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DEVELOPING A CHURCH REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR
IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN
PETERSBURG, INDIANA

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DEVELOPING A CHURCH REVITALIZATION PLAN FOR
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For the glory of God

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vii
PREFACE	viii
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Context	1
Rationale	3
Purpose	6
Goals	6
Research Methodology	7
Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations	8
Conclusion	9
2. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE PROJECT	10
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12	10
Combining Strength and Resources	11
Christians Must Work Together	12
1 Corinthians 12:1-31	14
Lessons from the Corinthian Church	16
Spiritual Gifts	17
Ephesians 4:1-16	22
Church as the Body of Christ	23
Five Gifts That Are Also Offices	24
Conclusion	29

Chapter	Page
3. THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE PROJECT	30
Benefits and Efficiency of Teaching in Groups	30
Experiential Learning	31
Group Learning.....	32
Team-based Learning	34
Cooperative Learning	35
Online Group Learning.....	36
Church Revitalization Literature.....	37
Sociology and Psychology Support Working and Learning in Groups	43
Group Structure and Characteristics.....	44
Social Aspects and Benefits.....	45
Psychological Impact and Benefits.....	48
Group Modes	50
Conclusion	51
4. DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT	53
Revitalization Training Program	53
Curriculum	55
Session One: Introduction.....	58
Sessions Two through Seven.....	59
Session Eight: Application	63
Implementation	65
Conclusion	67
5. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT	69
Evaluation of the Project’s Purpose	69
Evaluation of the Project’s Goals.....	70

	Page
Strengths of the Project	79
Weaknesses of the Project	80
What I Would Do Differently.....	81
Theological Reflections	82
Personal Reflections.....	83
Conclusion	85
 Appendix	
1. GROUP REVITALIZATION CURRICULUM RUBRIC.....	86
2. EVALUATION OF MINISTRY APPLICATION PLAN	88
3. CHURCH REVITALIZATION PRE- AND POST-PROJECT SURVEY	90
4. T-TEST RESULTS	96
5. CURRICULUM FOR IMANNUEL BAPTIST REVITALIZATION PROGRAM	97
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	138

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Pre- and post-survey results.....	75
A1. T-test results for ministry project	97

PREFACE

This project was completed through the grace and providence of God. God the Father has blessed me with a family whom I treasure. My wife, Lora Roman, and daughter, Kaitlyn Roman, have been a source of great help, support, and encouragement. God has also blessed me with an education that has been enlightening, and a seminary whose professors, such as my advisor Dr. Jay Owens, display the excellence needed for the service of the Lord's ministry.

Joseph Roman

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The vision for Immanuel Baptist is to be a healthy church so that it may fulfill the great commission in spreading the gospel and making disciples (Matt 28:19-20).¹ Church revitalization is vital for Immanuel Baptist to become a healthy church. Church revitalization is a process that addresses all aspects of church and ministry such as evangelism, discipleship, and outreach in helping the church correct weaknesses and sprout healthy growth. In this aspect, revitalization is to be an ongoing process that Immanuel Baptist must continually engage for it to become healthy and then remain healthy. Revitalization is not a method or a task to be achieved, but it is finding what works.² It is about cultivating a culture for healthy changes and preparing church leaders and members to be led and empowered by the Spirit of God.³ Group revitalization enhances the process by teaching and equipping members in community with one another.

Context

The Immanuel Baptist Church of Petersburg, Indiana is in its sixth year of working towards revitalization. The church has made progress through its individual efforts and has strengths in faithful perseverance, functional polity, and unity of the brethren. Immanuel Baptist has weathered the process of dealing with conflict that comes

¹ All biblical references are from the KJV unless otherwise indicated.

² William David Henard, *Can These Bones Live?* (Nashville: B&H, 2015), 12-13.

³ Tom Cheyney and Terry C. Rials, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Revitalization* (Orlando: Renovate, 2015), 34.

from power struggles within the church. Leaders were exploiting flaws in the church government. Immanuel Baptist responded by changing its church polity and creating a church council to get more members involved in the planning and decision-making process. The church was plagued with backbiting, division, and power struggles, but has come together in unity. Business meetings are no longer contentious, and the church council is smoothly handling issues as they come up.

The process of change has resulted in key leaders of the church leaving and no one has stepped in to replace their leadership. This change has been helpful in that the church is now functioning in unity. The change has also been stagnating in that the church is at a plateau and is not moving forward. Church leaders are not striving for excellence, engaging more relevant ministries, spreading the gospel or reaching their community for Christ. The leadership at Immanuel Baptist lacks a vision and a passion for fulfilling the great commission. Immanuel Baptist's current vision is limited to programs that are inwardly focused and recurring outreach projects that are outdated. They mistake activity for ministry and perform projects without an evangelistic purpose.

Immanuel Baptist has three major voices concerning ministry and doctrine. Those voices come from the pastor, their past experiences, and the voices of people not connected to the church. These three inputs of voice rarely agree. The pastor's voice is often outnumbered. The members have an affection for the past and tend to listen to those voices. Immanuel Baptist does not work in community with other Southern Baptist churches which would add a fourth input. This would open opportunities to hear new ideas, share problems, collaborate on solutions, and reap the benefits of joint fellowship. Immanuel Baptist is not opposed to this kind of interaction. They simply do not purpose to have this kind of fellowship with other like-minded churches.

The majority of Immanuel Baptist members are over the age of sixty. There are no leaders in the church under the age of fifty-five. The church gears its worship services

and ministries to cater to the fifty and over age group. The church has some members in the nineteen to forty age range, however, there is no emphasis to draw them into leadership positions. There is also not a priority in tailoring worship and ministries to make them more meaningful to the younger generations. The younger generation members are loosely connected and do not come on a consistent basis. There is a disconnect between the generations preventing growth and church health.

The combination of the lack of vision, lack of lay leadership, lack of identity and connection to the past have resulted in an inability of the church to identify problems and proffer solutions. They view ministries and programs as successful simply based on the premise of completing a program or engaging in a ministry. The effectiveness or relativeness of the program is not used as a criterion for the program or ministries. Even when a program is questioned and changes are made, the program ends up so close to the original it does not change its effectiveness. The members are not obstinate; their vision is just clouded. They listen to the wrong voices and their emotions tend to give them an affection for the old programs and ministries. The end result is that the younger generations look at Immanuel Baptist as their parents' church.

Rationale

Developing a group revitalization program can be an effective means of church transformation. Thomas Rainer, in his book, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* said that 10 percent of churches were healthy, 40 percent showed symptoms of sickness, 40 percent were very sick, and 10 percent were dying.⁴ In the last five years, Immanuel Baptist Church in Petersburg, Indiana, has advanced from being a very sick church to showing symptoms of sickness. Immanuel Baptist has joined the 40 percent that are capable of the

⁴ Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive* (Nashville: B&H, 2014), 86.

transformation into a healthy church. It is logical that since only 10 percent of churches are healthy, this stage of transformation must be the hardest and churches are struggling to accomplish this on their own. Ten people can accomplish feats that are impossible for one person and ten churches together can accomplish something one church on its own cannot. A plan of action is needed to revitalize Immanuel Baptist by getting ten or more members working together as one and has the ability to get ten or more churches growing together as one.

To get ten people working as one requires a bonding agent that holds the group together without restricting the individual characteristics of the individuals. A church revitalization plan is such a bonding agent. It will bond the group together through shared goals, problem solving, learning exercises and time together. The challenge is getting every individual to function as part of the group as a whole while acknowledging the importance of the differences of each individual. Once this level of cooperation is achieved, all in the group can learn, grow and problem solve in unison. That same group will then be able to take what they have learned and help another church start the process. The long-term goal would be to maximize efforts by getting multiple churches in unison helping one another get healthier.

People learn knowledge in diverse ways such as visually, audibly, and hands-on. People learn to change by taking the knowledge they have learned and applying it in their lives. A revitalization plan will teach knowledge and then provide a setting for applying that knowledge. Church revitalization has to be more than just an information processor. It must be a change agent. The present reality is that if a church engages books, watches videos, and takes training but there is no real change, the church is on its own. The same church will likely be branded as unwilling to change when in reality, they simply do not know how to change. Church revitalization is needed to help church members change by teaching knowledge and providing hands-on experiences for

applying that knowledge.

King Solomon wrote, “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccl 4:9-12). Working together is mandated in being our brother’s keeper. It makes us stronger and keeps us safer. The best choice for addressing the health of the church is to develop a church revitalization plan that provides real life settings for church members to learn, grow and problem solve together while watching over one another.

The biblical basis for church members working together and working with other churches is they all are part of the body of Christ. The main goal is to build the Kingdom of Heaven. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12). A church revitalization plan is needed to help churches join the work of perfecting the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ.

The path to health is learning to make the right changes. Immanuel Baptist struggles with an affection for the past and making good changes. Immanuel Baptist needs an educational tool that enlightens the members on what the church is, what the church should be, and what the church must do to be healthy. Knowledge alone will not make them healthy. They must process it internally and then choose to change. They need a plan of action that will serve as a change agent by bringing them to a point where they choose a course of change and then implement that change. Unless change happens there will be no noticeable difference in the health of the church but even the smallest change in the right direction makes the church healthier. The goal of the plan is not to make the

church healthy in a year but to help the church develop a culture of making the right changes so that change becomes a normal process in the functioning of the church.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to equip the members of Immanuel Baptist Church in Petersburg, Indiana for the work of ministry by developing a group revitalization program.

Goals

The program is meant to help the church embrace church revitalization by implementing a process to facilitate growth. Church revitalization involves all areas of church worship and ministry. The program is adaptable to all areas but for this project it focused on the areas of evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine. The following three goals were utilized in implementing the group revitalization program for Immanuel Baptist.

1. The first goal was to develop an eight-session curriculum that will equip participants for the work of church revitalization in the areas of evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine.
2. The second goal was to implement the curriculum from the first goal to increase the knowledge of participants in church revitalization in these six areas.
3. The third goal was to prepare a ministry plan for the practical application of the knowledge and principles of church revitalization by the participants in the ministry context of their church.

A specific research methodology was created that measured the successful completion of these three goals.⁵ This methodology is described in the following section.

⁵ All of the research instruments used in this project will be performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

Research Methodology

Successful completion of this project depended upon the completion of these three goals. The first goal was to develop an eight-session curriculum that equips participants for the work of church revitalization as a group in the areas of evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine. This goal was measured by the expert panel who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.⁶ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion was met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The second goal was to implement the curriculum to increase the knowledge of participants in church revitalization in the areas of: evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine. This goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-survey which was used to measure the change in doctrinal knowledge.⁷ The pre- and post-surveys determined the level of doctrinal knowledge related to evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine. The course was administered in a group setting with each session consisting of interactive teaching and group interaction. This goal was considered successfully met when the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores.

The third goal was to prepare a ministry plan for the practical application of the knowledge and principles of church revitalization by the participants in the ministry context of their church. This goal was measured by a panel of three ministry leaders from Immanuel Baptist who utilized a rubric to evaluate the functionality of the plan,

⁶ See appendix 1.

⁷ See appendix 3.

communication processes, training elements, and the action steps.⁸ This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms will be used in the ministry project:

Church revitalization. The process of a church in decline making the changes in evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer and doctrine necessary to have healthy growth is church revitalization. “Church revitalization begins with laying the foundation of God’s Word as it is preached and followed through a movement of God’s Spirit.”⁹

Group revitalization. This term is used as a reference to the process of church revitalization by teaching participants in a group setting and cultivating group activity and community.

One limitation will apply to this project. This group revitalization program is adaptable to use with multiple groups, but only the group of Immanuel Baptist Church in Petersburg, Indiana is within the control of the author of the project. To mitigate this limitation, the project will be limited to Immanuel Baptist as the only participating group.

One delimitation will apply to this project. First, this project will limit the curriculum topics to evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine. Church revitalization includes all aspects of church health, and the group revitalization program is designed to address all aspects while allowing the participating church to adapt it to their current needs. The six aspects of evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine are the best starting topics for Immanuel Baptist.

⁸ See appendix 2.

⁹ Henard, *Can These Bones Live?*, 2.

Conclusion

Group revitalization is an effective tool for churches to get healthy. It allows church members to learn with each other and from one another. Group revitalization brings up the conversations that allow discussion necessary to bring unity of purpose. The following chapters will reveal that the Bible, the education system, current literature on the subject, sociology, and psychology support the concept of group revitalization.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE PROJECT

Healthy churches operate effectively as a group to equip the members for the work of the ministry. A healthy church is one in which its members use their spiritual gifts for the purpose of working together to equip and edify the body of Christ. This chapter sets forth the biblical and theological basis for a group training project. Christians are stronger, healthier and safer together than apart. God intends for Christians to work together and He works through men and women to edify the members of Christ. It is imperative that Christians are taught to know and use their spiritual gifts within the church. The Holy Spirit gives the gifts and empowers their use. Without the Holy Spirit there cannot be revival or revitalization, therefore any project aimed at revitalization must engage Christians in the understanding and use of their spiritual gifts in the community setting of the church.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

The Old Testament teaches that two are better than one (Eccl 4:9-12). People have more strength, safety, and productivity when others join them in the work. The importance of the two individuals unifying is exemplified in God's decision to make Eve, saying, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen 2:18).¹ The Talmud compares a man without a companion to having a left hand without a right hand.² An individual with no family or relative to share their time,

¹ Robert Jamieson, A. R Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*, vol. 2, *Job-Isaiah* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 523.

² Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Job-Isaiah*, 523.

talents, experiences, wealth and resources can overcome loneliness through fellowship with others.³ Those who stay secluded and only see their own needs and wants will become unable to care for the needs of others because they are separated from them. Isolation from other Christians is isolation from the observations, admonishments, corrections, and counsel of brothers and sisters who are walking the same path.⁴ The logic of two being better than one suggests that three would be better than two. The Targum interprets it as three righteous in a generation being more useful than two.⁵

The advantage of heat or warmth that two have over one is comprised of multiple facets. The concept that when two lie together they have heat has practical applications physically, spiritually, and emotionally. The physical application is clearly understood by considering the example of marriage. Husband and wife share body heat and their physical touch evokes emotions that relieves stress and helps the body heal. The spiritual application is understood by considering the disciples on the way to Emmaus. The disciples commented on how their hearts burned within them while Jesus was with them explaining the Scriptures. The emotional application can be understood by considering how Paul thanked God and was encouraged when he saw the brethren come to meet him on his way to Rome (Acts 28:15).⁶

Combining Strength and Resources

All societies have their poor and afflicted who struggle to gather enough for food, clothes, and shelter. When two who are unable to support themselves live together, they combine their resources and strengths. The financial good reward they receive for

³ Michael V. Fox, *JPS Bible Commentary: Ecclesiastes* (Dulles, VA: Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 29, ProQuest.

⁴ J. Robert Wright, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 351, ProQuest.

⁵ Tremper Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 89.

⁶ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Job-Isaiah*, 524.

this labor of working together is they are now able to afford the basic costs of life. The emotional good reward is that they support, encourage, and strengthen each other. Combining personal resources allows them the reward of accomplishing together feats they were unable to accomplish alone.⁷ There are additional rewards of working together or being in community with others, such as companionship, warmth and security.⁸

The benefit of security that two have over one must be looked at from the physical and spiritual aspects. The physical aspect can be seen when one individual is attacked by another individual who is stronger. The stronger will prevail and the weaker will fall because he is alone. If that weaker individual had an ally with him then the foe would fall because the foe was alone.⁹ When two walk together if one of them falls the other is there to help. A person can fall in many ways such as being attacked or dropping from a high perch. They can also fall emotionally or spiritually because of distress, danger, error in judgment or sinning.¹⁰ When a man or woman is alone, they are more vulnerable to temptation and spiritual attack from the enemy. A friend nearby could prevent them from falling prey. Christian fellowship and communion with one another are ranked just below fellowship and communion with God in necessity.¹¹

Christians Must Work Together

The New Testament gives clear illustrations that God intends for believers to work together for strength, safety, and encouragement. In the tenth chapter of Luke Jesus sent seventy disciples out two by two. Jesus also said, “For where two or three are

⁷ Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, vol. 2, *Psalms-Malachi* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 2008), 287.

⁸ Craig G. Bartholomew and Tremper Longman III, *Ecclesiastes*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 183, ProQuest.

⁹ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Job-Isaiah*, 524.

¹⁰ Poole, *Psalms-Malachi*, 287.

¹¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 3, *Job to Song of Solomon* (McLean, VA: MacDonald, 1970), 1004.

gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20). The strength of a threefold cord can be described in the New Testament as Christians having their hearts knit together, “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ” (Col 2:2).¹² A Christian can make a threefold cord with only one Christian friend because Christ will join with them to make the third.¹³

The importance of God working through His saints and His saints working together as the true church is woven into the fabric of Christianity. Irenaeus contended that where the church is there is the Spirit of God and where the Spirit of God is there is the church. Participation in church with other believers is required for spiritual nourishment.¹⁴ Charles Spurgeon believed that prayer offered in a group setting was more effectual than the solitary prayers of individuals.¹⁵ The addition of the “communion of saints” to the Apostle’s Creed shows the importance early century church leaders laid upon the unity, fellowship and sharing of all good gifts among the brethren.¹⁶

The church apart from Jesus Christ is not the church. A believer apart from Jesus Christ is not a Christian. Believing by itself is not enough for salvation. The one who is believing must become grafted on to the vine. As a branch must be connected to the vine so must a believer be connected to Jesus (John 15:1-7). A believer becomes a Christian and a member of Christ when Jesus lives within them. A Christian who separates themselves from other Christians also separates themselves from the work of

¹² Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Job-Isaiah*, 524.

¹³ Henry, *Job to Song of Solomon*, 1004.

¹⁴ J. N. D Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 192.

¹⁵ Peter J. Morden, “C. H. Spurgeon and Prayer,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 84, no. 4 (October 2012): 325.

¹⁶ Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 277-78.

Jesus to minister to other Christians. Churches must learn how to teach their members how to work together for strength, fellowship, safety, encouragement, growth and edification.

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

The New Testament teaches that Christians are all members of the body of Christ and commands them to work together (1 Cor 12:1-31). The church is one body made up of many members. This diversity is necessary because without the numerous members there could not be a body. The human body has many members yet they are all controlled by one mind or spirit. This analogy is representative of the church in that every believer is a member but they are unified by one mind or one Spirit. The term member bears the meaning of a part that has a function of its own. Bringing new members into the body of Christ is not merely increasing numbers or size, it is increasing functions. Each member has been given one or more gift for the purpose of exercising their function within the church.¹⁷ Manifestations of the Spirit is a term that describes spiritual gifts that can be seen and illuminate the work of the Holy Spirit. They cannot be attributed to natural talents nor are they an indication of one's holiness. They are not just for the spiritual elite. Every believer is endowed with one or more gifts.¹⁸

The term "one body" refers to the church of Jesus Christ and gives His members purpose, meaning, and motivation. In the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul gives instruction concerning the use of spiritual gifts. These gifts come from God for the purpose of edifying fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.¹⁹ God distributes gifts as He

¹⁷ Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000), 253–56.

