church revitalization recommends an explanatory sequential mixed methods design.[2] Specifically, this study utilized the participant-selection variant of the explanatory mixed methods design. As John Creswell and Vicki Plano Clark explain, "This variant is used when the researcher is focused on qualitatively examining a phenomenon but needs initial quantitative results to identify and purposefully select the best participants."[3] Figure 1

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[1] John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2011), 151.

[2] Creswell and Plano Clark write, "This design is most useful when the researcher wants to access trends and relationships with quantitative data but also be able to explain the mechanism or reasons behind the resultant trends." Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 82.

[3] Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 86. The authors note two variants of the explanatory mixed methods design. The "follow-up explanations variant" is most common and places a priority on the quantitative phase and uses the qualitative phase to explain the quantitative results. However, the less common participant-selection variant places a priority on the second qualitative phase. Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 85-86.

illustrates this design structure, while the following two sections state the purpose of the study, along with a synopsis of the research questions.[4]

Figure 6. Explanatory sequential mixed methods

Research Purpose

The precedent literature is replete with indictments of individualism's negative impact on church vitality and discipleship efforts. A review of applicable research indicates that aspects of individualism and collectivism are of great interest; however, a direct inquiry into measures of individualism and collectivism and their potential impact upon church revitalization, particularly with regard to a revitalization pastor's socio-cultural orientation and discipleship, is lacking. It was the intent of this study to fill part of this void in the literature.

The overall purpose of the combined efforts of the research pod was to identify churches that have experienced revitalization and to discover methods and attitudes that resulted in a movement toward revitalization. The purpose of this particular explanatory sequential mixed-methods study was to use qualitative interviews to explain the effect of the revitalization pastor's socio-cultural orientation on discipleship in Southern Baptist Convention churches experiencing revitalization.[5]

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[4] Figure 6 adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 69

[5] Creswell explains,
The explanatory sequential mixed methods approach is a design in mixed methods that appeals to individuals with a strong quantitative background or from fields relatively new to qualitative approaches. It involves a two-phase project in which the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase, analyzes the results, and then uses the results to plan (or build on to) the second,

Research Questions Synopsis

1. What percentage of SBC churches are plateaued or declining?

2. Of those churches, which have experienced a decline, what percentage have experienced revitalization?

3. What influence does a revitalization pastor's socio-cultural orientation have upon subjective measures of church revitalization?

4. What influence do revitalization pastors believe key theology expressions have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?

5. What influence do revitalization pastors believe key elements of meaningful membership have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?

6. What influence do revitalization pastors believe key programmatic elements have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?

7. What influence do revitalization pastors believe crisis and opposition have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?

8. What advice would revitalization pastors give to others seeking to revitalize their church?

Design Overview

This study was conducted as one component of a larger study with seven other studies, performed by seven research team members, investigating factors contributing to church revitalization within the SBC.[6] This mixed-methods design consisted of two components. The first component was a quantitative strand consisting of three phases. Phase 1 collected and analyzed data on churches in the SBC to produce a list of churches that have experienced revitalization. Phase 2 utilized a survey to discover church leaders'

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qualitative phase. The quantitative results typically inform the types of participants to be purposefully selected from the qualitative phase and the types of questions that will be asked of the participants. The overall intent of this design is to have the qualitative data help explain in more detail the initial quantitative results. (John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. [Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014], 224)

See also Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 69-71. The design occurs in two distinct phases and is intended to use the second qualitative phase to explain information revealed in the quantitative phase. As Creswell and Plano write, in this design, "the researcher interprets how the qualitative results help to explain the initial quantitative results." Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 71.

[6] The larger study examines how changes in discipleship, evangelism, leadership, missions, prayer, and worship are present in church revitalization.

subjective assessment of their church's revitalization and factors contributing to that revitalization. Phase 3 implemented a survey to score revitalization leaders with regard to four aspects of socio-cultural orientation. A composite individualism and collectivism score, as well as a collectivism-individualism differential score, was computed for each phase 3 respondent.

The qualitative strand was the second component of the study. A select number of church leaders that rank highest and lowest with regard to their collectivism-individualism score were invited to participate in interviews. These interviews further investigated the potential impact of aspects of socio-cultural orientation upon the revitalization leader's perception of discipleship, as well as its effect upon the revitalization leader's perception of their church's revitalization process. The qualitative interviews provided further understanding and insight into the relationship between individualistic and collectivistic tendencies and church revitalization. The following sections detail the purpose and design of each component and strand of the study.

Quantitative Strand

The entire research team jointly conducted the two initial quantitative phases of the study. In an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the purpose of the quantitative strand was to identify types of individuals (or churches in this case) to be selected for the qualitative strand.[7] The first three research questions were addressed in the quantitative strand. The purpose and specifics of each quantitative phase follows.

Phase 1. The purpose of phase 1 was to collect data on SBC churches and identify the churches that met the criteria of revitalization. The data for this phase was drawn from Annual Church Profile (ACP) reports submitted to LifeWay by SBC churches in the United States. The data analysis for this phase consisted of applying the revitalization criteria to the ACP data. The product of this analysis was a list of churches

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[7] Creswell, *Research Design*, 224.

in the SBC that have experienced revitalization as indicated by meeting qualifying metrics, as well as objective measures of particular metrics of revitalization for each church. This list of revitalized churches provided the sample for phase 2.
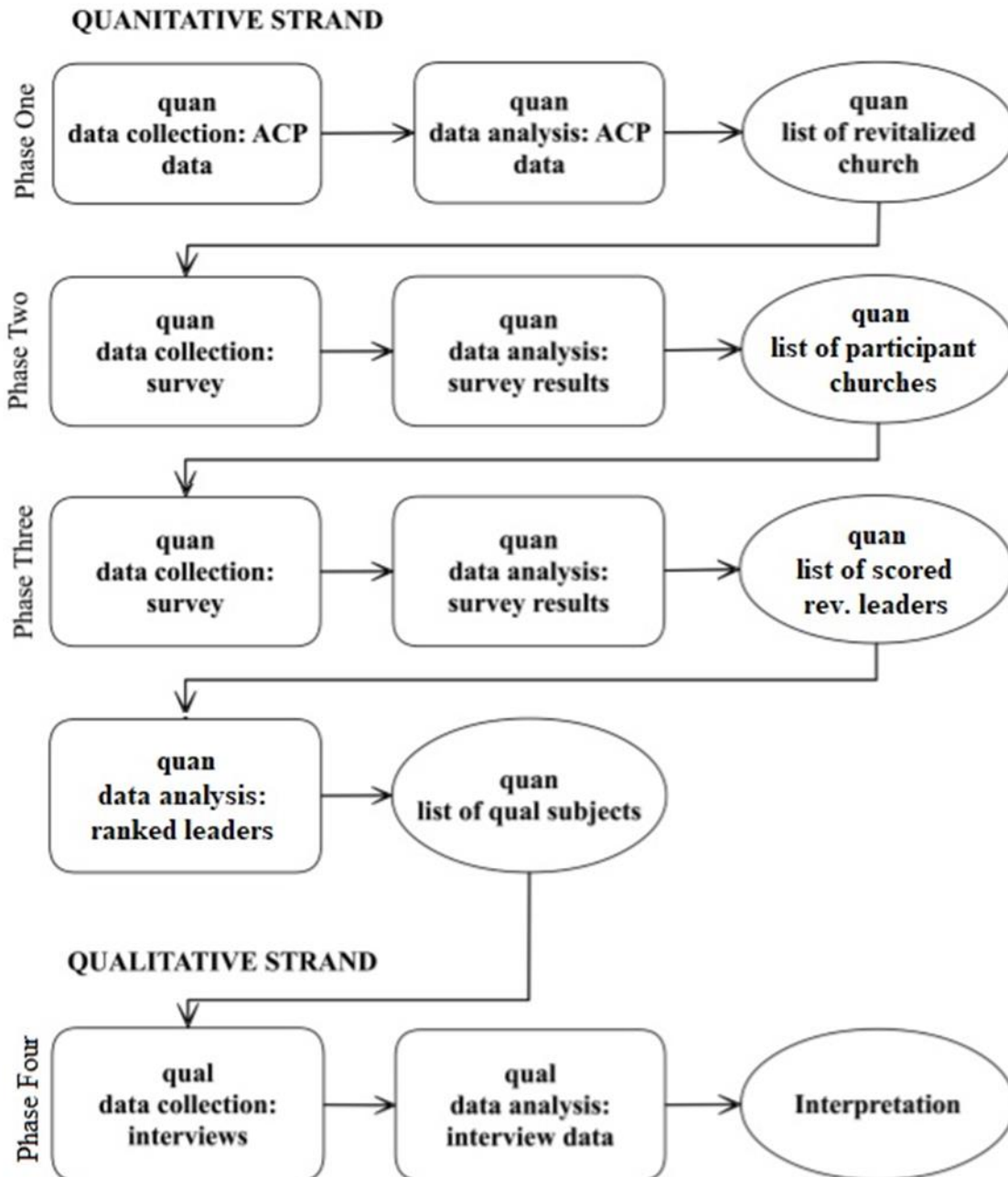
Figure 7. Design overview

Phase 2. The purpose of this phase was to discover how church revitalization leaders from phase 1 churches self-assessed significant factors in their church's revitalization. For this phase, the research team administered a survey to the churches from phase 1. This survey included items relating to church demographics, the respondent's role in their church's revitalization, and sections specifically related to the research emphasis of each research team member. Data analysis for this phase consisted of compiling survey responses to collect subjective measures in each of the categories of emphasis. The product of the analysis was a subjective assessment by revitalization leaders regarding aspects of their church's revitalization. Respondents to phase 2 who agreed to participate in further research provided the sample for phase 3.

Phase 3. Phase 3 was unique to me, as a researcher, relative to the combined efforts of the research team. The purpose of phase 3 was to collect data on church revitalization leaders from phase 2 and determine each leader's socio-cultural orientation with respect to aspects of individualism and collectivism. For this phase, I administered a survey instrument, with the Triandis-Gelfand Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism Scale embedded within, to revitalization leaders from phase 2.[8] Data analysis for this phase consisted of scoring the instrument for each respondent in four aspects of socio-cultural orientation (HC, HI, VC, VI). A composite individualism (IND=HI+VI) and collectivism (COL=HC+VC) score, as well as a differential score (DIFF=COL-IND), was computed for each phase 3 respondent. The product of the analysis was a rank order list of all respondents according to their personal differential score, from highest (most strongly collectivistic as compared to individualistic) to lowest (most strongly individualistic as compared to collectivistic). The highest six and lowest six ranked

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[8] Harry Charalambus Triandis and Michele J. Gelfand, "Converging Measurement of Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74, no. 1 (1998): 120.

respondents available for phase 4 interviews provided the sample for the qualitative strand.

Qualitative Strand

        The qualitative strand was conducted individually by each research team member and focused on their aspects of interest with regard to church revitalization.[9] In an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the qualitative data is drawn from participants identified in the quantitative strand and helps explain in more detail the initial quantitative results.[10] The following section details the purpose and components of the qualitative strand.

        Phase 4. The purpose of this phase was to explore how socio-cultural orientation impacted a revitalization leader's perspective and contributed to the revitalization of churches from phase 3. This qualitative strand employed a phenomenological approach in an attempt to understand the shared experience of discipleship in church revitalization according to the socio-cultural orientation of church revitalization leaders.[11] For this phase, the data collection was the administration of semi-structured interviews with church revitalization leaders identified in phase 3. Data analysis consisted of transcription, coding, and content analysis of the interviews. The product of this phase was findings represented by themes and categories in the form of models of discipleship according to

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      [9] Phase 3 of this research design is distinct from other team members' designs. Phase 4 of this research aligns with phase 3 of other members' research designs.

      [10] Creswell, *Research Design*, 224.

      [11] Creswell writes,
Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon. The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence. . . . The inquirer then collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon, and develops a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals. This descriptions consists of "what" they experienced and "how" they experienced it." (John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*, 3rd ed. [Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012], 76)

the revitalization leaders' socio-cultural orientation in churches that have experienced revitalization.

This section has provided an overview of this study. The research design allowed the qualitative strand to inform the results of the quantitative strand. Table 5 correlates the research design components with corresponding research questions.

Table 5. Research design and research questions

Design Components	Corresponding Research Questions
QUAN	
Phase 1	1, 2
Phase 2	3
Phase 3	3
QUAL	
Phase 4	4, 5, 6, 7, 8

Interpretation

The final component of the study was the interpretation of the findings. Both the quantitative and qualitative results were summarized and interpreted, as well as research questions answered. This component fulfilled the design purpose, explained by Creswell and Plano Clark, as "discuss[ing] to what extent and in what ways the qualitative results help to explain the quantitative results."[12]

This section provided an overview of the survey design and a description of the individual components. The following section describes the population of the study.

<div align="center">

Population

</div>

The population for this study were member or affiliate churches of the SBC within the continental United States who have experienced revitalization. Three specific characteristics of this population provided the rationale for inclusion in this study: (1) the

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[12] Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 84.

SBC is the largest protestant group within the United States,[13] which allowed the study to begin with the largest potential population; (2) the SBC archives extensive data on member churches, and this data is collected for each church through the submission of the Annual Church Profile, which is stored and analyzed by Lifeway Research; (3) churches within the SBC share a common culture and confessional context, which allows for greater commonality in the sampling.

The following section describes the process of delimiting the population in each phase of the study.

Delimitations and Sampling

The research design included five specific points of delimitation to arrive at the population and sample for this study. The first delimitation occurred prior to phase 1. To be eligible for the study, a church had to be a member or affiliate of the SBC and have completed the ACP in the years 2006 through 2016. As a result, churches that had not submitted ACP data for every year in the timeline were excluded from consideration in the initial sample population.

The second delimitation occurred during phase 1 in which churches had to meet the following definition for revitalization to be included in the population. The definition includes three criteria[14]: (1) In 2011, the congregation had declined 10 percent or more in worship attendance as compared to 2006 (five years prior), and, in 2016, the congregation had grown 10 percent or more as compared to 2011 (five years prior); (2) from this group, churches were excluded that had less than two of the last five years with

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[13] US Religion Census, "American Religious Data: 1952-2010," accessed November 12, 2018, http://www.usreligioncensus.org/compare.php. Group size is counted in three categories: congregations, adherents, and attendees. For number of congregations the SBC ranked first with 50,816 congregations while non-denominational Christian Churches was second (35,496). For adherents, the SBC ranked first with 1,9896,279 while non-denominational Christian Churches was second (1,2241,329). For attendees, the SBC ranked second with 6,263,277 while non-denominational Christian Churches was first (8,621,258).

[14] This definition of *revitalization* was determined by the larger research group in consultation with the group's doctoral thesis supervisor.

one-year worship attendance growth of 10 percent or more, or had less than two of the last five years with higher than a 20:1 attendance to baptism ratio; (3) a church had to have both two years of 10 percent worship attendance growth per year and a 20:1 baptism to attendance ratio or better.

Churches that met these criteria served as the initial population of the study. This number of churches experiencing revitalization was used to calculate the percentage of SBC churches that were experiencing revitalization, plateaued, or in decline (research questions 1 and 2).[15]

The third delimitation occurred in phase 2 in which the list of churches experiencing revitalization was surveyed to compile revitalization leaders' assessments regarding aspects of their church's revitalization. The specifics of the survey are provided in the section on instrumentation, and the entire survey is listed in appendix 3 (Church Revitalization Influence Survey). The goal for the statistical significance of the survey was a 95 percent confidence level and a 5 percent confidence interval. Once the survey collection was complete, those revitalization leaders who had completed the phase 2 survey and agreed to additional research were asked to participate in phase 3.

The fourth delimitation occurred in phase 3 in which the revitalization leaders were surveyed to assess each leader's score in four aspects of socio-cultural orientation. The specifics of the survey are provided in the section on instrumentation, and the entire

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[15] The answers to research questions 1 and 2 were calculated as percentages based on the total number of SBC churches (47,544 in 2017) versus the number of churches that completed the ACP. Southern Baptist Convention, "Fast Facts about the SBC," accessed November 14, 2018, http://www.sbc.net/ BecomingSouthernBaptist/FastFacts.asp. These criteria closely resemble that used in Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H, 2007), xiii. One notable exception is the use of attendance to baptism ratio rather than the membership to baptism ratio used by Stetzer and Dodson. Thom Rainer identified 20:1 attendance to baptism ratio as a criterion for an evangelistically effective church in Thom Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches: Successful Churches Reveal What Works and What Doesn't* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 35. Since the purpose of this study was to identify revitalized churches and not merely churches experiencing numerical growth, this criterion recognized by Rainer was employed. According to the SBC, based on 47,272 cooperating churches in 2016, the average weekly attendance was 5,200,773 with annual baptisms of 280,773. This yields an attendance to baptism ratio of 18.52:1. Southern Baptist Convention, "Fast Facts about the Southern Baptist Convention," accessed December 22, 2017, http://www.sbc.net/ BecomingSouthernBaptist/pdf/FastFacts2017.pdf.

survey is listed in appendix 5 (Culture Orientation Scale). Revitalization leaders who completed the phase 3 instrument, and who had agreed to additional research, were considered for participation in the qualitative strand of this research. Data analysis of phase 2 and phase 3 surveys provided the answer to research question 3.

The final delimitation occurred in phase 3 in which the rank order list of revitalization pastors according to aspects of socio-cultural orientation were used to produce the sample for inclusion in phase 4 of the study. Initially, a respondent had to have agreed to participate in a follow-up interview to be eligible for the sample. This purposeful sampling prioritized collectivism-individualism differential scores to emphasize socio-cultural orientation characteristics and incorporated consideration of maximal variation between churches of like scores to produce a diverse sample based on demographic categories of church context (rural, suburban, and urban).[16] This delimitation produced a list of twelve churches that were invited to participate in the phase 4 qualitative strand of the study (semi-structured interviews). Data analysis of the interviews provided the answers to research questions 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

This section detailed the delimitations of the study and methods for sampling the population. The next section will identify the limits of generalization of the study beyond the population.

Limitations of the Generalization

The population and sample were derived from the SBC churches in the United States. The quantitative attributes were generalized to SBC churches experiencing revitalization.[17] The qualitative attributes were only generalized to the participants in

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[16] Creswell explains,
This approach consists of determining in advance some criteria that differentiate the sites or participants, and then selecting sites or participants that are quite different on the criteria. This approach is often selected because when a researcher maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, it increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives—an ideal in qualitative research. (Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 156-57)

[17] Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 9.

phase 4 of the research. While there may be limitations in the direct application of these findings, depending on the cultural context of a given church, the combined quantitative and qualitative findings may be transferable to other church contexts due to the commonality of socio-cultural orientation, resulting in discipleship themes and practices. These themes and practices are generally mirrored in other evangelical congregations beyond SBC churches.

Research Instrumentation and Procedures

This study employed three primary data collection instruments. During phase 2 of the quantitative strand, the research team administered an online survey. During phase 3 in the quantitative strand, I administered an additional online survey. During phase 4 in the qualitative strand, I conducted interviews via electronic video media. The following sections detail the content and rationale for each instrument.

Church Revitalization Survey

Phase 2 in the quantitative strand employed the "Church Revitalization Survey" as the data collection instrument. The purpose of the survey was threefold: (1) to provide the subjective assessment of revitalization leaders regarding aspects of their church's revitalization, (2) to assist in providing an answer to research question 3, and (3) to provide a list of participants for phase 3 of this research. The details of the Church Revitalization Survey follow.

Design. The research team chose a self-administered web survey as the mode. This design leverages three advantages. First, using a website survey service (specifically, www.surveymonkey.com) maximized the technology for question sequencing and skip logic.[18] Second, data collection was automatic, and a certain amount of data analysis

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[18] Leslie Andres explains, "Web surveys have the advantage of being able to program skip questions so that that the respondent is automatically directed to the next relevant question." Leslie Andres, *Designing & Doing Survey Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012), 86.

could be queried by the website. Last, the speed of collection provided a significant saving in terms of time.[19]

Content. The survey asked thirty-two questions in ten sections (see appendix 3 for questions). The first section comprises six demographic questions related to the role the respondent held with the church in relation to the revitalization. The second section is one question, comprising multiple sub-questions, for contact information. The third section covers the revitalization process in general, with three questions. Sections 4-9 consist of questions relating to the specific factors that may have contributed to the revitalization (discipleship, evangelism, missions, leadership, prayer, and primary worship gathering). The final section is one open-ended question for general comments.

Section 4 of the survey pertains specifically to discipleship. Each question addresses a unique facet of discipleship in relation to the revitalization process and is drawn from the research questions or precedent literature. Question 11 is an open-ended question,[20] while question 12 uses a six-point Likert rating scale.[21] Question 13 pertains to programmatic elements in use by the church to facilitate discipleship. Question 14 requires the respondent to choose between either individual or collective mindset toward discipleship efforts.

Administration. The entire research team participated in collecting data for the survey. Collection protocol occurred as follows. First, the research team divided the

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[19] Andres, *Designing & Doing Survey Research*, 50-51. Three disadvantages also accompany a self-directed web survey. First, because the link to the survey was embedded in an email invitation, churches without accurate or complete email information did not receive the invitation. Second, self-administered surveys inherently include an inability for respondents to ask follow-up or clarification questions. Last, the most qualified person to complete the survey may not have received the invitation or be the one actually responding.

[20] Survey question 11: "Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's discipleship ministry which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process."

[21] All questions on the phase 2 survey with rating scales have no midpoint. The nature of the question recommends that respondents choose a side. "If there is no midpoint, individuals are not allowed to sit on the fence." Andres, *Designing & Doing Survey Research*, 74.

list of churches that experienced revitalization. Each member was assigned a number of churches to check and validate contact information. This check was done through website searches. Second, an email invitation was sent to the primary email address at the church (either the general office email or the pastor, if available) (see appendix 2). The email invitation explained the purpose of the survey and included a link to access the survey via a web browser. For an incentive, respondents that submitted the response within seven days and agreed to a follow-up interview were entered into a drawing for a $250 gift card. Third, follow-up phone calls were made by the research team to churches that did not respond after seven days. Hard copies of the survey were provided for churches that did not have email or internet access.

Validation and reliability. Three protocols for validation and reliability were built into the survey design. First, the survey was submitted to an expert panel for feedback and approval. The expert panel included experienced church revitalization leaders, denominational leaders, and researchers in the field.[22] Second, the survey was field-tested among the research team and select pastors to ensure deliverability, functionality, and clarity. Finally, the instrument was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS) prior to implementation.

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[22] The expert panel consisted of Mark Clifton, Senior Director of Replanting/Revitalization for the North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the SBC and author of *Reclaiming Glory: Revitalizing Dying Churches* (Nashville: B & H, 2016); Brian Croft, Senior Fellow at the Mathena Center for Church Revitalization and author of *Biblical Church Revitalization: Solutions for Dying & Divided Churches* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016); Andrew M. Davis, author of *Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church Come Alive Again* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017); Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, revitalization pastors and co-authors of *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville: B & H, 2012); and Joseph Stephen Hudson, author of "A Competency Model for Church Revitalization in Southern Baptist Convention Churches: A Mixed Methods Study" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017).

Assessing Respondents' Socio-Cultural Perspective

Phase 3 in the quantitative strand employed a survey as the data collection instrument (see appendix 5). Whereas the Revitalization Survey was conducted with the entire research team, the Cultural Orientation Survey was unique to this thesis' research. The purpose of the survey was threefold: (1) to assist in providing an answer to research question 3; (2) to provide scoring of aspects for each revitalization leaders' socio-cultural orientation, and (3) to provide a list of participants for phase 4 of this research. The details of the Individualism and Collectivism Survey follow.

Design. I chose a self-administered web survey as the mode. This design leverages three advantages, as already discussed (see Church Revitalization Survey Design).

Content. The survey asked twenty-four questions in three sections (see appendix 5 for questions). The first section is one question, comprising multiple sub-questions, for contact information. The second section is sixteen questions replicating the Triandis-Gelfand Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism Scale.[23] The third section is six questions related to key cultural characteristics of the church's revitalization. The final section is one question ascertaining the respondent's willingness to participate in qualitative interviews.

Administration. I alone collected data for the survey. Collection protocol consisted of an email invitation sent to the email address submitted by respondents to the phase 2 survey (see appendix 4). The email invitation explained the purpose of the survey and included a link to access the survey via a web browser.

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[23] Triandis and Gelfand, "Converging Measurement of Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism," 120. This instrument is available for use in the public domain. Verification of this fact was obtained from an author of the original study (Michele Gelfand) via email on April 15, 2020.

Validation and reliability. Three protocols for validation and reliability were built into the survey design. First, the survey substantively presented a standard, validated instrument widely used for assessing a respondent's aspects of individualism and collectivism. Second, the survey was field-tested with and select pastors to ensure deliverability, functionality, and clarity.[24] Finally, the instrument was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of SBTS prior to implementation.

Socio-Cultural Orientation and Discipleship Interviews

Phase 4 in the qualitative strand employed semi-structured recorded interviews as the data collection instrument, the "Socio-Cultural Orientation and Discipleship Interviews."[25] As with the Cultural Orientation Survey, the Socio-Cultural Orientation and Discipleship Interviews were conducted individually. The purpose of the interviews was to collect data to formulate answers to research question 4 ("What influence do revitalization pastors believe key theology expressions have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?"), research question 5 ("What influence do revitalization pastors believe key elements of meaningful membership have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?"), research question 6 ("What influence do revitalization pastors believe key programmatic elements have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?"), research question 7 ("What influence do revitalization pastors believe crisis and opposition have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?"), and research question 8 ("What advice would revitalization pastors give to others seeking to revitalize their church?"). The specifics of the Socio-Cultural Discipleship Interviews follow.

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[24] Unlike the phase 2 survey, the Triandis-Gelfand instrument uses an odd number of options on a Likert scale, allowing respondents to "sit on the fence." See Andres, *Designing & Doing Survey Research*, 74. While not ideal, it was decided to leave the instrument unchanged from its original form to allow for potential comparison with other research utilizing the original instrument.

[25] Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 160.

Content. The interview questions combined demographic information and open-ended questions (see appendix 7).[26] The first section is comprised of seven personal and demographic questions. The second section asks nineteen questions related to the nature of the church's revitalization. Each open-ended question correlates to one or more research questions. See table 6 for the relationship between research questions and their corresponding interview questions.

Table 6. Qualitative research questions and interview questions

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Questions
4. What influence do revitalization pastors believe key theology expressions have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
5. What influence do revitalization pastors believe key elements of meaningful membership have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
6. What influence do revitalization pastors believe key programmatic elements have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 18, 19, 20, 21
7. What influence do revitalization pastors believe crisis and opposition have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 22, 23, 24, 25
8. What advice would revitalization pastors give to others seeking to revitalize their church?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 17, 21, 25, 26

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[26] The interview questions in appendix 7 consist of anticipated questions. However, the nature of the explanatory mixed method design anticipates some adjustment in the qualitative strand based on the analysis of the quantitative strand. Creswell and Plano Clark write,

> The researcher connects to a second phase . . . by identifying specific quantitative results that call for additional explanation and using these results to guide the development of the qualitative strand. Specifically, the researcher develops or refines the qualitative research questions, purposeful sampling procedures, and data collection protocols so they follow from the quantitative results. As such, the qualitative phase depends on the quantitative results. (Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 83)

Administration. The timeline for each interview included eight points of contact between myself and the participant. The following list details these points of contact.

1. An initial email was sent from me inviting the participant to schedule an interview on my Calendly.com scheduling page. Calendly integrates with Google Calendar, making scheduling simple.

2. I received an email signifying an interview has been scheduled. My Google Calendar was automatically updated by Calendly as well.

3. An email containing a link to a Zoom conference, scheduled at the participant's requested time, was automatically sent to the interviewee. Calendly integrates with my Zoom account, automating the Zoom scheduling process as well. My Google Calendar entry was also updated with the appropriate Zoom link.

4. I sent an email thanking the participant for scheduling an interview and attached the list of questions to be asked in order for the participant to prepare.

5. A video interview was conducted between the interviewee and myself via Zoom with both the audio and video feeds being recorded.

6. I sent each interviewee a thank you message via email and included instructions for the upcoming transcript verification process.

7. I sent each interviewee a transcript of their interview and reiterated instructions for the transcript verification process.

8. I sent an email containing the preliminary conclusions of this research and included instructions for interviewees to comment on my findings.

Each interview was conducted according to the following protocols.[27]

1. The interview was facilitated using video conferencing software (www.zoom.com) that allowed for recording the entire interview. Permission for recording was gained from the participant.

2. I read the informed consent statement and asked the participant if they agreed with the statement. Agreement was a prerequisite for continuing the interview.

3. I conducted the interview using the questions provided the interviewee in advance.

4. I thanked the interviewee and discussed all remaining points of contact.

5. I reviewed the transcript validation process with the interviewee and answered any questions.

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[27] Interview protocol sequence adapted from Stacey A. Jacob and S. Paige Ferguson, "Writing Interview Protocols and Conducting Interviews: Tips for Students New to the Field of Qualitative Research," *The Qualitative Report* 17, no. 6 (2012): 7-10.

6. I reviewed the preliminary interpretation validation process with the interviewee and answered any questions.

Following the interview, the data was processed according to the following protocols.

1. Each interview was transcribed using Trint.com.

2. Each interview was coded using emerging codes.

3. The qualitative data was analyzed into themes.[28] Themes centered around the content and ideas contained in the research questions.

Validation and reliability. Five specific protocols were followed to ensure validation and reliability in this phase of the study. First, I maintained a research journal of each step taken with dated entries, completed tasks, and observations. Second, the interview content and process were triangulated through supervisor and peer reviews. Members of the research team audited the content and process, along with the project supervisor. Third, two pilot interviews were conducted to ensure the video software and transcription process worked properly.

The fourth protocol involved member checking.[29] First, interview participants were given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. After the interview was transcribed, each participant was provided a transcript to review and correct. After ten days, if no revisions were recommended by the participant, I proceeded with the understanding that the transcripts were accurate and valid. Second, the preliminary interpretation of the study was provided to interview participants for their reflection and feedback. As with the interview protocol, a period of ten days was allowed for responses regarding the preliminary interpretation.

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[28] Creswell writes, "Themes in qualitative research (also called categories) are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea." Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 186.

[29] Creswell explains, "In member checking, the researcher solicits participants' views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations. This technique is considered to be the most critical technique for establishing credibility." Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 252.

The final protocol for validation involved clarifying researcher bias.[30] I acknowledge four primary areas where bias has the potential to influence the interpretation of the data. First, I am a student at SBTS and a member of a Southern Baptist church. Second, I have ten years of pastoral experience, serving as a pastor in both a Southern Baptist and a North American Baptist Church. Third, I have served in leadership and discipleship ministries within local churches for the past thirty-two years. Finally, I have experienced first-hand the personal devastation and loss of a church's witness due to the prioritization of individual agendas over concerns for relationships and interdependence on the part of church members and leadership alike.

Research Procedures

The methodology for this research project was reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of SBTS before any surveys or interviews were conducted with human participants. A risk assessment profile was created for research involving human subjects, as well as the assessment of risk to human subjects in research. All interview participants were provided with an informed consent statement before participating in an interview.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the purpose and design of this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study. The following chapter details the findings of the study, while chapter 5 addresses potential applications of findings and recommendations for future research.

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[30] Creswell explains, "In this clarification, the researcher comments on past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study." Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 251.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The overall purpose of the larger sequential explanatory mixed-methods study was to identify revitalizing churches and to describe various methods and characteristics utilized to move their churches toward revitalization successfully. The focus of this portion of the study was to determine and prioritize critical cultural change characteristics and practices present within SBC churches that have experienced revitalization. The purpose of this study was to describe the influence of the revitalization leader's socio-cultural orientation upon the leader's perspective concerning the church's revitalization. This chapter provides detailed descriptions of the research protocol, the demographics of the research participants, and the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative phases of research. The relative strengths and weaknesses of the research design are also addressed.

Compilation Protocol

The research design implemented for this study was an explanatory mixed-methods study that examined SBC churches in four distinct phases.[1] The quantitative strand consisted of three phases. Phase 1 applied revitalization criteria against ACP data to qualify Southern Baptist churches as having experienced revitalization. Phase 2 used a survey instrument to collect subjective responses from revitalization leaders regarding aspects of their revitalization experiences. Phase 3 used an additional survey instrument to assess the respondent's measure of several socio-cultural orientations. The qualitative strand consisted of only one phase. I contacted select respondents to the phase 3 survey,

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[1] The research protocol for phase 1 and phase 2 was conducted as part of a research team consisting of seven doctoral students under the supervision of Michael Wilder. While different team members carried out different responsibilities, the product of the research was a joint effort. In protocol explanations, there is no effort to distinguish the actions of a particular team member in contrast to another.

and interviews were conducted with these revitalization leaders. A detailed description of protocol and participants for each of the study's four phases follows.

Phase 1 Delimitations

Data collection began with a request made to Lifeway Research for ACP data collected from SBC churches in the continental United States. A series of delimiters were used to qualify participants in this research.

ACP data and five-year growth. The first delimitation required that churches had submitted ACP data to Lifeway Research for the years 2006 through 2016. The Lifeway data extract was obtained in June 2018. This extract indicated that 28,046 (59.3 percent) of all SBC churches in the continental US had met the prerequisite ACP participation requirement for inclusion in the research.[2] Further analysis of these churches' five-year worship attendance records between 2011 and 2016 indicated that 7,180 (25.6 percent) were growing, 7,211 (25.71 percent) had plateaued, and 13,656 (48.69 percent) were declining. The 7,180 (25.60 percent) of churches that were growing between 2011 and 2016 represented churches of interest for this research. Churches that had missing data necessary for future components of this research were also eliminated. These delimitations reduced the potential research sample population to 3,364 churches.

Revitalization status. After meeting ACP participation and five-year growth requirements, churches were assessed to determine whether they represented revitalized churches. This determination was based on two criteria. First, a church must have experienced at least a 10 percent decline in worship attendance between 2006 and 2011. Second, a church must have experienced two or more years of either 10 percent growth in their weekly worship service or have an attendance to baptism ratio of at least 20:1, year

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[2] The SBC reported total participation at 47,272 churches in 2016. Carol Pipes, "ACP: Churches Up in 2016; Baptisms, Membership Decline," *Baptist Press*, June 8, 2017, http://www.bpnews.net/49005/acp--churches-up-in-2016-baptisms-membership-decline.

over year, between 2011 and 2016. These delimitations reduced the potential research sample population to 1,226 churches.

This sample was then further reduced by changing the second criteria to require that churches experience both two or more years of 10 percent growth in their weekly worship service and have an attendance to baptism ratio of at least 20:1, year over year, between 2011 and 2016. This delimitation reduced the potential research sample population to 716 churches, representing 5.24 percent of those churches initially identified as declining between 2006 and 2011.[3]

Phase 2 Delimitations and Protocol

The research population of 716 churches was then invited to participate in a survey to obtain their perspectives regarding factors that influenced their experience of church revitalization (see appendix 3). The research team divided the list of 716 churches among themselves to verify the revitalization leaders' contact information. In June 2018, an email invitation was sent to the general email address at the church or the pastor's email, if available (see appendix 2). The invitation explained the survey's purpose and provided an embedded link taking the recipient to the online survey. An incentive was offered to participants that completed the survey within seven days and agreed to participate in a follow-up interview if selected. After this initial seven-day period, team members attempted to contact churches that had not responded to the email invitation. Paper copies of the survey were made available to invitees at this time for inclusion in the survey as well.

