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IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING REVITALIZING PASTORS
WITHIN THE CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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Chad Nicholas Stuart
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IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING REVITALIZING PASTORS
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Chad Nicholas Stuart

Read and Approved by:

Faculty Supervisor William D. Henard

Second Reader: Timothy K. Beougher

Defense Date: March 16, 2023

I dedicate this project to my wife, Christina, who revitalized my ministry when I was thinking of giving up just two years into my pastoral journey.

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PREFACE

I stood in stunned silence as my wife, Christina, quietly and awkwardly slipped off the platform. We were watching in real time two elders argue in the worship service about whether I should become their pastor. It was the type of situation I'd heard older pastors at denominational meetings tell stories about, I assumed these stories were made-up or at the very least exaggerated for the purpose of entertaining younger pastors; but no, this was happening. While my wife was being presented with a welcome bouquet of flowers, an elder on the back row of our little rural church in North Georgia raised his hand and stated, "I have nothing against Pastor Stuart. I'm sure he is a nice young man, but we don't need him." The elder introducing us immediately snapped back, "What have you done to help pastor this church in the last week?" And the fight was on. By the end of what was probably only five minutes, but felt like an eternity, a church business meeting for that night had been called, and I, after all of that had the privilege of trying to stand before a tense congregation and preach about the love of Jesus. Christina and I had invited friends and neighbors to our first Sabbath at our new church. Suffice to say they never came back, but praise God others did. Even though that elder on two other occasions attempted to run me out, I kept in the fight and by the time we transitioned a few years later to our next assignment, our beloved rural Georgia church had grown from an average of 25 in attendance to a weekly attendance of more than 60. I had no language for that growth, but I learned the language in my next assignment. A church in California that started with an average attendance of 150 and three or four baptisms a year, grew to a church of nearly 400 in attendance, 60+ baptisms a year, and \$800,000 in tithe. Someone during this time said, "The church had been revitalized." I was happy about that, but my eyes were set on a "more" exciting adventure. While working toward revitalization in the

mother church, I along with eight others planted a healthy daughter church. It was while planting that wonderful church that I discovered planting wasn't my actual passion. While I love the excitement and the lack of member conflict that comes with church planting, my heart, my passion, is for "restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem" (Dan 9:25). Thus, when I was given the opportunity by my denominational leadership to pursue a Doctor of Ministry degree, I chose church revitalization.

During my studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, my love and commitment to the mission of revitalizing churches has only grown. I am so grateful to SBTS for providing me the opportunity to learn and grow alongside brothers and a sister or two with similar passions. I am in many ways an outsider at SBTS. As a Seventh-day Adventist, I am many things that Baptists are not, or maybe they are many things that I am not. I am a Sabbath keeper, rather than reverencing Sunday, I do not affirm the eternal torment of the lost, but rather believe in annihilationism, I am not reformed, but like to stick closely to my brother John Wesley in the Arminian camp. Lastly, I am a vegetarian, so I was always a little hungry after the seminary luncheons catered by Chick-fil-A. Despite these differences, my classmates and professors were always extremely gracious and welcoming of me. I want to thank two professors in particular—Dr. Timothy Beougher, and my wonderful advisory professor, Dr. William Henard. I learned a great deal from both men. I am grateful for the knowledge they poured into me and the Christian manner in which they led their classes and welcomed me as their student.

Thank you to my editor, Betsy Fredrick. She is an amazing editor and I do not believe this project would have been completed without her. She cares about grammar and syntax, but also about how the ideas are being communicated, so asked questions like, "Do you really want to say (that) in (this) way?" Or advise, "Please expand upon this thought." Such insights make the writing richer and easier for all of us. So, all that read this I hope will mentally add their thanks to Betsy.

I also want to thank the many mentors I have had over my life, beginning with my own Dad, who taught me the great value of education and by his example of becoming Dr. Stuart, inspired me to choose a similar course in my life. I am grateful to both my parents who sacrificed to put all their kids through Christian school from kindergarten through college and raised us to try and help others whenever we were able. This spirit of helping in part gives me a passion for church revitalization.

Beyond my parents, I thank Pastors Neil Richmund, David VanDenburgh, Hazel Burns, Siegfried Roeske, Ken Rogers, Esther Knott, Dwight Nelson, and Paul Hoover. Neil, you loved me into a relationship with Jesus. Dave, you let me sit and learn from you and cared for and corrected me like a son. Hazel, you prayed for me and helped me to see God had a special calling on my life. Sieg, they called us the odd couple. You, old and completely proper, me young completely improper. You gave me a love for the Adventist message. Ken, you gave me a place to live and my first real shot at “leading.” Esther, you have been the great champion of my ministry for nearly twenty years. Dwight, you were my hero, turned friend. You told me, “You’re going to be a leader in this (the Seventh-day Adventist) church someday and I am going to help you.” You have been true to your word. Paul, in those first shaky years of pastoral ministry I’m not sure I would have made it through without your guiding hand and gracious heart toward me.

I want to thank the church families that have loved me and my family through ministry: Calhoun, Cartersville, Adairsville, Visalia, The Ark, and my current church family, the Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church. I have been blessed to work in each community in each context, and I pray I was blessing to you as well. Thank you also to my many colleagues in those many places, and in particular my current team: Jason, Lerone, Carol, Kandace, Matthew, Michael, and Crystal. You all have been so kind and tolerant as I’ve taken breaks here and there over the last five years to work on completing this task. Thank you also to the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and

the Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist for assisting with the finances to make it possible for me to pursue a doctoral degree.

Finally, I thank my wife, Christina, and our three sons, Dayton, Landon, and Levi. In my first year in pastoral ministry working alongside a senior pastor that didn't seem too fond of me, and not enjoying my role within the church I was serving, I told Christina, "If this is what ministry is I don't think it is for me." She challenged me as only she can, "If you don't like it, then you be better." With other words she reminded me that my ministry was not about others, but about who God called me to be, His servant, His child, His missionary. So even if others weren't doing their best, I could always give my all to God. For twenty years besides God the only person I've wanted to make proud is Christina, I pray I have accomplished that. Dayton, Landon, and Levi, I love you and I hope you see through this journey that you too can do hard things. God is big enough for anything He calls you to in your lives ahead!

Jesus, thank You for dying for me. Thank you for revitalizing my heart on April 26, 1996, and for doing so on so many occasions since then. I love You Jesus, and I give You all my life for all my days for the growth of Your kingdom and for the glory and the honor of Your name!

Chad Stuart

Ashton, Maryland

May 2023

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I have had the privilege of serving as a pastor for seventeen years. In those seventeen years, I have served as the head pastor or senior pastor of four congregations. Three of these congregations were either plateaued or in decline when my term of service began. Through experience in these churches and observing firsthand the blessing it is to the kingdom of God when a church is brought back to life, church revitalization has become my passion. I have been invited to serve on various committees within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination and I have come to the belief that to turn the tide on the growing crisis of plateaued and dying churches there must be more intentionality about which pastors are placed within individual Adventist churches. Addressing the leadership necessities of these dying churches is the great need that I wanted to serve through this Doctor of Ministry project.

Context

One of the roles I fulfill as a pastor within the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (CC) is to sit on both the executive committee of the conference and the personnel committee of the conference, which oversees, in conjunction with local churches, the placement of all pastors.

The total population of the CC territory is 5,613,251. Within the boundaries of the CC, as of October 2019, there are 92 churches, companies (the step before becoming

an officially organized church), and groups (the initial designation of a church plant), with a reported church membership of 16,252.¹

The most recent report (2018) from The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) listed 78 churches within the CC territory, holding a membership of 15,032. ASTR reported that the average combined church attendance within the territory is only 3,098 members. That attendance statistic is roughly 21 percent of the reported CC membership attending church. Unfortunately, CC attendance exceeds the reported numbers for the entire North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD),² which has a membership of 1,237,004m but an average attendance of only 15 percent.³ Although the CC is ahead of the NAD in attendance rate, they are both following the same trend of attendance decline. In the four years (2013) since attendance became part of the annual statistical report of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) world church, CC's average attendance has dropped by 3 percent.⁴ If the attendance and memberships of CC's three largest churches are removed (which includes the church I serve as senior pastor) then average attendance would drop to 16 percent of the membership.

Another vital statistic for understanding the cultural context is to know that 65 pastors are employed to oversee 91 churches within the conference (a majority of CC

¹ eAdventist, "Chesapeake Conference of SDA," accessed October 16, 2019, <https://www.eadventist.net/en/search?org=ANB811>.

² The North American Division consists of the United States, Canada, Bermuda, and Guam/Micronesia.

³ Seventh-day Adventist Church, Office of Archives and Statistics and Research, "2018 Annual Statistical Report of The Seventh-day Adventist Church," accessed July 2, 2019, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2018.pdf>, 18-20.

⁴ Seventh-day Adventist Church, Office of Archives and Statistics and Research, "2014 Annual Statistical Report of The Seventh-day Adventist Church," accessed July 2, 2019, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2014.pdf>, 15-16.

pastors have more than one church under their supervision, and a few CC churches have multiple pastors on staff).⁵

The average tenure for a pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America is 2.8 years before either leaving ministry or transferring to another church. Two-thirds of Adventist congregations have had three or more pastors in ten years.⁶ Within this context, five times a year the personnel committee of CC meets to discuss pastoral placements in various churches across the territory. This committee, on average, discusses the movement and hiring of three pastors per meeting. They move, hire, and terminate, yet the trend of decline continues in the vast majority of churches within the CC. Pastoral changes are not assisting in stemming the loss of attendance within the local churches of Chesapeake Conference.

Rationale

With the trend of church attendance in decline starting the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in the face, both in the NAD and more specifically in CC, changes must be made to reverse this declination and return to a denomination of growth. Albert Einstein is credited with coining the cliché, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” It must be accepted within the CC that insanity is being practiced and CC churches are suffering for it.

Consequently, there must be an analysis of the pastoral workforce of CC. This analysis must be completed based on leading studies in church revitalization that have assessed personality traits commonly possessed by pastors that have had success in church revitalization, and practices being performed by revitalizing pastors within successful church revitalizations. This analysis must be done to determine if the workforce is more

⁵ Seventh-day Adventist Church, “2018 Annual Statistical Report,” 59.

⁶ Faith Communities Today, “Pastoral Ministry in Seventh-day Adventist Congregations Today,” accessed July 5, 2019, <http://circle.adventist.org/files/icm/nadresearch/PastorMinistries.pdf>, 2.

or less likely to be successful in revitalizing the stagnant, dying, and dead churches within the CC territory.

After this analysis, if the findings support the presupposition that the pastors within CC territory are not the individuals best suited to revitalize churches, then steps must be taken to assist in making the necessary changes to end the insanity. Changes will be made through the re-training of the current pastoral team and the evaluation and practice of new hires.

Furthermore, the average tenure policy of pastors within CC must undergo a review. If found that the average pastoral tenure within CC was not conducive with the standard mean of tenure for pastors that revitalize churches, then there had to be a willingness to reassess the historical practice of short tenures and a willingness to move toward longer tenures for the sake of God's churches within the CC territory. I explored the best ways to make this change, which included a refocusing of the expectations from conference leadership to the pastors already within the CC territory and also, specific standards communicated in the hiring process that set tenure expectations.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to assess the current pastoral team within the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists territory to help determine the likelihood of future success in revitalizing the stagnant and dying churches within this territory and then in developing a system for building a pastoral workforce for growth rather than decline.

Goals

To improve the placement, hiring, and training of pastors to revitalize the plateaued and dying churches within CC, I sought to achieve the following goals:

1. The first goal was to assess the current revitalization practices being implemented among the lead pastors of CC.
2. The second goal was to assess the personality traits of the lead pastors in CC.

3. The third goal was to increase the knowledge of CC administration and ministry directors on the profile of a revitalizing pastor.
4. The fourth goal was to create an instrument to measure candidates as they are being considered for placement in plateaued and dying churches.
5. The fifth goal was to develop a ministry plan for pastors of plateaued and declining churches to assist the pastor in leading the church to revitalization.

Research Methodology

The first goal was to assess the current revitalization practices being implemented among the lead pastors of CC. This goal was measured by administering a survey that measured which practices of church revitalization are being implemented in local churches by the lead pastors.⁷ A secondary survey⁸ of the prayer practices of pastors in their local congregations provided further measurement to the key revitalizing practice of prayer.⁹ This goal was considered successfully met when 50 percent of CC's English-speaking lead pastors completed the survey and the inventory was analyzed by the CC conference administration providing a clearer picture of the revitalization practices taking place in CC churches.

The second goal was to assess the personality traits of the lead pastors in CC. This goal was measured by administering the DISC Personality Profile.¹⁰ This goal was considered successfully met when 50 percent of the head pastors of the CC's English-speaking churches completed the DISC Profile yielding a clearer picture of the pastoral

⁷ See appendix 1. All the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use.

⁸ See appendix 2.

⁹ Thom Rainer writes, "Our anatomy of revived churches was clear and persuasive. It is God who revitalizes churches. If we truly want to see His work in our churches, we must turn to Him in prayer. . . . We have seen again and again in our anatomy of revitalized churches that every sustained church revitalization is undergirded by a powerful movement of prayer. Every. Single. One. It's just that important." Thom S. Rainer, *Anatomy of a Revived Church: Seven Findings of How Congregations Avoided Death* (Spring Hill, TN: Rainer, 2020), 82.

¹⁰ The DiSC Personality Profile inventory is readily accessible at many sites online. I purchased the inventories for use in this doctoral project through Church Staffing. <https://www.churchstaffing.com>.

personalities within CC. Gary L. McIntosh's *There's Hope for Your Church* states that pastors who revitalize churches overwhelmingly fall into one of two personality types within this profile.¹¹ This assessment measured how many current pastors in the CC fall into one of those two personality types or a combination of the two.

The third goal was to increase the knowledge of CC administration, ministry directors, personnel committee on the profile of a revitalizing pastor. This goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-survey that was used to measure the change in knowledge and understanding of personality and practices of a church revitalizing pastor most likely to bring about church revitalization.¹² 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 fourth goal was to create an instrument to measure candidates as they are being considered for placement in plateaued and dying churches. This goal was measured by the president, executive secretary, treasurer, and ministerial director of CC who used a rubric to evaluate legality, clarity, and functionality of the instrument. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level.¹³ If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, then the material was revised until it met the standard.

The fifth goal was to develop a ministry plan for pastors of plateaued and declining churches that would assist him or her in leading the church to revitalization. This goal was measured by a panel of three administrators and a CC conference ministerial

¹¹ Gary L. McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 29.

¹² See appendix 3.

¹³ See appendix 8.

team member,¹⁴ who utilized a rubric to evaluate the functionality of the plan, communication processes, training elements, provision of revitalization resources, and the action steps. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of all the rubric evaluation indicators met or exceeded the sufficiency level.¹⁵ If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, then the material was revised until it met the standard.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

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

Chesapeake Conference or Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The territory of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination that covers Delaware, Maryland (except two counties and including only portions of two counties), two counties in Virginia, and three counties in West Virginia.

Personnel Committee. A committee of the Chesapeake Conference composed of pastors and administrators that oversee in conjunction with the local churches the hiring and transitions of pastors within the Chesapeake Conference.

Conference Executive Committee or Executive Committee. A committee of the Chesapeake Conference composed of laypersons, pastors, teachers, and administrators within the Chesapeake territory that ratify the recommendations of the personnel committee.

DISC. “DISC theory, researched by Dr. William Moulton Marston at Harvard University, is a method of identifying predictable actions and personality traits within human behavior. Marston narrowed these predictable personality traits into four DISC

¹⁴ The three administrators were the conference president, the executive secretary, the conference treasurer. The ministerial team member was the ministerial director of CC.

¹⁵ See appendix 18.

personality types.”¹⁶ These four personality types are Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C).

Revitalizing pastor. A pastor that through personality trait and practice demonstrates the commitment and willingness, as McIntosh states, “to accept the challenge of guiding a church toward fresh health and vitality.”¹⁷

Plateaued church. Determined by worship attendance growing at a rate that is less than the population growth rate of the surrounding community in the last five years.¹⁸

Declining church or church in decline. When worship attendance declines by 10 percent over the previous five years.¹⁹

Revitalized church. As defined by Joseph Hudson, a church that through “an intentional change of culture and praxis, after a period of church plateau or decline, that leads to greater church and health and numerical growth.”²⁰

¹⁶ Disc Insights, “DISC Theory and DISC Personality Traits,” accessed January 17, 2019, <https://discinsights.com/disc-theory>.

¹⁷ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 28. McIntosh makes a delineation between revitalization pastors and revitalization leaders. His main differential is the belief that revitalization pastors work at the will of the people; i.e., the local church board desiring to gain consensus in their attempts to turn around a church. On the other hand, he sees revitalization leaders as individuals who recognize that, while they are employed by the church, the church is not whom they are trying to placate; they are called and thus answer to God. Therefore, they do not move at the will of the people but at the will of God. For the purposes of this project my definition would follow as a mix of these as church health must include a level of church community buy in, but I am in agreement that a revitalizing “pastor” (the term I have chosen to embrace) is ultimately accountable to God, above and beyond a board or denomination hiring.

¹⁸ Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 245. Rainer uses membership as the value for growth rate comparison. Due to a lack of auditing of church membership records within local Seventh-day Adventist churches, I chose to base this definition on attendance, which is a more accurate assessment of a church’s health in most Adventist church settings. The researcher notes that in some occasions “large” attendance may be a sign of an unhealthy setting if the majority of attenders are present based on a “celebrity” pastor, but are not actually engaged in the life of the church.

¹⁹ This definition is based on a pre-COVID society. Future researchers will need to determine how to apply the COVID and immediate post COVID years.

²⁰ Joseph Stephen Hudson, “A Competency Model for Church Revitalization in Southern Baptist Convention Churches: A Mixed Methods Study” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017).

Revitalization practices. A set of practices defined by revitalization literature consistently practiced by church revitalization pastors.

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the accuracy of the pre- and post-series surveys were dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to be honest about their knowledge and understanding of the practices and personality traits of revitalizing pastors. To mitigate this limitation, the respondents were promised that their answers would remain nameless. Second, the effectiveness of the training was limited by the honesty of the lead pastors in responding to the survey regarding their practices within the local church as it related to church revitalization. To mitigate this limitation, the respondents were promised that their answers would remain nameless.

Two delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project addressed the practices and personality traits of the lead pastors, not their defined giftedness. Second, the project did not survey all the pastors of the CC, only those in lead pastor roles; associate pastors were not surveyed.

Conclusion

This project provided CC with the insight and tools to identify new pastors for church revitalization placements and to develop current CC pastors to work within their current plateaued and declining church settings to, as Mark Clifton writes, reach the goal of making “much of Jesus—to bring him the glory he so richly deserves.”²¹

It was also my intention that this material spread beyond the CC territory to the NAD as well that the Seventh-day Adventist denomination may reverse the trend of decline and reach more people with the love of Jesus.

²¹ Mark Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory: Revitalizing Dying Churches* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 19-20.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL MODELS OF REVITALIZING LEADERSHIP

Less than 50 percent of Seventh-day Adventists in North America attend church from week to week,¹ and the membership growth rate is slipping farther and farther behind the population growth rate in North America,² resulting in ever stagnating and declining churches. To reverse this trend, the Seventh-day Adventist Church must embrace church revitalization as a primary focus of its ministry training and hiring practices within the pastoral workforce. This chapter explores the biblical and theological foundation basis for the need of revitalizing leaders.

Revitalization is an act of God carried forward through leaders committed, equipped, and made by God with a singular mission of growing God’s kingdom through making disciples. This chapter looks at three of these biblical examples of revitalizing leaders: Moses, Nehemiah, and Paul.

Moses: The Gritty Committed Leader

Moses’ tenure, of more than forty years as the pastor of God’s people, models the commitment of a revitalizing pastor. Imagine being the pastor of a church for forty years and the entirety of that tenure is a work of revitalization; this model was Moses’ pastorate. Moses was given from God a two-fold mission, first as deliverer: “Come, I will

¹ Seventh-day Adventist Church, Office of Archives and Statistics and Research, “2018 Annual Statistical Report of The Seventh-day Adventist Church,” accessed July 7, 2019, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2018.pdf>, 16-18.

² S. Joseph Kidder and David Beckworth, “Reflections on the Future of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America: Trends and Challenges (part 1 of 2),” *Ministry Magazine*, December 2010, accessed July 8, 2019 <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2010/12/reflections-on-the-future-of-north-american-seventh-day-adventism.html>.

send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt” (Exod 3:10).³ Then also as revitalizer: “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain” (Exod 3:12). Serving God on this mountain signified the moment when the Israelites would return to Mount Sinai to receive the law of God that would guide them in how to live and worship Him. Eugene Carpenter points out that the deliverance of God’s people from Egypt is not for the purpose of political freedom, but that they learn “to be and do all that Yahweh will instruct them to be and do.”⁴ Moses is not released from his mission after leading the children of Israel out of Egypt because now he must help them discover how they are to live in worship of the one true God. I would call this an act of revitalization.

Lessons can be learned from the life of Moses that would contribute to longevity as a leader.

Moses Knew His Calling

Then the Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.” (Exod 3:7-12)

³ All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

⁴ Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus 1-18*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016), 554.

Dwight K. Nelson, who has pastored the Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan,⁵ since 1983, shares, “Too often people only examine if a new call is from God, they do not take time to examine if they have been released from the previous call. A call to a new location may seem nice, but if God is silent about releasing you from your current call, then the previous order still stands.”⁶ The power of a true call can build longevity. Such a belief is reiterated by Jack Daniel: “God has assigned each of us a place in life, and we are to remain at our post until given orders . . . our vacillation is not a sign to leave but on the contrary a sign to remain steadfast at our post. When we are obedient and determined to remain steadfast, we eventually find our situation clarifying.”⁷ Moses’ call became clear and thus he would not move without God.

Moses Would Not Move without God

When Moses received his call, God gave him a promise, “I will be with you” (Exod 3:12a), and it seems that Moses never forgot that promise. When God informed Moses that He would no longer go with the children of Israel, Moses leans into that promise: “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?” (Exod 33:15, 16). It was a sustaining moment in extending the tenure

⁵ Pioneer Memorial Church is a Seventh-day Adventist congregation on the campus of Andrews University, the flagship university of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination and also the location of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. It has a membership of 3,786 members, making it one of the largest churches in the Adventist denomination.

⁶ Dwight Nelson is a mentor of mine and he shared this insight with me during a personal conversation when I asked him why he had stayed so long at Pioneer Memorial Church—he is in his 36th year of service there. He went on to say, “The call from God to come here was so clear; such that every time I start to explore other invitations, I have the firm conviction God has not released me from His previous calling.”

⁷ Jack L. Daniel, *Patient Catalyst: Leading Church Revitalization* (South Easton, MA: Overseed, 2018), 203.

of Moses. Eugene Carpenter writes, “Moses realizes that everything hinges on Yahweh’s presence.”⁸

Moses Knew The Israelites Were God’s People, Not His

At one-point, God’s anger boils over at the children of Israel. While Moses is on the mountain visiting with God, the people in the valley below become restless and build an idol. God tells Moses,

Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” (Exod 32:7, 8)

In Moses’ response one sees his understanding of to whom the people belong: “O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?” (Exod 32:11).⁹ Moses furthermore understood that it was this very reality that made the people significant: “Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?” (Exod 33:16b). Moses did not think that he somehow made the children of Israel great—the grace of God going with the people divinely set them apart and set them on their proper course in this world.¹⁰

Moses Vented to God

In both long and short tenures, but especially so in long tenures, one must learn where it is safe to complain. If a pastor does not discover to whom one can appropriately

⁸ Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus 19-40*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016), 341.

⁹ Boice believes that neither God nor Moses want to claim the people, like parents when needing to discipline an unruly child. James Montgomery Boice, *The Life of Moses: God’s First Deliverer of Israel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2018), 185. I do not agree with Boice—I believe Moses recognizes these are God’s people and he is in dialogue reminding God of this.

¹⁰ Carpenter, *Exodus 19-40*, 341.

vent, then his tenure may end up short. Moses time and again takes his problems to God and even questions God's ways: "Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, "O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all" (Exod 5:22, 23). Then, again, in Numbers 11:11-15,

Moses said to the Lord, "Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child, to the land that you swore to give their fathers?' Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness."

The call on Moses' life was from God, so when Moses had challenges he did not go to the people and complain, discourage, or seek answers. Moses sought answers from the one who called him. How many pastors ruin their tenures or destroy the revitalization of their churches by airing their doubts before God's people?

Moses Cared about God's People above Himself

Through Moses' appeals to God about the children of Israel, one sees that Moses valued the people and their well-being above his own pride or success. In Numbers 14, the people once again rebel: "And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. . . . And they said to one another, 'Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt'" (vv. 2a, 4). The people were complaining against Moses and Aaron and they even want a new pastor! So, what does Moses do? He prays for the grumblers and ingrates that they will receive mercy (Num 14:18-19).

