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Extending the Table: A Strategic Guide of Missional Renewal for a Declining Congregation

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

EXTENDING THE TABLE: A STRATEGIC GUIDE OF MISSIONAL RENEWAL
FOR A DECLINING CONGREGATION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX
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OF MINISTRY

BY

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

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has been approved by
the Dissertation Committee on October 10, 2016
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Semiotics and Future Studies.

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To my wife, Jody; my children, Alexander and Margeaux,

and

My mother, Eleanor, who modeled for me an unshakable love for the Church of Jesus.

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¹ Inspirational Writing Quotes from Famous Authors, “Sidney Sheldon”, www.writersdigest.com, accessed August 26, 2016, <http://www.writersdigest.com/writing-quotes>.

Cliff Berger for your guidance and for being a constant resource, often via late night Facebook messages, asking for help. My advisors, Ron Clark and Phil Carnes, opened my thinking in several important ways throughout this journey and encouraged me when I needed it the most. My editor, Rochelle Deans, was extremely gracious and patient as she refined my work. I am also grateful to the two churches I served during this journey: Gayton Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia and Downtown Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia. Without the support and generosity of both, this would not have been possible. My prayer is that my work will ultimately be a blessing to both congregations.

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ABSTRACT

The Lord took Ezekiel to the Valley of Dry Bones and asked him, “Son of Man, can these bones live?” (Ezekiel 37:3) Many churches in the large metropolitan cities of North America are looking over the Valley of Dry Ministries and asking essentially the same question, “Can these ministries live again?” The decline of the church in large metropolitan cities of the United States has been dramatic. It is not an unusual sight to drive through a major city and see church buildings that were once filled with congregants either shuttered and repurposed or with only a small remnant of congregants remaining.

This dissertation will explore the causes of city church decline and consider a ministry approach that could lead, by God’s grace, to a season of congregational renewal. Section one examines the challenge of suburbanization, re-urbanization, and the post-Christian context. Section two will explore various general ministry approaches to mission in the city, some of which can be applied to a strategy for renewal. Section three will lay the theological and practical foundation for a model of church renewal that leverages the synergy of the attractional and incarnational impulses of the church. This section will include a discussion of leadership, change in the church, and ministry strategy.

Sections four and five provide details of a strategic guide for renewal for a city church, Downtown Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia. Section six will be the postscript. The Appendix will be the artifact.

SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

“Toto, I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore.”¹ This iconic line uttered by Dorothy to her canine companion was an understated shock of recognition. Gone were the stable commodities and predictable routines of Aunt Em’s and Uncle Henry’s farm. Now she was in a land that was new, unpredictable, and frightening; yet it was also filled with an adventurous journey, gracious surprises, new relationships, and infinite possibilities.

In order to pursue vital and vibrant ministry, the local church in United States must at some point experience the realization that we are not in “Kansas” anymore. The stability and privilege that the church enjoyed in the era of Christendom has passed, or is rapidly fading, as the North American context is gradually transitioning to a post-Christendom reality. This new landscape, like Oz, can seem perilous, yet it is also ripe with adventure, gracious surprises, new relationships, and infinite possibilities for mission.

The decline of the church in large metropolitan cities of the United States has been dramatic. It is not an unusual sight to drive through a major city and see church buildings that have been abandoned or repurposed or with only a small remnant of congregants remaining. My work in this program is focused on a model of renewal for churches in major metropolitan areas of the United States that have been in decline. While it is my hope that this model has transferrable principles for churches of all ethnic groups, my focus is on churches that were started as predominantly Caucasian churches

¹ The Wizard of Oz, directed by Victor Fleming (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer), 1939, Film.

from the Protestant Mainline and Evangelical denominations. In this section we will explore some major causes of this decline, a new challenge that offers hope, and the deeper cultural change that will need to be considered in order for the church to experience a season of revitalization.

Suburbanization

In *Crabgrass Frontier*, a book exploring the suburbanization of the United States, Kenneth T. Jackson writes, “Housing is an outward expression of the inner human nature; no society can be fully understood apart from the residences of its members.”² If Jackson is correct, the “American inner human nature” has experienced an extraordinary transformation since the early days of this country. This transformation has impacted every aspect of society, including the church.

Short Pump, Virginia, located in the West End of Richmond, is a classic American suburb. It is filled with housing subdivisions that feature large homes, lush lawns, garages for multiple vehicles, and community pools and tennis clubs. The schools that serve Short Pump consistently rank as the county’s top performing schools.³ The 1,200,000-square-foot Short Pump Town Center features upscale shopping and dining, with ample parking. Short Pump has many churches, several that have over 1,000 participants, beautifully situated on bucolic campuses. It is a place where families settle to feel safe and secure.

² Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), Kindle Loc. 97.

³ “School Rankings,” School Digger, updated February 9, 2016, accessed May 30, 2016, <http://www.schooldigger.com/go/VA/schoolrank.aspx?level=3>.

Short Pump today is the polar opposite of the suburbs that existed on the outskirts of American cities in late 18th and early 19th centuries. These suburbs were considered inferior in every way to the “walking cities” of the era. According to Jackson, walking cities had five distinct characteristics:

1. **Congestion:** Lot sizes were small, streets were narrow, and houses were close to the curb. This created an intense, inner-city congestion and density of population.
2. **A clear distinction between city and country:** In earlier centuries, European cities were surrounded by walls that were considered inviolable and sacred. North American cities did not have actual walls, but travel distance between cities and rural areas served as a figurative barrier between the two.
3. **Mixed use:** With the exception of waterfronts and red-light districts, there were no neighborhoods given over to commercial, office, or residential functions... There were no special government or entertainment districts. Public buildings, hotels, churches, warehouses, shops, schools, and homes were interspersed, or often located in the same structure.
4. **Proximity to work:** Workers lived close to their places of employment. Because the business day was long, and because any distance had to be overcome by horse or foot, living close to work was strongly desired. Work and living spaces were often completely integrated, with members of the family, as well as apprentices, literally living above or behind the place of employment.
5. **Aesthetics:** There was a tendency for the most fashionable and respectable addresses to be located close to the center of town. To be a resident of a big town

was to enjoy the best of life...to live outside the walls, away from palaces and cathedrals, was to live in inferior surroundings.⁴

Jackson concludes, "Suburbs, then, were socially and economically inferior to cities when wind, muscle, and water were the prime movers of civilization."⁵

The dominant context for life in these walking cities was one of cohesion rather than compartmentalization. The functions of family, work, civic responsibility, education, entertainment, and religious life were naturally integrated for the typical resident of the city. The world of the city dweller may have been small by today's definition, but it was a world in which she was deeply rooted, broadly connected, and dependent on the community as a whole. Likewise, the church was integrated into every aspect of the life of the city.

However, this civic reality would not last for long. Jackson writes,

Between the years of 1815-1875, America's largest cities underwent a dramatic spatial change. The advent of mass transportation in the form of the steam ferry, omnibus, the commuter railroad, horsecar, the elevated railroad, and the cable car gave additional impetus that would turn cities 'inside out' and inaugurate a new pattern of suburban affluence and center despair.⁶

With the new space in the suburbs came new patterns of living. Jackson continues,

By 1870 separateness had become essential to the identity of the suburban house. The yard was expected to be large and private and designed for both active and passive recreation, in direct antithesis to the dense lifestyle from which many families had recently moved. The new ideal was no longer to be a part of a close community, but to have a self-contained unit, a private wonderland walled off from the rest of the world. Although visually open to the street, the lawn was a barrier...⁷

⁴ Jackson, Kindle Loc. 304-415, paraphrased excerpts.

⁵ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 415.

⁶ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 418.

⁷ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 1125.

This inside-out migration pattern reached its zenith with the advent of the mass production of the automobile in the early twentieth century and the expansion of the highway system in the U.S. after the Second World War. Commuters were no longer dependent on mass transportation as a means of travel to work. Additionally, the development of the Federal Housing Administration and the Veteran's Administration loan programs meant that families could purchase a home with little or no money down. In their book *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*, Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck write: "...in the years following the Second World War [the FHA and VA] provided mortgages for over eleven million new homes. These mortgages, which typically cost less per month than paying rent, were directed at new single-family suburban construction."⁸

Eventually, retailers that had historically been located in the heart of the city relocated to suburban shopping centers and, naturally, churches followed suit. In *Center City Churches: The New Urban Frontier*, Lyle Schaller writes, "Suburbia was seen as the new and challenging frontier after World War II. Most of the mainline Protestant denominations concentrated their resources on organizing new missions in suburban communities. One happy result was the creation of hundreds of large, vital, and strong suburban parishes."⁹ The residential and retail suburban migration resulted in the middle and upper-middle classes engaging the city almost exclusively for employment as most business districts remained vibrant.

⁸ Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream, 10th Anniversary Edition* (New York: North Point Press, 2010), 8.

⁹ Lyle E. Schaller, *Center City Churches: The New Urban Frontier* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 13.

But not for long. Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck suggest:

By the 1970s, many corporations were moving their offices closer to the workforce—or, more accurately, closer to the CEO’s house. The CEO’s desire for a shorter commute, coupled with suburbia’s lower tax burden, led to the development of the business park, completing the migration of each of life’s components into the suburb. As commuting patterns became predominantly suburb to suburb, many center cities became expendable.¹⁰

A description of the population shift from the cities to the suburbs in the United States would not be complete without considering the issues of race and poverty. Even at the turn of the twentieth century, cities were portrayed as dangerous and bastions of moral degradation. One real-estate ad from 1905 for a development in Wilmington, Delaware read, “Get your children into the country. The cities murder children. The hot pavements, the dust, the noise, are fatal in many cases, and harmful always. The history of successful men is nearly always the history of country boys.”¹¹

The demonization of the city became especially pronounced by White flight, a decades-long migration of Whites from racially mixed urban areas to homogenous suburbs and exurban areas.¹² Emily Badger of the Washington Post explained that White flight began when:

Whites in northern cities began re-sorting themselves away from Blacks in the first decades of the twentieth century...over the course of the three decades after the turn of the century, coinciding with the start of the Great Migration of Blacks out of the south, this pattern accelerated: As Blacks arrived in northern neighborhoods, more Whites left. By the 1920s there were three White departures for every Black arrival.¹³

¹⁰ Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck, 9.

¹¹ Jackson, Kindle Loc. 2654.

¹² “White Flight,” Wikipedia, last modified March 2, 2016, accessed May 30, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_flight.

¹³ Emily Badger, “‘White Flight’ Began a lot Earlier Than We Think,” The Washington Post, WonkBlog, March 17, 2016, accessed May 30, 2016,

Jackson contends, "...this pattern gained momentum during World War I, and especially after the Supreme Court decision in 1954¹⁴ that school segregation is unconstitutional, millions of families moved out of the city 'for the kids' and especially for the educational and social superiority of smaller and more homogenous suburban school systems."¹⁵

Many cities were financially devastated as their tax base eroded to a fraction of what it once was. The social services needed by those who remained in the city, many of whom were poor, increased dramatically and entire neighborhoods were abandoned. Compounding this challenge, thousands of churches in the city that were predominantly Caucasian either dissolved, merged, or relocated to the suburbs.¹⁶ As Mark T. Mulder wrote in his book *Shades of White Flight: Evangelical Congregations and Urban Departure*, "Concealed behind the gleaming skyscrapers of the downtown business districts and the SUV-flooded parking lots of P.F. Changs, Pottery Barns, and megachurches in suburbia reside bleak and depressed communities. Inarguably, many of these neighborhoods tend to be populated by racial minorities."¹⁷

If indeed, as Jackson asserts, housing is an expression of human nature, the migration from the walking cities of the American Revolution to the suburban enclaves that have become the predominant housing pattern in the United States has resulted in a significant change in the way our human nature is expressed. It has dramatically changed

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/03/17/white-flight-began-a-lot-earlier-than-we-think/>.

¹⁴ Jackson is referring to the Supreme Court decision *Brown versus Board of Education*.

¹⁵ Jackson, Kindle Loc. 5545.

¹⁶ Schaller, 11.

¹⁷ Mark T. Mulder, *Shades of White Flight: Evangelical Congregations and Urban Departure* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 1.

the way we understand our role in the community and every aspect of life has been impacted. Many city churches have struggled or closed in the wake of suburbanization. Many that remain are facing the challenges of aging buildings, shrunken budgets, weary parishioners, and perplexed clergy. A movement of the Spirit is needed to bring the hope of revitalization.

A New Challenge

Theologian Paul Tillich once told a class of college graduates, “We hope for nonconformists among you, for your sake, for the sake of the nation, and for the sake of humanity.”¹⁸ It is exactly this spirit of nonconformity that has led many to resist the pull to the suburbs in favor of moving back into the cities of North America. In his book *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* Timothy Keller writes:

Cities not only grow and mature, but they can also be reborn. Despite the pessimism about Western cities during the late twentieth century, many have regenerated during the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century...During this time, many cities’ population declines began to reverse. People began to move back into cities, and center cities began to regenerate at the cores.¹⁹

This migration back to the cities led William Frey, a Brookings Institute demographer, to assert that the period between 2010-2020 could be the “decade of the

¹⁸ Bill Bishop, *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 2008), 81.

¹⁹ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 155.

city.”²⁰ For the period between 2010-2013 the overall population in the U.S. grew by only 0.7%, which was the lowest since the Great Depression. By contrast, cities such as New York (2.8%), Houston (4.7%), San Francisco (4.0%), and Washington D.C. (7.4%) experienced significant growth.²¹ To be sure, some cities, particularly in the rustbelt, continued their decades-long decline. It is also important to note that the revitalization of cities has not had a universal positive affect. Gentrification, the “process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying the influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces poorer residents,”²² has led to an exodus of the city’s poorer residents to inner-ring suburbs leaving these communities to grapple with some of the same issues that cities faced decades earlier. However, it is clear that re-urbanization is transforming once again the relationship between the urban and suburban corridors of major metropolitan areas.

Understanding the factors behind this growth is critical to the revitalization of city churches. Keller points to four reasons for the revitalization of cities:

1. The U.S. economy has experienced a sustained period of growth, which created a great deal of new wealth and new jobs in knowledge sectors.
2. Crime decreased in cities.

²⁰ Greg Toppo and Paul Overberg, “In Latest Census Figures, Cities Continue Growing,” USA Today Online, October 7, 2014, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/usanow/2014/05/22/census-cities-population-growth/9377901/>.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Merriam-Webster Online, s.v. “gentrification,” accessed June 16, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gentrification>.

3. A cultural mood developed (which some call postmodern) embracing eclecticism, the mixture of the old and new, asymmetry, messiness and unmanageability, cultural diversity, and the artistic and organic.
4. Changes in immigration laws opened the door to an influx of immigrants from non-European nations.²³

There are some who question whether or not cities will remain on a trajectory of growth. One question, according to Frey from the Brookings Institute, is whether or not Millennials will stay in the city once they begin having children in larger numbers.²⁴ Another factor that could slow the growth of Millennials moving into the cities in the U.S. is gentrification. While gentrification has introduced many new residents into the city, it has also led to escalating home values, which have become a major hindrance for housing affordability among Millennials, retiring adults, and low- to middle-income families.

To many older congregations, the revitalization of a city presents new challenges. Will they be able to reposition their ministries to reach out to vibrant, creative, and dynamic communities? Will they be able to have an influential voice in matters of justice in their cities as they witness the displacement of the poor and marginalized? Will they be able to capture the heart and soul of the artists and the creatives in their midst? Will these churches, many of which were built in the height of the modern-industrial age, be able to deal with the messiness and unmanageability of the new urban postmodern milieu? This next section will explore the challenge of this deeper cultural change.

²³ Keller, *Center Church*, 155-156.

²⁴ Toppo and Overberg.

The Church on the Side of the Hill

The ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, “If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading.”²⁵ Change challenges the status quo and disrupts predictable patterns. Change invades perceived parlors of stability and wreaks havoc and chaos. Yet, change can also bring progress and be transformational if the missional gifts and imagination of the church are cultivated, developed, and released for mission.²⁶

Thus far in this work we have only discussed the demographic change that has faced the church. In cities that have experienced revitalization, the demographic changes facing the church could be described as a decades-long generational boomerang. Young families fled to the suburbs and now, in the twenty-first century, they are returning. But they are not returning with the same perspective on the church and other institutions as did previous generations. They are returning to the city, but not necessarily to the church.

Bishop Graham Cray, the former Director of Fresh Expressions in the United Kingdom, describes this shift in culture using the following comparison:

The image of the church used to be like the “church in the valley.” Culture would funnel people into the church as they encountered various life needs and the church’s task would be to receive them and then prepare them to go into the world on mission. Now the image of the church is like the church on the “side of the hill.” A few are still drawn into the church by the culture but the predominant flow of culture is away from the church. Therefore, the mission task of the church is to go where the people are.²⁷

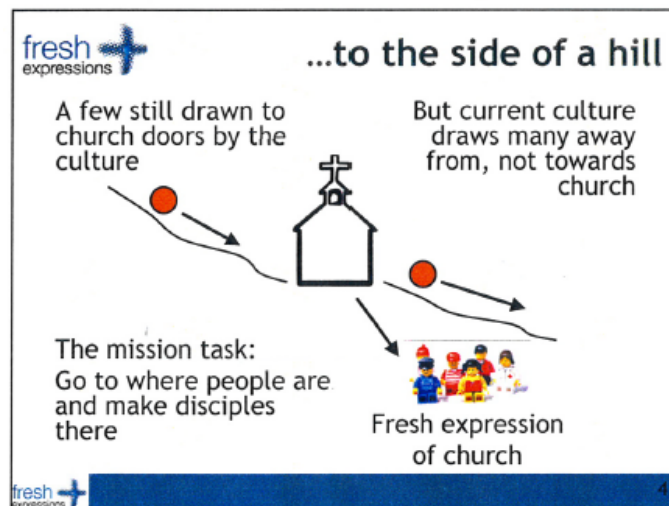
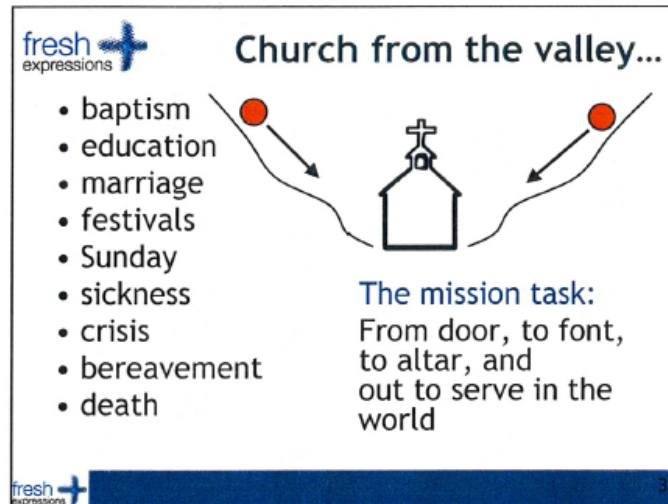
²⁵ Lao Tzu, Brainy Quote, accessed June 1, 2016, http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/l/lao_tzu.html.

²⁶ Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing Word* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006), 30.

²⁷ Graham Cray, “And: Fresh Expressions of the Church and Local Church,” (Fresh Expressions National Gathering, Alexandria, April 8, 2016). Paraphrased.

This beautifully describes the challenge facing the church in the Post-Christendom context for ministry and mission today.

(Bishop Graham Cray, Fresh Expressions U.K.)



To better understand the post-Christendom context, one must first define what is meant by the word Christendom. The term is typically understood in a quantitative and qualitative manner. Merriam-Webster defines Christendom as “the part of the world in

which *most* people are Christians.”²⁸ However, this definition is limiting because the challenge the church is facing is not just numerical. If that were the case, the same strategies that center-city churches employed prior to suburbanization could be updated and people would start flocking back to church on Sunday.

A more complete description of Christendom is offered by S. Michael Craven:

In granting the Christian church special favors and privileges in the fourth century, the Roman Emperor Constantine ushered in the era of the church-state partnership that would profoundly shape European society for centuries to come. As the protected and privileged religion of society, Christianity achieved unrivaled cultural dominance. The resulting cultures in Europe and later in North America became known as Christendom.²⁹

Although the European-style church-state partnerships were not formally embraced in many countries as Christendom expanded, it would become impossible to separate missionary activity from the institutions of culture. Lesslie Newbigin writes in his book *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, “...Asia, the Americas and later Africa experienced the impact of Western missions as an integral part of a whole movement in which military, political, commercial, cultural, and religious aspects were indissolubly blended.”³⁰ I witnessed this first hand on a mission trip to Lisbon, Portugal. According to Don Dixon, a missionary with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, “When the people in Portugal threw off the

²⁸ Merriam-Webster, s.v. “Christendom,” accessed December 11, 2013, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Christendom>. (emphasis added by author)

²⁹ S. Michael Craven, “The Church in Post-Christendom,” *The Christian Post*, March 20, 2008, accessed December 11, 2013, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/the-church-in-post-christendom-31585/>.

³⁰ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission, Revised Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), Kindle Loc. 83.

dictator [*Estado Novo* regime] they also threw off the church because they considered both responsible for corruption.”³¹

Therefore, a post-Christendom context is one in which the church no longer has dominant influence over the institutions of culture and Christians are no longer in the majority. This change has been experienced at the institutional level as institutions and businesses have developed policies that either prohibit Christian symbols and activities or forbid their preferential treatment. The impact has also been realized at the individual level. According to Timothy Keller, one characteristic of Christendom was that the formal institutions of the culture “Christianized” people by teaching or enforcing basic Christian values and beliefs.³² He illustrated this in a lecture titled “Belonging to a Missional Church”:

When leadership guru Peter Drucker, a German immigrant, moved to Hoboken in the late 1930s to teach at NYU, he went to the bank to apply for a loan. The bank official reviewed his application and told him, “We will need a reference from a pastor, priest, or rabbi.” Drucker replied, “Why would you want that?” To which the bank official replied, “We would never want someone to have a bank loan who was not a Christian. What would be your motivation for making good on the loan?”³³

Even the ability to achieve the American dream of home ownership was entangled with the vestiges of Christendom.