By September 2018, after repeated emails and phone calls to encourage responses, 129 churches had responded to the survey, resulting in a confidence interval of

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[3] This further delimitation was intended to focus research on the most extreme cases of revitalization, allowing researchers to sample church revitalization leaders whose experiences represent those more atypical of most pastors' experience.

7.82.[4] The team decided to further limit the sample to churches with a worship attendance of greater than 50 people in 2016, resulting in a sample population of 466 churches.[5]

To encourage more responses, the research team sent paper copies of the survey with a postage-paid return envelope to the 466 churches in April 2019. This effort was followed by additional attempts via email and phone calls to encourage completion of the survey. The final number of completed surveys resulted in a research population of 145 of a potential 466 respondents, resulting in a confidence level of 6.71.

Phase 3 Delimitation and Protocol

Phase 3 represents a point of departure from the research team, as each researcher began following their distinct research plan from this point forward. In my design, the 145 revitalization leaders were invited to participate in a second survey to score the leader on various aspects of socio-cultural orientation and to gain insight regarding several factors pertinent to their revitalization experience (see appendix 5). In May 2019, an email invitation was sent to all phase 2 respondents' email addresses (see appendix 4). The invitation explained the survey's purpose and provided an embedded link taking the recipient to the online survey. After this initial seven-day period, I attempted to contact churches that had not responded to the email invitation via email solicitation and phone calls.

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[4] The research team was comprised of students from three different cohorts at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Because the 2016 class was scheduled to graduate earlier, two of the students finalized their projects at this point in the study. The remaining students continued to solicit more survey responses over the following year. For 2016 cohort results, see Christopher Michael Aiken, "Church Revitalization and the Role of Pastoral Leadership: A Mixed-Methods Study" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018); and Aaron Thomas Colyer, "Church Revitalization and Evangelistic Emphasis: A Mixed Methods Study" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).

[5] The team decided to exclude churches with 50 or less due to two factors. First, the small numeric threshold needed to achieve the required percentage increase or decrease. A few people leaving or coming to the church could easily change the designation from growing to declining. Second, the return rate of contact efforts among churches with attendance under 50 was incredibly low. A cost-benefit analysis made it clear that prioritizing churches over 50 in attendance to get additional respondents was necessary.

A total of 63 revitalization pastors responded to the phase 3 instrument. Two responses were incomplete and were discarded, resulting in a research population of 61 revitalization pastors.

Derived Scoring

Responses to the sixteen questions representing the Triandis-Gelfand Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism Scale, embedded in the phase 3 survey, allowed for scoring respondents according to four aspects of socio-cultural orientation: horizontal collectivism, vertical collectivism, horizontal individualism, and vertical collectivism. It was my original intent to select the four highest-ranked respondents in each of the four aspects. I later determined that assessing the revitalization experience of church leaders according to each of these aspects would make each aspect population too small to be helpful. A less nuanced consideration of individualism and collectivism was deemed appropriate.

Respondent's C and I scores. The first scores derived were the respondents' Individualism (I) and Collectivism (C) scores. Each respondent's I score was developed by adding the respondent's Horizontal Individualism (HI) and Vertical Individualism (VI) scores (I = HI + VI). In the same manner, each respondent's C score was derived by adding the respondent's Horizontal Collectivism (HC) score and Vertical Collectivism (VC) scores (C = HC + VC).

Statistical analysis of the four aspect scores, as well as the derived I and C scores, were obtained by running general data analysis routines against the data in Excel (see table 7). Histograms displaying the distribution of both derived I and derived C scores were also produced (see figures 8 and 9).

Table 7. Statistical analysis of phase 3 respondents' socio-cultural orientations

	HI	VI	HC	VC	I	C
Mean	20.79	18.26	30.59	28.43	39.05	59.02
Standard Error	0.70	0.75	0.50	0.51	1.21	0.87
Median	21.00	19.00	31.00	29.00	39.00	61.00
Mode	21.00	19.00	34.00	26.00	38.00	63.00
Standard Deviation	5.48	5.86	3.94	3.95	9.41	6.76
Sample Variance	30.04	34.33	15.55	15.62	88.58	45.68
Kurtosis	-0.22	-0.63	0.16	-0.54	-0.50	-0.25
Skewness	-0.27	-0.21	-0.83	-0.28	-0.24	-0.77
Range	24.00	23.00	16.00	17.00	37.00	27.00
Minimum	7.00	6.00	20.00	19.00	18.00	43.00
Maximum	31.00	29.00	36.00	36.00	55.00	70.00
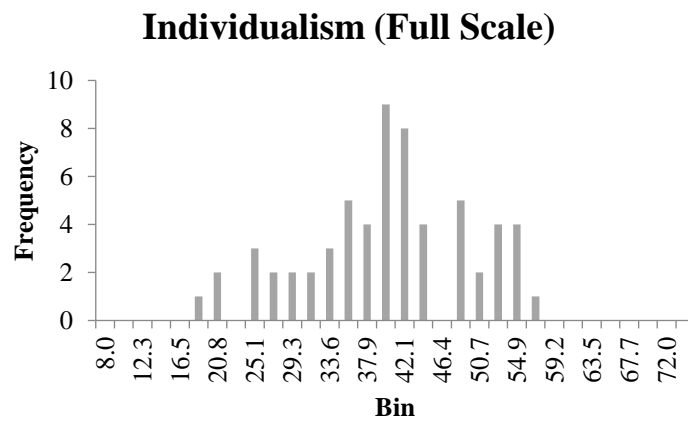
Figure 8. Histogram of phase 3 respondents' individualism (I) scores
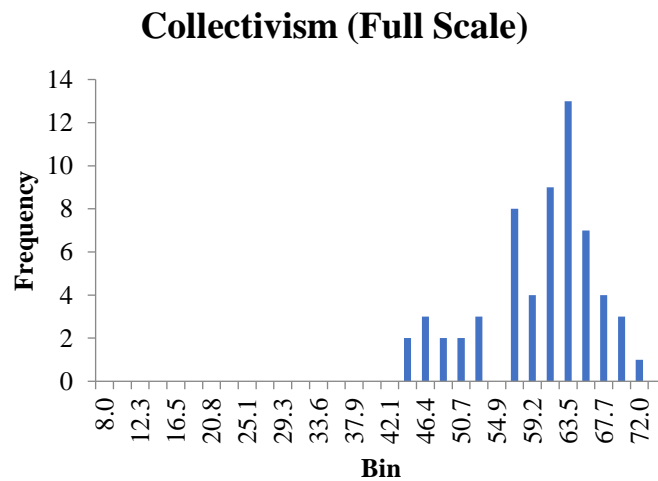
Figure 9. Histogram of phase 3 respondents' collectivism (C) scores

Respondents' C-I scores. This research intended to describe the experiences of revitalization leaders according to their relative levels of individualism and collectivism. Initial consideration of respondent's I and C scores revealed that simply selecting respondents with the highest I and C scores would prove problematic, as several respondents scored high in both aspects.[6] Therefore, another derived measure, the respondent's C-I score (C-I = C − I), representing the differential between each respondent's individualistic and collectivistic orientation, most appropriately facilitated my objective. Assessing each respondent according to their C-I score assisted in identifying participants whose socio-cultural orientations were the most dissimilar.

Statistical analysis of respondents' C-I scores was obtained by running general data analysis routines against the data in Excel. (See table 8). A histogram displaying the distribution of the derived C-I scores was also produced. (See figure 10.)

Table 8. Statistical analysis of phase 3 respondents' derived C-I scores

	Collectivism-Individualism
Mean	19.97
Standard Error	1.54
Median	19.00
Mode	22.00
Standard Deviation	12.03
Sample Variance	144.73
Kurtosis	0.05
Skewness	0.10
Range	57.00
Minimum	-7.00
Maximum	50.00

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[6] Scoring high in both individualism and collectivism would tend to substantiate an assertion that individualism and collectivism are not opposites of a bipolar understanding, and that context may hold significant sway in a person's individualistic or collectivistic leanings in the moment.

Collectivism-Individualism
(Full Scale)
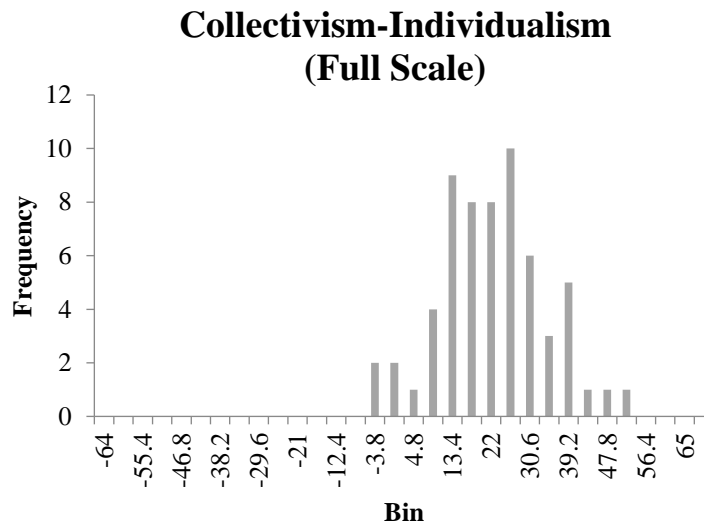
Figure 10. Histogram of phase 3 respondents' C-I scores

Respondent Z scoring. Based on the near-normal distribution of respondent's C-I scores, respondents whose C-I scores lay greater than one standard deviation from the distribution's mean were invited to participate in further study. Z scores were computed for all respondents' C-I scores relative to all respondents.[7] Positive Z scores represent the relative strength of collectivistic orientation relative to the sample mean. Conversely, negative Z scores represent the relative strength of individualistic orientation relative to the sample mean. See table 9 for a complete socio-cultural scoring breakdown for all respondents with C-I scores greater than one standard deviation from the sample mean.

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[7] As Neil Salkind writes, a respondent's Z score is a standard score which is "the result of dividing the amount that a raw score differs from the mean of the distribution by the standard deviation." Represented as an equation; $z=(X-\mu)/\sigma$. As such, a respondent's Z score represents the number of standard deviations to the right (positive) or to the left (negative) of the sample mean. Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014), 153.

Table 9. Socio-cultural scores for phase 3 respondents with C-I Z scores greater
than one standard deviation from the sample mean

Respondent	HI	VI	HC	VC	I	C	C-I	Z score
C-1	12	6	36	32	18	68	50	2.517
C-2	13	6	36	27	19	63	44	2.014
C-3	18	9	34	36	27	70	43	1.930
C-4	16	14	36	32	30	68	38	1.511
C-5	10	15	32	31	25	63	38	1.511
C-6	7	16	34	26	23	60	37	1.428
C-7	16	11	34	29	27	63	36	1.344
C-8	14	6	29	26	20	55	35	1.260
C-9	19	13	34	31	32	65	33	1.092
C-10	13	16	34	27	29	61	32	1.009
C-11	9	19	35	25	28	60	32	1.009
I-1	27	26	27	33	53	60	7	-1.087
I-2	31	23	30	30	54	60	6	-1.171
I-3	27	25	32	26	52	58	6	-1.171
I-4	16	25	24	22	41	46	5	1.254
I-5	23	25	26	26	48	52	4	-1.338
I-6	24	24	23	25	48	48	0	-1.674
I-7	28	27	26	26	55	52	-3	-1.925
I-8	31	21	24	22	52	46	-6	-2.176
I-9	28	23	20	24	51	44	-7	-2.262

Interviewee Selection

The respondents represented in table 9 were invited to participate in phase 4 interviews. A total of 12 respondents, 6 with the highest positive Z scores and 6 with the lowest negative Z scores, were accepted to be interviewed. This delimitation produced a list of 12 churches that provided the research sample population for phase 4.[8] Interviewees were identified according to their Z scores. Those interviewees with strong individualistic tendencies were designated with the prefix "Q1" (signifying their position in the first quartile of the C-I histogram) and were numbered from 1 to 6 with decreasing levels of C-I differential (ex. Q1-1, Q1-2, etc.). Likewise, interviewees with strong collectivistic tendencies were designated with the prefix "Q4" (signifying their position in the fourth quartile of the C-I histogram) and numbered from 1 to 6 with increasing levels of C-I

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[8] Unlike other research team members, I did not coordinate to avoid interviewee overlap. The nature of this research deals with orientations which transcend and nuance the topical concerns of other research members. To avoid interviewee fatigue, my phase 3 survey asked respondents to indicate whether they would be willing to be interviewed again if they had already been interviewed by another team member. Every respondent indicated that they would be willing to be interviewed again, if invited.

differential (ex. Q4-3, Q4-2, etc.). Table 10 provides an overview of the limitations and samplings used throughout this research.

Table 10. Delimitations and sampling summary

Phase	Delimitation	Description	Number
		Total SBC Churches in 2016	47,272
1	1	Churches with sufficient data	28,046
1	1	Growing churches (2011-2016)	7,180
1	2	Met revitalization criteria 1 and 2	3,364
1	2	Met revitalization criteria 3	716
2	3	Worship attendance >50	466
2	3	Responded to the Phase 2 survey	145
3	4	Responded to the phase 3 survey	63
3	4	Met C-I Z score criteria	20
3	4	Highest distance from mean	12

Phase 4 Protocol and Participants

"Socio-Cultural Orientation and Discipleship Interviews" were scheduled and conducted with 12 church leaders from the final delimitation of phase 3. Two pilot interviews were conducted in December 2019 to ensure the reliability of the protocol and technology. These interviews also helped, as Leslie Andres encourages, to "ensure that the level of language used in the [interview] questions is appropriate and understandable to the audience; to assess whether the questions are understood as intended."[9]

The protocol for interviews included: (1) an initial email; (2) interviewees self-scheduling an interview time online; (3) an automated email containing a link to a Zoom conference and an automatic Google calendar event posting; (4) an email with the interview questions for review; (5) a video interview; (6) a thank you email with instructions for transcript verification; (7) an email containing the interview transcript, reiterating instructions for transcript verification; and (8) an email containing the preliminary conclusions with instructions for verification.

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[9] Leslie Andres, *Designing & Doing Survey Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012), 27.

Twelve interviews were conducted with 11 interviews using the video and audio functions on the Zoom platform. Only 1 interview was performed using the audio-only feature. Each interviewee was read and agreed to an informed consent statement (see appendix 6). Interview times ranged from 63 to 120 minutes. All interviews were conducted using the Zoom online conferencing service.[10] Video recordings of the interviews were downloaded, and their audio quality improved.[11] These files were then uploaded to Trint.com for AI transcription. Transcripts created from the media files were edited on the website before being downloaded and smoothed in a standard text editor.[12]

Interviewees were emailed copies of their interview transcriptions for validation. Two interviewees suggested minor modifications be made to their transcriptions. No substantive issues were identified for the modification.[13] All transcripts were then coded using the research questions, themes from precedent literature, emerging themes from word cloud analysis, and emerging themes via NVivo software. Each interviewee received a copy of the tentative analysis of this research and was afforded ten days to comment on the analysis.

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[10] This service integrated with my Google calendar and Calendly online account, allowing for near instantaneous interview scheduling at the interviewee's convenience. Google Calendar events, with associated Zoom instructions, were placed on both my and the interviewee's Google calendars automatically. Rescheduling was also handled flawlessly. As a result, no interviews were missed due to scheduling errors.

[11] Interview videos were edited with Camtasia software. Background noise was removed, and audio wave forms were leveled and amplified.

[12] Trint.com uses artificial intelligence to convert the audio portion of media files into transcripts. Trint.com's online editing allows the researcher to edit transcripts while maintaining synchronicity between the curser and the corresponding location on the media file, simplifying transcription correction.

[13] Due to the sensitive nature of this research and to allow for candor and self-reflection as possible, I agreed to two stipulations. First, names and identifying locations are not included with the study. Respondents are identified by a number corresponding to their position on the C-I distribution. Second, the complete transcripts of interviews are not included in this thesis. At times, direct quotations may be used. See Andres, *Designing & Doing Survey Research*, 130.

<center>**Findings**</center>

Research findings for phases 2, 3, and 4 will be reported in this section. First, pastoral role, general demographic, and general revitalization responses from the phase 2 quantitative survey and the corresponding responses from phase 3 respondents will be detailed. Next, the remaining phase 2 responses, and phase 3 responses related to specific characteristics of revitalization emphasis, will be analyzed based on the respondent's C-I scores. Finally, phase 4 results from interviews of purposefully selected pastors focusing on how their orientation affected their experience of revitalization will be presented.

**Respondent Roles, Demographics, and
General Revitalization Responses**

Phase 2 research involved the use of a survey instrument sent to churches whose metrics over a ten-year period indicated that they had experienced revitalization. The instrument covered six primary areas of emphasis common to revitalization. These areas of emphasis included discipleship, evangelism, leadership, missions, prayer, and the primary worship gathering.

Pastoral roles. Phase 2 survey respondents were asked to indicate their current role within their church. Respondents were provided with four possible response options (see table 11).[14]

To provide a common perspective for analysis, only respondents who indicated they were a pastor/elder were eligible for phase 4 interviews. All respondents to the phase 3 instrument indicated that they serve as either an elder or a pastor in their current church.

<center>Table 11. Phase 2 respondents' current role</center>

	Respondent %
Pastor/Elder	94.3
Deacon	4.3
Staff	0.7
Volunteer	0.7

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[14] Phase 2 survey question 1, "Your current role with your church: pastor/elder, deacon, staff, or volunteer."

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The phase 2 survey question 2 asked respondents to indicate their role prior to the revitalization process. [15] Respondents were provided with five possible response options. These responses were then delimited to respondents who participated in the phase 3 survey instrument. Nearly half of all respondents to the phase 2 and phase 3 instruments indicated that they served as pastor or elder prior to their church's revitalization (see table 12).

Table 12. Phase 2 and 3 respondents' role prior to revitalization

	Phase 2 Respondent (%)	Phase 3 Respondent (%)
Pastor/Elder	47.1	48.1
Deacon	--	--
Staff	7.1	9.6
Volunteer	1.4	1.9
Not at the church	44.3	40.4

Next, the phase 2 survey question 3 asked respondents to indicate their role during the revitalization process.[16] Respondents were provided with five possible response options. These responses were then delimited to respondents who participated in the phase 3 survey instrument. The increase in respondents who were serving in a pastor/elder role during revitalization (42.3 percent of phase 2 respondents and 48.1 percent of phase 3 respondents) indicates that their installment in these offices was, in part, contributory to their church's revitalization (see table 13).

Table 13. Phase 2 and 3 respondents' role during revitalization

	Phase 2 Respondent (%)	Phase 3 Respondent (%)
Pastor/Elder	89.4	96.2
Deacon	0.7	--
Staff	6.4	3.8
Volunteer	0.7	--
Not at the church	2.1	--

[15] Phase 2 survey question 2, "Your role prior to the revitalization process: pastor/elder, deacon, staff, volunteer, or not at the church."

[16] Phase 2 survey question 3, "Your role during the revitalization process: pastor/elder, deacon, staff, volunteer, or not at the church."

General demographics. The phase 2 survey question 4 asked respondents to categorize their ministry context as rural, suburban, or urban. [17] Slightly more than half of phase 2 respondents identified their ministry context as rural. Phase 3 respondents were almost equally split between rural and suburban, with slightly fewer by percentage identifying as urban as compared to phase 2 respondents (see table 14).

Table 14. Phase 2 and 3 respondents' ministry contexts

	Phase 2 Respondent (%)	Phase 3 Respondent (%)
Rural	53.2	45.3
Suburban	36.2	47.2
Urban	10.6	7.6

General revitalization. Phase 2 survey questions 8-10 asked respondents about their revitalization process. Question 8 asked respondents to rate the importance of the six areas of revitalization emphasis in their revitalization experience.[18] Respondents were provided with six possible response options. Prayer, leadership, and the primary worship service ranked as the top three emphases in highly important and at least important categories (see table 15).[19]

Table 15. Phase 2 revitalization emphasis importance by percentage

Ministry Emphasis	Highly Un-important	Un-important	Slightly Un-important	Slightly Important	Important	Highly Important
Prayer	2.9	--	0.7	9.5	22.6	64.2
Leadership	3.7	0.7	0.7	8.1	25.7	61.0
Primary Worship Gathering	2.9	0.7	1.5	5.1	32.1	58.4
Discipleship	4.4	0.7	1.5	16.1	30.7	46.7
Evangelism	4.4	0.7	1.5	13.2	39.0	41.2
Missions	2.9	5.9	4.4	17.7	36.0	33.1

[17] Phase 2 survey question 4, "Your church context is best described as: rural, suburban, or urban."

[18] Phase 2 survey question 8, "Rate each ministry emphasis as to the importance it played in the revitalization process: Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important."

[19] At least important is the sum of highly important and important responses.

Phase 2 responses were then delimited to those respondents who participated in the phase 3 survey instrument. Prayer, leadership, and the primary worship service again ranked as the top three emphases in highly important and at least important categories (see table 16).[20]

Table 16. Phase 3 revitalization emphasis importance by percentage

Ministry Emphasis	Highly Un-important	Un-important	Slightly Un-important	Slightly Important	Important	Highly Important
Prayer	5.7	--	--	15.1	22.7	56.6
Leadership	5.7	--	1.9	11.3	26.4	54.7
Primary Worship Gathering	5.7	--	1.9	5.7	37.7	49.1
Discipleship	5.7	--	1.9	18.9	24.5	49.1
Evangelism	5.7	1.9	3.8	17.0	30.2	41.5
Missions	5.7	3.8	3.8	15.1	37.7	34.0

Next, phase 2 survey question 9 asked respondents to identify the area of emphasis that received the greatest amount of member resistance.[21] These responses were then also delimited to respondents who participated in the phase 3 survey instrument (see table 17).

Table 17. Member resistance to change initiatives by emphasis

	Phase 2 Respondent (%)	Phase 3 Respondent (%)
Evangelism	20.7	32.0
Discipleship	19.3	18.0
Leadership	19.3	18.0
Worship	17.2	20.0
Missions	8.3	8.0
Prayer	4.1	4.0
Other	11.1	--

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[20] Discipleship ranked even with Primary Worship Gathering in terms of "highly important," but ranked fourth overall in terms of "at least important" (highly important + important).

[21] Phase 2 survey question 9, "Reflecting on the change initiatives you have pursued in your church revitalization context, identify the area in which you have faced the greatest amount of member resistance: Discipleship, Evangelism, Leadership, Missions, Prayer, Primary Worship Gathering, Other"

Phase 2 survey question 10 asked respondents to identify the area of emphasis which received the greatest amount of member acceptance[22]. These responses were then also delimited to those respondents who participated in the phase 3 survey instrument (see table 18).

Table 18. Member acceptance of change initiatives by emphasis

	Phase 2 Respondent (%)	Phase 3 Respondent (%)
Missions	19.3	25.5
Discipleship	13.1	21.6
Leadership	15.2	21.6
Evangelism	11.7	13.7
Worship	21.4	13.7
Prayer	11.7	3.9
Other	7.6	--

**Revitalization Emphasis and
C-I Orientation**

After the pastoral role, general demographic, and general revitalization questions, the phase 2 and phase 3 instruments asked questions intended to further nuance leaders' experiences in six areas of emphasis for church revitalization. The purpose of this research was to consider the leaders' responses based on socio-cultural orientation.[23]

Respondent categorization. Four categories of respondents were created to accomplish this comparison. The term *Q1 Individualists* refers to respondents whose C-I scores are greater than one standard deviation to the left of the C-I mean. The term *Individualists* refers to all respondents, including Q1 Individualists, whose C-I scores are left of the C-I mean. The term *Q4 Collectivists* refers to respondents whose C-I scores are greater than one standard deviation right of the C-I mean. Finally, the term *Collectivists*

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[22] Phase 2 survey question 10, "Reflecting on the change initiatives you have pursued in your church revitalization context, identify the area in which you have faced the greatest amount of member acceptance: Discipleship, Evangelism, Leadership, Missions, Prayer, Primary Worship Gathering, Other"

[23] The detailed analysis of each emphasis is outside the scope of this thesis, having been reported by research team members as part of their research findings.

refs to all respondents, including Q4 Collectivists, whose C-I scores are to the right of the C-I mean.

Many questions on the phase 2 instrument use a six-response Likert scale. For responses that assess levels of agreement, the terms "at least agree" and "at least slightly agree" have been created for analysis purposes. "At least agree" refers to all respondents who either "agree" or "strongly agree." "At least slightly agree" refers to all respondents who "at least agree" or "slightly agree." In the same manner, for responses that assess levels of importance, the terms "at least important" and "at least slightly important" have been created. "At least important" refers to all respondents who assess the item as "important" or "highly important." "At least slightly important" refers to all respondents who assess the item as "at least important" or "slightly important."

Discipleship. Phase 2 survey questions 11-14 intended to more fully understand each revitalization leader's perspective regarding the emphasis placed on discipleship during their revitalization experience.[24]

Question 11 asks respondents to briefly describe the primary changes to the church's discipleship ministry which they perceive as having contributed significantly to their church's revitalization process. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 8).

Question 12 asks respondents to select their level of agreement with two statements concerning the church's discipleship ministry during the revitalization process. The first statement deals with their level of agreement with the statement that the church

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[24] For a detailed analysis of the phase 2 discipleship portion, see Brian Carl Legg, "Transforming the Discipleship Culture in Church Revitalization: A Mixed-Methods Study" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019).

has a clearly defined discipleship process.[25] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 19.

Table 19. Level of agreement that a clearly defined discipleship process exists by percentage

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	15.4	--	14.8	16.0	22.2
At least agree	48.1	22.2	37.0	60.0	66.7
At least slightly agree	65.4	55.6	63.0	68.0	77.8

No Q1 Individualists and only 22.2 percent of Q4 Collectivists strongly agreed with this statement. Q4 Collectivists are three times more likely than Q1 Individualists to at least agree with this statement. Q4 Collectivists are 39.9 percent more likely than Q1 Individualists to at least slightly agree with this statement. Slightly more than a third (34.6 percent) of all respondents disagree with this statement.

Question 12's second statement deals with the respondent's level of agreement with the statement that the majority of active members were able to explain their discipleship process.[26] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 20.

Table 20. Level of agreement that active members could explain their discipleship process

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	7.7	--	3.7	12.0	22.22
At least agree	25.0	22.2	18.5	32.0	55.6
At least slightly agree	53.9	44.4	48.2	60.0	55.6

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[25] Phase 2 survey question 12A, "Select your level of agreement with the following statement concerning the church's discipleship ministry during the revitalization process. 'The church has a clearly defined discipleship process: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.'"

[26] Phase 2 survey question 12B, "Select your level of agreement with the following statement concerning the church's discipleship ministry during the revitalization process. 'The majority of active members were able to explain the discipleship process: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.'"

No Q1 Individualists and only 22.2 percent of Q4 Collectivists strongly agreed with this statement. Q4 Collectivists are one and a half times more likely than Q1 Individualists to at least agree with this statement. Q4 Collectivists are 25.2 percent more likely than Q1 Individualists to at least slightly agree with this statement. Slightly less than half (46.1 percent) of all respondents disagree with this statement.

Question 13 asks respondents to select all programmatic elements that existed in the church's discipleship approach during the revitalization process.[27] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 21.

Table 21. Programmatic discipleship elements existing during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Age Graded	85.0%	100.0%	92.9%	76.0%	77.8%
Gender Studies	71.7%	88.9%	67.9%	76.0%	77.8%
Intergenerational Mentoring	20.8%	11.1%	17.9%	24.0%	22.2%
Home-based Small Groups	43.4%	33.3%	50.0%	36.0%	11.1%
Men's Ministry	49.1%	44.4%	42.9%	56.0%	55.6%
Women's Ministry	52.8%	44.4%	46.4%	60.0%	55.6%

Q1 Individualists were 29 percent (28.5 percent) more likely than Q4 Collectivists to use age-graded discipleship programming. Q4 Collectivists are twice as likely than Q1 Individualists to use intergenerational mentoring strategies, though both report low usage. Those more moderate groups (Individualists and Collectivists) are more likely than the more extreme groups (Q1 Individualists and Q4 Collectivists) to use intergenerational mentoring strategies. Q1 Individualists are three times as likely than Q4 Collectivists to use home-based small groups. Those more moderate groups (Individualists

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[27] Phase 2 survey question 13, "Which programmatic elements existed in the church's discipleship approach during the revitalization process? (Select all that apply.): Age-graded Ministry (i.e., children, youth, college, adult), Men's and/or Women's Bible Studies, Intergenerational Mentoring, Home-based Small Groups, Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry, One-on-one Type Discipleship Groups, Traditional Sunday School Model."

and Collectivists) are more likely than the more extreme groups (Q1 Individualists and Q4 Collectivists) to use home-based small group strategies.

Question 14 asks respondents to select the perspective that most closely represents the majority of active church members at the beginning of the revitalization process.[28] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 22. All categories of revitalization leaders were more likely to identify their church membership as collectivistic. Q4 Collectivists are twice as likely to identify their members as collectivistic than individualistic, and overall, collectivists are 78 percent more likely to identify their members as collectivistic than individualistic.

Table 22. The socio-cultural orientation of church members when revitalization began

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Individualistic	41.51	44.44	46.43	36.00	33.33
Collectivistic	58.49	55.56	53.57	64.00	66.67

Evangelism. Phase 2 survey questions 15-17 intended to more fully understand each revitalization leader's perspective regarding the emphasis placed on evangelism during their revitalization experience.[29]

Question 15 asks respondents to briefly describe the primary changes to the church's evangelism ministry that they perceive as having contributed significantly to their church's revitalization process. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 9).

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[28] Phase 2 survey question 14, "Regarding the discipleship process, select the perspective which most closely represents the majority of active church members at the beginning of the revitalization process: A More Individualistic Mindset (Members expect to select and shape most of their own discipleship process, with an emphasis on personal needs and intentional personal growth.), A More Collective Mindset (Members expect spiritual leadership to guide them in their discipleship process with an emphasis on common needs and intentional relational and community growth.)"

[29] For a detailed analysis of the phase 2 evangelism portion see, Colyer, "Church Revitalization and Evangelistic Emphasis."

Question 16 asks respondents to select their level of agreement with three statements concerning the church's evangelism ministry during the revitalization process. The first statement deals with the respondent's level of agreement with the statement that there was a demonstrable increase in personal evangelism among active members of the church.[30] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 23.

Table 23. Level of agreement that personal evangelism demonstrably increased

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	19.2	--	11.1	28.0	22.2
At least agree	46.2	33.3	44.4	48.0	33.3
At least slightly agree	82.7	77.8	85.2	80.0	88.9

No Q1 Individualists agreed strongly with the statement. One and a half times as many Collectivists as Individualists agreed with the statement, but the level of agreement from both was low. Responses moved toward parity as the level of agreement broadens to at least agree. The highest levels of strongly agree and at least agree responses came from respondents less than one standard deviation from the mean in their C-I score. Slightly more than 17 percent (17.3 percent) disagree with this statement to some degree.

Question 16's second statement deals with the respondent's level of agreement with the statement that the majority of active members could communicate the gospel in a personal evangelism encounter.[31] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 24.

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[30] Phase 2 survey question 16A, "Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the church's evangelism ministry during the revitalization process. 'There was a demonstrable increase in personal evangelism among active members of the church. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)'"

[31] Phase 2 survey question 16B, "Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the church's evangelism ministry during the revitalization process. 'The majority of active members could communicate the gospel in a personal evangelism encounter. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)'"

Table 24. Level of agreement that active members could evangelistically
communicate the gospel

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	2.0	--	--	4.0	--
At least agree	33.3	25.0	30.8	36.0	33.3
At least slightly agree	84.3	100.0	92.3	76.0	77.8

No Q1 Individualists or Q4 Collectivists agreed strongly with the statement.

One-third of Q4 Collectivists and one-quarter of Q1 Individualists at least agree with the

statement. The highest levels of at least agreement come from respondents less than one

standard deviation from the C-I mean. Levels of at least slight agreement increase as

respondents become more individualistic, with all Q1 Individualists at least slightly

agreeing with the statement. Less than 16 percent (15.7 percent) of all respondents disagree

with this statement to some degree.

Question 16's third statement deals with the respondent's level of agreement

with the statement that the active members of the church regularly engaged in gospel

conversations for the purpose of personal evangelism.[32] Responses, according to

respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 25.

Table 25. Level of agreement that active members regularly engaged
evangelistic gospel conversations

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	1.9	--	3.7	--	--
At least agree	28.9	33.3	25.9	32.0	33.3
At least slightly agree	59.6	55.6	63.0	56.0	77.8

As with the previous statement, no Q1 Individualists or Q4 Collectivists agreed

strongly with the statement. In fact, no Collectivist agreed strongly with the statement.

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[32] Phase 2 survey question 16B, "Select your level of agreement with the following statements
concerning the church's evangelism ministry during the revitalization process. 'The active members of the
church regularly engaged in gospel conversations for the purpose of personal evangelism. (Strongly
Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)'"

One-third of Q4 Collectivists and Q1 Individualists at least agree with the statement. The highest levels of at least slight agreement come Q4 Collectivists (77.8 percent), 50 percent higher than Q1 Individualists (55.6 percent). Slightly more than 40 percent (40.4 percent) of all respondents disagree with this statement to some degree.

Question 17 asks respondents to briefly describe the type and frequency of evangelism training currently offered in their church. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 10).

Missions. Phase 2 survey questions 18-20 intended to more fully understand each revitalization leader's perspective regarding the emphasis placed on missions during their revitalization experience.

Question 18 asks respondents to briefly describe the primary changes to their church's missions ministry, which they perceive to have contributed significantly to their church's revitalization process. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 11).

Question 19 asks respondents to select their level of agreement with two statements concerning the church's missions ministry prior to the revitalization process. The first statement deals with the respondent's level of agreement with the statement that the church had a vibrant missions ministry focused on financially supporting short-term and/or long-term missionaries prior to the revitalization process.[33] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 26.

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[33] Phase 2 survey question 19A, "Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the church's missions ministry prior to the revitalization process. 'The church had a vibrant missions ministry focused on financially supporting short-term and/or long-term missionaries. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)'"

Table 26. Level of agreement that a vibrant missions ministry focused on financially
supporting short-term and/or long-term missionaries existed prior to revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	11.5	11.1	11.1	12.0	22.2
At least agree	26.9	22.2	22.2	32.0	44.4
At least slightly agree	40.4	33.3	40.7	40.0	44.4

Q4 Collectivists are twice as likely as any other group to strongly agree with this statement. Q4 Collectivists are also twice as likely as either Q1 Individualists or Individualists to at least agree with this statement. All Q4 Collectivists who agree with this statement do so at the at least agree level. The overall trend indicates that a respondent's level of agreement with the statement increases as the respondent's level of collectivism increases. Nearly 60 percent (59.6 percent) of all respondents disagree with this statement to some degree.

Question 19's second statement deals with the respondent's level of agreement with the statement that the church had a vibrant missions ministry focused on sending short-term and/or long-term missionaries from its own membership prior to the revitalization process.[34] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 27.