Moses does similar in Exodus 33. God offers to go with Moses, but Moses will not even consider going without the people. Carpenter points out, "Moses is not satisfied

to be at ease himself.”¹¹ If a pastor’s focus is on the growth of God’s people and the revitalization of God’s people rather than personal ease, then longevity will be in view.

Moses Was Willing to Take Advice

Finally, Moses illustrates in his leadership that a leader, even the great Moses, should be willing to hear counsel and change. This example is seen most clearly in Exodus 18 when Moses receives advice from his father-in-law and a Midianite (in other words, someone not of the Israelite faith). The Bible tells that Jethro observed how his son-in-law was handling the challenges of “the church” and told him he was doing it wrong (Exod 18:17). Jethro gave Moses counsel on a better way of doing things (Exod 18:19-23). Exodus 18:24 records Moses’ response: “So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.” Longevity in one place requires adjustments, and Moses shows that no one is too big or powerful, even the one that speaks face to face with the Lord (Exod 33:11; Num 12:8), as Moses did.

Moses’s tenure, of more than forty years as the pastor of God’s people, models the commitment of a revitalizing pastor. Through the example of his ministry one sees characteristics of a revitalizing pastor committed to a long tenure with one church.

Nehemiah: The Prayerful Leader

Seventy-percent of Christian churches in America are in decline according to Exponential and Lifeway Research,¹² and the statistics are even greater in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination at 80 percent.¹³ A fitting description in light of these texts for the majority of churches in North America could be found in the book of Nehemiah:

¹¹ Carpenter, *Exodus 19-40*, 340.

¹² Thom S. Rainer, “Major New Research on Declining, Plateaued, and Growing Churches from Exponential and LifeWay Research,” Church Answers, February 7, 2020, <https://churchanswers.com/blog/major-new-research-on-declining-plateaued-and-growing-churches-from-exponential-and-lifeway-research/>.

¹³ Russell Burrill, *Waking the Dead: Renewing Plateaued and Declining Adventist Churches* (Berrien Springs, MI: NADEI, 2004), 2.

“The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire” (Neh 1:3). Nehemiah heard these words and his heart was stirred: “As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and I mourned for day” (Neh 1:4a). However, Nehemiah did something else: “And I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven” (Neh 1:4b). These prayers led to revitalization! The enemies of the restoration of Jerusalem were thwarted (Neh 4), the oppression of the poor ended (Neh 5), the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt (Neh 6, 7), exiles returned to Jerusalem (Neh 7), the people heard the law of God and they worship (Neh 8), the people confess their sins (Neh 9), the covenant is restored (Neh 8-9), government was established in Jerusalem (Neh 11), the priests and the services of the temple were reestablished (Neh 12), and reform continued (Neh 13). The previous scriptural references paint a beautiful picture of revival, and it all began with prayer! Thus, this section of the biblical analysis of revitalizing leaders in the Bible looks at the prayer of Nehemiah found in Nehemiah 1:5-11.

Before examining the elements of the prayer, four ideas associated with the prayer of Nehemiah must be considered. These four attributes highlight the revitalizing leadership characteristics of Nehemiah. The news that prompts the great prayer of revival that Nehemiah prays is bad news: “The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire” (Neh 1:3). What prompted the bad news was an inquiry by Nehemiah: “And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem” (Neh 1:2b). Nehemiah was a Jew living and working in Babylon with a job of great significance (Neh 1:11d). He had not been to Jerusalem,¹⁴ yet he cared for the people still in Jerusalem and Jerusalem herself. The reader does not know the extent of that care prior to the question, “And I asked them concerning the Jews who

¹⁴ Derek W. H. Thomas, *Ezra & Nehemiah*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2016), 204.

escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem,” but some have extrapolated great concern by the evidence of his reaction.¹⁵ The Bible does not provide the depth of his care prior to his inquiry. Whether his initial care for Jerusalem was large or small, the first point one can take from Nehemiah as a revitalizing leader is that he took notice of God’s people and God’s land.

Care for God’s people both in the church and out of the church is a place all pastors that are church revitalizers should begin. The pastor that does not care to know about God’s people or God’s church is not likely to lead that church in revitalization. On one occasion I interviewed a pastor for a specific church post. The pastor spoke much of his passions, skills, and ideas. When the interview came to a close, I inquired, “Do you have any questions?” His response, “No.” There was no inquiry of the church in which he was being interviewed to serve. There was no inquiry of the people he would be called to shepherd. There was no inquiry of the community in which the church was located. This pastor was not a Nehemiah.

When Nehemiah hears the news that Jerusalem, God’s city, remains in ruins, one sees the second significant point that preceded this prayer: intense sorrow. Jack Taylor and O. S. Hawkins write, “Revival never comes to any person until he realizes the dire need of it.”¹⁶ Nehemiah realizes the dire need of Jerusalem and the people dwelling there and it leads him to tears. Revitalization cannot happen until an individual or a group of individuals sees the enormity of the problem. Not only that they see the problem, but that that problem breaks their heart. Stanley Anderson writes, “Every man who is big enough to take his eyes off himself, and look upon the fields of suffering humanity, will find ample justification for hot tears.”¹⁷ In this moment, Nehemiah reminds the reader of Jesus: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are

¹⁵ Thomas, *Ezra & Nehemiah*, 205.

¹⁶ Jack R. Taylor and O. S. Hawkins, *When Revival Comes* (Nashville: Boardman, 1980), 44.

¹⁷ Stanley Edwin Anderson, *Nehemiah the Executive* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen, 1954), 19.

sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” (Matt 23:37). In the anguish and love for the shamed and the lost Nehemiah and Jesus both express their desire for something different. The revitalizing pastor must have this same anguish when he looks upon a dying church—he must mourn for the people languishing within the walls of these churches, and long for something better.

The third point that precedes the prayer is found in the position of the prayer within the writing of Nehemiah. Gregory Goswell states, “The prominent positioning of the prayer of Nehemiah at the head of the narrative, in a position that up to now has been occupied by the decrees of Persian kings (cf. Ezra 1:2-4; 7:11-26), shows that while the royal favour was still needed for the mission of Nehemiah, it was also relativized and even denigrated.”¹⁸ Goswell is pointing out that the writer of Nehemiah establishes the clear principle that God is ultimately going to accomplish the mission of revitalization, not any other individual. The revitalizing pastor must recognize that God ultimately gives the authority and will accomplish the task of revival within a church. Many pastors seek the power to bring revitalization to a church through conferences, coaching, or books, but the structure of Nehemiah illuminates the truth: God is in charge! Nehemiah illustrates that he understands God is in control by beginning the entire revival effort in going to the Lord in prayer. Nehemiah does not go and speak first to the king or any of the other servants; Nehemiah begins by talking to God. James Montgomery Boice writes, “This is the first and greatest dynamic” for leaders, “the leader and God.”¹⁹ When many pastors see the need of revitalization in their church they go first to their board, peers, or denominational leaders—Nehemiah goes first to God. His priority is God.

¹⁸ Gregory Goswell, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, EP Study Commentary (Faverdale North Darlington, England: EP, 2013), 197.

¹⁹ James Montgomery Boice, *Nehemiah*, Boice Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 19.

The fourth and final point before looking at Nehemiah’s prayer (Neh 1:5-11) is that Nehemiah was persistent in prayer. Nehemiah 1:4 reads, “I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven,” and then again in 1:6: “Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night.” The prayer is the summation of all these prayers,²⁰ yet in these two verses one sees that Nehemiah did not just pray once and he was done. He sought the Lord again and again. Nehemiah’s persistence in prayer continued throughout his journey of revitalizing Jerusalem, which is evident in the nine recorded prayers found throughout the book of Nehemiah.²¹ The revitalizing pastor must be a person of persistent prayer.

Nehemiah’s Prayer

The aspects of Nehemiah’s prayer serve as instruction on the elements that should be included in the prayers of revitalizing pastors. The prayer of Nehemiah has similar characteristics to the prayers of lament found in other parts of Scripture, though it is lacking one element: there is no complaint against God.²² Breneman aptly points out that Nehemiah’s prayer is not a lament, but a prayer of repentance.²³ Some commentaries place Nehemiah’s prayer in a four-part structure,²⁴ I would place it in the five part structure as Mark Throntveit does. In so doing he also places it in a simple chiasm:

A Invocation (5-6a)
 B Confession: Israel’s sin (6b-7)
 X Appeal to covenantal promise of return (8-9)
 B’ Confession: God’s redemption (10)
 A’ Invocation with supplication (11a)²⁵

²⁰ Goswell, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 204.

²¹ Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, The New American Commentary, vol. 10 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 170. These nine prayers are found in Neh 1:5-11; 2:4; 4:4-5; 5:19; 6:14; 13:14; 13:22; 13:29; 13:31.

²² Gary V. Smith, *Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, vol. 5b (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2010), 106.

²³ Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 171.

²⁴ Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 171.

²⁵ Mark A. Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1992), 63-64.

This structure places covenant at the heart of the prayer. Throntveit states that placing covenant as the central heart of the prayers does not undermine the key aspects of confession and mercy.²⁶ The structure of five parts is more accurate than the four of other commentaries.²⁷ Ultimately, God’s mercy and faithfulness in keeping His promises are at the heart of every answered prayer, thus I support the covenantal promise as the heart of Nehemiah’s prayer. Each of these elements and their significance for revitalization should be reviewed.

Invocation

Nehemiah opens his prayer with passion, “O Lord,” which is a particle of entreaty,²⁸ but before Nehemiah gets to his request he gives praise to The Lord: “O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments” (Neh 1:5). When Jesus’s disciples asked Him to teach them to pray, He invited them to begin prayer by praising God (Luke 11:1, 2). In the midst of his despair, Nehemiah is still mindful to praise his God. Also discovered in verse 5 is Nehemiah’s recognition that God is not to blame for the ruin in which the Jews find themselves: “God who keeps covenant and love.” Nehemiah unpacks this recognition more fully in the next section of the prayer. This opening of praise teaches the revitalizing pastor that no matter how bad the situation is, God is still worthy of praise. The desires of one’s heart are better clarified in the context of acknowledging who God is and what He is about. J. I. Packer writes,

Nehemiah’s walk with God was saturated with his praying, and praying of the truest and purest kind—namely, the sort of praying that is always seeking to clarify its own vision of who and what God is, and to celebrate his reality in constant adoration, and

²⁶ Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 65.

²⁷ Thomas outlines the structure of Nehemiah’s prayer in this way: A1 verses 5-6a, Lord, you are great: hear prayer; B1 verses 6b-7, our unfaithfulness; B2 verses 8-10, the Lord’s faithfulness; A2 verse 11, Lord, you are sovereign: grant mercy. Thomas, *Ezra & Nehemiah*, 210. The vital element that Thomas’ structure fails to emphasize is the second confession of who these people are (v. 10).

²⁸ Goswell, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 206.

to rethink in his presence such needs and requests as one is bringing to him, so that the stating of them becomes a specifying of “hallowed be thy name . . . thy will be done . . . for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.”²⁹

Before a pastor petitions God, let him pause to get himself in the right frame of mind to make those petitions in the will of God. This is the opening of Nehemiah’s prayer.

Confession 1

Confession is the next step in Nehemiah’s prayer. In the previous verse (1:5) Nehemiah firmly declares God is not the one who broke covenant. Now Nehemiah firmly lays the blame at the appropriate feet:

I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father’s house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. (Neh 1:6, 7)

Nehemiah does not place the blame upon the Babylonians, nor upon the King of Persia. The fault lies in that the children of Israel did not obey the commandments given by God through Moses. However, Nehemiah does not lay the blame at only the feet of those in shame in Jerusalem or at the feet of those living at the time of the exile. Nehemiah recognizes he too is a sinner, “we have sinned against you,” “even I and my father’s house have sinned,” “we have acted very corruptly.” Nehemiah is not praying at the people, he is praying as part of the people. He is, as Matthew Levering points out, embracing the idea of 1 Corinthians 12:26: “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”³⁰ But the words of the prayer were more than communal repentance by Nehemiah—his standard for loyalty to God was obedience to “the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you [God] commanded your servant Moses” (Neh 1:7b) in light of this Nehemiah is acknowledging was is true of all mankind: “All

²⁹ J. I. Packer, *A Passion for Faithfulness: Wisdom from the Book of Nehemiah* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1995), 44-45.

³⁰ Matthew Levering, *Ezra & Nehemiah*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007), 129.

have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). It is not enough for the revitalizing pastor to pray for the dying sinning church he is shepherding; he must also pray for the dying sinning man staring back at him in the mirror. Owen White explains, “There is hope for the man when he recognizes his sin, acknowledges and confesses it. There is hope for a nation when that nation recognizes its sin and when its citizens and leaders alike confess and turn from their sin. There is hope for a church when that the church humbly, penitently, and sincerely turns to the Lord.”³¹ Revitalizing pastors must be individuals with repentant hearts like Nehemiah.

Remember Your Promise

The prayer of Nehemiah now moves into what Throntveit calls “the heart of the prayer.”³² In this section of the prayer Nehemiah reminds God of his promise. Nehemiah does not remind God because God forgets, but as a way of claiming the promise God had given by paraphrasing Deuteronomy 30:

Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, “If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.” (Neh 1:9)

In this moment Nehemiah is expressing his trust in God. At the beginning of the prayer He already stated that he knows God keeps his promises; Nehemiah now is claiming this promise in trust. It is seen as a petition, but in many ways, it is a statement of trust. Verse 8 acknowledges the negative portion of the covenant that God did what he said he would do—the people have been scattered—but Nehemiah trusts that the second portion of that promise is just as likely to be fulfilled—the regathering of God’s people in God’s holy land. This section of the prayer teaches church revitalizers to pray the promises of God. The prayer should not be, “Lord revitalize this church so it is like Rick Warren’s.” The

³¹ K. Owen White, *Nehemiah Speaks Again* (Nashville: Broadman, 1964), 14.

³² Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 65.

prayer should be, “Lord, use us to make your name great” in reference to the promise of Malachi 1:11, or “Lord, lead this church to become a people that keep the commandments of God and have their faith in Jesus,” in reference to Revelation 14:12.

Confession 2

Throntveit includes a second confession in his structure³³: “They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand” (Neh 1:10). For the revitalizing pastor, this section of the prayer is a great confession to remind that the people are not the pastor’s, they are God’s. Even as Moses acknowledged to whom the people belonged (Exod 32:11) Nehemiah now does likewise. The people that God gives to the pastor to shepherd are not his to use or with which to experiment, they are people redeemed by the power of God. The revitalizing pastor should take every action with the truth of Mark 9:42 in mind: “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.” Why? Because these are God’s people that he redeemed.

Final Invocation

In this final invocation, Nehemiah narrows his petition down to his specific conversation he plans to have with King Artaxerxes. His prayer has not decreased in passion. He closes once again utilizing that particle of entreaty “O Lord,” and then he continues, “Let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man” (Neh 1:11). What lesson can be learned for the revitalizing pastor in this final section of prayer? First, not often is just one faithful person calling out to God. Nehemiah asks that God be attentive to his prayer, but then as if he recognizes that is too narrow to claim to be the only one praying, he states, “And to the

³³ Throntveit, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 64.

prayer of your servants” servants (plural). The second lesson to be learned is that when one finishes praying, one must go forth and serve. Nehemiah was not satisfied with praying and hoping something would happen—he was willing to put his own neck on the line. Revitalizing pastors begin with prayer, acknowledge the great God, confess their sins, claim the promises of God, and recognize that God’s people are his and not theirs, but they also go forth in service, praying all the way.

Nehemiah was a revitalizing leader and his example in this one prayer provides biblical foundations for the passionate prayer life of a revitalizing pastor. J. I. Packer asks, “Are we willing to learn to pray for the struggling communities of God’s people as Nehemiah prayed for the Jews, and to accept with Nehemiah any change of circumstances and any risk that may be involved in rendering the needed service?”³⁴

Paul: The First Revitalizing Pastor

The Christian church was launched at Pentecost³⁵ and quickly a church began to take shape in Jerusalem, thus making the original disciples the first church planters. When individuals study church planters from the Bible, oftentimes the apostle Paul is the focus of these studies.³⁶ What is most often overlooked though in the shadow of Paul as church planter, is Paul as the first church revitalizer.

Paul as Revitalizer in the Book of Acts

In Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas are commissioned for the work that God had called them (13:1-3); namely, to go out as missionaries, including the planting of

³⁴ Packer, *A Passion for Faithfulness*, 67.

³⁵ Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2012), 82.

³⁶ Ed Stetzer and Daniel Im, *Planting Missional Churches: Your Guide to Starting Churches That Multiply* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 36-38. Neil Cole. “How Many Churches Did the Apostle Paul Start?” *ChurchPlanting.com*, May 25, 2017, accessed July 3, 2019, www.churchplanting.com/how-many-churches-did-the-apostle-paul-start/#.XSX8ry2ZPOQ. Neil Cole believes that Paul started 20 churches himself, not counting all the churches that developed out of these or by his apprentice leaders.

churches (13:4-52) in Cyprus, Galatia, Antioch Pisidia. Leaving Antioch Pisidia they travel to Iconium (14:1-7) where their lives are threatened, so they “fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country” (14:6). Paul and Barnabas spend a decent amount of time in this area, but once again people are threatened by the Christian movement. This time, Paul is not able to escape, and he is stoned (14:19, 20). Paul goes back into the city and preaches and then Paul and Barnabas move on to Derbe, where another church is established (14:20b-21a). The preceding is the picture of Paul as church planter, but what is missed in this first journey is that Paul also embraced the role of church revitalizer. Acts 14:21-23 says,

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Looking at a map it is evident that Antioch, the location from which they started their missionary journey, is southeast of Derbe, only 150 miles³⁷; yet, Paul and Barnabas decide to take the long route home, retracing the majority of their steps. Paul and Barnabas take this route to strengthen, encourage, and establish leaders in the churches they had already planted. It could be asked, “Is Paul revitalizing the church or building up the new church?” I would contend these are not mutually exclusive as church revitalization is a perpetual act in the life of the church. Lee Kricher writes,

Church revitalization is often defined as the process needed to turn a declining church into a growing church. That definition makes sense but can just lead to a temporary season of improved church health because it does not emphasize reaching the next generation. I contend that we need to think in terms of perpetual church revitalization.³⁸

There is still further evidence in the book of Acts to Paul’s focused attention on the “strengthening” of the churches he had planted. After some time of preaching and

³⁷ Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 2:2179.

³⁸ Lee Kricher, *For a New Generation: A Practical Guide for Revitalizing Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 20.

teaching in Antioch (15:35) the Bible explains, “Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are’” (15:36). A dispute between Barnabas and Paul occurs, which leads Paul to choose Silas to be his new missionary partner. (15:37-40) This change in teammates does not thwart Paul from his objective. Acts 15:41 reads, “And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.” This same language is used in reference to a portion of Paul’s third missionary journey: “When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples” (Acts 18:22, 23). *Strengthening* is a word synonymous with revitalization. Hyung Woo Park, in his dissertation, “An Effective Strategy for Church Revitalization through a Case Study of Hosanna Church,” provides the following word study:

The word “strengthen” in the Greek is *episterizo*. The Greek prefix “*epi*” means to look over, to watch or to oversee. *Sterizo* means support, strengthen, or stabilize. *Sterizo* is the noun that means pillar, support or stabilizer. The word is transliterated into the English language as “steroid” which is medicine used for purpose of healing as ailment or building up the body. Steroid is another transliteration meaning to “strengthen” sound or to give off a fuller sound. There is no direct equivalent for the word *sterizo* or *episterizo* but, when used in the Septuagint, it denotes something or someone that is being strengthened by “supports” or “pillars.” It can connote God’s power upholding strengthening someone. Over the course of the Old Testament, the word develops into a metaphor that predominately conveys a moral and spiritual sense that God’s power, grace, and mercy supports and strengthens the individual, the corporate entity, or the nation of Israel.³⁹

Park’s analysis of *episterizo* and Luke’s use of it in the book of Acts to describe Paul’s ongoing ministry,⁴⁰ illustrates that Paul believed that his responsibilities went beyond church planting, but also to the ongoing health and revitalization of the churches that already existed.

³⁹ Hyung Woo Park, “An Effective Strategy for Church Revitalization through a Case Study of Hosanna Church” (DMin diss., Liberty University, 2009), 14-15.

⁴⁰ Paul uses *episterizo* to describe his desire for ministry in Rome in Rom 1:11 and to describe the mission of Timothy in 1 Thess 3:2.

Two Examples of Paul's Revitalizing Efforts

All of Paul's letters serve in some capacity as works of revitalization efforts, but two letters stand out most clearly by showing a key personality characteristic of a revitalizing pastor: the willingness to lean into conflict.⁴¹ The first letter to the church in Corinth and the letter to the church in Galatia. In these letters, Paul addresses the two issues that seem to most often be the cause of "decline" in the churches he planted: the acceptance of sin (either personal or corporate) and errant theology. Paul does confront the church from a position of parental care desiring for his "children" to mature,⁴² but he also confronts the issues harming these churches directly.

The Church in Galatia

The issue killing the churches in Galatia is a counterfeit gospel.⁴³ The counterfeit gospel is taking shape in the form of legalism and a returning to salvation through the Mosaic law, for example, the mandate of circumcision (Gal 5:1-12). Paul has learned of their return to the Jewish practice of circumcision and he sends them a letter.⁴⁴ Paul feels a burden to turn the Galatians away from error and toward the gospel and growth in Christ, elucidating in verse 6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel." Paul is upset. To use his own words, he is astonished. Charles Edward Jefferson writes, "The hottest of all Paul's letters he wrote is his letter to the Galatians. Luther was right when he said that

⁴¹ Alan Witham, "Leaning into Conflict," in *Lead to Revitalize! 15 Practices of a Church Revitalization Leader*, ed. Michelle Rayburn and Ruth Clark (Abbotsford, WI: Aneko, 2020), 121-30.

⁴² Ernest Best, *The Sprunt Lectures 1985: Paul and His Converts* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 29-56.

⁴³ Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 2.

⁴⁴ I do not explore the theology of the letter as that is not the purpose of this section, what I desire to establish is the burden Paul feels to turn this church away from error and toward the gospel and growth in Christ.

Paul's words in this letter are fierce flame and that he begins, so to speak, by cursing the angels."⁴⁵ Keener writes, "Galatians is the only undisputed letter in which Paul omits a thanksgiving. Even Paul's blessing is brief (Gal 1:3)."⁴⁶

Paul is not indifferent to what is taking place, and he is not just casually concerned. Paul with great passion spends the rest of the letter addressing their error and pointing them back to the true gospel. Paul is not thinking, "Well, I planted other churches and I will plant more." No, he is passionate about the health and theological revitalization of the churches in Galatia. Paul closes the letter by requesting that he no longer be troubled, "From now on let no one cause me trouble" (6:17a). Paul obviously cannot stop those outside the church that are spreading untruth, and this does not seem to cause him trouble. He is concerned for those he "feels spiritual responsibility."⁴⁷ Paul cares about these people to the point that when they are suffering or going in the wrong direction, it troubles him. Paul's concern is the heart of a revitalizing pastor. To seal this picture of heartfelt love for the churches in Galatia he has just so soundly rebuked, Paul ends the letter by calling them "brothers." Such a sentiment of title is not used in the closings of any of his other letters.⁴⁸ The letter to the Galatians starts and ends like no other Pauline letter and both the ending and beginning illustrate a pastor passionate about revitalizing his flock.

⁴⁵ Charles Edward Jefferson, *The Character of Paul* (New York City: MacMillan, 1923), 210.

⁴⁶ Craig S. Keener, *Galatians*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2018), 40.

⁴⁷ Moo, *Galatians*, 404.

⁴⁸ Ronald Y. K. Fung, *Galatians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 315.

The First Letter to the Church in Corinth

Three years after Paul left Corinth, the church is struggling. The church has been influenced by the culture of their city,⁴⁹ and as a result, sin crept, which has resulted in division.⁵⁰ Fee points out that Paul addresses eleven different concerns, ten behavioral issues, and one theological issue.⁵¹ Paul does not cast aside a church in such disarray, but his desire is to see it reformed—revitalized. This church faced considerable issues which show the vastness of the challenge:

1. They were a church divided within and against Paul. (1:10-4:21) “I follow Paul” “I follow Apollos”—Paul’s response “everyone follow Jesus.”
2. A man was committing incest with his Dad’s wife. (5:1-13)
3. Litigation amongst believers in the public court system. (6:1-11)
4. Engaging sexually with prostitutes. (6:12-20)
5. Not engaging sexually with your spouse and other matters of marriage. (7:1-40)
6. Disputes over food sacrificed to idols, not being a stumbling block to others, and a warning against idolatry. (8:1-11:1)
7. Women and men and what should adorn their head in worship. (11:2-16)
8. Irreverence, misapplication, and prejudice at the Lord’s Supper. (11:17-34)
9. Matters related to spiritual gifts, in particular the need to do everything in love. (12:1-14:40)
10. Disputes about the resurrection of believers. (15:1-58)
11. When to collect the offerings and support for the ministry. (16:1-3)

Just listing these issues may take one’s breath away, and some in the church planting camp may say, “It is easier to birth a baby than to raise the dead.”⁵² However,

⁴⁹ Paul Gardner, *I Corinthians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 28.