In his work *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope After Christendom*, Lee Beach describes three powerful forces that have caused the demise of Christendom in Western Culture:

³¹ Don Dixon, personal conversation with the author, May 2008.

³² Timothy Keller, “Belonging to a Missional Church,” audio of lecture presented at The Gospel and World Conference, New York, NY, January 10, 2004, accessed November 21, 2013, <http://sermons2.redeemer.com/sermons/belonging-missional-church>.

³³ Ibid.

- **A growing affluence in the population.** In the post WWII years, there was an unmistakable growth in national affluence in North America. The advent of the suburbs provided opportunities for middle-class families to pursue the American Dream with all of its promised comforts and security. This cannot be overlooked as a cause of secularization because with the increased comfort in lifestyle, the desire for religious consolation was lost.
- **Secularization.** In the 20th century, secularization became both a philosophy and a movement. North American culture shifted from a cultural context where “belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace.”³⁴ The cultural forces of rationalism (the process of organizing life around scientific and logical principles) and disenchantment (the gradual disempowerment of ideas or institutions associated with magic or religion) were two broader cultural forces that led to secularization.³⁵
- **A shifting social context.** Immigration patterns in North America shifted in the 20th century from immigrants coming mostly from European Christian countries to a pattern of immigrants from Asia, the Middle East, and India. A more pluralistic culture fosters a response of secularism by institutions so that one religion is not preferences over another in the public square.³⁶

³⁴ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 3, quoted in Lee Beach, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope After Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), Kindle Loc. 463.

³⁵ Paul Bramadat, “Beyond Christian Canada,” 4, quoted in Beach, Kindle Loc. 463.

³⁶ Beach, Kindle Loc. 360-608. Some parts of this section are paraphrased.

A significant challenge for church leaders in the United States is that the effects of the post-Christendom context are not equally experienced in every region or for every generation. Keller remarks: “One of the reasons why some American Evangelical churches have not experienced the same decline as the Protestant churches in Europe and Canada is that there still exists a heartland where there are remnants of the old Christianized society...”³⁷

Therefore, when churches seek to engage the culture, one of the first questions that needs to be asked is, “what era is my community living in? Christian or post-Christian?” Keller continues with a quote from media critic Michael Wolf:

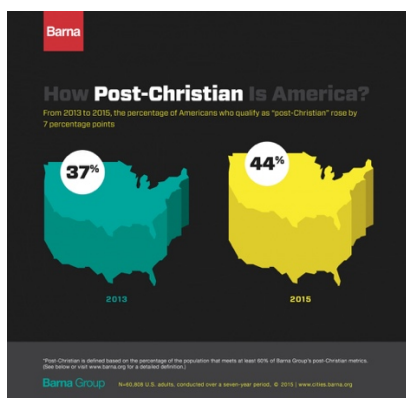
There is a fundamental schism in American cultural, political, and economic life. There is the quicker-growing and economically vibrant, morally relativistic, urban-oriented, culturally adventuresome, sexually polymorphous, and ethnically diverse nation. And there is the small-town, nuclear family, religiously oriented, mostly white-centric other America with its diminishing cultural and economic force.³⁸

In this quote, Wolf is describing the difference between listeners of CNN and Fox! In a study published by the Barna Group, the percentage of Americans who are categorized as post-Christian has increased from 37% in 2013 to 44% in 2015, with the highest percentages residing in urban areas of the northeast and Pacific Northwest.³⁹

³⁷ Keller, “Belonging to a Missional Church.”

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ray Nothstine, “Are You Living in a Post-Christian America?” Christian Post U.S., August 13, 2015, accessed June 1, 2016, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/are-you-living-in-a-post-christian-america-142773/>.



The shift from Christendom to post-Christendom has been a collective traumatic experience for many churches in North America. In many ways, the Church today, pushed to the margins of culture, resembles more of a community in exile similar to Israel and the early Christian church. Some respond to the trauma of exile by engaging in culture wars and becoming entrenched behind the barricades of empty pews. Some churches in the city literally took flight as they relocated and followed the masses to the suburbs to delay the impact of pluralism and multi-culturalism that is prevalent in the cities. Some chose the “freeze” response and did nothing, hoping that a miracle would make the reality of post-Christendom go away. The fight, flight, or freeze response all take a negative view of the post-Christian reality.

However, there are many reasons to see the challenge of this change in a positive light. In an article titled “What is Post-Christendom?” the following hope is offered:

Post-Christendom offers an opportunity to disentangle Christianity from its imperial past. Celebrating the demise of Christendom does not mean rejoicing in the declining number of Christians or the diminishing influence of the Christian story in Western culture. But this transitional period invites us—humbly, patiently, tentatively and hopefully—to return to the roots of our faith and rediscover the gospel for a new era.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ The Anabaptist Network, “What is Post-Christendom?” accessed December 12, 2013, <http://www.anabaptistnetwork.com/pdf/WhatIsPost-Christendomformatted.pdf>.

A faithful, forward-looking response by the city churches would be to hear the Spirit using this sweeping change to call the church back to the humble, yet courageous, posture that characterized the first-century church. Newbigin asserts:

We are forced to do something that the Western churches have never been forced to do since the days of their own birth—to discover the form and substance of a missionary church in terms that are valid in a world that has rejected the power and the influence of the Western nations. Missions will no longer work along the stream of expanding Western power. They have to learn to go against the stream. And in this situation we shall find that the New Testament speaks to us much more directly than does the nineteenth century as we learn afresh what it means to bear witness to the gospel from a position not of strength but of weakness.⁴¹

May this new situation be filled with adventure, gracious surprises, new relationships, and infinite possibilities for mission. We now turn our attention to some of the positive ways the Church in the city have responded to the challenges outlined in this section.

⁴¹ Newbigin, Kindle Loc. 89.

SECTION 2: OTHER SOLUTIONS

Introduction

The biblical metaphor of exile is often used to describe the situation of the North American Church in the post-Christian era. Exile for Israel was traumatic and disorienting. Yet it was also a time that forced these communities to re-imagine the contours of faithful mission. Lee Beach writes, “In fact, exile was for Israel a time of immense creativity, as it was also for the early church. For the community to thrive in exile would take more than simply going back to former practices. A fresh interpretation of faith would be necessary to not only sustain the community but also to meet the challenges of a new life setting.”¹

While it is true that many city churches declined significantly during the 20th century, there have been extraordinary examples of churches that remained vibrant² and, as with the exilic communities of the Bible, there have been new and creative ways to approach the mission of God in the city. There are examples of churches that have experienced renewal after a period of decline that directly relate to the focus of this project. There are also “other solutions” that have emerged that would not be described as renewal strategies for a declining church, but they would be described as renewal strategies for mission in the city and, thus, have indirect application for my project. To try to describe every creative approach to ministry in the city is beyond the scope of this

¹ Beach, Kindle Loc. 275.

² Many of these churches are focused on ethnic groups other than Caucasian. I want to honor and acknowledge their work. However, a detailed description of these ministries is beyond the scope of my project.

project. The seven approaches described below were chosen due to their relevance to the overall purpose of my project and the development of my artifact.

Attractional Ministry

The attractional church is characterized by a centralized ministry that seeks to attract people from the community to the church facility through church-based programs and high-quality presentations on Sunday morning. While attractional churches would contend that they need to pursue the mission of God in the world, functionally they have a tendency to focus their ministries inside the walls of the church.³ Three powerful characteristics of an attractional church include: 1) an outward focus that attracts newcomers to the congregation, 2) cultural relevance being pursued at great lengths in order to communicate effectively, and 3) the mobilization of members via gift-based ministry.⁴

Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, reflecting on the work of missiologist Ralph Winters, contend that the attractional or gathered church has a modalic form of ministry. It is characterized by a stable environment in which congregants are nurtured and sustained in the faith and there is a strong emphasis placed on public worship. Modalities are primarily concerned with ministry that happens within the church, although they can be extremely generous to and involved in missions. These churches can be characterized as having a significantly larger percentage of conversions being children who have been

³ Aaron L. Graham, "The Leadership Dynamics of Growing a Missional Church in the City: The District Church, Washington, D.C." (D.Miss. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2013), 23-24.

⁴ Rob Wegner and Jack Magruder, *Missional Moves: 15 Tectonic Shifts that Transform Churches, Communities, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Kindle Loc. 904.

born to the church rather than adult conversions to the faith. The classic evangelical, Pentecostal, or mainline church would be considered modalic in form.⁵

The First Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia (FBCR) is located in the heart of the city. FBCR was started in 1780 in downtown Richmond and for over 236 years it has played a significant leadership role in the city and in missions in Virginia and around the world. The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention was born at FBCR. It was the first church in Virginia to organize a Missionary Society for women and the first church to send its members as missionaries to Africa.⁶ Lott Carey, a former slave, was a member of FBC Richmond and later went on to become one of the first Black missionaries and the first Black missionary to Africa.⁷

FBCR draws people not only from downtown Richmond but also from the surrounding three counties in the Richmond metropolitan area. It is home to a wide array of ministries including a preschool, a ministry for the deaf, divorce recovery, a single-adult ministry, and various opportunities for prayer and Bible study. The purpose of FBCR is to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to Richmond, Virginia, otherwise known as KOH2RVA. The goal of KOH2RVA is to involve every congregant in some form of mission work around the city. Senior Pastor James G. Somerville writes:

I look at it this way: apprentices are meant to become apostles. We who are learning the work of the Kingdom are ultimately meant to go out and do it (or to stay in and do it—there is lots of “kingdom-bringing” that goes inside the walls of the church building and not just out there in the world), and to call others to join

⁵ Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, *AND: The Gathered and Scattered Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), Kindle Loc. 1818-1831. (Section paraphrased)

⁶ Richmond’s First Baptist Church, “What We Believe,” accessed June 25, 2016, <http://www.fbrichmond.org/about-us/what-we-believe>.

⁷ “Lott Cary,” Wikipedia, last modified February 20, 2016, accessed June 25, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lott_Cary.

us in that work, because this job is too big for any one person or any one church to do alone...At Richmond's First Baptist Church I believe that our first responsibility is to this place where God has put us—Richmond, Virginia. That doesn't mean we can't bring heaven to earth in other places; it only means we ought to focus our efforts here. In the same way a heavy stone can make a big splash, and the ripples can travel outward to every part of the pond, I believe we are called to make a big splash in Richmond, with the ripples traveling outward to every part of the world.⁸

Through the gracious hand of the Holy Spirit, great pastoral and lay leadership, and a DNA with a heart for the city, FBC Richmond has weathered some seasons of decline and maintained a transformational ministry in the city.

On a smaller scale than FBC Richmond, Lisa Marie Sullivan conducted a survey of four United Methodist Churches located in urban settings across the United States. The average age of the four congregations during the time of the study was 135 years old with an average worship attendance of 269. Each church had experienced a sustained season of decline that lasted a decade or more.⁹ Sullivan listed common denominators and foundational factors that enabled the turnaround in all four churches. They were:

- Changes were made in the worship style or format to become invitational and connect in relevant ways with the changing demographics of the surrounding community.
- Outreach to the community addressing felt needs was an essential bridge to reconnect with the neighborhood outside the walls of the church.

⁸ Richmond's First Baptist Church, "What We Believe," accessed June 25, 2016, <http://www.fbrichmond.org/about-us/what-we-believe/>.

⁹ Lisa Marie Sullivan, "Revitalization of the Urban Church: A Multi-Case Study of Turnaround Churches" (D.Min. diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2009), 6-7.

- Structural (building) changes occurred to the interior and in some cases exterior of the church. These changes had symbolic meaning for the church, and were visible signs to the surrounding community.
- Visibility in the community increased as the church made turnaround changes.
- Staff and pastoral changes were catalysts for revitalization.
- Leadership training was essential to facilitate transition and to achieve success in revitalization.
- A new missional focus facilitated lay leadership involvement.
- Strategies for how to proceed were not always clear from the onset, and were intentional and organic at the same time.
- Acceptance of loss (of the past) and letting go were important turning points for achieving a new forward momentum toward revitalization.¹⁰

Key aspects of these turnaround stories dealt with attractional aspects of ministry such as worship style, staff leadership, and buildings. As in the case of FBCR, these churches all exhibited a strong heart for the community and missions within the framework of an attractional, modalic form of ministry. Critics would argue that in a post-Christendom era churches that have a heavy emphasis on attractional ministry will struggle to reach non-Christians and that more resources need to be allocated to the missional aspects of ministry.

¹⁰ Sullivan, 66.

Multi-Site Ministry

A subset of the attractional church model is the multi-site church. According to Aubrey Malphurs, “a multi-site church is the same church that meets in more than one location. It could meet in several places on the same campus, another location in the same town or state, or even in another country.”¹¹ Multi-site churches initially began as a way for churches who had outgrown their ministry space to increase in size without having to relocate the entire ministry to a larger campus. It has evolved into an intentional, mission-driven strategy for larger regional churches to mitigate the reality that most people will not drive more than 30 minutes to attend church.

The multi-site church phenomenon has exploded considerably in the megachurch and giga-church (over 10,000 members) movement. In 1990, there were ten multi-site churches in the United States. In 2014, according to Leadership Network, there were more than 8,000 multi-site churches.¹² This model of ministry is succeeding in urban, suburban, and rural communities.¹³ Ed Stetzer, reflecting on research conducted by Warren Bird, wrote, “multi-site churches reach more people than single-site churches, multi-site tends to spread healthy churches to more diverse communities, and multi-site churches have more volunteers in service as a percentage than single-site. Additionally, multi-site churches baptize more people than single-site.”¹⁴

¹¹ Aubrey Malphurs, “Malphurs: Multi-Site vs. Church Planting?” Christianity Today, The Exchange, June 30, 2008, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2008/june/malphurs-multi-site-vs-church-planting.html>.

¹² Jim Tomberlin and Tim Cool, *Church Locality: New Rules for Church Buildings in a Multi-Site, Church Planting, and Giga-Church World* (n.p.: Rainer, 2014), 3.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 21.

Another reason for the surge in the multi-site approach is sustainability or the concern for it. Many multi-site facilities are smaller, multi-purpose venues that can be repurposed or sold if the community changes and the site is no longer sustainable. The desire is not to repeat the over-building tendency of the large church in the twentieth century, many of which are located in major metropolitan areas with only a fraction of their facility now being utilized.

Most multi-site churches are suburban churches that expanded into neighboring suburban and even rural areas. Some suburban multi-site churches such as North Point Church (Atlanta area), Elevation Church (Charlotte area) and Wooddale Church (Minneapolis area) have launched sites closer to the center of the city. The National Community Church in the Washington, D.C. area is an example of a multi-site church that started in the center of the city and then added sites throughout the city and into neighboring suburbs.

One form of the multi-site movement that has a direct impact on churches in urban areas is that of church mergers or acquisitions. Over one third of multi-site campuses come from either a merger or an acquisition.¹⁵ According to Jim Tomberlin and Warren Bird, “mergers encompass a wide spectrum of types of churches. The range of mergers includes strong, stable, stuck, and struggling churches. Many are motivated by survival, but an increasing number identify ‘mission’ as their primary impetus.”¹⁶ The healthiest mergers are between a strong “leading” church and a smaller “joining” church

¹⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹⁶ Jim Tomberlin and Warren Bird, *Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), Kindle Loc. 539.

that has a desire to experience missional renewal. Typically, the joining church becomes a campus of the larger church and functions as another video venue of the leading church.

An example of a suburban church merging with an urban church is the merger of Atlee Community Church (Atlee) and Northminster Baptist Church (Northminster) in the Richmond, Virginia metro area. Atlee is located in a northern suburb of Richmond about eleven miles from downtown Richmond. Atlee was started in 1995 as a seeker-sensitive church and exploded in growth during her first two decades of ministry. Northminster was located in the Ginter Park area of Richmond, an aging, historic neighborhood adjacent to the heart of the city. While the church experienced significant decline in attendance over the last three decades, the church developed numerous mission initiatives to reach those in need in the community.

In 2013, Atlee and Northminster began conversations concerning the possibility of merging their two congregations with the latter becoming one of former's campuses.

Pastor, Sammy Williams, wrote,

We believe that “missional” and “attractional” are not opposites but two sides of the same coin. Atlee's strengths are attracting seekers to life-changing faith and building them into fully devoted followers of Christ. Northminster's strength has been discovering and developing missions within its urban setting. We believe if our churches join forces, the kingdom of God will benefit.¹⁷

The merger was approved on Palm Sunday of 2014.

Critics of the multi-site movement argue that, while multi-site ministry is a powerful tool for megachurches to attract and add people, they don't multiply vision and missional leadership. They also tend to perpetuate a celebrity culture that reveres the senior leader and they unintentionally give the impression that a worship service with

¹⁷ Sammy Williams, “Exciting News,” Sammy's Blog, March 2, 2014, accessed June 27, 2016, <https://sammywilliams.wordpress.com>.

small groups attached is the essence of what church is all about rather than a community gathered in pursuit of the mission of God.¹⁸

Church Planting

Church planting is a concept that every church has in common. Every church, at some point, from the days following Pentecost to the church that gathered for the first time last week, was once a new church plant. After decades of focusing almost exclusively on planting churches in rural and suburban areas, U.S.-based denominations, church planting networks, and church planting churches are focusing a great deal of energy and resources on planting churches in the city.

Timothy Keller, the Senior Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (Redeemer) in New York City, has been a strong advocate for planting new congregations in the city. Redeemer originally started as a prayer group of fifteen meeting in an apartment in 1989 to pray for the launch of the church. By September of that year, the first service was held and drew 250 people. Over the years since, Redeemer has grown to average over 4,500 people per week with almost twice that amount attending regularly. Redeemer has multiplied into three generative congregations in Manhattan with the hopes of multiplying into six to nine more in the future.¹⁹

In 2001, Redeemer launched its own mission agency with the mission to help leaders build gospel movements in cities. The vision is to see a world-changing, city-

¹⁸ Neil Cole, "The Multi-Site Model," CMA Resources.org, March 31, 2010, accessed June 28, 2016, https://www.cmaresources.org/article/multi-site-model_n-cole.

¹⁹ Redeemer Presbyterian Church, "Redeemer History," Redeemer.com, accessed June 27, 2016, http://www.redeemer.com/learn/about_us/redeemer_history.

renewing, gospel-centered global church.²⁰ Keller states three powerful reasons for planting church in the city:

1. *New churches attract non-churched people on average about three to six times more than older churches.* Only one in 10 new members of churches over 15 years old are people who were not Christians or not churched previously, while in new churches it is one in three or even two out of three.
2. *New churches are the best way to increase the generosity base for all the ministries in a city.* All ministries need start-up capital in order to launch. But most ministries and charitable non-profits will need funding from outside themselves indefinitely. A new church, however, only needs start-up funding at its beginning. Several years later, or in some cases sooner, the church becomes self-funding from within. Even more, it begins to be a source of giving and generosity to other ministries beyond itself.
3. *New churches are the best way to renew the older, existing churches.* How so? Often older congregations are reluctant to try a new approach, sure it would “not work here.” But when the new church, which has the freedom and incentive to innovate, succeeds with some new method, other churches take notice and are encouraged to try it themselves.²¹

Redeemer City to City has helped start 337 churches in forty-five cities.²²

²⁰ Redeemer City to City, “About Us,” Redeemercitytocity.com, accessed June 27, 2016, <http://www.redeemercitytocity.com/about/>.

²¹ Timothy Keller, “Church Planting is What We Do,” Redeemer.com, December 2015, accessed June 27, 2016, http://www.redeemer.com/redeemer-report/article/church_planting_is_what_we_do.

²² Redeemer City to City, “About,” Redeemercitytocity.com, accessed June 27, 2016, <http://www.redeemercitytocity.com/about/>.

One criticism of the surge of church planting in the city is that some church planting networks appear to be focusing exclusively on areas that have been or are being gentrified. These areas typically draw Millennials and Empty-nesters searching for the latest chic place to live rather than drawing in the urban poor, who often live in areas with high crime rates and under-performing schools. Efrem Smith, President and CEO of World Impact wrote:

Do we really need more urban churches? Yes, if we embrace the need for urban church planting that is committed to Kingdom advancement among the urban poor in a way that leads to indigenous ministry leadership development... We don't simply need more churches in our cities we need church planting and leadership development movements. These movements should specifically center on the empowerment of the urban poor. This will call urban church planting movements to connect evangelism, discipleship, and a liberating witness to the marginalized and outcast.²³

This criticism should be taken seriously and serve as a call for church planters in the city to focus on the well-being of the city and her citizens. If the church pursues the transformation of the city with the gospel in word and deed, the Spirit will ensure the health and well-being of that local church.

The New Monasticism

In his book *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, Leonard Sweet writes, "...the Bible outlines a double procession of rejection and affirmation in terms of culture: a movement away from the world is followed by a movement back to the world as we love what God loves and do what Jesus did."²⁴ This would describe the community rhythm of the new

²³ Efrem Smith, "Church Planting Among the Urban Poor," Christianity Today, May 15, 2014, accessed June 27, 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2014/may/church-planting-among-urban-poor-by-efrem-smith.html>.