Table 27. Level of agreement that a vibrant missions ministry focused on sending
short-term and/or long-term missionaries from its own membership
existed prior to revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	7.7	--	3.7	12.0	22.2
At least agree	19.2	11.1	14.8	24.0	33.3
At least slightly agree	32.7	11.1	22.2	44.0	33.3

[34] Phase 2 survey question 19B, "Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the church's missions ministry prior to the revitalization process. 'The church had a vibrant missions ministry focused on sending short-term and/or long-term missionaries from its own membership. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)'"

No Q1 Individualists strongly agree with this statement. Collectivists are slightly more than three times as likely to strongly agree with the statement than Individualists, and Q4 Collectivists are almost twice as likely to agree strongly than Collectivists. The general trend for agreement, at the at least agree level, increases as the respondent's level of collectivism increases, with Q4 Collectives at least agreeing with the statement three times more often than Q1 Individualists. When considering the "at least slightly agree" level, the strongest agreement shifts to respondents whose C-I scores are within one standard deviation of the C-I mean, with Collectivists at least slightly agreeing with the statement at twice the rate of Individualists. Slightly more than 67 percent (67.3 percent) of all respondents disagree with this statement to some degree.

Question 20 asks respondents to select their level of agreement with the same two statements from question 19 concerning the church's missions ministry from the church's current practice. The first statement deals with the respondent's level of agreement with the statement that the church currently has a vibrant missions ministry focused on financially supporting short-term and/or long-term missionaries.[35] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 28.

Table 28. Level of agreement that a vibrant missions ministry focused on financially supporting short-term and/or long-term missionaries currently exists

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	30.8	22.2	25.9	36.0	44.4
At least agree	69.2	44.4	66.7	72.0	66.7
At least slightly agree	96.2	88.9	96.3	96.0	88.9

Q4 Collectivists are twice as likely as Q1 Individualists, and Collectivists are 39 percent more likely than Individualists, to strongly agree with this statement. Individualists

[35] Phase 2 survey question 20A, "Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the church's current missions ministry. 'The church had a vibrant missions ministry focused on financially supporting short-term and/or long-term missionaries. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)'"

are 50 percent more likely than Q1 Individualists to at least agree with this statement. Upon reaching the at least agree slightly level, the largest degree of agreement comes from respondents within one standard deviation of the C-I mean. Less than 4 percent (3.8 percent) of all respondents disagree with this statement to some degree.

Question 20's second statement deals with the respondent's level of agreement with the statement that the church currently has a vibrant missions ministry focused on sending short-term and/or long-term missionaries from its own membership.[36] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 29.

Table 29. Level of agreement that a vibrant missions ministry focused on sending short-term and/or long-term missionaries from its own membership currently exists

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	30.8	11.1	33.3	28.0	33.3
At least agree	55.8	44.4	59.3	52.0	44.4
At least slightly agree	78.9	55.6	74.1	84.0	55.6

Q4 Collectivists and Individualists are three times more likely, and Collectivists are two-and-a-half times more likely to agree strongly with this statement than Q1 Individualists. Upon reaching the at least agree level, Q1 Individualists and Q4 Collectivists obtain and maintain parity. The highest levels of at least agreement and at least slight agreement come from respondents within one standard deviation of the C-I mean. Slightly more than 21 percent (21.1 percent) of all respondents disagree with this statement to some degree to some degree.

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[36] Phase 2 survey question 20B, "Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the church's current missions ministry. 'The church had a vibrant missions ministry focused on sending short-term and/or long-term missionaries from its own membership. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)'"

Leadership. Phase 2 survey questions 21-24 intended to more fully understand each revitalization leader's perspective regarding the emphasis placed on leadership during their revitalization experience.[37]

Question 21 asks respondents to briefly describe the primary changes to their church's leadership structures which they perceive to have contributed significantly to their church's revitalization process. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 12).

Question 22 asks respondents to assign a level of importance to sixteen leadership practices during the revitalization process in their ministry context. The first statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of building momentum in the revitalization process.[38] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 30.

Table 30. Level of importance of building momentum during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	51.0	50.0	46.2	56.0	77.8
At least important	86.3	75.0	84.6	88.0	88.9
At least slightly important	98.0	100.0	100.0	96.0	100.0

Q4 Collectivists are 55 percent (55.6 percent) more likely to assess this practice as highly important than Q1 Individualists. Upon reaching the at least important level, all respondent categories have reached near parity, with a slight trend toward increasing

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[37] For a detailed analysis of the phase 2 leadership portion see Aiken, "Church Revitalization and the Role of Pastoral Leadership"; and Donald R. Sanders, Jr., "Transforming the Leadership Development Culture in Church Revitalization: A Mixed-Methods Study" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019).

[38] Phase 2 survey question 22A, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Building Momentum (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

agreement as the respondent becomes more collectivistic. Only 2 percent of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's second statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of conceptual thinking in the revitalization process.[39] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 31.

Table 31. Level of importance of conceptual thinking during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	33.3	25.0	23.1	44.0	55.6
At least important	64.7	62.5	53.8	76.0	77.8
At least slightly important	90.2	100.0	88.5	92.0	88.9

Q4 Collectivists are nearly two-and-a-quarter times as likely to rate this practice as highly important than Q1 Individualists. Q1 Individualists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least slightly important. Just under 10 percent (9.8 percent) of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's third statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of contextual awareness and planning in the revitalization process.[40] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 32.

Table 32. Level of importance of contextual awareness and planning during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	34.0	37.5	26.9	41.7	62.5
At least important	76.0	62.5	73.1	79.2	87.5
At least slightly important	94.0	100.0	96.2	91.7	87.5

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[39] Phase 2 survey question 22B, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Conceptual Thinking (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

[40] Phase 2 survey question 22C, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Conceptual Awareness and Planning (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

Q4 Collectivists are one and two thirds as likely to rate this practice as highly important than Q1 Individualists. The general trend is for increasing collectivism to produce increasing importance at the "at least important" level. Q1 Individualists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least slightly important. Six percent of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's fourth statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of developing others in the revitalization process.[41] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 33.

Table 33. Level of importance of developing others during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	58.8	44.4	50.0	68.0	77.8
At least important	88.2	88.9	88.5	88.0	100.0
At least slightly important	94.1	88.9	96.2	92.0	100.0

Q4 Collectivists are 75 percent more likely than Q1 Individualists to rate this practice as highly important. Q4 Collectivists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least important. Nearly 6 percent (5.9 percent) of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's fifth statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of getting members engaged in the revitalization process.[42] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 34.

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[41] Phase 2 survey question 22D, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Developing Others (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

[42] Phase 2 survey question 22E, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Getting Members Engaged (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

Table 34. Level of importance of getting members engaged during revitalization

	All	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	61.5	77.8	63.0	60.0	55.6
At least important	92.3	88.9	96.3	88.0	88.9
At least slightly important	94.2	88.9	96.3	92.0	100.0

Q1 Individualists are nearly 40 percent (39.9 percent) more likely to rate this practice as highly important than Q4 Collectivists. The general trend is for increasing individualism to result in an increased rating of this practice as highly important. All Q4 Collectivists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least slightly important. Nearly 6 percent (5.8 percent) of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's sixth statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of gospel orientation in the revitalization process.[43] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 35.

Table 35. Level of importance of gospel orientation during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	57.7	44.4	59.3	56.0	55.6
At least important	88.5	100.0	92.6	84.0	88.9
At least slightly important	96.2	100.0	100.0	92.0	100.0

Q4 Collectivists are just over 25 percent (25.2 percent) more likely to rate this practice as highly important than Q1 Individualists. Q1 Individualists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least important. The only category of respondents to assess this practice as unimportant are Collectivists at 8 percent.

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[43] Phase 2 survey question 22F, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Gospel Orientation (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

Question 22's seventh statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of individual and corporate repentance in the revitalization process.[44] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 36.

Table 36. Level of importance of getting members engaged during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	26.9	33.3	25.9	28.0	11.1
At least important	65.4	44.4	59.3	72.0	66.7
At least slightly important	88.5	77.8	85.2	92.0	100.0

Q1 Individualists are three times more likely to rate this practice as highly important than Q4 Collectivists. Q4 Collectivists are 50 percent (50.2 percent) more likely than Q1 Individualists to asses this practice as at least important. All Q4 Collectivists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least slightly important. Nearly 12 percent (11.5 percent) of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's eighth statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of information seeking in the revitalization process.[45] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 37.

Table 37. Level of importance of information seeking during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	14.0	12.5	11.5	16.7	11.1
At least important	54.0	50.0	57.7	50.0	55.6
At least slightly important	84.0	100.0	88.5	79.2	77.8

[44] Phase 2 survey question 22G, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Individual and Corporate Repentance (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

[45] Phase 2 survey question 22H, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Information Seeking (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

All categories of respondents are comparable at the highly important and at least important levels of importance. Q1 Individualists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least slightly important. Twenty-two percent (22.2 percent) of Q4 Collectivists and 16 percent of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's ninth statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of initiative in the revitalization process.[46] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 38.

Table 38. Level of importance of initiative during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	38.0	37.5	38.5	37.5	55.6
At least important	82.0	87.5	80.8	83.3	100.0
At least slightly important	94.0	100.0	96.2	91.7	100.0

Q4 Collectivists are over 48 percent (48.3 percent) more likely to rate this practice as highly important than Q1 Individualists and Collectivists, and more than 44 percent (44.4 percent) more likely than Individualists. Q4 Collectivists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least important, and Q1 Individualists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least slightly important. Six percent of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's tenth statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of interpersonal understanding in the revitalization process.[47] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 39.

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[46] Phase 2 survey question 22I, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Initiative (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

[47] Phase 2 survey question 22J, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Interpersonal Understanding (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

Table 39. Level of importance of interpersonal understanding during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	32.0	37.5	30.8	33.3	22.2
At least important	66.0	75.0	69.2	62.5	55.6
At least slightly important	90.0	100.0	92.3	87.5	88.9

Q1 Individualists are nearly 70 percent (68.9 percent) more likely than Q4 Collectivists to rate this practice as highly important. Q1 Individualists are also nearly 35 percent (34.9 percent) more likely than Q4 Collectivists to rate this practice as at least important. Q1 Individualists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least slightly important. Eleven percent (11.1 percent) of Q4 Collectivists and 10 percent of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's eleventh statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of missional focus in the revitalization process.[48] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 40.

Table 40. Level of importance of missional focus during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	39.2	12.5	30.8	48.0	44.4
At least important	78.4	75.0	76.9	80.0	88.9
At least slightly important	98.0	100.0	100.0	96.0	100.0

Q4 Collectivists are slightly more than two and a half times more likely than Q1 Individualists to rate this practice as highly important. Once reaching the "at least important" level, each category approaches parity, with a slight trend of increasing collectivism resulting in an increased frequency of assessment. All respondent categories, with the exception of Collectivists, rate this emphasis as at least slightly important. Four

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[48] Phase 2 survey question 22K, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Missional Focus (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

percent of all Collectivists, representing 2 percent of all respondents, find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's twelfth statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of organizational awareness in the revitalization process.[49] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 41.

Table 41. Level of importance of organizational awareness during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	31.4	12.5	23.1	40.0	44.4
At least important	70.6	50.0	61.5	80.0	88.9
At least slightly important	86.3	75.0	84.6	88.0	100.0

Q4 Collectivists are more than two-and-a-half times more likely than Q1 Individualists to rate this practice as highly important. This general trend, with increasing levels of individualism resulting in decreasing levels of importance, is present at all three levels under analysis. All Q4 Collectivists (100 percent) rate this practice as at least slightly important. Twenty-five percent of all Q1 Collectivists and more than 13 percent (13.7 percent) of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's thirteenth statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of relationship building in the revitalization process.[50] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 42.

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[49] Phase 2 survey question 22L, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Organizational Awareness (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

[50] Phase 2 survey question 22M, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Relationship Building (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

Table 42. Level of importance of relationship building during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	59.6	55.6	51.9	68.0	77.8
At least important	90.4	88.9	92.6	88.0	88.9
At least slightly important	96.2	100.0	100.0	92.0	100.0

Q4 Collectivists are nearly 40 percent (39.9 percent) more likely than Q1 Individualists to rate this practice as highly important. Approximate parity is reached at the level of at least important. All categories of respondents, with the exception of Collectivists, find this practice to be at least slightly important. Eight percent of Collectivists, representing nearly 4 percent (3.8 percent) of all respondents, find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's fourteenth statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of teamwork and cooperation in the revitalization process.[51] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 43.

Table 43. Level of importance of teamwork and cooperation during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	56.9	25.0	42.3	72.0	66.7
At least important	92.2	87.5	88.5	96.0	100.0
At least slightly important	94.1	87.5	92.3	96.0	100.0

Q4 Collectivists are more than one-and-a-half times more likely than Q1 Individualists to rate this practice as highly important. A general trend, with increasing levels of collectivism resulting in increasing levels of importance, is present at the at least important and at least slightly important levels. Collectivists and Q4 Collectivists who find this practice important do so at the "at least important" level. Q4 Collectivists (100

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[51] Phase 2 survey question 22N, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Teamwork and Cooperation (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

percent) rate this practice as at least important. Nearly 13 percent (12.5 percent) of all Q1 Individualists and nearly 6 percent (5.9 percent) of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's fifteenth statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of transparency in the revitalization process.[52] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 44.

Table 44. Level of importance of transparency during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	51.9	44.4	44.4	60.0	55.6
At least important	84.6	88.9	81.5	88.0	88.9
At least slightly important	96.2	100.0	96.3	96.0	100.0

Q4 Collectivists are 25 percent (25.2 perecent) more likely, and Collectivists are 35 percent (35.1 percent) more likely than both Q1 Individualists and Individualists to rate this practice as highly important. Q4 Collectivists (100 percent) and Q1 Individualists (100 percent) assess this practice as at least slightly important. Approximately 4 percent of Individualists, Collectivists, and all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 22's sixteenth and final statement deals with the respondent's assigned level of importance of willingness to confront/church discipline in the revitalization process.[53] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 45.

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[52] Phase 2 survey question 22O, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Transparency (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

[53] Phase 2 survey question 22P, "Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. 'Willingness to Confront/Church Discipline (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

Table 45. Level of importance of willingness to confront/church
discipline during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	39.2	50.0	38.5	40.0	33.3
At least important	56.9	62.5	53.8	60.0	66.7
At least slightly important	72.5	75.0	76.9	68.0	66.7

Q1 Individualists are 50 percent (50.1 percent) more likely than Q4 Collectivists to rate this practice as highly important. Collectivists and Individualists are comparable in their assessment of high importance. All Q4 Collectivists who assess this practice as important do so at the "at least important" level. Twenty-five percent of Q1 Individualists, 23 percent (23.1 percent) of all Individualists, 32 percent of Collectivists, one-third (33.3 percent) of Q4 Collectivists, and 28 percent (27.5 percent) of all respondents find this leadership practice to be unimportant.

Question 23 asks respondents to briefly describe the primary changes to their church's leadership development process which they perceive to have contributed significantly to their church's revitalization process. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 13).

Question 24 asks respondents to select their level of agreement with two statements concerning the church's leadership development processes. The first statement deals with the respondent's level of agreement with the statement that prior to the revitalization process, a culture of effective leadership development existed within the church.[54] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed in table 46.

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[54] Phase 2 survey question 24A, "Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the leadership development processes. 'Prior to the revitalization process, a culture of effective leadership development existed within the church. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)'"

Table 46. Level of agreement that a culture of effective leadership development existed prior to revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	1.9	--	--	4.0	--
At least agree	3.9	--	3.7	4.0	--
At least slightly agree	9.6	22.2	11.1	8.0	11.1

The strong majority of every respondent category, including 90 percent (90.4 percent) overall, believe that there was not a culture of effective leadership development prior to their revitalization.

Question 24's second statement deals with the respondent's level of agreement with the statement that leadership development played a significant role in the revitalization process.[55] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed in table 47.

Table 47. Level of agree that leadership development played a significant role in revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Strongly agree	31.4	22.2	22.2	41.7	44.4
At least agree	72.6	66.7	70.4	75.0	77.8
At least slightly agree	86.3	88.9	85.2	87.5	88.9

Q4 Collectivists are twice as likely than Q1 Individualists and Individualists to agree with this statement strongly. There is a general trend for increasing collectiveness to result in higher levels of agreement at the "strongly agree," and the "at least agree" levels. All categories are comparable when assessing the at least slightly agree level. Overall, 14 percent (13.7 percent) of all respondents disagree with this statement.

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[55] Phase 2 survey question 24B, "Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the leadership development processes. 'Leadership development played a significant role in the revitalization process. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)'"

Prayer. Phase 2 survey questions 25-28 intended to more fully understand each revitalization leader's perspective regarding the emphasis placed on prayer during their revitalization experience.[56]

Question 25 asks respondents to briefly describe the primary changes to their church's leadership structures which they perceive to have contributed significantly to their church's revitalization process. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 14).

Question 26 asks respondents to assign a level of importance to two statements regarding prayer and revitalization. The first statement asked the respondent to assess the importance of the church leadership's dependence upon prayer as a vital means for realizing revitalization in their ministry context.[57] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 48.

Table 48. Level of importance of leadership's dependence upon prayer
as a vital means for realizing revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	55.8	44.4	40.7	72.0	100.0
At least important	82.7	77.8	81.5	84.0	100.0
At least slightly important	96.2	88.9	96.3	96.0	100.0

All Q4 Collectivists rated the statement as highly important, more than one and a quarter times as often as Q1 Individualists. While approximately 4 percent of Individualists, Collectivists, and all respondents found the statement unimportant, 11 percent (11.1 percent) of Q1 Individualists found the statement unimportant.

[56] For a detailed analysis of the phase 2 prayer portion see Dean Craig Clark, "Transforming the Prayer Culture in Church Revitalization: A Mixed-Methods Study" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019).

[57] Phase 2 survey question 26A, "Rate the following statements. 'The church leadership's dependence upon prayer as a vital means for realizing revitalization in your ministry context. (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

Question 26's second statement asked the respondent to assess the importance of the church congregation's dependence upon prayer as a vital means for realizing revitalization in their ministry context.[58] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 49.

Table 49. Level of importance of the congregation's dependence upon prayer
as a vital means for realizing revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly important	44.2	33.3	37.0	52.0	77.8
At least important	73.1	66.7	74.1	72.0	100.0
At least slightly important	94.2	88.9	96.3	92.0	100.0

Q4 Collectivists are more than one-and-a-third times more likely than Q1 Individualists to assess the statement as highly important. All Q4 Collectivists rated the statement as at least important and are 50 percent (49.9 percent) more likely than Q1 Individualists to assess the statement to be at least important. Six percent (5.8 percent) of all respondents and 11 percent (11.1 percent) of Q1 Individualists, an amount equal to the results of question 26 statement 1, found the statement unimportant.

Question 27 asks respondents to briefly describe their frequency and pattern of personal prayer during the revitalization process. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 15).

Question 28 asks respondents to briefly describe the ways the topic and act of prayer was prioritized in corporate worship during their church's revitalization process. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 16).

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[58] Phase 2 survey question 26B, "Rate the following statements. 'The church congregation's dependence upon prayer as a vital means for realizing revitalization in your ministry context. (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)'"

Worship gathering. Phase 2 survey questions 29-31 intended to more fully understand each revitalization leader's perspective regarding the emphasis placed on the church's primary worship gathering during their revitalization experience.

Question 29 asks respondents to briefly describe the primary changes to the church's primary worship gathering, which they perceived to have contributed significantly to their church's revitalization process. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 17).

Question 30 asks respondents to indicate what the most difficult element was to change in the primary worship gathering during church's revitalization process, as well as state the reason why it was so difficult to change. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 18).

Question 31 asks respondents to indicate what the most element of change was in the primary worship gathering during church's revitalization process, as well as state the reason why it was so rewarding. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 19).

Phase 2 general concluding comment. Question 32 asks respondents to indicate what advice they would offer to a pastor seeking to lead a revitalization process. Phase 2 responses were delimited to phase 3 respondents and ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from most collectivistic to most individualistic (see appendix 20).

Phase 3 questions related to the characteristics of revitalization. In addition to asking questions necessary for determining respondents' socio-cultural perspectives scores, the instrument also included six additional questions relating to the respondent's perception of their revitalization experience.

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Phase 3 question 18 asked the respondent to describe the cultural diversity of attendees to a typical worship service during their revitalization.[59] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 50.

Table 50. Level of cultural diversity in worship during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly diverse	9.8	--	6.3	13.8	18.2
Somewhat diverse	39.3	44.4	53.1	24.1	36.4
Uniform, with exceptions	42.6	44.4	31.3	55.2	36.4
Uniform	8.2	11.1	9.4	6.9	9.1

No Q1 Individualists assessed their attendees as being highly culturally diverse, with a minor trend of increasing numbers of highly diverse congregations as respondent categories become more collectivistic. Each category of respondents has a distribution of responses with the middle levels of somewhat diverse and uniform having the preponderance of responses. Q1 Individualists are equally split between assessing their congregations as somewhat diverse and uniform, each at 44 percent (44.4 percent). Likewise, Q4 Collectivists are equally split between these same two levels of diversity at 36 percent (36.4 percent).

Phase 3 question 19 asked the respondent to describe how closely attendees of a typical worship service reflected the local community during their revitalization.[60] Responses according to respondents' C-I scores are detailed by percentages in table 51.

Only a small number of Collectivists (3.5 percent) reported that their attendees did not reflect their local community. Q1 Individualists were more than twice as likely

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[59] Phase 3 survey question 18, "During a typical worship service during your revitalization, how would you describe the cultural diversity of your attendees? Our attendees were culturally uniform, Our attendees were culturally uniform, with a few exceptions, Our attendees were somewhat culturally diverse, Our attendees were highly culturally diverse."

[60] Phase 3 survey question 19, "During a typical worship service during your revitalization, how closely would your worship attendees reflect the community surrounding your church? Our attendees did not reflect the local community, Our attendees somewhat reflected the local community, Our attendees mostly reflected the local community, Our attendees accurately reflected the local community."

than any other category of respondent to assess their attendees as accurately reflecting

their local community.

Table 51. Level to which worship attendees reflected the local community

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Accurately reflected	19.7	44.4	21.9	17.2	18.2
Mostly reflected	50.8	33.3	50.0	51.7	45.5
Somewhat reflected	27.9	22.2	28.1	27.6	36.4
Did reflect the local community	1.6	--	--	3.5	--

Phase 3 question 20 asked the respondent to describe the level of unity in their

church at three different points of their revitalization journey. The first sub-question asks

respondents to assess their church's unity before revitalization.[61] Responses according to

respondents' C-I scores are detailed by percentages in table 52.

Table 52. Characterization of unity before revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly unified	6.6	11.1	12.5	--	--
Unified	18.0	22.2	21.9	13.8	18.2
Somewhat unified	19.7	22.2	9.4	31.0	9.1
Somewhat divided	16.4	11.1	12.5	20.7	36.4
Divided	26.2	33.3	25.0	27.6	27.3
Highly divided	13.1	--	18.8	6.9	9.1

No Collectivists, including Q4 Collectivists, assessed their church as highly

unified before revitalization. No Q1 Individualist assessed their church as highly divided

before revitalization. Q1 Individualists were slightly more than twice as likely than Q4

Collectivists to assess their church as being unified to some degree. Individualists (43.8

percent) and Collectivists (44.8 percent) nearly equally assessed their churches as being

unified to some degree.

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[61] Phase 3 survey question 20A, "How would you characterize your church's unity before your revitalization? Our church was highly divided, Our church was divided, Our church was somewhat divided, Our church was somewhat unified, Our church was unified, Our church was highly unified."

Phase 3 question 20's second sub-question asks respondents to assess their church's unity during revitalization.[62] Responses according to respondents' C-I scores are detailed by percentages in table 53.

Table 53. Characterization of unity during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly unified	9.8	11.1	15.6	3.5%	--
Unified	31.2	22.2	25.0	37.9	36.4
Somewhat unified	32.8	22.2	21.9	44.8	54.6
Somewhat divided	18.0	33.3	28.1	6.9	--
Divided	8.2	11.1	9.4	6.9	9.1
Highly divided	--	--	--	--	--

No Q4 Collectivist, and a very small percentage of Collectivists, assessed their church as highly unified during revitalization. No respondents assessed their churches as highly divided during revitalization. Q4 Collectivists were nearly two and a half times as likely as Q1 individualists to assess their church's unity during revitalization as somewhat unified. Q4 Collectivists (90.9 percent) were nearly 80 percent more likely than Q1 Individualists (55.6 percent) to assess their church as being unified to some degree during revitalization. There is a general trend that as church leaders become more collectivistic, their perception of their church being unified to some degree increases (Q1 Individualists 55.6 percent, Individualists 62.5 percent, Collectivists 86.2 percent, Q4 Collectivists 90.9 percent).

The change in perception from before to during revitalization was computed by subtracting assessment levels reflecting before revitalization from those reflecting during revitalization. These changes are detailed by percentages in table 54.

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[62] Phase 3 survey question 20B, "How would you characterize your church's unity during your revitalization? Our church was highly divided, Our church was divided, Our church was somewhat divided, Our church was somewhat unified, Our church was unified, Our church was highly unified."

Table 54. Change in the characterization of unity from before to during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly unified	3.3	--	3.1	3.5	--
Unified	13.1	--	3.1	24.1	18.2
Somewhat unified	13.1	--	12.5	13.8	45.5
Somewhat divided	1.6	22.2	15.6	-13.8	-36.4
Divided	-18.0	-22.2	-15.6	-20.7	-18.2
Highly divided	-13.1	--	-18.8	-6.9	-9.1

No category of respondents experienced a shift from a more unified to a more divided character during revitalization. Q1 Individualists as a group experienced a change as a 22 percent (22.2 percent) shift from divided to undivided, but not experiencing a net increase to being characterized as unified to any degree. The general overall trend from table 53 continues into table 54, that as church leaders become more collectivistic, their perception of the change in their church's level of unity increases to some degree.[63]

Phase 3 question 20's third sub-question asks respondents to assess their church's unity after revitalization[64]. Responses according to respondents' C-I scores are detailed by percentages in table 55.

Table 55. Characterization of unity after revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly unified	54.1	44.4	56.3	51.7	72.7
Unified	23.0	33.3	21.9	24.1	9.1
Somewhat unified	18.0	22.2	15.6	20.7	9.1
Somewhat divided	4.9	--	6.3	3.5	9.1
Divided	--	--	--	--	--
Highly divided	--	--	--	--	--

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[63] Percentage increase in perception of unity: Q1 Individualists 0.0%, Individualists +18.75%, Collectivists +41.4%, and Q4 Collectivists +63.4%.

[64] Phase 3 survey question 20B, "How would you characterize your church's unity presently? Our church was highly divided, Our church was divided, Our church was somewhat divided, Our church was somewhat unified, Our church was unified, Our church was highly unified." Some phase 4 churches who characterized themselves as still being in a revitalization posture indicated that they responded to this question according to their current status.

All Q1 Individualists characterize their churches as being some degree of unified after revitalization. Only slightly less than 5 percent (4.9 percent) of respondents report their churches as being characterized as divided to any degree after revitalization, all being reported as only somewhat divided. Q4 Collectivists were nearly 64 percent (63.7 percent) more likely than Q1 individualists to assess their church's unity after revitalization as highly unified. Only 27 percent (27.3 percent) of Q4 Collectivists assess their church as being anything other than highly unified. Q1 Individualists report a greater distribution between the three assessment levels indicating degrees of unity.

The change in perception from before to after revitalization was computed by subtracting assessment levels reflecting before revitalization from those reflecting after revitalization. These changes are detailed by percentages in table 56.

No category of respondents experienced a shift from a more unified to a more divided character due to revitalization. The general overall trend noted in table 54 continues into table 56, indicating that as church leaders become more collectivistic, their perception of the change in their church's level of unity increases.[65]

Table 56. Change in the characterization of unity from before to after revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Highly unified	47.5	33.3	43.8	51.7	72.7
Unified	4.9	11.1	--	10.4	-9.1
Somewhat unified	-1.6	--	6.3	-10.4	--
Somewhat divided	-11.5	-11.1	-6.3	-17.2	-27.3
Divided	-26.2	-33.3	-25.0	-27.6	-27.3
Highly divided	-13.1	--	-18.8	-6.9	-9.1

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[65] Percentage increase in perception of unity: Q1 Individualists +44.4%, Individualists +50.0%, Collectivists +51.7%, and Q4 Collectivists +63.6%.

Phase 3 question 21 asks the respondent to describe the church leadership's level of concern for building and/or preserving church unity during their revitalization.[66] Responses according to respondents' C-I scores are detailed by percentages in table 57.

Table 57. Level to concern for building and/or preserving unity during revitalization

	All	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Intentionality and proactivity	57.6	55.6	58.1	57.1	70.0
Actions at times	32.2	33.3	32.3	32.1	10.0
Actions whenever our unity was seriously threatened	5.1	11.1	3.2	7.1	20.0
Not a primary concern	5.1	--	6.5	3.6	--

Q4 Collectivists were the only category of respondent whose levels of intentionality and proactivity, and action when seriously threatened, were significantly greater than average. Q4 Collectivists were also the only category of respondents whose level of actions at times was significantly less than (one-third) the average.

Phase 3 question 22 asks respondents if they could identify planned events and/or programs that increased their sense of unity and community during their revitalization.[67] Responses according to respondents' C-I scores are detailed by percentages in table 58.

Table 58. Can respondents identify planned events and/or programs which increased their sense of unity and community during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Yes – Definitely	50.9	55.6	48.4	53.6	80.0
Yes – Somewhat	39.0	33.3	41.9	35.7	20.0
No	10.2	11.1	9.7	10.7	--

[66] Phase 3 survey question 21, "What posture did your church leadership take regarding building and/or preserving church unity during your revitalization? Unity was not a primary concern, We took action whenever our unity was seriously threatened, We took actions at times to build and/or guard our unity, We intentionally and proactively built and/or guarded our unity."

[67] Phase 3 survey question 22, "Can you identify planned events and/or programs which increased your sense of unity and community during your revitalization? Yes–Definitely, Yes–Somewhat, No."

Phase 3 Q4 Collectivists are 44 percent (43.8 percent) more likely than Q1 Individualists to be able to identify events or programs that increase the sense of unity and community. Q4 Collectivists were also the only category where all respondents could identify such events.

Phase 3 question 23 asks respondents if they could identify unplanned events and/or programs that increased their sense of unity and community.[68] Responses, according to respondents' C-I scores, are detailed by percentages in table 59.

Q4 Collectivists were again the only category where all respondents could identify such events. One-third of Q1 Individualists and 20 percent (20.3 percent) of all respondents could not identify such events.

Table 59. Can respondents identify unplanned events and/or programs which increased their sense of unity and community during revitalization

	All Phase 3 Respondents	Q1 IND	IND	COL	Q4 COL
Yes – Definitely	40.7	33.3	42.0	39.3	40.0
Yes – Somewhat	39.0	33.3	35.5	42.9	60.0
No	20.3	33.3	22.9	17.9	--

Phase 4 Interviews

Twelve pastors participated in phase 4 interviews. Interviewees were assured that neither they nor their ministry context would be identified with their responses to interview questions. Interview questions were designed to further nuance the respondent's personal experience of themes that emerged from phase 2 and phase 3 surveys, as well as precedent literature.

Demographics. Overall, phase 4 interviewees, on average, were 44 years of age with 18.5 years of ministry experience. Also, on average, these pastors were at their

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[68] Phase 3 survey question 23, "Can you identify unplanned events and/or crisis points in the life of your church which increased your sense of unity and community during your revitalization? Yes–Definitely, Yes – Somewhat, No." The intent of this question was to capture events which were not part of a strategic plan, but rather were placed upon the leader and their church by forces beyond their control.

revitalization churches for just slightly more than 3 years (3.1 years) prior to revitalization beginning and had current tenures of 9.3 years at their revitalization churches (see table 60).

Table 60. Phase 4 interviewee overall pastoral experience and ages in years

	Min	Max	Range	Mean	Median
Ministry experience	4.0	35.0	31.0	18.5	16.5
Tenure (Prior to revitalization)	0.0	15.0	15.0	3.1	3.0
Tenure (Total)	4.0	25.0	21.0	9.3	8.3
Age	34.0	60.0	26.0	44.0	42.0

Q1 Individualists on average were just over 40 years (40.2 years) of age with 16.8 years of ministry experience. Also, on average, these pastors were at their revitalization churches for nearly 2.5 years (2.4 years) prior to revitalization beginning and had current tenures of 8.3 years at their revitalization churches (see table 61).

Table 61. Q1 Individualists' pastoral experience and ages in years

	Min	Max	Range	Mean	Median
Ministry experience	10.0	26.0	16.0	16.8	16.5
Tenure (Prior to revitalization)	0.0	4.0	4.0	2.4	3.3
Tenure (Total)	6.0	11.0	5.0	8.3	8.0
Age	34.0	52.0	18.0	40.2	39.0

Q4 Collectivists, on average, were nearly 48 years (47.8 years) of age with 20.2 years of ministry experience. Also, on average, these pastors were at their revitalization churches for nearly 4 years (3.8 years) prior to revitalization beginning and had current tenures of 10.3 years at their revitalization churches (see table 62).

Table 62. Q4 Collectivists' pastoral experience and ages in years

	Min	Max	Range	Mean	Median
Ministry experience	4.0	35.0	31.0	20.2	17.5
Tenure (Prior to revitalization)	0.0	15.0	15.0	3.8	1.5
Tenure (Total)	4.0	25.0	21.0	10.3	8.3
Age	37.0	60.0	23.0	47.8	46.0

Comparisons of these averages indicate that Q4 Collectivists were 7.6 years older than Q1 Individualists with 3.4 years more ministry experience. Q4 Collectivists also had a tenure that was two years longer, but the length of revitalizations was almost identical as Q4 Collectivist revitalizations started nearly one and a half years later than their Q1 Individualistic counterparts.

Educational levels for phase 4 interviewees ranged from some college to one interviewee holding a doctoral degree. Ten of the 12 interviewees (83.4 percent) had attended seminary and had earned a master's degree at a minimum.

Q1 Individualists had more formal education than Q4 Collectivists. Q1 Individualists all had masters degrees, with 4 in the process of completing a doctoral program, and 1 already holding a PhD. Q4 Individualists had 1 interviewee that held 2 associate's degrees, 1 with a bachelor's degree, 3 with seminary master's degrees, and 1 doctoral candidate (see table 63).

Table 63. Phase 4 interviewee educational levels

	Q1	%	Q4	%	All Phase 4 Interviewees	%
Some College	--	0.0%	1	16.7%	1	8.3%
Bachelors	--	0.0%	1	16.7%	1	8.3%
Masters	1	16.7%	3	50.0%	4	33.3%
Doctoral Candidate	4	66.7%	1	16.7%	5	41.7%
Doctorate	1	16.7%	--	0.0%	1	8.3%

Pastors selected to participate in phase 4 interviews represented various sizes and ministry contexts across the United States. Regional identification was established using US Census Bureau regions and divisions.[69] All interviewees included participants from East South Central (3), West South Central (4), East North Central (1), South Atlantic (3), and West (1) regions. Q1 Individualists included West (1), East South

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[69] Regions were defined by the US Government census regional divisions. See United States Census Bureau, "Census Regions and Divisions of the United States," accessed February 21, 2020, https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/maps-data/maps/reference/us_regdiv.pdf.

Central (2), West South Central (2), and East North Central (1) participants. Q4

Collectivists included South Atlantic (3), West South Central (2), and East South Central

(10) participants (see table 64).