⁵⁰ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2014), 5.

⁵¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 5.

⁵² A refrain often heard at church planting conferences. I have planted a church as well, so I have probably said it myself.

Paul did not live by the philosophy that struggling churches should just be discarded. Paul did not say, “Let’s scrap it and start all over.” He did not say, “We’ll pick out the healthy people and start fresh, while letting this church slowly die across town.” No, Paul spends more time between both of his letters to the church in Corinth than he does on any other church. The more trouble the church experiences, the greater Paul’s focus and determination to see it revitalized. How does Paul see this church in Corinth with all of its struggles and conflicts and even in some cases its rejection of him? “My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen” (16:24). Paul increasing his focus on a church that is struggling shows the heart of a true revitalizing pastor.

Conclusion on Paul

Through the evidence in the book of Acts and Paul’s letters to churches in Galatia and Corinth, there is ample evidence of the New Testament apostolic commitment to church revitalization. One characteristic is evident in both the letter to the Galatians and the letter to the Corinthians that is a vital skill for a revitalizing pastor: Paul was willing to confront the issues. A revitalizing pastor must be willing to see conflicts and confront them; not cause them but confront them. Paul’s commitment was a living demonstration of this truth. He knew what God called these churches to be, spiritually, emotionally, theologically, evangelistically, and he was willing to face conflicts to get them there. Mary Case said, “No pressure, no diamonds.”⁵³ Paul knew no pressure, no glory for God.

Conclusion

In the lives of Moses, Nehemiah, and Paul is seen three examples of revitalizing leaders. They illustrate many of the same characteristics: passion for God and his cause, a love for the people they are leading, and more. In Moses, one discovers a willingness to

⁵³ John Brandon, “48 All-Time Best Quotes on Facing Workplace Conflicts,” Inc.com, October 23, 2014, <https://www.inc.com/john-brandon/48-all-time-best-quotes-on-facing-workplace-conflicts.html>.

stay for the long haul; longevity is key for the revitalizing leader. In Nehemiah, a deep commitment to prayer, and the example of how revitalizing leaders ought to pray can be gleaned. Finally, in Paul one sees a willingness to confront the difficult issues head on in a church. Paul did not cut and run; he confronted the issues so that the churches could become what God called them to be. Revitalization is an act of God carried forward through leaders committed, equipped, and made by God with a singular mission of growing God's kingdom through making disciples. Moses, Nehemiah, and Paul were just such leaders.

CHAPTER 3

PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN A CHURCH REVITALIZATION SETTING

Biblical history reveals that God’s Spirit moves through leaders to bring revival. Whether it be one of the leaders in the previous chapter, Moses, Nehemiah, or Paul; or others such as King Asa (2 Chr 14-15), King Hezekiah (2 Chr 29-32; Isa 36-39), King Josiah (2 Chr 34-35), or the apostle Peter (Acts 2-4). Revival is led by a leader.

The evidence of leader-led revival extends beyond biblical history. A majority¹ of the great revivals in history can be credited to a leader or leaders. Martin Luther led the revival that brought the reformation. Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield led the First Great Awakening and Timothy Dwight led the revival that ignited the Second Great Awakening,² and the list from history could continue. Revitalization occurs as God moves through his Spirit in a revitalizing pastor infused with specific personality traits, invested in revitalizing practices, and committed to the arduous journey of change. The belief that leaders drive revitalization has been borne out in research such as from Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, who write, “We asked about pastor and staff changes by posing the question, ‘Did the turnaround coincide with any significant pastoral or staff changes?’ . . . 85.2% respondents answered ‘YES’ to this question. . . . Let that sink in—

¹ Revivals such as the Asbury Revival of 1970 and the Prayer Revival of 1858 seem to have no clear discernible leader. For more on the history of the Asbury Revival, see Robert Coleman, *One Divine Moment* (Old Tappan, NJ: F. H. Revell, 1970). For history on the Prayer Revival of 1858 see J. Edwin Orr and Richard Owen Roberts, *The Event of the Century: The 1857-1858 Awakening* (Wheaton, IL: International Awakening Press, 1989).

² Collin Hansen and John D. Woodbridge, *A God-Sized Vision: Revival Stories That Stretch and Stir* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 59-74.

six of seven comeback [revitalized] churches experienced staff change prior to their comeback.”³

The rest of this chapter explores what the extra biblical material reveals about three key indicators of a revitalizing pastor: a revitalizing personality, the two practices of revitalizing prayer and revitalizing preaching,⁴ and grit⁵—which lead to a sustained tenure in a difficult location.

The Revitalizing Personality

There are two schools of thought regarding the importance of personality in the journey of becoming a revitalizing pastor. On one side, Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon Penfold believe that certain pastors are wired to revitalize churches. They refer to these individuals as “re-envisioning pastors.”⁶ Malphurs and Penfold write,

The great assumption in America is that anyone can do or be whatever he or she wants. . . . The only problem is that it’s simply not true. Everybody can’t do or be whatever they want. Similarly the great assumption of pastoral ministry is that any Christian can be a pastor. And in some circles the view is that every Christian can be a re-envisioning pastor. That’s not true either, as it flies in the face of how God has designed us. God has not wired every Christian with the potential to pastor or lead a church.⁷

³ Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H, 2007), 177.

⁴ I chose to focus on these two practices based upon Acts 6:4 where the early apostles state, “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.” I am in agreement with Harry Reeder who writes, “The apostles provided the model for all church leadership, especially pastors, when they said, ‘We will devote ourselves to prayer and the to the ministry of the word.’” Harry L. Reeder III, *From Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2008), 107.

⁵ I am using the word *grit*, but biblically this is often referred to as *perseverance*. “Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Rom 5:3 NIV).

⁶ *Re-envisioning pastor* is synonymous with the preferred term in this document of *revitalizing pastor*. Gordon Penfold and Aubrey Malphurs, *Re:Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 33-144

⁷ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 56.

On the opposite side, Dodson and Stetzer write, “It would be impossible and unwise to say that a ‘Comeback Pastor’ is a certain personality, gift mix, or profile.”⁸ While I would also caution against limiting God to only using a specific personality type to revitalize churches—after all, one can only speculate on the personality types of the leaders written of in the Bible⁹—there are adequate studies to warrant an examination of personalities when working to identify and develop revitalizing pastors. Thus, for the purpose of this study it is important to examine which personalities are more inclined to success in the area of church revitalization.¹⁰

Revitalizing pastors are different from their ministry colleagues. Gary Westra writes, “These differences don’t lie in what Turnaround (*revitalizing*) pastors do to bring renewed vigor, refreshed vision and bracing growth to a church. Focusing on results or behaviors leads to the mistaken idea that Status Quo pastors simply need to copy the Turnaround pastor’s techniques to breathe life into a plateaued or stagnant church.”¹¹ If the personality design of individual pastors plays no role in revitalizing a church, then every pastor would simply need to follow the instructions found in the great resource on church revitalization strategy and method, *Can These Bones Live* Bill Henard,¹² and

⁸ Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 187. *Comeback pastor* used in Stetzer and Dodson’s writing is synonymous with the preferred term in this document of *revitalizing pastor*.

⁹ Joseph Hudson states, “One could argue that Paul, Barnabas, and Timothy all participated in church revitalization, yet demonstrate very different personality types.” Joseph Stephen Hudson, “A Competency Model for Church Revitalization in Southern Baptist Convention Churches: A Mixed Methods Study” (PhD, diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 48.

¹⁰ Stetzer and Dodson considers it a lack of wisdom to delineate a certain profile of a pastor, but then proceeds in giving a profile: older, higher education, and in the case of smaller churches that are revitalized, bivocational. Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 188-89.

¹¹ Gary Westra, “Turnaround Pastors Aren’t Like Everyone Else,” TurnAround Pastors, February 11, 2018, <https://www.turnaroundpastor.com/turnaround-pastors-arent-like-everyone-else/>.

¹² See William David Henard, *Can These Bones Live? A Practical Guide to Church Revitalization* (Nashville: B & H, 2015).

churches would live again.¹³ Following instructions such as found in Henard’s book or other similar resources will help and does play a role for pastors who are not naturally designed to be revitalizing pastors. Malphurs and Penfold acknowledge, “A great number of the re-envisioning skills of REPs (Re-envisioning pastor) are by nature teachable and learnable.”¹⁴ Yet, there should still be a knowledge in understanding which personality types are a part of the 10-15 percent “naturals”¹⁵ which have had greater success when accompanied with the principles of church revitalization than individuals that do not possess these personality types.

For the purposes of this project, the focus is on the personality research centered around the DiSC assessment.¹⁶ The DiSC Profile looks at the “four basic personality types, also known as ‘temperaments.’”¹⁷ These four temperaments are:

D - Dominance: The emphasis is on shaping the environment by overcoming opposition to accomplish a result.

i – Influencing: The emphasis is on shaping the environment by influencing or persuading others.

S – Steadiness: The emphasis is on cooperating with other within existing circumstances to carry out the task.

¹³ Malphurs and Penfold write, “The state of the church reflects the state of church leadership in America. If 80-85 percent of churches are struggling, what does that say about those who are pastoring these churches? We believe there is a direct correlation between the state of the church and the state of pastoral leadership in those churches.” Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 26.

¹⁴ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 125.

¹⁵ According to Bud Brown, only 10-15 percent of pastors are natural born revitalizing pastors. Bud Brown, “Pinpointing Turnaround Pastors,” TurnAround Pastors, February 11, 2018, <https://www.turnaroundpastor.com/pinpointing-turnaround-pastors/>.

¹⁶ Jeremy Johnson provides research into the relationship between the Enneagram and congregational size, answering the question, “Do lead pastors of Protestant megachurches in the United States tend to share commonalities in their Enneagram personality types?” Jeremy David Johnson, “The Connection between Lead Pastors’ Enneagram Personality Type and Congregational Size” (EdD diss., Southeastern University, 2019).

¹⁷ Robert A. Rohm, *Positive Personality Profiles: Discover Insights into Personalities to Build Better Relationships*, rev. ed. (Atlanta: Personality Insight, 2012), 17.

C – Conscientiousness: The emphasis is on working conscientiously within existing circumstances to ensure quality and accuracy.¹⁸

In writing specifically about the character of risk taking in revitalizing pastors, Larry J.

Purcell describes the four dimensions of DiSC in this way:

Dominance. Person places emphasis on accomplishing results, the bottom line, confidence. Concerned about tasks. Values the big picture but ignores details.

Influence. Person places emphasis on influencing or persuading others, openness, relationships. Concerned about relationships. Values people and unity.

Steadiness. Person places emphasis on cooperation, sincerity, dependability. Concerned about relationships. Values the team.

Conscientiousness Person places emphasis on quality and accuracy, expertise, competency. Concerned about task. Values details.¹⁹

Purcell contends, however, that “the DiSC inventory is not used to determine the best personality” for a revitalizing pastor, but rather to help a pastor who does not have the risk-taker personality to assess others in order to build a team to revitalize a church.²⁰ In other words, someone on the revitalizing team needs to have this personality. Such a sentiment in itself reveals that there is a personality that often has greater success as a revitalizing pastor.

Utilizing in this project only the DiSC assessment, the research reveals pastors with the greatest success in leading revitalization in their churches are pastors with the D or I personality type. Gary McIntosh writes, “According to the familiar DiSC personality profile, a revitalization leader overwhelmingly falls into either the D or the I personality type.”²¹ William Ingram in his research paper “Defining Characteristics of Turnaround Leaders of Evangelical Churches in the Western Region of The United States,” discovered,

¹⁸ DiSC Classic Version 9.0 (Minneapolis: Inscape Publishing, 2001), 6, as cited in Gordon Penfold, “Defining Characteristics of Turnaround Pastors among Evangelical Churches in the Rocky Mountain States” (DMin thesis, Biola University, 2001), 84.

¹⁹ Larry J. Purcell, “Risk-Taking,” in *Lead to Revitalize! 15 Practices of a Church Revitalization Leader*, ed. Michelle Rayburn and Ruth Clark. (Abbotsford, WI: Aneko, 2020), 109.

²⁰ Purcell, “Risk-Taking,” 108-9.

²¹ Gary L. McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 29.

Turnaround and non-turnaround pastors have remarkably different DiSC profiles, including the range of scores and the overall average scores for each profile. . . . Turnaround pastors have on average a higher score on the “D” and “i” than non-turnaround pastors. The average “D” scores for the turnaround pastor is 4.8, whereas the average “D” score for the non-turnaround pastor is 2.5. This is a difference of 2.3 on a 7-point scale. A difference is also found when comparing the average “i” scores. The average “i” score for the turnaround pastor is 5.3, whereas for the non-turnaround pastor the average “i” score is 4.3, which is a difference of 1.0 on a 7-point scale. Turnaround pastors have higher D and i scores on average compared to non-turnaround pastors. On the other hand, non-turnaround pastors score higher on “S” and “C” than the turnaround pastor. The average score for the non-turnaround pastor on “S” is 5.7, while the average turnaround pastor score is 3.2. This is a difference of 2.5 on a 7-point scale. A difference is also found when comparing the average “C” scores. The non-turnaround pastor has an average “C” score of 4.5 as compared to 3.0 for the turnaround pastor, which is a difference of 1.5 on a 7-point scale.²²

Malphurs and Penfold in their research discovered that leaders of large churches—individuals they would define as re-envisioning pastors—are most often DI’s or ID’s on the DiSC inventory.²³ Some examples they provide are pastors that are having or have had success in leading large and complex churches, like Rick Warren, founding and current pastor of Saddleback Church; Bill Hybels, founding and former pastor of Willow Creek Church, or Steve Stroepe, pastor of Lake Pointe Church.²⁴ Malphurs and Penfold then ask the question, “Do pastors who can re-envision the church have certain gifts, passions, and temperaments in common that point them in the direction of church revitalization?”²⁵ The overwhelming answer based on Malphurs and Penfold’s research is “‘yes!’ Our exploration discovered that . . . 73 percent re-envisioning pastors [revitalizing pastors] patterned as some combination of the D or I temperament on the Personal Profile (*DiSC*). . . By far the most prevalent profiles of the re-envisioning [revitalizing pastor]

²² William Joseph Ingram, “Defining Characteristics of Turnaround Leaders of Evangelical Churches in the Western Region of The United States” (DMin project, Talbot School of Theology, 2015), 141-42. Further research has come to the same conclusion that revitalizing pastors are most likely to have a high D and or a high I score on the DiSC assessment. See Penfold, “Defining Characteristics of Turnaround Pastors”; Robert W. Thomas, “Personality Characteristics of Effective Revitalization Pastors in Small, Passive Baptist General Conference Churches” (DMin thesis, Biola University, 1989).

²³ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 63.

²⁴ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 63.

²⁵ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 63.

were DI, ID, D, or I or some other combination with D or I.”²⁶ Of the non-re-envisioning pastors, those pastors who found it difficult to lead plateaued or declining churches in revitalization only 25 percent were some combination of the D or i temperament.²⁷

Summary

All of this research should be considered by the denomination or in the context of this project, the Chesapeake Conference Personnel Committee, when placing a pastor in a church that is plateaued or in decline. However, the words of Mark Clifton and Kenneth Priest should be considered when utilizing this information to place a pastor or hire a pastor for a local church: “A pastor who naturally is high D . . . can be a bulldozer . . . the dominant personality can be overbearing.”²⁸ A word of encouragement likewise should be taken into account recognizing that the majority of pastors a denomination or church interviews will “fall into an analytic category, the C in DISC.”²⁹ Thus, Leith Anderson’s words should be heeded: “Bottom line: Having certain traits doesn’t guarantee effective leadership any more than lacking certain traits guarantees ineffective leadership. What a leader does with those traits is what matters most.”³⁰ In fact what matters most in the success of a revitalizing pastor is the connection he has to the Lord, which is why the next section of this chapter explores the revitalizing pastor’s practice of prayer.

²⁶ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 111.

²⁷ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 112.

²⁸ Mark Clifton and Kenneth Priest, *Rubicons of Revitalization: Overcoming 8 Common Barriers to Church Renewal* (Littleton, CO: Acoma, 2018), 63.

²⁹ Clifton and Priest, *Rubicons of Revitalization*, 62.

³⁰ Leith Anderson, *Leadership That Works: Hope and Direction for Church and Parachurch Leaders in Today’s Complex World* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1999), 42.

Revitalizing Pastors Lead and Are Led through Prayer

While this chapter began with an exploration of the personality types that are most successful in revitalizing a church, the personality of a pastor is not a guarantee of success in church revitalization, and is in no way the most important component. Ellen G. White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, writes, “A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.”³¹ She also explains,

Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work. There is no place for us to rest in a careless attitude. We must never forget the warnings of Christ, “Watch unto prayer,” “Watch . . . and pray always.” A connection with the divine agency every moment is essential to our progress. We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit.³²

If church revitalization is a form of localized revival, then a revitalized church can come only through prayer. Other aspects will help facilitate revitalization, but the power will come through prayer.³³ Jesus’ words seem apt here: “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it” (John 14:13-14). A revived church, inasmuch as the church is the body of Christ, is a glory to the Father, thus reviving a church is something Jesus wants to do through prayer. Such a focused ecclesiology is probably why earnest prayer is held in such high esteem amongst all revitalizing pastors. They truly follow the words of R. A. Torrey: “I must pray, pray, pray. I must put all my energy and all my heart into prayer. Whatever else I do, I must pray.”³⁴

³¹ Ellen Gould White, *Selected Messages from the Writings of Ellen G. White, Book 1* (Takoma Park, MD: Review and Herald, 1958), 121.

³² Ellen Gould White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1923), 508.

³³ Hansen and Woodbridge write, “It may appear suspicious that no New Testament figure exhorts the church to pray for this type of blessing. Not a problem, said Martyn Lloyd-Jones. You don’t pray for God to send revival when you’re living in one. ‘The church always looks like the church in the New Testament when she is in the midst of revival.’” Hansen and Woodbridge, *A God-Sized Vision*, 26.

³⁴ R. A. Torrey, *How to Pray* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1900), 15.

Thom Rainer states, “I have yet to see a sustained church revitalization that was not undergirded by a powerful movement of prayer . . . It is categorical. It is imperative. It is a priority.”³⁵ Rainer also indicates why revitalizing pastors see prayer as essential for their churches to turnaround:

1. Prayer leads the pastor to recognize the Source of revitalization.
2. Prayer helps leaders understand that revitalization is spiritual warfare.
3. Prayer turns the leaders away from self-sufficiency.
4. Prayer leads the leaders away from being self-serving
5. Prayer unites the churches the leaders are leading.
6. Prayer leads them to discern the will of God.³⁶

Not only is prayer vital, but a lack of prayer can determine how successful a church revitalization effort is. Priest and Clifton write, “How we treat prayer sets a boundary in church revitalization.”³⁷ These boundaries are put in place because the pastor prays too little, prays too late, prays too timidly, prays too few prayers of repentance, or prays too often for what the pastor wants rather than what God wants.³⁸ Francis Chan not only believes that a pastor who is not committed to prayer places a boundary on church revitalization, but he believes a lack of prayer is disqualifying for ministry: “Pastors who are not drawn to prayer should not be pastors.”³⁹

The Focus of the Revitalizing Pastor’s Prayers?

Revitalizing pastors must become dependent on prayer so that their source of power is always Jesus. Without Jesus there will be no revitalization. A. C. Dixon said, “When we depend on organizations, we get what organizations can do; when we depend

³⁵ Thom S. Rainer, *Anatomy of a Revived Church: Seven Findings of How Congregations Avoided Death* (Spring Hill, TN: Rainer, 2020), 71.

³⁶ Thom S. Rainer, “Six Reasons Prayer Is Moving Hundreds of Churches to Revitalize,” *Church Answers*, February 7, 2020, <https://churchanswers.com/blog/six-reasons-prayer-is-moving-hundreds-of-churches-to-revitalize/>.

³⁷ Clifton and Priest, *Rubicons of Revitalization*, 23.

³⁸ Clifton and Priest, *Rubicons of Revitalization*, 24-29.

³⁹ Francis Chan, *Letters to the Church* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2018), 114.

upon education, we get what education can do . . . but when we depend upon prayer, we get what God can do.”⁴⁰ Church revitalization begins when revitalizing pastors pray for God to cleanse their own hearts. McIntosh writes, “Be sure to confess any known sin in your own life.”⁴¹ Dwight Nelson, pastor of the Pioneer Memorial Church, on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, credits such a moment in his life with leading to the blessings he has had in his ministry. Nelson has been serving that church community for more than thirty-seven years, and in those years the church has experienced unprecedented growth, numerically as well as in spiritual health, but Nelson said none of it would have been possible if he had not early in his ministry been confronted with his own sin. This confrontation happened when one night he prayed somewhat casually, “Lord show me my true sinfulness.” The Lord, however, was not casual about Nelson’s prayer and the Lord answered that prayer in force, sending Nelson into a season of confession and repentance. Out of that time, Nelson states, “It just turned my life around” and thus his ministry.⁴² Revitalizing pastors pray not just once for their own hearts to be examined and cleansed, but often. In his book *Richard Baxter and Conversion*, Timothy Beougher states, “It is far more dangerous to examine yourself too little than too much.”⁴³

Revitalizing pastors pray for vision. McIntosh writes, “If you are a pastor, vision begins with you.”⁴⁴ He then recommends finding that vision in the study of the Bible and, “in your prayers, ask God specifically to make you alert to what he desires for his

⁴⁰ A. C. Dixon, quoted in Michael S. Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones, *The God Who Goes Before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership* (Nashville: B & H, 2018), 208.

⁴¹ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 76.

⁴² This information was gathered in a conversation I had with Dwight K. Nelson in Dayton, OH, July, 2019, in preparation for a research paper. Nelson has been my mentor for the last twenty years.

⁴³ Timothy K. Beougher, *Richard Baxter and Conversion: A Study of the Puritan Concept of Becoming a Christian* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2007), 88.

⁴⁴ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 76.

church.”⁴⁵ Both McIntosh and Malphurs and Penfold point to Nehemiah as the biblical example of a revitalizing leader that practiced visioning prayer:

We must bathe the entire process in constant prayer. In the case of vision development, it is envisioning prayer. It is the place where Nehemiah began when he discovered the state of the Jewish remnant that survived the exile and the state of Jerusalem. It’s primarily a prayer for God to give him favor with the reigning pagan king. . . . In the same manner, it is biblically acceptable for us as well to pray for God’s favor as we seek to convince people of his vision for their future. It’s imperative that God intervene if the vision is to catch and become a reality.⁴⁶

The focus of the prayer is from praying for vision, to praying for God’s vision, to finding favor with the people.

Revitalizing Pastors Pray for Revival in Their Church

Closely tied to vision is revival. A vision will not move forward without revival. Russell Burrill, former director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute writes, “There is no one method for turning churches around, but there is one Spirit who can enable the church to work through the difficulties and empower it to once again be vibrant; a true movement of God in its surrounding society.”⁴⁷ I would add that no one leader can revitalize a church on his own, so revival of the people is necessary, and revival of the people is dependent on God. Therefore, the leader must pray for revival in the church. This prayer for revival is not to be done alone. Rainer states, “For those of you seeking to lead a revitalization, let me exhort you. First, if you don’t know the prayer warriors in your church, find them. Second, if you can’t find them, start asking people in the church to help you find those who have a passion for prayer. Third, encourage those

⁴⁵ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 76.

⁴⁶ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 157.

⁴⁷ Russell Burrill, “Can Dying Churches Be Resuscitated?” *Ministry Magazine*, December 2002, 14-23.

prayer warriors.”⁴⁸ However, as much as possible, the revitalizing pastor should expand prayer beyond himself and a few prayer warriors; the pastor should restore the focus of churchwide prayer for revival. White explains, “The promise is made on condition that the united prayers of the church are offered, and in answer to these prayers there may be expected a power greater than that which comes in answer to private prayer.”⁴⁹ Though, as the pastor prays for revival in the church, prayer warriors pray for revival in the church, and the church united prays for revival, the revitalizing pastor “must lead their church to pray for things that matter.”⁵⁰

Further Prayers of Revitalizing Pastors

Another element of focus in the revitalizing pastor’s prayer life is patience. Praying for patience is necessary because it protects the pastor from many mistakes that are often made due to impatience. Brian Croft points out that pastors in dying churches “act hastily and think they have to solve every problem.”⁵¹ What is the solution to impatience that leads a pastor to feel the need to address every problem in the church immediately? According to Croft, “Sometimes the best thing to do to be faithful in a struggling church is to stop and pray and cry out to God.”⁵² Patience will also assist in keeping a pastor in a parish long enough for the church to turnaround. Croft explains, “Rarely has a pastor ready to bail at the two-year mark prayed as he ought for his

⁴⁸ Rainer, *Anatomy of a Revived Church*, 75. McIntosh provides an identifying mark of a prayer warrior or intercessor, “a person who prays one hour a day.” And what to ask them to pray for, “When you can identify a minimum of three intercessors, form them into a prayer team for your church . . . This is an intercessory team for the church. Once this team is in place, ask members to focus their prayers on the formation of a vision for the future of the church.” McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 77.