²⁴ Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century World*, (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000), xvi.

monasticism. Historical monasticism represents a way of life in which the ways of the world were disavowed and one, typically a monk or a nun in a Catholic order, would pursue a life of piety and poverty. A new monasticism has emerged over the last few decades that has been led primarily by young, single Protestants and Evangelicals who embrace a life of austerity and passionate ministry among the poor. Rather than living cloistered away in a monastery, they seek to live among the poor and marginalized in the city and they often turn to the ancient writings and traditions of monasticism for inspiration.

In 2004, leaders from the new monasticism movement across the country gathered at St. John's Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina to formalize the movement. These leaders developed the following statement: "...new monasticism is producing a grassroots ecumenism and a prophetic witness within the North American church that is diverse in form but characterized by the following marks:

1. Relocation to the abandoned places of empire.
2. Sharing economic resources with fellow community members and the needy among us.
3. Hospitality to the stranger.
4. Lament for racial divisions within the church and our communities, combined with the active pursuit of just reconciliation.
5. Humble submission to Christ's body, the church.
6. Intentional formation in the way of Christ and the rule of the community, along the lines of the old novitiate.
7. Nurturing common life among members of intentional community.

8. Support for celibate singles alongside monogamous married couples and their children.
9. Geographical proximity to community members who share a common rule of life.
10. Care for the plot of God's earth given to us, along with support of our local economies.
11. Peacemaking in the midst of violence, and conflict resolution within communities along the lines of Matthew 18:15-20.
12. Commitment to a disciplined contemplative life.²⁵

Shane Claiborne, an important voice in the movement, is one of the leaders of a monastic community in Philadelphia called *The Simple Way*. *The Simple Way* is located in the Kensington neighborhood, which used to be one of the most productive communities in the United States, with hundreds of factories. However, over the last three decades Kensington has lost more than 250,000 jobs and it is now the poorest community in Pennsylvania. Claiborne and five others from Eastern Seminary moved there in 1998 and put down roots among the people. Since then they have purchased property, opened a store, and launched multiple ministries to meet the needs of Kensington's residents. They have also developed programs to help interns and novices experience the monastic lifestyle on a short-term basis to see if living in a monastic community is something they are called to do.²⁶

Critics of the new monasticism contend that a monastic rule of life can slip into legalism and a works-based doctrine of grace and that it uses guilt to motivate those who

²⁵ Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution, Updated and Expanded: Living as an Ordinary Radical* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 379.

²⁶ Rob Moll, "The New Monasticism," Christianity Today, September 2, 2005, accessed June 27, 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/september/16.38.html?start=8>.

come from a life of privilege. Critics also struggle with the broad ecumenical nature and the lack of attention given to Christian doctrine. In response, the new monastics would argue that they are most closely following the way of Jesus and that their desire is to break free from the materialistic culture that the Evangelical church has bought into.

Missional Churches

The missional church movement is a direct response to the reality of the post-Christian context. Missional churches recognize that the church is no longer the “church in the valley” and that in order to reach people far from God the church must go where the people are. Rather than missions being one among many programs in the church, the mission of God is the heartbeat of every activity in a missional church. (This concept will be explored in greater depth in the next section.) Over the last decade, the term “missional” has become so ubiquitous that it has been used to describe almost any effort to reach people outside the church. Alan Hirsch writes:

Many churches have mission statements or talk about the importance of mission, but where missional churches differ is in their posture toward the world. A missional community sees the mission as both its originating impulse and its organizing principle. A missional community is patterned after what God has done in Jesus Christ. In the incarnation God sent his Son. Similarly, to be missional means to be sent into the world; we do not expect people to come to us. This posture differentiates a missional church from an attractional church.²⁷

Missional churches come in all shapes and sizes. Bob Roberts is the pastor of NorthWood Church in Keller, Texas, a church that averages almost 2,000 people each weekend. What makes NorthWood Church stand out among larger churches is that they have participated in planting over eighty-nine churches throughout the world. In an interview with the staff of *Leadership*, Roberts says, “We aren’t about weekends... We

²⁷ Alan Hirsch, “Baggage Check: Defining Missional,” *Leadership* (Fall 2008): 22.

aren't just trying to get people into church. It's kingdom in and kingdom out."²⁸ He continues, "I am learning that mission begins with Christology not ecclesiology. Following Jesus leads us to mission, which leads to churches gathering."²⁹

The Adullam Communities in Denver, Colorado represent another form of a missional church. Adullam's vision statement says, "Adullam is a network of incarnational communities that are apprenticing kingdom people."³⁰ In describing the church, former pastor Hugh Halter says, "We have a missionary thrust that forces us out of the church into a network of incarnational communities, but we also deeply value our corporate calling, our corporate essence, and our consistent larger gatherings."³¹ Adullam communities can be found meeting in homes and various public spaces. Halter says, "our goal is not to attract Christian people to our worship service but to be the faithful church in small pockets throughout our city. We are creating places of inclusive belonging where God's alternative Kingdom can be experienced."³²

A struggle for some of the smaller missional churches in urban areas is the ability to sustain the ministry with sufficient financial and leadership resources. Before Aaron Graham started TDC, he served as the pastor of The Quincy Street Church (Quincy Street) in Boston, Massachusetts among some of the poorest residents of the city. Quincy

²⁸ Anonymous, "We Aren't About Weekends: An Interview with Bob Roberts," *Leadership* (Winter 2007): 29.

²⁹ Ibid., 31.

³⁰ Adullam, "The Way of Adullam," accessed June 30, 2016. <http://www.adullamdenver.com/about-adullam/>.

³¹ Halter and Smay, 25.

³² Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, *The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), Kindle Loc. 309.

Street averaged about fifty people for their worship gatherings and served over 200 people during the week. Graham writes:

...our primary mission of developing local leadership in the Quincy Street community, who would passionately follow Jesus and live out God's mercy and justice for the poor, always felt like an uphill battle. It seemed like leaders relapsing back into their addictions became the norm...It became nearly impossible to raise up long-term leadership within the neighborhood, much less multiply leaders who could go start ministries and churches in neighborhoods beyond Quincy Street.³³

According to Ed Stetzer, additional challenges of the missional church include 1) missional leaders can be reactionary against the established church; 2) missional churches can have an unbalanced view that places demonstration (or service) over proclamation; and 3) Some practitioners have become less orthodox as they have allowed their context to shape theology.³⁴

Organic Church

In reference to food, Webster defines organic as, "grown or made without the use of artificial chemicals."³⁵ Recently I went to my local grocery store to buy a green pepper. I went to the produce department, selected a pepper and then glanced at the price. When I saw the exorbitant amount the grocer wanted for one pepper, I put it back. Then I quickly noticed it was an *organic* green pepper. In the world of a major grocery store chain, less is more. Fewer additives and chemicals means more money!

³³ Graham, 6.

³⁴ Ed Stetzer, "Finding the Right Church Planting Model Part 4: The Missional-Incarnational Approach," Christianity Today, August 17, 2015, accessed July 1, 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/august/finding-right-church-planting-model-part-4-missional-incarn.html>.

³⁵ Merriam Webster Online, s.v. "organic," accessed July 1, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/organic>.

In reference to the Church, the definition is essentially the same but the cost factor is exactly the opposite. Proponents of the organic church movement would argue that the typical church in North America has “additives” that are not essential to the growth of the church, cost far more in resources than necessary, and in some cases could be a detriment to the church actually reaching people who are not Christians. Neil Cole, one of the leaders of the organic church movement, writes: “It amazes me to consider how much effort and how many resources (time, money, and people) are expended for a single hour once a week. We have made church nothing more than a religious show that takes place on Sunday... Is this what the bride of Christ is?”³⁶

The primary focus of the organic church is to be present in the community and gather the church where the people are. Organic church planting starts with making disciples and then follows the Spirit’s lead in the forming and gathering of the church. The movement has defined the church as: “the presence of Jesus among His people called out as a spiritual family to pursue His mission on this planet.”³⁷ Each church should have three critical strands of DNA: Divine Truth, Nurturing Relationships, and Apostolic Mission.³⁸ Organic church leaders contend that the typical way the Western church is organized—with buildings, programs, and a heavy reliance on paid clergy—is cumbersome and not able to be reproduced easily. Conversely, the Organic Church is “best prepared to saturate a region because it is informal, relational, and mobile.”³⁹

³⁶ Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2005), Kindle Loc. 181.

³⁷ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 826.

³⁸ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 1478-1486.

³⁹ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 526.

Critics would argue that the organic church movement is primarily a reaction for many against the mega-church and, like the missional church, could be in danger of wandering from orthodoxy. However, it is hard to argue with the driving focus of the organic church to be a movement of multiplying disciples that seeks to be the presence of Jesus where we live, work, and play. To quote Cole, “If you want to win this world to Christ, you are going to have to sit in the smoking section. That is where lost people are found, and if you make them put their cigarette out to hear the message they will only be thinking about one thing: ‘When can I get another cigarette?’”⁴⁰

Other Redemptive Solutions

This section has been a brief summary of the ways in which some churches approach ministry and mission in the city. It is not intended to be an exhaustive summary and I am glad the Lord chooses to work in many other ways to bring His church to fruitful mission. However, I do believe that each of the approaches described have something to offer a strategy to pursue the renewal of a declining church in the city.

Before leaving this section, it is important to note that some city churches reached the point in their life cycle in which renewal was not possible yet other redemptive solutions were pursued. In my own metro area, Arlington Presbyterian Church and the FBC Church of Clarendon each made the courageous decision to sell their property to a developer who would build affordable housing units for those who have been priced out of gentrified markets.

Before the Fair Park Baptist Church in Alexandria closed, they voted to engage a re-start and gave birth to a new church, Convergence, that is focused on reaching artists

⁴⁰ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 203.

throughout the metro D.C. area. Ballston Baptist Church, realizing their ministry was nearing death, voted to give their property to the NorthStar Network of Churches. A few years later, the network was able to sell the property for over 15 million dollars. The proceeds will be invested in a fund to help new church plants and church renewal projects that will impact our city for Christ for generations to come. Even when local congregational renewal is not what the Spirit is doing, congregations can make courageous and redemptive decisions to advance the mission of God.

SECTION THREE: THE THESIS

Introduction



Recently my wife and I purchased an antique, German crystal chandelier for the dining room in our home in historic Old Town Alexandria, Virginia. The previous light fixture was contemporary in nature and just didn't quite fit in a home that predates the civil war.

As soon as we saw the new-old one, we knew it was for us and we excitedly brought it home and enlisted an electrician to install it. Much to our disappointment, the chandelier could not be installed. Apparently, an essential part, something akin to an anchor that would hold it in the ceiling, was not from the original and the replacement part would not work. To add insult to injury, when the electrician reinstalled the contemporary light fixture, "something" happened to render it useless. So we were left to dine in the dark.

Our chandelier reminds me of the plight of city churches that are in need of renewal. As churches decline, they often adopt non-indigenous solutions and models from churches in other contexts. The hope is that these new parts and pieces will help them find a quick path through the stormy seas of decline and the post-Christian context. Often these imported solutions render the church powerless and little, if any, "light" shines in the community. When this occurs, some city churches become demoralized and lose hope. If renewal does not occur, these churches eventually go into a death spiral that is rarely reversed. Like a chandelier sitting on a chair, these churches look good, but they are no longer useful in the kingdom.

In this section I will contend that a path for city church renewal in the era of post-Christendom is to rediscover God’s original design for the church that leverages the synergy between the incarnational and attractional aspects of the church’s original DNA. In Acts 2 Luke reports that the early church, “...continued to meet together in the temple courts [attractional] and they broke bread in their homes [incarnational] and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.”¹ From the very beginning God choreographed a two-step dance for his church that rocked back and forth between the attractional and incarnational impulses. We will take a closer look at this dance as we consider a strategy of renewal for city churches that includes *both* a return to homes as a center for spiritual formation, community building and evangelism; *and* a vibrant weekly gathering for the worship of God. We will also take a look at a key leadership role and posture that helps facilitate a season of renewal. But first we will explore important theological foundations for city church renewal.

The Missio Dei

In order to effectively respond to the challenges of renewal for city ministry in post-Christendom, the concept of missions must be liberated from the Christendom framework that located the heartbeat of missions in the structures and programs of the church. This liberation of missions from a programmatic mentality results in what is called the *missio Dei*, which is described eloquently by German theologian Jürgen Moltmann in this reflection, “It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes

¹ Acts 2:46 NIV.

the church.”² Considered a more theocentric approach to mission rather than a ecclesiocentric approach to missions,³ the concept of *missio Dei* recognizes that God is a missionary God and that God’s mission preceded the creation and development of the Church. The Church was born, shaped, and gifted to pursue and participate in this great mission of the redemption of all created things. God didn’t form the Church and then announce the Church’s mission. God has a mission and then formed and empowered His church for that missional purpose.

The foundational characteristic of this theology of mission is that God is continually and lovingly in pursuit of humankind and that all of scripture is the story of God’s “sending initiative.” Leonard Sweet says, “In the last few decades of the church we have gotten it backwards. We are not the seekers. God is the real Seeker.”⁴ Wegner and Magruder write:

God is building a family, a global family that will join him in the healing of the world. This mission heartbeat radiates from the Father, through the Son, into the Spirit-filled, sending us out on mission to the world. The Father sent Israel. The Father sent the Son. And now the Father, Son and Spirit are sending the Church. This is the reason why our God left his throne. The heartbeat mission of God is what drives all of redemptive history.⁵

² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 64.

³ Darrell L. Guder and Lois Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), Kindle Loc. 171.

⁴ Leonard Sweet, Lecture, Orcas Island Advance, George Fox Evangelical Seminary, June 2015. (paraphrased)

⁵ Wegner and Magruder, 53.



Figure 2.3
(From Missional Moves)

Three powerful Biblical stories serve as pillars for this theological framework. The first is found in the missional call of Abraham and Sarah. God roused Abram from his nomadic routine and called him to, “Go from your country, your people, and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing...all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”⁶ God’s sending of Abraham on a journey of faith and his invitation to live in a covenant relationship was a mission with a global purpose. God’s intent was to use Abraham and, subsequently, the nation of Israel to bring God’s blessing to all people and to invite all nations to worship Him.

As Israel’s story unfolded, they struggled in their calling to be faithful and to introduce the nations to the heart of God. Yet, that did not deter the missionary impulse

⁶ Genesis 12:1-3 NIV.

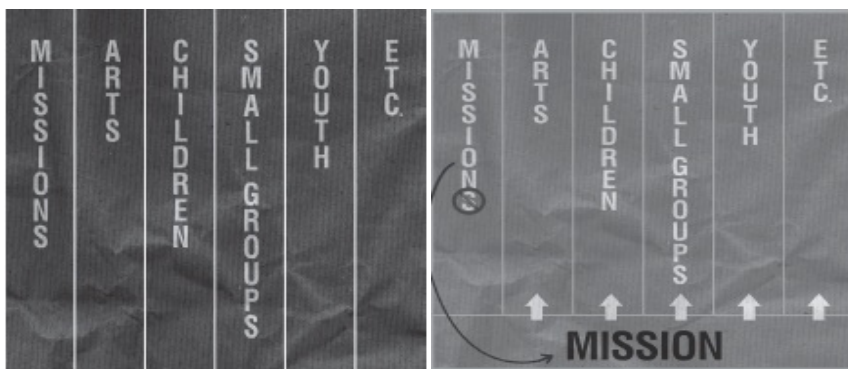
of God, as a second story was woven into this redemption narrative. God sent Jesus, the perfect Israelite, to fulfill the law and to redeem the world through his life, death, and resurrection. The resurrected Jesus then gathered his disciples and sent them to, "...make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I commanded you."⁷ But before they could leave the confines of Jerusalem, another "sending" had to take place. On the day of Pentecost, God and the ascended Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to give birth to the Church. Without the animating power of the Spirit, the Church could not be effectively sent to pursue her mission. And now the Church is in the process of writing another story of mission that will be in development until God fully and finally consummates his Kingdom.

This new (or renewed) theology of mission must be accompanied by a paradigm shift in how the covenant community engages the concept of missions. In the ecclesiocentric model *missions* was seen as one of many programs in the church that competed for time, money, and volunteer resources. (Figure 2.1). This segmented approach to missions leads people to believe that missions are an option in the buffet of church programs rather than an essential part of the faith journey. This results in many people not only being disengaged from God's mission, but stunted in their growth as a disciple.

To embrace the *missio Dei* paradigm for mission is to understand that every aspect of the body of Christ is involved in God's mission enterprise. In a missional church, missions is not a separate program but the *missio Dei* permeates every activity and function of the church. (Figure 2.2). A missional lifestyle is not just for the select few

⁷ Matthew 28:19-20 NIV.

with spare time or vocational missionaries who are sent to faraway lands. Rather, living missionally is taught and modeled as one of the core tenets of being a disciple of Jesus. God did not save his people only to settle them into a routine that would separate them from his movement and work in the world. Or, as Mike Breen from 3DM ministries says, “Every disciple is called to live in three directions: *up* toward God, *in* toward the covenant community and *out* on mission.”⁸



(Figure 2.1 from Missional Moves)

(Figure 2.2 from Missional Moves)

When a church embraces this new paradigm for mission, she will bless and release people for mission in the world, even if their service is not part of their local church’s mission endeavors. In the ecclesiocentric paradigm, an unintended message can be sent that if you are not, “doing our deal, then you are not on mission.”⁹ God’s call for each person is creative and unique and it cannot be contained to the mission budget, priorities, or calendar of one church. In my ministry I have found that often God calls an

⁸ Mike Breen and Steve Cockram, *Building a Discipling Culture: How to Release a Missional Movement by Discipling People Like Jesus Did, 2nd Edition* (Pawley’s Island, SC: 3DM Ministries, 2011), 79-80.

⁹ Wegner and Magruder, 57.

individual to a specific ministry and then the Spirit uses that person's passion to ignite a passion in others and, eventually, in the entire church. Consider this missional story:

In my previous congregation, which is located in an affluent suburban community, one of our members shared with me that she had a burden for the hungry in our community and that she wanted to start a food pantry. I listened politely but as she spoke I was thinking, "we have two closets filled with old cans of soup and we have not had someone come to ask for food in years." Nevertheless, with no small amount of skepticism, I told her to run with the idea and gave my blessing. My first reaction could not have been more wrong! The Spirit animated and anointed that ministry and within a year the food pantry was serving over thirty-five families each week. Local restaurants were donating food and dozens of volunteers were involved on a weekly basis. And, in the second year, the church planted a community garden and invited the clients of the food pantry to have a place to grow their own fresh food. The leadership of the church, including me, simply got out of the way and released her for mission.

This woman volunteers very little time in the centralized ministries of the church. Yet, her vision and leadership has resulted in hungry bellies and souls being fed.

This practice of liberating and empowering people for mission is key to establishing what Alan Hirsch labels an apostolic movement. An apostolic movement is a dynamic combination of God on mission, the local church on mission, and the people of God on mission. When these forces combine, the church is a catalyst for transforming culture and the paradigm is shifted from institution to movement.¹⁰ This missional theology enables Christians to see God working through people and organizations that may not be overtly Christian. Consider this missional story:

Together We Bake (TWB) is an organization founded by Stephanie Wright and Tricia Sabatini in 2012. TWB is an empowerment- based job training program for women in need of a second chance in the Washington, D.C. area. Their mission is to provide a comprehensive workforce training and personal development program to help women gain self-confidence, transferable workforce skills, and invaluable hands-on experience, which will allow them to find sustainable employment and move toward self-sufficiency. Many of TWB's clients were previously incarcerated. TWB runs a micro-bakery out of the church I currently serve and they teach their clients baking and commercial kitchen skills so they

¹⁰ Ibid., 58.

can enter or re-enter the workplace upon completing the program. TWB's products are sold in Whole Foods in the D.C. area and local Farmers' Markets. They have a 90% program completion rate and only 8% recidivism rate. TWB is clearly an example of God working in our community in an organization that is not even Christian-based, much less church-based.

The *missio Dei* invites us to experience God on mission inside and outside of the Church. Church leaders have the sacred responsibility to invite and empower others to participate in this great mission.

A Theology of Exile

In Christendom, the church literally and figuratively stood at the center of the community. Just as tall steeples dominated the skyline, the influence of the church dominated the cultural ethos in many communities. I grew up in Greensboro, North Carolina in the sixties and seventies. Each day, elementary school started with the pledge of allegiance and a prayer. Local clergy took turns offering the prayer before the kickoff to football games on Friday nights. Blue laws forbade stores to be open on Sundays, and in some cities today the sale of alcohol on Sunday is still taboo. A Christian in Christendom was the proverbial fish in the water.

As we have discussed in section one, this is no longer the case in many cities in North America as we are now in a post-Christendom context. If the Christian does not acknowledge this new cultural milieu, she will end up like a fish frantically flopping around on the dock and gasping for air. However, we have a Biblical model for how God's people are to live in a culture in which Christianity is not part of the power structure. From the days of ancient Israel to the Church after Pentecost, God's people have, for the most part, operated on the margins of culture. Beach writes, "Christendom,

it can be argued, is an anomaly that produced mixed results for the church's mission and identity."¹¹

It is in this context that a theology and framework of exile may be the most constructive for the Church as she seeks to be on mission in the city in North America.

An article published by Alban at Duke Divinity School says:

Several scholars, notably Walter Brueggeman and Michael Frost, have affirmed as much [exile as an appropriate framework for the Church in post-Christendom], pointing out that the experience of exile goes beyond simple physical dislocation. It is a cultural and spiritual condition where one feels at odds with the dominant values of the prevailing cultural ethos. Put simply, people can feel as if they are in exile without ever being "cast out of the land."¹²

One could argue that a primary understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus is to embrace a posture of being exiled in our culture. Jesus prayed for his disciples and said:

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.¹³

At the heart of Christian identity is this concept of being dislocated from the dominant culture opposed to God, yet sent on mission into the culture. The call for God's people in exile is not to be cloistered in fear away from the dominant culture, but rather living as a sent people pursuing an open conspiracy of love, justice, and mercy for the global glory of God. Peter wrote to first-century Christians living within the dominant culture of the

¹¹ Beach, Kindle Loc. 205.