Table 64. Phase 4 church participation profile

ID	Church Ministry Context	State	Region by US Census Division	ACP reported Worship Attendance (2016)	Self-reported Average Worship Attendance (2019)
Q1-1	Rural	MT	West	70	75
Q1-2	Suburban	AL	East South Central	1186	1350
Q1-3	Suburban	LA	West South Central	97	120
Q1-4	Suburban	OH	East North Central	76	50
Q1-5	Suburban	AR	West South Central	90	180
Q1-6	Rural	MS	East South Central	95	90
Q4-1	Suburban	SC	South Atlantic	510	800
Q4-2	Urban	GA	South Atlantic	683	752
Q4-3	Urban	OK	West South Central	574	650
Q4-4	Rural	LA	West South Central	86	100
Q4-5	Suburban	KY	East South Central	50	70
Q4-6	Suburban	SC	South Atlantic	650	875

Socio-cultural interviews revealed several consistent themes of pastoral

perspectives concerning their experience during their church's revitalization. Responses

were assessed within the respondents' socio-cultural identification group (Q1 Individualists

or Q4 Collectivists) and then assessed relative to all respondents. Coding was used to

"generate a description of categories or themes for analysis."[70]

An intentional return to Scripture. A theme repeated by participants

throughout the interview process related to their intentional emphasis on Scripture as the

source for their revitalization purposes, and the basis for their revitalization efforts. This

emphasis generally manifests itself in three different ways: centrality and importance of

the Word, concern for teaching, and purpose validation.

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[70] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2014), 189.

It was explicit from comments made throughout the interview process that participants held to a high view of Scripture. Pastor Q4-3 believed that the foundation of his revitalization efforts was "being a church that taught the Word of God. We are very Word centric. Everything we do, from the babies to the grave, is all centered-on equipping from the word." When discussing theological threads, Pastor Q1-5 digressed to add that he found "the importance of the Word itself" to be a more substantial issue to be discussed than any theological tenant that could arise from its pages. Pastor Q1-3 added that teaching his people to trust Scripture was key.

Several revitalization pastors commented that their church's relatively limited understanding of Scripture was of immediate concern. Pastor Q1-3 stated, "My main goal has been to take them back to the scriptures. I found the people here were woefully ignorant of what the bible actually says." After discussing a myriad of interpersonal issues among his church members, Pastor Q4-5commented, "I would say that one percent of attenders would follow through with doing things according to biblical standards. . . . I don't think they were trying to do anything contrary to the Word of God." His emphasis pointed to a lack of understanding of biblical principles, which prevented his people from meeting biblical expectations.

This lack of biblical understanding caused several pastors to move away from topical messages and emphasize verse-by-verse exegesis of passages. Pastor Q1-5 added that he uses a "narrative style of preaching in order to draw people into the text." By painting pictures lifted from the text, he believes he is able to help hearers connect with the lessons being taught. This idea connects with Q1-3's statement that his "approach has been more biblically-based as opposed to systematic. The nature of the people here could not have handled systematic [theology based preaching]."

The third manifestation involved the use of Scripture to validate the need for revitalization. Much of this emphasis involved the discovery (or rediscovery) of the basic tenants of what a church was and is called to be. As Pastor Q1-4stated, "The second thing

that I emphasize (after the importance of the Word) is mission. Why are we here?" Pastor Q1-3 spent two years laying the groundwork for revitalization by preaching through the Gospel of Luke, The Sermon on the Mount, and the Book of James. Pastor Q4-1 did likewise, but his preaching ministry emphasized the Great Commission and the Greatest Commandment. Pastor Q4-3 summed up the thoughts of many, stating, "We wanted to return to just the basics, not what a Baptist church looks like. . . . We wanted to structure ourselves to be a relevant church after the New Testament church model. We built around a vision, not of me as the pastor, but the vision of a New Testament church according to scripture."

Pastor Q4-6 voiced a similar sentiment, with a particularly personal application: "Where did we come from? For me, that's the book of Acts. I wanted a safe environment for my family and me so that we could do community—honest, open, authentic community—with people where we could be honest about our stuff, about our junk."

When asked for any concluding advice regarding theological emphasis for revitalization, five of the six Q1 Individualists offered a response based on the biblical text.[71] Five of the six Q4 Collectivists offered a response that was interpersonal in nature.[72]

The metaphorical family. The dominant theme and metaphor intentionally used by revitalization pastors is family. "Family" is used to communicate identity, to imply rights and responsibilities, and to encourage connection, patience, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Five of six Q1 Individualists independently identified "family" as the most significant metaphor used in their revitalization vocabulary. Pastor Q1-3 stated, "That's

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[71] The notable exception was Q1-1. The particular cultural context of that church is extremely individualistic. Pastor Q1-1, though scoring as the most individualistic revitalization pastor interviewed in phase 4, suggested that he is "much less individualistic than his average attender."

[72] Statements included such things as "connect people through the church's story," "know your people," "don't leave family," etc.

the word that we see being used regularly for the body of Christ. . . . It should be a family, and these people understand family, and so it works well. [The church in Acts] knew each other, and they knew each other like family." Pastor Q1-6 observed, "[My church attenders] use the word family a lot. They call one another friends. The word family is used pretty regularly, that 'this is part of my family.'"

Commenting on the multiple ways that Christians can hear the Word today, one pastor partially ceded, saying,

> There is an aspect of being fed the word . . . but another thing that you cannot get from watching televangelists or listening to sermons online is community. That's very important in terms of corporate worship and church family . . . because you can listen to a lot of good preaching, but you can only get that family and community out of a local church congregation.

Q4 Collectivists trended toward even greater intentionality toward engaging the family metaphor. Pastor Q4-3's church included this metaphor in their church's vision statement: "'We exist to help our community know God, become family, and impact the world.' Those three become pillars of everything. Everything that we feel led to do has to tie back to those three pillars." Pastor Q4-4 went as far as to replace the word "church" in their local context with the word "family," and offered an emotional apologetic for decision:

> Family is the dominant metaphor. We stopped using the term 'church' five years ago and replaced it with family. . . . Everyone is beneficial to the family. Every one of us has a role. When you don't use the gifts that God has given you to the good of the family, the whole family suffers. . . . It's not about us. We gotta get over ourselves. It's about Christ. And we are family. You don't leave the family. The family stays together. Even though we get mad, we all come back together again on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, etc. Why? Because we are a family. . . . At the end of the day, we are family because we find ourselves in Christ, and we're not about us. We're about Christ.

Make membership meaningful. All participating revitalization pastors could identify with and endorse the idea that making membership meaningful was a significant element of their revitalization process. As one Q4 Collectivist pastor commented, "My goal is that [our members] would value church membership more, that they would see it

as a vital part, not just something that's an option, but as something that's actually valuable to be a part of."

Several pastors described how they had modified the process to become members of their churches. Most notably, they stopped the practice of receiving members immediately after coming forward to join. Pastor Q1-6, commenting on this process change, stated, "Membership was exactly what it is in most Southern Baptist churches. It's just where my name is on some record. . . . Traditionally, you come forward to join, and I ask everybody who is a member to raise their hand. That's been taken away." Pastor Q4-6 echoed this sentiment: "At [our church], you just don't walk down on Sunday and say, 'I want to join the church.' That's not how we do it."

Revitalization pastors, and Q1 Individualists particularly, spoke energetically about increasing member engagement. Pastor Q1-1 explained, "Three years ago . . . I was afraid to ask people to do things. But over the past couple of years, we've been pretty intentional. We don't let people just sort of sit in that, 'OK, well I joined your church, and now I am here.'" Pastor Q1-1 added, "When you become a member here, you don't just walk down the aisle and sign a card and just sit . . . you have to serve. You know, there is an expectation that you're going to serve, and you're going to be involved."

Two Q1 Individualistic pastors connected active participation in church directly with God's activity. From Pastor Q1-4's perspective, God is active, and the motive is for the church member to be part of what God is doing.[73] In the second case, Pastor Q1-5's emphasis is on a relationship that God initiates between the member and the church, resulting in an obligation for member participation.[74] Pastor Q1-6 summarized,

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[73] Pastor Q1-4 explained, "If you do what we ask you to do, you will go to Sunday worship. You will go to a breakout (small group). You'll leave that day having made five friends at a minimum. . . . [Our church] is not a place where you are going to come and not be involved. . . . We want you to come and plug in and serve because we want you to be part of what God is doing here."

[74] Pastor Q1-5 said, "If God led you here, and if you feel that this is where the Holy Spirit is showing you that you need to get plugged into and serve, we want you to come alongside us and be partners in the gospel with us."

"Membership does have privileges at my church, but that privilege is to serve, not to be served. Stole that straight from Jesus."

One method employed to assist in creating meaningful membership was the development of a membership class. Development was disproportionate with all six Q4 Collectivists compared to only two of six Q1 Individualists holding these classes.[75] Pastor Q4-1 commented that establishing a membership class was one of the first things he did, and another pastor noted that membership increased when a class was put in place.[76] The classes cleared up the ambiguity. Pastor Q4-3 explained, "There were no grey areas of what 'does it mean to be a part of this body?' So that raised the bar and brought a more unified heartbeat of membership."

Another method employed to assist in creating meaningful membership was the institution of potential member interviews. Five of the twelve revitalization churches (three individualistic and two collectivistic) hold these interviews, with three (two individualists and one collectivist) sharing a meal with potential members.

Basis of pastoral authority. An interesting trend of responses emerged during discussions regarding the revitalization pastors' theology of authority. In this section are responses from revitalization pastors, ordered from the most individualistic to most collectivistic pastors.[77]

Humility: "If you're not willing to serve, and you're not willing to put yourself in a place of humility, then there's not going to be a response to that."[78]

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[75] Q1-2 is holding membership classes, but he himself does not like the practice.

[76] Pastor Q4-2 explained, "We did see an influx of members when we put a robust membership class into place."

[77] Responses were gathered from comments related to several questions, primarily arising from discussions related to authority and submission (see phase 4, question 11). Pastors Q1-4, Q4-2, and Q4-5 did not make statements direct enough for comparison with their colleagues.

[78] Pastor Q1-1.

Trust: "The authority that's been given to me to lead the church . . . some of it is a matter of the trust I have built. It is earning trust and loving the people."[79]

Respect:

I view my role more as a coach than as a boss, and people know that. Now they respect me, which is part of what allows me to do that. . . . Currently, there is no one in leadership that I haven't put there . . . because they've earned the respect of the people. They've earned my respect. And they are individually demonstrating what it means to be a disciple. People who other people respect become leaders. They'll become leaders long before they have a title.[80]

Divine Placement:

God has placed pastors in a position of leadership and authority, and the church should follow the leader and submit to the spiritual authority that the pastor has, not because of who he is, but because of the role and the office that he holds and that God has placed him in . . . as long as there's not any biblical reason to oppose direction provided by the pastor, I believe the pastor has been called to lead the congregation.[81]

Relationship: "Authority around here is relational man. The assertion of authority apart from relationship would be stupid and devoid of effectiveness. So we try to model relational leadership in that way, and the guys have bought into that too."[82]

Listening: "We literally have total peace in this congregation because they know they are being heard. It's not a pastor that's dominating the vision. It's us finding that vision together."[83]

Modeling: "Do they respect my authority? Oh my gosh yeah! They watch my wife and me and how we interact with each other. They seem to follow that very well. My wife is very submissive, and yet my wife is a strong, strong leader. So, I am very blessed in that I feel like I have a group of people that are very respectful of me."[84]

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[79] Pastor Q1-2.

[80] Pastor Q1-3.

[81] Pastor Q1-5.

[82] Pastor Q4-1.

[83] Pastor Q4-3.

[84] Pastor Q4-6.

What is notable about these responses is their general trending. Q1 Individualists appear to have a greater tendency to understand leadership authority as earned through attributes of the leader and granted by the congregation in response to meeting the congregation's expectations.[85] By contrast, Q-4 Collectivists seem to understand leadership authority more as a product of relational participation.

Leadership role realignment. Discussions of leadership authority inevitably resulted in a discussion of church polity and the means used by revitalization pastors to implement what they deemed to be necessary changes.

All six Q1 Individualists commented that they specifically taught and/or preached on the subject of authority and submission in the church and home and that this teaching was necessary to produce change. By contrast, only three of the six Q-4 Collectivists discussed preaching and/or teaching on authority and submission. Their motivation for doing so was primarily an effort to preach the whole counsel of the Word.

None of the revitalization pastors interviewed indicated that their revitalization effort included the creation of a formally recognized elder body. Several pastors, however, commented on their desire to have a plurality of elders supporting them. Pastor Q1-3 commented,

> I tried to install elders here, but this traditional small Baptist church was afraid of the idea completely. . . . I started training men to study the Word well, preach, teach, and understand scripture. Now I have 'Sneaky Elders,' who give me advice and preach when needed. The people have a hard time respecting that group because they haven't called them elders. But I treat them as elders myself. I allow them to hold me accountable. . . . I do not like being the sole elder.

Pastor Q4-1's comment seems to represent the plurality preference in multi-staff churches: "I've tried to help my people understand that our pastors and associate pastors are the elders of the church. . . . I let them preach regularly to lead out in that way.

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[85] The exception to this trend in the response of Q1-5, which was unique among all the respondents.

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The largest emphasis of authority redistribution pertained to the role of deacons. All six of the Q1 Individualists noted that they expressly taught that the role of deacons is one of service, and that deacon leadership authority is for leading in service-based ministry. This change was intentional in every instance. A Q-1 Individualist, Pastor Q1-3, referring to this intentionality, stated, "One of the things that I have done is to work very hard to remove the [decision making] authority of the deacons." A Q-4 Collectivist, Pastor Q4-1, echoed this sentiment: "I have really downplayed the role of the deacons in the church."

While every revitalization pastor expressed a desire to return to his understanding of biblical roles for church offices, Q1 Individualists repeated a theme related to their perception of the congregation's understanding of the practical role of deacon as protective. As Pastor Q1-3put it, "The thought before was that the deacons were there to keep the pastor in line and run him off if necessary. That's a common small church belief in Baptist groups." Pastor Q1-6 echoed these sentiments.

> I came from [the south], and there the pastor is an employee. While the pastor may be recognized as the CEO, he answers to the board and is an employee. And at some point, if you go too far, you're going to have to be reined back in and do what they say… There was this idea that 'I've been here longer than you have. I'll be here after you leave. So, I'm not going to really do any of these hair-brained things you might bring up.

Commenting on attitudes experienced by an intentional interim prior to their revitalization, a Q4 Collectivist pastor, Pastor Q4-2, noted that church members had attitudes "like a lot of typical Southern Baptist churches [where the] pastors are hirelings."

Pastor Q1-1 offered a similar critique, slightly more nuanced and more sympathetic to the congregation's perspective, when he added, "Prior to our time here, the average period of service was about two years. So at about the two-year mark, they anticipated I would leave. There was this sense early on, like, "You say whatever you want. But we know in two years you're not going to be here, so we're going to operate as we always have."

Justifications for disunity. A clear differentiation occurred when revitalization pastors were asked to comment on the reasons used by church members to justify disunity during the revitalization process.

Only one of the six Q-4 Collectivists, Pastor Q4-2, recalled an event when a member or members of the church attempted to justify disunity.[86] By contrast, five of the six Q-1 Individualist pastors were able to produce at least one justification used by members. Of these, three specifically mentioned issues regarding church by-laws as being particularly significant sources of disunity justification. In Church Q1-1, a set of by-laws were used to stop revitalization efforts, but it was discovered that they had never been approved by congregational vote. Their use was unique to the life of the church, and their sudden application represented a pragmatic attempt to stop the change occurring in the church. In Church Q1-2, an unwieldy and confusing set of church by-laws were used to entrap a pastor when his revitalization efforts incensed a staff member who was a deacon's wife. This same sense of complication and unwieldiness was voiced by another Q-1 Individualist pastor, Pastor Q1-3, who remarked, "The bylaws of the church, which were written by a lawyer many, many years ago for a different church, [had simply been adopted] by this one."

The responses of these five pastors represented a sense that by-laws, and presumably other core documents of the church, were of secondary consideration and called upon pragmatically as needed. These documents did not represent the current life of the church or express the active participation of the membership. Rather, these documents formed a type of secondary "rule of order" enforced when beneficial to an individual's or a subgroup's purposes.

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[86] In his statement, this pastor reflected upon role realignment tensions as an implicit source of disunity justification.

Business meetings frequency. In almost every case, revitalization pastors

indicated that an intentional change was made in the way business meetings were held at

their churches.

Four of the six Q1 Individualists indicated that their church continues to hold

what would be described as traditional monthly business meetings. One of these pastors

added that their effort at change included an intentional increase in communication

between meetings, allowing them to decrease meeting length to approximately six minutes.

The remaining two Q1 Individualist pastors reported that their churches have moved from

monthly to quarterly business meetings.[87] One of these churches still holds monthly

information only meetings but reserves actionable decision making to the church's

quarterly scheduled meetings.[88]

By contrast, none of the Q4 Collectivist pastors indicated that they held monthly

business meetings at their church. Only one church held quarterly meetings, moving from

monthly to quarterly during their revitalization. Four of the remaining Q4 Collectivist

churches only held annual business meetings.[89] Pastor Q4-1 indicated that there was no

open microphone at their annual business meeting. This necessitated an active

communications plan on the part of leadership to explain proposals and hear from

members well in advance of the meeting. Finally, Pastor Q4-6 reported that his church

did not have any regularly scheduled business meetings.

Intergenerational v old and new. Of particular interest to I-C considerations

is the relationship between individuals of different ages within a group. All twelve

revitalization pastors indicated that there is currently a positive relationship of interaction

between the generations, which they universally interpreted as the relationship between

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[87] Churches Q1-2 and Q1-5.

[88] Church Q1-5.

[89] Each pastor acknowledged that while special business meetings were allowed under their churches core documents, these special called meetings were rare and short.

younger and older members. One Q1 Individualist pastor, Pastor Q1-5, expressed a statement of intergenerational intentionality: "I think just bringing [generations] together and keeping the message of equality at the forefront anytime we do anything as a church, engaging all demographics to attend all of those events and making sure that everyone understands that this is not an event for a certain group or certain demographic, I think that's important." Pastor Q1-2 expressed intergenerational intentionality as a missional strength, commenting, "[People we are trying to reach] see a 70-year-old next to a 45-year-old next to a 13-year-old that's greeting or serving." This type of intergenerational engagement was observed by an SBC representative at Pastor Q4-1's church: "We had a guy from the convention say, 'Man, your church is like . . . if you take the pie of all the different age groups, every age group is represented well. Every piece of the pie is about the same.' We incorporate whole church, whole family activities, missions, ministries, throughout the year, to not segment everyone."

Several churches acknowledged that intergenerational intentionality was difficult prior to revitalization, due primarily to lack of generational representation. Pre-revitalization churches tended toward older average attendees. Pastor Q1-3 commented, "Early on there was only older. Now there's a huge mix." Similarly, Pastor Q1-4 noted, "Originally, there were few younger members, so intergenerational engagement was impossible. Now they have some younger members, making it possible."

Another interesting observation by several pastors was the dynamic, not between generations, but rather between long-term members and newer members reported by Q1 Individualist pastors. Pastor Q1-3 commented,

> The hardest part is the mixture of old and new members. Not older age members and younger age members. [Old and new members is] the most difficult mixture… When new people come to a church where you've got established people, my guess is that they'll accept 10 to 15 percent new people. As soon as it goes beyond that mark… all of a sudden, "Wait a minute! Hold on! Who are you to come into my church?!"

Pastor Q1-1 experienced a negative consequence of this dynamic, noting, "The [original church members] are trying to figure out their place now. . . . We see a lot of our

older membership just saying, 'We'll just let them do it. You don't need me now.' That's our current reality." Pastor Q1-6 provided a statement of hope for intergenerational integration between some long term and new members as a church experiences revitalization.

> [Unlike some of the entrenched members], there were older members of the congregation who have such a young heart and attitude. They are just as active, just as interested, just as participatory as anybody else. So there was a sort of division as the church continued to grow and continued to increase. Even now, as people from the retired age crowd come asking about membership, they all seem to represent that 'eager to participate" attitude. . . . Those that had that antagonistic attitude literally either passed away or have moved on to other congregations.

The impact of crisis. Revitalization pastors were asked about the impact of both perceived crisis and actual crisis upon their church's revitalizations.[90] Five of the six Q1 Individualistic pastors were able to identify perceived crises that impacted their church's revitalization process. Reported crises included finances, fear of pastoral abandonment, the purpose of the church, appropriate translation of the Bible, and a caustic staff member.[91] The only notable exception was church Q1-2, whose pastor reported that the actual crisis they were facing made any other issues appear insignificant. While each of these crises were reported, only Pastor Q1-4 considered the impact of the perceived crisis to be significant relative to the revitalization process, noting,

> [Perceived crises] were battles we chose to fight, and anything we planned we knew was going to be a fight. And so, we planned them, and we fought them. But those became positive moments for everyone who's still here because those people got to see that it was the same little pocket of people who were voting against everything . . . and [now] we're all on the same page.

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[90] The term "perceived crisis" was used to identify those crises which, in the estimation of the revitalization pastor, were created by members' perspectives or opinions which did not constitute an actual threat to the church and/or surrounding community. The term "actual crisis" was used to identify those crises which, in the estimation of the revitalization pastor, represented a legitimate threat to the church and/or the surrounding community.

[91] Pastors Q1-1, Q1-3, Q1-4, Q1-5, and Q1-6 respectively.

While the perceived crisis was present in virtually all Q1 Individualist's churches, the only significant residual impact was the clarification of who the divisive parties were, producing a sense of unity among the remainder of the membership.

It is notable that only two of the six Q4 Collectivist Pastors reported dealing with perceived crises. The four Q4 Collectivist Pastors who did not identify perceived crises described their revitalization in terms such as a "remarkable four years of peace," filled with "a spirit of unity," or simply experiencing "none whatsoever."[92]

By contrast, eight of the revitalization pastors, comprised of four Q1 Individualists and four Q4 Collectivists, identified actual crises that they believe impacted their church's revitalization. In every case, that impact was positive.

Pastor Q1-1 described a church split 2008, producing "a level of understanding that it was going to take intentional effort towards revitalization if they were going to survive." A second incident, involving inappropriate sexual relationships by a church leader, caused leaders to become more circumspect and intentional in vetting potential leaders according to biblical standards. This benefit remains in place to this day. Pastor Q1-1 also noted a personal insight and personal growth benefit from his experience:

> I think the other side is the personal element. You know, I think the hardship with a crisis is, as much as we would like to kind of remove ourselves, you know, to like this ethereal level, you know, OK, we're here as pastors. Pastors are people, too. And I think the hardest part about a crisis, and namely that unexpected crisis, was how personal it became to me. It was not just an emergency in the life of this situation. It wasn't just a hardship that the church was dealing with. It was personal because I had placed trust in this individual, and that trust had been broken."

> And you know how small towns are and how it began to kind of disparage my character in the community. Now I use that word my, but that's where I think crisis becomes so difficult, particularly in moments of revitalization… We often respond personally, and sometimes those personal responses, particularly in my environment, can destroy revitalization efforts far quicker than, you know, if a structure fails, if a Sunday school class fails or whatever. It's those personal elements that seem to sabotage revitalization so much quicker.

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[92] Pastors Q4-2, Q4-1, and Q4-3 respectively. Pastor Q4-4 described an incident of perceived crisis involving a $1.2M building project for a church of 65 members. Pastor Q4-5 endured an incident of jealousy by a vocal minority toward an individual who gave a gift to the church.

Pastor Q1-2 described the disintegration of a church, which had been a flagship of the SBC in the 1970s and 1980s. Falling from over 3,000 to 550, carrying over $10 million in debt, and having prior pastors plant new churches nearby and drawing away members, which caused a sense of desperation to overtake the remaining members. He reported,

> The church was desperate. They knew they needed revitalization. They just didn't know what to do, how to do it. And they basically were willing to do some things. . . . Everybody who was going to leave had already left. So really that five hundred and fifty people who were a part of the church, they had multiple opportunities to leave. . . . And so the people who were left, you know, they basically said, "No. This is our church. We are in this together. And, you know, we just believe God can do something new and fresh." So, you know, they weren't resistant to change. They really desired a leader to come cast a vision and develop a strategy to move them forward.

Pastor Q1-5 recalled the departure of a youth pastor who planted a church nearby, drawing away many of the families. After reflection, he summarily commented, "But I think it was all needed. . . . We would have never gotten to where we are today had we not gone through that process."

Pastor Q1-6 points to a crisis as a turning point, when he and his church family experienced the traumatic consequences of a mile-wide F-4 tornado cutting a swath through their town "within tossing distance of my church":

> I let everybody know real quick; there's a reason why we weren't damaged. And I aim to take advantage of every reason we're given. So, we housed a relief crew. We fed people from the parking lot. I was up there as many hours a day as I could be. And when people weren't working, they were there with me. And we started seeing all these different things, and that sort of tragedy started to galvanize. . . . People being able to see the church more than just sitting in a pew and listening to someone give a Bible-based speech. So, if I had to really quantify when do I think it happened? I was here about three and a half years beforehand until that storm came. And then God allowed me to kind of follow exactly what he was telling me to do, what he was telling us to do, and then just ride that realization that what you're supposed to do is far past the boundaries of this property line. Such an awful thing, more beauty has come from that than. . . . We could sit here for four hours, and I wouldn't be able to tell you all that came out of that. You can't design that part of the revitalization. I'm not going to pray a tornado on somebody else's congregation. . . . I just happen to be the beneficiary of a tornado that made that happen real quick. Real in a full way. It was happening. It sort of stamped, "this is what it's about," and that hasn't gone away.

Both Pastor Q4-1 and Pastor Q4-3 referred to decisions to relocate as sources of actual crisis for their churches. Pastor Q4-3 referred to the results of this crisis as positive: "The naysayers . . . they left. That core of argumentative malcontents, they all left through the transition process of relocating because they wanted to stay at the old church building. So, there was a purging that happened, and now I'm the beneficiary of that."

Pastor Q4-4 credits a flood, which covered 75 percent of his local community, with framing his church's current understanding of ministry.

> For two and a half weeks, we sheltered two hundred and some people in our church. And then for another six weeks after that, we were a distribution center. That right there brought our church together, and like, hey, we were small, real small. But man, we were able to do some legit ministry, you know. And so that was real. . . . And from there, actually, is how we solved the need to develop the missions and ministry team, based off that flood, which guides everything we do now.

Summary of Findings

The objective of this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study was to describe the impact of the revitalization leader's socio-cultural orientation upon the leader's perspective concerning their church's revitalization. The study was comprised of two strands, quantitative then qualitative, sequenced in four phases. The first phase was a team-implemented quantitative component examining SBC Annual Church Profile (ACP) data, which identified 716 churches that met the study's revitalization criteria.

In phase 2, the team implemented effort and part of the quantitative strand, and invited the previously identified 716 churches to continue their participation by completing a thirty-two-question online survey instrument. The research team received 145 responses to the request, resulting in a confidence level of 6.71. Both demographic composition and survey question responses were analyzed for all respondents.

In phase 3, an individually-implemented component, and part of the quantitative strand, invited the 145 respondents of the phase 2 survey to continue their participation by completing an additional twenty-four-question online survey instrument. Sixty-three

completed responses were received. Both demographic composition and survey question responses were analyzed for all respondents. From these 63 respondents, 12 were purposefully selected and invited to participate in an in-depth interview related to issues significant to understanding the relationship between revitalization and the revitalization leader's socio-cultural orientation.

Phase 4, the only component of the second, qualitative strand of the study, was comprised of 12 qualitative interviews with 12 revitalization pastors whose assessed C-I scoring placed them at least one standard deviation away from the sample mean. Six Q1 Individualists and 6 Q4 Collectivists were interviewed following twenty-five questions. The responses to each question further described the impact of several emphases upon the focus on self and the sense of community experienced by revitalization pastors. Areas of emphasis included crisis and opposition, theology, meaningful membership, and programming. Resulting interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for analysis.

Phase 4 interviews provided additional clarity on the perspective of revitalization pastors, with the ability to nuance differences between Q1 Individualist and Q4 Collectivist Pastors. Qualitative interviews revealed nine themes related to revitalization and the revitalization pastor's socio-cultural orientation:

1. Revitalization involved an intentional return to the Scriptures and biblical purposes of the church.

2. The metaphor that most positively impacts revitalized churches is that of *family*.

3. Churches that experience revitalization also experience an increased emphasis on meaningful membership. Q4 Collectivists are more likely than Q1 Individualists to support this emphasis by implementing new member's classes.

4. Revitalization pastors have differing understandings of how leadership authority is acquired, with Q1 Individualists emphasizing attributes of the leader, and Q4 Collectivists emphasizing the leader's reputation and relationship with the congregation.

5. Revitalization churches experience leadership role realignment, shifting deacons from an operational to a ministerial context. Q1 Individualists are much more likely to reinforce this realignment through teaching than Q4 Collectivists.

6. While only one Q4 Collectivist experienced a church member attempting to justify disunity, all but one Q1 Individualist experienced such an attempt.

7. There is a general trend of decreasing frequency of business meetings as pastors become more collectivistic.

8. All revitalization churches acknowledge an increase in positive intergenerational interaction. Q1 Individualists describe this increase as a product of intentional efforts. Q4 Collectivists tend to describe increased intergenerational engagement as a natural consequence of community.

9. Both Q1 Individualistic and Q4 Collectivistic pastors agree that actual crisis had a long-term positive effect on their experience of revitalization.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer eight specific research questions. The following answers are provided based on the analysis of available data.

Research Question 1

What percentage of SBC churches are plateaued or declining? As stated in the earlier described research protocol, during the year 2016, 28,046 of 47,272 SBC churches provided sufficient data to calculate attendance trending. Of these 28,046 churches, 7,211 (25.7 percent) were plateaued and 13,656 (48.7 percent) were in decline. Combined, 20,867 (74.4 percent) SBC churches were either plateaued or declining.

Research Question 2

Of those churches which have experienced a decline, what percentage have experienced revitalization? As stated, 716 churches met the criteria for church revitalization, as defined by this research design. Narrowing the sample was completed according to the following criteria: (1) worship attendance in 2011 had declined 10 percent or more compared to 2005 (5 years prior); and (2) worship attendance in 2016 had grown 10 percent or more from 2011 levels (5 years prior). The field was then narrowed by eliminating congregations that (1) had less than 10 percent annual growth for two of the last five years; and (2) had less than two of the last five years with a minimum worship attendance to baptism ration of 20:1. The sample was further narrowed by requiring that the revitalized churches have both two years of 10 percent worship growth per year and

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have a 20:1 attendance to baptism ratio. The result was the identification of 716 churches experiencing revitalization, representing 5.24 percent of churches originally in decline.[93]

Research Question 3

What influence does a revitalization pastor's socio-cultural orientation have upon subjective measures of church revitalization? A detailed analysis of quantitative Likert-based responses to phase 2 and phase 3 instruments, based on respondents' C-I scores, has already been provided (see Revitalization Emphasis and C-I Orientation above). For brevity, only findings deemed significant for determining unique socio-cultural perspectives are detailed.

Phase 2 discipleship.

1. Q4 Collectivists are three times as likely than Q1 Individualists (66.7 percent to 22.2 percent) to at least agree that the church has a clearly defined discipleship process.[94]

2. Q4 Collectivists are one and a half times more likely than Q1 Individualists (55.6 percent to 22.2 percent) to at least agree that the majority of active members were able to explain their church's discipleship process.[95]

3. When asked about programmatic elements that existed in the church's discipleship approach during the revitalization process, the following trends were observed:[96]

   a. Q1 Individualists are three times as likely than Q4 Collectivists (33.3 percent to 11.1 percent) to use home-based small groups.

   b. Those more moderate groups (Individualists and Collectivists) are slightly less than twice as likely than the more extreme groups (Q1 Individualists and Q4 Collectivists) to use home-based small group strategies.

4. All categories of revitalization leaders were more likely to identify their church membership as being collectivistic rather than individualistic.[97]

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[93] This percentage was calculated by dividing the number of churches experiencing revitalization (716) by the number of churches experiencing decline (13,656) in 2016.

[94] Phase 2 survey question 12A.

[95] Phase 2 survey question 12B.

[96] Phase 2 survey question 13.

[97] Phase 2 survey question 14.

Phase 2 mission.

1. Q4 Collectivists are twice as likely as Q1 Individualists (44.4 percent to 22.2 percent) to strongly agree that the church currently has a vibrant missions ministry focused on financially supporting short-term and/or long-term missionaries.[98]

2. When asked if the church currently has a vibrant missions ministry focused on sending short-term and/or long-term missionaries from its membership, the following trends were observed:[99]

   a. Q4 Collectivists are three times more likely than Q1 Individualists (33.3 percent to 11.1 percent), and Collectivists are two-and-a-half times more likely than Q1 Individualists (28 percent to 11.1 percent) to agree strongly with this statement.

   b. Upon reaching the at least agree level, Q1 Individualists and Q4 Collectivists reach and maintain parity.

   c. The highest levels of at least agreement and at least slight agreement come from respondents within one standard deviation of the C-I mean.

Phase 2 leadership.

1. Q4 Collectivists are nearly two-and-a-quarter times more likely than Q1 Individualists to rate conceptual thinking in the revitalization process as highly important.[100]

2. Q1 Individualists are three times more likely than Q4 Collectivists (33.3 percent to 11.1 percent) to rate the level of importance of individual and corporate repentance in the revitalization process as highly important. [101]

3. When asked the level of importance of organizational awareness in the revitalization process, the following trends were observed:[102]

   a. Q4 Collectivists are more than two-and-a-half times more likely than Q1 Individualists (44.4 percent to 12.5 percent) to rate this practice as highly important.

   b. A general trend, with increasing levels of collectivism resulting in increasing levels of importance, is present at all three levels under analysis.

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[98] Phase 2 survey question 20A.

[99] Phase 2 survey question 20B.

[100] Phase 2 survey question 22B.

[101] Phase 2 survey question 22G.

[102] Phase 2 survey question 22L.

4. When asked the level of importance of teamwork and cooperation in the revitalization process, the following trends were observed:[103]

   a. Q4 Collectivists are more than one-and-a-half times more likely than Q1 Individualists (66.7 percent to 25 percent) to rate this practice as highly important.

   b. A general trend, with increasing levels of collectivism resulting in increasing levels of importance, is present at the at least important and at least slightly important levels.

   c. All Q4 Collectivists, and Collectivists generally who find this practice important (96 percent) do so at the "at least important" level.

5. When asked the level of agreement with the statement that leadership development played a significant role in the revitalization process, the following trends were observed:[104]

   a. Q4 Collectivists are twice as likely as Q1 Individualists and Individualists (44.4 percent to 22.2 percent) to agree with this statement strongly.

   b. There is a general trend of increasing collectiveness resulting in higher levels of an agreement at the "strongly agree," and the "at least agree" levels.

Phase 3 additional questions.

1. When asked how closely attendees of a typical worship service reflect the local community during their revitalization, the following trends were observed:[105]

   a. Only a small number of Collectivists (3.5 percent) reported that their attendees did not reflect their local community.

   b. Q1 Individualists were more than twice as likely than any other category of respondents to assess their attendees as accurately reflecting their local community.

2. When asked to describe their church's unity before revitalization, the following trends were observed:[106]

   a. No Collectivists, including Q4 Collectivists, assessed their church as highly unified before revitalization.

   b. No Q1 Individualist assessed their church as highly divided before revitalization.

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[103] Phase 2 survey question 22N.

[104] Phase 2 survey question 24B.

[105] Phase 3 survey question 19.

[106] Phase 3 survey question 20A.

    c.   Q1 Individualists were slightly more than twice as likely than Q4 Collectivists (55.5 percent to 27.3 percent) to assess their church as being unified to some degree.