¹⁸ George T. Montague et al., *First Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 326, ProQuest.

¹⁹ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 20, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 395.

pleases to temper the body of Christ together. The eye does not receive power to see on its own nor the hand strength to grasp but God empowers and places both as needed for the functioning of the body of Christ. God has designed the church so that its members cannot function on their own. The mouth cannot speak without the air of the lungs, the movement of the larynx, and thoughts of the mind. Christians are warned not to be jealous of other's gifts. They are encouraged to see the importance of their own gifts and function. Christians must see that to rebel against the use of their gifts is to rebel against God who ordained they have and use those gifts.²⁰ Gifts are not meant for rivalry, jealousy, or the benefit of the individual possessing the gift. Spiritual gifts are for the common good and are always meant for the edifying of the whole body of believers.²¹

The term "One Spirit" used in 1 Corinthians 12:4, 13 is a reference to the Holy Spirit. The empowering of the gifts themselves, the conferring of them upon individuals, and their distribution are all part of the office of the Holy Spirit.²² Paul emphasizes the controlling power of the Holy Spirit saying, "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor 12:3). This brings up the question of salvation for those who make a verbal profession of faith in calling Jesus Lord, but are still unconverted. Calvin wrote of those who make such a confession, "They undoubtedly have, so far as that effect is concerned; but the gift of regeneration is one thing, and the gift of bare intelligence, with which Judas himself was endowed, when he preached the gospel, is quite another."²³ There is a warning here for the Corinthians to discern between true partakers of the Holy Spirit and those who falsely pretend to be partakers. This

²⁰ Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 257-64.

²¹ Leon L. Morris, *1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 165, ProQuest.

²² Calvin, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 398-99.

²³ Calvin, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 397.

warning includes instructions to consider anyone who preaches any other gospel as accursed (Gal 1:8).²⁴

Lessons from the Corinthian Church

True believers are members of the body of Christ and are to use their gifts and talents for the building and edifying of the church. The Corinthian church struggled with using their gifts properly and Paul had to address that issue. The record of how Paul handled this issue is of great value to Pastors today facing the same struggle in their church. In the first chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul is thankful for the grace of God which is given to the Corinthians and “That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge” (1 Cor 1:5). He acknowledges how well-endowed they are with spiritual gifts but still sees a need to admonish and instruct them on the use of those gifts. Paul reminds them they were pagans led away by their idols and points to their ignorance of spiritual gifts. The Corinthians had been converted but were misusing their spiritual gifts for two reasons. They were immature in the use of the gifts and unaware of the availability, power and purpose of those gifts.²⁵

Paul sees that in order for the Corinthian church to overcome their immaturity they will need the mind of Christ. Paul embarks upon this task in a threefold attack. First, he communicates with them through language or divinely chosen words. Second, he takes advantage of his knowledge of what motivates the Corinthians and uses their own desire for spiritual maturity against them. Third, he uses his personal relationship with them as a spiritual leader.²⁶ Speaking words alone is not enough to complete the edifying task of helping others know the mind of Christ. There has to be an understanding of how they

²⁴ Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 242.

²⁵ Montague et al., *First Corinthians*, 318–20.

²⁶ David A. Ackerman, “Fighting Fire with Fire: Community Formation in 1 Corinthians 12-14,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 29, no. 4 (October 2005): 356, Ebscohost.

think, what influences them, what is important to them, and what motivates them. Paul was able to take advantage of a relationship that he had with the Corinthians. They looked at him with respect and as a spiritual leader. This kind of relationship requires a holy walk, a loving heart, and proper cultivation.

Paul's instructions to the church of Corinth are the same instructions he would give to churches today. Divinely chosen words are needed to explain, teach and help the practical application of spiritual gifts given to believers. James Boice contended that a spiritual gift is a capacity for service which is given to believers which they did not possess prior to becoming a Christian. Spiritual gifts differ from talents because they are only given to Christians and only for spiritual purposes.²⁷ Believers possess these spiritual gifts but they do not own them nor do they have control over them. The gifts are given and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Believers are channels of which the Holy Spirit moves and controls. Without the Spirit of God there is no spiritual gift.²⁸

Spiritual Gifts

Christians need to have a healthy view of their spiritual gifts. Everyone is to be content to use their own gifts and cultivate them. The gifts themselves become a boundary that one must be content to stay within. It is foolish to attempt to go beyond the capability of one's gift or to attempt to use a gift one does not have. God endows gifts in measure for the purpose of unity and edification, therefore gifts are not to be withheld from use within the body of Christ.²⁹ This contention is meant for the practical use of gifts and not the desire for additional gifts. Christians are to earnestly covet the best gifts. The best gifts are those which are the most useful. The Corinthians coveted gifts which

²⁷ Dragoș Ștefănică, "An Attempt to Define the Charismata in the Main Christian Traditions," *Ecumenical Review Sibiu / Revista Ecumenica Sibiu* 7, no. 2 (August 2015): 237, <https://doi.org/10.1515/ress-2015-0017>.

²⁸ Ștefănică, "Charismata in the Main Christian Traditions," 240-41.

²⁹ Calvin, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 398.

were more attractive than useful.³⁰ Paul's command to covet the best gifts is an indication that if one prayed earnestly, it is possible God may give them the gift or gifts they desire.³¹

There is as diversity of gifts because the gifts have a diversity of purpose. Those gifts have a direct impact on the strengthening and building of the church. It is essential that churches understand, teach and use gifts according to their intended purpose and priority. Charles Hodge considered it a mistake to divide the gifts into categories such as gifts, ministrations, operations. They are all gifts given by the Holy Spirit and as such, they are equally important. They are all a mode or type of service for Jesus Christ and His church and as such, they are to be equally viewed. They are all an effect or change brought about by the power and efficiency of God the Father and as such, they are to be equally implemented.³²

The gift of wisdom would allow one to give wise and practical advice. The advice may not seem wise to the world such as turn the other cheek, but it will be wise in God's eyes. It is a gift that becomes visible when it is exercised such as giving testimony before governments and courts: "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist" (Luke 21:14-15).³³ To have wisdom is to have good judgment concerning the Christian walk. This judgment is practical wisdom which the first chapter of James calls a gift. The gift of wisdom is the capacity to apply knowledge in order to make wise decisions and practical judgments.³⁴

³⁰ Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 264.

³¹ B. J. Oropeza, *1 Corinthians* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017), 169, ProQuest.

³² Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 242-43.

³³ Montague et al., *First Corinthians*, 326-27.

³⁴ Greathouse, William M., Frank G. Carver, and Donald S. Metz. *Beacon Bible Commentary* (Kansas City, Mo: Nazarene Publishing House, 1968), 427, Ebscohost.

The gift of knowledge is often used in conjunction with wisdom. The Word of knowledge enables one to know, to understand and to relay information pertaining to truth.³⁵ Knowledge or gnosis implies research and investigation which is not limited to purely intellectual purposes. True knowledge is profitable whether it be science, health, history, agriculture or other. The gift of knowledge is a supernatural endowment that goes beyond natural ability which may be extended to include God-given insight to mysteries, revelations and prophecies.³⁶

The gift of faith must be differentiated from the gift of faith all believes are given whereby they believe and become born again members of the body of Christ. Faith is a gift given to all believers but the spiritual gift of faith is something more. There is not much clarification in the Bible as to the extent of this gift. Paul gives the indication it has something to do with miracles and healing.³⁷ Faith is a requirement to please God (Heb 11:6). All aspects of a Christian's life and development are intertwined with faith. Faith is instrumental in knowing and using one's spiritual gifts and using one's spiritual gifts is instrumental in increasing faith.³⁸

The gift of faith must mean something more than the saving grace of faith required by all who come to salvation. Faith is needed for miracles but since miracles is also listed as a gift then the gift of faith must be something different. The gift of faith can safely be seen as a higher measure of the saving grace of faith. A measure of faith that can enable one to confess Christ in the face of adversity and become a martyr if so called upon.³⁹ It takes faith to move mountains (Matt 17:20) and the gift of faith to believe moving mountains is more than a metaphor. Miracles happen because of faith and the

³⁵ Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 245-46.

³⁶ Greathouse, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 428.

³⁷ Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 166.

³⁸ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1136.

³⁹ Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 246-47.

church needs members who have and use the gift of faith.

The gift of healing is a supernatural ability to bring physical restoration to health. It was given to the Apostles but only for a limited time. God limited the gift which can be seen in that Paul was unable to heal Timothy or remove the thorn from his own side. The Greek word for healing is plural, indicating various types of healing for various illnesses.⁴⁰ The writings of the early church fathers indicate the gift of healing was evident in the church for centuries after the apostolic period. There are those who believe it is no longer in use and those who believe it is beginning to reappear.⁴¹ Those with the gift did not do the healing. God does the miraculous healing. Today a person does not have to be in touch with the sick to make use of the gift of healing. They have to be in touch with God. Jesus healed the centurion's servant without physically touching or seeing him (Matt 8:5-13). Prayer is a great facilitator for the gift of healing.

The working of miracles is a gift that has effects which are miraculous. The gift of healing is also miraculous but the gift of miracles is more comprehensive.⁴² The gift of miracles is also associated with power such as when Paul in Acts chapter thirteen being full of the Holy Ghost, struck Elymas with blindness.⁴³ The working of miracles is the rendering of power. The apostles used the gift to cast out evil spirits and heal bodily ailments. Paul exercised the use of this gift as proof of his apostleship and authentication of the gospel message.⁴⁴ One does not have to do something visually spectacular like parting the Red Sea to have the gift of miracles. God does the miracles. Christians ask Him to do those miracles. Even, if only in the mildest form, the church needs members with the gift of miracles.

⁴⁰ Greathouse, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 428.

⁴¹ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1135.

⁴² Hodge, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians*, 247.

⁴³ Greathouse, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 428-429.

⁴⁴ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1135.

The gift of prophecy is bestowed upon individuals by the Holy Spirit to empower them to speak inspired words. That inspiration comes from God; therefore, they are communicating a message that God has for the hearers.⁴⁵ Scholars have associated it with inspired preaching, exhortations, instructions, warnings, predicting of future events, revealing of mysteries, and the searching of men's hearts.⁴⁶ In the New Testament church men endowed with the gift of prophecy went from church to church. They built up believers in their faith through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. Their preaching of the Word of God was not limited to the written Scriptures. They would speak the revelations that God gave them.⁴⁷

Every Christian has the responsibility of discernment or as John says "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). The gift of discernment is a special ability or insight that goes beyond using the Bible as a guide. It is a supernatural God-given ability to know or discern if something is of God or of the world.⁴⁸ The gift of discerning spirits is a special illumination from God allowing one to make spiritual judgments between truth and false, right and wrong, regardless of outward appearances.⁴⁹

Divers kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues are tied together because anything spoken in tongues is of no benefit or edifying value without the interpretation. There is a division of belief as to whether the gifts of tongues are still dispersed by the Holy Spirit or if they have ceased. It is not necessary to engage in debate on the issue because if it is a valid gift today, the Holy Spirit will give it as He determines. God is sovereign and He determines who gets the gifts and who does not. Based on these

⁴⁵ Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 167.

⁴⁶ " Greathouse, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 429.

⁴⁷ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 1136-37.

⁴⁸ Greathouse, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, 429.

⁴⁹ Calvin, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 403.

reasons, no conclusion should be made as to the gift of tongues being genuine.⁵⁰ One church may believe and engage in practice of the use of speaking in tongues while another may dispute their validity. Both are to respect the other and in humility acknowledge there are things beyond our understanding.

There is a caution that churches must heed in the desire for unity. There is strength in differences and diversity. In the search for unity the church must be careful to eliminate division not diversity.⁵¹ The unity of the church comes from the integration and networking of the differences that emerge among the members of Christ.⁵²

The Holy Spirit bestows and empowers believers with spiritual gifts. Those gifts are not special abilities of believers. They are special endowments of grace wherein the Holy Spirit works through believers in the practical application of these gifts for the building up and edification of the body of Christ. When believers allow the Holy Spirit to have more control of their lives then God will work in believers to accomplish His will. Spiritual gifts are to bear fruits in the church but those fruits are somewhat different than the fruit of the Spirit. Christians should seek the fruit of the Spirit even more than gifts. Those fruits are love, joy and peace.⁵³

Ephesians 4:1-16

Spiritual gifts are given to individuals for the purpose of working with others so all may be one in faith, body, and Spirit (Eph 4:1-16). The church can be defined as all

⁵⁰ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998), 892-97.

⁵¹ John Bradley, "The Body of Christ Is Impaired by Division," *One in Christ* 47, no. 2 (December 2013), 243, Ebscohost.

⁵² Guillermo Hansen, "The Networking of Differences That Makes a Difference: Theology and the Unity of the Church," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 51, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 41, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6385.2011.00652.x>.

⁵³ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 897.

true believers in Christ for all time.⁵⁴ Ephesians 1:22 states that God has subjected all creation to be under the feet of Christ and has given Christ to the church as head over everything. Logic implies that if Christ is head over all things, then He is head over the church even though it is not specifically stated in the verse. The church is not given to Christ but Christ is given to the church.⁵⁵ When God gave Jesus to the church, He gave it a savior, a priest, a king, and a unifying identity in Christ. The church is now known and identified as the body of Christ.

The body of believers which make up the church has a threefold purpose. The church is to worship God, to nurture and build up fellow believers, and to evangelize and make disciples. A healthy church will have effective ministries in all three purposes without attempting to elevate the importance of one over another.⁵⁶ In order to achieve these three purposes, a Christian's walk must be lived with all lowliness, meekness, and patience. Lowliness is to possess humility and meekness is to reject the actions of pride and cruelty. The attributes of lowliness and meekness help believers face the trials and tribulations of life without being afraid. Patience enables the believer to bear the burden of those trials and tribulations which blossoms into an experience learned assurance. It is through the implementation of lowliness, meekness and patience that Christians learn how to respond to suffering and offer true worship to God.⁵⁷

Church as the Body of Christ

Local churches differ in varied beliefs and practices but are still part of the one body of Christ as long as they adhere to the true and whole gospel of the Word of God.

⁵⁴ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 853.

⁵⁵ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 288-90.

⁵⁶ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 867-69.

⁵⁷ M. J. Edwards, ed., *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture 8 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 150.

There is tension between believers today of differing doctrines and denominations as there was between the Jewish and Gentile believers in the church of Ephesus. The church today must follow the same counsel given to the Ephesians to exercise humility, gentleness, and patience, forbearing one another in love. Christians are to forbear or, to take up, to bear up, to endure one another. Forbearing also has the aspect of holding oneself back when dealing with believers who hold differing viewpoints. Humility, gentleness, patience, and forbearing must be done in love. This can only be accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit in the church, both corporately and individually.⁵⁸

The church is made up of different people from different nationalities and countries but they are to be one people and they are to be a holy people. Christians have a holy calling and they are to live a life that is worthy of that calling. Unity and purity are two characteristics of a life that is worthy.⁵⁹ It is impossible to multiply churches through church planting. It is also impossible for someone or something to split the church. It is important to recognize that the church buildings and denominations visible today are not the true church which is the body of Christ. They may contain some members of the church but they are not the church. There is only one body of Christ the true church.⁶⁰ Paul does not exhort believers to become one body. He declares there is one body.⁶¹

Five Gifts That Are Also Offices

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Eph 4:11). The wording of this verse puts emphasis on apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers as offices or positions of service

⁵⁸ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 509-10.

⁵⁹ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians: God's New Society*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 146-47.

⁶⁰ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 151.

⁶¹ Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 143.

rather than gifts. Calvin looked at it from the position that when God calls a person to serve in an office such as an apostle or pastor, He also endows them with the gifts necessary to perform that office.⁶² Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:28 refer to Spiritual gifts as people in place of an ability or ministry. Spiritual leaders are given to the church by God, and endowed with gifts by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up and edifying the body of Christ. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are leaders who are gifted in helping others realize and develop their own spiritual gifts.⁶³

The verb *apostello* means to send, therefore an apostle is one who is sent. There is an argument that all Christians are sent into the world as ambassadors for Christ. The clarifying factor is that Christ only gave some to be apostles.⁶⁴ The primary function of an apostle is the preaching of the gospel. The pattern of the apostles was to preach the gospel, plant churches and teach the converts.⁶⁵ Apollos, Titus, and the Lord's brother James, are examples of men who were given the gift of apostleship. The example given by such apostles in the New Testament indicates that at least one of the main functions of an apostle is to establish churches in areas in need of hearing the gospel. The church might look at an apostle as God's messenger to reach new territories for Christ.⁶⁶

Prophets in the Bible were ones whom God sent to the people to be His mouthpiece. They were given a message or word from God to give to the people. Those words from the Old Testament Scriptures as well as the canonical writers were used to complete the Bible. God has intended that man today is not to add to or take away from

⁶² John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 21, *Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 277.

⁶³ Grant R. Osborne, *Ephesians Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 47, Ebscohost.

⁶⁴ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 160.

⁶⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 346-47.

⁶⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 541-42.

His Word. There are Pentecostal and charismatic strands who contend that God is still sending prophets and prophetesses to carry His word to people today. God is sovereign and can do as He pleases, therefore the possibility of such occurrences exists but would be for individual or local church benefit only. God can reveal His will for an individual or church without the intention of it applying to the whole body of Christ.⁶⁷

The practical interpretation today of a prophet is one who is led of the Holy Spirit to give a relevant message to an individual or to the church. The timing of the messages is such that they have a particular impact on the lives of the individuals involved as well as the church.⁶⁸ The gift of prophesy is for the edification, comfort and encouragement of the church. Prophesy is a gift that enables one to understand and communicate the mysteries and revelations of God to the church. Prophets are instrumental in preparing saints for ministry and building up the body of Christ.⁶⁹

An evangelist is one who makes known the gospel.⁷⁰ Chrysostom held the belief that the duty of an evangelist was specifically to preach the gospel and the characteristic of travel was not relevant. Theodoret considered travel to be characteristic of an evangelist, contending they went everywhere preaching the gospel.⁷¹ The New Testament use of the word evangelists is uniquely associated to the element of travel. An evangelist can be described as one who is especially endowed to travel from place to place proclaiming the good news of the gospel.⁷² Those who contend travel is not relevant still concede evangelists can and at times do travel. Those who attach travel to

⁶⁷ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 161-63.

⁶⁸ Frank Thielman, Robert Yarbrough, and Robert Stein, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 274, ProQuest.

⁶⁹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 542.

⁷⁰ Hodge, *A Commentary on Ephesians*, 160-61.

⁷¹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 542.

⁷² Thielman, Yarbrough, and Stein, *Ephesians*, 274.

the office of evangelists also acknowledge that there is not a mileage requirement to classify as travel. An evangelist can go across the country, or to the neighboring town or just across the city.