¹² Alban at Duke Divinity School, "The Church in Exile: Being a Missionary to the Dominant Culture", October 16, 2008, accessed July 14, 2016, <https://alban.org/archive/the-church-in-exile-being-a-missionary-to-the-dominant-culture/>.

¹³ John 17:14-18 NIV. Emphasis added.

Roman Empire, “Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”¹⁴

In the Old Testament, we find God’s people grappling with the trauma of being exiled by the Babylonian and Persian empires. In response to being exiled, God’s prophet, Jeremiah, wrote to the exiles in Babylon:

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”¹⁵

While exile was a traumatic and devastating experience in the story of God’s people, God’s promise was to allow them to prosper, build, be fruitful, and to increase in number.

The Church today can learn a great deal from the exilic experiences of Ancient Israel. Beach describes the way Israel adjusted in exile by highlighting three critical themes:¹⁶:

1. ***God’s presence on foreign soil.*** Prior to exile, the symbols of God’s presence had been the land, the Davidic kingship, and the temple. In exile, Israel experienced a God that would be with them and would not abandon them. Further, they came to realize that God’s glory was not restricted to the temple and that the covenant

¹⁴ 2 Peter 2:11-12 NIV.

¹⁵ Jeremiah 29:4-7 NIV.

¹⁶ Beach, Kindle Loc. 744-854. (This entire section draws heavily upon Beach’s work.)

traditions could be experienced through their stories. The Church in a post-Christian culture can be assured that God is present and working, that God will not abandon the Church, and that God's glory can be experienced beyond the context of Christendom.

2. **Holiness.** In the prophetic scriptures, the prophets call Israel to be faithful and obedient and to resist the mores of the dominant culture. This is echoed in the call of Jesus for his disciples to be *in* and *sent to* but not *of* the world. The prophetic call to holiness and purity among God's people was a call to maintain their distinct identity. It was also an explicit rejection of the norms of the dominant culture. While Israel was called to build and settle down, they were not called to compromise obedience and to assimilate into the pagan culture. Likewise, Christians today are to pursue holiness and to be distinct in the way that we live in a post-Christian culture.
3. **Mission.** Beach writes, "One of the most dynamic aspects of the turn to hope in exilic life was the renewal of Israel's sense of being a people on mission. Exile brought a renewed sense that Israel had a role to play among the nations of the world in declaring the supremacy of Yahweh."¹⁷ This call to mission is experienced dramatically as in Jonah's call to go and preach to the wicked city of Nineveh, Nehemiah's call to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and in Isaiah's poetic servant songs that beckons Israel to be a "light to the Gentiles that my [God's] salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."¹⁸ Christians in a post-Christian

¹⁷ Beach, Kindle Loc. 798.

¹⁸ Isaiah 49:6 NIV.

culture have the same enduring call to be on mission for the global, glory of God.

A key for this mission to thrive is for Christian leaders to cultivate a missional imagination that is hopeful and creative and that, in the words of Beach, “refuses to be overcome by the circumstances around us that often speak of decline, demise, and death. A prophetic imagination will offer a vision of something different, an alternative future.”¹⁹

A theology and framework of exile offers hope for today’s church. It is a hope that calls us not to seek to return to the powerful place at the center of Christendom, but a hope that beckons us forward, empowered by the Spirit, into purposeful forays of mission from the margins into other cultures for the glory of God.

A Theology of the City

Throughout history God has used the city as an instrument for gathering resources, organizing people and systems for the basic necessities of life, and for the development of culture. Cities were instrumental in furthering the mission of Jesus. Since there is greater population density in the city, both the positive and negative attributes of humankind are intensified. Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz, preeminent urban ministry scholars, write, “Despite sin’s radical distortion of God’s urban purposes, the city remains a mark of grace as well as rebellion, a mark of preserving, conserving grace shared with all under the shadow of the common curse. Urban life, though fallen, is still

¹⁹ Beach, Kindle Loc. 2022.

more than merely livable.”²⁰ The key for God’s people is to have a redemptive missional view of the city.

When Jonah, God’s pouting prophet, expressed frustration and anger toward God for saving the people of Nineveh, God responded by stating his concern for the great city because there were over 120,000 people living there.²¹ City church renewal starts with a renewed concern for the people in the city and the health of the social systems that support city life. When Nehemiah first heard of the plight of the city of Jerusalem, he broke down and wept in concern.²² Nehemiah’s heart was broken for the plight of God’s people and he was moved to engage a work of rebuilding and renewal.

“Cities of refuge” in Ancient Israel served an important role in the covenant community’s justice system. If a person accidentally killed someone and they were being pursued by an avenger-kinsmen, they could flee to these designated cities and find protection and justice. The person who committed involuntary manslaughter could go to the city gates and plead their case before the elders of the city. It was then the responsibility of the elders to admit the accused into the city and find a place for them to live until they could stand trial. After which, if found innocent, they could return to their home without fear of retribution. The six “cities of refuge” were Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramath, and Golan.²³

²⁰ Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001), Kindle Loc. 1015.

²¹ Jonah 4:11 NIV.

²² Nehemiah 1:4 NIV.

²³ Joshua 20:1-9 NIV.

Conn and Ortiz describe a three-fold view of the city in the Hebrew Scriptures.

There is:

1. ***The city as divine intention.*** The mandate that God gave Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply and to rule and subdue the earth,²⁴ is, according to Conn and Ortiz, "...accomplished through more than farming and husbandry; the founding of the first city will be one of the first achievements of this enduring mandate to expand the borders of the garden (Gen 4:17). The future of humankind outside the garden was destined to play out in the cities."²⁵ Cities were built as places of refuge, creativity, beauty and justice.
2. ***The missionary intention of God's cities.*** The covenant call of Abraham included Israel's mission to the nations. Many cities in the Ancient Near East had mixed populations. Conn and Ortiz continue, "In these urban kingdoms Israel, through its Levite priests, could uniquely fulfill its role as a people in the midst of peoples. In keeping with its calling Israel would 'represent God in the world of nations. What priests are for people, Israel as a people is for the world.'"²⁶
3. ***God's urban alternative.*** Conn and Ortiz point out that the alternative to cities in the Bible is not the rural village or urban tribalism. When the Hebrew scriptures depict an alternative to the ideal of city life, it is in terms of chaos, disgrace, and destruction. "The urban inversion would substitute stench for perfume, rope for party sash, sackcloth for rich robes, burning for beauty. The gates of the city

²⁴ Genesis 1:28 NIV.

²⁵ Conn and Ortiz, Kindle Loc. 1007.

²⁶ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 1045. (In this quote Conn and Ortiz quote the work of Johannes Blauw in *The Missionary Nature of the Church* [London: Lutterwork, 1962].)

emptied of population would become gathering places for echoing a liturgy of despair to joy (Isaiah 23:24-25).²⁷ It is the broken city that needs to be restored—not abandoned. It needs to be fought *for*, not fled *from*. As noted earlier, Nehemiah was not called to resettle Jerusalem into a series of villages, he was called to rebuild the walls of the great city. Yes, this is an argument made *via negativa* but it is strong nonetheless.

From the perspective of practical theology, Ray Bakke, another preeminent urban ministry scholar, writes in his book, *A Theology as Big as the City*, that the post-exilic writings of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther should be read together because they each deal with the same challenge from a different perspective. The challenge was rescuing God's people from the threat of extermination as in the case of Esther; or in the case of Nehemiah and Ezra, restoring the city of Jerusalem. The different perspectives taken together, synoptically, provide a comprehensive approach to mission in the city today.²⁸

Esther addresses the challenge from the perspective of using influence in the marketplace and the political arena. By God's gracious intervention, even though Esther was an exiled outsider, she moved into the political system when the Persian king Xerxes made her the queen. She then persuaded Xerxes to change the edict that all Jews were to be destroyed and they were given the ability to defend themselves in the land. Likewise, to seek the welfare of the city, Christians must do more than pray. We must find ways, by God's gracious intervention, to be a part of the system so that unjust laws that adversely affect the most vulnerable in the city are changed.

²⁷ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 1069.

²⁸ Ray Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1997), Kindle Loc. 956-1013. (This section adapted and paraphrased from Bakke.)

Nehemiah approached the challenge from the perspective of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, which represented provision, justice, and security. This perspective reminds us that mission in the city is not just ministry to people as individuals; it must also focus on the rebuilding of social networks and systems, many of which are designed to help those on the margins of the city. Nehemiah also organized and mobilized city dwellers to engage the work. A church on mission in the city seeks to empower the residents of the city to be a part of the solution to the challenge. When the solution to the challenge is organic rather than from the outside, the potential to sustain positive change is dramatically increased.

Ezra's ministry was priestly in function and he reintroduced the teaching of God's Word to God's people. This is a reminder that ministry in the city cannot only focus on improving the social well-being of the city, but it must also seek to transform the spiritual lives of the residents of the city. Comprehensive mission in the city endeavors to do a good deed and share the Good Word. Reflecting on the writings of William Temple, Bakke writes, "Christianity is the most materialistic religion on the entire earth. It's the only religion that successfully integrates matter and spirit with integrity...If Temple is correct, we Christians are the only people who can truly discuss the salvation of souls and the rebuilding of city sewer systems in the same sentence."²⁹

In the New Testament, the concept of God's redemptive work moves beyond specific cities such as Jerusalem and Babylon. God's mission agents are to tell the story of Jesus' life and work on the cross from Jerusalem to Judea, from Samaria and to the

²⁹ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 291.

ends of the earth.³⁰ Empowered by the Spirit, Jesus' followers move out from Jerusalem and into the surrounding cities. Bakke writes, "The very architecture of Luke-Acts, which moves from Galilee to Jerusalem, and then from Jerusalem to Rome, displays an urban focus."³¹ Cities served a strategic purpose for the missionary journeys of St. Paul. Cities such as Athens and Ephesus were places where ideas and trade moved about with ease. Just as the infrastructure of the cities facilitated the movement of commerce, it also facilitated the movement of the gospel.

The early Christians also ministered to the urban poor. In his book *The Rise of Christianity* Rodney Stark writes:

To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachments. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. To cities torn by violent and ethnic strife, Christianity offered a basis for social solidarity...People had been enduring catastrophes for centuries without the aid of Christian theology or social structures. Hence I am by no means suggesting that the misery of the world caused the advent of Christianity. What I am going to argue is that once Christianity did appear, its superior capacity for meeting these chronic problems soon became evident...[for what Christians] brought was not simply an urban movement, but a new culture.³²

The city provided a stage on which the theological themes of Jesus' kingdom could be experienced and appropriated.

The final word on the city in the Bible is found in Revelation 21-22 as John the Revealer experienced a vision for the ultimate redemption of all created things. John describes the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. And

³⁰ Keller, 148.

³¹ Bakke, Kindle Loc. 1233.

³² Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 161-162 quoted in Keller, 149.

this new city will be a garden city with a river running through it and trees that will bring healing to the nations. All the redeemed will inhabit this new city and God will dwell among the people.³³ As someone once said, “The Bible begins in a garden and ends in a city.”³⁴ Understanding God’s holistic vision for the city enables a city church to consider a comprehensive strategy for renewal that seeks the transformation of the individual, the community, and the church. We will now turn our attention to key practical aspects of ministry that, by God’s grace, will foster a climate for missional renewal in the city.

Cultivating a Climate for Change

American inventor Charles Kettering said, “The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress.”³⁵ Kettering, an engineer who led the research department at General Motors, could have easily been referring to the Church in North America. Yet, change, and the ability to respond to a changing environment, is part of the DNA of the Church. Developing a Biblical framework for change and a healthy leadership approach to the process of change is essential to the success of a strategy for city church renewal.

A Biblical and Theological Framework for Change

Quite naturally, people of faith are drawn into a tension as one considers the concept of change in the church. On one hand, as Christians we place our faith in Jesus

³³ Revelation 21-22 NIV.

³⁴ Source unknown.

³⁵ Charles Kettering, accessed November 30, 2014, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/charlesket122377.html>.

who is the “same yesterday and today and forever.”³⁶ We are encouraged to “contend for the faith that has been entrusted to God’s holy people.”³⁷ It would be quite a challenge to contend for that which is in a constant state of change.

Yet, on the other hand, one could argue that change is *writ large* throughout the story of God. After the fall, Adam and Eve were suddenly aware that they were naked. This is a change that penetrates the deepest level of the human psyche. The Exodus was a massive journey of change for the People of God. Jesus captivated his listeners on the mountainside by expanding how his followers were to understand and apply the law of God more directly. Saul was blinded on the road to Damascus, became Paul, and later writes, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”³⁸ Peter had a vision on the rooftop one day and his understanding of the reach of God’s mission is changed as he shares the gospel with Cornelius, a Gentile.

Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead provides a powerful “narraphor” for city churches that are dying and in need of renewal. Leonard Sweet defines a “narraphor” as “a story made with metaphors that help us understand the world, ourselves, and God better.”³⁹ Just as Mary and Martha acknowledged that Lazarus was dead and that they lamented the absence of Jesus, Sullivan argues that churches in need of renewal must first acknowledge that they are dying and that they have become distanced from the presence, power, and ministry of Jesus.⁴⁰ After this reality is acknowledged and faith in Jesus is

³⁶ Hebrews 13:8 NIV.

³⁷ Jude 1:3 NIV.

³⁸ 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV.

³⁹ Leonard Sweet, *From Tablet to Table: Where Community is Found and Identity is Formed* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 3.

⁴⁰ Sullivan, 13.

asserted, the miracle of new life is given by the grace and power of God for the global glory of God.

This work of renewal is not the work of God alone. The Bible issues a continuous call for humankind to join God in God's redemptive work to restore and renew creation.

Professor Terry Briley writes:

The Bible typically does not use the word 'change.' It centers instead on the rich theological vocabulary behind 're' language such as rebirth, renewal, restoration, redemption, reconciliation, and repentance. These words certainly signal change, though, and dramatic change at that. Such language helps to address the ever-relevant question regarding change: Why? The words above share the assumption that: 1) God's original creation has been damaged by sin; 2) God is at work to overcome this damage; 3) God has invited us to participate in his work. We human beings, who often resist change—and are the only part of the creation with much capacity to do so—introduced the fall. We also remain the only part of the creation honored by God to join his counteractive response to the fall.⁴¹

The sacred call for the missional leader is to proclaim a Gospel that transforms the lives of those who follow the mission of Jesus and to discern the difference between change that is redemptive and change that is destructive to the health of the congregation.

To answer the challenging question of what should or should not be changed, Aubrey Malphurs developed a practical framework for a theology of change that he labels the, 3 F's: function, form, and freedom. **Functions** are the timeless, unchanging, and non-negotiable precepts that are based on scripture. Malphurs distinguishes between general and specific functions. Specific functions are those that apply to certain believers such as the gifts of leadership and administration. General functions apply to the entire church and are crucial for spiritual maturity such as teaching, fellowship, worship,

⁴¹ Terry Briley, "What is the Biblical Perspective on Change," Terry Briley, May 5, 2013, accessed December 1, 2014, <http://terrybriley.com/2013/05/05/what-is-the-biblical-perspective-on-change/>.

evangelism, and service. How these functions are *experienced* may change, but their role in the church must be unchanging.

Forms are the temporal, changing methods that are sensitive to cultural dynamics and realities. A form would describe *how* a function is experienced in the life of the church. Worship service times and styles are examples of form, as are the various approaches to discipleship and gift-based ministry. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, a church has **freedom** in discerning what forms are necessary to fulfill the absolute functions of the church. Malphurs argues that there should be only two restrictions when it comes to choosing forms. First, forms or methods need to be consistent with scripture. While they do not need to be prescribed by scripture, they should not contradict scripture. Second, forms must be engaged to accomplish the absolute functions of the church.⁴² Leaders whom God has called to lead a city church through a season of congregational renewal would be wise to ground the congregation in a theology of change that allows them to distinguish the critical difference between absolute functions and negotiable forms.

A Healthy Leadership Approach to Change

Before we consider a healthy approach to change for the city church seeking missional renewal, let's first establish a definition of what it means to be a missional church. Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk define a missional church as "...a community of God's people who live into the imagination that they are, by their very nature, God's missionary people living as a demonstration of what God plans to do in and for all

⁴² Aubrey Malphurs, *A New Kind of Church: Understanding Models of Ministry for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 85-93. [Note: This footnote indicates that the entire section on the 3 F's are drawn from Malphurs' work]

creation in Jesus Christ.”⁴³ A missional church embraces the need for the church to be both gathered (attractional) and scattered (incarnational) and, as stated earlier, is a theocentric approach to mission. God is on mission in the world today and formed the Church for the purpose of pursuing and advancing God’s kingdom reign on earth as it is in heaven.

It is important for the leader of a city church seeking renewal to recognize the *type* of change that our culture is experiencing. Roxburgh and Romanuk write that there are two types of change: *continuous* and *discontinuous*. Continuous change, also referred to as developmental change, is change that occurs *within* a paradigm. It is change that comes with normal development, maturity, and growth that one could expect within the typical life cycle of an individual or organization. While continuous change is often resisted and grieved, one typically has resources available to learn how to deal with continuous change. The approach may need to be tweaked here and there, but this kind of change can be managed with the existing skill set of the leader.⁴⁴

Discontinuous change is disruptive and unanticipated; it creates situations that challenge our assumptions.⁴⁵ In February of 2011, my sister called me in the middle of the night to tell me my mother had suffered a major stroke. In that moment the entire dynamic of our family changed. The change introduced a level of stress and chaos that we were not equipped to handle. It also demanded a new set of skills that my mother’s primary caregivers struggled to embrace.

⁴³ Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), Kindle Loc. 226.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 291-305.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Kindle Loc. 291-305

The post-Christian culture presents a significant amount of disruptive change for the leader and the church in the city. Like it was for my mother's caregivers, skills that used to be effective are no longer adequate for the task. Without the development of a new framework of leadership that calls for a new set of skills, the leader is vulnerable to high levels of frustration and burnout. Many choose to leave parish ministry altogether.⁴⁶

In a Christian culture, a leader could operate successfully with either a pastoral or entrepreneurial approach to leadership. The pastoral approach focuses on meeting the needs of the flock. The entrepreneurial approach knows where the church needs to go and then develops a compelling vision and strategy for the congregation to implement. Roxburgh and Romanuk argue that these approaches are no longer optimal for the church in the sea of discontinuous change. Rather, they argue for a new framework of leadership in which the leader is a cultivator that seeks to cultivate the missional imagination, capacity, and gifts of the people of God.⁴⁷

Roxburgh and Romanuk explore four critical elements for the process of cultivation. They are:

- **Cultivating an Awareness and Understanding.** This is where the leader seeks to cultivate an awareness of what God is doing among the people and leading the congregation to imagine being at the center of God's activities in the world.
- **Cultivating Co-learning Networks.** This is where the leader seeks to create an environment in which people can experiment and discover new ways of engaging

⁴⁶ Travis Collins, *For Ministers About to Start...Or Give Up* (Columbia, SC: The Columbia Partnership, 2014), 2.

⁴⁷ Roxburgh and Romanuk, Kindle Loc. 675-731.

Scripture and mission together. The emphasis is on the leader helping to cultivate and inspire but not to impose strategies.

- **Cultivating Fresh Ways to Engage Scripture.** This is where the leader helps people to connect with the story of God and find their place in the Kingdom narrative. Scripture is seen more as a story to be entered into and less of a toolbox of principles and precepts to memorize.
- **Cultivating New Practices, Habits and Norms.** This is where the leader cultivates among the people new ways of connecting to various habits and practices of spiritual formation.⁴⁸

For a leader to transition from a pastoral or entrepreneurial style of leadership, a great deal of self-awareness and submission to the work of the Holy Spirit is needed.

Cultivating leadership requires key attitudes of the heart such as humility, submission, service, patience, and discernment. It requires the leader to listen more to the Spirit and to the people and to speak less. The leader must be willing to share ministry and leadership at every level, lose control (as if the leader really ever had control), and follow the dance of the Spirit and pace of the people. This form of leadership provides a healthy approach to change that enables creative and apostolic ministry and leadership to thrive.

Cultivating Apostolic Leadership for Renewal

“The great Christian revolutions came not by the discovery of something that was not known before. They happen when someone takes radically something that was

⁴⁸ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 731-799.

always there.”⁴⁹ This observation by the great theological ethicist, H. Richard Niebuhr applies beautifully when considering the subject of leadership in the church amidst the disruptive and turbulent change of post-Christian North America. In order for the church in the city to rediscover the heartbeat of God’s mission, I contend the role of the apostolic leader is the “*that which was always there*” that needs to be rediscovered in the church. The role of the apostolic leader has been in the DNA of the church since its inception. Without passionate, clear, theologically grounded apostolic leadership, city churches in need of renewal will not be able to effectively engage the new frontiers of mission in post-Christian North America.

Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors [shepherds], and the teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”⁵⁰ The gifts listed in this passage, according to missional thought-leaders,⁵¹ constitute far more than just another list of gifts such as those listed in the Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. Rather, these gifts, given by Jesus to his church, represent roles that are essential in the ministry and mission of the church.

One challenge for the church in North America is that leadership in the church has mostly focused on the role of shepherd and teacher. The roles of evangelist, apostle, and

⁴⁹ H. Richard Niebuhr as quoted by Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), Kindle Loc. 3100.