⁴⁹ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993), 9:303.

⁵⁰ Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 69.

⁵¹ Brian Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization: Solutions for Dying & Divided Churches* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016), 45.

⁵² Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization*, 45-46.

flock.”⁵³ Staying at a specific church for the long term is covered in more detail in the following section.

One final focal point of a revitalizing pastor’s prayer life that should not be overlooked is in his prayer for the community beyond the church’s walls. Stetzer and Dodson write, “Comeback leaders and churches pray for their communities and then act on those prayers . . . Prayer for the community leads to actions that reach out to the community.”⁵⁴ It is obvious to state that a church will not revitalize if new people do not start walking through the doors, and new people will not walk through the doors without a commitment of prayer. Dutch Sheets states, “Our prayers can and do cause the Holy Spirit to move into situations where He then releases His power to bring life . . . The power that created the universe through His “rachaph-ing” has been deposited in the Church—while untold millions await their births into the kingdom of God.”⁵⁵

Summary

A pastor that does not pray in the mentioned areas and beyond will never become a revitalizing pastor for the glory of God, no matter their personality or any other element or method applied. Rainer writes,

Our anatomy of revived churches was clear and persuasive. It is God who revitalizes churches. If we truly want to see His work in our churches, we must turn to Him in prayer. . . . We have seen again and again in our anatomy of revitalized churches that every sustained church revitalization is undergirded by a powerful movement of prayer. Every. Single. One. It’s just that important.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, many pastors in unhealthy church situations do not understand the Rainer’s statement. They live by the principle that, as Bill Henard writes, “when all else

⁵³ Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization*, 26.

⁵⁴ Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 71.

⁵⁵ Dutch Sheets, *Intercessory Prayer: How God Can Use Your Prayers to Move Heaven and Earth* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1996), 132.

⁵⁶ Rainer, *Anatomy of a Revived Church*, 82.

fails, pray. Prayer becomes the last resort, not the first.”⁵⁷ Therefore, this section concludes with the counsel once again of Ellen White: “Exhort the brethren to pray. We must seek if we would find, we must ask if we would receive, we must knock if we would have the door opened unto us.”⁵⁸ Revitalizing Pastors must pray if they are going to see revitalization.

Revitalizing Pastors Burn Up in the Pulpit

Timothy Beougher, in his article “Church Revitalization Begins with Personal Revitalization,” references the preaching of the great revivalist John Wesley, “The story is told of John Wesley being asked, ‘Why do people come to hear you preach?’ Wesley replied: ‘I set myself on fire and people come to watch me burn.’”⁵⁹ Beougher points out that “historians debate the historicity of this account,”⁶⁰ but there is no denying that a revitalizing pastor will preach with a God imbued fire. This fire is key to church revitalization and thus must be a characteristic and practice of a revitalizing pastor. Churches in need of revitalization need revitalization in the preaching ministry.⁶¹

Getting the Preaching Fire

The book of Acts clearly teaches that revitalization preaching, in fact all preaching, must be bold.

⁵⁷ Henard, *Can These Bones Live*, 199. Henard provides a list for how to get a church praying for revitalization, citing Jim Nicodem, “7 Ways to Get Your Church onto the Praying Field,” April 26, 2011, <http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-how-to/138200-7-ways-to-get-your-church-onto-the-praying-field.html>. Henard, *Can These Bones Live?*, 200.

⁵⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, February 10, 1890.

⁵⁹ Timothy Beougher, “Church Revitalization Begins with Personal Revitalization,” Southern Equip, September 10, 2018, <https://equip.sbts.edu/article/church-revitalization-begins-personal-revitalization/>.

⁶⁰ Beougher, “Church Revitalization Begins with Personal Revitalization.”

⁶¹ Michael Ross writes, “True church revitalization can never take place and be maintained unless it is the product of a biblical pulpit. Churches in need of revitalization more than likely need revitalized pulpits.” Michael F. Ross, *Preaching for Revitalization: How to Revitalize Your Church through Your Pulpit* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2006), 19.

So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. (9:28 NIV)

Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. (13:46b)

So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. (14:3)

He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. (18:26a)

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. (19:8)

He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance! (28:31)

So where does this boldness come from? Again, book of Acts reads, “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly” (4:31b). Bold and revitalizing preaching comes from the Holy Spirit, which is something the pastor and congregants (if they are aware of their need) must pray for. Acts 4:29 and 31a tell the reader that the bold preaching of Acts 4:31b and following was the result of prayer: “Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness . . . After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken.” The preacher cannot have the bold preaching fire for revitalized preaching without the power of the Holy Spirit. Michael Ross gives this perspective in the opening pages of his book on revitalized preaching:

In the nineteenth century George Atkins penned the words to a famous hymn, “Brethren, We Have Met to Worship.” In the first stanza of that hymn Atkins wrote: “Brethren, we have met to worship and adore the Lord our God. Will you pray with all your power, while we try to preach the Word? All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down. Brethren, pray, and holy manna will be showered all around. . . . The idea of asking for “holy manna” from above seems foreign to a generation of preachers reared in an age of Church growth methodology and pragmatic church programming.⁶²

Asking for the Holy Spirit fire is the first place a revitalizing pastor must begin.

⁶² Ross, *Preaching for Revitalization*, 11.

Maturing as a Revitalizing Preacher

Even though the power of revitalizing preaching comes from the unction of the Holy Spirit, revitalizing pastors must still be committed to maturing their preaching talents. James Carroll in his book written with Brian Croft shares the story of a woman in his church that asked to speak with him about his message one Sunday following his sermon. Carroll states that because he had been criticized by others, he “mentally dismissed her,”⁶³ but she gently said, “When you preach, read the scripture before you tell us about it. That way it is primary, and your comments are secondary.”⁶⁴ Carroll goes on to say something that is true of even the most passionate of preachers: “This anecdote demonstrates that it’s possible for pastors with sound theology, good training, and genuine desire to honor God to preach bad sermons.”⁶⁵

Ellen White, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church writes, “By earnest prayer and diligent effort we are to obtain a fitness for speaking.”⁶⁶ Bryan Chapell also blends this connection between the power of God and the need for diligent effort to mature as a preacher: “Consciousness of God’s enablement should encourage all preachers (including beginning preachers)” and I would add seasoned preachers, “to throw themselves wholeheartedly into their calling.”⁶⁷

How then can preachers improve? By maturing as a preacher. Tim Keller explains, “There are basically three things that go into the “maturing” process: a) the actual preparation of the message, b) life experience—of your own heart, of pastoral work, of

⁶³ Brian Croft and James B. Carroll, *Facing Snarls & Scowls: Preaching through Hostility, Apathy, and Adversity in Church Revitalization* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2019), 60.

⁶⁴ Croft and Carroll, *Facing Snarls & Scowls*, 60.

⁶⁵ Croft and Carroll, *Facing Snarls & Scowls*, 61.

⁶⁶ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 175.

⁶⁷ Bryan Chapell, *Christ Centered Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 31.

prayer, c) practice.”⁶⁸ Keller’s position is helpful because he does not set forth a specific model by which people will mature. He focuses on principles by which a preacher grows. First is the repeated task of specifically studying for and writing sermons. The time commitment of sermon preparation can vary from preacher to preacher.⁶⁹ Second is life experience—of the preacher’s heart, of pastoral work, and of prayer. Charles Spurgeon says of the life of the preacher, in relation to sermon preparation, “We ought to be always in training for text getting and sermon-making.”⁷⁰ Third is practice. A rigid timeframe should not be applied.⁷¹ However, there should be patience in maturing as a revitalizing preacher, since it is a process of years, not weeks.⁷²

⁶⁸ Scot McKnight, “Tim Keller Answers: How Much Prep Time for a Sermon?,” Patheos, May 13, 2016, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/2016/05/16/tim-keller-answers-how-much-prep-time-for-a-sermon/>.

⁶⁹ For a listing of times various influential preachers spend in sermon preparation, see Eric McKiddie, “The Number of Hours Keller, Piper, Driscoll (and 5 Others) Spend on Sermon Prep,” Pastoralized.com, September 26, 2013, <https://www.pastoralized.com/2013/09/26/the-number-of-hours-keller-piper-driscoll-and-5-others-spend-on-sermon-prep/>. The “ideal” I heard in my first preaching class while attending Southern Adventist University in Chattanooga, TN was 1 hour for every 1 minute of preaching. This “ideal” became a burden to me when I no longer had three or four weeks to prepare for one sermon as I did while an associate, but had to preach week after week at my two small country churches in rural Georgia and found maybe 5-10 hours of sermon preparation time. I felt guilt worrying if I was depriving God’s people. Over time this guilt gave way to practicality and accepted the reality of my situation. Now my position would be similar to Kevin DeYoung’s: “I’m not a slave to any particular rule about time spent in study. The whole “one hour in study for every minute in the pulpit” has always seemed ridiculously unattainable, and usually makes for overly stuffed sermons.” Kevin DeYoung, “How to Improve Your Preaching,” The Gospel Coalition, February 17, 2020, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/how-to-improve-your-preaching/>.

⁷⁰ Charles Spurgeon, quoted in Geoffrey Chang, *Spurgeon the Pastor: Recovering a Biblical and Theological Vision for Ministry* (Nashville: B & H, 2022), 20.

⁷¹ While I agree with Malcolm Gladwell’s principle behind his 10,000-hour rule theory, “Practice isn’t the thing you do once you’re good. It’s the thing you do that makes you good.” Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (San Francisco: Little, Brown, 2008), 31. I do not agree with his 10,000-hour rule, which is the theory that it is necessary to complete 10,000 hours of something to achieve true expertise.

⁷² Scot McKnight quotes Tim Keller: “If you preach regularly, say 40-50 times a year, including Sunday preaching and other speaking at weddings, funerals, and conferences, then, yes, I’d say it takes at least three years of full-time preaching before you get even close to being as mature and skillful a preacher as you are capable of becoming.” McKnight, “Tim Keller Answers.” Many more items could be listed under tools to improve as a preacher. I found Kevin DeYoung’s list helpful which also included some unexpected items that I have found in my personal preaching ministry to be of great value such as getting enough sleep

Expository Preaching

This section would be incomplete without a few words on expository preaching. Erik Raymond compiles a list of several definitions of expository preaching:

Haddon Robinson: The communication of a biblical concept derived from and transmitted through a historical-grammatical and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher then through him to hearers. . . .

Albert Mohler: Expository preaching is that mode of Christian preaching that takes as its central purpose the presentation and application of the text of the Bible . . . all other issues and concerns are subordinated to the central task of presenting the biblical text.

Mark Dever: Expository preaching is preaching in which the main point of the biblical text being considered becomes the main point of the sermon being preached.

Tim Keller: Expository preaching grounds the message in the text so that all the sermon's points are the points in the text, and it majors in the text's major ideas.⁷³

While these definitions are helpful, I am in concurrence with Haddon Robinson who also notes, "Defining becomes sticky business because what we define, we sometimes destroy."⁷⁴ Through the definitions of expository preaching, exposition has come to be viewed primarily as a verse-by-verse process without illustration or narration, and thus boring.⁷⁵ But to view expository preaching as one format is to miss the point of exposition, which is to ground the sermon in the text of the Bible. Harry Reeder writes,

Biblical preaching is not having something we want to say, and then finding some verses to support it. It is speaking for God, and allowing Him to speak through us. This approach to preaching and teaching is commonly called *expository*, and that is a good term if it is understood to mean that we are "exposing" or "revealing" the meaning of the Word. For preaching and teaching to be expository in that sense does not mean that it must be a series of sequential passages from a book in the Bible

and exercising regularly. Kevin DeYoung, "How to Improve Your Preaching," The Gospel Coalition, February 17, 2020, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/how-to-improve-your-preaching/>.

⁷³ Erik Raymond, "What Is Expository Preaching?," The Gospel Coalition, April 18, 2017, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/what-is-expository-preaching/>, emphasis original.

⁷⁴ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 19.

⁷⁵ Calvin Miller, *Preaching the Art of Narrative Exposition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 20-23.

(topical studies can be expository in that sense), but it does mean that we must be allowing the inspired Word itself to dictate what we will say and how we will say it.⁷⁶

Furthermore, while there is evidence that exposition is ideal, there should be grace shown and acknowledgement that others have been faithful to God and are faithful to God, and that their preaching can be revitalizing, even if their “exposition” is not fitting of the standards often applied today. Would Charles Spurgeon⁷⁷ pass Mark Dever’s⁷⁸ standards in today’s modern era?

Summary

In conclusion, revitalizing pastors mature through the power of the Holy Spirit by means of preparation, life experience, practice, and personal patience. Revitalizing

⁷⁶ Harry L. Reeder and David Swavely, *From Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2008), 112.

⁷⁷ Chang writes of Charles Spurgeon, “At the end of the day, whether he succeeded in preaching any given sermon expositionally can be debated.” Chang quotes Spurgeon, “Although in many cases topical sermons are not only allowable, but very proper, those sermons which expound the exact words of the Holy Spirit are the most useful and the most agreeable to the major part of our congregations.” Chang, *Spurgeon the Pastor*, 29.

⁷⁸ While acknowledging that topical preaching can be “expositional,” Mark Dever implies an inferiority to this exposition beyond the verse-by-verse exposition. He writes,

The topical sermon begins with a particular topic on which the preacher wants to preach and then assembles truth from various texts of the Bible. Stories and anecdotes are combined, and all are woven together around one theme rather than around one text of Scripture. A topical sermon may also be expositional, insofar as it uses texts carefully and well, but the point of the sermon was already determined before the preparation for the sermon had begun. I already knew what I wanted to say when I set out to prepare this sermon, as opposed to what is usually the case when I preach expositionally. In the latter instance I may be surprised by the message of the text. If expositional preaching is so important, then it needs to be defined. Expositional preaching is not simply producing a verse-by-verse commentary from the pulpit. Rather, expositional preaching is that preaching which takes for the point of a sermon the point of a particular passage of Scripture. This is clearly not what I am doing in this sermon. But it is what I have intended to do every other time I have entered the pulpit to preach. Expositional preaching is preaching in service to the Word. It presumes a belief in the authority of Scripture, but it is something more. A commitment to expositional preaching is a commitment to hear God’s Word. (Mark Dever, “Why Topical Preaching Can Never Build a Healthy Church,” *Southern Equip*, August 10, 2021, <https://equip.sbts.edu/article/sermon-expositional-preaching-as-a-mark-of-a-healthy-church/>)

preaching will most often result in expository preaching defined closely as verse-by-verse, but can be achieved through other approaches of exposition.⁷⁹

In the next section of this chapter “grit” will be covered, which impacts persistence in prayer and preaching but also impacts the persistence to stay with a struggling church through to the end of goal of revitalization.

Revitalizing Pastors Have Grit

Angela Duckworth, author *Grit: The Power and Passion of Perseverance*, states,

Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term goals . . . grit is about having what some researchers call an “ultimate concern”—a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do. And grit is holding steadfast to that goal. Even when you fall down. Even when you screw up. Even when progress toward that goal is halting or slow.⁸⁰

Research shows that revitalizing pastors have “grit.”⁸¹ Pastoral grit is one of the thirteen vital characteristics of a revitalizing pastor—they either possess or must develop it according to the North American Missions Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.⁸²

Why is grit such a necessity for revitalizing pastors? Research shows that revitalizing a church is a long-term engagement. This long-term engagement is estimated to take five to seven years in a city and ten to fifteen years in a rural church.⁸³ Rainer points

⁷⁹ Stetzer and Dodson point out, “There does not seem to be one approach, although the slight majority of comeback pastors used a verse-by-verse style of preaching.” Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 91. Other styles included by 47 percent of comeback (*revitalizing*) pastors were topical, thematic, or other (92).

⁸⁰ Angela Duckworth, “FAQ,” accessed April 18, 2021, <https://angeladuckworth.com/qa/#faq-125>.

⁸¹ Research done on pastor tenure and revitalized churches uses the terms *perseverance*, *resiliency*, and *longevity*. The term *grit* encompasses all of these.

⁸² Jimbo Stewart, “13 Essential Characteristics of Effective Replanters,” North American Mission Board, September 27, 2021, <https://www.namb.net/church-replanting/resource/13-essential-characteristics-of-effective-replanters/>.

⁸³ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 32.

out, however, that most pastors leave between their third and fourth year at a church.⁸⁴ McIntosh further supports this research with his own, stating, “Some 90 percent of pastors don’t make it past the four-year mark in a local church.”⁸⁵ With this exodus of pastors from churches that are dead and dying, the cycle of decline continues without strong leadership to see through any church initiatives for growth.

Donald Ross believes that a pastor should not even take on a dying church unless he is committed to at least five years of ministry there: “The whole project will take more than five years, but you will see progress by then.”⁸⁶ If a pastor does not possess grit, then he will never make it past three years, much less to five years or beyond. Jack Daniel writes, “Tragically, they will most likely part just at the point when the potential for further health and growth is the greatest.”⁸⁷

McIntosh believes that pastors leave, thus undercutting potential future success, because of conflict and resistance in the church. He relates the following scenario:

What typically takes place is that a conflict of some sort arises in the third or fourth year of a pastor’s ministry in a congregation. Perhaps church members and leaders begin to understand the impact on the church of what the pastor desires to do and begin to resist changes. For example, the people may say they want to grow. However, when people begin to realize growth means changing . . . they resist the idea. The congregation votes against any changes with their money, time, attendance, and, if a congregational meeting is needed, their actual votes. The pastor sees this resistance as an unwillingness to follow his leadership and leaves the church, only to repeat the process in another church.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Thom S. Rainer, “The Dangerous Third Year of Pastoral Tenure,” June 18, 2014, <http://thomrainer.com/2014/06/dangerous-third-year-pastoral-tenure/>.

⁸⁵ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 34.

⁸⁶ Donald Ross, *Turnaround Pastor: Pathways to Save, Revive, and Build Your Church* (Montlake Terrace, WA: Turnaround Church Coaching Network, 2013), 103.

⁸⁷ Jack L. Daniel, *Patient Catalyst: Leading Church Revitalization* (South Easton, MA: Overseed, 2018), 200.

⁸⁸ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 34-35.

McIntosh adds, “The desire to give up and move on is intense.”⁸⁹ Thus, why grit is vitally important for revitalizing pastors. Pastoral grit will help a revitalizing pastor maintain his passion and perseverance over the long-term to achieve the end goal of seeing a dead church come to life again. Church revitalization is a long-term commitment—pastors that do not have the grit to stay in the battle of church revitalization should not take on a church in a plateaued or dead state. McIntosh ultimately concludes that short pastor tenures “will never lead to revitalized churches.”⁹⁰

Mark Tidsworth, president of Pinnacle Leadership Associates, writes about the importance of pastoral grit. The areas of impact grit can have on pastoral ministry carry over into becoming a revitalizing pastor:

1. Pastoral grit sustains pastoral engagement with a particular (church) over time.
2. Pastoral grit discourages the pastor from looking for another call.
3. Pastoral grit empowers [pastors] to get back up after being knocked down.
4. Pastoral grit often is found in “less gifted” pastors than those who enjoy many natural or God-given talents.
5. Pastors with grit regularly invest in support systems outside their congregation.
6. Pastors with grit can see ministries, projects, and initiative through from beginning to end.⁹¹

Fortunately, grit can be developed,⁹² and a person without grit is more likely to be able to grow in grit than one can grow in changing one’s personality.

For the accuracy of the literature review it must be noted that grit is more than stubbornness. It is more than a pastor being too lazy or too obtuse to recognize the need to move. Grit encompasses the quality of work being done while remaining committed to a local church. This can be understood in Duckworth’s understanding of perseverance:

⁸⁹ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 35.

⁹⁰ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 36.

⁹¹ Mark Tidsworth, “Pastoral Grit,” January 16, 2018, <https://www.pinnlead.com/blog/2018/01/pastoral-grit.html>.

⁹² Steven W. Ruby, “The Development OF Pastoral Grit: Surviving and Thriving through the Seasons of Ministry” (DMin project, Northwest Graduate School of Ministry, 1999).

“Exceptional sustained effort toward achieving a long-term goal.”⁹³ The key word is “exceptional.” This word is key in the research of pastoral grit. A long tenured pastor, who is not exceptional and not a revitalizing pastor, can be as damaging to a church as an exceptional revitalizing pastor is beneficial. Henard writes, “Stubbornness probably defines most pastors. They stay out of loyalty or commitment, not realizing their tenure is actually keeping the church from growing and revitalizing.”⁹⁴ Malphurs and Penfold in their studies found that long tenured revitalizing pastors produce “steady and continuous growth,” while long tenured non-revitalizing pastors produce “at best a plateau and in most cases a steady decline.”⁹⁵ Since part of grit is to persevere at an exceptional level and to achieve an ultimate goal, the following insight by McIntosh is important to highlight: “If a church has not experienced revitalization within ten to twelve years of a pastor’s tenure, it is not going to happen.”⁹⁶ McIntosh then provides the following counsel to pastors who may perceive themselves to be gritty but in reality are just stubborn: “If you have been in your church for less than seven years, you need to stay longer; if you’ve been there ten or twelve years, you must either capture a new vision for the next ten years or leave for a different ministry.”⁹⁷

In conclusion. Long tenure is vital for revitalizing a church, but it must be a long tenure based on the grit of a revitalizing pastor.

Conclusion

The aspects of church revitalization are many and vary from book to book on the topic. In like manner, the qualifications of a revitalizing pastor are many and vary

⁹³ Trickle by Beautiful Company, “Grit Is a Key Factor in Exceptional Achievement,” accessed April 18, 2021, <https://trickle.app/drip/21789-grit-is-a-key-factor-in-exceptional-achievement/>.

⁹⁴ Henard, *Can These Bones Live?*, 118.

⁹⁵ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 96.

⁹⁶ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 36.

⁹⁷ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 36.

from book to book. This chapter focused on three elements that will assist in pointing the administration of the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists toward pastors already in the field and pastors that will be hired in the future that are more likely to have success in revitalizing churches based on their personality profile, relationship to prayer, and pastoral grit. Such knowledge of individuals will assist the administration and personnel committee in the future hiring of pastors, reassignment of current pastors, and training of all pastors within the Chesapeake Conference territory.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

As a pastor within the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (CC), the senior pastor of the largest church by membership and attendance, and the highest tithe paying church in our region, I have felt a great concern for the ongoing struggles in growth and attendance at a majority of the churches in the CC region. Adventists do not operate under a congregational system; thus, we are taught early and often that our concern should be for our church and for the state of the Seventh-day Adventist Church globally. As the largest tithe paying church in the CC territory by more than three million dollars a year, there is also a stewardship responsibility to care about the lack of growth happening in the churches that are receiving a portion of those tithe dollars.¹ Furthermore, as a member of the personnel and executive committees of CC, I have another level of responsibility to work for better practices in the hiring, placement, and training of pastors in CC to address the rapid decline of the majority of CC churches.

This chapter will describe the process undertaken to achieve the following five goals:

¹ Each church in the Seventh-day Adventist Church sends the entirety of their tithe dollars to the local conference above them, from there a portion of each tithe dollar is used to assist churches with less money in the same local conference. The combined tithe also pays for all pastors and elementary and secondary Seventh-day Adventist teachers at the academies in that specific conference. From there, a portion of the tithe is passed on to the structural entities above the conference, the local Union which have oversight of the conferences across many states, and the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and hospitals in those multi-state regions. Then, a further portion is passed on to the division/general conference level that distributes the tithe out to missionaries and areas of the world that are in the greatest need. This practice is a stewardship matter for a local pastor like myself of the largest tithe paying church in CC because, as a pastor of a 2000-member church, I receive the exact same salary as the pastor down the road that has the shepherding responsibility of 100 members. All pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church are on the same salary wage scale no matter the size or strength of the churches they serve. Thus, it behooves a pastor like myself to care if the dollars the church members I serve are being utilized in the hiring of pastors that are gifted and prepared to revitalize dying and plateaued churches.

1. The first goal was to assess the current revitalization practices being implemented among the lead pastors of CC.
2. The second goal was to assess the personality traits of the lead pastors in CC.
3. The third goal was to increase the knowledge of CC administration and ministry directors on the profile of a revitalizing pastor.
4. The fourth goal was to create an instrument to measure candidates as they are being considered for placement in plateaued and dying churches.
5. The fifth goal was to develop a ministry plan for pastors of plateaued and declining churches to assist the pastor in leading the church to revitalization.