3. When asked to describe their church's unity during revitalization, the following trends were observed:[107]

    a.   No Q4 Collectivist and a very small percentage of Collectivists (3.5 percent) assessed their church as highly unified during revitalization.

    b.   Q4 Collectivists were nearly two and a half times as likely as Q1 individualists (54.6 percent to 22.2 percent) to assess their church's unity during revitalization as somewhat unified.

    c.   Q4 Collectivists were nearly 80 percent more likely than Q1 Individualists (90 percent to 55.6 percent) to assess their church as being unified to some degree during revitalization.

    d.   There is a general trend that as church leaders become more collectivistic, their perception of their church as being unified to some degree during revitalization increases.

4. When asked to describe their church's unity after revitalization, the following trends were observed: [108]

    a.   All Q1 Individualists characterize their churches as being some degree of unified after revitalization.

    b.   Q4 Collectivists were nearly 64 percent (63.7 percent) more likely than Q1 individualists (72.7 percent to 44.4 percent) to assess their church's unity after revitalization as highly unified.

    c.   Only 27 percent (27.3 percent) of Q4 Collectivists assess their church as being anything other than highly unified.

    d.   As church leaders become more collectivistic, their perception of change in their church's level of unity to some degree increases (Q1 Individualists +44.4 percent, Individualists +50 percent, Collectivists +51.7 percent, Q4 Collectivists +63.6 percent).

5. When asked to describe their church leadership's level of concern for building and/or preserving church unity during their revitalization, the following trends were observed:[109]

    a.   Q4 Collectivists were the only category of respondent whose levels of "intentional and proactive," and "action when seriously threatened" were significantly greater than average.

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[107] Phase 3 survey question 20B.

[108] Phase 3 survey question 20C.

[109] Phase 3 survey question 21.

b. Q4 Collectivists were also the only category of respondents whose level of actions at times was significantly less than (one-third) the average.

Research Question 4

What influence do revitalization pastors believe key theology expressions have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community? After analyzing data from qualitative interviews, the following themes rose to inform research question 4:

1. The overwhelmingly dominant theological thread, emphasized by both individualists and collectivists during revitalization, is a return to biblicism, specifically accepting the authority of Scripture and the necessity of returning to the biblical purposes of the church. Lesser theological threads, used more frequently by individualists during revitalization, included "unity" and the idea of our "common need."

2. A return to biblicism caused virtually every church to intentionally work to understand and restructure the role of deacon(s) into one of ministry-based service.

3. The overwhelmingly dominant theological metaphor, used by both individualists and collectivists to describe salvation, discipleship, and an appropriate relationship between believers is "family." Lesser theological metaphor included "life together" (used more frequently by individualists) and "journey" (used more frequently by collectivists).

4. Virtually all churches expressed an attempt to emphasize individual and corporate aspects of discipleship equally.

Research Question 5

What influence do revitalization pastors believe key elements of meaningful membership have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community? After analyzing data from qualitative interviews, the following themes rose to inform research question 5:

1. Virtually all revitalization pastors indicated that the expectation of active participation of all members increased dramatically during their church's revitalization.

2. The dominant mechanisms implemented to communicate an expectation of active participation were a new member's class (more common among collectivists) and interviewing potential members over a meal (more common among individualists).

3. No churches reported a change in their approach to church discipline during revitalization, with several commenting that this aspect of their church remains in need of improvement.

4. Individualistic pastors are much more likely to describe members attempting to justify disunity. Divisive members tended to refer to outdated, unfamiliar, and seldom referenced or followed by-laws as justification for their actions.

Research Question 6

> **What influence do revitalization pastors believe key programmatic elements have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?** After analyzing data from qualitative interviews, the following themes rose to inform research question 6:

1. The majority of individualistic pastors' churches continue to hold monthly business meetings, while a minority moved to quarterly business meetings.

2. The majority of collectivist pastors' churches moved from monthly to quarterly business meetings, while a minority moved to annual business meetings.

3. Churches with collectivistic pastors are more likely to do annual calendaring, focus on having one key event monthly, emphasize extended community engagement (Passion Week, Advent, etc.), and design outreach that takes the church out into the local community.

4. Churches with individualistic pastors are less likely to have recurring annual events, focus on having one key event quarterly, emphasize point engagement (Easter Sunday, Christmas Eve, etc.), and design outreach that brings the local community into the church.

5. All revitalization pastors indicated that increased intergenerational interaction was a beneficial element of their church's revitalization.

6. Individualistic pastors tend to attribute increased intergenerational interaction as a product of teaching and providing ministry leadership opportunities to persons of all ages.

7. Collectivist pastors tend to understand increased intergenerational interaction as a byproduct of normal community, encouraged by events that intentionally seek to include persons of all ages.

Research Question 7

> **What influence do revitalization pastors believe crisis and opposition have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?** After analyzing data from qualitative interviews, the following themes rose to inform research question 7:

1. The most common source of opposition encountered by individualistic pastors was the notion of tradition (aversion to change, ownership mindset, etc.) and conflict created by disparaging attitudes of established members toward new members of the church.

2. The most common source of opposition encountered by collectivist pastors was push-back when ineffective ministries were discontinued.

3. Individualistic pastors unanimously reported examples of perceived crisis.[110] Only one collectivist pastor reported experiencing a perceived crisis.

4. The majority of all revitalization pastors experienced actual crisis (church split, overwhelming church debt, natural disasters, divisive staff members, etc.), which they believe were essential for producing and/or nurturing their church's revitalization.[111]

5. Actual crisis, initiated internally to the church, tended to produce a thinning effect, forcing a smaller remnant to form a joint resolve, producing an initial inward-facing perspective which revitalization pastors work to overcome.

6. Actual crisis, placed upon the church from outside the church (particularly natural disasters), tended to produce a missional immediacy, unifying the current membership, and producing an outward-facing perspective.

Research Question 8

What advice would revitalization pastors give to others seeking

revitalization for their church? After analyzing data from qualitative interviews, the

following themes rose to inform research question 8:

1. Teach and obey the Word

2. Let Scripture and the Spirit do their work / Do not place hope in programs

3. Return to biblical principles, purposes, and leadership roles in the church

4. Know your people / Emphasize the "family" nature of church relationships

5. Love the people / Tell them you love them / Work to maintain a "nice" ethos

6. Build trust / Revitalization pastors often minister to those deeply hurt by previous pastors / Deacons often try to protect members from future hurts (by you)

7. Make it eminently clear you are "in it for the long haul."

8. Connect people to the church's unique story / Know your church's "journey."

9. Expect participation / Have and communicate clear expectations of members

10. Be patient / Do not rush revitalization / Take the long view / Everyone is in process

11. Remember, a rural church mindset and a small church mindset are not synonymous

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[110] Perceived crisis was understood to be events that produced a perception of conflict or crisis among church members, but which, in the pastor's estimation, did not constitute a true threat to the survival of the church.

[111] Actual crisis was understood to be events that, in the pastor's estimation, constituted a clear and present danger to the survival of the church.

12. Celebrate victories / Be a cheerleader / Small victories are huge in revitalization

13. Endure / Remain sensitive / Differentiate what is personal and what is not

14. Be prepared / Take advantage of the opportunities that crisis provides

Evaluation of Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design following two strands and utilizing four phases. The combined research team completed phases 1 and 2. Phases 3 and 4 were accomplished individually, with each researcher engaging study in a unique aspect of church revitalization. Phase 1 involved the collection and analysis of data according to metrics of revitalization to target candidates for the phase 2 quantitative instrument. Phase 2 respondents represented the target population for the phase 3 quantitative instrument. The fourth phase of the research design used qualitative interviews and in-depth analysis to provide further explain the data from the quantitative phases.[112] The design was sufficient for the stated research purposes.

Strengths

The design of this research proved to have several inherent strengths. Limiting the study population to SBC churches ensured a relative continuity of practice, governance, and terminology, providing a reasonably common internal contextual construct from within which respondents participated. Limiting the study population to SBC churches in the continental United States likewise provided a reasonably consistent overarching socio-cultural macro-context, increasing the validity of discernable differences between respondents operating primarily from within differing socio-cultural syndromes. The use of SBC churches also provided the opportunity for the use of ACP data from LifeWay, representing the voluntary submissions of participating SBC churches. Access to this data afforded researchers the ability to extract necessary data, making this research possible.

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[112] John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2011), 70-71.

The transferability of research results is improved through the use of the SBC population, representing the largest evangelical denomination in the world. Additionally, all participating churches had experienced successful church revitalization, increasing the transferability of insights gained from their experience to other churches' revitalization efforts.

An additional strength of the research design was the use of a team-based approach for the opening two phases, followed by individual efforts in phases 3 and 4. Team members were able to encourage and advise one another and delegate tasks to team members with particular strengths. For major tasks, worklists were created and divided among team members. This division of labor allowed for contact, recruitment, and follow-up efforts targeting all potential participants, with each team member being accountable for multi-state segments of the United States.

Challenges

The first design challenge involved the use of the term revitalization. Phase 1 delimitations necessitated the use of a limited number of quantitative metrics to define revitalization. While these metrics represented commonly used measures, particularly among those interested in church growth, their use limited the character of researched revitalization experiences to those more traditional forms. Church health and church growth are not synonymous, and revitalizations that produced results primarily related to church health without church growth were less likely to be recognized.

Uneasiness with the term *revitalization* was also present among potential participants of phase 2. Pastors occasionally commented that they assumed email solicitations to participate in research were fraudulent because they did not consider their churches to be in the process of revitalization, or as being revitalized. Even though their church met the metrics of revitalization, the pastor's experience and expectation of what revitalization constituted indicated otherwise.

Finally, uneasiness with the term *revitalization* was again present during phase 4 quantitative interviews. Interviewees were left to discern for themselves when periods of revitalization occurred at their church. This self-determination also produced some confusion as to whether revitalization efforts or revitalization results were in question. Some interviewees spoke as if revitalization started when they took particular actions. For others, revitalization started when the effects of actions were recognizable. I made no effort to assist interviewees in broaching this issue, leaving it up to their sensibilities. Of note is the fact that all but two interviewees believed that their church was still actively engaged in revitalization.

The second design challenge involved securing phase participants. While data analysis identified 716 candidates, only 145 respondents ultimately participated in phase 2 research. Several factors exacerbated this challenge. As mentioned, some candidates thought the invitations were fraudulent because they doubted the truthfulness of the statement that their church was experiencing revitalization. The contact information associated with ACP data was occasionally inaccurate and often ended in a church's general administration or church secretary's email inboxes. Efforts to locate good contact information was time intensive. Ultimately the decision to delimit respondents to churches with over fifty in Sunday worship attendance was made based upon a cost-benefit analysis. The response rate of churches under fifty with good contact information was extremely low, suggesting that time spent data mining for good contact information on other small churches would not represent good time stewardship. Several pastors serving churches within this demographic concurred, stating that they were overwhelmed with church responsibilities and could not spare the time to participate in research.

The third design challenge was the length of the phase 2 survey. SurveyMonkey analytics report that phase 2 respondents typically took 28 minutes and 24 seconds to

complete the survey. Nearly 30 percent of those who started the phase 2 survey did not complete the instrument, presumably due in large part to survey fatigue.[113]

The fourth design challenge was the length of time needed to complete the four phases of the study. Phase 3 of this design was unique among all the research team's designs, effectively doubling the time needed to complete the research, including an additional survey instrument and extensive comparative analysis of the phase 2 responses in light of phase 3 results. The additional time required by the research design, combined with personal events I encountered, made this research the longest in duration among the research team members. Three different annual cohorts have participated in the combined research project, and my researcher participation has spanned all three cohorts.

The fifth design challenge was the more technical sociological concepts underpinning this research. Time had to be spent with each interviewee explaining terms and definitions necessary to have a common language in dialogue without bogging the interviewee down with too much technical jargon. It became suspect at times that interviewees might be using terms introduced inadvertently by me without having a firm grasp on the definitions or possible connotations of the terms. Reflective listening using a simpler vernacular was employed to mitigate any errors created by this term insertion.

The sixth design challenge involved sample continuity of phase 4 interviewees. This challenge was again due to the unique nature of this research design compared to other research members' efforts. Other research team members' interview phase used a sample of twelve interviewees whose orientation was intentionally similar. This research design attempted to produce two sets of six interviewees each, representing differing socio-cultural orientations. I developed a process for derived scoring and selecting interview participants according to their socio-cultural orientation. Analysis of all responses also took on an added dimension of difficulty, as answers to the research

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[113] Survey fatigue diminishes data quality and sets in at approximately the five-minute mark. See Kevin Stile, "Survey Fatigue 101: Everything You Should Know Before Creating Your Next Online Survey," *SurveyCrest*, May 16, 2016, https://www.surveycrest.com/blog/survey-fatigue-101/.

questions had to include both combined responses as well as responses nuanced according to socio-cultural set orientation.

Conclusion

This study collected quantitative data from 716 revitalized churches from SBC churches in North America. In phase 2 of the study, 145 revitalization pastors completed a survey instrument regarding their experiences in revitalization. In phase 3 of the study, 63 revitalization pastors completed a survey instrument making it possible to score and rank each according to socio-cultural syndromes for consideration of inclusion in phase 4. In phase 4 of the study, twelve pastors, comprised of two sets of six representing divergent syndromes, were interviewed. These interviews provided data that afforded an opportunity to better understand pastors' perceptions of their churches' revitalizations, nuanced where appropriate according to socio-cultural orientation, and affirming perceptions that transcend this orientation schema.

These findings, combined with the findings of other research team members, are the product of one of the largest studies on church revitalization in the last decade. It is my prayer that the conscientious consideration and prayerful application of these findings, nuanced according to the uniqueness of leaders' attributes and members' stories, will be used by God to bring renewed life to the body of Christ. The chapter which follows will discuss implications for the literature, applications of the research, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The common purpose of the combined efforts of the research team, of which
this research is a component, was to identify revitalizing churches and to explore various
methods that revitalization leaders implemented to move their churches toward
revitalization successfully. The particular purpose of this explanatory multiphase
sequential mixed-methods study was to consider the influence of a revitalization leader's
socio-cultural orientation upon their perception of their church's experience of
revitalization.[1] By defining discipleship as a life of loyal followership of Christ throughout
daily living rather than a course of study, I considered leaders' responses across all aspects
being investigated by the research team in light of the respondent's socio-cultural
orientation.[2] The hope is that pressing into the potential impact of socio-cultural orientation
upon revitalization leaders will further a discussion of the influence of socio-cultural
orientation upon church members individually and collectively as a church community.

Phase 1 of this research established the need for revitalization.[3] Phase 2
delimited the sample population to 716 churches experiencing revitalization within the
SBC. Of these churches, 145 responded to a survey instrument detailing their experience
within six aspects of church revitalization. Phase 3 further delimited the sample population
to 64 respondents who completed a socio-cultural scoring instrument. Phase 4 identified

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[1] Socio-cultural orientation scaling for this research was limited to collectivism and
individualism.

[2] Aspects under consideration included discipleship, evangelism, leadership, missions, prayer,
and the worship gathering.

[3] Of the 28,046 churches with sufficient data to analyze, 13,656 were in decline and 7,211
were experiencing a plateau. See table 10.

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two groups of six revitalization leaders each, whose socio-cultural orientations were scored as being the most divergent. By assessing each group's responses, it was possible to compare and contrast their experience of revitalization according to their particular socio-cultural perspective.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide insights that connect research findings with the literature. First, research implications for revitalization, in general, are considered. Second, potential applications of research findings are provided. Finally, recommendations for future research are suggested.

Research Implications

The impetus for this research is based on two key principles. First is that the state of the church in America in general, and the SBC specifically, is one of decline. The Pew Research Center reported that the percent of the US population that identified as Christian fell 8 percent, from 78.4 percent to 70.6 percent, between 2007 and 2014.[4] Kevin Ezell, President of NAMB, noted in 2014 that the number of SBC churches per capita was not keeping pace with population growth.[5] In 2017, Chuck Kelly, President of NOBTS, commented that a modest 1 percent increase in the number of churches in 2016 was accompanied by decreases in baptisms, membership, and attendance. Kelly, commenting on these trends, stated that "the SBC is in the midst of a decline that shows no signs of either slowing down or turning around."[6]

Phase 1 quantitative data analysis confirms the magnitude of the state of decline within the SBC and the infrequent experience of revitalization. In addressing research question 1, the research team found that of those churches that had sufficient data for

[4] Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape," May 12, 2015, http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/.

[5] Kevin Ezell, "Breathing New Life into Dying Churches," *Southern Seminary Magazine*, Summer 2014, 32.

[6] Chuck Kelley, "The State of the SBC," June 8, 2017, http://www.drchuckkelley.com/2017/06/08/sbc-state/.

analysis, 25.60 percent were growing, 25.71 percent were plateaued, and 48.69 percent were experiencing a decline. After combining declining and plateaued churches, the data would suggest that combined 74.40 percent of SBC churches need revitalization (see table 10). Data analysis also shed light on research question 2, indicating that of the 13,656 churches in decline, only 5.24 percent eventually experienced revitalization.

The second key principle of this research is that socio-cultural orientation is a factor in determining a person's sense of self and their relationship with others. Edgar Schein defines culture in terms of a group's assumptions, perpetuated as "the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."[7] Harry Triandis describes cultures as either individualistic or collectivistic. These categories are based on characteristics of independence or interdependence, relational resilience, sources of motivation, and priorities.[8] Triandis provides descriptors of each cultural syndrome, and a general consistency between collectivism and biblical discipleship is evident.[9] This impulse for biblical discipleship to lean toward collectivistic thinking is further emphasized by the precedent literature's repeated impugning of individualism.[10] Fred Rothbaum et al., building on Bowlby's attachment theory, explains the process by which the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism are developed and reinforced.[11]

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[7] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 18.

[8] Harry Charalambus Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism: New Directions in Social Psychology* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 2.

[9] See Triandis, *Individualism & Collectivism*, 9-12, 58-59, 138-39. Also see Yuriy Gorodnichenko and Gerard Roland, "Understanding the Individualism-Collectivism Cleavage and Its Effects: Lessons from Cultural Psychology," in *Institutions and Comparative Economic Development*, ed. Masahiko Aoki, Timur Kuran, and Gerard Rolan, vols. 150-51, International Economic Association Series (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 27.

[10] For example, see Harold Senkbeil, "Engaging Our Culture Faithfully," *Concordia Journal* 40, no. 4 (September 2014): 292-93.

[11] See Fred Rothbaum et al., "The Development of Close Relationships in Japan and the United States: Paths of Symbiotic Harmony and Generative Tension," *Child Development* 71, no. 5 (October 2000): 1121-42.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory further explains the permeating and contextually controlling impact a macro-culture has upon individuals.

From within the dominant American macro-culture of individualism, it is difficult not to value and normalize self-sufficiency and personal autonomy. Barna, commenting on the task at hand in contemporary disciple-making, suggests, "If we peel back the layers, many Christians are using the Way of Jesus as a means of pursuing the Way of Self. Our discipleship efforts must prophetically respond to the 'iSpirit' of the age; people must not only convert to become a disciple of Jesus, but also de-convert from the religion of Self."[12] Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation suggest that vulnerability, interdependence, and humility, attributes consistent with collectivism and eschewed by individualism, are key factors used by God to produce transformation.[13] Such a suggestion would indicate that a general move toward a posture of collectivism would be beneficial in producing transformative revitalization of individuals and persons collectively as churches.

Phase 3 quantitative analysis addressed research question 3. In summary,

1. Discipleship

    a. Individualists are more likely to use small groups.

    b. Collectivists are more likely to believe they have a clearly defined discipleship process.

2. Missions—Collectivists are more likely to believe their church has a vibrant missions ministry for sending and supporting missions.

3. Leadership

    a. Individualists consider individual and corporate repentance to be more important than collectivists.

    b. Increasing levels of collectivism correspond with increasing importance of organizational awareness.

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[12] Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship* (Colorado Springs: The Navigators, 2015), 14.

[13] Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley, and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville: B & H, 2012), 132.

     c. Collectivists are more likely to view teamwork and cooperation as highly important.

     d. Increasing levels of collectivism correspond with increasing importance of leadership development.

4. Church Unity

     a. Collectivists tend to view their church as being more divided before revitalization and more unified after revitalization than do individualists.

     b. Increasing levels of collectivism correspond with increasing perception of unity.

The quantitative strand of this research aligns with the precedent literature. It supports the two key principles upon which this research is based: (1) the state of the church in America in general, and the SBC specifically, is one of decline, and (2) socio-cultural orientation influences a person's sense of self and their relationship to others.

The following section, which addresses research questions 4-8, focuses on applications arising from the qualitative strand of this research.

Research Applications

Phase 4 of the study asked revitalization pastors to describe their experience regarding four key aspects of revitalization. Qualitative interviews were conducted with twelve revitalization pastors following a predetermined series of questions (see appendix 7). Details of themes arising from these qualitative interviews are provided in chapter 4 of this research.

Biblical Leadership Structures

Research question 4 asked, "What influence do revitalization pastors believe key theology expressions have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?" Data analysis found that the dominant thread, among both individualistic and collectivistic revitalization pastors, was a return to biblical purposes and leadership structures. A manifestation of this emphasis within this research was that virtually every revitalization church underwent a conversion of the role of deacon(s) from one of organizational leadership into one of ministry-based service.

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Similar findings were reported by other members of the research team. Christopher Aiken's work on the role of pastoral leadership found that "every [interviewed] church operated as a pastor-led or pastor/staff-led church. Most of the declining churches were led by deacons, or typically by a prominent deacon during the period of decline. As part of the revitalization strategy, the pastor shifted this structure to one more conducive to implementing changes that influenced revitalization."[14] Donald Sander's research echoes Aiken's findings. Expressing the significance of structural change upon leadership development, Sanders found that "pastors saw these changes to leadership structures as encouraging the development of new leaders, more leaders, and empowered leaders, which in turn contributed to the church's revitalization."[15]

Likewise, Brian Legg remarked concerning revitalization pastors' reliance upon scriptural authority for organizational change. During his interviews, he found that "Most pastors acknowledged that resting on the authority of Scripture for organizational changes took the stress off of the pastor and placed it rightly onto the Lord."[16]

While the value of changing leadership structures is clear, so too are the potential consequences of engaging in such change efforts. For many church members, the process of leadership transference took on the nature of a battle for truth or orthodoxy. Aubrey Malphurs, describing opposition to cultural change, notes that persons could "believe they're defending the faith when in reality they're defending their cultural

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[14] Christopher Michael Aiken, "Church Revitalization and the Role of Pastoral Leadership: A Mixed-Methods Study" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 104. Aiken continues to explain, "This is not to imply that the deacon-led structure caused the decline; however, it does indicate that shifting the structure was essential in the church's revitalization." Aiken, "Church Revitalization and the Role of Pastoral Leadership," 104. Aiken's assessment could be understood to indicate that the structural modification was done for pragmatic purposes. This research supports Aiken's findings, but would emphasize the motivation for change to be one of scriptural fidelity.

[15] Donald R. Sanders, Jr, "Transforming the Leadership Development Culture in Church Revitalization: A Mixed-Methods Study" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019), 129.

[16] Brian Carl Legg, "Transforming the Discipleship Culture in Church Revitalization: A Mixed-Methods Study" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019), 126.

heritage. So they fight as if the entire future of orthodox Christianity depends on them."[17]

Schein notes the inter-personal dynamics between leadership and followership, writing, "Culture is ultimately created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated by leaders. At the same time, with group maturity, culture comes to constrain, stabilize, and provide structure and meaning to group members even to the point of ultimately specifying want kind of leadership will be acceptable in the future."[18]

Revitalization pastors are called to engage in the transformation of unhealthy, established church cultures. There is a genuine sense in which a revitalization pastor's leadership, working to change an unhealthy church culture, must engage with and nurture a congregation's ongoing supernatural yielding toward a posture of followership, to produce a trajectory of healthy maturation for the church.[19]

Church as Family

In answering research question 4, revitalization pastors were asked to share metaphors or phrases used to describe salvation, discipleship, and biblical community. The overwhelming response by both individualistic and collectivistic revitalization pastors was "family." Such an association should not be surprising. Scripture is replete with "family language." Christians are called brothers and sisters. God is our Father. Jesus is both our bridegroom and older brother. The Greek word for "household" is used a dozen times in the New Testament to refer to God's people.[20] Robert Banks supports the use of "family" as a dominant metaphor, writing

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[17] Aubrey Malphurs, *Look before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 14.

[18] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3.

[19] I have lived experience, both as a younger revitalization pastor who presumed upon appropriate followership, and as an older pastor overwhelmed by being given the gift of followership by church members.

[20] For example, see Matt 24:44-45; Heb 3:6.

A whole cluster of terms from family life are applied to Christian community. Some of these are among the most frequently used terms in Paul's vocabulary. . . . So numerous are these, and so frequently do they appear, that the comparison of the Christian community with a "family" must be regarded as the most significant metaphorical usage of all.[21]

Lee Eclov suggests that thinking of the church as "home" will change a leader's perspective, moving away from typical business priorities and toward relational priorities:

Thinking of a church as home changes a lot. A home is considerably different from an organization . . . when we conceive our church as home our priorities shift. Names matter more than numbers. We invest in the high priority of loving one another as the precursor to loving the lost. We take on the inefficient responsibility of caring for individuals. We learn to leave the ninety-nine in order to search for one lost sheep. We worship differently when we worship as a family. And leaders shepherd their flock more like parents than executives.[22]

So strongly does Eclov endorse the imagery of "family" that he goes as far as to correct the terminology, commenting that describing the church as God's family "isn't really a metaphor at all. God's household is the very definition of the church. We're not *like* a household or family. We *are* one."[23]

The cyclically reinforcing dynamic of cultural cause and effect would suggest that revitalization pastors who think of the church as a family will lead like a relational parent. Leading like a relational parent will produce actions and resulting programs or events consistent with and resulting in the reinforcement of a family ethos.

It is important to acknowledge that the use of a culturally contextualized term to guide cultural change can become problematic. As the meaning of the term "family" morphs in the greater culture, there is a risk that a biblically aligned corrective may be lost. This potential for changed meaning makes the authority of a biblical definition of family an even greater priority in Christian homes and the church.[24]

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[21] Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 49-50.

[22] Lee Eclov, *Feels Like Home: How Rediscovering the Church as Family Changes Everything* (Chicago: Moody, 2019), 21.

[23] Eclov, *Feels Like Home*, 22.

[24] For example, Woodworth identifies the roles of New Testament fathers as bestowing identity, teaching, and providing a model. See Steve L. Woodworth, "How Pastors Can Reclaim the Role of

Active Member Participation

Research question 5 asked, "What influence do revitalization pastors believe key elements of meaningful membership have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?" Analysis of responses found that virtually all revitalization pastors experienced a dramatic increase in expectation of active participation of all members during their church's revitalization. All participants indicated that they had done away with receiving members immediately upon walking the aisle and simply announcing intent. Among collectivists, the most used mechanism to communicate member expectations was the forming of a new member's class. Individualists tended to hold a pastoral interview to explain member expectations with prospective members, generally over a shared meal.

The foundational concept of *koinonia* demands active inter-personal engagement. Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, expounding upon this idea, insist,

> If we believe the command to make disciples (Matt. 28:19) is bigger and more beautiful than merely making converts and calling people to "make a decision," then we understand the essential role of the Church in maturing people in Christ. The command to "make disciples" carries the connotation of forming believers who learn and develop over a lifetime. One result, then, of discipleship is believers who serve and influence others in all spheres of life.[25]

Both Colyer and Legg noted similar themes arising from within their research, referring to the leveraging of a new member assimilation process within revitalizing churches. Legg notes, "Every pastor in the collective interviews described a noticeable maturing effect in new members, and existing members, as they worked together, in community, to disciple one another, to mentor one another, and to grow as one body in health."[26]

Spiritual Parent," *CT Pastors*, June 2018, https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2018/june-web-exclusives/in-dad-deprived-society-pastors-can-fill-that-role.html.

[25] Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 3.

[26] Legg, "Transforming the Discipleship Culture," 129. See also Aaron Thomas Colyer, "Church Revitalization and Evangelistic Emphasis: A Mixed-Methods Study" (EdD thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 70.

Such an understanding of the obligation for intentional community conforms with Greg Ogden's description of an appropriate biblical community (see table 1). This understanding also addresses Ogden's first and fourth cause for the low state of contemporary discipleship. Odgen's first cause is the relegation of discipleship to information-based programming, which ignores the fact that "the preached word needs the context of community, where meaning can be discussed, and bold implications for our lives heard."[27] Ogden's fourth cause is a faulty ecclesiology that does not view the church as fundamentally a discipleship community, where "[radical individualism] has torn the heart out of Christian community."[28]

In addition to scriptural and ecclesiological alignment, a move toward active member participation also conforms to the description of collectivists provided by Triandis (see tables 2 and 3). For persons to remain engaged and experience longevity in a community, they must have natural or supernatural inclinations toward valuing and maintaining interpersonal connectedness and interdependence, both of which are general characteristics of collectivism.

Greater Intergeneration Interaction

Research question 6 asked, "What influence do revitalization pastors believe key programmatic elements have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?" Analysis of responses found that all revitalization pastors reported increased intergenerational interaction as a beneficial outcome of their church's revitalization journey.

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[27] Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 44.

[28] Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 51.

Brian Croft suggests that unity, especially as expressed through intergenerational corporate worship, is essential to church revitalization.[29] Holley Allen and Christine Ross suggest that age segregation is itself a characteristic of individualism. They contend that generational cohorts are largely due to Donald McGavran's observations, made within a collectivist culture, later misapplied to the individualistic American context.[30]

Triandis' characteristics of collectivistic cultures more accurately align with intergenerational interaction. A collectivists tendency to view the self as part of the whole, a view of history as important, a sense of duty to submit to the group and maintain relationships, and understanding salvation as connected (in some way) to relatives; all combine to influence one toward intergenerational interaction (see table 3).

While the unanimous report of increased intergenerational interaction is noteworthy, so too is the different means accredited for these results. Individualistic pastors considered increased intergenerational interaction a response to teaching and providing ministry leadership opportunities to persons of all ages. The basis of improvement for individualists was understood to be cognitive advancement and personal empowerment, albeit for the good of the whole. In contrast, collectivist pastors tended to attribute increased intergenerational interaction to normal community engagement. Events such as common midweek meals and multigenerational social events were described in familial terms and viewed as intuitive, and less in terms of strategic importance.

The Essential Nature of Crisis

Research question 7 asked, "What influence do revitalization pastors believe crisis and opposition have upon church attendees' focus on self and sense of community?" Analysis of responses found that the majority of revitalization pastors experienced actual

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[29] Brian Croft, "Clear the Runway: Preparing Your Church for Revitalization," in *A Guide to Church Revitalization*, ed. R. Albert Mohler, Jr. (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2015), 30-31.

[30] Holley Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, "Why Churches Tend to Separate the Generations," *Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* 3, no. 2 (January 2013): 10-11.

crisis (church split, overwhelming church debt, natural disasters, divisive staff members, etc.), which they believe were essential for producing and nurturing their church's revitalization.

The nurturing effect manifests itself in two ways. First, crisis internally generated within the church tended to produce a thinning effect as members left the church, producing a core of inward-facing members intent on organizational survival. It was this embattled, protective, and sometimes paranoid posture, through which the revitalization pastor's ministry had to shepherd. By contrast, crisis generated externally and placed upon the church, such as natural disasters, tended to produce a unifying immediacy, resulting in a core of outward-facing members intent on missional purpose.

Both manifestations involved an exodus of members early in the crisis. Ajith Fernando reminds readers that Christians

> are often too quick to abandon their church, organization, small group, friend, or spouse when the going gets tough. People would rather split than go through the frustrations of working through the problems. This tendency results in shallow relationships, which in turn result in minimal depth to the fruit of their labors. In fact, learning to pay the price of commitment is a key to developing deep fruit in ministry anywhere in the world.[31]

While this response might seem simplistic, it is arguably a legitimate consideration for most issues of member abandonment of their church. The individualistic tendency to view relational tensions through a cost-benefit assessment, combined with a characteristic "trust in relationships which, ironically, 'helps people out of committed relationships' and into new ones," may explain much of the early abandonment phenomenon.[32]

Aiken likewise uncovered a theme surrounding the role of crisis in his research. He reports,

> Each leader (interviewed) spoke of the difficult advantage facilitated by a significant crisis in the revitalization process. . . . The unanticipated result of these incidents was that the crisis accelerated the pastor's ability to lead. As the pastor

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[31] Ajith Fernando, *Jesus Driven Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 24.

[32] Rothbaum et al., "The Development of Close Relationships," 1125.

engaged the crisis, he gained credibility to lead. . . . Each participant in [interviews] had a version of a story of how they gained through the crisis experience.[33]

It is noteworthy when viewed from the perspective of this research that the pastor's ability to lead was facilitated by a collective willingness to be led. An initial willingness to be led gave the leader an opportunity for success, thereby initiating a cycle of increased leadership effectiveness through both leadership growth and an increasingly united collective response to leadership.

Allen and Ross impugn individualism as they expound on the community creating potential of crisis:

> The excessive individualism of secular Western culture is fundamentally incompatible with the life of community as depicted in Scripture. The central events of the Old Testament—the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, crossing the Red Sea and the giving of the Law at Sinai—were community-creating events. Some scholars argue that before these events, the Israelites, though acknowledging that they were descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, did not identify themselves as God's people. When he delivered, rescued, and formed them through the law and in the desert, they truly became his people, and he became their God.[34]

This research, in combination with findings from other members of the research team, would suggest that revitalization pastors consider the gift that crisis affords them to shepherd their congregation into becoming a more appropriate image of the body and bride of Christ. The particular findings of this research would further suggest that revitalization pastors consider this gift in terms of pastoral leadership and congregational followership, and capitalize on the unique opportunities and sensitivities that times of crisis afford each. Recalling Geiger, Kelly and Nation's posture of transformation, "While God changes people through His truth, people are most likely to receive the transformative truth of God when they are in a vulnerable posture. . . . Transformation often occurs when disciples are in a posture of weakness, interdependence, and/or with an outward focus."[35]

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[33] Aiken, "Church Revitalization and the Role of Pastoral Leadership," 115-16.

[34] Allen and Ross, "Why Churches Tend to Separate the Generations," 11-12. See also Joseph Hellerman, *When the Church Was a Family: Recapturing Jesus' Vision for Authentic Christian Community* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 143.

[35] Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 132.

Further Research

The Impact of Horizontality
and Verticality

The instrument used to assess respondents' levels of collectivism and individualism also assessed levels of horizontality and verticality for each respondent. Many of the findings of this research share a specific emphasis on leadership relative to followership. Understanding how socio-cultural orientation relative to verticality and horizontality influences responses to these and other research questions could add significantly to the understanding of these aspects as descriptive and predictive of future outcomes.

Leadership through Liminality

Related to the issue of horizontality and verticality is understanding the process of leading through crisis understood as collective liminality. Precedent literature for this research hinted to the possibility that congregations may experience a crisis in terms consistent with liminality, and that the congregation's relationship toward leadership in general, and their leader, in particular may prove predictive of how the crisis will impact the collective community.

Extend Research to the
Congregational Level

This research extended only to the revitalization pastor level and assessed the leader's socio-cultural orientation to understand their experience. A natural progression would be to extend this research to the congregational level and assess the congregation's perspective relative to their socio-cultural orientation and relative to their revitalization pastor.