⁵⁰ Ephesians 4:11-13 NIV.

⁵¹ Leading missional voices such as Mike Breen, Alan Hirsch, David Bosch, Tim Catchim, and Darrell Guder.

prophet, in *general* have been underemphasized and often relegated to parachurch ministries and missionaries. This neglect has led to many churches declining in growth and failing to reproduce new churches. Darrell Guder writes, “The problem of clericalism that results from that reduction of these essential functions is certainly one of the major and most daunting challenges that the Western Christian movement faces as it moves out of the protections of established Christendom.”⁵²

However, when the roles of prophet, evangelist, and apostle are recovered in the church, an ecclesiology of movement is established.⁵³ Hirsch and Catchim describe the importance of the apostolic role as follows:

The apostle is the quintessentially missional form of ministry and leadership. The apostolic role provides the key that unlocks the power of the New Testament ecclesiology insofar as its ministry is concerned. In the power of the Holy Spirit, apostles are given to the ecclesia to provide the catalytic, adaptive, movemental, translocal, pioneering, entrepreneurial, architectural, and custodial ministry needed to spark, mobilize, and sustain apostolic movements.⁵⁴

The role of the apostolic leader in creating an environment for the renewal of the church and the expansion of mission in the city is vital.

⁵² Darrell Guder, Quoted in Hirsch and Catchim, *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), xvi.

⁵³ The scope of this work does not allow for the treatment of the roles of prophet and evangelist. In *A Permanent Revolution*, Hirsch and Catchim describe the role of the prophet as the leader who calls God’s people to faithfulness and serve as the guardians of the covenantal relationship. They describe the evangelist as the recruiter to the cause and the naturally infectious person who is able to enlist people into the movement by transmitting the gospel.

⁵⁴ Hirsch and Catchim, Kindle Loc. 898.

The Work of the Apostolic Leader

If the primary call of the disciple of Jesus is to announce the Kingdom of God,⁵⁵ then it is the primary role of the apostle, guided by the Holy Spirit, to be the catalyst that creates the context for such announcement and demonstration by leading apostolically. Dave Ferguson, Senior Pastor of Community Christian Church in Naperville, Illinois writes, “People with apostolic gifts see over the horizon. They’re able to look at the spiritual landscape and see where God is working... We’re counting on apostles to do their thing so that everybody else can do theirs.”⁵⁶

Apostolic leaders do not just look for new expressions of mission to launch and then, like a lone ranger, move on to the next challenge. Rather, the apostolic leader seeks to pioneer and establish an organizational culture that will foster team-based leadership that depends on the roles of the prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher to develop the community into a multiplying organism. Hirsch and Catchim have identified four crucial functions of the apostolic leader:

- Apostles seed the DNA of the gospel and the Church by pioneering new ground. So, as the one who is sent, he or she advances the gospel into new missional contexts and cultures and plants the gospel there, subsequently cultivating new expressions of the ecclesia. This involves far more than sharing the gospel and then moving on once the person has accepted Christ. The apostle embeds the very

⁵⁵ Michael Frost, “God’s Mission and Your Neighborhood,” Sentralized Chicago, Naperville, January 14, 2015.

⁵⁶ Dave Ferguson as quoted by Skye Jethani, “Apostles Today? Rediscovering the Gift that Leaves Churches and Well-connected Pastors in its Wake,” Christianity Today, originally published in *Leadership Journal*, Spring 2008, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2008/spring/15.37.html?start=1>.

genetic codes of the church so it is sound theologically and, sustainable, and so that it remains true to its missionary calling.

- Apostles guard the DNA of the gospel and ecclesia through the integration of apostolic theology. The apostle is aware of the movement's theological integrity, and realizes that the movement can be compromised by false teaching and shallow theology. St. Paul stayed connected to the churches he planted and frequently corrected false teaching.
- Apostles cultivate translocal, fully networked movements through vision, purpose, and the management of meaning. Theological identity, meaning, and purpose blend to create a common identity that transcends denominational and cultural barriers. It is a decentralized network that seeks to hold order and chaos in tension.
- Apostolic leaders create an apostolic field in which distinctly apostolic things happen. The apostle's work is foundational and provides the springboard for other ministries.⁵⁷ An example would be Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14. They appoint leaders in churches and leave them to develop and maintain the congregations.

Two Dimensions of Apostolic Ministry: Pauline and Petrine

Whenever one considers a model for apostolic work, the missionary ministry of Paul immediately comes to mind. He went from city to city, planting the gospel and establishing churches that would reproduce disciples and other churches. Yet, there is another model for apostolic leadership in the Bible that needs consideration for churches in need of renewal. Dick Scoggins of the U.S. Center for World Missions writes:

⁵⁷ Hirsch and Catchim, Kindle Loc. 3342-3483 (paraphrased in part by author).

If we read Galatians 2:8-10 as portraying two types of apostleship, then we see some compelling ramifications. In this passage, Paul states that Peter recognized his (and Barnabas') calling as apostles to the Gentiles, while Paul and Barnabas recognized Peter's (and James' and John's) apostleship to the circumcised (Jews). So we see that there is an apostolic ministry to the existing people of God (the Petrine).⁵⁸

The synergy of these two models of apostolic leadership can bring about a powerful season of renewal in the church.

Consider the directional focus of the Petrine and Pauline apostles. Paul went out to the edges of the frontier and established new congregations by grounding them in the faith and then moving them into the center as they became connected to the Church Universal. This has an outward-in directional energy. Peter, on the other hand, started at the center and moved in an inward-out direction. Ircel Harrison writes:

While Paul was penetrating the Gentile world with the gospel, Peter and James stayed in Jerusalem and shared the message of Christ in the center of Jewish influence. They were confronting an established system with a message of renewal, but their mission was still apostolic. Both within and outside of the church we need apostolic leaders. Those who function within the church are leaders who realize that just as God is a sending God (sending forth God's own Son), the church is a sending church. The church should always be engaging the culture, but someone may have to remind it to do so.⁵⁹

Petrine apostles seek to cultivate the missional imagination of the people and seek to guide the congregation to discover how the Spirit is beckoning them to engage their missional role. "If Pauline apostles are entrepreneurs, Petrine apostles are intra-preneurs.

⁵⁸ Dick Scoggins, "Nurturing a New Generation of Pauline and Petrine Apostles," Simple Church, April 4, 2009, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://simplechurch.eu/index.php/articles/full/nurturing-a-new-generation-of-pauline-and-petrine-apostles.-dick-scoggins/>.

⁵⁹ Ircel Harrison, "4 Types of Leadership Needed in Missional Churches," Ethics Daily, December 15, 2014, accessed April 21, 2015, <http://ethicsdaily.com/4-types-of-leadership-needed-in-missional-churches-cms-22330>.

They work within the organization to turn an idea into a viable outcome through assertive risk-taking and innovation.”⁶⁰

*Table 1: Petrine and Pauline Apostolic Ministry Characteristics*⁶¹

| | Pauline | Petrine |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| People skill set | Culturally savvy | Politically savvy |
| Primary metaphor | Pioneer | Mobilizer |
| Specialization | Founding | Refounding |
| Task | Mission | Remissionalize, revitalize |
| People Orientation | Outsiders | Insiders |
| Response to status quo | High dissonance | Medium to low dissonance |
| Missional focus | To the nations | To the people of God among the nations |
| Leadership Type | Entrepreneurial | Intrapreneurial |
| Assignment duration | Shorter term | Medium to long term |
| Level of risk involved | High risk | Moderate to low risk |
| How they are viewed by the institution | As a dissenter (a change agent) | As an agitator (a change manager) |

Cultivating Apostolic Leaders

Movements never start in corporate offices with executives drawing up a master plan. Looking for the best and brightest and recruiting them to the work is not how world-changing movements start. If we truly want to see the world changed, we must begin as a band of madmen [and women], welcoming other crazy people who want to be a part of something bigger than themselves.⁶²

⁶⁰ Hirsch and Catchim, Kindle Loc. 3742.

⁶¹ Ibid., Kindle Loc. 3754 (Table 6.1).

⁶² Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are (Shapevine)*, Reprint ed. (Loveland, CO: Baker Books, 2010), 130.

So how does a city church in need of renewal cultivate an environment that is conducive to a grassroots movement of kingdom revolutionaries? Let's explore a three-dimensional response to this challenge.

Corporate repentance and renewal. *If a church has neglected any of the roles outlined in Ephesians 4:11, the first step is to engage in an expression of corporate repentance and to seek renewal.* Just as in every area of the Christian life, repentance is the prelude to renewal. This exercise would make the congregation aware of the need for the apostolic role in the church and it could lead to the congregation surfacing critical reasons and corporate character flaws that have led to the neglect of the role.

Are there control issues among key leaders in the church? Is there a lack of faith or an improper view of stewardship? Is the leadership selfish and unwilling to send people out to be the catalyst to launch new expressions of the church? The point of this step is not to bring shame, but to create a healthy self-awareness and understanding. Starting with a call to repentance also frames the issue of apostolic leadership and ministry as a matter of obedience to the Great Commission rather than a mere strategic emphasis. The call to repentance and obedience is timeless, whereas strategies come and go with various leaders.

Second, essential to the renewal dimension of this issue is a season of prayer in which the church asks God to send laborers for the harvest. Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."⁶³ Imagine the impact of hundreds of people praying that

⁶³ Luke 10:2 NIV.

God would call out leaders who consider leaving the routine of their comfort zones to be sent out to pioneer new ministries.

Third, the pursuit of holiness in the role of the apostolic leader is critical. As we have already noted, Beach contends that the pursuit of holiness is a crucial dynamic for the church living in exile. It is the pursuit of holiness that allows a people to maintain their distinct values and commitments in the world. As the church launches new missional expressions, apostolic leaders must model this pursuit or the movement will struggle.

A theology of the missio Dei. The second dimension of cultivating apostolic leaders is to embrace the concept of the *missio Dei* (explored at length above). As the theology and practice of mission moves to the center of church rather than as just one additional program, the environment is more conducive for apostolic leaders to hear God's call for missional leadership. It also lays the groundwork for the church culture to empower and release people for mission. When this theology is permeating the life of the congregation, the scorecard is changed. Rather than focusing exclusively on how many people are gathered on Sunday, the congregation begins measuring kingdom effectiveness by counting how many leaders are sent and how many new ventures are started.

Practice. The third dimension of cultivating apostolic leadership is practice. The following activities are typically present in an environment in which apostolic leadership is cultivated:

- The senior leader models a missional lifestyle. It is not essential for the senior leader to have apostolic gifting, but it is essential that s/he is a champion for the role.
- The missions' ministries of the church are repositioned in guiding documents (budget, By-laws, vision plans, etc.) so that mission is allowed to permeate every ministry rather than being one of many programs.
- Sermons and teachings frequently center on a missional lifestyle and orientation.
- Stories of people being involved in missional ventures are highlighted.
- There is a change in metrics. The church celebrates missional ventures instead of, or at least in equal proportions to, attendance patterns.
- The attitude of "giving our best folks away" is valued instead of resisted.
- The pastor and other leaders offer to serve as prayer partners and mentors.
- The roles of the clergy and laity are less distinct and leaders for new ventures are often found among what is traditionally known as the laity.
- The congregation rather than the seminary is the seedbed for cultivating apostolic leadership. The congregation encourages and supports the ongoing theological development of new leaders in partnership with seminaries, but the locus of leadership development is in the congregation.⁶⁴

This three-dimensional response to the challenge of cultivating apostolic leaders in the church today, in the power of the Holy Spirit, should serve as a catalyst for the renewal of city churches.

⁶⁴ Travis Collins, Director of Mission Advancement, Fresh Expressions US, e-mail exchange with the author on April 22, 2015. (Bullets 2, 8, and 9 are gleaned from the author's experience and general conversations with other missional thought-leaders.)

Thus far in this section we have established a theological foundation for mission, the city, and what it means for the people of God to live as exiles in a post-Christian culture. We have explored the contours of congregational change and considered a new framework for missional leadership. And, we have highlighted the importance of the role of the apostle as the city church seeks to renew her focus on the edges of mission in the city. The remainder of this section will focus on two important aspects of a strategy of renewal.⁶⁵

Two Sides of the Same Coin: Attractional and Incarnational Ministry

Ultimately, theological concepts need to be put into practice. Just as the “Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us,”⁶⁶ missiological concepts must find their way into the practice of ministry. There are two streams of thought and approaches to mission that characterizes the church in North America: the incarnational approach (often referred to as missional) and the attractional approach. According to Graham:

The incarnational approach tends to see the mission of God mostly beyond the local church in the neighborhood. The attractional approach tends to see the mission of God mostly within the walls of the church. While neither approach would argue that (a) the local church does not have a critical role in the mission of God or (b) that the mission of God does not exist beyond the walls of the church, churches in these streams functionally behave as if at least one is true.⁶⁷

Regrettably, many practitioners pursue one approach to the exclusion of the other, creating a false dichotomy between the church gathered (attractional) and the church scattered (incarnational).

⁶⁵ The artifact portion of this project will focus on specific practical elements of a strategy for the renewal of Downtown Baptist Church, the church that I serve in the metropolitan D.C. area.

⁶⁶ John 1:14 NIV.

⁶⁷ Graham, 23-24.

A friend of mine used to always say to me, “any strength over played becomes a weakness.” The same is true for the attractional and incarnational approaches to mission. The attractional church runs the risk of neglecting those for whom the gathered aspect of church life will not be the point of entry into the congregation and who may even be hostile to the institutional church. Additionally, the attractional church, with a heavy emphasis on campus-based ministry, extracts followers of Jesus from the communities in which they live, often separating the functions of discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship from mission.

When I attended college at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, every day on my way to class I drove past a church that had a sign that had just below its name with the descriptors, *Independent, Fundamental, Bible-Believing, Premillennial*. It also had a black chain link fence surrounding the perimeter of the church. The message was very clear: “Unless you are one of us—stay out!” Yet, an attractional church could be creating an *invisible* fence around the perimeter of the campus that keeps parishioners inside the church and off the mission field. The unintended message could be: “If you are one of us stay in here!”

The incarnational church,⁶⁸ while usually closer in proximity to the neighborhood and usually smaller in number, can become a closed community that a newcomer can find difficult to break into. Additional challenges of the incarnational impulse when over-emphasized are inadequate resources, burnout among core leaders, and the potential for social action to become more of a priority than the worship of God.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ A description of various forms of incarnational churches is included in section 2 under the headings: New Monasticism, Missional Church, and Organic Church.

⁶⁹ Graham, 18-34.

I contend that for a city church in need of renewal, a healthy balance between the attractional and incarnational impulses of the church is essential. More importantly, a biblical vision for the church includes both. As stated earlier in this section, both Israel and the Church have been sent into the world (incarnational) to invite people into the reconciled, redeemed community to worship and honor God. Endowed by the Spirit, this movement into the world is irresistibly attractive. This is why, for this project, I use the term “missional” to describe a church that is faithfully pursuing the mission of God while holding both impulses together.

These dynamic impulses, held together in tension fuel each other. Smaller incarnational communities acting as cells of the larger congregation need the gathered celebration of multiple communities to be inspired and renewed for service. Mike Breen writes:

It [the larger gathering] reminds us who we are. It shows us we are part of a bigger story that is reinforced when, upon looking around, we see enough people to remind us we aren't alone in this. We hear stories of victory and redemption. It nourishes our souls and allows the wounds of the missional frontier to receive some healing. It is not the only place care happens, but it is an important one.⁷⁰

Just as the holy feasts and festivals reminded the Israelites of their participation in the larger family of God, the same is true of the gathered Church today.

The gathered church needs the relational depth that can only be achieved in smaller incarnational communities. This relational depth brings an intangible quality to the gathered community in worship that a room full of an equal number of strangers cannot achieve. Incarnational communities also serve as ministry labs that allows a

⁷⁰ Mike Breen, “Can a Church Be Missional and Attractional?” BlogPosts3DM, accessed December 15, 2013, <http://weare3dm.com/mikebreen/we-are-3dm/can-a-church-be-missional-and-attractional/>.

congregation to take risks and reach into segments of the community where the larger congregation could not go. Wegner and Magruder writes, “Institutions [the gathered church] can hold ground, preserve the important gains of the pioneers [the incarnational communities], and in fact become the supply chain, the distribution force, and most importantly the launch pad for the pioneering movement out on the edges.”⁷¹

It may seem counter intuitive for a city church in need of renewal to focus an equal amount of energy on scattering the church as it does gathering the church. When budgets are declining, committee positions are vacant, and there seems to be more empty pews than filled ones, it is tempting to focus almost exclusively on the Sunday gathering. It is tempting to hold the people who are in the congregation tightly and struggle to release them for ministry in their own neighborhoods, even if it means committee positions remain unfilled, and heaven forbid a Sunday is missed now and then. But God works in counter intuitive ways and promises to bless the church when we are willing to give ourselves away for the sake of mission.

Further, a balanced approach between these two powerful impulses is how God wired the church. During the era of Christendom, the church was characterized by its focus on the attractional impulse almost to the exclusion of the incarnational. In this new era, an era that will feel far more like the first century in many ways for the church, the incarnational impulse cannot be ignored. It will lead the church to where the people are. When both are held together, the church radiates with the beauty and passion of Jesus.

⁷¹ Wegner and Magruder, Kindle Loc. 1028.

Word and Deed with a Twist

The ultimate goal for city church renewal is for lives to be changed by the gospel of Jesus demonstrated in both word and deed. If in a missional church mission is to be the heartbeat of the church, then evangelism is the heartbeat of mission. Yes, mission is more than individuals becoming Christians, but it should never be less. But what does effective evangelism look like in a post-Christian culture that is marked by pluralism?

I contend the gospel is most effective when proclaimed in word and deed, with a twist. “Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary use words”⁷² is a popular quote that captures what some believe is an appropriate method of evangelism in a post-Christian culture. This statement is often used to challenge Christians to live winsome lives that are consistent with the gospel.

This is a noble aspiration to be sure. However, this statement can diminish the gospel by only presenting one side of the gospel coin—deeds. Mark Galli, quoted in an article by Ed Stetzer, said:

[The quote] ‘Preach the gospel; use words if necessary’ goes hand in hand with a postmodern assumption that words are finally empty of meaning. It subtly denigrates the high value that the prophets, Jesus, and Paul put on preaching. Of course we want our actions to match our words as much as possible. But the gospel is a message, news about an event and a person upon which the history of the planet turns.⁷³

⁷² Anonymous. Often wrongly attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.

⁷³ Ed Stetzer, “Preach the Gospel, and Since It’s Necessary, Use Words,” *Christianity Today*, June 25, 2012, accessed April 25, 2014, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2012/june/preach-gospel-and-since-its-necessary-use-words.html>.

Stetzer continues, “[The gospel] isn’t something we can do, but it is something we must announce. We do live out its implications, but if we are to make the gospel known, we will do so through words.”⁷⁴

Additionally, the challenge to a “deeds-only” approach to evangelism is that it does not necessarily point people to Jesus. In a post-Christian culture, there are moralistic pagans who do good deeds. There are members of other faith groups who are engaged in issues of justice and mercy. Altruistic endeavors are powerful public relations tools of global corporations such as Starbucks, Apple, and Microsoft. A “wordless” gospel can get lost in a sea of good deeds being performed daily.

For evangelism in a post-Christian culture to be effective, a holistic approach must be pursued that includes verbal proclamation of the gospel and the demonstration of compassionate ministry. These two are not meant to be separated. Missiologist and theologian David Bosch writes, “Evangelism will of necessity consist of word and deed, proclamation and presence, explication and example...because ‘our deeds,’ our ‘Christian presence,’ and our example are ambiguous.”⁷⁵

Timothy Keller contends that in order for the gospel to be heard and believed in a post-Christian culture four characteristics must be present:

1. The gospel must be *intelligible*. People need to understand intellectually the key truths of the gospel such as grace, sin, repentance and salvation.
2. The gospel must be *credible*. People may understand the concepts but still not believe. The burden for the evangelist is to provide a credible reason for the faith

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ David Bosch as quoted by Krish Kandiah, “Lesslie Newbigin’s Contribution to a Theology of Evangelism,” *Transformation* 24, no. 1 (January 2007): 51-60.

that meets the objectives of others who may have a completely different worldview.

3. The gospel must be *plausible*. People need to see how the gospel meets their deepest needs.
4. The gospel must be *intimate (personal)*. Ultimately, the truth of the gospel has to be received personally.⁷⁶

The first two characteristics focus on gospel announcement while the last two focus on gospel demonstration. For the gospel to be plausible and personal a non-Christian today needs to see it being lived out in a Christian.

So what's the twist? The twist is community. A culture that is increasingly disconnected and isolated needs to see how the gospel is lived out in relationships. Brad J. Kallenberg writes:

The gospel may remain a mystery to the surrounding culture unless the church lives out the gospel in the form of its life together. It is the pattern of the believing community's relationship that embodies the story of Jesus in concrete terms that outsiders can comprehend. Only when the gospel is linked to such concrete illustrations can outsiders say, "I see what you mean."⁷⁷

Kallenberg contends that Christians should continue having conversations with non-Christians about Jesus, but these conversations won't make sense unless the postmodern person sees the gospel lived out in community.⁷⁸ Greg Boyd writes, "The Christian faith

⁷⁶ Timothy Keller, "Evangelism and the Steward Leader," (audio of lecture presented in the Steward Leadership: Leader Talks, 2006-2007, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, NY, October 16, 2006), accessed April 10, 2014, <http://www.gospelinlife.com/sermons/evangelism-and-the-steward-leader.html>.