The project consisted of three steps: preparation, implementation, and follow-up. While the project itself took only eighteen weeks, obstacles in today's world, most significantly a global pandemic, necessitated a delay in the completion of this project. Once underway, the project proceeded as expected and yielded helpful results.

Preparation Period

Week 1

In week 1 of the preparation period, I dialogued with the president of the CC, Elder Rick Remmers, to receive his endorsement of this project. This permission was necessary because the project involved subjects that are employed by CC and not individual contractors, and also because goals 3, 4, and 5 require the participation and feedback of CC administration. Remmers fully endorsed the project and its goals.²

Weeks 2-3

Upon receiving that endorsement, in weeks 2-3 I developed the materials I would need to assess the revitalizing practices of CC pastors. I prepared and developed a Revitalizing Pastors Practices survey based upon my literature review throughout this research project of the common practices implemented by successful revitalizing

² Midway through the project Remmers received a call to serve as an administrator at the North American Division. The individual that replaced him as president of CC was Jerry Lutz. Lutz was serving as the Executive Secretary (like a vice-president) under Remmers and thus was aware of my project and its objectives. Out of respect for his leadership I asked if he was amenable to me continuing my research and the subsequent reporting, which he was.

pastors.³ The survey reviewed a multitude of practices within the life of the church and the leadership of the pastor. In my studies I came to the clear realization that prayer and an emphasis on prayer⁴ is the greatest practice of a revitalizing pastor, thus I also developed a Prayer Practices survey.⁵

During this time I also chose the resources needed to assess the personality traits of the pastors. I chose to utilize the DiSC assessment.⁶ I purchased thirty-two assessments through Church Staffing company to provide each English-speaking lead pastor in the CC territory the opportunity to take the DiSC assessment. During my research, I acknowledged a limitation I would face, which was that not all pastors would have the DiSC personality scores that are conducive for revitalizing pastors. Recognizing that pastors would not be terminated based upon their DiSC assessment, I also wanted to

³ See appendix 1.

⁴ Jim Cymbala states,

True Revival Means Prayer First! Whether in preparation for a fresh, powerful move of the Spirit or whether as a sign of an ongoing present revival of the Spirit—the prayer meeting will be paramount in the life of the Church. Hungry, sincere seekers of God will pour out their heart’s desire to Him in corporate prayer. . . . During the course of an ongoing and present revival, the prayer life of the church will intensify and be liberated by God into even deeper areas of intercession for men without Christ. New depths of the spiritual worship the Father seeks will be ignited by the fire of the Holy Spirit. The Bible clearly records and all of church history confirms that a church revived and “on fire” will burn brightly in prayer and supplication. Can a prayerless church claim a great “renewal” or revival from the Holy Ghost? Every honest Christian knows that a mark of God’s Spirit in us is that wonderful spirit of prayer which He bestows so that we can affect situations and souls through a powerful laying hold of God in faith. God visits the church that prays. (Jim Cymbala, “Whatever Happened To The Prayer Meeting?,” SermonIndex.net, September 25, 2012, https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=62143&forum=36)

⁵ See appendix 2.

⁶ The Malphurs Group has used the DiSC assessment extensively in their research. see The Malphurs Group, “Thriving as a Dominant-Type Leader: Deep on DiSc Part 1,” April 20, 2022, <https://malphursgroup.com/thriving-as-a-dominant-type-leader-deep-on-disc-part-1/> for example. Malphurs Group is just one of many researchers to utilize this tool. The DiSC assessment is also utilized by the Unstuck Group to help churches see their areas of need for revitalization. See The Unstuck Group, “The Key Thing Most Church Teams are Missing,” accessed November 3, 2022, <https://theunstuckgroup.com/the-key-thing-most-church-teams-are-missing-episode-207-the-unstuck-church-podcast/>. See also Gary L. McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 28-37; Gordon Penfold and Aubrey Malphurs, *Re:Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 69-145; Mark Clifton and Kenneth Priest, *Rubicons of Revitalization: Overcoming 8 Common Barriers to Church Renewal* (Littleton, CO: Acoma, 2018), 61-63.

analyze how many current CC lead pastors, no matter what personality type they possess, have grit, as this characteristic may help them overcome any limitations in their personality to work toward the necessary practices to revitalize a church and persevere through the inevitable conflicts that arise in the process of revitalizing a church.⁷ The Grit Scale⁸ is an open-source scale and can be found at the author and creator of the Grit Scale, Angela Duckworth's website.⁹

Weeks 4-8

In weeks 4-8, I sent the Revitalizing Pastors Practices survey, the Prayer Practices survey, the DiSC assessment, and the Grit Scale inventory to the thirty-two lead pastors of non-Spanish speaking churches in CC. Since I gathered this information in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, I asked the pastors to base their answers to the Revitalizing Pastors Practices and Prayer Practices surveys on their regular practices prior to the pandemic, as most churches in our territory were closed to in person worship for a significant portion of 2020 and parts of 2021.

Week 9

In week 9, I began to prepare for achievement of the third goal of increasing the knowledge of CC administration and ministry directors on the profile and practices of a revitalizing pastor. To understand if their knowledge had grown or not after my presentations, I had to first develop a baseline of their existing knowledge related to the

⁷ Donald Ross writes, "Being a turnaround leader (*revitalizing pastor*) is rewarding, but much like parents who wait years before being appreciated by their children, you will need to be willing to wait and endure to see the results you are working toward. There is no quick fix to reverse the direction in a declining church." Donald Ross, *Turnaround Pastor: Pathways to Save, Revive, and Build Your Church* (Montlake Terrace, WA: Turnaround Church Coaching, 2013), 103.

⁸ I chose to use the Grit scale based on its use in numerous other areas of research including academic success, personal self-control, goal attainment, employment status, etc. Chaturika S. Kannangara et al., "All That Glitters Is Not Grit: Three Studies of Grit in University Students," *Frontiers*, January 1, 2019, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01539/full>.

⁹ Angela Duckworth, "Grit Scale," accessed April 18, 2021, <https://angeladuckworth.com/grit-scale/>.

profile and practices of a revitalizing pastor. To garner this baseline, I developed a Revitalizing Pastor Profile and Practices Knowledge quiz.¹⁰

Week 10

In week 10, I analyzed the results of the survey and assessment responses I received from CC pastors. Of the Revitalizing Pastors Practices surveys, I received back 21 of the 32. Of the Prayer Practices survey, I received back 20 of the 32. Of the 32 DiSC assessment inventories distributed, I received 16 responses.¹¹ And of the 32 Grit Scale inventories distributed I received 20 responses.

Weeks 11-15

In week 11, I based upon my research and what I observed as a member of the personnel committee of CC that oversees the hiring and placement of pastors, I created a new hiring and placement plan.¹² I established the precedent for this more stringent hiring practice to the founding history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. James White, one of the co-founders of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, stated,

In no way can a preacher so well prove himself, as in entering new fields. . . . If he be successful in raising up churches, and establishing them, so that they bear good fruits, he gives to his brethren the best proofs that he is sent of the Lord. . . . If they cannot raise up churches . . . then certainly the cause of truth has no need of them, and they have the best reasons for concluding that they made a sad mistake when they thought that God called them to teach the third angel's message."¹³

The precedent at the founding of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, with little money and a need to establish churches, was to only hire those that could raise-up churches that could then financially support the pastor. While church planting is still

¹⁰ See appendix 3. An answer key to the quiz is provided in appendix 4.

¹¹ Nearly one quarter of those that responded to the Grit Scale survey, Revitalizing Pastors Practices, and Prayer Practices survey in this research failed to respond to the DiSC assessment.

¹² See appendix 6.

¹³ James White, quoted in Ron Gladden, "Evangelism and Church Planting," Ministry Magazine, October 1999, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1999/10/evangelism-and-church-planting>.

essential, there is a greater need of being good stewards of resources and revitalizing churches. Thus, just as the focus then was on only hiring those that could establish churches, the focus should be now on primarily hiring those that can re-establish churches. The hiring rubric I built focuses on seven steps in the process¹⁴

Step 1: Each candidate takes the DiSC personality inventory. While this step alone will not determine hiring, it will give insight into the references and interviews that take place with the pastoral candidate. The DiSC also provides direction to administration on areas that the pastor will need mentoring if being placed into a plateaued or declining church.

Step 2: The candidate takes the Prayer Practices survey. Follow up to the survey would be to ask questions regarding the observation of the candidates' prayerfulness from the provided references and conference's secondary references.

Step 3: The candidate takes the Revitalizing Pastors Practices survey. Follow up to the survey would be to ask questions regarding the observations of the candidates' revitalizing practices in his or her current church of service from the provided references and conference's secondary references.

Step 4: A conference officer or department director makes a surprise visit in person to observe the pastor in his/her current place of pastoral service. This visit would evaluate the health of the church they are currently in. The surprise visit would prevent pastors from sharing their "best"¹⁵ sermon, but rather a sermon prepared in their normal week to week routine.¹⁶

¹⁴ These seven steps are in addition to the already established HR practices, along with the review of references and doctrinal faithfulness.

¹⁵ I once heard it said that every preacher has at least one sugar stick. *Sugar stick* is a reference to a sermon that a preacher knows they can preach, and it will get a great reaction. It is that sermon that preachers use repeatedly wherever they go to make a good impression. But it is not necessarily emblematic of their consistent preaching practice.

¹⁶ In an interview I had with Dwight Nelson in July of 2019, he shared that prior to his hiring at the Pioneer Memorial Church (PMC), one Sabbath the president of Andrews University attended his church.

Step 5: Listen to at least three sermons of the candidate prior to hiring. The sermons should be evaluated on content, exposition, clarity, relevance, engagement, length, and fire in the pulpit.

Step 6: If the pastor has ten or more years of pastoral experience, then a thorough evaluation of their tenure history is examined. If the pastor has multiple short tenures of four years or less in a head pastor role, then the committee should slow down and seek clarity on the reason for the shortened stints of ministry in multiple locations.¹⁷

Step 7: Each candidate takes the Grit Scale test.

Following the development of the hiring and placement rubric, I created a rubric for the CC administration and directors to grade the plan.¹⁸

During weeks 12-15 I developed a ministry plan for pastors of plateaued and declining churches to assist the pastor in leading the church to revitalization. I created a plan for a seven-month cycle of training for pastors that are serving in a plateaued or dying church.¹⁹ This plan could also be used for new hires or any pastor the conference administration deems it necessary for them to attend.²⁰ These seven months would cover the following subjects:

Nelson had no knowledge this visit would take place. He said to me, “He needed to see how I was in my natural element without me being able to prepare a ‘special’ message. Can this young guy handle the pulpit?” Nelson said there was no interaction with the president prior or following the worship service. The president simply came in sat down, observed the service, spoke to a few individuals on his way out and left. The next time Nelson saw or spoke to him is when he was flown out to consider the PMC position.

¹⁷ Consistently short tenures may indicate that a pastor has already been in churches that are plateaued or declining and either did not have the personal stamina to maintain a presence or he did not have the ability to galvanize the church to want to keep him as their leader. Likewise, there may be valid family reasons or internal conference politics which led to the shortened tenures.

¹⁸ See appendix 8.

¹⁹ See appendix 9.

²⁰ The Seventh-day Adventist system is not congregational, so all pastors are hired by the local conference rather than the local church and thus can be directed to participate in such trainings.

1. The need for church revitalization²¹
2. The biblical foundation of church revitalization²²
3. The leadership needed for church revitalization²³
4. The prophetic mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church²⁴
5. Prayer and the revitalizing pastor²⁵
6. Preaching and revitalizing pastor²⁶
7. Perseverance²⁷

At the conclusion of the seven-month development cycle, an ongoing mentoring or coaching process is to be established.²⁸ The conclusion of the plan includes a list of recommended books and resources for pastors to study for continued growth as revitalizing pastors.²⁹ I then built a rubric for the CC administration to assess my plan.³⁰

Weeks 16-17

In weeks 16 and 17, based on my analysis of the surveys and assessments I had received back and the knowledge I had gained through my research, I prepared for my

²¹ See appendix 10.

²² See appendix 11.

²³ See appendix 12.

²⁴ See appendix 13.

²⁵ See appendix 14.

²⁶ See appendix 15.

²⁷ See appendix 16.

²⁸ Andy Stanley writes, “You will never maximize your potential in any area without coaching. It is impossible. You may be good. You may even be better than everyone else. But without input you will never be as good as you could be. We all do better when somebody is watching and evaluating.” Andy Stanley, *The Next Generation Leader* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 104.

²⁹ See appendix 17.

³⁰ See appendix 18.

presentation to CC administration in which I would present my findings and suggested tools to help provide solutions to stem the tide of plateaued and declining churches in CC.

This preparation period included creating two presentations. First was a presentation of the key practices and profile of a revitalizing church pastor³¹ for the purpose of increasing the knowledge of the CC administrators and directors. This presentation shared the profile of a revitalizing pastor based on the best research up to this point in church history. Included in this presentation was a picture of a revitalizing pastor's personality, practices (primarily prayer and preaching), tenure, etc. Then, I created a second presentation based on the surveys and assessments of the pastors in CC. The purpose of the second presentation was to illustrate the contrasting picture of a revitalizing pastor based upon the most thorough research of church revitalization experts, versus the current reality of lead pastors in CC.

Implementation Period

Week 18

In week 18 I traveled to the headquarters of the CC to share with the leadership my presentation and the tools I had developed. My presentation to CC leadership was the major thrust of this project, with a desired outcome of them grasping the ideal profile and practices of revitalizing pastors and then understanding where CC pastors are falling short of that ideal. Finally, my purpose was to share with CC leadership the tools I had developed to address our needs and help the pastors and churches in CC to grow closer to the ideal.

Assessing the knowledge of CC's leadership. I began my presentation by asking CC administration to take the Revitalizing Pastor Profile and Practices Knowledge quiz.³² After completing this quiz, I presented on the practices and profile of a

³¹ See appendix 5.

³² See appendix 3. An answer key to the quiz is provided in appendix 4.

revitalizing pastor. Following the presentation, I resubmitted to them the Revitalizing Pastor Profile and Practices Knowledge quiz.³³ At a later time I measured the success of this goal by running a *t*-test for dependent samples to demonstrate any statistical difference in the pre- and post-survey scores.

Now with a greater understanding of the practices and personality of a revitalizing pastor, I presented to CC leadership the practices and personalities of pastors serving as lead pastors in CC. The purpose of these two presentations back-to-back was to provide tangible evidence of the challenges facing the CC pastoral ranks.³⁴

Hiring and placement rubric. I then presented to CC leadership the Hiring and Placement plan that I developed. I carefully walked them through the rationale and practical purposes of each step. I emphasized ways in which this plan could be a complement to the practices already in place.

Development of revitalizing pastors. The last aspect of my presentation to CC administration was to give the outline of the seven-month training plan I had developed to train and equip CC pastors to become revitalizing pastors, or at the very least to recognize the need and implement best practices of revitalizing pastors in their local churches. I acknowledged to leadership that the purpose of this training was a recognition of two realities. The first reality is that no hiring practice is perfect. Even by placing the Revitalizing Pastor Hiring and Placement rubric into the hiring and placement of pastors, some who look good on paper, present well within interviews, or check the appropriate boxes on the Hiring and Placement Rubric of revitalizing pastors, still might not turn out to be revitalizing pastors. The second reality is that there is no stomach to fire a large percentage of CC's current pastoral work force and yet the lack of revitalizing pastors

³³ See appendix 3.

³⁴ The administration fully grasped the issue, which will be further explained and evidenced in chap. 5.

amongst the current team of CC pastors must be addressed. Therefore, I presented this training as a solution to assist with developing and equipping pastors in CC in the areas of revitalizing pastoral ministry.

Follow-Up Period

When I met with CC administrations and directors to assess their knowledge of a revitalizing pastor's practices and profile, I also presented the hiring and placement plan and the development plan of non-revitalizing pastors. To help them understand the importance of adopting both plans, I presented the numbers in Chesapeake Conference of plateaued and dying churches and provided the profile of the pastors managing the non-Spanish speaking churches within the Chesapeake Conference. Following my presentation, I answered their questions about my research and the material presented. I then requested that they provide an analysis of the hiring rubric and development plan.³⁵ There was an agreement that in 2023 we would discuss implementing the revitalizing pastor seven-month development portion of my presentation with a group of pastors in the CC. This process will likely begin with pastors that CC leadership is mentoring to become lead pastors at some point in the future. Furthermore, CC leadership stated they would also explore encouraging some current lead pastors to participate in the development plan, though there was a hesitancy in this initial meeting to encourage this as an establishment of policy with the current CC lead pastors.

The follow-up on the hiring and placement rubric appeared more tenuous amongst CC leadership. The CC treasurer was most eager to implement the vast majority of it, and CC's ministerial director also was ready to embrace large swaths of the plan,

³⁵ The results of their analyses are presented in chap. 5.

but the president appeared to be more reserved on embracing any aspects of the plan. I hold out hope for greater implementation of the entire project.³⁶

Conclusion

This project intended to give CC leadership the opportunity to see clearly through stark research the problem confronting not just the CC territory but the entire North American Division Seventh-day Adventist Church, and then to provide tools to assist in thwarting the great opponent of the cause of God: stagnant and dying churches. I also hope this project will provide structure and tools for future researchers, especially within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination where we are just beginning in to accept and address the reality before us—a movement in North America that appears to be dying.

³⁶ Even as I was reworking this chapter and writing my concluding words, I paused in my writing and looked at my phone to find the following text message from the CC Executive Secretary (Vice-President) Andre Hastick, “Chad, I’d love to meet for lunch to discuss a little further and get some further insight from the research you have been doing for your doctoral work. Do have availability in early February?”

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

The development of this project was helpful to the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (CC). It revealed a statistical picture of the lead pastors within the CC and their practices and personalities in relation to their need to pastor plateaued or declining churches. This picture brought awareness to the CC administration and ministerial department for the purpose of assisting them in how to address the leadership issues related to plateaued and declining churches in their region. This project also provided valuable tools to address the future hiring or placement of pastors in plateaued or declining churches within CC, along with a tool of development for pastors already serving in churches in a plateaued or declining state.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to assess the current pastoral team within the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists territory to help determine the likelihood of future success in revitalizing the stagnant and dying churches within this territory and then in developing a system for building a pastoral workforce for growth rather than decline. The project accomplished this purpose by developing a statistical picture of the average pastor working within CC and through that analysis revealed to the CC administration a workforce that is ill prepared to face the challenges of the plateaued and declining churches in CC territory.

Further, this purpose was accomplished by creating a seven-step process to be utilized in hiring and placement by the CC administration. This process will assist the administration and personnel committee in evaluating pastoral candidates applying for a job within the CC conference or serve as a guideline for the reassignment of pastors

already working at churches in the CC territory. By utilizing this step-step evaluation, CC administration will have a better understanding of each candidate and their potential success or failure rate of revitalizing a plateaued or declining church prior to the conference's placement or hiring pastors to serve such churches.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

Each of the project's five goals contributed to the overall purpose of the project, and the completion of each goal throughout the project implementation ensured that the purpose of the project was met.

Goal 1

The first goal was to assess the current revitalization practices being implemented among the lead pastors of CC. This goal was successfully met when 69 percent of CC's English-speaking lead pastors completed the survey, exceeding the desired 50 percent threshold, and the inventory was analyzed by the CC conference administration providing a clearer picture of the revitalization practices taking place in CC churches.

This goal was also successful in helping to prepare for the later project goals, particularly goals 4 and 5. The data collected through the Revitalizing Pastors Practices Survey and the Prayer Practices survey revealed where pastors are implementing the best practices for church revitalization and where they are not.

An area of strength discovered within the pastoral ranks of CC through the survey is that most CC pastors embrace a commitment and practice of expositional preaching, with 71 percent reporting that their style of preaching is expositional and 29 percent approach preaching from a topical model. Another strength around preaching is that 72 percent of the pastors are spending significant time, six hours or more each week, in direct sermon preparation. Both statistics, while illustrating positives regarding the preaching practices for a vast majority of CC pastors, still show room for improvement.

Likely, a great number of pastors are not preaching toward revitalization with most CC churches in a plateaued or declined position and 29 percent of pastors not preaching expositionally and 28 percent that spend less than six hours a week in sermon preparation.¹ Such numbers indicate that many of these churches will remain stagnant or dead without a change in the person serving as pastor or the pastor having a change in his preaching.

Another area of strength observed through the surveys is in some of the responses related to prayer. The pastors and their churches are praying for their communities. Ninety percent of the pastors say their church members regularly pray for the church's community and 85 percent of the pastors indicate that they often pray for their communities as well. Many of the pastors preach about prayer, with 95 percent of them reporting that they preach on prayer at least once a year and 45 percent stating that they preach on prayer four times or more in a year. Most pastors are also reading and learning about prayer—80 percent of the pastors have read three books or more in the last three years on prayer. The pastors know who the prayer warriors are in their churches; every survey indicated that they know who their prayer warriors are, and I say “amen” to this insight. Also, 90 percent of the churches hold a weekly prayer meeting beyond the traditional Sabbath morning worship service. This practice is also something to affirm. Yet, with all that is happening in the church related to prayer, three statistics in the prayer survey were alarming to myself and CC administration: 85 percent of the pastors do not have a prayer partner—they have no one they regularly pray with, other than their spouse; and 25 percent of the pastors, when they pray with their spouse, do not pray about the church. Since ministry is such a stressful journey, not having anyone to pray with, and for 25 percent of them not even praying about their ministry with their spouse, is alarming and foretelling of potential future crisis in areas of accountability.

¹ Five percent reported spending only 1-2 hours in sermon preparation a week, an amount of time that is significantly inadequate.

There was an area that would be perceived as a strength based on the answers of the pastors but is contradicted by the reality. One key practice of revitalizing pastors is the practice of “staying” at one church despite the difficulties and struggles. The pastors’ answers indicate an understanding of this need, and 90 percent answered that they are committed and in fact want to stay in their current church. Unfortunately, 67 percent of CC pastors have been at their church less than five years. According to Gary McIntosh, “It normally takes five to seven years to revitalize a church in a city. It takes much longer in a rural situation, say, about ten to fifteen years (or longer!)”² Most churches in CC are in rural settings, thus a pastor staying less than five years is not adequate for the revitalization that needs to happen.

Some of the weaknesses revealed in the survey, beyond the tenure of pastors at a specific church in CC, were obvious to me based on the numbers, and some were only revealed to me when I presented the data to CC administration. The first weakness that jumped out was in regard to evangelism. The question on the survey was, “Does your church have an evangelistic strategy to reach out to the community?” Sixty-seven percent of the pastors responded “no.” How can a church be revitalized if there is not a plan to evangelize the community? While the lack of an evangelistic plan in so many churches was striking to me, it was extremely disappointing to CC leadership and led to a discussion amongst them as I listened in. It is common practice in Seventh-day Adventism to emphasize evangelism and almost every Adventist church does “evangelism.” The responses from the pastors regarding their evangelistic plans in their local churches, however, revealed to the administration that pastors do evangelistic events,³ but these “events” are often prophecy seminars and not part of a larger evangelistic strategy. It was

² Gary L. McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 32.

³ Most persons that live near an Adventist church have received mailers with beasts or the Pope on them for Seventh-day Adventist prophecy seminars.

clear that having event-based evangelism, rather than an evangelistic strategy, brought great consternation to the CC administration.

Another significant area of weakness came through two questions. For the first, “I preach at least twice a year on stewardship (yes or no),” 33 percent of the pastors answered “no.” The second question was, “Does your church have legacy ministries that are not effective? (Yes or No), where 48 percent of the pastors indicated that, “yes,” their churches do have legacy ministries that are ineffective. These two questions were asked to assess a pastor’s willingness to deal with tough topics and issues often associated with conflict, a critical identifier of revitalizing pastors. Both answers reveal that a large percentage of the pastors in the CC are not willing to talk about or confront large barriers to growth in their churches. Such a position is extremely harmful to the likelihood of a church turnaround. Alan Witham states, “The harmful tendency is to avoid the very thing that is essential to the health of the church. When the potential cost is counted . . . leaders often opt out in favor of what is perceived to be an easier, less stressful route (not addressing it). As a result, the church suffers and the stress builds.”⁴ These answers indicate such a relation to difficulties are happening in many CC churches.