Development of a Group
Assessment Instrument

Extending research to the congregational level would require the implementation of a single person instrument, completed by members individually, and combined to

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produce an approximate composite response. Such a process does not account for the difference between individual private response and crowd response. The political dynamics of a group impact the net group response. A collection of weighted individual assessments of individual responses would come closer to representing a unified congregational response. Better yet would be an instrument designed to assess group responses, actively completed in a community context. To the best of my efforts to find such an instrument, none appears to exist at this time.

**The Effect of Social Distancing
on Community**

At the time of this writing, the United States is one month into the COVID-19 (aka SARS-CoV-2) pandemic. Churches are meeting via the internet. People are restricted in how close they can come to others in public. Many businesses are closed, and church leaders are attempting to envision what the "new normal" will be after restrictions are lifted. Internet chatter seems to indicate major positions; either people are becoming accustomed to "church at home" and may never come back, or people are beginning to crave relational community that they used to take for granted. Research into the impact of and best practices for preventing and overcoming the sense of lost community during times of social distancing would be of extreme value to the church moving forward.

**The Relationship Between Domains
of Knowing and Socio-Cultural
Orientation**

The precedent literature for this research hinted at preferences for socio-cultural syndromes for particular domains of learning and knowing. Specifically, individualism appears to favor the cognitive domain and collectivism to favor the affective domain. The affective domain has been recognized as the filter domain, providing context for cognition. Additionally, the affective domain is the most significant in terms of value modification and the development of a person's values and character. It may prove significant to understand how affective learning and knowledge, supported by an emphasis on narrative,

appeals to a collectivistic orientation. A relationship may further suggest that intentionality toward affective correctives is an appropriate discipleship emphasis within cognitively oriented individualistic cultures.

**Collectivistic Small Group Formation
and Practices**

This research found that all but one individualistic revitalization pastor interviewed started or encouraged an existing small group program at their church. By contrast, only one collectivistic revitalization pastor emphasized small group ministries. This trend appears counter-intuitive at face value, as most churches espouse small group ministry as the mechanism for building intimate relational community. Future research could push into the notion that contemporary small group methodologies implement individualistic forms and methods, and may well produce higher degrees of individualism among participants. For example, allowing persons to select the group they wish to attend is very democratic. Still, it will generally result in people attending affinity groups where they feel little need to change and grow, thereby avoiding Geiger, Kelley, and Nation's transformational posture altogether. By contrast, Randy Frazee implemented a small group structure that was geographically based, requiring neighbors to learn how to get along, thereby participating in and contributing toward each other's sanctification.[36]

**The Impact of Collectivism or
Individualism on Multi-Site
and Multi-Service Churches**

The notion of the local church as one body seems to stand at odds with churches implementing multi-site and multi-service methodologies. Do these methods produce what would more accurately be called multiple churches with a common leadership team? What is the relationship between the congregation's level of individualism or collectivism and

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[36] Randy Frazee, *The Connecting Church: Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 161. Frazee moved from an affinity model (age, life stage, interests, etc.) to a geographic model of group ministry.

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their willingness to accept these levels of distancing from church leaders? The same could also be asked of church size when single services are implemented. How do church size and the increasing distancing of members from leaders that increasing size brings, impact members' sense of connectedness, and how does the congregant's socio-cultural orientation impact their willingness to accept these levels of distancing from church leaders.

Conclusion

The findings of this research, and the combined work of the research team, confirm the unsettling news that the church in general, and the SBC in particular, is facing the severe challenge of decline. SBC churches are closing every year, and while new plants are also starting, the number of churches is falling behind population growth. Nearly 75 percent of all SBC churches are in decline or have plateaued. Add to this that many established churches in the United States appear to have lost their way, losing their way and becoming syncretistic with the overarching macro-culture of American individualism in which they have been placed for ministry.

The combined effort of the research team was to look into the state of revitalization among SBC churches from several critical perspectives. Most of these efforts have emphasized a search for best practices, focusing primarily on determining principles for revitalization pastors to consider implementing at their churches. This research has taken a slightly different tack. Rather than looking at individual aspects of church life, I studied responses covering every critical perspective assessed by research team members but did so from a socio-cultural perspective context.[37]

In one sense, the results of this research are encouraging. Change toward a more collectivistic orientation influences revitalization positively. And while culture

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[37] Indirectly, it could be argued that this research already begins to respond to Colyer's suggestion that future research consider the connection between cross-cultural influences in church revitalization. See Colyer, "Church Revitalization and Evangelistic Emphasis," 95. See also Legg, "Transforming the Discipleship Culture," 129-30. While addressing cultures in terms of ethnos, cultures can be described in terms of degrees of individualism and collectivism.

change is a slow process, pastors are specifically called to embrace the inherent inefficiencies of effective pastoral care and discipleship.

In another sense, pastors need to be sober about the challenge before them. Pastors, as well as their church members, are immersed in a culture characterized by individualism. Individualism seems normal and natural. Culture has taught, through others already enculturated, that individualism "is the correct way perceive, think, and feel in relation to problems."[38] One of the most helpful things a pastor can do for his people is to be direct with them about the challenge they face. Revitalization pastors repeatedly described actions they took to produce collectivistic outcomes and attitudes. Yet, no respondent reported simply telling their people, "This is what we are doing, because this is how we need to change, because this is what we are all up against, and it is inherent in all of us."

A whole cloth move toward collectivism has never been touted as a solution to the problems resulting from American individualism. Any and every syndrome or culture has embedded disfigurements of the *imago Dei* due to human sinfulness. However, the overarching findings of this research support the working hypothesis that churches in America, which experience revitalization, do so by overcoming elements of American individualism. This overcoming will never be perfect or complete until He appears. Until that time and given the current overarching macro-culture of American individualism, the findings of this research indicate the appropriateness of leading and living in ways that favor a collectivistic shift in perspective of self, others, and communities of faith.

> Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might

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[38] Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 18.

reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph 2:11-22)

APPENDIX 1

EXPERT PANEL REQUEST

Greetings [Recipient Name],

My name is John Baker, and I am a doctoral student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I am part of a research team seeking to identify successful church revitalizations and determine what significance a focus or priority of the following areas played the greatest role: evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and worship ministry.

I am requesting your participation in sculpting our initial survey instrument as a panel of experts who have distinguished themselves as practitioners or thought leaders on the subject of church revitalization. Attached you will see a copy of the survey tool in its draft form. Below are the inclusion criteria for SBC churches in the research population who will receive this survey:

1. The church has ACP data for 2006-2016.
2. Less than 10% growth in worship attendance over the five year period prior to the turnaround.
3. Then experienced growth in worship attendance of 10% or more for 2 out of 5 years following the turnaround while achieving a 20:1 worship attendance to baptism ratio in the same years.

Roughly 700 SBC churches that provided ACP data fit the criteria above. After reviewing the survey, please respond with any edits or comments you would give to sharpen our research tool. Please keep in mind that the intent of this brief survey is to identify churches whereby the leadership intentionally employed strategies related to the above priorities. After the survey phase, individual researchers for each topic will conduct in-depth follow-up interviews of selected churches/pastor. In your view, will these questions effectively identify these priorities; if no, what changes would you propose?

If you have any further questions, we are more than happy to provide much greater detail about the nature of the study if you are indeed interested. Our efforts to discover and synthesize the best practices of successful church revitalizations will no doubt be a benefit to current pastors and Christ's greater kingdom in years to come. Thank you for your valuable contribution to this important research in church revitalization.

Blessings,

John O. Baker III (Church Revitalization Research Team)

APPENDIX 2

PHASE 2 SURVEY PARTICIPATION INVITATION

Dear Church Leader,

My name is John Baker, and I am a pastor and a researcher writing on behalf of a research team of doctoral students from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, under the supervision of Dr. Michael Wilder. The purpose for my letter to you today is to thank you for your leadership of your church. **Based on the current Annual Church Profile (ACP) data, You are in the 3.2% of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Churches that have been led to revitalization in the last decade!**

In a day of incessant reports of sustained decline in attendance, baptism, and membership across the landscape of SBC churches, you have been part of a small but effective percentage of churches that have experienced a turnaround. As such, we want to…in fact, **we NEED to learn from you**.

We are asking if you would take a few moments to complete the survey located at the link below within the next **SEVEN DAYS**. Of all reporting churches in the SBC, less than one thousand meet the initial criteria to be considered for this research project.

Our research seeks to identify principles that may be transferrable to other churches…to other leaders who desperately desire for God to breathe life into their churches. We pray that God allows us to see His hand at work in your church and to tell part of **His story in your church.**

As a pastor, I KNOW the daily pressures of the ministry. There is far more to do than there seems to be time to accomplish it. This is why I am humbly asking you to give me some of your most precious commodity: TIME. **We anticipate that it will require approximately 15 minutes to complete this survey**. A select group of churches will be identified from the results of this survey and approached to commit to a more in-depth interview with one of our research team. As an incentive, if you complete the survey in the next seven days and indicate a willingness to participate in a 20-30 minute personal interview if requested, you will be entered into a drawing for a **$250 Amazon Gift Card**.

Would you please take a moment, even now, to help all of our SBC churches learn from you? Any information you provide 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.

On behalf of our team, thank you for your leadership and for your prayerful consideration of this request.

For the sake of His Name,

John Baker

APPENDIX 3

CHURCH REVITALIZATION INFLUENCE SURVEY

The survey was administered via surveymokey.com. Words in bold represent the emphasis in the online survey for participants.

Demographic Information
1. Your **current** role with your church:
   - Pastor/Elder
   - Deacon
   - Staff
   - Volunteer

2. Your role **prior** to the revitalization process:
   - Pastor/Elder
   - Deacon
   - Staff
   - Volunteer
   - Not at the church

3. Your role **during** the revitalization process:
   - Pastor/Elder
   - Deacon
   - Staff
   - Volunteer
   - Not at the church

4. Your church context is best described as:
   - Rural
   - Suburban
   - Urban

5. Briefly describe what ways your community has changed over the last 10 years and ways your church as sought to adapt.

6. Are you willing to participate in a follow-up interview regarding the revitalization process at your church?
   - Yes
   - No

Interview Participation Contact Information

7. Contact information:
   - Name
   - Church Name
   - Church Address
   - Address
   - City/Town
   - State/Province
   - Zip/Postal Code
   - Church Website
   - Email Address
   - Phone Number

The Revitalization Process in General

8. Rate each ministry emphasis as to the importance it played in the revitalization process. (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)
   - Discipleship
   - Evangelism
   - Leadership
   - Missions
   - Prayer
   - Primary Worship Gathering
   - Other (please specify)

9. Reflecting on the change initiatives you have pursued in your church revitalization context, identify the area in which you have faced the **greatest** amount of **member resistance**.

10. Reflecting on the change initiatives you have pursued in your church revitalization context, identify the area in which you have faced the **greatest** amount of **member acceptance**.

Discipleship

11. Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's **discipleship ministry** which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process.

12. Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the church's discipleship ministry **during the revitalization process**. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)
    - The church has a clearly defined discipleship process.
    - The majority of active members were able to explain the discipleship process.

13. Which programmatic elements existed in the church's discipleship approach **during the revitalization process**? (Select all that apply.)
    - Age-graded Ministry (i.e., children, youth, college, adult)
    - Men's and/or Women's Bible Studies
    - Intergenerational Mentoring
    - Home-based Small Groups
    - Men's Ministry
    - Women's Ministry
    - One-on-one Type Discipleship Groups
    - Traditional Sunday School Model

14. Regarding the discipleship process, select the perspective which most closely represents the majority of active church members **at the beginning of the revitalization process.**
    - **A More Individualistic Mindset** (Members expect to select and shape most of their own discipleship process, with an emphasis on personal needs and intentional personal growth.)
    - **A More Collective Mindset** (Members expect spiritual leadership to guide them in their discipleship process with an emphasis on common needs and intentional relational and community growth.)

Evangelism

15. Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's **evangelism ministry** which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process.

16. Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the church's evangelism ministry **during the revitalization process**. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)
    - There was a demonstrable increase in personal evangelism among active members of the church.
    - The majority of active members could communicate the gospel in a personal evangelism encounter.
    - The active members of the church regularly engaged in gospel conversations for the purpose of personal evangelism.

17. Briefly describe the type and frequency of evangelism training **currently** offered in your church.

Missions (including national and international efforts)

18. Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's **missions ministry** which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process.

19. Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the church's missions ministry **prior to the revitalization process**. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)
    - The church had a vibrant missions ministry focused on financially supporting short-term and/or long-term missionaries.
    - The church had a vibrant missions ministry focused on sending short-term and/or long-term missionaries from its own membership.

20. Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the church's **current missions ministry**. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)
    - The church had a vibrant missions ministry focused on financially supporting short-term and/or long-term missionaries.
    - The church had a vibrant missions ministry focused on sending short-term and/or long-term missionaries from its own membership.

Leadership

21. Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's **leadership structures** which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process.

22. Indicate how important each of the following leadership practices has been in the revitalization process in your ministry context. (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)
    - Building Momentum
    - Conceptual Thinking
    - Contextual Awareness and Planning
    - Developing Others
    - Getting Members Engaged
    - Gospel Orientation
    - Individual and Corporate Repentance
    - Information Seeking
    - Initiative
    - Interpersonal Understanding
    - Missional Focus
    - Organizational Awareness
    - Relationship Building
    - Teamwork and Cooperation
    - Transparency
    - Willingness to Confront/Church Discipline

23. Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's **leadership development processes** which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process.

24. Select your level of agreement with the following statements concerning the leadership development processes. (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.)
   - Prior to the revitalization process, a culture of effective leadership development existed within the church.
   - Leadership development played a significant role in the revitalization process.

Prayer

25. Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's **prayer ministry** which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process.

26. Rate the following statements. (Highly Unimportant, Unimportant, Slightly Unimportant, Slightly Important, Important, Highly Important.)
   - The church leadership's dependence upon prayer as a vital means for realizing revitalization in your ministry context.
   - The church congregation's dependence upon prayer as a vital means for realizing revitalization in your ministry context.

27. Briefly describe your frequency and pattern of personal prayer **during the revitalization process**.

28. In what ways were the topic and act of prayer prioritized in corporate worship **during the revitalization process**?

Worship Gathering

29. Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's **primary worship gathering** which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process.

30. Please indicate what the most **difficult** element was to change in the primary worship gathering during the revitalization process and state the reason it was difficult.

31. Please indicate what the most **effective** element of change was in the primary worship gathering during the revitalization process and state the reason it was rewarding.

General Comments

32. What advice would you offer to a pastor seeking to lead a revitalization process?

PHASE 3 SURVEY PARTICIPATION INVITATION

Thanks for Your Continued Help [First Name]!

This is Your Link to Phase 3!

We want to thank [**Church Name**] for helping us get to this point, and for agreeing to participate in ongoing research to better understand church revitalization.

The link below will take you to a brief survey, which should only take 4-6 minutes to complete. (Please consider taking our survey right now, even if a researcher has already interviewed your church!)

Take Our Short Phase 3 Survey
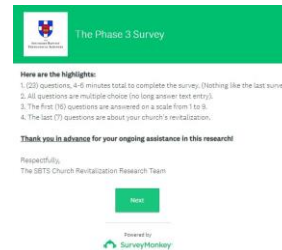
What Happens Next?

For some of you, there may have been a long lapse between our last contact and this email. Things are going to move much quicker now. Beginning in about 10 days, a team of researchers will comb through your responses and begin setting up interviews with some of you to try to understand your church's experience of revitalization in a little more detail.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is: JBaker765@Students.SBTS.edu

Thanks again for all you are doing for His kingdom!
In Him,
John

APPENDIX 5

CULTURE ORIENTATION SCALE

1. Demographic Information
   - Name
   - Email Address
   - Church's Name
   - Church's city, state, and zip

   A 16-item scale designed to measure four dimensions of collectivism and individualism. All items are answered on a 9-point scale, ranging from 1 (never or definitely no) and 9 (always or definitely yes). The items should be mixed up prior to administering the questionnaire.

2. I'd rather depend on myself than others. (HI)
3. It is important that I do my job better than others. (VI)
4. If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud. (HC)
5. Parents and children must stay together as much as possible. (VC)
6. I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others. (HI)
7. Winning is everything. (VI)
8. The well-being of my coworkers is important to me. (HC)
9. It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want. (VC)
10. I often do "my own thing." (HI)
11. Competition is the law of nature. (VI)
12. To me, pleasure is spending time with others. (HC)
13. Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required. (VC)
14. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me. (HI)
15. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused. (VI)
16. I feel good when I cooperate with others. (HC)
17. It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups. (VC)

Scoring: Each dimension's items are summed up separately to create a VC, VI, HC, and HI score.

18. During a typical worship service during your revitalization, how would you describe the cultural diversity of your attendees?
    - Our attendees were culturally uniform
    - Our attendees were culturally uniform, with a few exceptions
    - Our attendees were somewhat culturally diverse
    - Our attendees were highly culturally diverse

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19. During a typical worship service during your revitalization, how closely would your worship attendees reflect the community surrounding your church?
- Our attendees did not reflect the local community
- Our attendees somewhat reflected the local community
- Our attendees mostly reflected the local community
- Our attendees accurately reflected the local community

20. How would you characterize your church's unity?
    a. Before your revitalization
    - Our church was highly divided
    - Our church was divided
    - Our church was somewhat divided
    - Our church was somewhat unified
    - Our church was unified
    - Our church was highly unified

    b. During your revitalization
    - Our church was highly divided
    - Our church was divided
    - Our church was somewhat divided
    - Our church was somewhat unified
    - Our church was unified
    - Our church was highly unified

    c. Presently
    - Our church is highly divided
    - Our church is divided
    - Our church is somewhat divided
    - Our church is somewhat unified
    - Our church is unified
    - Our church is highly unified

21. What posture did your church leadership take regarding building and/or preserving church unity during your revitalization?
- Unity was not a primary concern
- We took action whenever our unity was seriously threatened
- We took actions at times to build and/or guard our unity
- We intentionally and proactively built and/or guarded our unity

22. Can you identify planned events and/or programs which increased your sense of unity and community during your revitalization?
- Yes – Definitely
- Yes – Somewhat
- No

23. Can you identify unplanned events and/or crisis points in the life of your church which increased your sense of unity and community during your revitalization?
   * Yes – Definitely
   * Yes – Somewhat
   * No

24. THE LAST QUESTION: The next phase of our research will involve interviews with researchers, each lasting approximately 45 minutes. Your church might be selected by more than one researcher for follow-up interviews. If this should happen, would you be willing to be interviewed by more than one researcher?
   * Yes – If selected, I am willing to be interviewed by more than (2) researchers
   * Yes – If selected, I am willing to be interviewed by (2) researchers
   * Yes – If selected, I am willing to be interviewed by just (1) researcher
   * No – I decline being interviewed

APPENDIX 6

INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your willingness to participate as part of the research project on Church Revitalization conducted by the research team under the supervision of Dr. Michael Wilder of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY.

This research is the most current and far-reaching of its kind, involving a study of SBC churches across the convention. You are part of a select, qualifying, group of churches based upon your Annual Church Profile (ACP) submissions in the recent past. Already, you have been helpful in completing the online research questionnaire, and you have been selected to participate in a follow-up interview based on the responses you gave in the survey.

Below is the informed consent statement and the general questions that will serve as the backbone of a phone or video conference interview with John O. Baker III, one of the doctoral students conducting the research. His area of focus is specifically in the area of individualism's influence on discipleship and its role or influence on the church's revitalization.

> **Agreement to Participate**
> The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify principles and practices that influenced the church's revitalization. This research is being conducted by John O. Baker, III, under the supervision of Dr. Michael Wilder of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for purposes of identifying principles and practices employed by pastoral leaders to influence the church revitalization. In this research, you will be asked to respond to several questions pertaining to your experience in leading your church during revitalization. Any information you provide 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 this interview, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.
>
> [ ] I agree to participate   [ ] I do not agree to participate

Thank you for your help. I truly believe that the information we gather will assist thousands of pastors like yourself to become more effective in leading their churches to experience revitalization.

Best regards,
John O. Baker, III
Ed.D. Candidate
Individualism, Discipleship, and Church Revitalization

APPENDIX 7

INDIVIDUALISM, DISCIPLESHIP, AND
REVITALIZATION QUESTIONS

Demographic Information

1. Describe your ministry context (type of community).

2. How many years have you been in ministry?

3. How many years did you serve prior to the revitalization?

4. How many years have you served in your current role?

5. Describe your training and educational background.

6. What is your current age?

7. Describe your church (size, demographics, etc.)

Focus on Self and Sense of Community Questions

8. How has your church's theology impacted the focus on self and the sense of community of your church?

   a. What were the dominant theological threads emphasized by your church during the revitalization process? *(Which doctrine would seem most familiar to your average church member, Union with Christ or The Priesthood of All Believers?)*

   b. What were the dominant metaphors used by your church to describe salvation, discipleship, and the interpersonal relationship of believers? *(Exodus, Pentecost, Journey, Tightrope, etc.)*

   c. How do you both encourage individual believers to have personal encounters with God and encouraging the church to encounter God corporately? Is there a hierarchy between these two encounters?

   d. Briefly describe your church's teaching regarding the concept of appropriate authority and submission. *(Was this a theme during your revitalization? What were the major points of application during your revitalization? (Elders/Members, husbands/wives, one-to-another, etc.))*

e. Given your experience of revitalization, what advice regarding theological emphasis would you give to others seeking to revitalize their church? What would you have done differently?

9. How have elements of meaningful membership impacted the focus on self and the sense of community of your church?

   a. How has the church's attitude toward membership changed during the revitalization process? (*Is there an expectation that qualified attenders will become active members?*)

   b. If expectations of members were raised during the revitalization process (starting a new member's class, signing the church covenant, etc.), what was the result?

   c. Was there a change in understanding and/or implementation of church discipline during the revitalization process? Was discipline implemented? To what effect?

   d. Was a theological understanding or ecclesiological structure or core document used by some who resisted change to justify and/or promote disunity among your church members?

   e. Given your experience of revitalization, what advice regarding meaningful membership would you give to others seeking to revitalize their church? What would you have done differently?

10. How have programmatic elements impacted the focus on self and the sense of community of your church?

   a. What programmatic elements were most successful in moving participants toward a greater community with other participants?

      i. Does your church participate in planned revival services? If not, why not? If so, describe how the individual and corporate aspects of revival are understood and presented.

      ii. Describe your church year, with emphasis on those events which are recurring church traditions and may be considered defining of your members' experience at your church.

   b. When programming discipleship opportunities, does your church offer extensive options, a few options, a single option, or a programmed sequence? Explain why.

   c. What was the change in the nature of intergenerational interaction (worship, discipleship, etc.)? (*What if any identifiable factors brought about this change?*)

   d. Given your experience of revitalization, what advice regarding church programming would you give to others seeking to revitalize their church? What would you have done differently?

11. How have crisis and opposition impacted the focus on self and the sense of community of your church?

    a. Describe the greatest sources of opposition encountered during the revitalization process. How was this addressed? What was the outcome?

    b. Describe how a perception of crisis, based on intentional actions of leadership during the revitalization process, impacted the sense of community of the church. What was the crisis? How did leadership respond? What was the outcome?

    c. Describe how unplanned crisis events (death of a significant person, closure of a major employer, etc.) during the revitalization process impacted the sense of community of the church. What was the crisis? How did leadership respond? What was the outcome?

    d. Given your experience of revitalization, what advice regarding crisis and opposition would you give to others seeking to revitalize their church? What would you have done differently?

12. Given your experience of revitalization, what advice would you give to others seeking to revitalize their church? (See the last question under 4-7)

APPENDIX 8

SIGNIFICANT DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY CHANGES

Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's discipleship ministry which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process. *Responses are ordered according to the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. I shared 8 weeks of revitalization with the congregation. From this, we then made a goal of visiting every house in all directions within 8 miles of the church.

2. We focused sincerity on putting Jesus first.

3. Began a mentoring program that helps pair young believers with older believers. Changed our midweek service to be an inclusive Bible study; getting ready to make a once a month intergenerational gathering. in the discipleship ministry (Sunday school and other groups) really pushed the need to go on mission (local for now) as part of a growing discipleship process

4. We initiated a Sunday night discipleship strategy as well as women's ministry, men's ministry, and family ministry discipleship

5. New members class

6. Small groups meeting outside of the church

7. Drawing the congregation together to work as a unit.

8. The only thing we had, as far as discipleship goes, was Sunday School, which honestly isn't discipling anyone but is an opportunity to feel good about opening

the word and then just sharing prayer requests. Our changes have been three-fold (especially in the last 2 years)

a. We have changed our programing to be more centered around actual discipleship and personal growth.

b. Practical opportunities to make disciples in our community and in church.

c. Education and leadership development to help our leadership catch the vision for it.

9. We attempted to revitalize small groups, including home groups and Sunday School. We also expanded men's/women's groups that meet off-campus. As we grew, we added an associate pastor of discipleship to help steer the ministry recently.

10. We have implemented multiple life groups, along with key leaders taking part in one on one discipleship.

11. The quality of teaching has improved. Spiritual growth developing from the spiritual depth of bible study. Special emphasis training. Evangelism, finances, discipleship, small group, etc.

12. Immediately began meeting with men on Saturday mornings for Discipleship and Evangelism. Emphasized the importance of Disciples making Disciples. Stressed that Discipleship and Evangelism go hand in hand.

13. We started a small group program to allow members to hold each other accountable and to encourage one another to grow in their faith. Everyone was encouraged to find a ministry and to serve. The sermons and Bible studies were focused on our identity in Christ and as Christ-followers and what that looks like practically.

14. Bible Study classes

15. The encouragement of more personal involvement in church programs.

16. In the last several years, we have implemented d-groups. This is where we have one person take 2 or more people and disciple them for a year and have them replicate after that year.

17. New Member's Class

18. The development of small groups and growth track

19. I'm not sure if we have a great discipleship plan in my mind. As of right now, I disciple these in attendance on Wednesday nights and Sunday nights. This is an intense time of study.

20. We have emphasized discipleship as something everyone at the church is responsible for, and not just a programmatic area led by a few. We have also created opportunities to engage in church-wide prayer, which has led to a renaissance in attention to discipleship. After prayer emphasis, we became more deliberate in involving new Christians/new members in discipleship and have encouraged "regular" members to recommit.

21. Fellowship, intimacy, and varied studies for short periods of time.

22. No significant changes. As I previously stated, the issue for this church was to stop the bleeding from a troubled few years, the establishment of stable leadership, and renewing loving relationships. I would say we are only now getting healthy enough to address more issues like discipleship. If pressed for an answer, I would have to say that small groups in homes and happening all during the week have been one of the most helpful changes to discipleship ministries.

23. Men's and women's small groups.

24. We have created a small group ministry in place of Sunday night worship. Our small groups are just the vehicle, and they are not Sunday School all over again. We use small groups as a vehicle to create an intentional and relational environment where discipleship can happen.

25. We started new classes, starting new campuses, developing new leaders.

26. Everything we do passes through our discipleship process. We were able to move our discipleship platform from once a week to the mid-week life group format. Relational discipleship has offered a platform for church growth, open discussion through difficult changes, and ultimately has allowed us to cultivate leaders safely. Discipleship is as much about living the word as learning the word, and it has radically changed both the understanding and pace at which the church is moving.

27. I am a bi-vocational pastor who believes and teaches that service is worship. Additionally, I believe bi-vocational requires others to step up.

28. We've launched Family Groups (groups of 10-25 that meet in homes throughout the community to unpack Sunday sermon on a more practical level, share a meal together, and serve the community. We've also launched D-Groups: small (4-6), same-gender groups that meet regularly to pray, share what they're reading/learning from Scriptures (group members read the same plan), and hold each other accountable to engage others with the Gospel.

29. We changed the name and focus of our Sunday School. The name change reflects the change in the focus. We now call our Sunday School classes Growth Groups.

30. I have been teaching that discipleship is about walking with someone rather than a class. Living life with each other and being intentional.

31. I don't like this question because all we do is discipleship. I don't even like the term discipleship. It's passive. We use the words "Disciple-making" to describe what it means to become more like Jesus. We tell our people that disciple-making happens on 5 levels, and all of them are important to growing as a disciple. 1) Corporate (50+)- gathering together for worship, 2) Community Groups (20-50)-groups of small group on mission, 3) Small groups (8-15)-meeting in homes for a meal, bible study, prayer, biblical community, 4) Micro Groups (2-4)-accountability groups meeting regularly for deeper disciple-making, 5) Individual-must emphasize time alone with the Lord. This change of

focus puts disciple-making back on the people, for them to see that they are not on their own to becoming disciples of Jesus. This is a community effort.

32. Life groups

33. New leadership

34. Next steps experience – orientating newcomers as well as established members to the church mission. Growth groups – during the week in homes allow for connections and meaningful relationships.

35. Reaching out

36. Moved from Committees to Ministries

37. Increased # of SS classes. New teachers. Aggressive outreach.

38. There really haven't been any changes. We still follow the old Sunday School model, and it isn't working very well, to be honest. My wife and I are about to start a small group Bible study in our home on Sunday nights.

39. We increased training for leaders, offer a variety of options as to topics, location, time, all based on life interest.

40. Rebooting Sunday School and focusing on children's church.

41. Sunday school to small groups

42. We are changing the discipleship function of the church from a program to a process that will ultimately be ingrained in all that we do as a church.

43. From day one, we offered a second and then 3rd Sunday School option. The church had never done small groups prior to my pastorate. We began to cultivate discussion-based SS classes. The church had been conditioned to lecture-teach and was very closed to discussion. This left a bad taste in the mouths of millennial folks that we wanted to reach. We also implemented marriage and parenting classes on Wednesday nights. This was super effective and is my wheelhouse, so that helped. After a few seasons of that, we launched a few topic-driven small groups and then a full relaunch into sermon-based small groups where I write the curriculum. We currently have an athlete

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bible study, college one, teen one, and three adult ones meeting weekly during the school year along with topic-based ones for the Sunday school hour.

44. We started small groups that met in a variety of locations based on interests, age groups, and season.

45. We detached discipleship from something you receive on Sunday evening, and instead, recognize discipleship as something you do. We transitioned from a traditional "Discipleship Training" to focusing on making disciples by building up a non-existent children's ministry. That transitioned to a study on the Bible and missions with young people and began to turn a focus towards outreach.

46. We had to redefine discipleship from being sitting through a Bible study to intentionally seeking to have God transform us. We have even reformatted our Sundays around this idea and now have a 90% Sunday morning small group participation rate.

47. We increased one-on-one, man-to-man friendship discipleship. We began the Titus Project several years ago, and it has increased the number of men willing to teach, preach, and lead in our church.

48. Sunday School

49. Launching "life groups" off and on campus. Launching more discipleship types of classes/seminars.

50. All ages in Sunday School are receiving age-appropriate lessons following the same curriculum; Wednesday Night Youth program and VBS have increased focus on Biblical Foundations and encourage participation.

51. Purposeful individual discipleship.

APPENDIX 9

SIGNIFICANT EVANGELISM MINISTRY CHANGES

Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's evangelism ministry which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process. *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. Primary changes would be invitation program and community-minded projects.

2. Focused efforts on making the church a "winner" which prompted people to invite others

3. Prior to my becoming pastor, the only evangelism format the church had was G.R.O.W and it was dismal. I canceled this program and focused on personal and corporate evangelism, offering yearly evangelism training and preaching regularly on personal and corporate evangelism. The church has at least one corporate outreach/evangelism activity a month. The church has also established a mission and ministry team to help coordinate evangelistic endeavors and help the church have ownership. The team gets 5% of the church's budget.

4. Acts 1:8 model was adopted. Neighborhood strategy, City strategy, Nation strategy, and International strategy and taught the entire church how to share the gospel through their personal testimony

5. Student ministry, school

6. Couples group

7. They saw me involved directly in evangelism

8. Our evangelism ministry was limited to inviting people on Sunday and a

small team that cold-called people they knew needed prayer. We are started (and are far from arrival) teaching on what evangelism is, training how to do it, challenging people to take personal responsibility, and giving church-wide options for people to be involved.

9. We have teams visiting door to door in our community weekly. We also have conducted evangelism training classes throughout the year. I also preach on evangelism regularly.

10. Outreach, outreach, outreach.

11. We have better clarity in the type of proper response to the Gospel. Also, follow up on spiritual conversation.

12. I immediately began offering evangelism training using different evangelism tools. Began emphasizing the Great Commission and Acts 1:8

13. The church three years ago had NO evangelism ministry. They were inward-focused and had no desire to spread the Gospel. We started having outreach events and during those events, we would have a team walking around and sharing Jesus. We started door-knocking and walking around the community evangelizing. Several sermons were focused on the Great Commission putting that into practice.

14. Basically, through ministry to refugees

15. We had a few new families join that actively engaged their neighbors.

16. Our church still struggles with personal evangelism, and we see that this needs to change. Our church is really good at inviting people to church, which has led to multiple salvations and membership growth.

17. We made it a goal to contact EVERY member through personal visits, postcards and phone calls

18. We are still trying to define and grow evangelism; however, visitation plays a vital role in our mission.

19. There was no evangelism before. Now we reach out to a focused area of the community four times each year. We do not have a weekly or monthly emphasis aside

from encouragement from the pulpit to be a light for Christ and to personally hand out Bibles.

20. First, we, as a church, prayed for a revival in evangelism at the church -- both individually and collectively. Then, beginning with an intentional focus on the part of the ministerial staff/leadership, an example of an evangelistic mindset was emphasized. We encouraged members to invite friends/family to church activities, and we identified new avenues to take evangelism outside the walls of the church to reach the surrounding community. There was an emphasis by the leadership, followed by a call to commit from the membership. As the process succeeded, more "bought into" evangelism being a privilege and obligation of all Christians.

21. personal involvement and mentoring of others to join in

22. No significant changes have been observed or initiated.

23. There will little formal attention/training given.

24. We encourage individuals to build relationships with others and share the Gospel. Honestly, most of our members do not do that.

25. We are giving different avenues of outreach to use different gifts.

26. We make it a practice to ask if our people are sharing their faith. We survey our life groups weekly on Gospel Conversations and Gospel Presentations. (This is a new approach and while it has taken some time, we believe it will produce a measurable approach.) We also take the time before a local mission project to reestablish why we are providing for a need. Sharing the Gospel is part of our mission statement as well and is posted in clear view. Finally, establish a come-from mentality rather than a go-to mentality. You don't go to Hillcrest; you come from it. This is a sending place that desires to make disciples.

27. Opening the doors of the church and allowing the community in. Pushing the church out into the community – Trunk-or-Treat, car shows for missions, after school program, summer camp

28. First, as a pastor, I have tried to model a passion for personal evangelism. We routinely tell stories of people coming to faith as they are being baptized, often asking the person who led them to faith to participate in that special moment. We have a massive sign hanging in our lobby that lists the names of those we are praying for to come to faith. This summer, we will be prayer walking the neighborhoods closest to our church. We also host 2 strategically evangelistic events each year, our Spring Fling (women) and Get in The Game (men).

29. Each member was challenged to come up with a personal " Who Do You List," a list of people you know who do not know Jesus or who do not have a church home. We developed a personal strategy of prayer and evangelism instead of a mass event evangelism strategy only

30. Teaching the church body to share their story with the people that God has placed in their life. Be that it is family, friends, neighbors, even co-workers.

31. First, identifying the need. That it is not the pastor/staff's job to share with others; it is all of our jobs. And then give tools for people to use in everyday environments (work, school, play). Simplifying the approach and focusing on how Jesus changes lives, not us.

32. Block party outreaches

33. People seem more likely to invite friends to church

34. The conversion growth occurred among children/students as a result of our "mission" to pick them up on buses and vans. The adult growth was transfer growth.