⁷⁷ Brad J. Kallenberg, *Live to Tell: Evangelism for a Postmodern Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 50.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

was never meant to be lived solo. We cannot live in revolutionary love, we cannot swim upstream against culture, if we try to do it alone.”⁷⁹

Kingdom Power and Proximity

A re-imagined framework for evangelism is critical for city church renewal. Included in this re-imagined framework should be a robust theology of the Kingdom of God and the consideration of a new vehicle for effective evangelistic ministry. Far more than methods and programs, a Kingdom theology will provide a sense of priority, power, and urgency to proclaim the gospel of Jesus. A robust Kingdom theology reminds the city church in need of renewal of her critical role and place in the story of God.

Lesslie Newbigin argues that Western culture is not a secular society without gods but rather a pagan culture with many false gods.⁸⁰ In this type of culture, relying on canned evangelistic methods with propositional statements would be like trying to paddle a canoe upstream with a toothpick. The power for effective evangelism is in the Spirit-anointed, Jesus-shaped example of a Christian life that actively participates in bringing God’s Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Boyd writes:

If we are trying to evangelize without being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, we are merely inviting people to join a religion, but to be an evangelist is to be a bearer of good news...the Kingdom isn’t something we do, it’s something we are. As we are becoming conformed to the image of Christ, it will be impossible not to be a bearer of good news. This is not just one more thing to do. The Kingdom is in essence good news. Our call is to live like Jesus and to revolt like Jesus, to manifest the Kingdom like Jesus...the beauty of this counter-culturally radically different way of living is it draws people who are hungry for it.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Gregory A. Boyd, “Advancing the Cruciform Revolution: A Kingdom Perspective on Evangelism,” *Word & World* 29, no. 4, (Fall, 2009): 407-417.

⁸⁰ Kandia, 51-60.

⁸¹ Boyd, 410.

In the Christian era, the discussion of evangelism focused on a theology of heaven, hell, atonement, sin, and salvation. These matters are critically important, but I contend that in a post-Christian era they have to be included under the umbrella of a Kingdom theology rather than standing in isolation. The non-Christian today needs to hear that Jesus is a good and loving King who is busy at work establishing his Kingdom on earth. Part of this Kingdom work is to redeem and restore a broken world, which includes humankind. God invites us to join in the grand restoration project and to participate in the Kingdom. As we do, God empowers us and provides everything we need to live counter-culturally and to be liberated from these “lesser gods.” Matters of sin, salvation, heaven, and hell will come in due time and flow naturally from this theological priority.⁸²

The early church provides the cause exemplar for Kingdom-centered evangelistic impact. Again, from Boyd’s article:

This band of people [the early church] living in often hostile environments looked a lot like Jesus. They manifested the beauty of God’s reign, and they revolted against aspects of their culture that were not in sync with that reign. So, for example, they would not pledge allegiance to the emperor by lighting incense before a statue. For that, many of them gave their lives. They wouldn’t participate in many of the violent and lewd forms of entertainment in the Roman empire. They would frequently rescue children who had been abandoned by fathers, as was the legal right of the Roman citizens, and for that they were accused of undermining family values...The way their lives contrasted with the empire was their witness, and the church grew. They preached with their lives, and they preached with their deaths.⁸³

⁸² A Christian-era evangelistic presentation typically begins in Genesis three with sin and then moves to redemption. But a post-Christian evangelistic conversation is most effective when it begins in Genesis one in which we learn that we are made in God’s image and likeness and we are God’s image-bearers in the world. This then moves to Genesis three where we find we have marred that image through rebellion but that God is seeking us, and desires to be reconciled to us. As Leonard Sweet says, “God is the One doing the seeking.”

⁸³ Ibid., 412.

This emphasis on the evangelist living a Kingdom-saturated life echoes Beach's argument that the pursuit of holiness is the way that God's people live faithfully in times of exile.

To be an effective evangelist, the Christian needs not only the Spirit-infused power of the Kingdom, but also proximity to the people. The vessel that will carry the Christian most effectively to the mission field is the *oikos*, the Greek term for household. Again, the early church serves as our model. Luke's account of the early church records that when Cornelius, Lydia, and Crispus were saved, their households were as well.⁸⁴

Antonia Tripolitis cited three factors that led to the growth of the early church:

1. The church was an open community. The cults were secretive and exclusive; the philosophical schools made salvation an intellectual accomplishment and were closed to women. Christianity was accessible.
2. The church was intransigent. Christians would not budge on their exclusive message that salvation was only found through Jesus. Pagan counterparts were fluid and always willing to compromise their message and adapt it to other religions. This led to uncertainty and confusion while Christians held up Jesus as "the way."⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Keller, "Evangelism and the Steward Leader," Gospel in Life, accessed April 10, 2014, <http://www.gospelinlife.com/sermons/evangelism-and-the-steward-leader.html>.

⁸⁵ I contend that the close relationships nurtured in the *oikos* allowed the early Christians to hold true to the faith even in the face of persecution.

3. The church created a deep sense of community. They were bound together by a common rite, a community of life, and a common danger. Yet, they were not exclusive in their hospitality and they cared for the needs of others.⁸⁶

Webber also reflects on the work of sociologist Rodney Stark and theologian David Fitch. Stark contends that, “the basis for successful conversionist [sic] movements is growth through social networks, through a *structure of direct and intimate interpersonal attachments*.”⁸⁷ Fitch argues that successful evangelism will occur in the home and that it, “incubates in the climates of hospitality, in the places of conversation, posing questions and listening to the strangers in our midst. These *oikos* communities can include up to 20-30 people who gather for community and discernment.”⁸⁸

Typically, in the North American context, we think of the household as the nuclear family. However, in the early church the household was made up of extended family, servants, and other various extended relationships.⁸⁹ Keller suggests today the Christian has potentially five *oikoi*: family, neighbors, colleagues (school and work), affinity networks, and friendships that develop outside of these networks. He contends that *oikos* evangelism is the method-less method and that if you have a friendship with a non-Christian, evangelism will happen naturally unless we short circuit it in one of two ways: 1) If the Christian is not living a winsome lifestyle and his/her life is marked by fear, anxiety, grumpiness, etc., or 2) If the Christian hides how important Jesus is to him

⁸⁶ Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 56-57.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 58. (emphasis added)

⁸⁸ Ibid., 58-59.

⁸⁹ Keller, “Evangelism and the Steward Leader,” Gospel in Life, accessed April 10, 2014, <http://www.gospelinlife.com/sermons/evangelism-and-the-steward-leader.html>.

or her.⁹⁰ The *oikos* serves as a powerful platform for Kingdom ministry and evangelism in the post-Christian context.

Conclusion

Walter Brueggeman writes,

“God’s call disrupts the lives of settled people, both in biblical times and now. God sends, then and now, to transform the present world, subject to alien powers, into the world God intends. Discipleship and evangelism [and strategies for city church renewal] are, therefore, not primarily about church membership and recruitment but about an alternative way of being in the world for the sake of the world.”⁹¹

For over two millennia God has worked powerfully and beautifully through the Church to draw people to a saving knowledge of Jesus. Methods of ministry change but thanks be to God the message does not. God still loves sinners and wants to see them rescued by Jesus.

The renewal of declining churches in the city is no small task. The challenge is great in a post-Christian context due to many factors such as globalization, immigration, gentrification, pluralism, impoverished communities, and a heavy dose of skepticism toward institutions including the church. Add to these macro-challenges the internal challenges of declining membership and budgets, waning volunteer commitment, and changing communities, and it is clear city church renewal will not happen without a movement of the Holy Spirit breathing new life into the congregation.

During my work in this program, my wife and I felt led by God to leave a growing church in the suburbs of Richmond, Virginia to return to our ministry roots in

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Walter Brueggeman, “Evangelism and Discipleship: The God Who Calls, The God Who Sends,” *Word & World* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 121-135.

the Washington D.C. area. We are now serving a city church in need of ministry renewal. Arriving at this decision was not easy due to the challenges outlined throughout this work. During the discernment journey I shared with a friend and ministry colleague that we were wrestling with the decision and it was taking a toll in every way. His counsel to me was simple and unforgettable. He told me to “stop wrestling and start dancing with the Spirit. Just let the Spirit lead the dance and we will be led to the center of God’s will.” That one simple shift in the way we approached this big decision liberated us from the conventional worries that accompany such a decision and it allowed us to hear the call of God and make the move to the city. God disrupted our settled lives and beckoned us to the dance floor in the city.

I share my story because I believe that ultimately this is the call of renewal for the church in the city. Yes, we need to ground the work of renewal in a strong theology of mission, exile, and the city. Yes, we need to cultivate a healthy environment for leadership, change, and missional strategy. And yes, we need a robust theology of the Kingdom that leads to the infiltration of the gospel into the city through demonstration and announcement at every level—beginning with the *oikos*.

And, ultimately, it is the work of the Holy Spirit that is needed to bring about renewal in the church. With the animation and power of the Spirit, I am convinced that



churches in the city can be lights that burn bright for the mission of Jesus. Earlier, I shared a story about our antique chandelier that would not work. My wife was able to locate a part that matched the original and now the chandelier burns bright in our home over the table

at which we have hosted several feasts and conversations about Jesus. My prayer is that this illumination is just a foretaste of what God is going to do in and through his church.

Sections four and five describe a strategic plan for a city church in need of missional renewal. This plan will focus on reframing key aspects of the ministry of Downtown Baptist Church so that the synergy between the incarnational and attractional impulses can be leveraged that will result in a movement of localized gospel communities meeting in *oikoi* around our region. Fire up the chandeliers around our communities and let the feasts begin.

SECTION FOUR: ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

The artifact, *Extending the Table*, is a strategic guide that will, by God's grace, guide Downtown Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia to experience missional renewal. The focus of the guide will be to transition the church from a regional church with an attractional model for ministry to a movement of local gospel communities called, *Table Groups*. This guide is not intended to be a model for other churches in the city, as it is unique to the strengths and challenges of DBC. However, it is my hope that other city churches might be able to utilize some of the more general principles. The artifact has eight sections:

- 1) An overview of the history and ministry of Downtown Baptist Church including current demographic data.
- 2) A summary of congregational listening sessions called "Nights in Old Town" through which Downtowners expressed their hopes and concerns about the future of the church.
- 3) A draft of a new framework for congregational governance that will streamline the ministry operational structure so that more human capital is released for mission.
- 4) A draft of a new ministry resource allocation plan that includes: 1) Time Resource—how the church engages the weekly rhythm of "gathering and scattering"; 2) Staff Resource—a new missional staffing model; and 3) Financial Resource—A new missional budget.¹

¹ These resource allocation plans will be adopted and implemented gradually from September 2016-December 2017.

- 5) A summary description of the incarnational ministry, *Extending the Table*. This will include a summary of the ministry, results from the summer beta test, and a long-term multiplication plan.
- 6) A summary description of a new initiative called *MissionStories*, a story-telling ministry that captures the story of Downtowners on mission.
- 7) A summary description of a collaborative approach to mission in the city called *MissionTogether*.
- 8) A description of a missional liturgy for worship.
- 9) A plan for evaluation.

SECTION FIVE: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATIONS

Artifact Description: *Extending the Table*¹ is a strategic guide that will guide Downtown Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia to experience missional renewal. The focus of the guide will be to transition the church from a regional church with an attractional model for ministry to a movement of local gospel communities called *Table Groups*.

Goals and Strategies: The ultimate goal for *Extending the Table* is that DBC will experience missional renewal, which will then result in more people becoming followers of Jesus Christ for generations to come. The strategy is to reposition the church to become a movement of local gospel communities (Table Groups) by leveraging the synergy of the attractional and missional impulses of the church.

Beta Version: In the summer of 2016 we will launch *Extending the Table* as a pilot that will feature 5 Table Groups that will meet at least twice monthly. These Table Groups will consist of a mix of Downtowners and people in their community who are either un-churched or non-Christians.

Measuring Success: We will measure success by considering the following questions:

- 1) Did Downtowners capture the vision for inviting un-churched friends to join them around the table for a meal and spiritual conversation?

¹ *Extending the Table* is the working title for this artifact. My desire is to explore the metaphor of the table in building community, spiritual formation, and the ministry of evangelism through incarnational hospitality. As the church multiplies out from the central campus, we extend the table of the Lord where we live, work, and play.

- 2) Did the leadership of the church capture the vision for *Extending the Table* as a model for mission and ministry in a way that will lead to greater investment of time, financial resources, and staff in the future?
- 3) Did a leadership community emerge that will serve as yeast for a more extensive movement in the future?

Maintaining the Finished Product: There are three critical aspects of this strategic journey that I believe will help us maintain the finished project. They are: 1) A new framework for congregational governance that streamlines the congregation's administrative leadership structure that to will allow for more human capital to be invested in the missional strategies of the church; 2) A community of Table Group leaders is developed and nurtured so that a community of incarnational missionaries begin to see their home and families as a center for gospel mission; and 3) The attractional aspect of DBC's ministry is not abandoned. I contend in this dissertation that in order for *Extending the Table* to be successful, we will need to leverage the synergy of the attractional and incarnational impulses of the church. The gathered church is critical for support, inspiration, and the pursuit of larger goals that only the gathered church can pursue. The scattered church (Table Groups) provides the primary focus for the multiplication of disciples (evangelism).

Audience: The primary audience for this artifact is the leadership and congregation of Downtown Baptist Church. It is also my hope that in years to follow this strategic guide could serve as a potential model for urban, regional church revitalization.

Audience Impact: I would like the primary audience to embrace *Extending the Table* as a model for ministry and mission so that people in the D.C. area who don't

know Jesus will meet him through the invitation of his followers and commit their lives to him.

Audience Application: My hope is that the audience for this artifact will be seeking a ministry strategy that will lead to more people becoming followers of Jesus and the church being revitalized with a new generation of leaders and disciples.

Artifact Scope and Content: The scope and content of the strategic guide will be: congregational governance, congregational strategy, a theology of ecclesial mission, and leadership training for Table Group leaders. The content will be organized in a sequential strategic guide that will have a curriculum component for Table Groups. This is a fairly “low-tech” artifact that will require only basic computer skills. The functional skills needed are congregational analysis and leadership.

Budget: The budget for *Extending the Table* is as follows:

- Congregational Governance Review by Attorney: \$3,000
- Leadership Development Resources for Table Leaders: \$300
- Hospitality Expenses for Leadership Community: \$700
- MissionStories Initiative: \$1,000
- Administrative Costs: \$1,000
- **Total:** \$6,000

Promotion: *Extending the Table* will be made available to the leadership and congregation of DBC through congregational meetings, personal interactions, sermons, leadership retreats, and written communication. *Extending the Table* will be made available to other congregations through social media, personal networks, and denominational outlets.

Standards of Publication: The strategic guide will seek to follow the standards as outlined by GFES for dissertations/artifacts. There are no plans to formally publish the guide.

Action Plan Components: The following are the components of this artifact: 1) Listening Sessions will be conducted with the DBC congregation; 2) A demographic study will be commissioned and analyzed; 3) A new framework for congregational governance will be developed; 4) A new framework of congregational resource allocation will be developed; 5) A leadership community of Table Group leaders is recruited and developed; 5) Extending the Table ministry is launched and participants are invited to join; 6) A new ministry initiative called *MissionStories* will be launched as a story-telling ministry that captures and tells the story of DBC on mission; and 7) A strategy will be developed to leverage the attractional ministries of DBC to support *Extending the Table*.

Technical Skills Required to Complete the Artifact: The following skills are necessary for the development of this artifact: 1) Effective oral and written communication skills; 2) Recruiting skills; 3) Vision-casting and preaching skills; 4) Strategic and administrative leadership skills; and 5) Congregational “political” skills.

Assessment of Advisee’s Present Skill-set: At 53, regrettably, I am still a work in progress when it comes to written communication skills. I do feel that I am gifted in the areas of teaching/preaching, casting vision, and developing congregational strategy. I have been told I have keen congregational political instincts, but I am in a new ministry setting and I am still getting to know the system and where the pressure points are.

Timeline for Acquiring Necessary Skills: The written skills will be acquired through working with my editor and advisor as chapters are submitted. The

congregational political skills will be trial and error and hopefully will be developed as the strategic guide unfolds for the congregation.

Deadlines for the Various Components are:

- Conduct Listening Sessions: September-October, 2015
- New Congregational Governance Framework Developed: August 15, 2016
- New Congregational Resource Allocation Plan Developed: May, 31, 2016
- Leadership Community of Table Group Leaders: Starts May 22, 2016 and ongoing.
- Training Guide for Table Group Leaders: May 22, 2016
- Congregational Strategy: August 31, 2016
- *MissionStories* Launched: September 1, 2016

SECTION SIX: POSTSCRIPT

When I started this program in September 2013, I was the pastor of a regional, attractional suburban church in the West End of Richmond, Virginia that was on a steady growth trajectory. The intent of my artifact was to develop a strategic guide for the church to continue its growth by multiplying into local gospel communities throughout our region. This was the focus of my essays for the first two years of the program.

At some point over the course of this program, I can't pinpoint exactly when, the Holy Spirit began nudging me and my wife, Jody, to prayerfully consider serving again in a major metropolitan city. In June 2015, just after the final SFS12 Advance at Orcas Island, I was called to serve Downtown Baptist Church (DBC) in historic Old Town Alexandria, Virginia just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. DBC is a regional congregation located in an urban village that has experienced significant decline over the past few decades. Through this journey, the Lord gave us a burden for the renewal of churches in the city.

There has been a great resurgence of church planting in the city over the last decade. We began to dream about what it would be like if the Spirit began a renewal movement in existing churches that would grow alongside the church planting movement for the glory of God and the salvation of those in the city. While many city churches are in decline, there are still enormous resources that can be mobilized for Kingdom work in the city. It was through this call process that my topic shifted to the development of a strategy of multiplication as a path for the renewal of the church.

There were two critical concepts that shaped this guide for renewal. First was the concept that a missional church thrives when it holds in tension the attractional and

incarnational impulses of the church. The work of Hugh Halter and Matt Smeay was foundational for me in this area. The strategy outlined in the artifact includes a strong emphasis on both aspects of the ministry and mission of the church. Second, renewal in the church should seek to gather people around the table. It is at the table where community and spiritual formation is most likely to occur. People in the city are often separated from their extended families and they crave the opportunity to be in the homes of others. This underscores the possibility that hospitality may be the cutting edge of evangelism in the 21st century. The work of Leonard Sweet in *Table Talk* shaped a great deal of my thinking. These two critical concepts were like sails hoisted to capture the wind and will of the Spirit as the guide for renewal unfolded. The importance of the two cannot be overstated.

I was drawn to the artifact approach to the dissertation because it allowed me to think deeply about ministry strategy, which can often take a back seat to the tyranny of the urgent. It caused me to dig deep and become immersed in the story of my new congregation to a degree that I may not have achieved otherwise. There is a reason this artifact is called a strategic guide rather than a strategic plan. Some of the steps outlined in the guide have already been put into practice. Other aspects are in progress and will depend on the will of the congregation. The guide essentially serves more as “directional thinking” than a plan with specifics.

Future research and development will emerge as the plan unfolds. If the congregation struggles to adopt some of the measures, then alternative measures will need to be developed. If the guide unfolds the way it is proposed, additional work will be needed to consider how to multiply at the congregational level (church planting, multi-

site, etc.). In the future, I would also like our missions ministries to consider a comprehensive study on how to deal with the impact of gentrification in our community. DBC is located in an affluent community and those who own property have prospered from gentrification. In my view, this means we have a greater responsibility to consider gentrification's impact on the poor and consider ways we can be involved in minimizing its effect on the poor.

Lastly, an important part of this renewal journey is the development of a new governing structure and leadership team for DBC. As this new team is launched, I plan to focus on critical aspects of Board Leadership by exploring the work of three authors who have specialized in the area of organizational team development: 1) Patrick Lencioni (*The Ideal Team Player, The Advantage, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*); 2) John Carver (*Boards that Make a Difference, John Carver on Board Leadership, The Board Members' Playbook*); and 3) Ram Charan (*Boards that Lead, Boards that Deliver, Owning Up*).

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APPENDIX: ARTIFACT

Extending the Table: A Strategic Guide for City Church Renewal

Contents

Introduction

Section One: An Overview of the Ministry of Downtown Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia

Section Two: Cultivating the Mission: A Summary of “Nights in Old Town” Listening Sessions

Section Three: Empowering the Mission: A New Framework for Congregational Governance

Section Four: Fueling the Mission: A New Framework for Resource Allocation

Section Five: Living the Mission: A Summary of the Pilot Program *Extending the Table*

Section Six: A Description of a New Ministry Initiative: *MissionStories*

Section Seven: A Description of *MissionTogether: A Collaborative Approach to Congregational Mission in Our City*

Section Eight: A Description of a Missional Liturgy for Worship

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Introduction

Extending the Table is a strategic guide that will, by God's grace, guide Downtown Baptist Church (DBC) in Alexandria, Virginia to experience missional renewal. The focus of the guide will be to transition the church from a regional church with an attractional model for ministry to a movement of local gospel communities called *Table Groups*. This guide is not intended to be a "plug and play" model for other city churches, as it is unique to the strengths and challenges of DBC. I believe it is important for congregations to learn best practices of other churches and from the saints that have gone before. However, I also believe it is crucial for leaders to cultivate an organic strategy for renewal that parishioners help create.

Sections 1 through 8 will contain the following: 1) A rationale for the ministry action taken; 2) A list of resources in each section that church leaders may consult as they seek to cultivate a strategy for renewal specific to that ministry action; and 3) A summary of the ministry action considered or taken. As this is a strategic guide that is currently in process, some of these steps will have been completed at the time of publication. Others will be pursued as the congregation continues to take the journey toward renewal. Section 9 is a list of questions that will be used for evaluation.