The weakness that only became apparent in the presentation with CC administration was in response to the following question, “Does your church ‘look’ like the community it is in? (Age, racial socio-economic).” Seventy-six percent of the pastors answered “yes,” that their church and community look the same. When I presented this response to the CC administration, the conference ministerial director laughed out loud, and the conference president shook his head in disgust and said, “No, no, no.” This precipitated another discussion amongst the leaders indicating that they clearly believe a great many of the pastors do not actually know their communities. I asked the ministerial director to share with me why he laughed, and he said, “Most our churches are in areas

⁴ Alan Witham, “Leaning into Conflict,” in *Lead to Revitalize! 15 Practices of a Church Revitalization Leader*, ed. Michelle Rayburn and Ruth Clark (Abbotsford, WI: Aneko, 2020), 121.

where the community has changed, and the church has not.” The leadership was very disappointed that the pastors did not recognize the differences between their church’s membership and their local communities. A church without a clear understanding of the community around it, or the community’s perspective of the church, will struggle to revitalize. Bill Henard, in his book, *ReClaimed Church*, comments, “When a church understands what the community thinks of it and when the church realistically deals with the false image that it has projected, not only to itself but to the world, those painful exercises will lead the church to grow again.”⁵

The survey responses provided the insight that while many pastors are trying hard and taking positive steps, there are significant indicators that the overall practices of CC lead pastors will not lead to revitalization in their local contexts and may even send their churches into further decline.

Goal 2

The second goal was to assess the personality traits of the CC lead pastors. This goal was successfully met when 16 of 32 head pastors of the CC’s English-speaking churches completed the DISC Profile, meeting the 50 percent threshold desired at the beginning of the project.

This goal revealed that over 50 percent of pastors in CC have a dominant personality that is not ideal for revitalizing churches. The study that largely informed my insights on personality was done by Gordon Penfold and written about in his book with Aubrey Malphurs, *Re:Vision*. They indicate that 73 percent of revitalizing pastors are patterned with either a dominant D or I personality through the DiSC personality profile, whereas 48 percent of pastors that are not revitalizing pastors have a dominant C or S personality in the DiSC profile. They also point out that only 14 percent of the pastors in

⁵ Bill Henard, *ReClaimed Church: How Churches Grow, Decline, and Experience Revitalization* (Nashville: B & H, 2018), 148.

their study did not possess a D or I in their personality.⁶ In the CC, the personality breakdown is as follows:

- Dominant = 25%
- Influence = 25%
- Steadiness = 44%
- Conscientious = 6%

The positive outlook of this goal assessment is that 50 percent of CC pastors score with a personality that is more likely to be able to lead a church revitalization. The negative outlook is that 50 percent of the CC pastors are not likely to lead a church revitalization based upon their DiSC personality profile. This result is concerning when 78 percent of CC churches are plateaued or already in decline.

Goal 3

The third goal was to increase the knowledge of the CC administration and ministry directors on the profile of a revitalizing pastor. This goal was successfully completed. In the quiz provided to CC leadership prior to my presentation on the profile and practices of a revitalizing pastor, the four leaders⁷ had a mean score of 2.6 out 16 possible points. After my presentation, the mean score went up to 10.625 out of 16 possible points. I was able to assess the value of the quiz by using a one-tail *t*-test to consider the assumed movement in scores from a lower value to a higher value, and $t = 0.01651395$. With, $t < .05$, this indicates the data I provided to the CC administration in the presentation was statistically significant and helpful to improving their knowledge of the profile and practices of a revitalizing pastors.

⁶ Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E Penfold, *Re:Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 111-12.

⁷ There were scheduled to be five leaders present but the CC evangelism and church growth director had a conflict arise the day of the scheduled presentation and was unable to be there.

Goal 4

The fourth goal was to create an instrument to measure candidates as they are being considered for placement in plateaued and dying churches. The administration of the CC was given a rubric to evaluate the seven-step plan for recommended inclusion in the hiring and placement process of pastors in the CC (see table 1). The process reached the sufficiency level in 90 percent of the categories on the provided rubric (see table 2). The process met this standard at its initial submission with three out of four evaluators scoring the process as exemplary in all categories and one evaluator scoring two categories as sufficient, “the data from the instrument is easily gatherable”⁸ and “the instrument is providing relevant information to assist in hiring of pastors.”

Table 1. Revitalizing pastor hiring and placement rubric evaluation

1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The instrument is clearly relevant to the issue of hiring revitalizing pastors in CC.				XX XX	
The instrument is faithful to the Bible’s teaching on pastoral leadership.				XX XX	
The data from the instrument is easily gatherable.			X	XX X	
The instrument is within the legal boundaries of HR laws.				XX XX	
The instrument is providing relevant information to assist in hiring of pastors.			X	XX X	
Overall the instrument is clear.				XX XX	

Table 2. Total score of revitalizing pastor hiring and placement rubric

Total Possible Points	Total Points Earned	Final Percentage
96	94	97.9%

⁸ The larger concern on the gatherable data is not based on if it can be gathered but rather a concern of how it will impact recruiting pastors. In the process created it is recommended that all pastors take the DiSC profile prior to hiring. The officers are concerned that such a request would work against “the recruiting process” of high profile or already successful pastors.

Goal 5

The fifth goal was to develop a ministry plan for pastors of plateaued and declining churches to assist the pastor in leading the church to revitalization. The administration of the CC was given a rubric to evaluate the seven-month curriculum and plan for developing pastors as church revitalizers (see table 3). The plan reached the sufficiency level in 90 percent of the categories on the provided rubric (See table 4). The process met this standard at its initial submission with three out of four evaluators scoring the process as exemplary in all categories and one evaluator scoring the process as sufficient in four areas: “the plan is clearly relevant to the issue of a revitalizing pastors ministry,” “the points of the plan are reasonable for implementation by a local pastor,” “the plan contains points of practical application,” and “the plan is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the objective, church revitalization.”

Table 3. Developing revitalizing pastors ministry plan rubric

1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The plan is clearly relevant to the issue of a revitalizing pastors ministry.			x	xx x	
The plan is faithful to the Bible’s teaching on the function of a pastor.				xx xx	
The plan is theologically sound.				xx xx	
The plan is clear in its intent and direction.				xx xx	
The points of the plan are reasonable for implementation by a local pastor.			x	xx x	
The plan contains points of practical application.			x	xx x	
The plan is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the objective, church revitalization.			x	xx x	
Overall, the plan is clearly presented.				xx xx	

Table 4. Total score developing revitalizing pastors ministry plan rubric evaluation

Total Possible Points	Total Points Earned	Final Percentage
128	124	96.8%

Following the presentation of the plan and the evaluation by the CC leadership was a request that, in the new year, I would serve as a trainer of a select group of pastors currently serving in the CC to take them through the seven-month development plan. It was also requested that new pastors be taken through the seven-month development plan. These requests further validated the successful completion of this goal.⁹

Strengths of the Project

Based on evaluation and feedback, I identified four strengths from this project that will serve the Seventh-day Adventist denomination locally through the Chesapeake Conference and nationally through the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

The first strength is related to the larger Seventh-day Adventist denomination in North America. In Adventism, a scarcity of research has been done at an advanced level about church revitalization within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.¹⁰ This lack of research is interesting in that Seventh-day Adventists believe each of the messages to the seven churches in the book of Revelation (Rev 2:1-3:22) refer prophetically to specific time periods and spiritual movements in history.¹¹ Seventh-day Adventists also believe that the message to Laodicea (Rev 3:14-22) is referencing, not only the broader Christian church in the last days, but in many cases it targets the state of their church in the last days specifically.¹² Since the message of Laodicea is about a

⁹ I was again approached at a conference meeting following the presentation, and it was said that multiple conversations had taken place since the presentation and all the officers were in agreement that aspects, if not all parts of the plan, should be implemented starting in 2023.

¹⁰ To my knowledge, the only book written directly about the topic by an Adventist writer is Russell Burrill, *Waking the Dead Returning Plateaued and Declining Churches to Vibrancy* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart, 2004).

¹¹ C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares* (Nampa, ID: Pacific, 1985), 2:89-132.

¹² David Newman, "Laodicea and Corporate Repentance," *Ministry Magazine*, February 1993, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1993/02/laodicea-and-corporate-repentance>; Roy Adams, "Thinking Aloud about Laodicea," *Adventist Review*, January 7, 2022, <https://adventistreview.org/2008-1524/2008-1524-5/>.

“half-hearted and content”¹³ church, that is, a stagnant or dying church, a church in need of revitalization, the lack of scholarship within Adventism on this topic is surprising. One of the strengths of this project is to hopefully begin a reversal of investigation into church revitalization from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective.¹⁴

The second strength is that the project created greater awareness of the need for church revitalization within the territory of the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. I discovered in the process of research that, of the fifty-eight non-Spanish speaking churches in the CC, only 14 percent (eight churches) are growing, 46 percent are plateaued (twenty-seven churches), and 40 percent (twenty-three churches) are in decline.¹⁵ While the CC leadership was aware of decline in several churches, having the numbers in front of them created a tension point forcing them to confront the very real crisis facing the non-Spanish speaking churches in CC. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote from a Birmingham jail, “Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal.”¹⁶ Displaying the numbers to the CC leadership is a strength because it created a tension to force them to step into the realm of “creative analysis and objective appraisal” to solve the dying church problem in their conference.

¹³ Maxwell, *God Cares*, 131.

¹⁴ Heidi Baumgartner, “Historic Training Hosted by NAD Ministerial Association Focuses on Church Revitalization,” North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, November 17, 2021, <https://www.nadadventist.org/news/historic-training-hosted-nad-ministerial-association-focuses-church-revitalization>. There is evidence that this research and further research will be well received as there has been a surge of conferences and gatherings in recent years exploring the topic of church revitalization utilizing research primarily created beyond the boundaries of the Seventh-day Adventist movement.

¹⁵ Monica Terreos and Eduardo Munoz, e-mail to author, November 28, 2022.

¹⁶ Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail—California State University, Chico,” accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.csuchico.edu/iege/assets/documents/susi-letter-from-birmingham-jail.pdf>.

The third strength of this project was educating the CC leadership on the profile of a revitalizing pastor and giving them opportunity to compare that profile with the profile of the common pastor serving in the CC. Though the need is great in the CC for revitalization, the *t*-test from the evaluation of goal 3 revealed that the knowledge of the CC leadership was poor when it came to an understanding of the profile (practices and personality) of pastors best positioned to revitalize churches. The quiz following the presentation of the profile of a revitalizing pastor provided the t-test results of $t = 0.01651395$. The result of $t < .05$ indicated that the data provided in the presentation was statistically significant and helpful to improving the knowledge of the CC leadership. Armed with this greater knowledge, the CC leadership was able to compare the revitalizing pastor profile with the current pastoral workforce in the CC based on the research of this project. This comparison led them to determine a need for an adjustment in hiring, placement, and training of future pastors.

Finally, the fourth strength of this project is that it provides a focused framework for the CC leadership to embrace, modify, or expand upon for hiring, placing, and training pastors that serve in the CC territory. Chesapeake Conference ministerial director, Elder Eli Rojas, said,

Many of the practices covered in the plan for the development of revitalizing pastors within the Chesapeake Conference are things we do or try to cover in our ministerial trainings. But those practices are not established in such a clear and intentional format with a defined need and end goal as they are within this plan. Nor has there been this type of intentionality to address the pastors working in declining churches.¹⁷

Weaknesses of the Project

There are three significant weaknesses in this project. One is due to the limited research subjects, one is due to the targeted group that this project is intended to impact, and one is due to the design of the project.

¹⁷ Eli Rojas, The Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Director, discussion with author, November 30, 2022.

The first weakness is based on the limited subjects of study. I chose in this project, in part due to consultation with the CC leadership, to only survey individual pastors and not the congregations they serve. Surveying only pastors and not the members in their congregations created a bias that has no contrasting feedback. While I do not believe that any individual intentionally misrepresented their practices or their perceptions of their churches, it was clear from the feedback with leadership that the overall answers in some cases were not an accurate representation of what leadership is observing in the field. Several questions serve as examples of my position that this finding is a weakness. The first and most glaring question that underscored this issue was based on the responses to the question, “Does your church ‘look’ like the community it exists in?” Seventy-six percent of the pastors said “yes” to this question. On a similar question, “Is the population of your church growing, declining, or static?,” sixty-seven percent of the pastors said “growing.” CC leadership indicated the answer percentages for both questions was inaccurate. They were shocked by the answer to the former question particularly. On a third question, “Does your church have a new members class?,” thirty-eight percent said “yes.” In my research, this answer shocked me in the positive, as I expected the total number to be much lower, as new member classes are not common in Seventh-day Adventist churches. As I was sharing my report and I expressed my pleasure that so many of the non-Spanish speaking churches had a new members class, the leadership indicated that my original assumptions were likely correct, and they do not believe that 38 percent of the churches have a new members class. A final example of this weakness is the question, “Do you track worship attendance each week?,” seventy-six percent of the pastors said “yes.” Our executive secretary, the individual responsible for analyzing attendance data in the conference, stated this data was inaccurate.¹⁸ Such answers in conjunction with the feedback from the CC leadership lead me to believe that the project

¹⁸ All CC churches are asked to report attendance every seventh week. Only one third of churches submit any attendance records. CC leadership believes that if truly 76 percent of the churches were taking weekly attendance that more than one third would be reporting their attendance numbers.

would be stronger if pastors and other leaders within the local churches were surveyed to provide some balancing data to the pastors self-reported information.

The second weakness is due to the group that was targeted to be impacted by this project, the Chesapeake Conference. If the target group was the local church in which I serve, or if the project centered around a preaching practice at my local church, then the project might have a more likely chance of having an impact, as I, the senior pastor of my local congregation, would have greater autonomy to implement all aspects of the project. Since I chose to focus on a project that would impact all of the CC, the inherent weakness is that my ability to impact the final implementation and effect of this project is limited to my tools of persuasion and influence. As a local pastor and not holding a position of leadership at the denomination level either in administration or as a ministry department director, I possess no decision-making authority. I do serve on the personnel committee and the executive committee of the CC, but in these roles, I do not make hiring or training practice decisions, and thus I am limited to work within the scope of what is already put forth. From the first day I began this project, I was aware of this imbedded weakness, but the force of this weakness has declined as I have observed how well the project, its principles, and methods have been received.

The third weakness is the design of the project. I did not fully recognize this weakness until I was presenting the project to the CC leadership. I designed the development plan as if I were the individual doing all the training. There are references and illustrations that are personal to my experience. There is also a level of knowledge based upon my four years of researching church revitalization as a student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary that cannot be easily transferred to another person within the CC. This oversight limits the immediate success of the development portion of the project if I am not the one leading the seven-month development cycle. This weakness did not fully present itself until, as I already stated, I was presenting to the CC leadership. In the immediate, as long as the Lord maintains my life and I remain in the employment

of the CC, this weakness can be overcome; however, to maintain the success of the development portion of this plan, it is necessary that in the training there also be mentoring and development of other trainers and that the development plan have a few more generic elements by which other trainers could add their particular influence to the seven-month cycle.

While none of these weaknesses devalue the research, they must each be acknowledged for the purpose of informing future researchers.

What I Would Do Differently

Hindsight is 20/20 and I am sure that is one of the blessings of pursuing a terminal degree. The pursuit of a terminal degree demands that individuals gain knowledge not only in a particular area of study, but also in how they go about doing the research for the degree. Looking back, I can see how this project would be better if I had started with the knowledge I now possess.

When I started, I knew nothing of research or data collection. I could have come to an even more accurate profile of the average pastor working in the CC if I had formulated some of the questions in my surveys in a different manner. For example, in the survey I asked, “Does your church strive to do things with excellence?” I gave no context to what I meant by “excellence.” I then gave five options: a great deal, a lot, a moderate amount, a little, not at all. Reflecting on that question forces me to ask myself, how do I define “a great deal?” Or how do I define, “a moderate amount?” The question and answers leave too much room for subjectivity. Thus, I limit how I can then interpret the answers. Another example is on the question of preaching. I asked if the pastor’s preaching was primarily expositional or topical. The question would have been stronger if I had been more granular in the variations of expositional preaching or topical preaching.

Also, in data collection, nearly 70 percent of the pastors completed the practices surveys, but only 50 percent completed their DiSC profile inventories. I would like to understand if that was due to how they received the documents, their discomfort with

sharing their personalities scores with me, or if there was a theological impediment to them completing the DiSC inventory. Perhaps an underlining concern of partaking in an element of research related to psychology prevented some pastors from completing the DiSC inventory.¹⁹ Looking back I would have called each pastor that did not complete the DiSC inventory but did complete the other elements of the research to find out why they chose not to participate in the personality analysis.

There is one more thing I would do differently in data collection. I would have sought to understand the Grit Scale tool better. It was not until much later in my research and after I had already submitted and received responses for the Grit Scale that I discovered that questions can be ordered and observed that will assist in specifically identifying if the subject has grit because of passion or perseverance, or if their grit is a combination of both. Since I used the Grit Scale to determine perseverance, having the understanding that passion and perseverance could be delineated within the scale prior to the distribution and analysis of the tool and my analysis of the responses I received would have been beneficial in advance. The Grit scores seemed far too high for a great number of pastors that have little other indicators of possessing perseverance. I would have liked to delineate if their Grit score was high due to high responses to the passion questions or if the subjects truly scored high on both passion and perseverance.

For this project, the last thing I would have done differently would be to push harder and make a stronger case to survey congregations for the purpose of gathering their perspectives on their respective pastoral subjects. I asked for this permission and was told it might not be the best for the local pastors; I gave up too easy. My assessment is that the project would have been richer and more balanced with input from each surveyed pastor's congregations.

¹⁹ Kristy Koepp, "Attitudes and Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists concerning Psychology, Counseling, and Mental Health Issues" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2014).

Theological Reflections

Gregg Allison argues, “Our ecclesial background, our church experience, shapes our theology.”²⁰ Such being the case, throughout my writing of this project I was challenged by my ecclesial background, which emphasizes a model of ministry that this project works at times directly against. Russell Burrill, my former seminary professor, writes, “Adventist biblical and historical roots demand a model of church that is not pastor dependent, one where members provide mutual care for each other as they go about fulfilling the Great Commission.”²¹ In Adventism, we refer to this statement as God’s ideal, and often reference the ideal by using the phrase, no “settled pastors.”²² This project was built counter to this ideal as I argued that, to move a church from death to life, not only is a settled pastor needed, but a pastor that will be settled for many, many years. The conflict between what many in my faith background consider the ideal and the ideal I portend in this project led me to reflect on the question, “what does my ecclesiology say about my theology?” I am also forced to ask, “Is my project beneficial to the long-term health of the Seventh-day Adventist Church or is it adding to the problem?” To answer the latter question I would need to write an entirely new project, but the summarizing conclusion to which I have come is that, inasmuch as a revitalizing pastor is operating under the biblical job description of a pastor, “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph 4:11-12), then a pastor can serve in one location, one church, without disavowing the ideal by being an “evangelistic overseer”

²⁰ Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2012), 28.

²¹ Russell C. Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life & Mission of the Local Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1998), 234.

²² Ellen White writes, “There should not be a call to have settled pastors over our churches, but let the life-giving power of the truth impress its individual members to act, carrying on an efficient missionary work in that locality. As the hand of God, the church is to be educated and trained to do effective work. Its members are to be the Lord’s devoted, Christian workers. The church is too one-sided.” Ellen G. White, *Important Testimony* (Takoma Park, MD: Review and Herald, 1903), 12.

and trainer rather than a hovering, stifling, do it all yourself shepherd.²³ By defining “settled pastors” as pastors who serve for an extended time in one location, Adventists have focused on the wrong issue. The issue is not the length of service at one location; the issue is having the right type of pastor. A pastor may only serve at a church for one year, but that pastor might be a “settled pastor,” in that he does not develop the members for the work of ministry, whereas another pastor may serve at a church for twenty years and through his ministry the church is continually becoming less and less pastor dependent and more and more evangelistically fervent.²⁴

As I continue to wrestle with the question above, I am mindful of my theology, of which I am sure, teaches me that God is a gracious and patient God, a God who has throughout human history worked outside of His ideals to constantly grow His family. I am particularly receptive to the story in 1 Samuel 8²⁵ when the children of Israel asked for an earthly king, a choice that went directly against God’s ideal. While I pray I am not the elders in this story, I am grateful for a God who continues to work with and through those

²³ Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach*, 234.

²⁴ White, I believe, affirms such an assessment of what truly is the problem with settled pastors when she writes,

Those ministers who hover about the churches, who have not a clear cut message, which, like a sharp, two-edged sword, cuts both ways, will do the churches harm. They will not work for the salvation of souls that are in great peril because they know not the truth, and they will die spiritually themselves, and trouble and discourage those who try to help them. . . . When the church sees that the ministers are all aglow with the spirit of the work, that they feel deeply the force of the truth, and are seeking to bring others to the knowledge of it, it will put new life and vigor into them. Their hearts will be stirred to do what they can to aid in the work. There is not a class of people in the world who are more willing to sacrifice of their means to advance the cause than are Seventh-day Adventists. If the ministers do not utterly discourage them by their indolence and inefficiency, and by their lack of spirituality, they will generally respond to any appeal that may be made that commends itself to their judgment and consciences. But they want to see fruit. (Ellen Gould White, *Pastoral Ministry* [Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1995], 122)

²⁵ First Sam 8:4-7 says,

So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.” But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.”

people that set up a kingdom model that was not ideal, a God who gave them the following promise through their king:

When Solomon had finished the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the Lord and in his own palace, the Lord appeared to him at night and said: “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices. When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. As for you, if you walk before me faithfully as David your father did, and do all I command, and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor to rule over Israel.’” (2 Chr 7:11-18 NIV)

God desires His family to grow, and He has chosen imperfect humans to work in His power and through the Holy Spirit to accomplish that task. I am not sure I have the ecclesiology or theology exactly right, but I remain open to growing and working for God’s kingdom.

Personal Reflections

As previously stated in this final chapter, one of the strengths of this project is that it opens the field of church revitalization research within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. This project is just a starting point, however, and I pray that others, when researching the topic of church revitalization, particularly in the Adventist church, will take a category within this project—personality, preaching, prayer, pastoral tenure, or maybe a category outside of this project, like small groups, eldership in Adventism, volunteerism—and will research deeply into a singular subject area. My project is broad, a starting point for others, but I look forward beyond this project to personally research more deeply into specific areas of church revitalization, and I hope future researchers will do the same. Three areas in particular that I would advise future Seventh-day Adventist researchers to focus on in the topic of church revitalization are prayer, small groups or Sabbath Schools, and Ellen White’s counsel on how to revive dead and dying churches.

Conclusion

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is dying in North America. I understand that social and cultural influences play a role in the decline of the Adventist church and all protestant churches in North America, but too many of those social and cultural influences are used as excuses to address the true problems causing the precipitous decline. Including the problem identified and addressed within this project, pastors in some cases are not designed by personality to serve in the churches they are asked to oversee, and in almost all cases these pastors are not trained to meet the needs of plateaued or declining churches that now represent nearly 80 percent of Adventist churches in North America. I do not agree completely with John Maxwell's well known adage, "Everything rises and falls on leadership," but I do believe that a dying church will have a much greater opportunity for a revitalization if the right leader—trained in the right way, following the best practices God has given them opportunity to know, and fully dependent and trusting in the power that comes through the Holy Spirit—is placed as a revitalizing pastor in that church.

I pray that I will always be a revitalizing pastor, and that this project and my future ministry will help other pastors become revitalizing leaders as well, for the glory of God.

APPENDIX 1

REVITALIZING PASTORS PRACTICES SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify ministry practices in your local church setting. This research is being conducted by Chad Stuart for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry 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.

Directions: After filling out the information section please answer the following questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer. If you are the pastor of multiple churches on the questions related to practices at your church, please choose one of your churches and indicate by circling which church you have chosen in the churches you listed below.

The church or churches I serve as a pastor are (this information will not be reported but will be utilized in getting the membership data of your church):

How many years have you served at your current pastoral assignment? _____

How many years have you been in ministry? _____

1. Do you have a prayer partner?
 Yes
 No
2. Does a prayer meeting happen weekly at your church?
 Yes
 No
3. Do your church members regularly pray for their community?
 Yes
 No

4. Do you regularly pray for your community?
 Yes
 No
5. Is your preaching primarily topical or expositional?
 Topical
 Expositional
6. How much time do you spend studying for and writing your sermon each week?
 1-2 hours
 3-5 hours
 6-10 hours
 11+ hours
7. Do you preach at least twice a year on giving/stewardship?
 Yes
 No
8. Does your church have an easily accessible way for guests to indicate they were at your church?
 Yes
 No
9. Do you or someone from your church follow up with guests within 48 hours of their visit?
 Yes
 No
10. Does your church look like the community it is in? (age, racial make-up, socio-economic)
 Yes
 No
11. Is the community around your church growing or declining?
 Growing
 Declining
 Static
12. Does your church have a vision and/or mission statement?
 Yes
 No
13. Does your church have ministries that are not effective?
 Yes
 No
14. Does your church have a new members class? (not baptismal Bible studies)
 Yes
 No
15. Does your church strive to do things with excellence?
 Yes
 No

16. Does your church have an evangelistic strategy to reach out to the community?
 Yes
 No
17. Do you believe your church can experience 15% growth in attendance each of the next three years?
 Yes
 No
18. Is your church willing to try new ways of doing ministry?
 Yes
 No
19. Would you like to stay at your church for another five or more years or are you ready for a new assignment?
 I want to stay
 I am ready for a new assignment
20. Have there been baptisms in your church in the last 12 months in which individuals were led to Christ and given studies by someone other than you the pastor? If so, how many?
 Yes _____ How many?
 No
21. Is at least 40% of your weekly adult worship attendance in Sabbath School or small groups each week?
 Yes
 No
22. Do you track worship attendance each week?
 Yes
 No
23. Is an expectation of service involvement communicated to individuals when they join the church?
 Yes
 No
24. If you are married, does your wife love the church?
 Yes
 No
25. If your church is stagnant or declining, are you willing to do whatever is necessary and endure conflict that may come in order to turn it around?
 Yes
 No

APPENDIX 2

PRAYER PRACTICE SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify ministry practices in your local church setting. This research is being conducted by Chad Stuart for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry 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.