The *World Book Dictionary* defines a pastor as a minister in charge of a church or congregation and as a spiritual guide.⁷³ That definition aptly describes the everyday use of the word. It does not adequately describe the meaning of pastor in terms of being a New Testament office or spiritual gift. The office of a pastor is one of a shepherd who is called to tend God's flock.⁷⁴ The Old Testament refers to God as a shepherd who tends his flock which is the nation of Israel. The New Testament refers to Jesus as the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). A pastor today is one who is especially endowed to feed, nurture and protect the sheep.⁷⁵ The shepherding that pastors are called to perform today include ministering to troubled saints, exhorting and comforting all saints, and the administration of all local church activities and functions.⁷⁶

Teachers work with people to develop skills, help them learn to do things, and help them acquire information. Teaching is to help others learn, show them how and make them understand.⁷⁷ Teachers are distinguished from pastors in that all pastors teach but not all pastors have the gift of teaching. Pastors are more gifted in administration, ministering and shepherding. Teachers are given a special gift to explain the teachings of the church. They help individuals understand the doctrines and the Christian message for which the body of Christ is known.⁷⁸ The term used for teacher depicts intellectual facts

⁷³ Clarence Lewis Barnhart, Robert K. Barnhart, and Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, eds., *The World Book Dictionary* (Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational, 1976), 1524.

⁷⁴ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 163.

⁷⁵ Thielman, Yarbrough, and Stein, *Ephesians*, 275–76.

⁷⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 544.

⁷⁷ Barnhart, Barnhart, and Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, *The World Book Dictionary*, 2152.

⁷⁸ Thielman, Yarbrough, and Stein, *Ephesians*, 276-77.

and knowledge as well as spiritual and moral evaluation and knowledge. Jesus was a gifted teacher who was recognized as a teacher not only by his disciples, but also by his enemies (Matt 9:11). Jesus taught with authority and those with the gift of teaching should teach with authority, not their own authority but the authority of the Scriptures. Teachers are to instruct in doctrine and its application to daily life.⁷⁹

Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are given by Jesus for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry and edifying the body of Christ. The correlation between the perfecting of the saints and the work of the ministry is debated among scholars. One view is that the perfecting of the saints and the work of the ministry are two separate goals. The work of the ministry is limited to those called or the clergy and not the laity. A second view links the perfecting of the saints to the work of the ministry in that the saints are to be equipped for the work of the ministry.⁸⁰

Jesus gave spiritual gifts and these five offices to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. The primary purpose Christ gave pastors and teachers is to equip all members of His body for ministry.⁸¹ Spiritual leaders are to equip the body of Christ. The verb equip conveys the practical application of training or preparing others. The verb also has a medical meaning within the context of the setting of broken bones. Christian leaders are to equip by training, preparing and restoring or mending that which is broken.⁸²

Jesus gave them for the building up of the body of Christ. The ultimate purpose for spiritual gifts and these five offices is to build up the body of Christ. All spiritual gifts are service gifts. They are meant for use in building up and edifying the church. The way

⁷⁹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 545.

⁸⁰ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 166-68.

⁸¹ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 168.

⁸² Osborne, *Ephesians Verse by Verse*, 48-49.

the body of the church grows and becomes healthy is the same as an individual's body. When all the parts of the human body perform their intended function in unity with all other parts, the human body grows strong. The way for the body of Christ to grow healthy and strong is for all members to use their spiritual gifts in unity with other members.⁸³

Conclusion

God can do anything. With just a small display of His power He could bring any nation and any heart to their knees. God does not need pastors or teachers or evangelists to revitalize a church or make the body of Christ healthy. He chooses to work through the inferior vessel to accomplish His will. God performs miracles and still He intends for Christians to help Christians. God answers prayers and heals diseases and still He intends for Christians to pray for Christians. God looks at the inferior vessel knowing He can make it strong. God's work for man is accomplished through the Holy Spirit flowing through Christians, and Christians emptying themselves so they can be filled with God. The church cannot become healthy without working together because that is how God intends for it to be. One body, one Spirit, one faith joining many members together. The road to church health begins with every member considering one question and pondering the answer Jesus gave, "When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt 25:38-40).

⁸³ Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 168.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND HISTORICAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE PROJECT

Education is society's formal mechanism in helping students adapt their behavior to fit in society. The culture of society involves belief systems, including what is and what is not appropriate or acceptable. Schools are a primary carrier of culture which prepares students to assimilate and function within societal norms. Thus, the meaning of education and socialization are intertwined.¹ Organized institutions such as schools, groups, and organizations combined with the key individuals who frequently interact with the student are the key elements that prepare students to take their place in society.²

Benefits and Efficiency of Teaching in Groups

The education system in the United States advocates the benefits and efficiency of teaching in group or class settings. The teaching and training of others is best accomplished by understanding how people process information and experiences in a learning environment. Education is a process that seeks to stimulate understanding through a variety of means such as classroom teaching, lectures, demonstrations, and hands on projects. The process of education seeks to pass on data to increase knowledge and influence behavior for socialization. Experiential learning and group learning are two methods of learning that are proving to be very effective in these endeavors. The following will give a brief explanation of experiential learning, along with some group learning methods such as team based learning and cooperative learning. The purpose of

¹ Mark A. Chesler and William M. Cave, *A Sociology of Education: Access to Power and Privilege* (New York: Macmillan, 1981), 3-4.

² Chesler and Cave, *A Sociology of Education*, 9.

addressing experiential learning is because of its unique methodology, effectiveness and ability to be adapted for use in group learning. The social aspect of group learning has been found to be effective both in the classroom and online settings.

Experiential Learning

In the book, *The Theory of Experiential Education*, Laura Joplin makes the premise that all learning is experiential. Anytime a person learns it is a result of the personal experience of interacting with the subject. Joplin contends that much is done under the guise of education which does not involve learning and not all learning is deliberately planned. Experience alone does not equate to learning, but experience can lead to evaluation where one begins to analyze what happened. A time of reflection to process the experience is essential to propagate learning.³

Learning is more complex than just doing something in hopes of creating a learning experience. Learning activities are designed to get students involved and become absorbed in the experience in way that allows them to absorb the material. Not all experientially designed learning activities result in learning. Teaching is defined as the delivery of information not the delivery of learning. Teachers use activities like evaluations and test scores to see how much of the delivery of information resulted in learning. Those results do not give a definitive understanding of whether the student truly learned or simply had the memorization skill to pass tests.⁴

Experiential Learning is one of four levels of learning. The first level is that of short-term memorization, such as studying for a test. The student only needs to retain this information for a short while and much of the information is forgotten shortly after the test. The second level of learning is that of interest where the student has a little

³ Karen Warren and Association for Experiential Education, eds., *The Theory of Experiential Education: A Collection of Articles Addressing the Historical, Philosophical, Social, and Psychological Foundations of Experiential Education* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1995), 15.

⁴ Warren and Association for Experiential Education, 143.

understanding of a topic that interests them. They will ponder and interact more with that topic because of their interest in it. This interaction results in a little higher level of learning than mere memorization. The third level is experiential learning. This level of learning is deeper and more personal and involves both the content and the process of learning. The fourth level is internalized learning. This is the level where the student takes the information and considers how they might use it in their life. Internalization may be viewed as an inside-out process. The learner takes in the information and personalizes it so much they feel a responsibility to do something with it. They look outside themselves for a need or purpose for this new learning.⁵

Experiential learning has some differing characteristics from nonexperiential learning. Experiential learning starts from the viewpoint and perception of the student's current awareness and progresses at the pace of the student. This type of learning is more personal than nonexperiential learning. Value is placed on how students feel about the subject as well as their factual recall ability. Importance is placed on both the correctness of the answers and how the student arrives at those answers. Students are encouraged to be involved in the monitoring of their learning and develop self-evaluation skills.

Experiential learning incorporates a mental and social understanding along with component analysis. Socially, students are taught the ability to defend their positions or explain a subject to other individuals and groups. Experiential learning engages students in group identity and socialization skills with emphasis placed on individual development. Students learn to evaluate their relationship within the group and understand their role in the group.⁶

Group Learning

Group learning is involved in all educational settings from preschool up,

⁵ Warren and Association for Experiential Education, 144-45.

⁶ Warren and Association for Experiential Education, 20-21.

including athletic teams and special conferences. One of the most important and versatile educational tools available is the discussion group. The purpose of a discussion group is to promote learning among the members. The utilization of a discussion group for learning makes it a learning group. A learning group is defined as a group whose purpose is designed for the members to learn specific subject matter, information, knowledge, skill and procedures.⁷ The effectiveness of a learning group is dependent on the elements of two-way communication, clear goals, high cohesiveness, high trust, climate of acceptance, and frequent occurrence of controversy.⁸

Learning groups can be effective in reaching shared goals. In the classroom some goals are focused on the individual and others are focused on group learning or some output of the group. The reason learning groups are effective is because of their ability to incorporate both individual and group effort. At times the group works together, but there are times the group may have individuals work on their own. Groups will come together to discuss how the total body is working as a group and how the group might be more effective. One of the benefits of learning groups is, that as the members interact, small friendship clusters informally come together.⁹

Teachers can enhance learning in the classroom by utilizing learning groups. Placing a select group of students and teachers together for the purpose of learning a task has been found to be a useful social-psychological concept. Learning groups are distinct from classroom groups and may exist outside the classroom setting.¹⁰ One example is the student peer group which is both a learning group and one of the most significant and meaningful sources of rewards and punishments in the classroom. As early as the third

⁷ David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson, *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*, 2nd ed (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1982), 421.

⁸ Johnson and Johnson, *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*, 2nd ed, 422.

⁹ Daniel Bar-Tal and Leonard Saxe, eds., *Social Psychology of Education: Theory and Research* (Washington: New York: Hemisphere, 1978), 237.

¹⁰ Bar-Tal and Saxe, *Social Psychology of Education*, 234-35.

grade, children's values, attitudes toward school, developing school aspirations, and school behavior are influenced by peer-group members. Classroom groups that have supportive friendship patterns, like the student peer group, are an aide to academic learning.¹¹

Team-based Learning

Team-based learning is an effective and powerful form of group learning.¹² This method of learning allows students to learn more than just information and data. They learn how to interact with others in a team setting. As students interact, they learn the weaknesses and strengths of the other team members. Individuals within the team discover what others find difficult to comprehend and attempt different ways to explain it so their teammate can better understand. This becomes a mechanism which helps students become better at teaching each other.¹³ The book, *Team Based Learning: Small Group Learning's Next Big Step*, states "When [Team Based Learning] is well implemented, students can progress considerably beyond simply acquiring factual knowledge and achieve a depth of understanding that can come only through solving a series of problems that are too complex for even the best student to complete through their individual effort, In addition, virtually every student develops a deep and abiding appreciation of the value of teams for solving difficult and complex problems."¹⁴

Team-based learning benefits teachers and faculty in many ways. Team-based learning is a good option for teachers who are dealing with the problem of student apathy.

¹¹ Bar-Tal and Saxe, *Social Psychology of Education*, 233.

¹² Larry K. Michaelsen, Michael Sweet, and Dean X. Parmelee, eds., *Team-Based Learning: Small-Group Learning's Next Big Step*, New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 116 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 45.

¹³ Michaelsen, Sweet, and Parmelee, *Team-Based Learning: Small-Group Learning's Next Big Step*, 24.

¹⁴ Michaelsen, Sweet, and Parmelee, *Team-Based Learning: Small-Group Learning's Next Big Step*, 24-25.

Students find team learning more engaging which brings a higher level of energy and enthusiasm. Some teachers have found that team learning resulted in better attendance and students came more prepared. The team setting facilitates more response and talking from the students which allows teachers to do more listening and observing. Some teachers have found that the social aspect and peer tutoring of team-based learning has helped at risk students stay on track and complete their course.¹⁵

Cooperative Learning

In the book, *Created to Learn*, William Yount states, “Research has shown that Cooperative Learning increases achievement, motivation to learn, higher thinking skills, and interpersonal relationships in students.”¹⁶ Cooperative Learning is a concept that emphasizes active participation for cognitive learning. The idea is to teach in a way that students learn. Students learn through various modes such as, seeing, feeling, hearing, personal experiences, problem solving, or hands on activities. Students are encouraged to work together in a way that allows each to process information through their own learning modes. Grades are based on students and student teams reaching a required level of excellence.¹⁷

Cooperation is the act of working together to achieve a common goal or purpose. Learning through cooperation increases acceptance of handicapped students and improves self-esteem. Cooperative learning is implemented in multiple ways and forms such as having a group investigate a topic and prepare a presentation for a larger group or class. Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) is a form of Cooperative Learning that utilizes

¹⁵ Michaelsen, Sweet, and Parmelee, *Team-Based Learning: Small-Group Learning's Next Big Step*, 25.

¹⁶ William R. Yount, *Created to Learn: A Christian Teacher's Introduction to Educational Psychology* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 241.

¹⁷ Yount, *Created to Learn: A Christian Teacher's Introduction to Educational Psychology*, 240-41.

competition between teams to promote learning. Student Teams-Achievement Divisions is a similar form of Cooperative Learning that utilizes quizzes for competition among groups.¹⁸

Skillful use of reflection can be a helpful determinant of when and how to use cooperative learning. Efforts in teacher-education reform has revealed a common belief among participants that systematic reflection produces the greatest transfer of learning to new settings and is a key element to developing teachers who are decision makers, socially competent or curriculum builders. One way to incorporate reflection is through the use of written exercises that require students to analyze what they know and how they know it.¹⁹

Online Group Learning

Online learning has unique challenges in respect to establishing a working online community. Social presence is a critical element for achieving collaborative work, especially in regard to the online community. Group assignments, simulations, discussions, homework, and posted papers require a sense of social presence and community to be successful. There is an additional need for students and faculty to communicate and interact fluidly within their online community. The online learning environment places more demand on students and faculty to share responsibility for learning.²⁰

Group or team development of online communities are formed in stages. The first stage begins the development with members getting to know each other and deciding

¹⁸ Yount, *Created to Learn: A Christian Teacher's Introduction to Educational Psychology*, 308-9.

¹⁹ Elizabeth Cohen, Celeste Brody, and Mara Sapon-Shevin, *Teaching Cooperative Learning: The Challenge for Teacher Education*. Suny Series, Teacher Preparation and Development (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 189, Ebscohost.

²⁰ Rena M. Palloff and Keith Pratt, *Collaborating Online: Learning Together in Community*, 1st ed, Jossey-Bass Guides to Online Teaching and Learning, 2 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 9-10.

how to work together. The second stage is the development of unity and problem solving. Conflict usually comes as this stage develops and has been found to be important to the development of groups. A group must be able to resolve conflict before it can move in harmony to the following stage of taking action. The final stage comes as the group completes its work and is called the termination stage.²¹

Personal interaction among students and faculty is crucial. Online courses must be intentional in making space for personal issues. The need for personal interaction will cause students to connect through outside means such as email when personal interaction is not properly facilitated within the parameters of the online community. Students who have online courses without the personal element often feel isolated and dissatisfied with the learning experience. In the online learning community students are more apt to depend on each other to meet deadlines and achieve the learning objectives.²² The book *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace: Effective Strategies for the Online Classroom*, states, “Without the support and participation of a learning community, there is no online course.”²³

Church Revitalization Literature

Church revitalization literature categorizes the ability of a church to function in community as a requirement for revitalization and a marker of health. Group learning and experiential learning are two methods of learning that may be of special use in church revitalization. The concept of working and learning in community is a common theme in Christian literature. In order to responsibly consider the use of group learning within the context of church revitalization, consideration of what the professionals in the field of

²¹ Palloff and Pratt, *Collaborating Online: Learning Together in Community*, 15-16.

²² Rena M. Palloff and Keith Pratt, *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace: Effective Strategies for the Online Classroom*, The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 29.

²³ Rena M. Palloff and Keith Pratt, *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace*, 29.

church revitalization have written is required. The following is a sampling of books by various authors in the field of church revitalization.

The book *Re:Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church*, recommends building teams to increase the healthy function of the church community. Community is defined as the people one can reach to join them in their particular venture. Community in the realm of businesses would be defined as customers or potential customers. The community of the church is the people that the church can get to join them in fellowship and worship. Typically, people who live within three miles of the church are candidates to become part of the church community.²⁴ The process of bringing these candidates into the church, experiencing conversion, and becoming mature disciples are clear objectives for the church community. One way to get the church to obtain these ministry goals is to build teams. The congregation itself is a team which needs to be motivated and mobilized to do the work of the ministry. The church staff is a team whose knowledge and expertise are suited to train and develop leaders.²⁵

Stephen Macchia, in his book *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry*, argues that Jesus built community by teaching in groups, both large and small. The disciples lived in community with Jesus as He taught and prepared them for ministry. Macchia contends that Jesus continually strove to build community with the disciples to mobilize them for new experiences. The process of teaching and building in community for the purpose of preparing and sending the disciples became a cycle that was repeated throughout the New Testament. One of the reasons Jesus taught in community was so the learner could share that teaching with others.²⁶ Teaching in

²⁴ Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold, *Re:Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2014), 212.

²⁵ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church*, 212-13.

²⁶ Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 80.

community requires providing a safe environment which allows people the freedom to be themselves. If ministry today is to build community through teaching, then as Jesus considered the needs of the disciples, the church must take consideration of the needs of those in their community.²⁷

The book *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally*, by David Hesselgrave, points out some important small groups in the New Testament and the significance of the number in a group. Jesus chose twelve men to be apostles making them a significant small group. Jesus had a special relationship with three of the disciples which made Jesus, Peter, James and John a small group. In Luke 10:1 Jesus sent seventy of his followers to go before him into the cities which Jesus would be going. In 1 Corinthians 15:6, after his resurrection, Jesus appeared to five hundred brethren at one time. Hesselgrave contends there is significance in the number of each group. Small groups come in a variety of sizes. The optimum size of a group in maximizing effectiveness is directly related to the purpose, activities and settings of the group.²⁸

Hesselgrave contends a small group should be confined to the number of members who can establish a face-to-face relationship. The small group should be thirty members or less so the absence of any member would be noticed. This understanding of a small group coincides with the definition of a community as the maximum number of people who can maintain face-to-face relationships. Churches need the face-to-face relationships of small groups to meet the congregation's need for acceptance and fellowship. Hesselgrave further contends that in some cultures it would be difficult for local churches to grow much larger than the maximum size of the small group.²⁹

The book *Advanced Strategic Planning*, by Aubrey Malphurs contends that the

²⁷ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry*, 80-84.

²⁸ David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond*, 2nd ed (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2000), 204-5.