ARTIFACT SECTION ONE

An Overview of the History and Ministry of Downtown Baptist Church (DBC) and Old Town Alexandria, Virginia

Rationale

Overview of History. Taking the time to become a student of a congregation's history is essential to being able to enter into its story. Congregations, like individuals, are shaped positively and negatively by past experiences. Powerful leadership connections are available to the pastoral leader through the re-telling of the congregation's story. Strengths of the past can be leveraged for mission action. Painful episodes from the past can be opportunities to remind the congregation of how God has carried them even in difficult times. Past episodes of congregational failures can present opportunities for a time of corporate repentance. Learning the history allows a new pastor to enter into a season of humble listening and learning from the people of how God has been at work before she or he arrived on the scene.

Leveraging a Strength

From the beginning, DBC has had a strong commitment to ministering to the community of Old Town Alexandria. Through the years, members have sacrificed a great deal for local mission. Presently our leaders are seeking to leverage this strength by leading the congregation to consider converting part of our facility into a Mission Center that would host visiting mission teams that want to do work in our city.

Overview of Ministry. When considering a strategy for the future it can be tempting to focus only on a few areas of ministry, usually a congregation's strengths or the challenge areas that need to be mitigated. But churches, like people, are living entities. When change occurs to one part of the body, the entire body is affected. Providing an overview of the entire ministry allows the leadership team to pursue a comprehensive strategy for renewal and leads to the consideration of how ministry change affects the entire body.

Demographic Overview. A demographic study is essential for any approach to strategic planning. The demographic data represents the "voice" of the people who may

not currently be involved in the life of the congregation. Rarely is a church unsurprised by all of the findings in a demographic study. Demographics allow leadership teams to assess the overall ministry plan and make the appropriate adjustments that are relevant to the congregation.

According to the MappingCenter for Evangelism and Church Growth, 59.01% of the households in the 2-mile radius of DBC are single person dwellings.

Resources

1. The Center for Congregational Health (www.healthychurch.org)
2. Constructing Your Congregation's Story by James P. Wind President of the Alban Institute http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website_Properties/how-we-serve/documents/vital-congregations-constructing-your-congregations-story.pdf
3. The United Methodist Church (<http://www.umc.org/how-we-serve/vital-congregations-our-story>)
4. The MappingCenter for Evangelism and Church Growth (<http://www.mappingcenter.org>)

Overview of the History of DBC

First Baptist Alexandria.¹ It is impossible to grasp the history of DBC without first exploring the history of the First Baptist Church of Alexandria (FBCA), DBC's

¹ History of the First Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia, edited by Wilson R. Gaines, 1988. (This entire section is drawn from this work.)



“predecessor” church. In April 1803, twelve members of The Baptist Church at Back Lick in Fairfax County, Virginia, were dismissed agreeably to start a new church in the colonial port city of Alexandria on the banks of the Potomac River. On April 22, 1803, the church was born. The first pastor called by the church was a traveling preacher by the name of Jeremiah Moore. Moore is legendary in Baptist life in that before the revolution he had been jailed three times by the British government for preaching without a license from the Anglican Church. Moore was defended in court by Patrick Henry and eventually released. Moore’s case is often cited as an example of events that led to the First Amendment of the

U.S. Constitution, which is the basis for the separation of church and state.

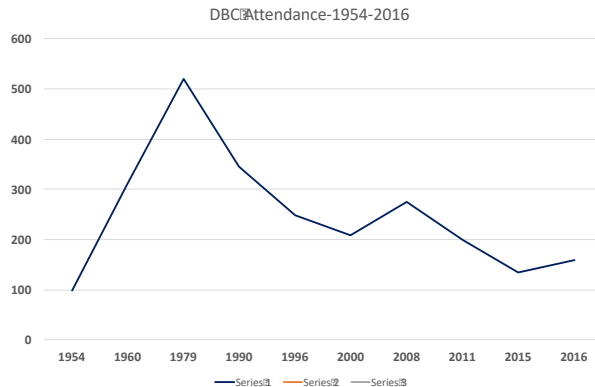
In 1830, FBCA built a meeting house at 212 South Washington Street in the heart of downtown Alexandria and continued to grow steadily. When the civil war broke out, every Protestant minister fled the city except one: Dr. C.C. Bitting the pastor of FBCA. Throughout the civil war, FBCA continued to hold services and minister to the community. On June 15, 1862, a Union military guard entered the church building during Sunday services and took possession of it. The church was ordered to vacate the property and on July 5, 1862, the church was converted to a military hospital. Injured troops bathed their wounds in the baptistery of the church. The church continued to worship in borrowed facilities and Dr. Bitting was eventually imprisoned for a week because of his

Baptist belief in the freedom of worship and the separation of church and state. The hospital closed on December 8, 1864 and the church received the building back on May 21, 1865.

FBCA continued to grow in number and in physical presence in Alexandria. By the turn of the century, the church had 700 members. In the first half of the twentieth century, FBCA exploded in growth and grew to 2,300 members by 1953. In 1944 and again in 1950, in a single year 386 members were added. The church was also instrumental in starting eight churches from 1850-1953. In 1949, to accommodate the growth of the church, FBCA purchased property on King Street Hill located 2.3 miles from the old church building, and began construction of a larger facility in 1953. The last service on South Washington Street was held on May 2, 1954. FBCA continues to have a thriving ministry in Alexandria and the greater D.C. area.

Downtown Baptist Church (DBC). In March of 1954, a group from FBCA began meeting to discuss the possibility of maintaining a Baptist presence in the downtown area of Alexandria. During this time, the group was counseled by the leaders of the Mount Vernon Baptist Association as to how to start a new church without being a divisive presence at FBCA. The group grew quickly and by all accounts maintained a strong sense of integrity in breaking away from FBCA. The core group continued to meet for several weeks preparing to launch the new church. DBC held its first service on May 9, 1954 and was officially recognized by the Mount Vernon Baptist Association on June 15, 1954. The church started with a heart for ministering in the downtown Alexandria community and in August of 1954 the church purchased the old FBCA facility. Thus, the histories of FBCA and DBC are inextricably linked.

DBC called its first pastor, Elsie Phillips, in 1955 and the church grew under his leadership from 98 charter members in 1954 to 311 in attendance in the fall of 1960. The early years of the church were focused on mission in the city and a strong discipleship ministry. Rev. Phillips resigned in 1961 and was succeeded in 1967 by Rev. Jack Coffee,



who served the church faithfully. In 1967, the Rev. Donald Bowen accepted the call to become DBC’s third pastor, and under his leadership the church grew steadily in discipleship and

mission. The 1970s represented the “golden age” of the church as attendance grew to over 500 people each week by 1979. During the 1980s and 1990s, DBC underwent its first season of decline. The metropolitan D.C. area experienced considerable suburban growth during that period and many families moved to new communities further from the city. Many churches in Alexandria and in neighboring Arlington County struggled to make the transition from being suburban churches just outside the city of Washington, D.C. to city churches in communities that had transitioned to a more urban context. By 1996, DBC’s worship attendance had fallen to 249. Rev. Bowen concluded his thirty-year tenure in 1997. Although the church experienced a prolonged season of numerical decline, the church maintained a deep commitment to serving the city of Alexandria and continued to grow in discipleship and financial support of the ministry.²

² Statistics gathered from church newsletters.

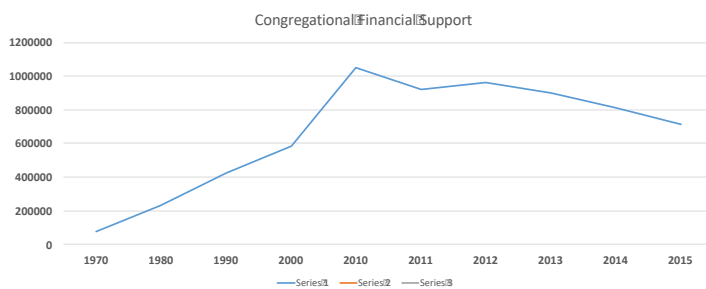
In 1997, the church called the Rev. Dale Seeley. After a brief period of continued decline, the church began to grow again, reaching a peak of approximately 300 people each Sunday.³ Seeley's tenure was marked by a strong emphasis on pastoral care and mercy ministries, financial stewardship, and the growth of the staff team. At one point the staff included the following positions:

- Senior Pastor—Full-time
- Minister of Music/Senior Adults—Full-time
- Minister of Christian Education—Full-time
- Director of Congregational Life (Pastoral Care)—Part-time
- Youth Ministry Associate—Part-time
- Preschool Associate—Part-time
- Children's Associate—Part-time
- Comptroller—Full-time
- Church Secretary—Full-time
- Facilities Management—Part-time
- Church Custodian—Part-time
- Organist—Part-time
- Pianist—Part-time

Rev. Seeley resigned in 2008 and, after a lengthy interim period, the church called Dr. Dan Carlton in 2011. Dr. Carlton's tenure was marked by a heavy emphasis on mission advancement and the formation of strategic mission partnerships with several

³ The church stopped keeping attendance records during Seeley's tenure. These numbers are based on conversations with parishioners.

non-profit organizations in the city. During this period, the church also underwent a staff reduction plan which eliminated all of the full-time positions with the exception of two: the Senior Pastor and the Comptroller. This realignment caused deep conflict within the congregation and resulted in a steep decline in attendance and revenue. Dr. Carlton resigned in August of 2014.

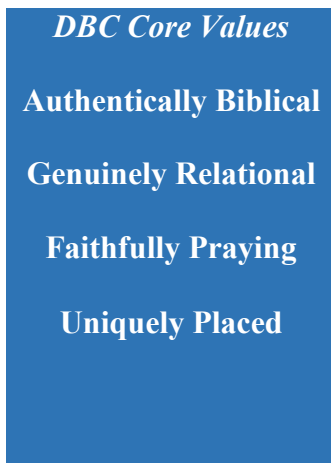


The lay leadership of the church completed a S.W.O.T. analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) in the months after Dr.

Carlton's resignation, which is included at the end of this section. In June of 2015, Rev. Phillip Faig was called to serve as the church's sixth pastor. The church is presently working toward the plans of renewal outlined in this artifact.⁴

Overview of the Ministry

⁴ All data in this section is compiled from church meeting minutes, financial reports and church newsletters.



The ministry of DBC has been strongly influenced by the location of the church. One of the core values of the church is being *uniquely placed*. Downtown Alexandria, also known as Old Town Alexandria, is an urban village on the banks of the Potomac River that is steeped in colonial history. The Old Town community features a thriving residential community, tourism and shopping, and a strong business community, as it is home to many national trade and political associations. Across the river from D.C., and within a few miles of several military installations including the Pentagon, Old Town has a fairly high transient population of military, political, and government personnel. Throughout its history, DBC has had a balance of congregants who are rooted in the area and those who are temporarily assigned to the area for three to four years.

The transient nature of the congregation is a blessing and a challenge. The blessings are: 1) There is a solid and steady flow of visitors seeking a place to call home; 2) Transients bring a vital flow of new ideas and experiences to bear on the congregation; and 3) Transients often are more open to inviting others who are new to join them for worship and/or service opportunities. The challenges are: 1) Transients who are in leadership roles continually need to be replaced; 2) If the church experiences a season of conflict, transients are less likely to stay connected; and 3) Transients are less likely to assume leadership roles and they typically have a lower level of emotional attachment to the overall ministry.

DBC is a diverse congregation in almost every way. There is ethnic, educational, generational, and socio-economic diversity. I frequently remark to others, “DBC has those who lobby the halls of power and those who mop the halls of power.” One growing segment of the DBC family is second-generation, college-educated Hispanics. The church has a strong heart for missions and a desire to grow as disciples of Jesus. DBC is a hybrid between a neighborhood and commuter congregation.

Although it still has a strong base, the church has struggled financially in recent years, as giving has dropped over 35% from 2010-2015. The church has one worship service each week that is a blend between traditional and contemporary worship styles. There are Bible studies for all ages on Sunday morning. The current areas of growth for the church are in young families with preschoolers and empty-nesters. The youth ministry is almost non-existent.

The church has the following staff positions:

- Senior Pastor—Full-time
- Pastoral Resident—Full-time (one year)
- Director of Music—Part-time
- Director of Children—Part-time
- Financial Administrator—Full-time
- Administrative Assistant—Part-time
- Facilities Coordinator—Part-time
- Organist—Part-time

Staff expenses make up 54% of the overall ministry budget. The church has an attractive, historic building with a 400-seat sanctuary, a 125-seat dining area with a small stage, a

commercial kitchen, multiple offices and classrooms, and a pastoral residence. There is no off-street parking.

Demographics

As stated above, Old Town Alexandria is a thriving community on the banks of the Potomac River. It is located in USPS zip code 22314 and is just seven miles from the White House. It is one of the more expensive communities in the D.C. area, yet it also features several public housing communities. Old Town has been cited as one of the more desirable cities in the U.S. for Millennials.⁵ Old Town is also a very educated community. Within a one-mile radius of the church campus west of the Potomac, 32.4% hold a Bachelor's degree and 43.65% hold a graduate or professional degree. The average household income is \$156,159. 42.6% of the households are single-person households.⁶

A detailed demographic report is at the conclusion of this section. A few observations for the purpose of strategic planning are:

- Ministries need to be developed that will appeal to the urban intellectual.
- Children's ministry investment should be at least twice that of youth ministry.

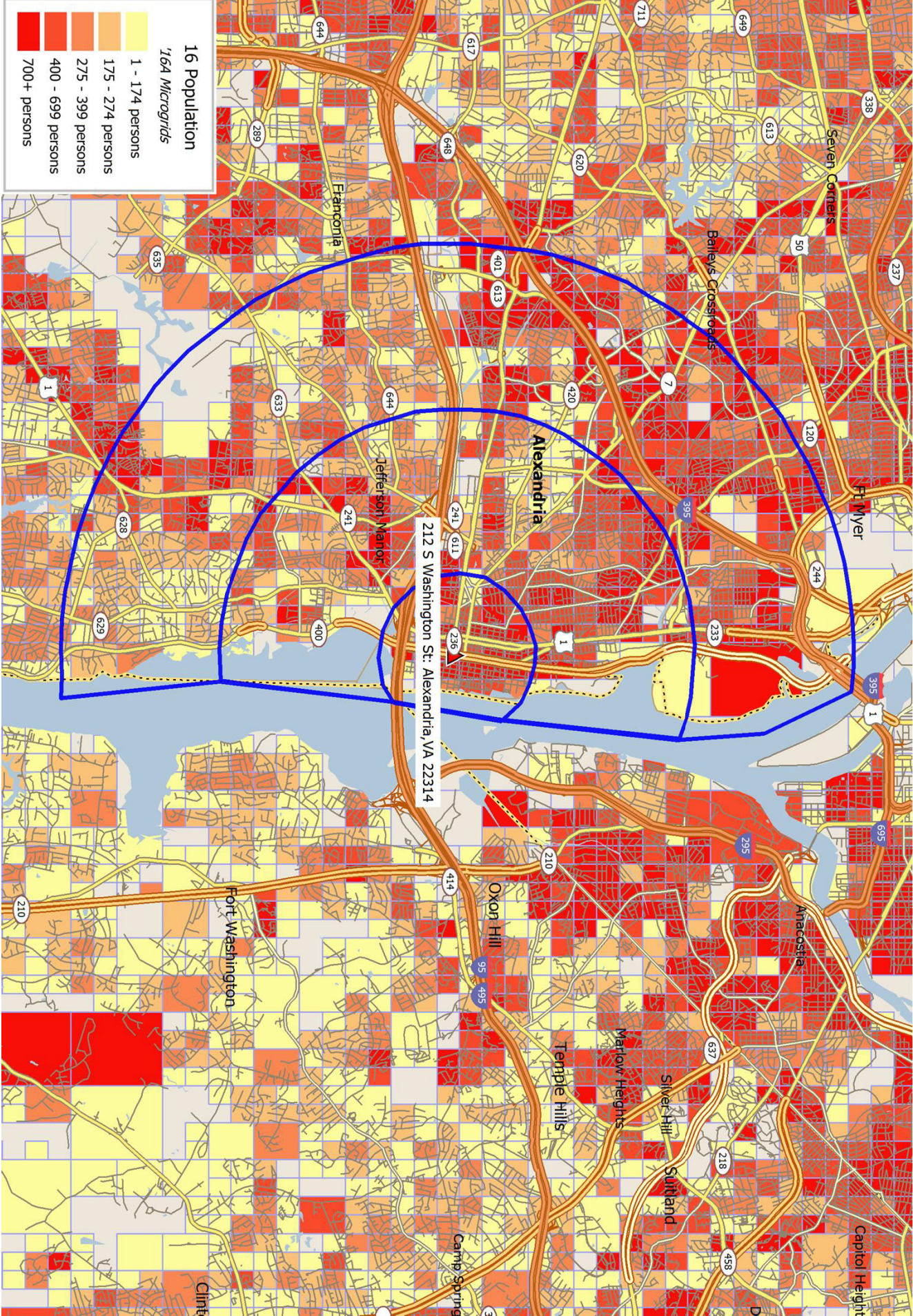
Both the youth and children's populations are considerably lower than the suburban context. The farther out DBC reaches, the more this population increases.

⁵ Kathryn Dill, "The Best Cities for Millennials Right Now," Forbes Leadership, May 13, 2015, accessed August 5, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kathryndill/2015/05/13/the-best-cities-for-millennials-right-now/#42c025450e9b>

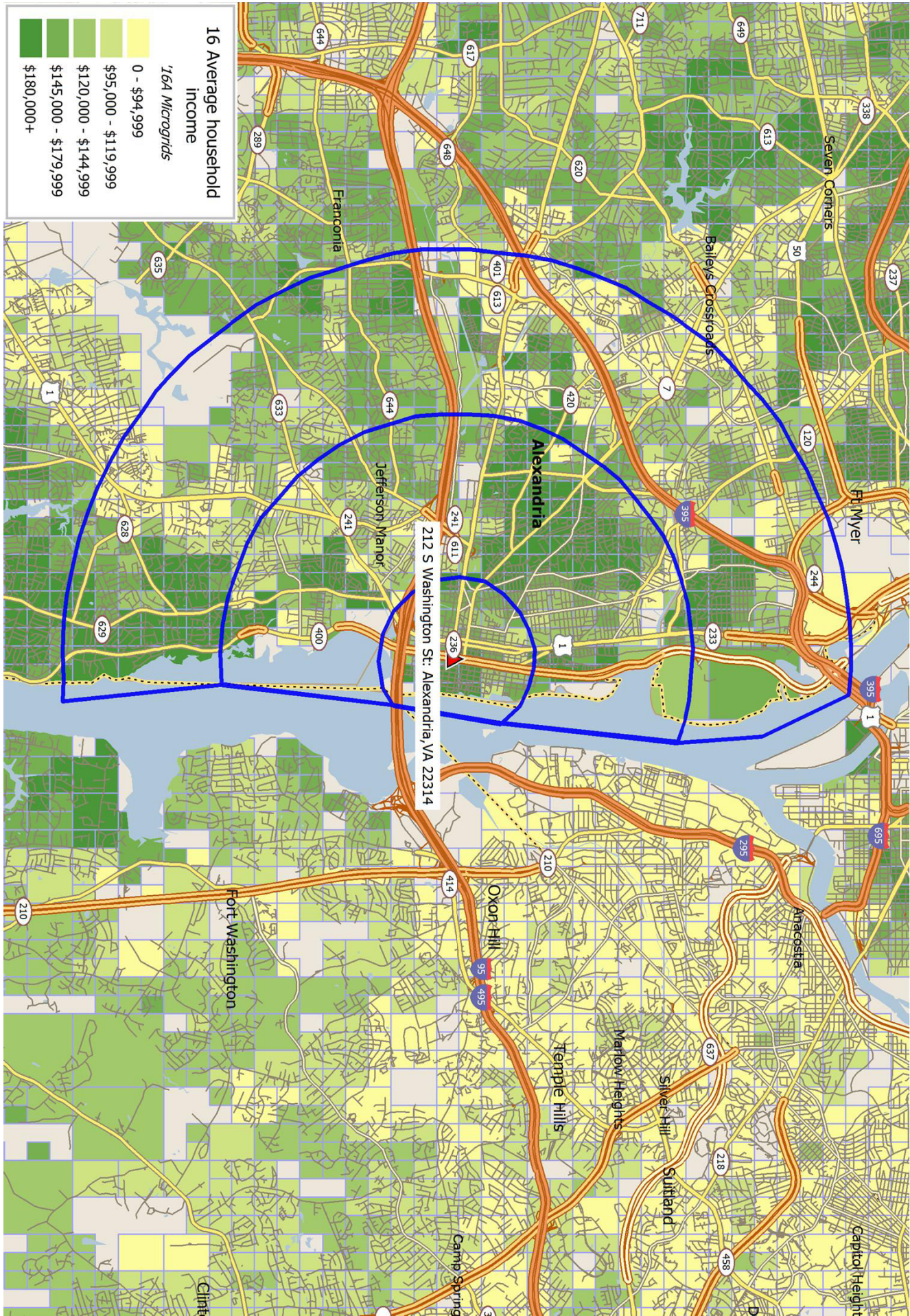
⁶ Demographic Comparison Report, Alexandria, Virginia, 1-3-5-mile radius of 212 South Washington Street west of the Potomac River, DemographicReports, www.demographicreports.com.