35. Effective follow-up

36. Everything focuses on evangelism

37. FAITH MINISTRY

38. Strong Biblical preaching. Outreach efforts increased.

39. I've just tried to get people to understand that wherever they go, they represent Jesus Christ and his church.

40. One on one connection with non-believers. Encouraging and training our people on how to be intentional in building relationships with non-believers.

41. We are empowering membership to be inviters and to talk about their salvation openly.

42. People felt comfortable inviting their unchurched friends to worship services

43. We present the gospel clearly THROUGH discipleship. We are such a lost area that people here need to become accepted and cultivated spiritually before they will respond to the gospel. The more we disciple the more come to Christ. We had 65-year-old women who came to my small group who had never heard the gospel or been in a church prior to us. She was taught about Jesus for over 9 months and now is a believer.

44. We used monthly grocery giveaway as an opportunity to share the gospel.

45. Changing inward focus to outward focus, a ceasing of the assumption that everyone in the area knows who Jesus is, and a recognition that a disciple who hasn't shared the Gospel in 15 years is, at best, a stagnate and disobedient disciple.

46. Evangelism grows out of a person's experience with Christ. The more intimate and transformative their experience, the more they want others to experience Him. Before, some people would evangelize as part of a program. Now, people share Christ because as a natural overflow of what He's doing in their lives.

47. An increase in personal involvement with others in evangelism.

48. More Mission Minded outreach

49. Evangelism training regularly AND all our small groups perform a "Love Where We Live" project every 4-6 weeks.

50. We have an outreach to the local elementary schools, providing school supplies and support for teachers.

51. We began outreach events where we went into the community rather than expecting them to come to us.

APPENDIX 10

TYPE AND FREQUENCY OF CURRENT
EVANGELISM TRAINING

Briefly describe the type and frequency of evangelism training currently offered in your church. *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. Sunday school, discipleship training, Wednesday youth, and adult Bible study.

2. GROW strategy; personal evangelism; community involvement

3. We do yearly evangelism training. This takes place in a sermon for the whole church and through Sunday School. This past January the church hosted different pastors to teach/preach on the importance of personal evangelism each Sunday. Inserted in each bulletin is an evangelism card where each person can check if they have shared a tract, personal testimony, or a gospel presentation the past week. We are a church of 100 and so far, this year we have had over 700 gospel contacts

4. Regular training in their personal testimony and 2 times a year on Sunday night discipleship

5. 3 circles yearly

6. Weekly via small groups and mid-week Bible study

7. From the pulpit in sermons

8. Right now, it is once a year in a formal setting.

9. We offer a class twice annually, and I preach on it regularly.

10. Weekly sharing your faith class. Our Sunday school classes put an underlying emphasis on sharing your faith. also, it is regularly preached from the pulpit.

11. Once a year. Church-wide event training.

12. At least once a quarter, if not more.

13. We do not have exclusive evangelism training, but it was an emphasis in our small group program for 6 months and taught extensively at Bible Studies. We are somewhat using Evangelism Explosion.

14. Bible Study and preaching

15. Associational training concerning teaching and VBS annually. Church training for workers in Awana annually.

16. We have trained our church during the worship service using 3 circles. We also train before missional outreach in our community. We have offered to train anyone as well personally. On average, it's quarterly or every 6 months.

17. Classes on how to share your faith and regular outreach opportunities

18. Deacon training and encouragement once a year. Small group training three times a year.

19. We miss the mark on having a special focus here. We just preach the need to be sharing the Gospel and try to give opportunities and techniques through large group activities.

20. We currently don't offer any training other than the Men's Sunday Bible Study class, which just completed a multi-week course emphasizing evangelism and personal witnessing. Additionally, in the other classes, there is an emphasis on telling others what Christ did for you personally, and how He can do it for them, too. It's simplistic, but it takes some of the apprehension away from evangelistic endeavors.

21. Once or twice a year officially but I keep it before them regularly

22. Through Sunday School classes and some small groups.

23. We are preparing to launch a 6-week evangelism intensive in a few weeks for all Life Groups on Sunday mornings. This is one of our greatest needs.

24. We have offered evangelism classes in the past. We are preparing to offer another one either this Summer or Fall. I also preach on it frequently.

25. We did the 3 circles training church-wide. Had testimonies of people using 3 circles.

26. Incorporated into worship services, and through our life group teaching and training

27. Minimal, minus sermon focused

28. We try to offer something quarterly to this end. That being said, every person who joins our church walks through a process we call welcome To Church in which they are taught to communicate the gospel and their own personal testimony. Our hope is that every member will be equipped to engage their friends, family members, coworkers and classmates with the gospel.

29. We do evangelism training one to two times a year

30. We have had two trainings in the last two years, but not any before that, other than bible study.

31. Large church training about once a quarter, regular reminders for SG leaders to teach to their group members. Heavy focus on regularly training leaders to train others. We are working through No Place Left right now to emphasize evangelism that leads to planting new churches.

32. In house workshops

33. Never

34. Not aware of any training classes/programs. Gospel explained during VBS and weekly kids/student ministries.

35. 3 Circles. Offered with strategic event training.

36. Classes. Pulpit. Quarterly and weekly.

37. None at the present time

38. Regular Soul-winning classes

39. We haven't offered evangelism training.

40. Annually in one meeting training, ongoing in sermon messages.

41. We do not have a dedicated training program.

42. Non-existent other than modeling

43. We address this on a regular basis in small groups and we have an emphasis on the pray, invite and follow up model. We also emphasized being spirit lead in our evangelism as opposed to an in your face model which culturally has not worked.

44. Monthly nursing home and grocery ministry coaching, and an adult Sunday School class devoted to evangelism.

45. Associational training semi-annually, state training annually, and church training through pastoral teaching regularly.

46. Very little, actually. As they increasingly understand how the gospel effects every part of their life, they find it increasingly easier to incorporate it into their normal conversations.

47. Weekly encouragement and regular biblical examples of evangelism.

48. About Quarterly on Sunday evening

49. Quarterly

50. Outside of the pulpit, where evangelism training was done often, little intentional training took place. At least twice a year, teachers were trained in evangelism, to some degree.

APPENDIX 11

SIGNIFICANT MISSIONS MINISTRY CHANGES

Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's missions ministry which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process. *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. We offer free clothes closet and food pantry. We offer Christian life coaching and counseling, also free movie night once a quarter and Wednesday night meal weekly.

2. More active in North America and international missions

3. Intentional outreach was established. we do at least one outreach per quarter, moving this to every 8 weeks. we do local projects in our community and state projects. we established a missions and ministry team with gets 5% of the budget. The team looks for evangelistic, missions, and outreach opportunities for the church. We look for ways that each age group in the church can participate. Participation has increased with each event. These are intentional off-campus events/endeavors.

4. Acts 1:8 MISSION STRATEGY

5. Local missions

6. Focused more on the Co-Op program and let missionaries be missionaries.

7. We searched and found ministry opportunities and immediately responded

8. We have gone from only sending money to CP to having intentional, missional community partnerships with gospel intentionality, and have started partnering with missions organizations overseas by sending teams and funds.

9. We have expanded our international missions ministry to include multiple trips yearly all over the world. We also started a national partnership with a church plant and have conducted many short-term national trips. 10% of our congregation participated in a mission project annually in the past 2 years.

10. "As you are going" mission emphasis, where our people look at their daily lives as a mission field. Each Sunday school class also has adopted a local entity where they regularly address physical and spiritual needs. we also have regional and foreign projects that we currently take part in. none of these missions, nor any other were a part of the church prior to the revitalization process.

11. More opportunities and more intention plans, specific outreach projects.

12. Began educating our folks on our Cooperative Program Giving. Started Faith Promise Giving up and above the general fund giving that supports the Cooperative Program.

13. We had very few missions when I came to this church 3 years ago. Now we support a missionary in Israel and a sister church in Africa. We have started a backpack ministry in local schools, working with a local homeless program, started a Care Team to help any need we find in the community, and other activities.

14. Ministry to immigrants

15. Our giving to missions has been over 13-15% for several years now. We have missionaries in a couple of times each year.

16. Locally, we have brought more of the events that happen at our church every year to the community rather than having them come to the church. Easter egg hunt and Trunk or treat are now done in the community. Also, our small groups and Student Ministry is starting to make it a priority to serve in the community throughout the year. About five years ago, we started our first church planting partnership and we also started a student missions partnership in St. Louis. Internationally we have sent missionaries to

the Philippines and have partnered with a missionary in Ghana West Africa for the past 10 years.

17. Going on mission trips instead of just supporting them financially

18. Reaching the community in various mission efforts

19. There were no missions before. We now give some to The Cooperative Program and try to have opportunities such as OCC (Operation Christmas Child), Gideons, and First Choice Pregnancy Center.

20. Missions is a central focus of EBC. The primary change has been from a leadership perspective, where one individual who had been heading this effort has reached out to others in the church to come alongside her and share the responsibility. Additionally, over the past three years, we have seen actual missions participation increase from 1 member to 10 this year.

21. More people are willing to participate, and it has encouraged others.

22. Full disclosure - I am 57 and had not been a Southern Baptist until coming to Damascus almost 5 years ago. I like several things about the Cooperative Program, special offerings, etc. I was gravely disappointed in the lack of connection the church felt, not only to missions but to actual missionaries. We could not possibly be more disconnected. Since then, we have curtailed increasing Cooperative Fund giving and instead, have begun taking on missionaries that we can know, work with and be involved personally in their ministries. One couple like that was homegrown in our church. This has been the biggest contributing factor.

23. My predecessor as pastor was very involved in church planting in the Denver metro. The church was also beginning to focus on taking teams to international destinations.

24. We are partners with a school in town. We also have a prayer partnership with some international missionaries. We have a partnership with a church planter in Denver, and we are taking our first mission trip there this August.

25. Regular time in front of the church to tell of missions impact.

26. We redefined the expectations of ministries. First, we stopped doing a million ministries and narrowed it down to four. Which now is three. We then put a high level of financial backing and effort, along with a tremendous number of volunteers, towards each of these. Second, we moved all smaller ministries to the life groups for monthly work. Every life group should be doing a mission ministry that is manageable without the entire church's help. This allows much work to be done for the kingdom and minimizes overusing our people.

27. Changed from simply sending money to associations for their desires and started old school picking and choosing missionaries and ministers to support.

28. As a church, for the first time ever, we have embraced two church planting partnerships here in the states. Lord willing, we'll take our first short term trip this summer to serve alongside one of these plants. Additionally, we have formed an international partnership with IMB missionaries in London. Last year, the first in years, we resumed participation in the LMCO.

29. Not many. We have always been mission-minded. We have just included a focus on doing local missions rather than just funding missions only.

30. We have started to look at our community as our mission field. So, we start to engage our community so they might see Jesus.

31. Showing repeatedly how gospel change sends people on mission. Our "up, in, out" paradigm is Gospel, Groups, Go. Gospel-centered in all we do, groups focused on building community and GO on mission to your neighbors and all the world. Going (missions) is the result of gospel work in us.

32. Meeting with people on their own turf.

33. Fresh fervor for missions. active missions committee, make missionaries very "visible" in the life of the church

34. Become more aggressive in pursuing the spiritually disconnected by entering their lives through their children.

35. Regular mission trips and support by the lead pastor.

36. None to significant

37. Reached to a struggling church. Established new goals for Mission Offerings

38. Promotion of opportunities. Promotion of needs.

39. Our Missions Committee has taken more interest in local missions in the last year and a half or so. Prior to that, the church wasn't doing any mission work at all. I'm currently trying to put together two mission trips for next summer.

40. Personal engagement by members.

41. No change.

42. Local and global partnership strategy with very limited church-organized outreach events

43. We incorporated teaching on the need for missions (missions exist because worship doesn't-piper) and now have started going on short term missions and have sent out a handful of full-time missionaries from our church. The church is so young in their faith that they have never been out of this context with the intention of evangelism.

44. Actual local and international mission trips. Investing and supporting the associational camp.

45. A recognition that missions is something you can actually do! Retraining the church's understanding that one does not have to leave the country to do mission work and making opportunities for small mission moments to take place in the community.

46. Missions was something our women prayed for during their monthly meeting. Now, we partner with church planters locally and out of state. We also encourage our members to do missions in their own context to the people they know. We don't focus on it being an event. It's just something we do.

47. We have experienced an increase in individual missions. Additionally, the church has welcomed several missionaries to speak and supported them financially.

48. Do a roofing ministry, block party tailor, door to door

49. Local missions significantly. Regional then international.

50. Involving the youth in missions education, encourage them to participate in fundraising activities for the missions supported by the church; Active support for BSU and their summer missionary programs

51. We started doing something. We placed an emphasis on "For Shelby" to remind our church that we had friends and neighbors that need Jesus.

APPENDIX 12

SIGNIFICANT LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE CHANGES

Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's leadership structures which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process. *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. No changes, other than we showed them hope. We turned from internal to external in the ministry.

2. New ministerial staff

3. We have moved to a matrix system that has empowered various committees to be responsible for their own ministries. Been intentional about growing and training leaders from within the church.

4. We implemented a church council, ministry teams, quarterly church-wide leadership training

5. Pastor Led, Elder Led

6. We went from 2 deacons to 4 Elders and Deacons for every 10 people in the Church. We have added two Deaconess to assist the Pastor in dealing with single women.

7. The church had suffered for years with no pastoral leadership

8. Changing qualifications for leaders, adding and removing leadership, currently beginning to implement a system for leadership development within the church, beginning to lead the church in understanding biblical leadership roles and restructuring.

9. We expanded staff as attendance grew. We have started an intern program that has grown. We also clearly defined ministry leadership roles for volunteer ministry positions.

10. New Pastor, implementation of department heads, assigning deacons to each family in the church, reassigning leaders to positions that better suit their gifts.

11. Change from a patriarchal leadership model to a congregational leadership model

12. I came 9 years ago and moved them from hiring me full time to bi-vocational. I shared with them that my plan was to hire a full-time Minister of Worship and Students. Since that time, I now have a full-time Administrative assistant, Full-time Minister of Worship and Media and a Full-time Student and Missions Pastor

13. The prior pastor had a chaplain mentality. He loved the flock he inherited. The deacons ruled the church with a business mentality. The new pastor is focused on equipping the saints for the work of the ministry and believes that if the church is not reproducing, then it isn't healthy. The deacons now view themselves as servants. Leadership is stronger and more assertive.

14. Pastoral leadership bringing onboard multi-ethnic pastors

15. The chairmen of each committee form the leadership team with the pastor. They guide the church with significant decisions being approved by the body.

16. We are a staff and Pastor lead church. This has strengthened in the last several years with us, adding the Executive Pastor role to help assist that Pastor with overseeing the church. We have begun and continue to work to empower our lay leaders to train and encourage them to lead their ministries.

17. The church did a survey of their strengths and weaknesses and found out they were more inward-focused than outward focused. Due to that survey, they hired a Pastor who was outward-focused to fix their weakness and it worked

18. Growth Track is a tool used to identify leaders through personality training and gifts training.

19. Not the structure really, just encouragement to be involved with missions. The church was in a bad place financially when I came 4 ½ years ago. They only had

$4,000 in the bank and were accustomed to cutting everything. God blessed to where we now have about 48K and are giving to coop program some (need more) and other local areas. It takes time to love people into change. The old mindset of Pastors coming into a church to prove change did not work here in preview days nor do I believe it works anywhere. This is a slow process of growth for myself and my church family.

20. Seven years ago, EBC was small enough that a small group of members basically assumed responsibility for all aspects of the church (financial, property, education). Today, the church has constituted an active committee/ministry team structure, which involves more members, with greater buy-in. And, those who have carried the load for so long are enjoying partnering with new people to share responsibility. This was possible because God blessed EBC with new members who were eager to step up and share their gifts/talents/skills with the church in leadership roles.

21. The ministers have delegated more to lay leadership and focused more on raising up and training from within the body or equipping them for the work of the ministry.

22. Most leadership left during the "dark years." My deacons were all green when I began. Solidifying them, encouraging them, challenging them to take on these new duties has been the biggest challenge as well as the biggest change factor in the past four years. We have also had some staff turnover that has brought about some good, needed changes. This contributes, as well.

23. My predecessor was a strong leader who made some good/right adjustments in the decision-making processes of the church.

24. We have moved our youth pastor to full-time, and we added a children's minister.

25. Leadership has been very solid. We replaced 1-2 staff, but the key staff very stable and united.

26. A transition from a committee led to a plurality of elders was one of the greatest moves for the church. We have funneled through a discipleship process with no fallout. Also, we have transitioned to two services and are completely free regarding worship music styles. Discipleship is our biggest change.   We have a "Jethro meets Jesus" discipleship model. Life group leaders generally lead groups of 10-12, Community leaders lead 5 Life Groups and elders staff leadership oversees community leaders. All of this in relational settings as Jesus taught us. Finally, we have put multiple team leaders in high burn out areas like children's ministry. This helps us avoid a constant rollover of new ideas, vision, and unnecessary change in the kids' and volunteers' lives.

27. While I am the pastor who is more than able to lead and run everything as I am a retired SCPO (E-8/USN) and accustomed to doing so… I lead by example, push the Deacons to serve vice overlord, and push the congregation to be involved vice pew warmers.

28. We've overhauled everything: constitution and bylaws, Deacon roles and responsibilities, budgeting process, church leadership structure.

29. This is an ongoing process of restructuring some ministries and more delegations

30. I'm not aware of any leadership structure change other than my coming on as the pastor of the church.

31. Once again, empowering the people to lead rather than the pastors/staff leading and doing everything. We put the responsibility back on the people. Our job is to equip, and their job is to do. This gave people the freedom to create and develop ministries they were passionate about, but also gave us permission to kill ministries that were manufacturing energy.

32. Accountability mentoring

33. New pastor arrived March 2017

34. Reduced number of church committees to 4. Made decisions using the chairs of the 4 committees as an executive team.

35. We are led by lead pastor rather than elder/board rule.

36. Everything depends on leadership

37. ACTS Ministry established

38. Strong pastoral leadership

39. The addition of several new deacons seems to have helped. There is no rotation system, and there hadn't been an ordination in about 10 years. There have been no major structural changes to the leadership, though.

40. Smaller but more effective staff. We were too staff heavy. We also had staff with personal agendas. Lay leadership also adjusted.

41. The church has an active leadership committee that meets monthly to discuss and plan activities and issues.

42. We became staff-led, with our parent church providing oversite

43. We started with a team approach with men and women operating as the decision-makers. After three years, we have re-written the by-laws and have an elder lead model.

44. New leadership

45. A transition from "always done it" family member leadership to placing lay people who have actually been called and gifted in roles of leadership. The pastor maintaining authority in situations normally driven by power players in the church has led to a reduction in those individuals' ability to distract the leadership group from the mission of the church.

46. Congregationally led to pastor led

47. Before, the leadership consisted of the pastor who had been their 16 years and was passive. There were a couple of other guys who took leadership roles too, but

they passed away shortly before I started there. Today, we have multiple levels of leadership and a growing leadership development process.

48. Prior to my arrival as the pastor, the church had a regular 1.5 to 2-year turnover rate in pastors. This was primarily due to poor conflict resolution skills in both the pastors and the members of the church. I have a different approach and much training in conflict resolution. It is helpful.

49. Hired key staff (pastors and directors)

50. The leadership structure is primarily centered on Pastoral staff. The church council plays some role in leadership. But at this point, too much of the leadership is dependent on the pastor.

APPENDIX 13

SIGNIFICANT LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT CHANGES

Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's leadership development processes which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process. *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. We had visitation every week to reach an 8-mile radius around our church. During this process, we removed a couple of strongholds in the church. We have a different mindset now.

2. Provide hands-on leadership to the church

3. We have a unified leadership DNA in every ministry area of the church

4. Elder leadership development

5. Adding Elders to work specifically on the Spiritual needs of the Church.

6. Finding facts, sharing facts, coming to conclusions, and acting immediately

7. The development process for us has been to be intentionally pouring into and helping the current leaders be discipled and grow. There has been very little in the church as far as developing other leaders, and most of what we are doing is currently being implemented as we speak but hasn't played a role in where we have come so far.

8. Waiting on people to show a level of depth and stability in their relationship with Christ and then evaluating them before assigning them to a leadership role.

9. Different people. Change in structure.

10. Mutual trust and respect between the Deacons and the Pastor. Deacons' role and the Pastor's role is clearly understood and followed.

11. The church used to put people into leadership based on availability and church tenure. They viewed the pastor as being the "hired gun" who does all the work. Now through discipleship, future leaders are being trained and equipped. We are using spiritual assessment to put people where they are gifted.

12. I conducted a 3-month cultural awareness seminar to build intercultural bridges with our multiethnic congregation

13. The encouragement of personal engagement.

14. Leadership development has been a back and forth struggle for us. We don't have as clear a plan of strategy in each ministry. This is an area we are growing in and working to better ourselves in.

15. Hiring more staff members to assist the Pastor

16. Again, the Growth Track and Deacon training have helped our process in developing leaders and identifying leaders

17. Again, we aren't that complicated. This church has loving people who needed to learn to trust a Pastor before being asked to do more. That has been a slow process but a good one. We have only 1 committee that makes decisions and recommendations now and only have 3 business meetings a year.

18. First, we prayed that God would be the center of our church, and guide every aspect of leadership, including new leaders. Second, the influx of new members who were leadership/mission oriented and gifted for specific areas of leadership. Third, an invitation to wider involvement, with clearly defined tasks and objectives. Fourth, continual communication.

19. Getting to know and understand the church members one on one. Being there with them as often as possible.

20. Personal time with deacons. Revitalizing men in the ministry with small groups and one on one relationship building (more recently).

21. Simply an emphasis on helping people mature in their faith in Jesus, through Life Groups, small groups, investing in a mission trip, serving in the life of the church, etc.

22. The staff has a retreat each year, and we study through books together.

23. Continuing to work as a team and "iron sharpens iron."

24. We have found that leadership is developed intentionally. So, we try to identify strong leaders and not just strong workers. We then funnel those through life groups and allow them to lead at different times. Ultimately, we hope they become life group leaders, community leaders, and staff. We make it appoint to develop ministry leaders and hire them when possible. So far, we have hired three church members, two of which have moved on to serve at other churches, and we have one church planter in assessment currently.

25. Many make light work. All work is worship and solely for the honor of God and not Ivor Baptist or self.

26. Still working on this, so I can't wait to read what you receive from others who are doing this well!

27. In the process of developing a leadership structure in which the Pastor does not have to be involved in everything the church does

28. I have been teaching that it is the body that does the work of the ministry, and it is my job as the pastor to equip them to do that job.

29. We kept it simple at first and are now doing some pipeline development because of the growth we have seen. Simply put, we put people in leadership quickly and let the fail. The best way to develop leaders is to have spaces for all levels of leaders to plug in and serve quickly. The process after that is what we are now developing more intentionally.

30. Relationship building

31. Meeting regularly as ministry staff, genuinely caring for each other

32. Better screening of those asked to serve on one of the four committees. Continuity of leaders on the committees with active members including a chair, past-chair, and future-chair not as abrupt in yearly traditions.

33. Team leaders identify and develop high-potential new members.

34. Energy and enthusiasm

35. Training

36. Stand firm on Words. Lead-out

37. I can't say that we've had any changes in our leadership development processes, at least none that were intentional, strategic, and discernible.

38. We have redefined staff roles and the size of the staff. We redefined leadership roles such as deacons and various leaders. We have only 2 committees: Finance and Personnel.

39. Empowering church members to give their input and not taking pastoral leadership to the level of dictatorship. I have tried to convey that their opinions are called and needed.

40. We created a clear expectation that everybody serves and created systems to plug people into roles

41. We had to shelf this process as we built our building, but now we are creating a pipeline of young men who can be discipled intentionally by the elders

42. Pastor investing in leaders and their families

43. Individuals in roles of responsibility that lorded that role over the church were removed. This freed the pastor to fill roles with people capable and willing to do what God instructed the church. Pastoral tenure has helped continue the church's revitalization as well.

44. Before, there was none. Now, we start with 1-to-1 discipleship and add training like Ministry Grid as a person shows an increasing level of commitment.

45. We started the Titus Project several years ago, and it has increased the number of trained leaders and speakers available in our church. It is a weekly meeting of qualified men who are willing to take on elder-type roles in the church.

46. We have begun to identify and train new leaders intentionally. Part of our struggle was stagnation and stubborn leaders. Over time we have found and encouraged new leaders to step up.

APPENDIX 14

SIGNIFICANT PRAYER MINISTRY CHANGES

Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's leadership structures which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process. *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. I believe we have prayer very long for this process to come to light. When we have come to a decision on something, we ask for God's will not our own. Myself, as the pastor, I have tried to look out into the congregation for Godly men to shine; to be Spiritual leaders in their homes and in the church. Also, the ladies have developed a bond with one another with prayer needs.

2. Focus on prayer for the lost

3. From time to time during the service we pray for lost people. each week during the midweek service we pray for lost people by name.

4. We created a Sunday night church prayer team, Wednesday night prayer time and prayer in our worship services

5. Monday night praying for revival. Wednesday night community prayer meetings.

6. We pray

7. Constantly bringing up prayer needs

8. This is an area we are weak in, but I believe as we have tried to make more of an effort to participate corporately and individually, we have seen the things we pray for change.

9. We re-started our prayer ministry about 4 years ago. We have people praying on Saturday nights at church before Sunday worship. We also have a team praying before services on Sunday. We also started a text prayer group to pray for immediate needs. A group has been studying the "Battle Plan for Prayer" book 3 times over the past 2 years.

10. Pulpit emphasis on individual prayer, weekly corporate prayer meetings.

11. Specific prayer.

12. I immediately passed out note cards for members to put names of those who were lost or out of the church. I called for the church to join me at the altar for prayer. Added a prayer request card to the bulletin.

13. We saturate everything in prayer!

14. No changes incorporated other than my preaching/teaching on prayer

15. More prayer for the church as a whole and for each other.

16. Prayer ministry has always been an important part of our church and can always use some changes. I believe there has been a consistent presence and strategy for praying in our church.

17. We have people set up to pray during the services

18. We now have a prayer team with a prayer app that keeps the team aware of prayer needs within the church through a group me app. We have members of this team who are praying for the services during the services each week.

19. We have made prayer more of a priority recently. We seek special prayer services and a special emphasis on Wed night especially.

20. There would have been no revitalization had there not been a commitment to fervent, continual prayer by the church for the church. Every aspect of our "revitalization" was a direct result of prayer. Prayer has become an emphasis, a missional goal, and individual and corporate prayer has been encouraged as vital to spiritual growth.

21. We have had corporate-led prayer instead of our regular Sunday morning service twice a year. Deacon lead Men's prayer on Sunday morning. Weekly prayer reminders and 24 hours of prayer sessions periodically.

22. Prayer emphasis in services, Sunday Schools, weekly prayer services, small groups and an emphasis in community-based prayer increased (e.g., Trail Days prayer walk, organizing the National Day of Prayer events, Community prayer services, etc.)

23. This has been a very weak area.

24. We incorporate a prayer time in every worship service.

25. No change. We pray together and have united prayer bi-monthly Sunday evening services.

26. The church had sustained because of Prayer. Three women had devoted themselves to the prayer of this church when it was most desperate. Those women continue to pray at this church even today. We also moved from a prayer list to relational prayer. Our life groups carry the burdens of one another. Finally, we take special time for prayer in each of our services at the spirits prompting. This allows a time of celebratory prayer, praise, and request.

27. I have survived and maintained only through the prayers of my IBC family. The return of "family" to the church family leads to an ever-strengthening prayer ministry for IBC and the families that make her up.

28. Prayer is a priority for us. Every gathering at any level has time dedicated to meaningful prayer. We also cleaned out an old room and created a brand-new prayer room open to church members throughout the week. We built a prayer team that sets aside time weekly to cover the needs of our faith family in prayer. We regularly teach on the importance of prayer.

29. Prayer for the lost (our Who Do You List) Praying that God would break our hearts over the things that break His heart

30. Pray helps us to align with the will of God. If we do not have a relationship with Him how do we get other to want to have one of their own. We cannot give what we do not have.

31. I'd like to say we have a great intentional prayer team in place and have throughout this whole process, but we don't. We do have people that I know have been covering this whole process in prayer while we've seen the changes and growth. Mostly the older folks who have stayed with us have embraced prayer as their ministry while the "younger folk" do a lot of heavy lifting. We spend times and seasons in prayer, like at the beginning of each year, we take time to abide and focus on prayer and fasting. Other varying times we will emphasize it as well. We could be more intentional about prayer and have a plan to involve more people in strategic prayer for this upcoming church planting season that we are entering.

32. Personal prayer concerns for people and ministries.

33. Sought to make prayer a priority

34. Corporate prayer has been a resource for inspiration and guidance. No organized on-going prayer ministry.

35. We are emphasizing prayer as pre-evangelism but primary changes to the prayer ministry.

36. Little

37. Began as a top priority

38. Infused more prayer.

39. We don't have a formal "prayer ministry," except for a small group of adults that meet on Wednesday nights for Bible study and prayer.

40. Consistent and intentional prayer. Multiple weekly prayer teams.

41. We began having corporate parapet meetings every Wednesday night before Bible study.

42. We prayed in the early days, but we kicked it up a notch in year 5

43. We started praying once a month at our service on Sunday AM when I came in. We also started a prayer group before SS on Sunday mornings and a men's prayer time before service. We have an element of prayer at EVERY small group. On top of that my SS class prays as I preach.

44. Prayer ministry became organized into a small group

45. Encouragement of individual prayer life outside of the church. The establishment of a mid-week prayer service combined with a family meal enabled members and guests to learn the importance of prayer. Laying hands on those suffering during service times expressed the need for prayer for church members. Prayer ministry in the community enabled many to become comfortable praying for others.

46. Prayer was limited to a Wednesday night meeting that focused on the superficial, physical needs of members. We stopped the single weekly meeting and began home groups which are focus prayer on spiritual issues. We also have a quarterly prayer service that replaces our entire normal Sunday morning schedule.

47. The involvement of prayer during revitalization at our church mostly involves my personal prayer. Early on, I began to pray for wisdom to lead the church out of decline effectively. Others prayed along with me for this same purpose. Additionally, we prayed for the effective and bold proclamation of the truth from Scriptures.

48. Organized prayer - and intercessional, also added corporate prayer times.

49. Prayer has taken a primary position in all that we do & each time the church meets. We also have held specific times of prayer for revitalization.

APPENDIX 15

FREQUENCY AND PATTERN
OF PERSONAL PRAYER

Briefly describe your frequency and pattern of personal prayer during the revitalization process. *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. I pray every morning about specific needs we are meeting or going through at this time.

2. Daily personal and group prayer

3. I pray for the church and lost. began using pray for every home.com

4. Sunday night prayer team, Wednesday night prayer time and Sunday worship service prayer time.

5. Pray daily

6. Daily with focus and vision

7. Constantly with groups and individuals

8. I have only been here two years, but in that time I seek to spend specific prayer time for revitalization and revival weekly.   But it is a part of my daily prayer time.

9. I was convicted about my lack of prayer over about 5 years ago. I've been growing in my personal practice and dependence upon prayer since then.

10. Personal daily prayer for specific issues in the church, music, leadership, building and grounds, families, up coming events.

11. Daily, as need or conflict arose.

12. I have a consistent daily devotional and prayer time separate from my sermon preparation however my sermon preparation is also a time of prayer and relationship with my Father.

13. Daily prayers in the morning and evenings specifically for God to work through me and the church.

14. Daily and meditation

15. Daily prayer was encouraged from the pulpit.

16. Up and down is the best way to describe it. Personal prayer has been essential for reminding me that I can't do anything without the power of God working and leading me in my life.

17. We have had frequent on-going prayer chains within the church

18. Daily through accountability of the prayer team

19. I pray daily but just like most people I have seasons of more intense focus. I should pray more intentionally and specifically and that is the direction I seeking to go now but I pray daily for God's direction and leadership.

20. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." I try to live by this, as well as the example for early and often prayer modeled by Jesus. I also try to remain aware that the great movements of the early church in Acts were always preceded by prayer. It is key. I have personal prayer time at least three set times daily, including devotional time. I have also brought some godly accountability partners alongside me in the prayer process. Most of the kingdom-advancing works done at EBC over the recent years is a result, I am convinced, of a group of men who covenanted to pray together for the church. Leaders must be men and women of prayer, first.

21. Daily for myself and the congregation

22. I have regular times of prayer both alone and with other people. Not sure how to measure it, exactly.

23. The church staff currently prays together for the church consistently. Personal time in prayer could always be greater/better.

24. Every morning!

25. Personally, I fast 40 days each year as well as regular, daily individual prayer & pray with team & pray with church.

26. The beginning was a focused prayer and plea for the Lord to provide wisdom beyond my age and ability. I was a young pastor in a tough place and new I was out of my league. I am a night owl so much of my prayers were in the evening and on the road however at special times I would go and spend time at the alter of the church. My prayer life struggled as the church grew not because my relationship with god was hindered but my time management. I have and continue to battle time management, but that is the nature of revitalization. You must do what is to be done until you can hand it off to do more. I currently am redeveloping my prayer time to incorporate memorization of text and extended times of solitude. In all honesty as disqualifying as it may seem their have been times in the ministry that it was being revitalized not because of my healthy prayer life, but because of theirs.

27. Every morning on 45 min drive to work/day job. Many times while walking for exercise – not as much as needed.

28. DAILY! Wouldn't make it otherwise!!

29. I pray daily for God will and that God not let me mess up what He is doing in the my life and in the life of His church.

30. You pray all the time. You pray as you are asking the Lord for direction. You pray as you are doing what ever it is that you are doing at the time, you just pray.

31. Same as the corporate prayer ministry with seasons of abiding and fasting with added times (daily, weekly) focusing on specifics. I need to be more strategic with my prayers.

32. A weekly call to prayer

33. Every weekday morning, as soon as I begin the day spend time in prayer.

34. Praying for the removal of barriers and strength to remain stedfast in the face of criticism.

35. Constant. Seriously.

36. Daily

37. Often, Daily, Top Priority

38. Continually

39. Every day, I pray that Jesus would help me make him look good in [this town].

40. Several Solemn Assemblies; prayer in life groups; prayer among staff; weekly prayer groups.

41. I don't have a schedule, but I pray often. The church members use a Facebook messenger to keep a continual prayer chain going.

42. Daily prayer walks

43. I have about a 3hr prayer, devotion and study time each morning. This is VITAL and is missing from many of our churches.

44. As much as possible really. Corporate fasting with prayer at least once a year. Prayer team who prays over the sanctuary before services. Prayer chain who prays for people and situations.

45. I continually sought God's direction through prayer - only loosing my focus when difficult issues called me away from listen to the Lord. My prayer life was less a style of speaking and far more about listening to God's voice during all times of change in the ministry here at ELBC.

46. Frequent

47. I don't know

48. Regular and consistent prayer for wisdom in leadership in the line of Solomon. I have asked for His guidance in every step of the process.

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49. Throughout the day

50. Daily I pray for specific revitalization needs, individuals, & the church as a whole.

APPENDIX 16

PRIORITIZATION OF PRAYER

In what ways were the topic and act of prayer prioritized in corporate worship during the revitalization process? *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. On Wednesday is "prayer meeting time" in the preaching time/announcements. Then I just listened to the people to hear the needs.