²⁹ Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond*, 205-7.

concept of believers working in groups is modeled throughout the Old and New Testament. A church will only rise to the level of the ability of its members. Church programs and discipleship processes cannot accomplish anything without people to implement those initiatives. Members need to be able to work together as a group in order to reach their potential because all the members together can do more than one member alone.³⁰ Malphurs further contends in his book, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins: How to Change a Church without Destroying It*, that New Testament ministry is a team ministry. Jesus worked with his disciples so He could work through them.³¹

The book *Where Do We Go from Here*, by Ralph Neighbour, Jr., argues that the basic Christian community contains two types of groups. The first group is called the Shepherd group whose basic function is that of nurture. The Shepherd group edifies members, helping them to use their spiritual gifts and build support systems. The second group is called a Share group whose main function is evangelism.³² The church community begins with pastors who are shepherds, revealers, enablers and facilitators. Those pastors develop a Shepherd group to help each member learn to exercise their spiritual gifts so they can edify others. Members are equipped to witness and share their faith with others. As members mature and grow, some will join a Share group to reach the lost and bring them into the Shepherd group.³³

Thom Rainer's *The Book of Church Growth* contends that small groups benefit the church and ministry in many ways. The small group helps to develop a deeper trust required to facilitate the intimacy and sharing necessary for changing lives. Small groups

³⁰ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 210, ProQuest.

³¹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins: How to Change a Church without Destroying It* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 139.

³² Ralph W. Neighbour and Lorna Jenkins, *Where Do We Go from Here? A Guidebook for Cell Group Churches* (Houston: Touch Publishing, 1990), 194.

³³ Neighbour and Jenkins, *Where Do We Go from Here? A Guidebook for Cell Group Churches*, 210.

have the ability to attract nonmembers to the church. People often join a small group for social or topical reasons then develop relationships with those in the group. The connection made within the small group gives a feeling of belonging. Having a sense of belonging in the group leads to a feeling of belonging in the church and eventually becoming a church member. Small groups also, have the capability of providing some pastoral care in the sense of shepherds looking after the sheep. The personal interaction of small groups is beneficial in developing relationships and engaging members in ministry.³⁴ Building relationships is critical for the success of small groups and ministry. Stephen Macchia stated, “I am convinced that virtually everything we accomplish in ministry is the direct result of the quality of our relationships.”³⁵

The book *Breakout Churches*, by Thom Rainer, examined churches that had plateaued or declined for several years then broke out and sustained new growth for several years.³⁶ One of the observations the book made was that breakout churches understood that church members needed to be connected to small groups. The relationship connection at the small group level helped members grow in spiritual health and stay in the church. Breakout churches were strategic and clear in the utilization of small groups. Open-ended groups were found to be more effective than closed-end groups partly because of the differences in duration and enrollment. The closed-end groups had a predetermined end date as well as a selective and closed enrollment. Open-ended groups were ongoing with a continuous open enrollment. Open-ended groups were typically better at building lasting relationships.³⁷

The book *Growing True Disciples*, by George Barna, states that small groups

³⁴ Thom S. Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology, and Principles* (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman Press, 1993), 293-94.

³⁵ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry*, 84.

³⁶ Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 20-21.

³⁷ Rainer, *Breakout Churches*, 106-7.

are an effective method for discipleship. Churches that use small groups must have ample training for their facilitators, an accountability process, strong communication, networking, and good material or the small group will fail to produce disciples.³⁸ Barna noted that the Adult Bible Fellowship has been found to be a good alternative to Sunday School or to be used in conjunction with Sunday School. The Adult Bible Fellowship is designed for use with groups of thirty to eighty. It provides a high-quality Bible teaching each week that corresponds with the Sunday sermon. The effectiveness of this tool is partially credited to the ability to take a large group and provide the intimacy of a life changing small group.³⁹

The book *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, by Robert Coleman, contends there are many methods for evangelism but all methods should place priority on training people to reach people. Coleman suggests it is best to start by training a few. In order to train people, one must seek them, win them, work for them and pray for them.⁴⁰ Training a few in the community setting that Jesus trained requires spending time together. This requires a commitment that Coleman illustrates with Billy Graham's answer to the question of what his plan would be if he were the pastor of a large church. "I think one of the first things I would do would be to get a small group of eight or ten or twelve people around me that would meet a few hours a week and pay the price!"⁴¹ When training others one must keep them going by giving ample supervision, give them things to do, have expectations for them, share their burdens and finally, empower them to carry on without supervision.⁴²

³⁸ George Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ*, Barna Reports for Highly Effective Churches (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2001), 121.

³⁹ Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ*, 122.

⁴⁰ Robert E Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Spire, 2010), 112-15.

⁴¹ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 116.

⁴² Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 117-20.

The book *Nuts and Bolts of Church Revitalization* proposes the utilization of a Church Revitalization Assistance Team. People working together in teams can be effective in bringing about change but the right people need to be on the team. Members of the team need to be dedicated, optimistic, creative, have a strong faith, and be able to work together with others. The book recommends five to seven people serve on the team. The team members are responsible for recruiting, communicating the biblical message for revitalization, develop a plan, create awareness, clarify expectations and present a timeline. These actions will help the church move forward and stay on track in the revitalization process.⁴³

Bill Henard in his book *Can These Bones Live: A Practical Guide to Church Revitalization*, points out that pastors endeavoring to revitalize a church will have to deal with groups who have something invested and at stake in the church. These groups can be very suspicious of change. Pastors need to know who these investor groups are and how to work effectively with them. These groups can be divided by the number who have been in the church for less than thirty years and those who have been members for over thirty years. The church can be further divided by making divisions for those who have been members for less than ten years and new members. Each group has different viewpoints, priorities, experiences, and expectations. Each group must be managed differently to adequately address the group's interests at stake.⁴⁴

Sociology and Psychology Support Working and Learning in Groups

Sociology and psychology, both support the value of working and learning in groups. Sociology and psychology play a significant role in group learning. Research in sociology indicates that group learning has several social benefits. Group learning can be

⁴³ Cheyney and Rials, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Revitalization*, 83-93.

⁴⁴ William David Henard, *Can These Bones Live?* (Nashville: B&H, 2015), 30-39.

a help in changing behavior and empowering both the individual in the group and the group itself. The psychology of group learning has been the focus of much research in efforts to determine the impact of group interaction on the individual and the group in aspects of learning and socialization. Psychologists are identifying multiple types of groups in an effort to understand their unique make up and purpose. This section will consider what makes a group, the social aspects and benefits, the psychological impact and benefits, and identify some of the different kinds of group modes.

Group Structure and Characteristics

The concept of a small group deals with several people working together for a common purpose. Several people can work independently on the same problem or task without being part of a group. The factors that distinguish a small group are what people accomplish by working together and the sense of unity or community they feel about it.⁴⁵ The book *Communication and the Small Group*, by Gerald Phillips gives this definition for a small group, “When two or more people share a common goal and to greater or lesser degrees pool their energies, talents, commitments, etc., to the accomplishment of that goal, a small group exists. For a group to be considered a small group, there must be few enough people so that they can converse face to face and not find it necessary to utilize formal resolution techniques (parliamentary procedure) to make their decisions.”⁴⁶

All groups have goals because every group meets together for the purpose of doing something. Group goals may be concrete and explicit or abstract and general. Groups will constantly assess how successful they are at achieving their goals and if their goal is changing or needs to be changed. Changes concerning goals can stress the dynamic of the group because everyone has individual goals that may or may not align

⁴⁵ Gerald M. Phillips, *Communication and the Small Group*, 2nd ed, The Bobbs-Merrill Series in Speech Communication, 12 (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), 34.

⁴⁶ Phillips, *Communication and the Small Group*, 34.

with new group goals. Groups may have such an impact on the individual that they realign their personal goals to accommodate the group. At times the individual may have an impact on the group so that the group realigns their goals to coincide with the individual.⁴⁷

There are five phases involved in group membership. The first phase is a period of investigation where the group is looking for recruits and individuals who are considering joining a group. The second phase is socialization where the group attempts to change the individual so they can better serve in the group and the individual attempts to change the group to better serve their personal interests. The third phase is maintenance where a negotiation takes place to find the best role for the individual to maximize both their personal goals and the group's goals. The fourth phase is resocialization where a higher level of assimilation of the individual into the group takes place to best accommodate each other. The fifth phase is a period of remembrance where both parties engage in a retrospective evaluation of their relationship. The phases of socialization and resocialization are the most stressful for the group and the individual.⁴⁸

Social Aspects and Benefits

People have a human need for a sense of belonging, kinship, and a connection to some higher purpose. The deterioration of the family unit combined with the social instability of culture increases the need for people to identify with others in what is termed a community. These communities are formed and developed from shared values and identity. A community may be defined as a dynamic whole created when people join together, share common practices, make joint decisions and make a long-term

⁴⁷ Patrick R. Penland and Sara Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, Communication Science and Technology 3 (New York: M. Dekker, 1974), 53-54.

⁴⁸ Paul B. Paulus, ed., *Psychology of Group Influence*, 2nd ed (Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum, 1989), 145.

commitment for the well-being of themselves, the group and others.⁴⁹ The process of taking a group of people and building a community for accomplishing shared goals and learning is not limited to face-to-face interaction. It is possible to develop a conscious community virtually through online discussions of goals, ethics, liabilities, communication styles, and other norms.⁵⁰

The first step in developing a community is for people to come together for a common purpose. Involvement in community requires a conscious commitment to the group. That commitment will be tested as members struggle with differences on how to proceed and what should be done.⁵¹ Conflict is common in these groups and the book *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace*, by Rena Palloff and Keith Pratt states, “If attempts are made to avoid the conflict, the group may disintegrate or simply go through the motions, never really achieving intimacy.”⁵² Disagreements are extremely important to the success of task oriented groups because disagreements tests and challenges information and reasoning.⁵³

Group learning benefits from the dynamics of how people behave in groups and how individual members respond and react in the group. The functioning of a group leads to incidental learning which is different from deliberate and conscious learning. Incidental learning merges peripheral data with group member’s emotional response to the data as they make determinations concerning some belief. Group members will consciously and unconsciously make generalizations based on how they see things from their own eyes, experiences, personality and culture. Learning is largely based on the

⁴⁹ Palloff and Pratt, *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace*, 25-26.

⁵⁰ Palloff and Pratt, *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace*, 23.

⁵¹ Palloff and Pratt, *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace*, 26.

⁵² Palloff and Pratt, *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace*, 26.

⁵³ Ernest G. Bormann, *Discussion and Group Methods: Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 195.

individual's unique style of interpretation and internalized. Learning is seldom verbalized, validated or reflected upon.⁵⁴

The most profound and intense peripheral learning takes place as a result of the members experiences while interacting in the group. Each member will react internally to events evoking emotions anxiousness, ego, rejection, elations, compassion, self -pity, fear, or mistrust.⁵⁵ Incidental group learning is useful in helping members learn to listen to content and feeling; communicate accurately and honestly; negotiate and work out differences; work with people they don't like; view confrontation as productive; to deal with and persevere through hostility and apathy.⁵⁶ The book, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, contends "No member comes out of a group experience unchanged in some way."⁵⁷

Studies in sociology have found that people working in groups can become a source of social change. People and organizations working in the community can become a social power. The book, *The Human Community*, gives this clarification, "Social power may be defined as the process of people bringing the resources they command to attain the goals they desire in relationships with other people."⁵⁸ Individuals find groups a mechanism of strength and power that is capable of achieving goals often thought to be unattainable on their own.

People's social lives and informal relationships impact the production goals of small groups. Failure to take informal relationships into consideration leads to discord,

⁵⁴ Penland and Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, 58.

⁵⁵ Penland and Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, 59.

⁵⁶ Penland and Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, 60.

⁵⁷ Penland and Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, 59-60.

⁵⁸ Edward Wesley Hassinger and James R. Pinkerton, *The Human Community* (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 261.

strife and conflict within the group.⁵⁹ The book *Social Psychology of Education: Theory and Research*, made this interesting conclusion concerning the German army, based on studies of military behavior during the second world war, “Shils and Janowitz (1948) showed that the breakdown of the German army was not due primarily to flaws in its formal organization but, instead arose out of dissolution of friendships among small units of soldiers. They concluded that the informal, supportive relationships of closeness among the soldiers were necessary for full realization of the formal goals of winning the war.”⁶⁰

Psychological Impact and Benefits

Groups have a psychological impact on people’s beliefs, values, feelings, and the fulfillment of basic needs. The family unit is a group which directly influences the religious and political views of members within the group.⁶¹ Groups are capable of meeting many of man’s basic needs. The need for people to feel safe and secure can be met through groups. Individuals often use groups to meet the social needs of being around other people and receiving affection. Groups can help individuals fulfill their highest potential by meeting their need for self-actualization and the need for prestige or the desire to be recognized.⁶²

The study of cybernetics compares the psychology of how humans control behavior to achieve goals with the way machines are programmed to achieve goals. Machines require a constant input of feedback in order to achieve and maintain programmed goals. Humans also require feedback from sources such as sight, feel,

⁵⁹ Bar-Tal and Saxe, *Social Psychology of Education*, 232-33.

⁶⁰ Bar-Tal and Saxe, *Social Psychology of Education*, 233.

⁶¹ Ronald L. Applbaum, ed., *The Process of Group Communication*, 2nd ed (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1979), 5.

⁶² Applbaum, *The Process of Group Communication*, 5.

hearing, mental understanding, and communication with others involved.⁶³ People require feedback for verification that the message they are communicating is being understood.⁶⁴ Studies indicate that the amount of information transmitted without distortion called fidelity was essential for successful communication. Interruptions and irrelevant or wrong information referred to as noise cut down the amount of information that could be transmitted or communicated. Noise would require redundancy in the repetition of input until it could be understood and communicated. Good communication requires minimizing noise and balancing redundancy to a level that results in the highest fidelity.⁶⁵

The psychology of how individuals react to the decision-making process of the group is major factor in the success of the group. Groups are structured to facilitate decision making. Groups that regulate decision making are shown to have less conflict. As groups make decisions concerning rules and procedures there will be built-in devices that individuals can use to oppose and restrict group decisions. Passive resistance is one of the most destructive of those devices because it so hard to recognize and confront. Individuals will resort to passive resistance if they feel their objections are not being heard or adequately conversed. Proper decision-making processes can allow objections to be heard and considered.⁶⁶

Psychology plays a determinant role in groups when making decisions about the rules for the group. Group rules are a dynamic which parallels decision making processes. The culture of the group will have spoken and unspoken expectations. The spoken rules are clear and easily seen when not adhered. Unspoken rules give comfort to some and make others uneasy. These rules elicit feels that are polar opposite to people;

⁶³ Bormann, *Discussion and Group Methods*, 30.

⁶⁴ Applbaum, *The Process of Group Communication*, 11.

⁶⁵ Bormann, *Discussion and Group Methods*, 30-31.

⁶⁶ Penland and Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, 55.

welcome or unwelcomed, safe or unsafe, included or not included. In general, members typically comply with the unspoken rules. A group that claims to have no rules is naïve because even informal groups must have rules. Individuals who break group culture or rules may face harsh retribution from the group like censure and alienation. Censorship may seem extreme but serves an important role in teaching participants to become group members.⁶⁷

Group Modes

There are several basic kinds or group modes. The work groups are the predominant mode. Work groups focus on accomplishing a task, learning information, mastering a skill or solving a problem. The discussion group is a more general mode that encourages, creativity, exchange of ideas, imagination, opinion, and brainstorming. The natural group is a mode that will form in the workplace and family units. This mode is a nondirected interrelationship process group that is used for the purpose of personal growth of the individual members.⁶⁸

An interesting and useful characteristic of the work group is the concept of how time is viewed from the group members. In the group setting, time is always seen as having a limit. The idea that there is a time deadline serves a purpose of keeping the group moving forward. The concept of time as a commodity that may run out motivates the group to assess success in terms of accomplishing the task in the shortest possible time.⁶⁹ The importance placed on productivity can be understood by considering that one of the primary characteristics of a work group is to have a well-defined purpose and reach that purpose more efficiently within the group than they could working independently.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Penland and Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, 56-57.

⁶⁸ Penland and Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, 34.

⁶⁹ Penland and Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, 34.

⁷⁰ Penland and Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, 35.

Discussion groups may accomplish a task but are more engineered to understand, interpret, and analyze a matter of interest. They work with facts and data but lean more to opinions and reactions. They are less concerned with time and more concerned with free participation and new ideas. Discussion groups engage in topics that are personal, emotional, and controversial on an objective level. In general, highly charged topics are talked about, not experienced. This group avoids discussion about the group itself or the process and dynamics of the group. The group focuses on human nature outside of the group.⁷¹

When a group of people come together for an explicit purpose in the hope of achieving their goal through the group experience, it is referred to as an experiential group. Experiential groups are used for a variety of purposes such as T-groups, sensitivity training, therapy, personal growth, human relations, and learning. There are three categories of experiential groups: learning, therapeutic, and expressive.⁷² Evidence indicates that experiential groups can effect small changes in personality and participants perceive that the group experience caused a change in their behavior and psychological functioning.⁷³

Conclusion

Research in education, church revitalization, sociology, and psychology, having different interests and purposes, have reached the same conclusion concerning group learning. Group learning can be highly effective and influential. Group learning takes place on its own in the family setting, peer groups, and social gatherings. The goal is to harness the potential of group learning to teach and mold people in knowledge and

⁷¹ Penland and Fine, *Group Dynamics and Individual Development*, 35.

⁷² Marvin E. Shaw, *Group Dynamics: The Psychology of Small Group Behavior*, 2nd ed, McGraw-Hill Series in Psychology (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 338.

⁷³ Shaw, *Group Dynamics: The Psychology of Small Group Behavior*, 357.

behavior. Group learning has the potential in church revitalization to teach in a way that sways the heart to buy in and internalize knowledge with conviction.

CHAPTER 4

DETAILS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Chapter four presents the practical application of addressing the revitalization needs of Immanuel Baptist as identified by this research paper. The practical application was a ministry project in the form of an eight-week group revitalization training program and the development of a ministry plan. Immanuel Baptist implemented the program starting in March of 2022 and ending in May of 2022. At the completion of this program, the participating group members presented the church with a ministry plan. The ministry plan included an action of change for each of the six areas of church revitalization covered in the project curriculum. Chapter four includes a detailed explanation of the training program, curriculum, and implementation instructions.

Revitalization Training Program

The group revitalization training program was structured to be implemented in eight sessions. Each session had its own set of goals which coincided with the overall goals of the program. At Immanuel Baptist, each session took one to two hours, depending on the level of discussion. The first session lasted over two hours. Each of the sessions used a combination of curriculum, teaching, discussion, and group interaction to help the participants understand and embrace church revitalization¹. Results from the pre- and post-surveys indicated that after completing the program the group's understanding of church revitalization increased 21.2 percent (see table 1). The sessions were purposefully designed so that at the end of the last session the group would have a

¹ Goals for each session and all worksheets can be found in appendix 5.

complete ministry action plan for the church.

The program was designed to be used with a small group, between five and twenty-five people. The goal for Immanuel Baptist was to have five to eight people complete the program. The first session surprisingly had sixteen participants, but that number fell off during the following sessions. The end result was eleven participants completed the program and took the pre- and post-surveys. Eleven participants exceeded attendance expectations for the project. The more significant aspect was the personalities of those eleven participants. They were all diligent, faithful, and worked well together.