Directions: After filling out the information section please answer the following questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer. If you are the pastor of multiple churches on the questions related to practices at your church, please choose one of your churches and indicate by circling which church you have chosen in the churches you listed below.

The church or churches I serve as a pastor are (this information will not be reported but will be utilized in getting the membership data of your church):

How many years have you served at your current pastoral assignment? _____

How many years have you been in ministry? _____

1. Do you have a prayer partner?
 Yes
 No
2. Does a prayer meeting happen weekly at your church?
 Yes
 No
3. Do your church members regularly pray for their community?
 Yes
 No

4. Do you regularly pray for your community?
 Yes
 No
5. How often do you preach on the subject of prayer?
 Zero times a year
 1-3 times a year
 4 or more times a year
6. How much time do you spend praying before writing your sermon each week?
 15 minutes or less
 16-30 minutes
 31-59 minutes
 over an hour
7. Do you know who the prayer warriors are in your church?
 Yes
 No
8. If the answer to your question above was "yes" how many prayer warriors are in your church?
 0
 1-4
 5-9
 10+
9. Do you and your spouse (if married) pray together for the church?
 Yes
 No
 Not married
10. How many books on prayer have you read in the last three years?
 (Please list a number)
11. What was the title of the last book you read on prayer?

12. Do you believe your church can experience 15% growth in attendance each of the next three years?
 Yes
 No

APPENDIX 3

REVITALIZING PASTOR PROFILE AND PRACTICES KNOWLEDGE SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify your knowledge of a profile of revitalizing pastor. This research is being conducted by Chad Stuart for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry 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.

Directions: Please place your name at the top so that your pre-survey scores can be compared to the post-survey scores then answer the following fill in the blank and multiple-choice questions.

Your Name: _____

1. The average tenure of a pastor that is leading a church that is plateaued or declining is _____ years?
2. The average tenure of a pastor that is leading a turnaround church is _____ years?
3. Of the following four groupings of characteristics, which **two** groupings do you believe are most effective in revitalizing a church?
 - a. Creating action, making fast decisions, solving problems, taking charge
 - b. Attention to detail, critical thinking, doing things correctly, complying with authority, prompting quality
 - c. Supporting others, listening well, loyalty, remaining patient, calming effect on others
 - d. Articulating a vision, making positive impressions, enthusiastic, entertaining people, creating positive environments
4. How many years on average does it take a revitalizing pastor to revitalize their church in a city? _____ years
5. How many years on average does it take a revitalizing pastor to revitalize their church in a rural area? _____ years
6. If a pastor has been at a church _____ years and revitalization has not begun, it is likely revitalization will not occur.
7. A church in plateau for _____ years is in danger of death.
8. The average age of pastors that lead a church to revitalization is? _____ years

9. Seventy percent of pastors that lead church revitalizations are . . .
 - a. 20 – 29 years
 - b. 30 – 39 years
 - c. 40+ years

10. What is the most important change revitalizing pastors make in their churches?
(Circle One)
 - a. Membership Requirements
 - b. Establishing tangible growth goals
 - c. Evangelism Methods
 - d. Assimilation Process
 - e. Committees
 - f. Prayer initiatives
 - g. Preaching
 - h. Children’s Ministry
 - i. Worship Format/Style
 - j. Sabbath School/Small Groups

11. Of the previous list, which two are most important for the revitalizing pastor to focus on? (should include the one you circled)

12. How long should a revitalizing pastor typically wait before making significant changes in a dying church? _____ (circle) months or years.

13. What is the key difference between a revitalizing pastor and non-revitalizing pastor?
_____.

14. Which is the most effective preaching format for revitalizing pastors?
 - a. Expository
 - b. Topical

15. What ratio of member to baptisms is necessary for revitalization to happen?

16. A revitalizing pastor must be able to effectively engage with the following age groups in order to be successful:
 - a. Children
 - b. Youth
 - c. Young Adults
 - d. Young Families
 - e. Middle-Age Professionals
 - f. Retirees and older
 - g. All of the above

APPENDIX 4

REVITALIZING PASTOR PROFILE KNOWLEDGE SURVEY—ANSWER KEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify your knowledge of a profile of revitalizing pastor. This research is being conducted by Chad Stuart for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry 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.

Directions: Please place your name at the top so that your pre-survey scores can be compared to the post-survey scores then answer the following fill in the blank and multiple-choice questions.

Your Name: _____

1. The average tenure of a pastor that is leading a church that is plateaued or declining is 3 years?
2. The average tenure of a pastor that is leading a turnaround church is 21 years?
3. Of the following four groupings of characteristics, which **two** groupings do you believe are most effective in revitalizing a church?
 - a. Creating action, making fast decisions, solving problems, taking charge
 - b. Attention to detail, critical thinking, doing things correctly, complying with authority, prompting quality
 - c. Supporting others, listening well, loyalty, remaining patient, calming effect on others
 - d. Articulating a vision, making positive impressions, enthusiastic, entertaining people, creating positive environments
4. How many years on average does it take a revitalizing pastor to revitalize their church in a city? 5-7 years
5. How many years on average does it take a revitalizing pastor to revitalize their church in a rural area? 10-15 years
6. If a pastor has been at a church 10-12 years and revitalization has not begun, it is likely revitalization will not occur.
7. A church in plateau or decline for 3+ years is in danger of death.

8. The average age of pastors that lead a church to revitalization is? 48 years
9. Seventy percent of pastors that lead church revitalizations are . . .
- d. 20 – 29 years
 - e. 30 – 39 years
 - f. 40+ years
10. What is the most important change revitalizing pastors make in their churches?
(Circle One)
- a. Membership Requirements
 - b. Establishing tangible growth goals
 - c. Evangelism Methods
 - d. Assimilation Process
 - e. Committees
 - f. Prayer initiatives
 - g. Preaching
 - h. Children's Ministry
 - i. Worship Format/Style
 - j. Sabbath School/Small Groups
11. Of the previous list, which two are most important for the revitalizing pastor to focus on? (should include the one you circled)
- prayer initiatives
- preaching
12. How long should a revitalizing pastor typically wait before making significant changes in a dying church? Trick Question: must start immediately
(circle) months or years.
13. What is the key difference between a revitalizing pastor and non-revitalizing pastor?
Revitalizing pastors believe their church can grow.
14. Which is the most effective preaching format for revitalizing pastors?
- c. Expositional
 - d. Topical
15. What ratio of member to baptisms is necessary for revitalization to happen?
35:1
16. A revitalizing pastor must be able to effectively engage with the following age groups in order to be successful:
- h. Children
 - i. Youth
 - j. Young Adults
 - k. Young Families
 - l. Middle-Age Professionals
 - m. Retirees and older
 - n. All of the above

APPENDIX 5

A REVITALIZING PASTOR PROFILE AND PRACTICES PRESENTATION OUTLINE

The purpose of this presentation is to increase the knowledge of CC administration and directors on the profile of a revitalizing pastor.

1. Introduction:
 - a. Leadership matters.
 - i. Our churches are dying!
2. The prayer life of a revitalizing pastor.
 - a. The need for prayer
 - i. Revitalization is an act of revival.
 - ii. Revival only comes through prayer.
 - b. Prayer practices
 - i. Personally
 - ii. Corporately
3. The personality of a revitalizing pastor.
 - a. Explanation of the DiSC personality inventory
 - i. D—Dominance temperament
 - ii. I—Influence temperament
 - iii. S—Steadiness temperament
 - iv. C—Conscientiousness temperament
4. The preaching of a revitalizing pastor.
 - a. Why preaching is so important
 - b. Maturing as a preacher
 - i. Preparation
 - ii. Life experience
 - iii. Practice
 - iv. Patience
 - c. Expository Preaching
5. The perseverance of a revitalizing pastor
 - a. GRIT
 - b. Tenure
6. Further key insights into the practices of a revitalizing pastor.

APPENDIX 6

REVITALIZING PASTOR HIRING AND PLACEMENT RUBRIC

Introduction

The Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists must implement a new hiring and placement practice to stem the tide of plateaued and declining churches.

Precedent exists within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in establishing hiring practices that will provide pastors to the local churches who can address the era's needs and circumstances.

One year before the Seventh-day Adventist church formalized its denominational status, when money was scarce and churches were few, leadership based the hiring and placement of a pastor on being able to fulfill the needs of the day, primarily the ability to establish and maintain a healthy church. The de facto leader of the movement, James White, stated,

"In no way can a preacher so well prove himself, as in entering new fields . . . If he be successful in raising up churches, and establishing them, so that they bear good fruits, he gives to his brethren the best proofs that he is sent of the Lord . . . If they cannot raise up churches . . . then certainly the cause of truth has no need of them, and they have the best reasons for concluding that they made a sad mistake when they thought that God called them to teach the third angel's message."

What type of pastors do we need to rise to the forefront in our era? Revitalizing pastors! The North American Division Evangelism Institute reported on the current statistics of church health in the Seventh-day Adventist churches of North America at the 2022 NAD Year-End Meetings. According to that report, there are currently 6,457 churches in the North American Division—

- 11% of North American SDA churches are in a plateaued state (soon to decline).
- 61% of North American SDA churches are in decline.

As the times at the founding of the Advent movement dictated terms of hiring, we are once again living in times and facing challenges that dictate we base the hiring of pastors on not less than, but in addition to doctrine and education, an individual's ability and qualifications to help reverse the trends of plateauing and declining churches. Hiring or placing pastors that address the needs and circumstances of the era is imperative to reverse this trend.

Thus, I propose implementing the following hiring/placement rubric within the Chesapeake Conference alongside the already established hiring and placement policies concerning the doctrine, education, and legal HR determinations for the hiring and placement of pastors into plateaued and declining churches.

Process

Step 1:

Each candidate takes the DiSC personality inventory. While this alone will not be a determinate of hiring it will give insight into the references and interviews that take place with the pastoral candidate, the DiSC will also provide direction to administration on areas that the pastor will need mentoring if being placed into a plateaued or declining church.

Step 2:

The candidate takes the Prayer Practices survey. Follow up to the survey: Questions are asked regarding the observation of the candidates' prayerfulness from the provided references and conference's secondary references.

Step 3:

The candidate takes the Revitalizing Pastors Practices survey. Follow up to the Survey: Questions are asked regarding the observations of the candidates' revitalizing practices in his or her current church of service from the provided references and conference's secondary references.

Step 4:

A conference officer or department director make a surprise visit in person to observe the pastor in their current place of pastoral service. This visit is to evaluate the health of the church they are currently in. The preachers "not on" sermon.¹

Step 5:

Listen to at least three sermons of the candidate prior to hiring. The sermons are evaluated on content, exposition, clarity, relevance, engagement, length.

Step 6:

If the pastor has 10+ years of pastoral experience, a thorough evaluation of their tenure history is examined. If the pastor has consistently short tenures 3 or 4 years or less in a head pastor role, the committee will move on to another candidate.²

Step 7:

Each candidate takes the Grit Scale test.

¹ In an interview with Dwight Nelson in July of 2019, he shared with me that prior to his hiring at the Pioneer Memorial Church (PMC), one Sabbath the president of Andrews University attended his church. Nelson had no knowledge this visit would take place. He said to me, "He needed to see how I was in my natural element without me being able to prepare a "special" message. Can this young guy handle the pulpit?" Nelson said there was no interaction with the president prior or following the worship service. The president simply came in sat down, observed the service, spoke to a few individuals on his way out and left. The next time Nelson saw or spoke to him is when he was flown out to consider the PMC position.

² Consistently short tenures may indicate he has already been in churches that are plateaued or declining and either did not have the stamina to maintain a presence or he did not have the ability to galvanize the church to want to keep him as their leader.

APPENDIX 7

REVITALIZING PASTOR HIRING AND PLACEMENT
INSTRUMENT RUBRIC CHECKLIST

Revitalizing Pastor Hiring Instrument					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Step	D	I	S	C	Comments
DiSC Personality Inventory					
Step	1	2	3	4	Comments
Prayer Practices					
Revitalizing Practices					
In person observation visit					
Three sermons					
Tenure history					
Grit Scale					

APPENDIX 8

REVITALIZING PASTOR HIRING AND PLACEMENT
INSTRUMENT RUBRIC EVALUATION

Revitalizing Pastor Hiring Instrument					
Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The instrument is clearly relevant to the issue of hiring revitalizing pastors in CC.					
The instrument is faithful to the Bible's teaching on pastoral leadership.					
The data from the instrument is easily gatherable.					
The instrument is within the legal boundaries of HR laws.					
The instrument is providing relevant information to assist in hiring of pastors.					
Overall the instrument is clear.					

APPENDIX 9

A PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF REVITALIZING PASTORS WITHIN THE CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Introduction

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph 4:11-16)

Just as it is the responsibility of local pastors to train and equip the members of the church for the work of ministry so too is it the responsibility of the local conference officers to train and equip local pastors for the ministry realities they will confront. Ellen White writing to local conference leadership stated,

Those who are thus appointed as overseers of the flock should be . . . men who in character, in words, in deportment, will be an honor to the cause of Christ, teaching the truth, living the truth, growing up to the full stature in Christ Jesus. This means the development and strengthening of every faculty by exercise, that the workers may become qualified to bear larger responsibilities as the work increases.¹

One of the primary goals of the conference leadership is to develop the workers in the field to have the qualifications to bear the responsibilities each pastor faces within their local context.² The following plan is for the purpose of assisting pastors to be qualified to serve in plateaued and declining churches.

¹ Ellen G White, *Manuscript Releases* (Silver Spring, MD: E.G. White Estate, 1990), 9:137-38.

² Malphurs and Penfold suggest denominations should ask, “What can we do to grow and develop pastors that the seminary cannot or is not accomplishing? What are the gaps in seminary training and other pastoral training that a network or judicatory can address?” Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon Penfold, *Re:Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 222.

This plan is based on utilizing the monthly Chesapeake Conference Ministerium's to train and equip revitalizing pastors for a 7-month cycle.³ Or an alternative is to assign pastors to a seven-month revitalizing pastor ministerium based on their current pastoral assignment and the assessed needs of that pastor (reference the hiring and placement rubric).

Each attending pastor should plan for four hours of allotted time per session and at each session the pastors will eat together. The principle that guides these sessions is from Proverbs 27:17, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

Each monthly session has the following schedule

1. Time of Prayer
2. (After first month) Discussion and review of the previous month's topic
 - a. Discussion of the recommended reading (Iron sharpening iron).
 - b. Questions and Concerns related to the pastor's local church.
 - c. Feedback from others in the group—(iron sharpening iron)
3. Teaching on topic of the month
4. Discussion on the topic of the month
 - a. Feedback to presenter (iron sharpening iron).
 - b. Questions and concerns
5. One take away
 - a. Each pastor will give one take away (application) they will work to focus on in the month ahead.
 - b. The group will pray for each of these "one" take aways. (Iron sharpening iron).
6. Eat together (iron sharpening iron).

Following the completion of these seven sessions pastors that are successfully becoming revitalizing pastors should be established as mentors/coaches for the next group of pastors to go through this development plan. 65-74% of pastors that are not naturally equipped to revitalize a church have the capacity to grow in their leadership skills. They may not become full revitalizing pastors, but they can make a difference for God's work, "if a pastor of a church of 50 can lead his church to 75, a pastor of a church of 100 can lead his flock to grow to 150, and if a pastor of a church of 500 can grow his competency, perhaps his church will grow to 600 . . . but the majority of pastors cannot lead well on their own. Most are managers not leaders. They struggle to pull the leadership trigger"⁴ they need help! And more help than seven sessions can provide, thus the need for mentors/coaches⁵ beyond the initial development plan.

³ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 222. Malphurs and Penfold write, "Denominations must address the training of REPs and NREPs," what I refer to in this project of Revitalizing Pastor and Non-Revitalizing Pastor, "for turnaround ministry. This could take place in the context of boot camps, seminars, and leader development clusters" (223).

⁴ Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 191-92.

⁵ Malphurs and Penfold explain, "Re-envisioning (revitalizing pastor) ministry is about leadership, not management. Most pastors struggle to lead and need help. Coaches and mentors can help fill this leadership vacuum." Malphurs and Penfold, *Re:Vision*, 192. They further report that 62 percent of the pastors revitalizing a church had mentors or coaches, whereas only 7 percent of pastors not revitalizing a church had a mentor or coach (194).

APPENDIX 10

SESSION 1: THE NEED FOR CHURCH REVITALIZATION

Primary Scripture: “And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.” –Acts 15:41

Session One Outline:

1. Our reality
 - a. 6,457 Churches in the North American Division
 - i. Multiplying Churches: 39- 1%
 - ii. Growing Churches: 1729- 27%
 - iii. Plateauing Churches: 697- 11%
 - iv. Dying Churches: 3978- 61%
 - b. Graying and De-Evangelizing of the Adventist Church¹
 - i. Median age of an Adventist member in the SDA Church is 51.
 1. Median age in the United States is 36
 2. Median age in Canada is 35
 - ii. Only 1 in 7 (14%) of members in North America have been baptized in the last ten years.
 - iii. From 1990 to 2008 the percentage of members baptized in “recent” years declined by half.
 - iv. The average local church globally adds 8 members per year.²
 1. Chesapeake Conference average accession per church, per year = 5.³
 2. Chesapeake Conference average loss per church, per year = 2.⁴
 - a. By the definition of plateaued or dying churches (Less than 10% growth over the last 5 years) all English-speaking churches in the

¹ Monte Sahlin and Paul Richardson, “Seventh-Day Adventist Church: A Demographic Profile,” Adventist Circle, November 1, 2008, <https://circle.adventistlearningcommunity.com/files/icm/nadresearch/NADDemographic.pdf>.

² David Trim, “Attrition, Losses, and Growth Rates in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church,” Adventist Review, January 7, 2022, <https://adventistreview.org/news/attrition-losses-and-growth-rates-in-the-seventh-day-adventist-church/>.

³ North American Division Secretariat, “Statistical Reports,” NAD Secretariat, January 2022, <https://www.nadsecretariat.org/statistics>.

⁴ North American Division Secretariat, “Statistical Reports.”

Chesapeake Conference are plateaued or declining.

- c. This is not consistent with our mission:
 - i. “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).
 - ii. “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places,” the final and full display of the love of God.”⁵
- d. Are we okay with this?
- 2. Revitalization vs Church Planting
 - a. Disadvantages of Church Planting
 - i. Lack of facilities
 - ii. Lack of offering and tithe base
 - iii. Ongoing commitment to “previous church”
 - iv. Lack of local history in the community
 - b. Advantages of Church Planting
 - i. No personal baggage (unless it is really a split and not a true plant).
 - 1. Model of ministry can start from scratch
 - ii. New churches often reach new residents.
 - iii. Evangelistic energy
 - c. Disadvantages of Revitalization
 - i. Fewer people are raised from the dead than birthed from a mother.
 - ii. Have to tear down systems and models in order to rebuild
 - iii. Lack of commitment from the local membership.
 - iv. Potential poor reputation in the community.
 - v. Conflict
 - d. Advantages of Revitalization
 - i. Resources—buildings, people (though maybe challenging), and offering/tithe base.
 - ii. Encourages those still faithful in the dead church or plateaued church.
 - iii. A double bonus!
 - 1. “I believe revitalizing may be more difficult at the outset, but I also believe that it offers all the rewards of planting--a new gospel witness--and more: it removes a bad witness in the neighborhood, it encourages the saints in the dead church, and it puts their material resources (that have been lying dormant) to work for the kingdom.”⁶

⁵ Ellen Gould White, *The Acts of the Apostles in the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Conflict of the Ages 4 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1911), 9.

⁶ Mike McKinley, *Church Planting Is for Wimps* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 36.

3. Recommended Reading:
 - a. *Waking the Dead*, Russell Burrill, chapter 3
 - b. *Can these Bones Live?*, Bill Henard, chapter 1
 - c. *From Embers to a Flame*, Harry L. Reeder III, chapter 1

APPENDIX 11

SESSION 2: BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF REVITALIZATION

Primary Scripture: The Seven Churches: Revelation 2:1 – Revelation 3:22

Key Verses:

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first (Rev 2:5).

So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth (Rev 3:16).

Session Two Outline:

1. Biblical Case Studies

a. Church in Ephesus

- i. A culture impacting church: Acts 19:23-41
- ii. Warning for Ephesus' leaders: Acts 20:28-31
- iii. Ongoing instruction: Book of Ephesians
- iv. Even more instruction and the beginning of deterioration: 1 Timothy 1:3-11
- v. Results: Revelation 2:1-7—Lost the first love

b. Church in Corinth

i. Issues in Corinth

1. They were a church divided within and against Paul. (1:10-4:21) “I follow Paul” “I follow Apollos”—Paul’s response “everyone follow Jesus.”
 2. A man was committing incest with his Dad’s wife. (5:1-13)
 3. Litigation amongst believers in the public court system. (6:1-11)
 4. Engaging sexually with prostitutes. (6:12-20)
 5. Not engaging sexually with your spouse and other matters of marriage. (7:1-40)
 6. Disputes over food sacrificed to idols, not being a stumbling block to others, and a warning against idolatry. (8:1-11:1)
 7. Women and men and what should adorn their head in worship. (11:2-16)
 8. Irreverence, misapplication, and prejudice at the Lord’s Supper. (11:17-34)
 9. Matters related to spiritual gifts, in particular the need to do everything in love. (12:1-14:40)
 10. Disputes about the resurrection of believers. (15:1-58)
 11. When to collect the offerings and support for the ministry. (16:1-3)
- ii. Paul’s response: My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen (1 Cor 16:24).

1. Paul does not give-up on the church in Corinth. He labors through multiple letters¹ to the church, exhibiting knowledge of their situation and care for them as their “pastor.”²
 - c. Evidence in the Bible that many of the churches Paul planted, he had to go back and strengthen (revitalize).
2. Biblical conclusion: Churches that are dying should not just be cast aside to go and plant new churches, we must take the ownership to revitalize them.
3. Seventh-day Adventist Prophetic Understanding
 - a. The Church of Laodicea representing God’s last day church:
 - i. The condition of many of those who claim to be the children of God is exactly represented by the message to the Laodicean church.³
 - ii. The church needs to drink deeply of the spirituality of the Word. Their service to God needs to be very different from the tame, lifeless, emotionless religious experience that makes many believers but little different from those who believe not.⁴
 - iii. Halfhearted Christians are worse than infidels; for their deceptive words and noncommittal position lead many astray. The infidel shows his colors. The lukewarm Christian deceives both parties. He is neither a good worldling nor a good Christian. Satan uses him to do a work that no one else can do.⁵
 - iv. Let us thank the Lord that while this class is so numerous, there is still time for repentance.⁶
 - b. Conclusion: We are experiencing the prophetic reality of Laodicea and we are not only dying as churches, we are hurting the cause of Christ in this world.
4. Recommended Reading:
 - a. *Waking the Dead*, Russell Burrill, chapters 1-2
 - b. *Flickering Lamps*, Henry and Richard Blackaby, chapters 1-2
 - c. *From Embers to a Flame*, Harry L. Reeder III, chapter 2

¹ Scott J. Hafemann, “Paul Actually Wrote Four Letters to the Corinthians,” Zondervan Academic, July 6, 2020, <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/four-letters-corinthians>.

² Hafemann writes, “This dual purpose explains the mixed nature of 2 Corinthians. In it, Paul strengthens the repentant majority, while at the same time seeking to win back the resistant minority.” Hafemann, “Paul Actually Wrote Four Letters.”

³ Ellen Gould White, *Our High Calling* (Takoma Park, MD: Review and Herald, 1961), 348.

⁴ White, *Our High Calling*, 348.

⁵ White, *Our High Calling*, 348.

⁶ White, *Our High Calling*, 348.