2. Teaching; example; doing

3. In everything we did

4. Mentioned weekly.

5. We speak of prayer during worship services, bible studies, and on the Web site.

6. Even anointing with oil and prayer

7. We have begun a time of intentional prayer time in each of our corporate worship services. Each week we take time to pray through specific items each week. We have also focused on talking about prayer as often as possible from the stage.

8. Most of our prayer emphasis change has been outside of corporate worship experiences.

9. Sermons dealing with prayer, altar calls for specific projects and programs, also praying over certain members going through issues.

10. It was intentional.

11. I used Wednesday night as my major time to teach through prayer and to demonstrate prayer.

12. Prayer is the first thing we do, done before the sermon, and at the end of worship.

13. I preached through the Christian Disciplines using Richard Foster's workshop

14. We pray for each activity. We pray for our workers. We pray for the community and the schools. We encourage Prayer for each other as well as those in need, and we pray for opportunities to witness.

15. Off and on throughout the process. Something we have done recently is adding a prayer time at the beginning of service and leading our congregation through it.

16. We never announced we are going through a revitalization process. We just prayed, preached the Word, and sought the Lord, and He revitalized us.

17. We focused on prayer as the number one ministry of our church and communicated that often.

18. Special prayer services and focus on Wed nights

19. There were sermon series on prayer, prayer groups (men, women, and co-ed) were started and faithfully tended, prayers began with praise and thanksgiving before turning to needs, and answered prayers have become the subject of our corporate gatherings. God's faithfulness, both individual and corporate, has been publicly acknowledged. Prayer is central to obedience and faith, which is central to understanding and living in God's will, and will result in inexplicable blessing.

20. Monthly, city-wide guided prayer services with other churches.

21. I would say it was certainly featured prominently - in worship services (also by engaging more people to lead in prayer corporately), in small groups, in the community, etc.

22. Honestly, not a heavy corporate emphasis. We want people to be praying, but corporate prayer times were not frequent. Even when we would have corporate

gatherings to pray for international missions, the times of prayer were good, but the turnout was not great.

23. We have a dedicated time of prayer in every worship service.

24. Weekly prayer leadership. Prayer in services. Prayer at special corporate times.

25. We mostly target the needs that were present. The intentionality of prayer was released through the Life group.

26. Heavy focus on during worship with reminders that prayer ministry is as important to the Kingdom as preaching.

27. Focus on humble prayer. Praying that we seek God's face more than we seek His hand. " The Colossians 1:9 challenge" To pray Colossians 1:9-12 for our family and our church family at 1:09 everyday

28. Over that past couple of years, we have had a day of prayer with everyone taking part in a 24-hour time slot. We also encouraged to pray 7/7/7, 7 am pray, 7 pm pray. 7 days a week. I do not think that one way is better than another, but you need to pray.

29. Same as above

30. Slowed down and intentional about different aspects of community and ministry.

31. Wednesday prayer meeting is attended by the senior pastor and given priority in planning

32. Altar calls, special prayer emphasis

33. Defining our reality and preaching on the primacy and process of prayer. Attempting to model prayer in a corporate setting.

34. Corporate prayer

35. Emphasized and practiced in each worship service

36. All men lead out to alter each Sun. morning - very impactful

37. This is a concrete area with something tangible that I can write about. Unlike many Baptist churches, we intentionally incorporate prayers and responsive readings into the fabric of our worship services every week. We often have a call to confession, corporate confession, and assurance of pardon, but none of this feels "high-churchy." I believe these acts of prayer have been meaningful and effective.

38. Sermons are regularly dealing with prayer, creating an atmosphere of prayer among individuals before and after services.

39. Nothing specific.

40. Normal prayer times

41. We had corporate prayer times when we broke up into small groups of prayer once a month. We also prayer three times per service.

42. It was made a priority and encouraged by all. Corporate prayer services were held for revival and growth and healing and help.

43. The members were continually encouraged and even asked to pray for two things; for God to make his purpose and plan for our church clear, and for we as his people always to be willing. God had already promised to make us able - but my desire was, and is, that he will continue to find his children willing to follow him.

44. We added a prayer time during the worship set. We also have a quarterly prayer service that replaces our entire normal Sunday morning schedule.

45. As a congregation, we regularly pray about 5-6 different times in worship. Additionally, there are several people who pray regularly for the leadership, speaking, etc.

46. Same as always

47. I believe that we are still in this process & our prayer for revitalization is central in all our times together as a church.

APPENDIX 17

SIGNIFICANT PRIMARY WORSHIP
GATHERING CHANGES

Briefly describe the primary changes to the church's primary worship gathering which you perceive have contributed significantly to the revitalization process. *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. Those in leadership were held to a higher standard. Start a project – finish it. Installed a projector in weekly service, it is used to share information. Text (group) to share info (engage the congregation) started a softball team.

2. I preached expository sermons.

3. We added a prayer time to the service, and we added a second service

4. Contemporary music.

5. A revitalized music ministry.

6. We started focusing on ministry and missions outside the facility.

7. A few things. 1. We have tried to create a climate of multigenerational worship where everyone can be engaged. 2. We have tried to remove the things that, for years, have become idols in either the way we do something or the tools we use for worship. 3. Make a point to continue to keep the vision, mission, and values of our church in front of our people weekly.

8. We re-started a dying traditional worship service to "country worship" format, along with our contemporary worship service. Much of our growth has been in the country worship service.

9. Introduction of blended music, also multiple forms of up to date technology.

10. We transitioned to a family-oriented service. Multi-generational service.

11. Immediately hired a full-time Minister of Worship. Created an atmosphere of love and friendliness by adding a welcome time.

12. Have an emphasis on teaching God's Word verse by verse. Contemporary worship was brought in, and the entire environment of the church became more open and loving. People started expressing themselves more during worship. Worship became more grounded in the Word and yet at the same time more emotional in nature. The worship is more Spirit-filled and passionate.

13. We have joint worship services regularly with all our ethnic groups. They sing, dance, preach and lead in other ways during the services

14. Our music ministry, blended, has become a vibrant part of worship.

15. Our Worship team has made a major difference. Our style of worship and our music minister that leads it has encouraged many to engage in powerful worship.

16. Changing the music

17. We changed our schedules to include an early worship service.

18. Consistent messages from God's word, a tremendously friendly group of people, unity is key here. (We haven't had any real problems because of gentle slow leadership I believe)

19. First, the corporate worship time, in all its iterations, has been the subject of concentrated prayer -- from the format to the music and message, to the emphasis on guests and the invitation time. The church, within its commitment to a blended worship service, has been updated with new media emphases, the creation of a praise and worship band, and congregational input into the service itself, under the guidance of the pastoral staff. The corporate worship time has been emphasized as a family event, where we gather as a family in Christ to worship His name and praise Him for every good blessing. We have intentionally rejected the prevalent "concert" or "show" format that is often seen in seeker churches for a traditional service. EBC is a church of the Book, and the full

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counsel of God is preached from the pulpit and reinforced in Bible study.

20. Blended and more congregational input. Team lead worship

21. A different style of preaching was introduced, music ministry remained blended, more enlistment of people's involvement took place.

22. We initiated a move toward a more contemporary gathering and a "simple" structure in worship. Worship together. Hear from the Word together.

23. We added a modern worship service, and we made the traditional service more blended.

24. Energetic, fun, creative.

25. Worship looks very different today than 7 years ago. The church's growth is not because of the worship gathering we have today, but for the hearts of the people who invited others to the gathering. However, the changes are as follows. We were a traditional organ/piano church with a choir. The preacher preaches and people come to the front to be members. A huge change for the worship experience that has impacted the culture of the church was the introduction of a full band that is capable of anything. The process took years, but the outcome has been well received by all generations. The other win for the church was moving away from a come forward response expectation to a let's talk in another area. It allowed a more honest and genuine exchange. Joining the church became a process not a split decision and that was critical to maintaining church health. Utilizing more people and taking the time to celebrate wins in people's lives was also critical to continued growth. One of the toughest changes was moving to two services. This has proven to be what allowed the church to continue growing numerically.

26. Included a "meet and greet" effort at the beginning of worship for restored family. Many sermons with the practical application of scripture to everyday life – scripture is God's love letter to us and direction for all of life. No clocks in the sanctuary.

27. More blended, more friendly to outsiders without compromising the gospel.

28. We have not really made any significant changes to worship except for some staff changes

29. At first, it was little things like moving the podium, and then it was changing up how I preach to include short videos, skits and visual aids

30. At first, emphasizing the excellence that should be on display week in and week out. In that process, getting the right people on stage that represent our context and congregation well. And once that was established, being ok with what we have. Our Sunday gathering is great. Much better than average. But we do not put the emphasis on the gathering like we used to. It distracts from everyday disciple-making. We have most recently (past year or so) implemented a more liturgical style with corporate readings, etc. This has been a great addition to our context. We've found that we reach a lot of de-churched people who love the "old" style. While the unchurched people like it because it's different than anything they are used to.

31. It is being able to open the environment for a true move of the Lord.

32. New preacher

33. Tried to remove "clunkers" of unplanned transitions and careless/unnecessary announcements and in-house business.

34. Excellence.

35. Quality. Energy.

36. Moved from high church to blended worship

37. Worship style - blended. Newer music

38. Much of the change has to do with a change in personnel. Our former minister of music was too professional and perfectionist, and he took himself too seriously. I've tried to instill in our new minister of music (a dual degree MDiv and Masters in Church Music student) that he should take what he does very seriously, while not taking himself too seriously. He has a better personality and feels "warmer" in the leadership of our worship. This overall feeling of warmth in the service has made a huge

difference, in my opinion. And when he messes up, he rolls with it. That's something the last guy couldn't do. If he (or anyone else) messed up, there was no laughing about it and moving on. It was always a big deal. People must see their worship leaders as lead-worshipers, human beings who love Jesus, and want to lead others to do the same. Rigid professionalism in worship does not promote that kind of feeling, in my opinion.

39. Style of worship; worship songs; use of a band.

40. Love music that does the people. Gospel that is a little traditional, with a bit of country and bluegrass. Sometimes we add in a little contemporary, but we are what we are.

41. Modern worship, casual culture, creativity, relevance, and gospel clarity. We also don't assume previous knowledge.

42. We streamlined the service to focus on worship, prayer, and the word. We took out cheesy elements that were cumbersome and could be handled in Small groups.

43. New worship team and musicians

44. Incorporating technology in the worship service. Removing the distraction of bulletins, and instead using announcement sheets and other methods of information sharing. Creating an inviting atmosphere and prioritizing worship over announcement making. The 4-person choir was transformed into the 4-person worship team. Preaching allowed to deliver the truth of God's word without expectation of "comforting" people in their sin.

45. Updated music. More engaging, text-based preaching. I am very passionate, and our services have a lot of passion now too. We also incorporate a discipleship time into the worship gathering. We don't have service and a separate Bible study, instead we gather for 2 hours, and the single event includes both parts.

46. 1. Bible-based exegetical preaching. 2. Attention to details in worship such as scriptural song selection, and careful placement of the different elements of the

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service. 3. Increase in public prayer. 4. Involvement of other men in the worship service and preaching.

47. A piano-led blended worship style of music

48. This continues as an area of growth & struggle as we walk through growing in our church growth.

APPENDIX 18

DIFFICULT ELEMENTS TO CHANGE
IN THE WORSHIP GATHERING

Please indicate what the most difficult element was to change in the primary worship gathering during the revitalization process and state the reason it was difficult.. *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. We still do not have a piano player, but we have a karaoke machine that was broken, and one of the speakers was blown. Very difficult because one of the strongholds did not want change.

2. Traditions

3. We are just now working on changing the worship service. we are moving to an intergenerational service with a blended music style.

4. Moving some of our people to a second service

5. Changing to a blended style of music

6. Music to a mix of contemporary and traditional music

7. From my time, there wasn't a lot that was difficult. We lead out, explained the purpose - showed from scripture - and then moved forward. However, the years before I arrived, I believe that the pulpit (and other furniture) and everyone's personal desire for worship style was a huge issue.

8. We shifted from a full-time worship pastor to paid part-time worship leaders for each worship environment. We also stepped up our creative worship team to include stage design. All of this was added complexity to my role as the senior pastor.

9. Music. We are a rural church where many grew up doing music the same way, never changing. Also, being a smaller church, we have limited exceptional talent. this is a process I am still praying for.

10. Variety of music styles. We have limited skilled musicians.

11. Honestly, I did not come up against resistance. The church made it clear they wanted a blended service, and I made sure I honored that request.

12. Our switch from the organ to the drums! The long-tenured members were resistant to all change, even when they saw the church was growing.

13. I share the pulpit with all our ethnic group pastors. English is not their first language, so at times it is difficult to understand their speech patterns fully.

14. Personal involvement.

15. We were more traditional in our worship style. We have since moved to a blended and more contemporary style. The difficult element is having all ages in the church embrace the need for change.

16. Changing the style of music because the previous music was more "high church" style

17. The amount of staff and leaders to fill positions without overloading those already serving

18. Just to love the people when they sought ideas that might not be the best move and allowing God space to make His will apparent.

19. As with most churches, we have struggled with what it really means to be a "blended" service. And there are always differences, usually generational, about the content of praise and worship music. While this is an ongoing issue, we are emphasizing the need for everyone to worship, both in themselves and with their neighbors -- we have encouraged members to take the emphasis off themselves and onto the God we worship.

20. Just getting people to accept change

21. No difficult area can honestly be identified. The greatest challenge was having to go to two services instead of one main service and the logistics of such a move. The reason that was difficult was the strain of having to have more people involved in making it happen and the strain on key staff.

22. My predecessor replaced the pews with chairs. That was a struggle for some people.

23. Adding the second service and preparing our church for that. In the end, we had total buy-in from the church.

24. Our move to a more contemporary feel.

25. Music and Services: The change in worship styles was very difficult for those who had done the same things for 60 years. A few left, however, most of the people were receptive to the idea that some change will allow a younger generation to have some input into the church. Their grandkids need to know that they aren't just to come and deal with it but to be invested in it and enjoy it as well. The additional service always poses some problems, but we were open in the beginning that this would be like two churches held together by one vision and mission. The two are uniquely different, with the second service being a little louder and more modern. However, any challenge to this has been long gone. We were fortunate to have a church desperate to see the kingdom grow.

26. Funeral music --> slow. Music should have a beat, excitement, joy – not a funeral march. We had an organ player of 30+ years. We prayed for and received a younger piano player.

27. Music for sure! Once, we moved the piano to the opposite side of the stage and received numerous complaints. Also, after first arriving, one dear lady told our interim music leader and me that she wouldn't be back the following Sunday unless we included a southern gospel song. :)

28. We have really made no changes

29. That the old way of doing things might not be the best way of doing things. I challenged them to start looking out of the box, out of the 4 walls of the church, and into the community.

30. Most difficult was firing the worship leader that was here for nearly 30 years. His presence on stage was taking away from the worship gathering because he just didn't fit what we were trying to do. He didn't get it. When he was let go, I took some arrows at first, but people saw the difference when he was gone. We ended up only losing one family over it. The other piece of that was his ballooned salary that we needed not pay anymore. Again, the emphasis needed to shift. I wish I would have done that about 2 years prior (which would have been one year into my role as senior pastor.

31. Getting away from the way we always did it, and not having enough people coming in to help.

32. We had to move our second service to the gym (from a beautiful sanctuary) to get extra seating capacity. This was difficult for many who naturally would rather worship in a beautiful space. It was frustrating to see people care little about having seats for people.

33. Worship leaders unwilling to change old practices such as a choir that was poor musical quality as well as participation.

34. Stopping the practice of having a group of senior leaders and their wives stand in front of the pulpit during the invitation.

35. None

36. Traditions hindered

37. Newer music ad musicians

38. The incorporation of more readings and prayers has not been without criticism. People (mostly older people) who've not been part of churches who utilize these things in worship have a hard time adjusting. Of course, we always have someone

complaining about the music, since we do have a truly blended style. We do everything from High-Church music to traditional hymns to modern worship songs.

39. Music selection; the volume of music; changing role of the choir.

40. Being the pastor and lead musician at the same time. Finding time to have practices when everyone is a volunteer.

41. Worship excellence

42. We struggled with getting worship up and running. We had a saloon piano player and a guitar guy who had just learned to play and one male singer. We now have a depth that three different people could lead on any given Sunday. The hardest part was telling people to step down from being upfront and taking the heat from those decisions.

43. In the beginning… just getting musicians.

44. Breaking the tradition of "we've always done it this way" as pertaining to things like bulletins, having a choir (regardless of participation/quality), not using dated music material, and putting words/lyrics on a wall. In other words, ushering in the 21st century in the worship context caused the most difficulty during this process.

45. Worship style, pastoral attire

46. Music. Not only was it a switch from hymns, but modern music requires high-quality musicians in order to do it well.

47. Song changes were difficult because of the tradition issues in a small rural church.

48. Music style

49. Finding those able & willing to lead worship on a consistent basis.

APPENDIX 19

MOST EFFECTIVE ELEMENTS OF CHANGE
IN THE WORSHIP GATHERING

Please indicate what the most effective element of change was in the primary worship gathering during the revitalization process and state the reason it was rewarding. *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. Shaking hands/projector/keeping them active during the month – very rewarding to see the numbers come to worship on Sunday.

2. Focus on Jesus and not on self.

3. We were able to add a second service and allow for a worship experience that better related to the audience.

4. We changed the time, blended music, first impressions ministry, Pastor in jeans and t-shirt, Holy Spirit.

5. People enjoying the music and learning new songs

6. I would say keeping the vision and mission of the church (as found in God's word) in front of people each week has helped them to buy into what we are trying to accomplish and then helped them be more open to being the church instead of just attending church.

7. The most effective element was getting away from a static traditional service. It was rewarding to see a multi-generational response in attendance.

8. Doctrinally sound, unapologetic, expository preaching. The Holy Spirit was put back in charge of the services.

9. I started having a children's moment. Nothing changes the moral of our

church quicker than the presence of children and teenagers.

10. I think the change was not as much in the service itself as it was in the ones leading the service; the Minister of Worship and Pastor. When God calls a man to a church, He really does equip the man for what that church needs.

11. Preaching the Word fearlessly and without compromise. Seeing the Spirit flow through the crowd and causing grown men to come forward, crying, and accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior is a beautiful thing for all to see. We are doing nothing different or special. We just made it all simply about Jesus.

12. The church sees that we are one body with many different parts. However, not all ethnic groups are equally represented in the decision-making process

13. The music, because it promotes involvement. Also preaching through the books of the Bible. The congregation hears the word in the context it was written.

14. Six years ago, adding our Music Minister and his effectiveness to lead our church to change and to embrace the change of all elements of worship.

15. Bringing the music to life

16. The hearts of the people to grow

17. The previous Pastor (I'm told) preached that the church was dying and didn't give much hope (at least that was perception). Anyway, just a positive outlook and preaching God's word. We have great people. Our music is good as well.

18. People have really responded to the use of multimedia, including slides, PowerPoints, and sermon notes, as a part of the service. We also make liberal use of times where the entire congregation (those who want to) come to the front for prayer time.

19. We explain the reason for the change, making small and gradual changes at first and then worked through the difficulties.

20. We enlisted more involvement from the congregation.

21. Can't say for sure.

22. We added a modern worship service, which has helped us reach younger families.

23. Solid preaching. Hum or clips.

24. Being freed from "churchiness." The best part of our worship experience is seeing the one man who still wears a tux shaking hands of the man whose house is one visit from being condemned. Seeing racial diversity in families accepted and the desire to change community lived out.

25. Feed the family with God's Word – all of it, even when they want to diet.

26. We are tying everything to the Word! We made it a point, from the beginning, to say that we existed for Jesus and for Him alone. So, we sing songs about Him to Him. If a song fits that description, no matter if it was written in 1700 or 2017, we'll sing it.

27. We have really made no changes

28. One thing we have started doing is breaking up the sermon with either a video or a visual illustration. Everyone stays more focused on the sermon, and people are not falling asleep in church.

29. Not being satisfied with mediocracy. People value a good "product" and what we display on Sunday is a piece of our identity, our visible selves. From the stage to the welcome center, EVERYTHING was under scrutiny until it became a part of our DNA to see an issue and fix it or elevate the importance of it being excellent immediately. By the way, excellence does not mean perfection. It means that we do our very best in the area of the personal, process, and product.

30. Upbeat worship.

31. New preacher. I think helped create momentum--the church had been through a split and I think for many people a new preacher was a face of change and sign of better times ahead.

32. Focus on congregational singing rather than performance and passive participation.

33. Solid worship pastor and biblical teaching.

34. Energy in the pulpit

35. Adjusting Staff. Uplifting attitudes

36. Style - quality

37. I can't really narrow it down to one thing. I'd say, for the most part, I've just tried to be consistent in improving the culture of the church. As someone said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." The overall culture of our church seems most visible in our worship services.

38. Worship style

39. Bringing a piano back into the church.

40. Preaching style and content

41. Changing our worship leader. The older one was there for 33 years, and he needed to go. He could lead music, but not a team. The new guy built a team.

42. A worship pastor committed to bringing glory to God and not putting on a show.

43. Incorporating technology and having one "modern" worship song during the service time. This encouraged singing from those who couldn't make use of the hymnal, allowed faces to be up and not turned down to the floor and encouraged younger children who were familiar with songs they heard on the radio. Additionally, changing the order of service and incorporating more individuals in the worship process.

44. Passion. People can become accustomed to God's amazing grace. They needed to be reminded. The more they are overwhelmed by it, the more life they have.

45. Bible-based exegetical preaching was most effective. Immediately, the Word did the work for me. As the Bible proclaimed things, we tried to follow the best we could.

46. We have made progress in the technology aspect of our worship. One of the most rewarding aspects was when a person, particularly against technology, recognized the need for it & volunteered to purchase TVs & a computer.

APPENDIX 20

ADVICE TO REVITALIZATION LEADERS

What advice would you offer to a pastor seeking to lead a revitalization process? *Responses are ordered by the respondent's C-I score, from the most collectivistic to the most individualistic score.*

1. Pray! Pray! & then Pray because, from the human mind, this little church was going to close 7 yrs. ago if it was not for God's Sovereign hand, it would have. Then with God's guidance, discuss the information with the key leaders and let it soak in. Then in a few weeks or months, share it in the pulpit to get the feeling of the church's response. Then have everyone praying for revitalization for that church. Be very enthusiastic in the pulpit for change; they must see it from the pastor. Work with everyone with this change, and there will be someone who will try to stop this process, but try to work with them or give them a task so things go forward, not backward. The worst thing we can do as a pastor is not lead the people to go forward. Always give hope to the hopeless. We have 3 air conditioners that are every bit of 25 yrs. old and we don't have the funds to replace them. Last august we set a goal to raise $4,000 to fix one of them. Today we have $3,000 toward that goal; some give a few hundred to it, and some give a few dollars. We will work until Jesus comes back. Nothing is too big for God. Focus on the small things then move to the bigger things. We made a lot of changes to get where we are at today. Thank you for letting me tell my story.

2. Always preach and teach Jesus; communicate and lead; tenacity

3. Take a long view. A slow, aggravatingly slow process. Be diligent. Build leaders. Create small wins often.

4. LEADERSHIP - VISION - churchwide ownership

5. Most important Pastor Led, Holy Spirit led, great first impressions ministry, blended music, approachable – preach/teach in casual clothing, time change to worship 10:30 to 11:30. Give times for people to respond without feeling it's going to late in service if no response can get to lunch sooner. All this and more has turned my church around. Every service, salvations, additions just hire a full-time Student Pastor.

6. Pray about it, get others to pray, and have a VERY THICK skin because ugly things will be said about you, and people will leave because you appear to be closed-minded. People will leave because you appear to be open-minded. Keep God's vision for your church front and center in your mind and on your tongue. Look for ways to say yes, rather than the standard we have to do it that way for 50 years. Did I mention thick skin? Some people will hate you. Some people will love you. Some people will count how many are in service every week and tell you when it drops by one body, even if you did a funeral the day before! Did I mention thick skin? Vision. Vision. Pray. Pray. Pray. And when you're done, pray some more!

7. Don't walk, run. Set an example as they have never seen before. Set goals and reach for them.

8. Remember that it is a process. You didn't start dying overnight, and you won't be revived overnight. walk in thankfulness and praise to God in the little victories, allowing those victories and the growth that comes with it to be the timetable to move you to the next step. Lastly, lead in the calling God has given you - but remember that until people see it done, modeled, prayed over, taught, and convicted, their level of buy-in is very little. Be willing to move at a pace where people can keep up.

9. Earnestly seek the Lord's direction for your church. There are many good ideas out there, but look for GOD ideas. Also, plan to stay to see through the vision God gives you. I just finished my seventh year as the pastor here. I feel like I'm just getting started. An interesting note: I am pastoring the church I grew up in and where I served as the youth pastor for 10+ years before becoming the senior pastor. I have been given

much trust to make changes because the church knows me and trusts I have their best interest at heart. This is a huge dynamic to our revitalization.

10. Preach the Word with passion and zeal, let your members develop before placing them in leadership roles, love on your people. If HE builds it, they will come.

11. Maintain biblical fidelity no matter how hard and exegete your congregation well.

12. Share your Vision or plan with the Pastor Search Committee the first time you meet with them. Ask them to join you in prayer on our knees. Meet with the Deacons by themselves and lay out your vision and plan. Have a church fellowship meeting for those who would like to come and share your vision or plan for the church. Do all this before you even come to the church in view of a call. If you and the Pastor Search Committee agree you are the one for the church, then you begin leading immediately. When I say leading, I am talking about Jesus' type of leadership. Servant Leadership, loving leadership, kind leadership, not Dictator leadership.

13. Follow God's leading, do not be fearful of men. Push the congregation, make them uncomfortable, get them out of their comfort zone but do it in love. Be aggressive but realize the limits of your congregation; do not leave them in the dust. Unfortunately, sometimes you must slow down and wait for them to catch up. But I have found that if you sincerely and passionately love God and His people, then most of His people will trust you and love you in return.

14. Auxano - Church Unique's study is good. We went through the process in 2018 but have not implemented all that we worked through. unfinished business remains

15. Love your people

16. If someone is truly serious in wanting to lead revitalization in their church, they need to start on their knees. They need to commit right then and there that God is in control of everything and that it is in His timing how the revitalization will happen. I would encourage anyone who is in this process to be patient. This is not going to happen

overnight. Don't try and change too much at once. It takes the church a whole lot longer to embrace change than it takes Pastors and Staff. I would encourage the pastor to surround himself with strong leaders or influencers in the church at the beginning of the process. He needs them to buy into the change before anyone else. I would remind a pastor that he will lose battles. But that doesn't mean he has lost the war. Above all, that pastor needs to seek to please the Lord because that is who he will answer to when he passes from this life. There is so much more I could say, but I will end with one more thought. Leading a church through the process of change is a difficult road at times. But as a pastor, you can't forget that it's also rewarding. Celebrate the wins! Write them on a wall. You will need to remind yourself of all that God has done in the times when you are at your breaking point, ready to give up. I have struggled with this more than anyone will know. But when I see someone in our church begin to live out what we have been asking them to do, it refreshes me and gives me the reminder that I just need to keep going. God is our strength throughout this whole process. Don't ever forget that.

17. Pray, seek God, visit, and preach the Word. No outside program is needed. Follow the model in the book of Acts

18. Trust God in the Vision he places on your heart. Programs come and go, but God will lead and always be there with you. Trust what God is leading you to do and motivate the people to follow by letting them know you care about them.

19. Pray for direction from God. Don't follow the patterns of forcing change. Love the People First – this is key! Programs come and go. Love God, live with integrity, love your spouse, do your job, and love the people.

20. Be patient. Surround yourself with godly men and women. Seek consensus, but don't be afraid to lead from the front. Be transparent. Keep the main thing the main thing. PRAY, PRAY, PRAY.

21. Be prepared spiritually, get a small group of accountability partners you can trust and listen to them. Don't expect immediate acceptance or understanding. It

may cause some to leave or retaliate. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide and change you and then your congregation. Be flexible and loving. Talk to your people and get to really know them.

22. Have patience and a little grit. My biggest lament of revitalization is that so few newer pastors have the stomach for it. It's much more trendy to simply start a new church in a heavily churched area and let the struggling, dying churches slowly find their own way to the grave. Within 10 miles of our church are 30 little churches on hospice care. Aging congregations with aging pastors with aging ideas and methodologies all stuck in a vortex of frustration and a sense of hopelessness as they watch their churches heading for uncertain ends. Very few young pastors want to get near that type of ministry. But often, that young pastor is what they need. Don't get me wrong - there's a place for church planting - no problem there. But there is a problem when churches who want younger leadership cannot find it. And it takes a lot of patience, longevity, willingness to lovingly teach and innovate without alienating people, to weather conflicts and resistance with kindness mixed with fortitude. And to have a burden to do such work. It is not easy, but it is becoming glaringly necessary in our churches - especially in Appalachia.

23. Seek the Lord's leading for the specific church you are part of. Do your best to grasp the pace at which the church can handle change. Preach the Scriptures faithfully and invite people to follow Jesus. Talk about the necessity of making disciples of all nations. Love and lead the congregation.

24. When talking about change, always sell the problem and not the solution. When people recognize there is a problem, they are more willing to create a solution (change).

25. 1 - Prayer and Fasting. 2 - Selecting key leadership. Both staff & lay. 3 - Meet & plan with leaders. 4 - Communicate, communicate with the church.

26. The revitalization process is not for someone looking for a steppingstone. It's for someone committed to seeing a people and community renewed and on mission for Jesus. Know your strengths and weakness before you say yes and have your family as close to committed as you are, if at all possible. This is not as hard as building a new church, at least from a financial standpoint. It is, however, much more difficult to build a culture during revitalization. Never resign when you're frustrated and always be slow to speak. Finally, keep your debt as minimal as possible. It is hard to work for the Lord when you must work for the people.

27. Remove the country club and restore the family. Get family out of the building and back with the surrounding community. Put faces to missions and not just checks.

28. Make the changes slow do not skip laying the foundation for change first people have to see the need for change before they accept it truly.

29. The church did not get into this state overnight, and it will not be fixed in one or two Sundays, but it can change. It will take guts to face those things that are hindering your church from growing and thriving. God wants people to know Him, and He wants to work through you. We as pastors need to remove those stumbling blocks that have been placed in our churches. Some of these blocks were placed by well-meaning individuals that did not know what they were doing. If we seek God, if we pray, if we humble ourselves, God will hear and heal our lands.

30. Discover the cultural context and its ins and outs outside of the building and figure out how the gospel will minister to them. Then show your people through the Word why it is important that they do so, put the ministry ball in their court. And finally, be ready for it to take a LONG time. Have some self-awareness of whether you are a "tip of the spear" kind of leader or a "handle and tail" kind of leader, and decide quickly if there is a group in the church that wants this bad enough. Create the hills you are willing to die on and bring that group of influencers with you. Also, decide quickly if you do not

have this group of influencers whether God might be ushering this local church to death or at least a passing of the torch to a church with life. Give your building away if you need to. Recognize when it's time to give it to the next generation.

31. Be willing, just be willing, and remain willing.

32. I mistakenly thought at first that I had to scrap the whole organizational structure for us to grow healthy. By that, I mean the finance committee and personnel, move them to become elder-led, etc. None of that, I now realize, was necessary. A lot of that change is unnecessary and can be a momentum killer. Better instead to focus on "being the church," staying focused on prayer, ministering God's word, and missions. Missions is a great "rallying point" for folks.

33. Trust your instincts. You are the expert in your setting.

34. Consistently show and tell your people that you love them and swing for the fences.

35. Everything rises and falls on personal relationships & energy/quality in the pulpit

36. Call people back to the Word of God!!

37. Know your call, set your heart and mind on God, incorporate prayer, preach Christ strong and stand on Word

38. Lead primarily within your strengths while working to improve your areas of weakness. Be who God made you to be. Find your own voice as a preacher and as a pastor. Don't try to lead like someone else. Don't try to preach like someone else. If you're a diplomat, then be a diplomat. If you're a dictator, then be as benevolent a dictator as you can be. You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Decide right now that you don't have to get your way every time. Decide which battles are worth fighting and fight them fairly. Be willing to admit when you're wrong. But, going back to the first thing I said, lead from your strengths. God gave you the set of gifts that you have for a reason. Put them to full use for the kingdom of God.

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39. Talk to numerous pastors who have been through it. Consider a church consultant. Know and understand who you are trying to reach, so study your demographics and have a trained individual interpret the information. Get buy-in from the staff, deacons, and key lay leaders. Communicate, communicate, communicate.

40. Keep it simple. Don't try to compete with the world. People come to church to get out of the world - if they're coming there selling God.

41. If possible, approach it as a replant. Create effective decision making/leadership systems

42. If you can't build on your knees in desperate prayer, then don't do it. We have enough guys who can gather a crowd but not enough guys leading life change.

43. Be real. Pray without ceasing. Don't be afraid to make people angry because not everyone will stay. God is faithful. Teach faith and the Holy Spirit.

44. Recognize the difficulty, and don't shy away from it. Revitalization is a big task, but God only asks you to be willing. Don't let the success or failure of any one thing be about you. Be willing to try anything the Lord leads you to and, if you find that it isn't working or the timing isn't right, change and do something else. Setting in the mold is what got the church in the condition it's in. Revitalization is about becoming comfortable breaking the mold and trusting that God knows what he's doing.

45. Love people, pray hard, engage the culture, and preach the Gospel.

46. Jesus never said, build a church. He said, make disciples. Start with individual discipleship, even if you can only find one other person to pour into, and God will do the rest.

47. Preach the Word without apology. Pray often for wisdom. And try to do what it says with that wisdom. Then train men in your church to preach, teach, and lead along with you and when you are absent.

48. Stay at the church. DON'T jump ship. Love the people God has blessed you with.

49. Read, study, counsel with pastors who have done it successfully

50. Be patient, love your people, learn your people. Remember that you are "people" too. Build relationships outside the church & set the example for intentional relationships. Pray & trust God not your wisdom or experience only.

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ABSTRACT

CHURCH REVITALIZATION AND THE ROLE OF PASTORAL
LEADERSHIP: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

John Obert Baker III, EdD
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
Chair: Dr. Michael S. Wilder

As the over-arching culture of North America becomes ever more post-Christian, the church in North America continues to decline. Nearly 75 percent of Southern Baptist Churches are plateaued or are in decline. Some have responded by planting new churches while others emphasize revitalization to return life to these plateaued and dying churches. Most of these efforts emphasize programmatic responses. Little if any consideration is given to the unique socio-cultural orientation of church leaders and church members which contextualizes the implementation and impacts the outcomes of these programs.

The purpose of this explanatory multiphase sequential mixed-methods study was to investigate the relationship between a revitalization leader's socio-cultural orientation, specifically concerning individualism and collectivism, and that leader's perception of their church's revitalization process. In phase 1, the study identified growing, declining, and plateaued churches. In phase 2, churches that met criteria indicating they had experienced revitalization were invited to participate in a survey related to their experience. In phase 3, churches that responded to the phase 2 instrument were invited to participate in a second survey designed to measure the respondent's socio-cultural orientation. In phase 4, select revitalization leaders whose socio-cultural orientation was strongly individualistic or collectivistic were invited to participate in qualitative interviews. The interviews examined how revitalization pastors understood

several critical aspects of their church's revitalization in light of their socio-cultural orientation. The study identified key differences and similarities in how revitalization leaders of differing socio-cultural orientations understand revitalization. The study also suggested further research on issues significant to furthering our understanding of the influence of socio-cultural orientation on church revitalization.

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