The program was designed to be administered by a qualified leader or group of leaders. The leaders had to be cognizant of the ways group learning takes place. The leader position required the ability to teach the curriculum but also have the restraint to allow the curriculum and the group conversation to do the teaching. The role of the leader was more that of an administrator than a teacher. The leader was to ask thought provoking questions to direct the conversation in a manner which would allow the participants to grasp the concepts on their own. The leader would only teach when a truth or concept was not being understood. The administrator who implemented the program for Immanuel Baptist was the writer of this project paper and the pastor of the church.

The administrator was responsible for the accomplishment of four general objectives during the implementation of the curriculum. The first objective was to understand and utilize group dynamics to promote learning. The second objective was to take advantage of group interaction to foster the bonding of the participants. The third objective was to enable and empower the group to take action, such as making the ministry action plan. The fourth objective, and perhaps the most important, was to help them seek and see God's leading hand among them. These four objectives were critical in enabling the group to enact good, Bible-based, faith-led change.

The administrator had the responsibility to lead the group through the program in a preset order. The program began with the participants taking a pre-survey test. The

pre-survey at Immanuel Baptist was administered the very first thing, prior to using the worksheets for learning. All eight sessions were structured with worksheets to allow the administrator to lead the group through a series of questions and discussion points. The group at Immanuel Baptist liked using the worksheets. When the worksheets opened an opportunity for discussion, the group willingly engaged because they knew interaction was expected of them. At the end of the eight-week program, the participants took the same questionnaire as a post-survey. Recording the difference between the pre- and post-surveys gave insight to the effectiveness of the program. For example, the results recorded in table 1 indicate the group's understanding of what elements make up a healthy church increased 10.5 percent.

Every session followed the same flow of order. The sessions began with prayer, seeking the Holy Spirit to give understanding and lead the discussion. Then the participants were given the participant's worksheet for that session. The leader was provided with a leader's worksheet which included answers, suggested examples, and probing questions. The curriculum for each week was designed to give a basic understanding of that session's topic, evaluate what their church does in that area, discuss what the church should be doing, and decide on three courses of action their church could do in this area to be healthier. At the last session, the group would pick one of those three actions to include in a church revitalization ministry plan. At Immanuel Baptist, the consistency of the sessions helped the participants become more comfortable as the project proceeded. When the last session came, the group easily selected the ministry plan without contention.

Curriculum

The curriculum consisted of a pre-survey, post-survey, a participant's worksheet for each of the eight sessions, and an administrator's worksheet for each of the eight sessions. The survey form and all worksheets are included in the appendix. When

the pre-survey was administered at Immanuel Baptist, several participants found the questions to be thought provoking and enlightening. Some participants asked questions, such as what was the meaning of the terms “outward focused” and “inward focused.” Learning at Immanuel Baptist started with the pre-survey. The curriculum was designed to be adaptable so a church can use it repetitiously by adapting the worksheets to meet their current needs. Toward the end of the first session, some participants made comments that they were not sure what to expect, but they were impressed on how relevant and well thought out the curriculum was. Before all the sessions were completed, some participants were saying that the church should do this program every year. The pre- and post-surveys are also adaptable so they can be changed to better assess the effectiveness of the program.

The writing of the curriculum took into consideration three major factors. The first major factor was the dynamic of group learning. The curriculum would have been written more specifically informational if it had been intended to be used in a normal teacher-student environment. This curriculum was designed to let the participants discover answers instead of providing them with the answers. The second major factor was to show need. The process of discovering the contrast between what a healthy church does in comparison to what their own church does allowed the participants to discover for themselves the needs of the church. The third major factor was to motivate and empower the participants to take action. The curriculum was written and designed so that all suggestions of change would come from the participants. The participants were reminded that God can and will use them if they look for the Holy Spirit to lead and direct them. When those participants reached session eight, they chose a ministry plan from suggestions that came entirely from themselves; not from the administrator, books, or influential Christian leaders. They saw that this was their work and it was a work that God had called them to. This premise was based on the verse; “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil 2:13).

There were three major goals for the curriculum. The first goal was to teach through group interaction. The second goal was to get the participants to form a bond that would inspire them to continue working together after the eight sessions ended. The third goal was for the group to develop a ministry action plan for the church. It was important that whoever taught the curriculum avoided falling into a lecture mode. The key was to teach succinctly, ask questions, and get the participants engaged and talking. The strength of the curriculum was in starting conversations that the participants could engage in as a group. Group interaction was a key component in getting them to form a bond by the end of the eight weeks. At Immanuel Baptist, the group bonded well because all answers to participant's questions came from other participants. The administrator avoided giving answers in order that the group would feel more empowered to answer. The result was the participants found themselves looking to each other for answers instead of the administrator. The curriculum for each week provided the administrator with a list of goals for that session, a participant's worksheet to pass out and use, and an administrator's worksheet to structure teaching and record group answers.

The sessions each had their own purpose and were administered in a pre-set order. Session one was an introduction and overview of what was to come, what was to be expected, how the sessions would work, and included a brief lesson on the strength of group learning. A key point was that two are better than one as Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 states. Sessions two through seven dealt with: evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine. In session eight, the group voted on which action plan suggestions should be included in the ministry action plan and implemented. During the last session, two participants were selected to screen each action plan for biblical correctness and accuracy so that the accumulated ministry action plan could be presented to the church council at their next business meeting.

Session One: Introduction

Week one began the program as an introduction. In this session, the administrator explained to the participants how the program worked, set expectations, got applicable consent forms signed, and administered the pre-survey. The success of the program hinged on the administrator understanding the goals set for the group in session one. At Immanuel Baptist, the administrator reinforced these goals each session and in the pulpit during services. The goals for session one are listed below.

1. Administer the pre-survey.
2. Get consent forms signed and gathered.
3. Explain the goals of the program.
 - a. Build a bond that makes the group stronger and propels them to continue to work together after the program ends.
 - b. Increase knowledge and understanding of church revitalization issues.
 - c. Effect changes by making a ministry plan for each of the six church revitalization issues.
4. Explain what is going to happen each week and how the program works.
 - a. Explain to the participants there will be a worksheet each week that will address biblical texts concerning that session's topic.
 - b. Explain there will be discussion on what is presently being done in our church for that week's topic and what our church should be doing in that area.
 - c. Explain that the group will come up with three suggestions that the church can do for growth in that area. In session eight, one of these suggestions will be picked to be part of the ministry plan for the church.

The administrator began session one with the pre-survey. In this project, the participants' completion of the pre-course survey was equal to a signed acceptance form for participation. Goal two for this session, which was to get consent forms signed, was accomplished with completion of the pre-survey. After the pre-survey, the administrator passed out the participants' worksheets and used the administrator's worksheet to start the session. The use of the worksheets in session one served as an example of what the participants could expect in the upcoming sessions. The biblical teaching for session one

focused on the importance of working together in the aspect that a twofold cord is not easily broken. A group can accomplish more than an individual. In order to help the participants seek God and be aware of His leading presence, the administrator emphasized that there is one more person in the group. The group was gathered together in Jesus's name; therefore, Jesus was there with them. The work they were to do was His work.

Session one at Immanuel Baptist started with questions from the participants about some of the terms on the pre-survey. The group continued to ask questions throughout the session. Session one turned out to be very important because it gave the group a sample of what the rest of the sessions would be like. The group liked the format and seemed to enjoy engaging in conversation. Comments from the group were all positive.

Sessions Two through Seven

Sessions two through seven focused on helping the group get a better understanding of the six areas (evangelism, discipleship, outreach, prayer, worship, and doctrine) of revitalization targeted for change. These sessions had the same four goals. The first goal was to engage the group in understanding the area of revitalization targeted for change in that session. The second goal was to have an honest evaluation of what their church does in that area of church health. The third goal was to engage the group in discussion on what their church should be doing in that area of church health. The fourth goal was for the group to decide on three viable options of change in that area of church health which will help the church grow stronger and move towards revitalization.

Session two focused on the area of evangelism. The biblical view of evangelism was engaged with focus on the proclamation or spreading of the gospel. The administrator engaged participants in conversation to help them grasp a basic understanding of what evangelism is and why it is important to church health and

revitalization. At Immanuel Baptist, the administrator found the worksheets to be very instrumental in leading the group through the learning process and facilitating discussion for suggested actions of change. The group at Immanuel Baptist came up with the following suggested options for change:

1. Change children's Sunday school curriculum to be more like a vacation Bible school with engaging music, games, and lessons. The hope is that if Sunday School is more fun, then it might draw more kids, resulting in more opportunities to share the gospel.
2. Have the church make an agreement with the youth to pay for summer camp if they come to church for a set number of weeks. The offer would be extended to their friends in an effort to reach youth outside of the church.
3. Have a craft and game night open to the church and the public once a month. Participants will be able to make a craft or be guided through making their own painting. Games will be available for those not interested in crafts. Food will be supplied and a short devotional given. This will be advertised in the paper in hopes of bringing in those who are lonely or looking for something fun to do.

Session three focused on the area of discipleship and the role it plays in church revitalization. The administrator engaged the participants in the biblical concept that discipleship is making disciples. To be a disciple of Jesus, one must be like Jesus and do what He did. Two things were important to point out: Jesus came to serve, not to be served, and he came to seek and save those who are lost. At Immanuel Baptist, the administrator noticed that, in this session, the group was beginning to have its own personality. Participants were becoming more vocal but very supportive. The administrator viewed the development of personality as a good thing for the bonding of the group, while also noting to watch that the dynamics stayed friendly and open. At the end of the session, the group decided on the following suggestions for change:

1. Develop a six-week discipleship course that could be offered each year.
2. Start a small group that would meet together once a week for discussion of a book, devotional or something from the Pastor's sermon.
3. Start a women's Bible study that enables participants to pour themselves into others.

Session four focused on the area of outreach. The administrator engaged the group in understanding what outreach means and why it is important to church

revitalization. One of the key elements was the importance of a church looking like the community.² Another key element was viewing outreach as meeting the needs of those outside of the church in hopes of an opportunity to share the gospel. This session was especially interactive for the Immanuel Baptist group. Some participants of the group struggled with the idea of committing resources and ministry to those who are not part of the church. This group viewed outreach as doing ministry for members of the church and inviting those outside the church to come and join them. The discussion of this topic led to a lively interaction wherein one participant became very vocal. The administrator had to take control to prevent the session from being hijacked by strong-willed individuals. A clarification of boundaries of the discussion topic, followed by reiteration that this program needed all participants to engage to be successful, worked in getting discussion friendly and back on topic. Survey results in Chapter 5 pp. 74-76 showed that the group's acceptance that outreach should be outward focused raised 6.17 percent. After the discussion, the group decided on these suggestions for change:

1. Start a Stephen Ministries³ in the church to develop a lay counsel ministry.
2. Decorate sacks and fill them with candy and small gifts to give away. A pamphlet detailing the church services and ministry opportunities will be included along with a gospel tract. These sacks can be decorated for different holidays and special events.
3. Start a youth booster club. Members will find out when the youth of the church are participating in sports events or school activities and have someone in the church go to watch and support them. The group can offer to bring drinks and snacks to games or practices.

Session five focused on the topic of worship. The administrator engaged the group in understand what individual and corporate worship means and why it is important to church revitalization. When the group discussed what Immanuel Baptist

² Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive* (Nashville: B&H, 2014), 25-29.

³ Stephen Ministries is a not-for-profit Christian education organization that produces training and resources for caring ministry, spiritual gifts discovery, grief support, and spiritual growth.

should do as part of worship, they came up with nine items: pray, give thanks, attend church, show kindness, witness, teach, live for God, share, and praise God. The church members do all of these but not efficiently enough to classify as worship and this led to an open conversation of problem areas in the church. Those problem areas included members of Immanuel Baptist being more apt to complain than to give thanks. One participant commented that members need to respect others' opinions. Acknowledgement was made by some that the church has a problem with showing kindness, even to one another. The group was reminded that efforts to initiate an old-fashioned prayer chain was dropped because the members did not want to have to talk on the phone to one another. The ability to talk openly about these issues helped the participants to see, perhaps for the first time, the need for change. After discussion, the group decided on these suggested changes:

1. Facilitate ways to better incorporate altar calls at the end of each service.
2. Start a praise team.
3. Incorporate ways to allow the Holy Spirit to extend the service through people being led to give a testimony or prayer and the pastor preaching longer when he feels led (some participants wanted to see what they termed as a "moving of the Holy Spirit" to move upon the pastor to preach longer). The basic idea is to eliminate time constraints in the service.

Session six focused on the importance of prayer and its role in church revitalization. The administrator engaged the group in understanding the difference between an individual's prayer and corporate prayer. Both individual and corporate prayers are necessary to church health and revitalization. The Immanuel Baptist group talked about returning to a service each week that would be devoted only to prayer. The problem in the past was that people stopped coming to those type of prayer meetings. Some members lamented that the church had stopped passing out prayer lists. One person made the point that when the church did pass out prayer lists, it was questionable whether people really were praying for those concerns. The list would continue to grow and when members were asked about the names on the list, they did not know who they were or

what they were on the prayer list for. The group liked the idea of formal prayers in unison combined with responsive reading. After discussion, the group decided on the following suggestions for change:

1. Incorporate the reading of classic, historical prayers in the Sunday service.
2. Start a small prayer group that would meet in homes.
3. Start a pre-service prayer group. The group would gather together before the service on Sunday mornings and pray for the service and the church.

Session seven focused on the importance of knowing and teaching doctrine.

The administrator engaged the group in the importance of doctrine and its role in church health and revitalization. In this setting, doctrine was defined as the teachings of the church. The Immanuel Baptist group engaged in discussion about problems the church had encountered when people joined the church but did not abide by the church's beliefs and teachings. Conflict would arise when new members started teaching things that were contrary to the church's beliefs. A new members' class was suggested to avoid this source of conflict. Then conversation progressed to questioning how many of the present members knew Southern Baptist doctrines. Survey results in chapter five pp. 74-76 indicate a 12.2 percent increase in the group's ability to communicate the tenants of the Baptist Faith and Message after completing the program. After discussion, the group decided on the following suggestions:

1. Start a Wednesday night class to teach the Baptist Faith and Message.
2. Have Bible studies on specific books of the Bible.
3. Incorporate the use of catechisms for children and adults.

Session Eight: Application

Session eight concluded the program with the completion of the ministry plan and encouragement to continue working together. The administrator led the group in a discussion of the importance of proceeding in love. The group needed to have a good understanding of why love was important to the success of church revitalization.

Following this teaching of the worksheet, the group was led in the discussion of the ministry plan options. The administrator used the worksheets (see footnote one) to accomplish the following five goals.

1. Explain and have a discussion on the importance of “love” as we move forward.
2. With love as the main focus, discuss what the vision of Immanuel Baptist should be as we move forward in a church revitalization effort.
3. Discuss and pick one of the suggested action plans for each topic discussed in the preceding weeks to include in a ministry plan for Immanuel Baptist.
4. Discuss ways the group can stay connected and continue working together after the program ends.
5. Administer post-survey.

At Immanuel Baptist, the administrator led the group in a discussion about “proceeding in love” because the Bible says love never fails (1 Cor 13:8). The administrator also reminded the group that all the suggestions for the ministry plan were theirs, not his. These ministry suggestions were the result of God moving on their hearts and leading them. Several members of the group made comments that it was hard to pick just one in each area because they thought the church should do all of them. The administrator explained that the church could do all of them but they needed to pick one to start with. After discussion, the group decided on the following suggestions to include in the ministry plan:

1. Have a craft and game night open to the church and the public once a month. Participants will be able to make a craft or be guided through making their own painting. Games will be available for those not interested in crafts. Food will be supplied and a short devotional given. This will be advertised in the paper in hopes of bringing in those who are lonely or looking for something fun to do.
2. Start a small group that would meet together once a week for discussion of a book, devotional or something from the Pastor’s sermon.
3. Start a youth booster club. Members will find out when the youth of the church are participating in sports events or school activities and have someone in the church go to watch and support them. The group can offer to bring drinks and snacks to games or practices.
4. Facilitate ways to better incorporate altar calls at the end of each service.

5. Start a pre-service prayer group. The group would gather together before the service on Sunday mornings and pray for the service and the church.
6. Start a Wednesday night class to teach the Baptist Faith and Message.

After the post-survey, the group celebrated with a meal and fellowship. The administrator reiterated in each session that this was a hard task and a work that they were doing for God. The group was encouraged throughout the eight weeks to be faithful and not quit. Completing the ministry plan gave the group a real sense of accomplishment. The meal celebration enhanced the feeling of having accomplished something really big and important. Immediately following the last session, a business meeting was held and the above ministry plan was voted in.

Implementation

The implementation of the project began by mapping out the complete timeline from promotion to completion. At Immanuel Baptist, the first thing that was put on that timeline was prayer. If God was not at work in the implementation of the program, then no good could be accomplished. If through prayer God engaged and his Holy Spirit led the group, then whatever came from this project would be good and a blessing. The timeline required eight weeks that a small group could meet consecutively. Two factors that were considered by Immanuel Baptist were winter holidays and inclement weather. The month of March was selected to start the program to avoid issues with winter weather and less competing activities.

The next step was to find the appropriate administrator or administrators. The candidates had to be of good report, have good rapport with other church members, have sufficient knowledge of all topics so they could lead the group through the learning process, and be committed to finishing the task assigned. At Immanuel Baptist, the pastor was the administrator. The church had a tendency of looking to the pastor to make decisions and do things. The pastor at Immanuel Baptist throughout the program kept explaining that he was not there to tell them what to do or give suggestions. His role was

that of administrator and God would work through them in accomplishing the goals of this program.

The promotion of the program got more people involved, set expectations and raised enthusiasm. At Immanuel Baptist, the pastor promoted the program in the pulpit by utilizing sermons which enlightened the need for church health and revitalization. The pastor believed it was important for the church members to see the need for church health and revitalization. The program was explained and promoted during Sunday and Wednesday services as both a learning exercise and a roadmap to actions that could bring church health and revitalization. The pastor also emphasized the importance of attendance and participation. He explained that this was not a Bible study or a lesson plan. The learning that would take place would be through discussion and group interaction. This program was designed to work through the communication and interaction of everyone in the group, therefore everyone needed to be faithful in coming to all the sessions.

The next step was to recruit a group. At Immanuel Baptist, a sign-up sheet was passed around at services and the pastor asked people individually. Prayer was vital in getting a group together because the group would develop its own personality and become its own entity. Having the wrong personalities or the wrong number would have an impact on the success of the group. Only God knew whether bigger or smaller would be better for our group and which personalities would mesh the best. The pastor at Immanuel Baptist wanted to get as many participants recruited as possible due to the concern of having enough members committed to finishing the program. God answered those prayers by exceeding the pastor's expectations.