APPENDIX 12

SESSION 3: YOUR LEADERSHIP

Primary Scripture: Acts 20:28-32: “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. ³²And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

Session Three Outline:

1. Leadership Matters:
 - a. Sorry for the heavy burden but . . .
 - i. “Leadership was rated as the number one factor by the churches that experienced revitalization.”¹ -Ed Stetzer
 - b. Ellen G. White—
 - i. “If Christ’s ambassadors realize the solemnity of presenting the truth to the people, they will be sober, thoughtful men, workers together with God. If they have a true sense of the commission which Christ gave to His disciples, they will with reverence open the word of God and listen for instruction from the Lord, asking for wisdom from heaven that, as they stand between the living and the dead, they may realize that they must render an account to God for the work coming forth from their hands . . . I tell you plainly, brethren, unless the ministers are converted, our churches will be sickly and ready to die.”²
 - ii. “God holds us responsible for all that we might be if we would improve our talents. We shall be judged according to what we ought to have been, but were not; what we might have done, but did not accomplish because we did not use our powers to glorify God. For all knowledge that we might have gained but did not, there will be an eternal loss, even if we do not lose our souls.”³

¹ Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H, 2007), 34.

² Ellen Gould White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1923), 142-43.

³ White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 147.

- c. The Bible—
 - i. So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (1 Pet 5:1-3)
 - ii. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. (Heb 13:17)
 - iii. Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. (Jas 3:1)
 - 1. We are to look after the flock God has put us over (1 Peter), we will give an account for how we lead this flock (Hebrews 13), and the judgment of that leadership is a judgment greater than if we had not signed-up for the task of pastoring (James 3).
- 2. Traits of a pastor leading revitalization:
 - a. Revitalization pastors . . .
 - i. Lean into conflict.
 - ii. Are willing to take risks.
 - iii. Work hard on church relationships.
 - iv. Take the lead in evangelism.
 - v. Lead with a vision.
 - vi. Demonstrate dependence on God.
 - vii. Are lifetime learners.
 - viii. Develop leaders and laborers in the church.
 - ix. Lead the church to celebrate wins.
 - x. Lead the church to implement change.⁴
- 3. Conclusion:
 - a. God will have men who will venture anything and everything to save souls.⁵
- 4. Recommended Reading:
 - a. *Comeback Churches*, Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, chapter 2
 - b. *Lead to Revitalize*, multiple authors, the whole book.
 - c. *Evangelism*, Ellen G. White, the whole book.
 - d. *Gospel Workers*, Ellen G. White, the whole book.
 - e. *There's Hope for Your Church*, Gary L. McIntosh, (only read if not easily discouraged).
 - f. *Re:Vision*, Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon E. Penfold, (only read if not easily discouraged).

⁴ Larry J. Purcell, "Introduction: A Revitalization Leader," in *Lead to Revitalize! 15 Practices of a Church Revitalization Leader*, ed. Michelle Rayburn and Ruth Clark (Abbotsford, WI: Aneko, 2020), xvi.

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 63.

APPENDIX 13

SESSION 4: THE PROPHETIC MISSION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Primary Scripture: Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷ And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.” ⁸ Another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.” ⁹ And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.” ¹² Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus. ¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!” (Rev 14:6-13)

Session 4 Outline:

1. Our prophetic movement
 - a. Three unique claims of Adventism:
 - i. We are the only people who find our *prophetic roots, or history*, predicted in Revelation 10.¹
 - ii. We are the only people who find our *prophetic identity* defined in Revelation 12.²
 - iii. And we are the only people who find our *prophetic message and mission* given in Revelation 14.³
 - b. These claims do not make us better than any other Christian movement. They make us different. And with a greater responsibility and accountability to God!
2. Review of Revelation 10
 - a. The little book (vv 2, 8, 9, 10)
 - i. Daniel 12:4
 - b. The bitterness of the book

¹ Jame Nix, “Seventh-Day Adventism-a Unique Prophetic Movement,” Ellen G. White Estate, accessed November 22, 2022, https://whiteestate.org/resources/nix/unique_movement.html.

² Nix, “Seventh-Day Adventism-a Unique Prophetic Movement.”

³ Nix, “Seventh-Day Adventism-a Unique Prophetic Movement.”

- i. October 22, 1844
 - 1. Daniel 8:14
- 3. Review of Revelation 12
 - a. Revelation 12:17—a movement identified.
 - i. Commandments of God
 - ii. Testimony of Jesus—(which is the spirit of prophecy Rev. 19:10)
- 4. Review of Revelation 14:6-12
 - a. In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.⁴
- 5. Connection between Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 24:14, and Revelation 14:6-12.
 - a. “Matthew 24:14 is tempered by Matthew 28:16-20”⁵
 - b. Revelation 14:6-12 is to be understood through the lens of Matthew 28:16-20⁶

Conclusion: The mission of the revitalizing pastor in the Adventist Church is to lead his or her members to an understanding of the prophetic roots of our movement and discipling, not only baptizing, but discipling individuals to live as witnesses for Jesus Christ in this world preparing others for His second coming.

Recommended Reading:

- a. *Evangelism*, Ellen White.
- b. *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and Mission of the Local Church*, Russell Burrill.
- c. *Acts of the Apostles*, Ellen White, chapter 1.

⁴ Ellen Gould White, *Last Day Events* (Nampa, ID: Pacific, 1992), 45-46.

⁵ Russell Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and Mission of the Local Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1998), 48.

⁶ Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach*, 50.

APPENDIX 14

SESSION 5: PRAYER AND THE REVITALIZING PASTOR

Primary Scripture: And they said to me, “The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.”⁴ As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. (Neh 1:3-4)

Session Five Outline:

“I have yet to see a sustained church revitalization that was not undergirded by a powerful movement of prayer . . . It is categorical. It is imperative. It is a priority.”¹

1. Church revitalization is a supernatural act!
 - a. More people birth babies than raise the dead.
 - i. The church is a body:
 1. Romans 12:3-8
 2. 1 Corinthians 12:12-26
 - a. Bodies die
 - b. It takes a supernatural power to bring a body back to life. Whether an individual or the body of the church.
 - i. But it is possible!
 1. Ezekiel 37:3a, “Can these bones live?”
 2. Ezekiel 37:3b, “Only you know Lord.”
 - c. In this passage two things bring the bones back to life:²
 - i. Preaching (prophesying) Ezekiel 37:4
 - ii. And an infusion of the Spirit of God! Ezekiel 37:5 and 37:14.
 - d. Prayer is how we receive the power of the Holy Spirit:
 - i. Luke 11:5-13
 2. What is revitalizing prayer?
 - a. Nehemiah.

¹ Thom S. Rainer, *Anatomy of a Revived Church: Seven Findings of How Congregations Avoided Death* (Spring Hill, TN: Rainer, 2020), 71.

² William David Henard, *Can These Bones Live? A Practical Guide to Church Revitalization* (Nashville: B & H, 2015), 1-2.

3. Seven Qualities of Revitalizing Prayer³
 - a. “Revitalizing prayer is driven by desperation; it is for the glory of God and the good of His people.”
 - i. Nehemiah 1:3-4
 - b. “Revitalizing prayer depends on the character of God.”
 - i. Nehemiah 1:5
 - c. “Revitalizing prayer persists, interceding for the good of God’s people.”
 - i. Nehemiah 1:6
 - d. “Revitalizing prayer revitalizes the pastor through the ongoing confession of sin.”
 - i. Nehemiah 1:6-7
 - e. “Revitalizing prayer depends on the promises of God.”
 - i. Nehemiah 1:8-9
 - f. “Revitalizing prayer depends on the power of God to revitalize the people.”
 - i. Nehemiah 1:10-11
 - g. “Revitalizing prayer discerns God’s timing; trust Him to open the right doors at the right time.”
 - i. Nehemiah 1:11
 - ii. Nehemiah 2:4
4. A model for revitalizing a church through prayer. Based on the revitalization of the Visalia Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁴
 - a. Find the prayer warriors. If you can’t find them recruit prayer warriors.
 - b. Get a personal prayer partner.
 - c. Have a focused time outside of the worship service for prayer.
 - d. Encourage members to start praying for their community.
 - e. Preach and teach on prayer.
 - f. Develop prayer teams.
 - g. Pray and then act on the prayers.
 - h. Give prayer testimonies.
 - i. Let prayer interrupt everything.
5. Recommended Reading:
 - a. *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, Jim Cymbala
 - b. *Pray for the Flock*, Brian Croft and Ryan Fullerton
 - c. *The Prayer Saturated Church*, Cheryl Sack

³ The list of seven qualities comes from an appendix in Michelle Rayburn and Ruth Clark, eds., *Lead to Revitalize! 15 Practices of a Church Revitalization Leader* (Abbotsford, WI: Aneko, 2020), 139-51

⁴ This model comes from the experience of Chad Stuart and the revitalization of the Visalia Seventh-day Adventist Church, a church that went from 150 people in attendance to 400 in attendance and the mother of another healthy growing church.

APPENDIX 15

SESSION 6: PREACHING AND THE REVITALIZING PASTOR

Primary Scripture: I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. ⁵ As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Tim 4:1-5)

Session Six Outline:

1. Preaching and not programs are still the reason people will choose to sit in your pews!
 - a. 76% of people choose the church they attend based on the sermons! And more specifically, the sermon content.¹
 - i. So effort and time must be put in to preparation!²
2. Insights from the Prince of Preachers
 - a. New Park was struggling . . .³
 - i. Revitalization through prayer and preaching.
 - b. Spurgeon's thoughts on preaching:
 - i. Primacy of preaching:
 1. "We shall be forgiven a great many sins in the matter of pastoral visitation if the people's souls are really fed up on the Sabbath-day; but fed they must be, and nothing else will make up for it. The failures of most ministers who drift down the stream may be traced to inefficiency in the pulpit. The chief business of a captain is to know how to handle his vessel, nothing can compensate for deficiency there, and so our

¹ Lydia Saad, "Sermon Content Is What Appeals Most to Churchgoers," Gallup, May 8, 2021, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/208529/sermon-content-appeals-churchgoers.aspx>.

² Thom S. Rainer, *High Expectations: The Remarkable Secret for Keeping People in Your Church* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 75.

³ Chris Castaldo, "Why Did God Use Spurgeon?," The Gospel Coalition, January 8, 2013, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/why-did-god-use-spurgeon/>.

pulpits must be our main care, or all will go awry.”
Lectures 2:146.⁴

- ii. Care taken in preparation for preaching:
 - 1. “When we preach and think nothing of it, the people think nothing of it, and God does nothing by it.”⁵
 - 2. “We ought to be always in training for text getting and sermon-making . . . the leaf of your ministry will soon wither unless, like the blessed man in the first Psalm, you meditate in the law of the Lord both day and night . . . I have no belief in that ministry which ignores laborious preparation.”⁶
- 3. Preparation—Take heart!
 - a. You’ve heard “one hour for every minute of the sermon”
 - i. Unnecessary
 - b. Tim Keller’s advice—
 - i. I pastor a large church and have a large staff and so I give special prominence to preparing the sermon. I give it 15-20 hours a week. I would not advise younger ministers to spend so much time, however. The main way to become a good preacher is to preach a lot, and to spend tons of time in people work—that is how you grow from becoming not just a Bible commentator but a flesh and blood preacher. When I was a pastor without a large staff I put in 6-8 hours on a sermon . . . It is only through doing people-work that you become the preacher you need to be—someone who knows sin, how the heart works, what people’s struggles are, and so on. Pastoral care and leadership is to some degree sermon prep. More accurately, it is preparing the preacher, not just the sermon. Prayer also prepares the preacher, not just the sermon.⁷
- 4. Expository Preaching
 - a. Church revitalization must involve “communicating the Word of God in a biblically faithful, practical, and relevant way . . . The agenda of a truly biblical message is always set by the words of the Bible and nothing else.”⁸
 - b. Exposition preaching comes in many forms.
 - i. Verse-by-verse
 - ii. Thematic

⁴ Charles Spurgeon, quoted in Geoff Chang, *Spurgeon the Pastor Recovering a Biblical and Theological Vision for Ministry* (Nashville: B & H, 2022), 16.

⁵ Spurgeon, quoted in Chang, *Spurgeon the Pastor*, 18.

⁶ Spurgeon, quoted in Chang, *Spurgeon the Pastor*, 20.

⁷ Denny Burk, “Ten Questions for Expositors—Tim Keller,” Unashamed, May 2, 2012, <https://unashamedworkman.wordpress.com/2007/04/04/ten-questions-for-expositors/>.

⁸ Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H, 2007), 90-93.

- iii. Narrative⁹
 - iv. Topical
5. Further Revitalizing Preaching Insights
- a. Listen to yourself preach!
 - i. “Preachers that say to me I don’t like to hear myself preach. I say to them, well maybe you’re not the only one. Go listen to yourself.” –Andy Stanley¹⁰
 - b. Build a sermonic calendar!¹¹
 - i. “Many preachers try to use the slower sermon summer months to plan the upcoming church year’s preaching program knowing that the quality of each sermon will greatly increase if they know well ahead of time what passages and topics they will address. Planning ahead enables the preacher to establish a pre-sermon file that keeps sermon preparation from degenerating into a Friday-afternoon flurry . . . whose results distress preachers and congregations alike.”¹²
 - c. Practice series preaching! (Occasionally preach through a book of the Bible, be careful though if it is too long and not a dynamic preacher you may bore the people rather than engage the people).¹³
 - i. Helps a preacher build creativity.
 - ii. Helps a preacher cover broader portions of scripture.
 - iii. Helps a preacher avoid pastoral “pet” texts and topics.
 - iv. Easier for and encourages members to bring guests to church.

⁹ Calvin Miller makes a strong argument for this being the preferred form of exposition: When Jesus asked, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus in effect does not say, “Let me give you three Hebrew roots on the word neighbor.” What he does say is, “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho . . .” In other words he follows the question, “Who is my neighbor?” with an immediate, “Once upon a time” and then launches into a story . . . metaphor and story is not only a legitimate form of exposition but is a preferred style of exposition mostly because it is so much more memorable than mere precepts-driven homiletics. (Calvin Miller, *Preaching the Art of Narrative Exposition* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010], 21)

¹⁰ Ed Stetzer, “Andy Stanley: Are You Missing This Key Part of Your Sermon Prep?” The Stetzer ChurchLeaders Podcast, November 16, 2022. <https://wheatonbillygraham.com/institutes/stetzer-leadership-podcast/>.

¹¹ Brandon Hilgemann, “Why You Need a Sermon Calendar, and How to Make One,” Pro Preacher, March 12, 2022, <https://www.propreacher.com/how-to-make-sermon-calendar/>.

¹² Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 56.

¹³ Chapell writes, “People want to study their Bibles in depth, but like vacationers wanting more than one view of the Grand Canyon they generally like to move along.” Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 59.

- d. Make reading a priority!
 - i. Dwight Nelson’s counsel on reading.¹⁴
 - ii. John Stott on reading for preachers,
 - 1. "Every day at least one hour; every week one morning, afternoon, or evening; every month a full day; every year a week. Set out like this it sounds very little. . . . Yet everybody who tries it is surprised to discover how much reading can be done within such a disciplined framework. It totes up to nearly 600 hours in the course of a year."¹⁵
 - e. Reading over listening! Books over audible books or podcasts.¹⁶
 - f. Learn from others, utilized the resources of others, but in the end communicate what the Holy Spirit speaks through you, not someone else.¹⁷
- 6. Recommended Reading:
 - a. *Preaching The Art of Narrative Exposition*, Calvin Miller
 - b. *Christ Centered Preaching*, Bryan Chappell
 - c. *Between Two Worlds*, John Stott
 - d. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, Haddon W. Robinson
 - e. *Feed My Sheep*, HMS Richards

¹⁴ Dwight Nelson rebuked the author of this project, Chad Stuart, when he complained about having too much to read in 2003. “I have too much to read,” said Chad. Dwight suddenly convulsed kicking Chad with force in his shin and saying, “That is non-sense. You’re a preacher. I always have 6 to 7 books I am reading.”

¹⁵ John R. Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1982), 204.

¹⁶ Brandon Hilgemann, “Read Better to Preach Better,” Pro Preacher, March 10, 2022, <https://www.propreacher.com/read-better-to-preach-better/>.

¹⁷ Chappell explains, “The two types of pastors who will never make great preachers: The first is the one who not listen to what others say, the other is the one who will only say what others say.” Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 67.

APPENDIX 16

SESSION 7: PERSEVERANCE

Primary Scripture: Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (1 Cor 15:58)

Session Seven Outline:

1. Are you ready to endure?
 - a. “One of the reasons most pastors are not successful at bringing about revitalization is that they don’t stay long enough.”¹
2. John Maxwell’s Five Levels of Leadership:²
 - a. Level 1: Positional authority (Years 1 and 2)
 - b. Level 2: Leading by permission (Year 3)
 - c. Level 3: Leading by production (Years 4-7)
 - d. Level 4: Leading by personal development (years 7-15)
 - e. Level 5: Leading by personhood (year 15 and beyond)
 - i. The average tenure of a pastor is less than four years.^{3 4}
3. Revitalizing a church is a slow process.
 - a. Church revitalization in a city takes five to seven years.⁵
 - b. Church revitalization in a rural community takes 10 to fifteen years.⁶
4. Perseverance is necessary!
 - a. Lean into conflict⁷

¹ Gary L. McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 33.

² McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 33-34.

³ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 34.

⁴ Less than three years in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination. Faith Communities Today, “Pastoral Ministry in Seventh-day Adventist Congregations Today,” accessed July 5, 2019, <http://circle.adventist.org/files/icm/nadresearch/PastorMinistries.pdf>, 2.

⁵ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 32.

⁶ McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, 32.

⁷ Alan Witham, “Leaning into Conflict,” in *Lead to Revitalize! 15 Practices of a Church Revitalization Leader*, ed. Michelle Rayburn and Ruth Clark (Abbotsford, WI: Aneko, 2020), 121-30.

- b. Hedgehog concept⁸
- c. Commit to the 20 Mile March⁹
- 5. Choose to stay
 - a. “Unless you hear otherwise the previous order still stands.” – Dwight Nelson¹⁰
 - i. Dwight’s history vs his Father and Grandfather’s history.
 - 1. Depth vs Breadth
 - b. The great controversy
 - i. “In many cases it is their confrontation with adversaries against the gospel and their ministries that make them (the pastor) conclude it is time for the next place. The Apostle Paul take the opposite approach—’But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.’” (1 Cor. 16:8, 9)¹¹
- 6. Reconciling long tenure with “No settled pastors”
 - a. It cannot be reconciled.
 - i. There is an ideal
 - 1. The New Testament Model
 - 2. The John Wesley Pioneer Model
 - 3. The Adventist Pioneers Model
 - ii. Pastors and churches now exist in the non-ideal world.
 - 1. They must work back towards the ideal.
 - a. Carefully. Graciously. Intentionally.¹²

⁸ Jim Collins writes, “Transformations from good to great come about by a series of good decisions made consistently with a Hedgehog Concept, supremely well executed, accumulating one upon another, over a long period of time.” Jim Collins, “The Hedgehog Concept,” Jim Collins, accessed November 23, 2022, <https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/the-hedgehog-concept.html>.

⁹ Jim Collins and Morten T. Hansen, *Great by Choice* (London: Random, 2011), chap. 3, Kindle.

¹⁰ This statement has been spoken to me on many occasions.

¹¹ Brian Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization: Solutions for Dying & Divided Churches* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016), 47-48.

¹² Russell Burrill, *Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and Mission of the Local Church* (Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1998), 235-46. Each church for work for the ideal and to move back to the position of no settled pastors. This will not be possible unless a church is revitalized and healthy.

APPENDIX 17

BUILDING A REVITALIZING PASTORS LIBRARY

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>There's Hope for Your Church</i>, Gary L. McIntosh 2. <i>Biblical Church Revitalization</i>, Brian Croft 3. <i>Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition</i>, Calvin Miller 4. <i>Kingdom Innovation for a Brave New World</i>, Doug Paul 5. <i>Power Through Prayer</i>, E.M. Bounds 6. <i>Richard Baxter and Conversion</i>, Timothy K. Beougher 7. <i>Reclaimed Church</i>, Bill Henard 8. <i>Christ Centered Preaching</i>, Bryan Chapell 9. <i>Re:Vision</i>, Aubrey Malphurs and Gordon Penfold 10. <i>Pray Big</i>, Alistair Begg 11. <i>Evangelism</i>, Ellen G. White 12. <i>Paul</i>, N.T. Wright 13. <i>Letters to the Church</i>, Francis Chan 14. <i>Transformational Groups</i>, Ed Stetzer and Eric Geiger 15. <i>Christ Centered Worship</i>, Bryan Chapell 16. <i>Waking the Dead</i>, Russell Burrill 17. <i>Radical Disciples for Revolutionary Churches</i>, Russell Burrill 18. <i>Gospel Workers</i>, Ellen G. White 19. <i>The Revolutionized Church of the 21st Century</i>, Russell Burrill 20. <i>2000 Years of Small Groups</i>, Joel Comiskey 21. <i>Flickering Lamps</i>, Henry and Richard Blackaby 22. <i>Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire</i>, Jim Cymbala 23. <i>Change</i>, John P. Kotter 24. <i>Tempered Resilience</i>, Tod Bolsinger 25. <i>Canoeing the Mountains</i>, Tod | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bolsinger 26. <i>Planning Small Groups With Purpose</i>, Steve Gladen 27. <i>Money, Possessions, and Eternity</i>, Randy Alcorn 28. <i>Who Needs the Church?</i>, Terry L. Johnson 29. <i>Scrappy Church</i>, Thom Rainer 30. <i>Patient Catalyst</i>, Jack Daniel 31. <i>Good to Great</i>, Jim Collins 32. <i>Great by Choice</i>, Jim Collins 33. <i>Can These Bones Live?</i> Bill Henard 34. <i>Sojourners and Strangers</i>, Gregg Allison 35. <i>Replant Roadmap</i>, Mark Hallock 36. <i>Lead to Revitalize!</i>, Various authors 37. <i>From Embers to a Flame</i>, Harry L. Reeder 38. <i>Anatomy of a Revived Church</i>, Thom S. Rainer 39. <i>Church Planting is for Wimps</i>, Mike McKinley 40. <i>Comeback Churches</i>, Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson 41. <i>Pray for the Flock</i>, Brian Croft and Ryan Fullerton 42. <i>Biblical Preaching</i>, Haddon W. Robinson 43. <i>The Prayer Saturated Church</i>, Cheryl Sacks 44. <i>A Guide to Church Revitalization</i>, SBTS various authors 45. <i>The Gospel Comes with a House Key</i>, Rosaria Champagne Butterfield 46. <i>Prayer</i>, Timothy Keller 47. <i>Preaching</i>, Timothy Keller 48. <i>Invitation to Evangelism</i>, Timothy K. Beougher |
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APPENDIX 18

DEVELOPING REVITALIZING PASTORS
MINISTRY PLAN EVALUATION

Revitalizing Pastors Ministry Plan					
Plan Evaluation					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The plan is clearly relevant to the issue of a revitalizing pastors ministry.					
The plan is faithful to the Bible's teaching on the function of a pastor.					
The plan is theologically sound.					
The plan is clear in its intent and direction.					
The points of the plan are reasonable for implementation by a local pastor.					
The plan contains points of practical application.					
The plan is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the objective, church revitalization.					
Overall, the plan is clearly presented.					

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ABSTRACT

IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING REVITALIZING PASTORS WITHIN THE CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Chad Nicholas Stuart, DMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. William D Henard

Chapter 1 introduces the project, describing the context, purpose, rationale, goals, and methodology. Chapter 2 establishes biblical support for the role of leadership in revitalization by examining the tenure of Moses, the prayerfulness of Nehemiah, and the first Christian church revitalizer, the apostle Paul. Chapter 3 explores the practical elements of this project that were included in the survey of the pastors of the Chesapeake Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: the importance of prayer in church revitalization; the type of personalities that best serve a church in need of revitalization; preaching, the critical communication arm to inspire church members to embrace revitalization; and perseverance, or what is referred to in this project as grit. Chapter 4 outlines the project implementation, utilizing the goals as the boundaries and order by which the project was completed. Chapter 5 is a project evaluation, looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the project, along with my reflections and some expressed desire of emphases of future researchers.

VITA

Chad Nicholas Stuart

EDUCATION

BA, Southern Adventist University, 2002
MDiv, The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, 2007
DMin, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023

PUBLICATIONS

“Crossing the Room.” *Adventist Review*, May 5, 2015, 34-38.
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MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Youth, Young Adult, and Children’s Pastor, Calhoun Seventh-day Adventist Church, Calhoun, Georgia, 2005-2006
Head Pastor, Cartersville Seventh-day Adventist Church, Cartersville, Georgia, 2006-2008
Head Pastor, Adairsville Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adairsville, Georgia, 2006-2008

Senior Pastor, Visalia Seventh-day Adventist Church, Visalia, California,
2008-2014

Church Planter, The Ark Community Church, Visalia, California, 2012-2014

Senior Pastor, Spencerville Adventist Church, Silver Spring, Maryland, 2014-