After the group had been formed and a leader was recruited, a proper place to meet had to be ascertained. The setting needed to be an area that would allow the participants to see one another and interact without straining. The seats needed to be comfortable enough so that older participants could sit through longer sessions without

discomfort. The first session for Immanuel Baptist ran over two hours. An older couple expressed that it was hard for the wife, who was in her eighties, to sit for two hours. The group made adjustments to keep conversations on topic and, although sessions still went over an hour, they ended well short of two hours. Additional accommodations could have been made by getting higher quality chairs or starting earlier and inserting multiple breaks in the sessions.

The success of implementing the sessions was dependent on the leader looking for the Holy Spirit to lead the group. Restraint had to be made by the leader not to interject his own ideas or influence the flow of conversation. The group had its own level of understanding and spiritual health. Conversation and ideas that came from that group matched their level of spiritual growth. The leader may have had a higher understanding and spiritual growth, but the group's level better matched the church's level. It was important to trust God and let the group work. The more the leader empowered the group, the more they engaged. During the implementation of the program at Immanuel Baptist, the pastor encouraged the group each week by commending them for their faithfulness and dedication in doing the Lord's work. Praise is one of the most effective motivators. The group needed to see their efforts as work that they were doing for the Lord. Repetition of these facts helped the group stay focused and determined.

The key to implementing each session was to follow the worksheets. The worksheets facilitated the completion of all goals for each session. The administrator's worksheets were helpful in preparing and leading each session. Participants found the participants' worksheets valuable in helping to understand concepts, writing down their own thoughts, and encouraging conversation. Several of the participants at Immanuel Baptist made comments on how well thought out the worksheets were.

Conclusion

Church revitalization is the process of making a church healthier. The road to

health is a continuous, ongoing process where the church gradually becomes healthier. A small sustainable increase in health lays the foundation for the next small sustainable health increase. The increase of church health is not measured by the knowledge and spiritual strength of a few but the combined health of the church as a group. Revitalizing a church requires the revitalization of the church as a community or group through the repetition of small sustainable increases. This eight-session program is adaptable so it can be used each year to continuously build church health.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Evaluation of the project is for reflection on what successfully worked and what changes would make the project better. This chapter will evaluate the project's purpose and the project's goals. An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the project will follow. Evaluation should lead to honest changes that will make the project better. Therefore, I will address what I would have done differently. Sound theology is a prerequisite for true church revitalization. Personal interpretation is an important aspect of valuable evaluation. For those reasons, a section on theological reflections is included, followed by a section on personal reflections.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip the members of Immanuel Baptist Church in Petersburg, Indiana for the work of ministry by developing a group revitalization program. The development of a group revitalization program was for the purpose of helping the church get healthy enough for members to effectively engage in ministry. A revitalization program was chosen for the targeted method to bring the church to health. The church presently addresses issues with church health by doing things that worked in the past. Those efforts are not working and have not worked for years. Logically, continuing to attempt to do things as they were done in the past will only bring the same failed result. The term church revitalization itself indicates a change. One or two changes by themselves will not make the church healthy. Church health requires continual change and adjustments. Church revitalization was the best choice because revitalization is a process. The purpose of the program was to engage the church in the

process of revitalization so that it could develop healthy habits.

The purpose of the project was addressed successfully in some ways. Results from pre- and post-surveys indicated a significant increase in knowledge of the participants concerning church health and revitalization. When the group picked the ministry plan in the last session, they were more open to changes that broke away from ways of the past. During discussion, some of the participants were acknowledging that there were cultural differences between generations. It was a good sign to hear them actually say there were things that worked for their generations that will not work for the younger generations. The process of revitalization seems to have genuinely begun. Some participants were even commenting that we need to do this each year.

The purpose of the project was not fully addressed. The process of revitalization may have begun; however, the revitalization process could easily stop. At least three things must happen to maintain the process. The first thing is the church has to follow through with the ministry plan. God has blessed the participants in leading them through the program and development of the ministry plan. Failure to be doers of the work could undo the good that has been done. The second thing is there must be follow up and continued maintenance. The revitalization message and lessons need to be reinforced throughout the year. Consistent teaching and preaching in love will eventually win the congregation over. The third thing is that the program needs to be repeated each year. This repetition of the program must be a process each year that brings focus on what the church needs to do in its present state to be healthy. These three things are outside the parameters of this program but they are vital to accomplishing the overall purpose of the program.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The first goal was to develop an eight-session curriculum that would equip participants for the work of church revitalization in the areas of: evangelism, discipleship,

outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine. This goal was successfully completed by exceeding the minimum criterion as judged by the expert panel who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.¹ The effectiveness of the curriculum after implementation is the focus of evaluation in this critical analysis. The curriculum overall was effective but the implementation of the curriculum revealed areas in need of change.

The curriculum was designed to make participants think for themselves before discussion. The worksheets would ask what the church does in the focused area for that session, followed by what the church should do. For example, in session three the participants discussed what Immanuel Baptist does for discipleship, and what Immanuel Baptist should do for discipleship. Then, the participants were instructed to write in their own words what discipleship is. The flaw which was revealed was that in some of the sessions, when discussion started, it became clear the group did not have a proper understanding of the session's topic. An example of this is the session on discipleship. The discussion on what Immanuel Baptist does for discipleship went way off course because participants began talking about things that were evangelistic or outreach oriented. I had to clarify and explain discipleship and the difference between discipleship, evangelism, and outreach.

The "what is" question (what is evangelism, discipleship, etc.) was placed third on the worksheets based on the premise that everyone should have at least a general understanding of the topic. Answering that question after discussing what the church does and what it should do in that area was intended to help participants internalize the meaning. Questions asked in that order worked well in some of the sessions but in some sessions, it caused confusion. One thing I would do differently is I would add a definition of the topic at the beginning of the session. I would include the differences between that

¹ See appendix 1.

topic and others that are closely related. I found that the participants in the group gave definitions for evangelism, discipleship, and outreach which were all interchangeable. Had I given a definition for each which included the differences from their counterparts, then the group would have heard the distinctions between evangelism, discipleship, and outreach three times. I would still leave the “what is” question in its original order because it did seem to help the participants internalize the meaning and application.

The curriculum facilitated the formation of a ministry action plan for the church in six areas. There was a session for each of those six areas of church health. At the end of each of those sessions, the group was to come up with three options of change that would help Immanuel Baptist be more effective in that area. I found that some participants in the group would just repeat parts of the discussion of what the church should do in that area. Some participants would offer the same suggestions for each session. One change I would make is that there needs to be a better explanation of the division between what the church should do in general and a specific plan of action the church can implement. Another change I would make is I would include a list of what other churches have done or are doing. The participants were well intentioned but most of them did not have a knowledge bank in these areas to draw from when making suggestions. Giving examples would have helped them formulate more options. I would give a list that was not so long that it overwhelmed them and not so short that they felt I was advocating particular options.

The last session instructed the group to pick one option from each of the sessions for a ministry plan. The reasoning for this task being placed last was to maintain a sense of purpose and importance from the first session all the way through to the last session. For eight weeks I impressed upon this group that they were doing this work for God and I praised them for their faithfulness. I wanted the finalizing of the ministry plan to be the culmination of the program so that the group could see God working through them. After implementing the curriculum, I found that building anticipation for the last

session worked well. I also discovered that by picking the ministry plan in the last session it helped the group to avoid conflicts between the ministry options. For example, in almost all of the sessions someone recommended a suggested change that would be implemented during the Wednesday night service. The thought was to replace Wednesday night Bible study with the new program. Throughout the sessions, I had to keep reminding the group that they had already made suggested changes that were to replace the Wednesday night Bible study. Choosing the ministry plan options together in one setting helped the group to make decisions that avoided time and implementation conflicts.

The second goal was to implement the curriculum to increase the knowledge of participants in church revitalization in the areas of: evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine. The success of this goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-survey to determine the change in doctrinal knowledge. The pre- and post-surveys consisted of forty-seven questions. The first five questions asked information concerning church membership and agreement to participate. Only questions six through forty-seven were measured for analysis. Three questions showed no change. Four questions indicated a decline instead of an increase. Thirty-eight questions showed an increase. The t-test for dependent samples in Appendix 4 indicated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores. Based on the results of the pre- and post-surveys, goal two was successfully completed but detailed analysis revealed areas of concern.

Table 1. Pre- and post-course survey results

Question	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	Amount of Change	Percent of Change
6	5.64	5.73	+.09	+1.52%
7	5.73	5.82	+.09	+1.52%
8	5.73	5.82	+.09	+1.52%
9	5.45	5.45	.00	.00%
10	4.00	4.45	+.45	+7.58%
11	4.82	5.09	+.27	+4.55%
12	5.09	5.45	+.36	+6.06%
13	4.64	5.27	+.63	+10.5%
14	4.00	4.27	+.27	+4.55%
15	4.73	5.45	+.72	+12.00%
16	4.18	4.91	+.73	+12.12%
17	3.91	4.64	+.73	+12.12%
18	5.00	5.36	+.36	+6.06%
19	5.09	5.27	+.18	+3.03%
20	4.55	5.18	+.63	+10.5%
21	4.55	5.45	+.90	+15.00%
22	3.91	5.18	+1.27	+21.21%
23	3.73	3.64	-.09	-1.52%
24	5.45	5.27	-.18	-3.03%
25	3.64	4.64	+1.00	+16.67%
26	5.36	5.45	+.09	+1.52%
27	5.36	5.45	+.09	+1.52%
28	5.45	5.45	.00	.00%

Question	Pre-Survey	Post Survey	Amount of Change	Percent of Change
29	4.73	5.09	+.36	+6.06%
30	3.18	3.91	+.73	+12.12%
31	4.64	5.09	+.45	+7.58%
32	3.00	4.00	+1.00	+16.67%
33	5.45	5.27	-.18	-3.03%
34	5.00	5.18	+.18	+3.03%
35	4.91	5.45	+.54	+9.09%
36	4.55	5.45	+.10	+1.67%
37	4.55	5.00	+.45	+7.58%
38	5.55	5.73	+.18	+3.03%
39	4.73	5.18	+.45	+7.58%
40	4.91	5.36	+.45	+7.58%
41	5.36	5.36	.00	.00%
42	5.00	5.36	+.36	+6.06%
43	4.36	4.64	+.28	+4.67%
44	5.09	5.00	-.09	-1.52%
45	4.18	4.55	+.37	+6.17%
46	3.36	4.09	+.73	+12.12%
47	4.27	4.64	+.37	+6.17%

Three questions had no change, but those three questions all had high scores to begin with. Question twenty-eight, “When my fellow church members are not doing well spiritually, I am concerned,” averaged 5.45 out of 6.00. Question forty-one, “When embracing changes in the church I can disagree with my fellow members but still work with them and value their opinions,” averaged 5.36 out of 6.00. No change in these two

questions does not indicate a problem. A problem can be seen in question nine, “I am willing to meet with other church members to pray together.” This is a question that arguably should be strongly agreed with by all church members. Considering that one of the sessions dealt with prayer, there should have been an increase in this area. The curriculum addressed individual and corporate prayer but most of the discussion focused on corporate prayer. One change I would make in this area would be to place more emphasis on one’s individual responsibility to pray. The current curriculum adequately addresses the mechanics of prayer but not personal responsibility and duty of prayer.

Four questions indicated a decline after the program. Question twenty-three, “In the last thirty days I have collaborated with my fellow church members to spread the gospel,” decreased 1.52 percent. Question twenty-four, “I am willing to work with other church members to revitalize our church,” decreased 3.03 percent. Question thirty-three, “In the last thirty days I have prayed for my fellow church members regularly,” decreased 3.03 percent. Question forty-four, “I pray for young families to join our church,” decreased 1.52 percent. Three of those questions did not concern understanding or agreement but specifically asked what the participant had done or is doing. Question twenty-four indicated that the willingness of the participants to work with other members to revitalize our church dropped from a high 5.45 out of six to 5.27. Question twenty-four on its own does not indicate a major problem since it has a high score. The four questions as a group together does indicate an area of concern. The project was an eight-week program. Our program took nine weeks because one week was postponed due to inclement weather. After nine weeks of concentration on church health and revitalization, there should have been an increase in prayer and willingness to work with other members to revitalize the church, not a decrease.

The results of the surveys show an increase in knowledge and understanding of church health and revitalization. The results also indicate that increasing knowledge does not change the heart. The questions that had no change along with the questions that

declined reveal a problem with the willingness to do what it takes for church health. There is resistance in the heart to let go of the past and embrace the changes necessary for church revitalization. The percent of decline was small, which indicates the resistance to change is only in a small number of the participants. Care must be taken to prevent those resistant to change from negatively influencing those who have recently accepted change. A change I would make to the program is to add questions that address the willingness of the heart. What are you willing to do to make disciples? Who are you willing to pray for each day? If you do not pray for others daily, does it matter? Will God hold you accountable for your prayer life, your attitudes toward the church, and your influence with other members? I would add questions like these to encourage participants to think about their personal responsibility as Christians and to promote conversations in the group on personal responsibility and accountability.

The surveys indicated a significant increase in knowledge. Question thirteen, "I know what elements make a church healthy," showed a 10.5 percent increase. Question seventeen, "I can communicate to others the tenants of the Baptist Faith and Message," showed a 12.2 percent increase. Question twenty, "I can communicate to others what a healthy church looks like," showed a 10.5 percent increase. Question twenty-two, "I understand what church revitalization is," showed a 21.2 percent increase. The significant increase in knowledge may not be reflective of the quality of the curriculum as much as it is reflective of how little the group knew before participating. Question twenty-two raised to 5.18 percent but the pre-survey result was only 3.91 percent. The curriculum was very effective with a group which had little knowledge of church health and revitalization. The curriculum may or may not be effective with a more knowledgeable group, depending on the ability and knowledge of the administrator and the interaction of the participating group. An administrator who is knowledgeable should be able to raise the teaching to the level of the group. The discussion of the group should also foster learning. The curriculum is effective but the success of the curriculum is dependent on the capability of

the administrator.

The third goal of the project was to prepare a ministry plan for the practical application of the knowledge and principles of church revitalization by the participants in the ministry context of their church. The group completed a ministry plan and it was accepted by church vote in a business meeting. Technically, the third goal was accomplished but the true determinant is in the ministry plan itself. The curriculum methodically led the group through picking a ministry plan but in some sessions the curriculum influenced the group to pick an obvious choice. An example was choosing to start a Wednesday night class to teach the Baptist Faith and Message to make the church more effective in teaching doctrine. Other ministry plan options showed more personal engagement, such as choosing to start a pre-service prayer group. The group would gather together before the service on Sunday mornings and pray for the service and the church. The oldest participant in the group made this suggestion and it resonated with the whole group. The pre-service prayer group has already been implemented. The first week they met to pray before service, a visitor came to the church. Immanuel Baptist is a small church in a town of about 2,500 people. Visitors are extremely rare for this church. A visitor coming that morning could have been just a coincidence but that is not how our church viewed it. The ministry plan option to start a youth booster club showed a change in heart for the church. Members will find out when the youth of the church are participating in sports events or school activities and have someone in the church go to watch and support them. The group can offer to bring drinks and snacks to games or practices. Ministries similar to this have been discussed in the past but the church always rejected them. It is very significant that the group suggested this option and even more encouraging that they voted for it. One cannot say for certainty if the curriculum was responsible for the change in attitude but it is safe to assume the curriculum had some effect.

Strengths of the Project

The dynamic of group interaction was one of the major strengths of the project. The participants at Immanuel Baptist worked very well together. While acting as administrator, I noticed three things about working with the group. First, I got a wider range of suggestions and ideas. In our group, the conversations seemed to foster more conversation and inputs. The second thing I noticed was that participants seemed to accept and believe the ideas that the group discussion promoted. Hearing other participants make similar statements seemed to influence their thinking that those ideas or suggestions must be right. The third thing I noticed was that attention and engagement was very high in the group. In most learning situations, like classes or lectures, some people will stop listening or paying attention. The group stayed engaged. I do not recall any instance when I had to explain to a participant what was being discussed or where the group was in the session.

Another strength of the project was having certain preset expectations. I promoted this project, constantly stressing that this program was based on group interaction with participants sharing, discussing and working together. I would follow up by saying the success of the program was dependent on all participants showing up and engaging. During the first session, I found that when I asked for input and discussion, the group was expecting that and conversation flowed. I did not have a problem getting discussion in any of the sessions. I also promoted the program by saying that the group would develop a ministry plan for the church. This ministry plan would come from the ideas and suggestions of the group. I, as administrator and pastor, would not be giving ideas or telling them what they should do. They, as participants, would seek the leading of the Holy Spirit, come up with ideas and develop a ministry plan. That expectation was reinforced in every session. The first session explained how the program worked and the expectations for the program. In sessions two through seven, the group had to come up with three suggestions each session for the ministry plan. The eighth session they

discussed and voted on the ministry plan. I saw in our group a sense of accomplishment as they finalized the ministry plan.

The curriculum itself was a strength of the project. I found that following the worksheets was effective in staying on topic and achieving the overall goal of making a ministry plan. The flow of the curriculum naturally led to the formation of the ministry plan. I also found the curriculum to be effective in fostering learning in each session. Several participants commented at different times how well thought out the curriculum was. The thing I found interesting was that the curriculum was not very strong on information, facts and data. The curriculum was designed to give basic information and foster engagement. The curriculum was not effective because of educational depth and strength; it was effective because it gave just enough information for participants to grasp and then proceed on their own. The participants who commented on the curriculum being well thought out were really reacting to the enlightenment and learning which had just come from their own interaction and discussion.

Weaknesses of the Project

There is great potential with group learning in this project. Working as an administrator in this project, I can see that much depends on the ability of the administrator. The success of the project depends more on the ability of individuals to relate and work together than it depends on the educational quality of the curriculum. This factor takes away from consistency when attempting to replicate the program with other groups. An administrator who is a gifted teacher could easily turn this program into an eight-week lecture instead of a group learning experience. Learning could still take place, but not to the level intended and possible through group learning. A person who is neither a good teacher or administrator could end the program with no learning taking place or worse. If participants with strong personalities take over the sessions, then learning will be dependent on those strong personalities. If they promote wrong teaching,

then the group could actually come away learning the wrong lessons and the church would be in worse health instead of better.

Another weakness of the project is the unpredictability that comes from working with people in groups. Participants who have great potential to add quality input may be too timid to speak. Participants with poor or possibly damaging inputs are often too willing to speak. When an issue that participants disagree on arises, the discussion can turn into a debate or argument. Participants may also have bitter or antagonistic feelings toward one of the other participants. These are just a few of the unpredictable factors involved in dealing with people in groups. The group at Immanuel Baptist worked well together but I still saw instances where personality and loyalty impacted the group interaction. Some of the participants shared a Sunday School class and that class at times was at odds with some of the other programs in the church. A few times in the program, one of those participants would begin to engage in issues which were outside the scope of the project. I had to steer the discussion back on topic. I also saw that because of their association they would be hesitant to say anything that contradicted one of the other members of their Sunday School class.

What I Would Do Differently

The participants' worksheets worked well but participants did not keep them. One thing I would do differently is that I would make a workbook for participants which contained all of the worksheets and supply pages for notes. I would include a section in each session of key words, phrases, and ideas with space for participants to write down their definitions. Participants could carry the workbook to each session so they could reference notes from previous sessions. Relevant facts, statistics and graphs would also be included in the workbooks. The thought is to make the workbook a kind of reference or text. A list of suggested readings could also be included.

The Immanuel Baptist group met in the fellowship hall at the church. The

room worked sufficiently but felt sterile. One of the things I would do differently is I would arrange for the group to meet in homes. Meeting in homes would improve several things. It would be more comfortable so that meetings lasting longer than two hours would not be burdensome on older participants. Meeting in homes would also create an environment that fosters more conversation. The home environment and extended conversation would, in turn, help the group bond more.

Another change I would make is that I would shorten the program from eight weeks to six weeks. The first session is mostly an introduction which could be blended into the beginning of session two, especially if the group meets in a home setting. Session eight could be divided into the remaining six sessions. One of the original reasons for having the group pick the ministry plan in session eight was so that they would have the benefit of all sessions before picking a plan. Although picking the ministry plan in one setting was beneficial, shortening the program to six weeks would be more beneficial. Anticipation could still be built up for the completion of the ministry plan without picking all the options in the last session. Possible time and implementation conflicts could still be avoided by displaying a written copy of the ministry option plans which were chosen in previous sessions.

Theological Reflections

I had the pleasure of being the administrator for this project. From start to finish, theology was the unspoken goal in every session that made the participants stronger in their faith. As the administrator, I was given the opportunity to explain things in a theological framework. For example, I explained that evangelism was to be seen as more than just spreading the gospel. The term “gospel” had to be understood as the good news that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures. Proper evangelism involves following the example of Jesus in seeking to save those who are lost. Theologically, one must have an understanding of

who the “lost” are and how they receive Christ that they might be saved. I was able to put little blocks of theology in each of the sessions.

One biblical basis for this group project was that two are better than one. If one falls the other is there to pick them up. I saw that principal in action during the implementation of the project. Participants at times encouraged each other. When a lady lost her ride, another participant offered to bring her. Conversation in general was based on the topic being discussed but at times participants veered off topic just to support something someone else said. There were a few instances where a participant would gently correct something just so another participant might understand. There were not many of these instances but there were a few. The thing that was interesting was that I could see the care and concern for others in those instances. In our group, two or more were showing themselves to be stronger than one.

The success of the project will ultimately be determined by what Immanuel Baptist does in the coming months. Anything that is not of faith is a sin. If we believe that God has led the discussions and put on the hearts of the participants that which is contained in the ministry plan, then it would be an act of disobedience not to do them. Faith is the underlying basis for participating in the program and faith must be the driving reason for following through with obedience in implementing the ministry plan. In comparison to many churches, the ministry plan Immanuel Baptist came up with would be weak and inadequate. The program was designed to raise the level of understanding and to meet the needs of the church. The ministry plan is just what Immanuel Baptist needs. Theologically, Immanuel Baptist must see God leading them and follow. Failure to follow would be worse than not being led at all.

Personal Reflections

My personal reflection of the project begins with thankfulness that the program worked. Mechanically the program met the goals of the project but I also looked for other

indications of success. I found those indications in some of the statements made by participants. One of the participants during the first session stated multiple times, “I didn’t understand what this program was, but now it makes sense.” He went on to say how good it was and how much he liked it. Several participants made comments on how well thought out the curriculum was. Several said that the church should do this every year. In addition to comments such as these, I found confirmation of success in the looks and reactions of the participants. I saw in their faces a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

The program was well suited for me personally to administrate. I have a management background and am very good at it. As administrator I was concerned about the understanding and personal growth of the participants. The ability to manage people and control situations is not necessarily a requirement for success but it is a big factor in the degree of success. As a manager I would teach, train, and enable workers to do their jobs. I did the same in administrating this program. The times I was getting through and could see the understanding in their faces gave me satisfaction. This program can be rewarding to both the participants and the administrators.

The program needs follow-up. All the learning that participants gain is temporary unless it is used and reinforced. I saw real learning and real growth. I saw a movement away from old set ways to acceptance of new ideas. Without continued growth and reinforcement, over time the participants will likely revert back to their old way of thinking. I have seen this with one participant in the group. He went from praising the work to contending for old ways within a few months of the program. The rest of the group still seems committed but their enthusiasm is waning. Putting the ministry plan in action is helping to keep them on track for now. They will need something new to engage them after the ministry plan is implemented. The old voices are going to continue to contend for their cause. The church needs to continually hear the new message for the mission of the church.

The program has potential to accomplish much more. With the right administrators, this program could be effective in any church or group setting. It was great to see the bonding that took place in our group. I was an effective administrator but I could have done better. The group learned but they could have learned more. It seemed to me that the group learned the most from the interaction with one another. They bought in and believed the things others in the group were saying. They would listen to the things I would say, but they waited for the reaction of the group before accepting those things as true. The group dynamic of learning could be expanded to bring multiple groups together. One suggestion for further use of this program would be to implement the program in multiple churches, then bring select members from a few of those churches together. The program can be tailored to allow the churches to discuss their ministry plans. Discussion of what worked and what did not work, along with problems they faced and how they addressed those problems would be beneficial. The churches would be able to learn from one another. They could forge a bond that would allow them to support and help each other.

Conclusion

The project can be considered a success in terms of meeting expected goals. The real success of the project cannot be measured because of time constraints. The real success of the program will be if the church truly revitalizes. The premise of the project was that church revitalization is a process. The program was meant to start that process of church revitalization. If the process was legitimately started then the process should continue. A year from now the church should be healthier. Two years from now the church should be even more healthy. It was a great privilege to implement this project. I look forward to doing more with this program. I have hope that this project will be a blessing and a success in the future. I know that it has been a blessing already to myself and the Immanuel Baptist participants.

APPENDIX 1

GROUP REVITALIZATION CURRICULUM RUBRIC

The following evaluation was sent to an expert panel of two seminary professors in church revitalization and one Immanuel Baptist member. This panel evaluated the course material to ensure it was biblically faithful, sufficiently thorough, and practically applicable.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
Biblical Accuracy					
Each lesson was sound in its interpretation of Scripture.					
Each lesson was faithful to the theology of the Bible.					
Scope					
The content of the curriculum sufficiently covers each issue it is designed to address.					
The curriculum sufficiently covers a biblical pedagogical methodology.					
Pedagogy					
Each lesson was clear, containing a big idea.					
Each lesson provides opportunities for participant interaction with the material.					
Practicality					
The curriculum clearly teaches what it takes to have a healthy church.					
Upon completion the participants will be able to understand the requirements for church revitalization.					

Other Comments:

APPENDIX 2

EVALUATION OF MINISTRY APPLICATION PLAN

The following evaluation was sent to three Immanuel Baptist leaders. This team evaluated the ministry plan for applying church revitalization principles in each participant's ministry context.

Name of Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Ministry Plan Evaluation Tool					
1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The ministry plan is biblically faithful.					
The ministry plan will make Immanuel Baptist healthier in the area of evangelism.					
The ministry plan will make Immanuel Baptist healthier in the area of discipleship.					
The ministry plan will make Immanuel Baptist healthier in the area of outreach.					
The ministry plan will make Immanuel Baptist healthier in the area of prayer.					
The ministry plan will make Immanuel Baptist healthier in the area of worship.					
The ministry plan will make Immanuel Baptist healthier in the area of doctrine.					
The ministry plan is within the capability of Immanuel Baptist to successfully implement.					
The ministry plan, when executed will begin the process of revitalization at Immanuel Baptist.					

Other Comments:

APPENDIX 3

CHURCH REVITALIZATION PRE- AND POST-PROJECT SURVEY

The following survey was administered before the eight-week training curriculum was taught and again after the curriculum was taught.¹ The survey is divided into two parts. Part one consists of five general questions concerning the participants salvation, church involvement and agreement to participate in all eight weeks of training. Part two consists of forty-one questions with a six-point Likert scale. The purpose of this survey is to measure the effectiveness of the training curriculum.

¹ Bradley Wayne White, "Teaching The Members Of Lakeview Baptist Church In Benton, Kentucky, To Understand And Practice Biblical Community," (DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 88-91.

Pre- and Post-Survey

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify for each participant the current understanding of church revitalization in the areas of evangelism, discipleship, outreach, prayer, doctrine, and worship. This research is being conducted by Joseph Roman for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Personal Identification Number: Choose a number that will be memorable to you. Do not choose something like “1 2 3 4.”

Write your number here: _____

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer. Respond to question three before the class by affirming what you will do and after the class by confirming what you did. Respond to question four by filling in your answer.

Part 1

1. Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Jesus Christ alone for salvation?
 A. Yes
 B. No
2. Do you regularly attend Sunday morning worship?
 A. Yes
 B. No
3. How long have you been a member of Immanuel Baptist Church? _____
4. In a normal week how many times will you be at church for worship, Bible study or fellowship? _____
5. Will you participate in each of the eight lessons and afterward answer these questions again as a post-survey?
 A. Yes
 B. No

Part 2

Directions: Please give your opinion regarding the statements below, using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, DS = disagree somewhat, AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree; please circle the appropriate answer.

6. I am committed to fellowship with members of my church.
SD D DS AS A SA
7. I understand what it means to have fellowship with other believers.
SD D DS AS A SA
8. The Bible teaches that churches should practice church discipline.
SD D DS AS A SA
9. I am willing to meet with other church members to pray together.
SD D DS AS A SA
10. I am willing to invite other church members to my home.
SD D DS AS A SA
11. I purpose each week to talk about spiritual issues with other church members.
SD D DS AS A SA
12. My fellow church members should call me to repentance when I am openly involved in deliberate and unrepentant sin.
SD D DS AS A SA
13. I know what elements make a church healthy.
SD D DS AS A SA
14. I believe my prayer life is to the level that God wants it to be.
SD D DS AS A SA
15. I am responsible to motivate other believers to love and good works.
SD D DS AS A SA
16. In the last thirty days I have motivated other believers to love and good works.
SD D DS AS A SA
17. I can communicate to others the tenants of the Baptist Faith and Message.
SD D DS AS A SA
18. I can communicate to others why they need a savior.
SD D DS AS A SA

19. I can communicate to others how to get to heaven.
SD D DS AS A SA
20. I can communicate to others what a healthy church looks like.
SD D DS AS A SA
21. I am responsible to help my fellow church members to grow spiritually.
SD D DS AS A SA
22. I understand what church revitalization is.
SD D DS AS A SA
23. In the last thirty days I have collaborated with my fellow church members to spread the gospel.
SD D DS AS A SA
24. I am willing to work with other church members to revitalize our church.
SD D DS AS A SA
25. I share the gospel with others on a regular basis.
SD D DS AS A SA
26. I am responsible to meet frequently with other believers for worship.
SD D DS AS A SA
27. If my church is not healthy, I have a responsibility to work with fellow members in a process to revitalize the church.
SD D DS AS A SA
28. When my fellow church members are not doing well spiritually, I am concerned.
SD D DS AS A SA
29. When my fellow church members are not doing well spiritually, I am willing to take action to help them.
SD D DS AS A SA
30. In the last thirty days I have taken action to help my fellow church members who are not doing well spiritually.
SD D DS AS A SA
31. I am willing to spend spiritually oriented time with my fellow church members outside of the regular activities of the church.
SD D DS AS A SA
32. In the last thirty days I have spent spiritually oriented time with my fellow church members outside of the regular activities of the church.

SD D DS AS A SA

33. In the last thirty days I have prayed for my fellow church members regularly.

SD D DS AS A SA

34. When I pray for my fellow church members, I pray for their spiritual growth.

SD D DS AS A SA

35. I understand my responsibilities as a church member.

SD D DS AS A SA

36. I have a list of unsaved people that I pray every day for salvation.

SD D DS AS A SA

37. My fellow church members know they can call me for help or counsel.

SD D DS AS A SA

38. I consider my fellow church members to be my spiritual family.

SD D DS AS A SA

39. When visitors come to our church, I always welcome them and take time to talk to them.

SD D DS AS A SA

40. I am actively involved in one or more ministry of the church.

SD D DS AS A SA

41. When embracing changes in the church I can disagree with my fellow members but still work with them and value their opinions.

SD D DS AS A SA

42. I support changes in worship style and music if those changes bring more people into the church.

SD D DS AS A SA

43. I consider myself a missionary sent to evangelize my neighbors and invite them to church.

SD D DS AS A SA

44. I pray for young families to join our church.

SD D DS AS A SA

45. If another church member is openly involved in deliberate and unrepentant sin, I should confront him or her and call him or her to repentance.

SD D DS AS A SA

46. Ministries of the church should be more inward focused than outward focused to meet the needs of the members of the church.

SD D DS AS A SA

47. Ministries of the church should be more outward focused than inward focused in order to reach the local community for Christ.

SD D DS AS A SA

APPENDIX 4
T-TEST RESULTS

Table A1. T-test results for ministry project

T-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	<i>Pre-Test Total</i>	<i>Post-Test Total</i>
Mean	196.5455	213.0909
Variance	351.0727	188.8909
Observations	11	11
Pearson Correlation	0.481312	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	10	
t stat	-3.21092	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.004659	
t Critical one-tail	1.812461	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.009317	
t Critical two-tail	2.228139	

APPENDIX 5
CURRICULUM FOR IMANNUEL BAPTIST
REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

There are two main goals for the curriculum. The first goal is to teach through group interaction. The second goal is to get the participants to form a bond that will inspire them to continue working together after the eight sessions end. It is important that whoever teaches the curriculum avoids falling into a lecture mode. The key is to teach succinctly, ask questions and get the participants engaged and talking. Session one will be an introduction and overview of what is to come, what is expected, how the sessions will work, and will include a brief lesson on the strength of group learning, using Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 for text. Sessions two through seven will deal with evangelism, discipleship, outreach, worship, prayer, and doctrine. (Note: in the last session the group will vote on which suggested action plans should be included in the ministry action plan and implemented.) During the last session, two or three participants will be elected to screen each action plan for biblical correctness and accuracy and then present the accumulated ministry action plan to the church council at their next business meeting. The strength of the curriculum is in getting conversation going and getting them to engage as a group. One of the main goals is to get them to form a bond by the end of the eight weeks. The curriculum for each week will provide the administrator with a list of goals, a participant worksheet to pass out and use, and an administrator's worksheet to aide teaching and record group answers. The administrator's worksheets have suggested answers written in italicized font enclosed with parenthesis.

Session One Goals:

1. Administer the pre-survey.
2. Get consent forms signed and gathered.
3. Explain the goals of the program.
 - d. Build a bond that makes the group stronger and propels them to continue to work together after the program ends.
 - e. Increase knowledge and understanding of church revitalization issues.
 - f. Effect changes by making a ministry plan for each of the six church revitalization issues.
4. Explain what is going to happen each week and how the program works.
 - d. There will be a worksheet each week that will address biblical texts concerning that session's topic.
 - e. There will be discussion on what is presently being done in our church for that week's topic and what should our church be doing in this area.
 - f. The group will come up with three suggestions that the church can do for growth in that area. In session eight, one of these suggestions will be picked to be part of the ministry plan for the church.

**Week One Participant Worksheet: The
Importance of Working Together in Church
Revitalization**

Write down six things every church must handle well in order to be healthy.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Who is our plus one? Read Matthew 18:20 and write down who else will be joining us in these sessions and why.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

Write three reasons two are better than one.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What happens to a person who is alone and falls?

Write down three ways a person can fall and what you can do to lift them up again.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Two are stronger than one but what is stronger than two?

Why is it important to work together as a group?

What can a group accomplish that a person cannot (write three things)?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Who is the head of this group and the person we are ultimately going to answer to?

According to 1 Corinthians 12:18 who decides what part of the body of Christ we will be?

According to 1 Corinthians 12:19-24:

Which parts of the body are not needed by the other members?

Which members of the body are to be given the most honor?

Fill in the blank, and below, write down some other words which have similar meaning

that could be used as a substitute in this sentence. "That there should be no

_____ in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." 1Co 12:25

The work we are about to do is not my work and it is not your work but it is

_____ work as members of the body of Christ.

**Week One Administrator's Worksheet: The
Importance of Working Together in Church
Revitalization**

Write down six things every church must handle well in order to be healthy. (*Don't just give the answers. Make them think and come up with them on their own... or with a little guidance.*)

1. _____ (Evangelism)
2. _____ (Discipleship)
3. _____ (Outreach)
4. _____ (Worship)
5. _____ (Prayer)
6. _____ (Teach Doctrine)

Who is our plus one? Read Matthew 18:20 and write down who else will be joining us in these sessions and why.

(Jesus because we are gathered in his name and because we are doing this for him not ourselves.)

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

Write three reasons two are better than one. (*Four are given in this Scripture.*)

1. *Because they have a good reward for their labor...*
2. *For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow*
3. *If two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?*
4. *And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

What happens to a person who is alone and falls?

(: but woe to him *that is* alone when he falleth; for *he hath* not another to help him up.)

Write down three ways a person can fall and what you can do to lift them up again.

(There are more than three answers but four important ways are physically, morally, spiritually, and emotionally.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Two are stronger than one but what is stronger than two? (*A threefold cord; three or more.*)

Why is it important to work together as a group? (*The reasons given in Ecclesiastes and the example of Jesus working with the disciples are a good start. Ask if they can think of any commands in the Bible to work together.*)

What can a group accomplish that a person cannot (write three things).

1. Vacation Bible School for multiple grades and ages
2. Have a choir
3. When someone gets sick, discouraged, overwhelmed, others help.

Who is the head of this group and the person we are ultimately going to answer to?
(*Jesus*)

According to 1 Corinthians 12:18 who decides what part of the body of Christ we will be? (*answer: God*)

According to 1 Corinthians 12:19-24:

Which parts of the body are not needed by the other members? _____

Which members of the body are to be given the most honor? _____

Fill in the blank, and below, write down some other words which have similar meaning that could be used as a substitute in this sentence. "That there should be no _____ in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." 1Co 12:25

The work we are about to do is not my work and it is not your work but it is [*our*] work as members of the body of Christ.

Evangelism

Goals:

1. Explain and have a discussion on what is evangelism and its role in church revitalization.
2. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist does for evangelism.
3. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist should do for evangelism in a church revitalization.
4. Have a discussion and make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in evangelism.

Week Two Participant Worksheet: Church

Revitalization Requires Evangelism

What does Immanuel Baptist do for evangelism (write at least two things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What should Immanuel Baptist do for evangelism for church revitalization (write at least three things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Write in your own words what evangelism is:

Evangelism is the proclamation or spreading of the _____

What does Ephesians 4:11 tell us about evangelism? _____

According to 1 Cor 12:31 should we ask for the gift of evangelism? _____

Evangelism is the spreading of the gospel, write in your own words what the gospel is.

Write three things from 1 Cor 15:1-4 that are important to know about the gospel:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

According to Matthew 13:18-23, what are four responses to hearing the gospel?

- 1.

2.

3.

4.

What is the difference between receiving the gospel and being born again?

The work of evangelism can be divided into three parts. What are they?

1.

2.

3.

According to 1 Cor 3:6-9, what is the difference between one who plants and one who waters?

Read the following Scriptures and for each write how we can labor for God in the work of evangelism.

1 Peter 3:15 _____

Matthew 5:16 _____

In evangelism, what things can you as an individual do to plant, water, and harvest?

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in evangelism.

1. _____

2. _____

3 _____

**Week Two Administrator's Worksheet: Church
Revitalization Requires Evangelism**

What does Immanuel Baptist do for evangelism (write at least two things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What should Immanuel Baptist do for evangelism for church revitalization (write at least three things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write in your own words what evangelism is: _____

Evangelism is the proclamation or spreading of the (good news or gospel)

What does Ephesians 4:11 tell us about evangelism?

(Draw out the concept of an office or gift, that He gives to some.)

According to 1 Cor 12:31, should we ask for the gift of evangelism? (What does covet imply?)

Evangelism is the spreading of the gospel, write in your own words what the gospel is.

Write three things from 1 Cor 15:1-4 that are important to know about the gospel:

1. (Christ died "for our sins" ... it is important to include "for our sins".)
2. (He was buried. He not only died but he was buried.)
3. (He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.)

According to Matthew 13:18-23, what are four responses to hearing the gospel?

1. (Hardened heart; the gospel bounces off.)
2. (Accepts the gospel with joy but turns away when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word.)

3. (Receives the Word but the cares of the world and deceitfulness of riches choke the Word and they become unfruitful.)

4. (Understands the Word and bears fruit.)

What is the difference between receiving the gospel and being born again?

(Remember the parable of the Sower) _____

The work of evangelism can be divided into three parts. What are they?

1. _____ (Planting)

2. _____ (Watering)

3. _____ (Harvesting)

According to 1 Cor 3:6-9 what is the difference between one who plants and one who waters? (Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one... Note: ask why?)

Read the following Scriptures and for each write how we can labor for God in the work of evangelism.

1 Peter 3:15 _____ (What is the hope in you and why do you have that hope?)

Matthew 5:16 _____ (Is the way you live and the good things you do considered evangelism?)

In evangelism, what things can you as an individual do to plant, water, and harvest?

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in evangelism.

1. _____

2. _____

3 _____

Discipleship

Goals:

1. Explain and have a discussion on what is discipleship and its role in church revitalization.
2. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist does for discipleship.
3. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist should do for discipleship in a church revitalization.
4. Have a discussion and make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in discipleship.

Week Three Participant Worksheet: Discipleship

What does Immanuel Baptist do for discipleship (write at least two things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What should Immanuel Baptist do for discipleship in church revitalization. (write at least three thing)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write in your own words what discipleship is:

Discipleship is the process of _____ disciples.

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines disciple as “one who accepts and assists in spreading the _____ of another.”

The word for disciple in the New Testament means

Read Matthew 10:24-25 and Luke 6:40. What does Jesus say the goal of a disciple is?

Write two things Jesus said you must do to be his disciple. (See Luke 14:27,33)

1. _____

2. _____

According to Luke 19:10, what did Jesus come to do?

According to Matthew 20:28, what did Jesus come to do?

If being a disciple of Jesus requires us to be like Him, what are two things we should be doing?

1. _____
2. _____

In discipleship write three things you can do as an individual to be more like Jesus in ministering to others and seeking and saving that which is lost?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in discipleship.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Week Three Administrator's Worksheet:

Discipleship

What does Immanuel Baptist do for discipleship (write at least two things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What should Immanuel Baptist do for discipleship in church revitalization (write at least three things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write in your own words what discipleship is:

Discipleship is (making) disciples.

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines disciple as "one who accepts and assists in spreading the _____ (doctrines) of another."

The word for disciple in the New Testament means _____ (learner or pupil).

Read Matthew 10:24-25 and Luke 6:40. What does Jesus say the goal of a disciple is?

_____ (To be like his master.)

Write two things Jesus said you must do to be his disciple. (See Luke 14:27,33)

1. (And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:27 KJV)
2. (So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:33 KJV)

According to Luke 19:10, what did Jesus come to do?

(Jesus said he came to seek and to save that which was lost.)

According to Matthew 20:28, what did Jesus come to do? (Came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.)

If being a disciple of Jesus requires us to be like Him, what are two things we should be doing?

1. _____
2. _____

In discipleship write three things you can do as an individual to be more like Jesus in ministering to others and seeking and saving that which is lost?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in discipleship.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Outreach

Goals:

1. Explain and have a discussion on what is outreach and its role in church revitalization.
2. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist does for outreach.
3. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist should do for outreach in a church revitalization.
4. Have a discussion and make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in outreach.

Week Four Participant Worksheet: Outreach

“The healthy church places high priority on communicating the truth of Jesus and demonstrating his love to those _____ the faith.”¹

Thom Rainer in his book, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, states that one sign of a dying church is that the church refused to look like the

_____.²

In what ways is our church like a fortress?

What are the “good old days” of this church?

In what ways is our church different from our community?

“When a church ceases to have a heart and ministry for its community, it is on the path toward _____.”³

According to Bill Henard, in his book, *Can These Bones Live*, churches used to be one of the main places that people went for fellowship and social interaction but culture has changed. “Churches have lost their impact, their voice, and thus their outreach. In order to regain a hearing from the world, the church must get back to doing ministry that meets the needs of people _____ of the church.”⁴

¹ Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 135.

² Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive* (Nashville: B&H, 2014), 25.

³ Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 28.

⁴ William David Henard, *Can These Bones Live?* (Nashville: B&H, 2015), 190.

Oscar Thompson Jr. contends in his book, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, that churches and Christians should build bridges in their relationships with others by simply meeting the _____ in a person's life or showing enough interest in _____.⁵

Where do we find people to build relationships and bridges with?

What does Immanuel Baptist do for outreach?

What should Immanuel Baptist do for outreach in a church revitalization?

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in outreach.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

⁵ W. Oscar Thompson, Carilyn Thompson Ritzmann, and Claude V. King, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples* (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 135.

Week Four Administrator' Worksheet: Outreach

“The healthy church places high priority on communicating the truth of Jesus and demonstrating his love to those _____ (*outside*) the faith.”⁶

Thom Rainer in his book *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, states that one sign of a dying church is that the church refused to look like the

_____ (*community*).⁷

In what ways is our church like a fortress?

What are the good old days of this church?

In what ways is our church different from our community?

“When a church ceases to have a heart and ministry for its community, it is on the path toward _____ (*death*).”⁸

According to Bill Henard, in his book, *Can These Bones Live*, churches used to be one of the main places that people went for fellowship and social interaction but culture has changed. “Churches have lost their impact, their voice, and thus their outreach. In order

⁶ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church*, 135.

⁷ Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 25.

⁸ Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 28.

to regain a hearing from the world, the church must get back to doing ministry that meets the needs of people (*outside*) of the church.”⁹

Oscar Thompson Jr. contends in his book, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, that churches and Christians should build bridges in their relationships with others by simply meeting the (*needs*) in a person’s life or showing enough interest in (*them*).¹⁰

Where do we find people to build relationships and bridges with?

What does Immanuel Baptist do for outreach?

What should Immanuel Baptist do for outreach in a church revitalization?

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in outreach.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

⁹ Henard, *Can These Bones Live?*, 190.

¹⁰ Thompson, Ritzmann, and King, *Concentric Circles of Concern*, 135.

Worship

Goals:

1. Explain and have a discussion on what worship is and its role in church revitalization.
2. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist does for worship.
3. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist should do for worship in a church revitalization.
4. Have a discussion and make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in worship.

Week Five Participant Worksheet: Worship

“The healthy church gathers regularly as the local expression of the body of Christ to worship God in ways that engage the (heart, _____, soul, and strength) of the people.”¹¹

What is the difference between individual worship and corporate worship?

What does Immanuel Baptist do for worship (write at least two things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What do you do as an individual to worship God (write at least two things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write in your own words what worship is:

Worship is a direct expression of man’s ultimate purpose to glorify God and fully to _____ him forever.¹²

Everything in a Christian’s life should be an act of _____.

¹¹ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church*, 41.

¹² Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1004.

Everything the _____ does should be an act of worship.

Write a list of things we should do as part of worshipping God.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Is worship equivalent to emotion or is it something more?

What should Immanuel Baptist be do for worship in a church revitalization?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What should you as an individual be doing daily to worship God?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in worship.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Week Five Administrator's Worksheet: Worship

“The healthy church gathers regularly as the local expression of the body of Christ to worship God in ways that engage the (heart, *mind*, soul, and strength) of the people.”¹³

What is the difference between individual worship and corporate worship?

What does Immanuel Baptist do for worship (write at least two things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What do you do as an individual to worship God (write at least two things)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Write in your own words what worship is:

Worship is a direct expression of man's ultimate purpose to glorify God and fully to (enjoy) him forever.¹⁴

Everything in a Christian's life should be an act of (worship).

Everything the (church) does should be an act of worship.

¹³ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church*, 41.

¹⁴ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1004.

Write a list of things we should do as part of worshipping God.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Is worship equivalent to emotion or is it something more?

(Worship is more than emotion, so get them to talk and engage the topic. You could discuss here the meaning of “they honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me.”)

What should Immanuel Baptist do for worship in a church revitalization?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What should you as an individual be doing daily to worship God?

1. (Prayer...would that be considered part of worship?)
2. (Praise...would that be considered part of worship?)
3. (What about seeking God, trusting God, obeying God's Word, or doing good deeds?)

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in worship.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Prayer

Goals:

1. Explain and have a discussion on what prayer is and its role in church revitalization.
2. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist does for prayer.
3. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist should do for prayer in a church revitalization.
4. Have a discussion and make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in prayer.

Week Six Participant Worksheet: Prayer

“John Calvin referred to prayer as “the soul of faith,” and indeed faith without prayer soon becomes _____.”¹⁵

What does Immanuel Baptist do for prayer (write at least two things)?

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

What should Immanuel Baptist do for prayer in a church revitalization (write at least three things)?

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

Write in your own words what prayer is:

Prayer is the _____ with God. That _____ is able to go both ways; we are able to speak to God and He is able to speak to us (even if it is nonverbal).

Failure to pray is a _____? Read 1 Samuel 12:23 and write what sin against God Samuel was not willing to commit?

What things should we pray for?

Read Ephesians 6:18 and write what kind of prayer that is and why it is important.

¹⁵ Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 946.

What is the difference between public (or corporate prayer) and personal prayers?

Write two purposes of corporate prayer.

1. _____

2. _____

What can Immanuel Baptist do to improve the use of corporate prayer in services?

What can Immanuel Baptist do to start a prayer ministry?

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in prayer.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Week Six Administrator's Worksheet: Prayer

“John Calvin referred to prayer as “the soul of faith,” and indeed faith without prayer soon becomes *(lifeless)*.”¹⁶

What does Immanuel Baptist do for prayer (write at least two things)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

What should Immanuel Baptist do for prayer in a church revitalization (write at least three things)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Write in your own words what prayer is:

Prayer is *(communication)* with God. That *(communication)* is able to go both ways; we are able to speak to God and He is able to speak to us (even when He choose to use nonverbal means).

Failure to pray is a *(sin)*? Read 1 Samuel 12:23 and write what sin against God Samuel was not willing to commit?

(God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you...)

What things should we pray for?

(...in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Phil 4:6 KJV)

Read Ephesians 6:18 and write what kind of prayer that is and why it is important.

(It is prayer “in the Spirit”, and it is “with supplication” and “for all saints” which qualifies as an intercessory prayer. It is also part of the armor of God. Discuss what it means to pray in the Spirit, to pray with supplication and to pray for all saints.)

¹⁶ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 946.

What is the difference between public (or corporate prayer) and personal prayers?

(Personal prayers should be private, in your closet (pray in secret that God may reward openly). Corporate prayer is public, usually formal, purposeful, exemplary and worshipful.)

Write two purposes of corporate prayer.

(Teaches by giving examples of how to pray, brings adoration and worship to God, it is powerful (where two are more are gathered in Jesus' name, He is in the midst of them). And Jesus said That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.)

What can Immanuel Baptist do to improve the use of corporate prayer in services?

What can Immanuel Baptist do to start a prayer ministry?

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in prayer.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Doctrine

Goals:

1. Explain and have a discussion on what doctrine is and its role in church revitalization.
2. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist does to teach doctrine.
3. Have a discussion and make a list of what Immanuel Baptist should do to teach doctrine in a church revitalization.
4. Have a discussion and make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in teaching doctrine.

Week Seven Participant’s Worksheet: Doctrine

In your own words, write what you believe “doctrine” is and its role in church revitalization.

Does doctrine deal mainly with legalism, rules and commandments?

If someone asked you what your church doctrines were, what would you say?

What does Immanuel Baptist do to teach the doctrines of the church?

What should Immanuel Baptist do to teach its members the doctrines of the church?

In the Old and New Testament, the word “doctrine” means_____.

Why is doctrine important?

Is abiding by a doctrine required for salvation?

Read 2 John verse 9 and write what it means:

According to 2 John verse 10, how should a Christian deal with a person who comes to you who does not adhere to the gospel of Christ?

If a Christian does not know what the doctrine of Christ is, how can he know if someone is teaching a different gospel?

What is the doctrine of Christ (see Mark 4:2-20)?

Discuss whether these questions are doctrinal and why?

Do you have to go to church to be a Christian? Do you have to be baptized to be saved?

If I accept Jesus into my heart then will I go to heaven regardless of how I live? Is there any sin I cannot be forgiven for?

Write ten doctrines of the church:

1. _____ 6. _____

2. _____ 7. _____

3. _____ 8. _____

4. _____ 9. _____

5. _____ 10. _____

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in teaching doctrine.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Week Seven Administrator's Worksheet:

Doctrine

In your own words write what you believe "doctrine" is and its role in church revitalization.

Does doctrine deal mainly with legalism, rules and commandments?

(Doctrine is much more than rules; it is Scripture, and all Scripture is good for doctrine.)

If someone asked you what your church doctrines were, what would you say?

What does Immanuel Baptist do to teach the doctrines of the church?

What should Immanuel Baptist do to teach its members the doctrines of the church?

In the Old and New Testament, the word "doctrine" means *(teaching, instructions, insight).*

Why is doctrine important?

Is abiding by a doctrine required for salvation? *(Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Matt 7:21 KJV)*

Read 2 John verse 9 and write what it means:

(You don't want a theological debate. Just engage them in what the doctrine or teaching of this verse means. They can do further study on their own so just open the door.)

According to 2 John verse 10, how should a Christian deal with a person who comes to you who does not adhere to the gospel of Christ? (*If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:)*)

If a Christian does not know what the doctrine of Christ is, how can he know if someone is teaching a different gospel?

(Common sense answer. Study to shew thyself approved unto God a workman...)

What is the doctrine of Christ (see Mark 4:2-20)?

(The seed was sown into four hearts with four different results. Discuss the difference between receiving the Word and letting the Word take root and grow in your heart.)

Discuss whether these questions are doctrinal and why?

Do you have to go to church to be a Christian? Do you have to be baptized to be saved?

If I accept Jesus into my heart then will I go to heaven regardless of how I live? Is there any sin I cannot be forgiven for?

Write ten doctrines of the church: (*Let them try to work it out before offering help.*)

Doctrine of God *Doctrine of man* *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*

Doctrine of the Church *Doctrine of the Word of God* *Doctrine of sin*

Doctrine of salvation *Doctrine of election* *Doctrine of Justification*

Doctrine of Sanctification *Doctrine of end times and many more...*

Make a list of three options Immanuel Baptist can implement as an action plan to be more effective in teaching doctrine.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Application

Goals:

1. Explain and have a discussion on the importance of “love” as we move forward.
2. With love as the main focus discuss what the vision of Immanuel Baptist should be as we move forward in a church revitalization effort.
3. Discuss and pick one of the suggested action plans for each topic discussed in the preceding weeks to include in a ministry plan for Immanuel Baptist.
4. Discuss ways the group can stay connected and continue working together after the program ends.
5. Administer post-survey.

Week Eight Participant Worksheet: Application

The key to success is the ability to know or prove the will of God. According to Romans 12:1-2, what must one do in order to be able to prove the will of God?

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding _____, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am _____.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me _____

1Cor 13:1-3

According to 1Corinthians 13:8 what never fails?

If we want to avoid failure what is one thing we need to make sure is included in any and all actions plans?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 and write what love is according to these verses.

According to John 13:35, what is the significance of Christians' love one for another?

What does our love for one another show other Christians and the world?

Now we are ready to discuss and pick an action plan for the church in each of the six areas we have covered the last seven weeks.

Evangelism: _____

Discipleship _____

Outreach _____

Worship _____

Prayer _____

Doctrine _____

Vote on three or more members to check the ministry action plan for biblical accuracy and then present it to the church council at their next meeting.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Post-survey: administer.

Week Eight Administrator's Worksheet:

Application

The key to success is the ability to know or prove the will of God. According to Romans 12:1-2, what must one do in order to be able to prove the will of God?

(Present your bodies a living sacrifice.)

(Do not be conformed to this world.)

(Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.)

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding *(brass)*, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am *(nothing)*.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me *(nothing)*. 1Cor 13:1-3 KJV

According to 1Corinthians 13:8 what never fails? *(Love)*

If we want to avoid failure what is one thing we need to make sure is included in any and all actions plans? *(Drive the point home for the need to love as God loves.)*

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 and write what love is according to these verses.

(Charity suffereth long, is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things.)

According to John 13:35, what is the significance of Christians' love one for another?

(By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples...)

What does our love for one another show other Christians and the world?

Now we are ready to discuss and pick an action plan for the church in each of the six areas we have covered the last seven weeks.

Evangelism: _____

Discipleship _____

Outreach _____

Worship _____

Prayer _____

Doctrine _____

Vote on three or more members to check the ministry action plan for biblical accuracy and then present it to the church council at their next meeting.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Post-survey: administer.

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING A GROUP REVITALIZATION PROGRAM FOR IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN PETERSBURG, INDIANA

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The purpose of this project was to develop a group revitalization program for Immanuel Baptist Church in Petersburg, Indiana. Chapter one explains existing conditions, need for revitalization, and reasons for choosing a group revitalization program. Chapter two states the biblical basis for group revitalization. Working in community is supported by Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 teaching that two are better than one, 1 Corinthians chapter 12 teaching that Christians are members of the body of Christ, and Ephesians 4:1-16 teaching that spiritual gifts are given for the purpose of building up the body of Christ. Chapter three presents the educational benefits and efficiencies of group revitalization followed by examples of current literature by the working community on church revitalization. Chapter three concludes with the sociological and psychological support for group revitalization. Chapter four describes the implementation of the project. Chapter five evaluates the project and makes conclusions on the successfulness of the project.

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