- There are a lot of people who live alone. Ministries such as *Extending the Table* that help people connect with others are crucial. In addition, one consequence of so many people living alone or without children in the home is that Old Town has become a very pet-friendly community. Events such as “A Blessing of the Animals” goes very well here.
- The area closest to the church is growing at a slightly faster rate than the areas farther out. The areas farther from the church campus are more racially diverse.
- A great deal of one’s income is invested in housing.

Alexandria, VA: 2016 Population



Alexandria, VA: 2016 Average Household Income



212 S WASHINGTON ST: ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314:(West of Potomac River)
SITE LOCATED AT 38.80365, 77.04707

| | <u>1 MI RING</u> | | <u>3 MI RING</u> | | <u>5 MI RING</u> | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| <u>Population</u> | | | | | | |
| 2021 Projection | 31,127 | | 119,233 | | 356,674 | |
| % Change 2016-2021 | | 12.1% | | 9.1% | | 8.5% |
| 2016 Estimate | 27,772 | | 109,297 | | 328,800 | |
| % Change 2010-2016 | | 26.9% | | 16.0% | | 13.2% |
| 2010 Census | 21,882 | | 94,193 | | 290,433 | |
| % Change 2000-2010 | | 11.7% | | 9.3% | | 8.8% |
| 2000 Census | 19,582 | | 86,185 | | 267,019 | |
| <u>Households</u> | | | | | | |
| 2021 Projection | 15,640 | | 53,142 | | 158,544 | |
| % Change 2016-2021 | | 8.8% | | 7.4% | | 7.7% |
| 2016 Estimate | 14,370 | | 49,494 | | 147,276 | |
| % Change 2010-2016 | | 20.2% | | 11.9% | | 8.3% |
| 2010 Census | 11,956 | | 44,215 | | 135,973 | |
| % Change 2000-2010 | | 12.0% | | 9.2% | | 10.4% |
| 2000 Census | 10,674 | | 40,476 | | 123,190 | |
| <u>Age, total population</u> | 27,772 | | 109,297 | | 328,800 | |
| under 5 years | 1,880 | 6.8% | 8,057 | 7.4% | 23,907 | 7.3% |
| 5 to 9 years | 1,227 | 4.4% | 6,108 | 5.6% | 17,753 | 5.4% |
| 10 to 14 years | 805 | 2.9% | 4,541 | 4.2% | 13,654 | 4.2% |
| 15 to 19 years | 700 | 2.5% | 3,738 | 3.4% | 12,741 | 3.9% |
| 20 to 24 years | 939 | 3.4% | 4,623 | 4.2% | 16,647 | 5.1% |
| 25 to 34 years | 5,530 | 19.9% | 20,003 | 18.3% | 68,214 | 20.7% |
| 35 to 44 years | 5,086 | 18.3% | 19,714 | 18.0% | 58,701 | 17.9% |
| 45 to 54 years | 3,854 | 13.9% | 15,102 | 13.8% | 43,925 | 13.4% |
| 55 to 64 years | 3,722 | 13.4% | 13,394 | 12.3% | 36,378 | 11.1% |
| 65 to 74 years | 2,798 | 10.1% | 8,873 | 8.1% | 22,436 | 6.8% |
| 75 to 84 years | 911 | 3.3% | 3,460 | 3.2% | 9,585 | 2.9% |
| 85 years and over | 321 | 1.2% | 1,685 | 1.5% | 4,861 | 1.5% |
| Median Age | 42.58 | | 40.20 | | 39.55 | |
| <u>Age, male population</u> | 13,204 | | 53,428 | | 160,846 | |
| under 20 years | 2,310 | 17.5% | 11,389 | 21.3% | 34,846 | 21.7% |
| 20 to 34 years | 2,955 | 22.4% | 11,929 | 22.3% | 40,660 | 25.3% |
| 35 to 44 years | 2,534 | 19.2% | 9,951 | 18.6% | 30,066 | 18.7% |
| 45 to 64 years | 3,507 | 26.6% | 13,838 | 25.9% | 39,300 | 24.4% |
| 65 to 84 years | 1,784 | 13.5% | 5,760 | 10.8% | 14,438 | 9.0% |
| 85 years and over | 112 | 0.8% | 560 | 1.0% | 1,536 | 1.0% |
| Median Age | 42.55 | | 39.87 | | 39.08 | |
| <u>Age, female population</u> | 14,569 | | 55,869 | | 167,954 | |
| under 20 years | 2,302 | 15.8% | 11,055 | 19.8% | 33,209 | 19.8% |
| 20 to 34 years | 3,514 | 24.1% | 12,697 | 22.7% | 44,201 | 26.3% |
| 35 to 44 years | 2,552 | 17.5% | 9,763 | 17.5% | 28,635 | 17.0% |
| 45 to 64 years | 4,069 | 27.9% | 14,658 | 26.2% | 41,003 | 24.4% |
| 65 to 84 years | 1,925 | 13.2% | 6,573 | 11.8% | 17,583 | 10.5% |
| 85 years and over | 209 | 1.4% | 1,125 | 2.0% | 3,325 | 2.0% |
| Median Age | 42.46 | | 40.41 | | 39.98 | |

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| | <u>1 MI RING</u> | | <u>3 MI RING</u> | | <u>5 MI RING</u> | |
|--|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| Total Aggregate Income (\$mil) | \$2,246.0 | | \$7,248.5 | | \$17,895.0 | |
| Per Capita Income | \$80,872 | | \$66,319 | | \$54,425 | |
| <u>Household Income (households)</u> | 14,370 | | 49,494 | | 147,276 | |
| under \$10,000 | 645 | 4.5% | 1,686 | 3.4% | 6,379 | 4.3% |
| \$10,000 - \$14,999 | 392 | 2.7% | 902 | 1.8% | 3,234 | 2.2% |
| \$15,000 - \$19,999 | 290 | 2.0% | 892 | 1.8% | 2,586 | 1.8% |
| \$20,000 - \$24,999 | 222 | 1.5% | 810 | 1.6% | 3,304 | 2.2% |
| \$25,000 - \$29,999 | 146 | 1.0% | 737 | 1.5% | 3,427 | 2.3% |
| \$30,000 - \$34,999 | 224 | 1.6% | 926 | 1.9% | 3,987 | 2.7% |
| \$35,000 - \$39,999 | 152 | 1.1% | 1,017 | 2.1% | 4,302 | 2.9% |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 449 | 3.1% | 1,964 | 4.0% | 7,770 | 5.3% |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 550 | 3.8% | 2,367 | 4.8% | 8,684 | 5.9% |
| \$60,000 - \$74,999 | 858 | 6.0% | 3,892 | 7.9% | 13,360 | 9.1% |
| \$75,000 - \$99,999 | 1,558 | 10.8% | 6,305 | 12.7% | 20,535 | 13.9% |
| \$100,000 - \$124,999 | 1,831 | 12.7% | 6,040 | 12.2% | 17,550 | 11.9% |
| \$125,000 - \$149,999 | 1,513 | 10.5% | 4,783 | 9.7% | 13,057 | 8.9% |
| \$150,000 - \$199,999 | 1,934 | 13.5% | 6,199 | 12.5% | 15,916 | 10.8% |
| \$200,000 - \$249,999 | 1,390 | 9.7% | 4,226 | 8.5% | 8,919 | 6.1% |
| \$250,000 and over | 2,217 | 15.4% | 6,749 | 13.6% | 14,266 | 9.7% |
| Aggregate Household Income (\$mil) | \$2,244.0 | | \$7,236.4 | | \$17,875.6 | |
| Average Household Income | \$156,159 | | \$146,207 | | \$121,375 | |
| Median Household Income | \$122,866 | | \$117,154 | | \$100,102 | |
| <u>Family Income (families)</u> | 6,519 | | 25,589 | | 73,908 | |
| under \$10,000 | 335 | 5.1% | 573 | 2.2% | 2,112 | 2.9% |
| \$10,000 - \$14,999 | 102 | 1.6% | 260 | 1.0% | 1,146 | 1.6% |
| \$15,000 - \$19,999 | 109 | 1.7% | 339 | 1.3% | 1,069 | 1.4% |
| \$20,000 - \$24,999 | 95 | 1.5% | 316 | 1.2% | 1,332 | 1.8% |
| \$25,000 - \$29,999 | 46 | 0.7% | 288 | 1.1% | 1,579 | 2.1% |
| \$30,000 - \$34,999 | 49 | 0.8% | 322 | 1.3% | 1,940 | 2.6% |
| \$35,000 - \$39,999 | 40 | 0.6% | 336 | 1.3% | 1,964 | 2.7% |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 106 | 1.6% | 827 | 3.2% | 3,384 | 4.6% |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 108 | 1.7% | 865 | 3.4% | 3,563 | 4.8% |
| \$60,000 - \$74,999 | 199 | 3.1% | 1,418 | 5.5% | 5,476 | 7.4% |
| \$75,000 - \$99,999 | 408 | 6.3% | 2,355 | 9.2% | 8,096 | 11.0% |
| \$100,000 - \$124,999 | 615 | 9.4% | 2,639 | 10.3% | 7,553 | 10.2% |
| \$125,000 - \$149,999 | 826 | 12.7% | 2,815 | 11.0% | 7,319 | 9.9% |
| \$150,000 - \$199,999 | 1,104 | 16.9% | 4,102 | 16.0% | 10,440 | 14.1% |
| \$200,000 - \$249,999 | 961 | 14.7% | 3,241 | 12.7% | 6,739 | 9.1% |
| \$250,000 and over | 1,417 | 21.7% | 4,893 | 19.1% | 10,195 | 13.8% |
| Aggregate family income (\$mil) | \$1,250.8 | | \$4,622.5 | | \$10,810.9 | |
| Average family income | \$191,871 | | \$180,645 | | \$146,275 | |
| Median family income | \$156,992 | | \$144,990 | | \$119,740 | |
| <u>Non-Family Income (non-families)</u> | 7,851 | | 23,905 | | 73,367 | |
| Aggregate non-family income (\$mil) | \$993.2 | | \$2,613.8 | | \$7,064.7 | |
| Average non-family income | \$126,503 | | \$109,341 | | \$96,292 | |
| Median non-family income | \$98,669 | | \$89,640 | | \$81,305 | |

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|---|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| <u>Population by Race/Ethnicity</u> | 27,772 | | 109,297 | | 328,800 | |
| White | 19,965 | 71.9% | 76,341 | 69.8% | 196,859 | 59.9% |
| Black | 5,189 | 18.7% | 15,506 | 14.2% | 63,410 | 19.3% |
| Asian | 1,130 | 4.1% | 6,049 | 5.5% | 29,037 | 8.8% |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 24 | 0.1% | 77 | 0.1% | 260 | 0.1% |
| American Indian/AK Native | 68 | 0.2% | 388 | 0.4% | 1,212 | 0.4% |
| Other/multiple races | 1,395 | 5.0% | 10,937 | 10.0% | 38,022 | 11.6% |
| Hispanic Origin | 2,010 | 7.2% | 17,375 | 15.9% | 60,598 | 18.4% |
| <u>Education (persons 25+)</u> | 22,221 | | 82,237 | | 244,129 | |
| No high school diploma | 819 | 3.7% | 6,337 | 7.7% | 23,182 | 9.5% |
| High school diploma | 1,590 | 7.2% | 8,217 | 10.0% | 28,460 | 11.7% |
| College, no diploma | 2,229 | 10.0% | 9,022 | 11.0% | 30,454 | 12.5% |
| Associate degree | 692 | 3.1% | 2,762 | 3.4% | 10,617 | 4.3% |
| Bachelor's degree | 7,200 | 32.4% | 25,208 | 30.7% | 73,038 | 29.9% |
| Graduate/professional degree | 9,691 | 43.6% | 30,691 | 37.3% | 78,378 | 32.1% |
| <u>Labor Force (persons 16+ yrs)</u> | | | | | | |
| Total Population, Age 16+ | 23,736 | | 89,849 | | 271,135 | |
| Employed | 17,186 | 72.4% | 65,814 | 73.2% | 199,365 | 73.5% |
| Unemployed | 511 | 2.2% | 1,768 | 2.0% | 5,934 | 2.2% |
| In armed forces | 564 | 2.4% | 1,620 | 1.8% | 4,062 | 1.5% |
| Not in labor force | 5,475 | 23.1% | 20,647 | 23.0% | 61,774 | 22.8% |
| Male Population, Age 16+ | 11,195 | | 43,595 | | 131,426 | |
| Employed | 8,564 | 76.5% | 33,880 | 77.7% | 102,491 | 78.0% |
| Unemployed | 187 | 1.7% | 892 | 2.0% | 3,047 | 2.3% |
| In armed forces | 370 | 3.3% | 1,117 | 2.6% | 3,106 | 2.4% |
| Not in labor force | 2,074 | 18.5% | 7,706 | 17.7% | 22,782 | 17.3% |
| Female Population, Age 16+ | 12,541 | | 46,254 | | 139,709 | |
| Employed | 8,622 | 68.8% | 31,934 | 69.0% | 96,874 | 69.3% |
| Unemployed | 324 | 2.6% | 876 | 1.9% | 2,887 | 2.1% |
| In armed forces | 194 | 1.5% | 503 | 1.1% | 956 | 0.7% |
| Not in labor force | 3,401 | 27.1% | 12,941 | 28.0% | 38,992 | 27.9% |
| <u>Vehicles Available (households)</u> | 14,370 | | 49,494 | | 147,276 | |
| Households with no vehicles | 1,544 | 10.7% | 3,897 | 7.9% | 13,465 | 9.1% |
| Households with 1 vehicle | 8,281 | 57.6% | 25,285 | 51.1% | 74,585 | 50.6% |
| Households with 2 vehicles | 3,885 | 27.0% | 16,008 | 32.3% | 45,910 | 31.2% |
| Households with 3+ vehicles | 660 | 4.6% | 4,304 | 8.7% | 13,316 | 9.0% |
| Vehicles in owner households | 9,596 | 52.6% | 43,900 | 61.1% | 110,453 | 52.3% |
| Vehicles in renter households | 8,645 | 47.4% | 27,915 | 38.9% | 100,884 | 47.7% |
| Total vehicles available | 18,241 | | 71,815 | | 211,337 | |
| Average vehicles per household | 1.27 | | 1.45 | | 1.43 | |

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|---|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| <u>Households</u> | 14,370 | | 49,494 | | 147,276 | |
| Average household size | 1.92 | | 2.18 | | 2.22 | |
| <u>Families</u> | 6,519 | | 25,589 | | 73,908 | |
| Average family size | 2.70 | | 3.01 | | 3.10 | |
| <u>Non-Families</u> | 7,851 | | 23,905 | | 73,367 | |
| Average non-family size | 1.27 | | 1.30 | | 1.33 | |
| <u>Group Quarters</u> | 186 | | 1,173 | | 2,447 | |
| <u>Household Type</u> | | | | | | |
| Families | 6,519 | | 25,589 | | 73,908 | |
| Married couples | 5,098 | 78.2% | 20,067 | 78.4% | 55,161 | 74.6% |
| with children | 1,297 | 25.4% | 7,559 | 37.7% | 22,345 | 40.5% |
| Male householder, no wife | 240 | 3.7% | 1,557 | 6.1% | 5,539 | 7.5% |
| with children | 82 | 34.2% | 738 | 47.4% | 2,536 | 45.8% |
| Female householder, no husband | 1,181 | 18.1% | 3,965 | 15.5% | 13,208 | 17.9% |
| with children | 752 | 63.7% | 2,312 | 58.3% | 7,568 | 57.3% |
| Non-Families | 7,851 | | 23,905 | | 73,367 | |
| with children | 8 | 0.1% | 78 | 0.3% | 290 | 0.4% |
| <u>Age of Householder (households)</u> | | | | | | |
| under 25 years | 347 | 2.4% | 1,192 | 2.4% | 4,552 | 3.1% |
| 25 to 34 years | 3,048 | 21.2% | 9,991 | 20.2% | 34,698 | 23.6% |
| 35 to 44 years | 3,106 | 21.6% | 11,178 | 22.6% | 33,627 | 22.8% |
| 45 to 54 years | 2,537 | 17.7% | 9,313 | 18.8% | 26,952 | 18.3% |
| 55 to 64 years | 2,444 | 17.0% | 8,400 | 17.0% | 22,782 | 15.5% |
| 65 to 74 years | 1,953 | 13.6% | 5,864 | 11.8% | 14,709 | 10.0% |
| 75 to 84 years | 680 | 4.7% | 2,383 | 4.8% | 6,568 | 4.5% |
| 85 years and over | 256 | 1.8% | 1,172 | 2.4% | 3,388 | 2.3% |
| <u>Household Size (households)</u> | | | | | | |
| 1 person | 6,127 | 42.6% | 18,339 | 37.1% | 54,719 | 37.2% |
| 2 person | 5,447 | 37.9% | 16,967 | 34.3% | 48,471 | 32.9% |
| 3 to 4 persons | 2,317 | 16.1% | 11,103 | 22.4% | 33,740 | 22.9% |
| 5+ persons | 479 | 3.3% | 3,085 | 6.2% | 10,346 | 7.0% |
| <u>Total Housing Units</u> | 15,162 | | 51,727 | | 153,696 | |
| Occupied | 14,370 | 94.8% | 49,494 | 95.7% | 147,276 | 95.8% |
| Owner-occupied | 6,503 | 45.3% | 26,355 | 53.2% | 64,920 | 44.1% |
| Renter-occupied | 7,867 | 54.7% | 23,139 | 46.8% | 82,356 | 55.9% |
| Vacant | 792 | 5.2% | 2,233 | 4.3% | 6,420 | 4.2% |
| <u>Housing Value</u> | | | | | | |
| Average Home Value | \$875,681 | | \$715,377 | | \$599,095 | |
| Median Home Value | \$608,053 | | \$541,063 | | \$478,764 | |
| Average Contract Rent | \$4,027 | | \$3,940 | | \$3,835 | |
| Median Contract Rent | \$1,589 | | \$1,557 | | \$1,523 | |

Downtown Baptist Church SWOT Assessment



Strengths:

Unified Culture

- Producers
- Battle Tested
- Welcoming

DBC currently has a unified culture within its membership that has been pruned through spiritual development and shared challenges. The past 6 years have taught us humility and patience, but has also shown us the importance of God's timing and the importance of forgiveness. The body today is engaged and willing to work as active participants in the mission of the church. In the midst of these we continue to be welcoming and loving church to those that walk into our lives both as individuals and as potential contributors to God's Kingdom.

Location:

God has divinely placed DBC in a community filled with opportunity. Our proximity to the center of power in our nation, the diverse population filled with potential outside our doors, as well as the amazing opportunity to minister to people that leave our doors and have influence across the nation and around the world.

Diversity:

We are blessed with an amazingly diverse congregation. People from all walks of life – socioeconomic, ethnic, upbringing, church background, careers and ages. We have a long tradition of celebrating our differences and believe it enriches our experience as the body.

Downtown Baptist Church SWOT Assessment



Opportunities:

Vocational leaders:

We see movement from “leadership” which is too narrowly defined as those with recognized positions, titles, or authority to an “everyday leadership”—leadership moments which are present whenever we influence or empower others to performed the act of leadership. For example, in the last few months, the congregation has witnessed individuals from within DBC taking on new or expanded roles within the church by leading Bible studies for which they had not done before, preaching the Word of God from the pulpit, or bridging gaps in continuing our mission opportunities.

Ripe for discipleship, Tradition of prayer:

We are ripe for discipleship as we are moving our thinking from a cozy internal view to an uncomfortable yet needed mindset of moving outward. We understand the need and the requirement for spiritual growth, authentic relationships, and multiplication – making disciples. We understand the requirement to make disciples but we haven’t taken the necessary bold intentional steps as a church yet. While we have the preaching, teaching Bible classes, and Sunday school which are important and provide part of the process of growing Christians, these are not necessarily ministries that make disciples. We are seeing small movements in our thinking to go from addition of disciples to multiplication of disciples much like a kernel of corn that multiplies into hundreds of kernels when planted and cultivated in fertile soil. DBC has fertile soil! We have experienced the miracles of prayer and know that God will provide for our every need – personally and corporately. Our prayer is to mold our hearts and minds into a discipleship church.

Mission with Impact, utilization of church building, millennial growth:

Over the last two to three years, our mindset has moved quickly to a more outward mission focus. This can be clearly seen in our mission giving which went from about 10-15% of our budget to approximately 25%. However, our mission growth does not stop there. We currently host 13 community organizations in our church building on a recurring basis throughout the week. We also host other Christian organizations for annual meetings. We still see that our church is not fully utilized and are continuing to look for ways to reach out to the community and develop relationships that can have an impact not only locally but globally. We believe that this model not only pleases God, but also fits well with the mindset of the millennial demographic of which Alexandria and Arlington has the highest growth rate in nation.

Downtown Baptist Church SWOT Assessment



Weakness:

Current Governance Model:

The current church governance model is congregationally led whereby the senior pastor serves in the capacity similar to that of the CEO. The structure also includes a Church Council comprising of the chairperson of each committee along with the chair of the deacons. The senior pastor also serves as the de facto chair of the church council. Under the current governance model, all major decisions are required to be taken to the church membership for a vote.

The disadvantage of the current governance model is that it presents a very silo approach to the governance and can create a vacuum in the operations of the church, whenever the senior pastor position is vacated for whatever reason.

In the absence of a senior pastor, the church council has authorize a sub-committee to review the current governance structure and recommend a new model suited for the effective operations of the church in accordance with scripture and in order to carry out the Kingdoms work at DBC

Commuter church and a transient population:

The majority of the current active DBC membership resides outside of a 3 miles radius of the church. Some of active DBC members come from as far as Southern Maryland, Fairfax, Annandale, Woodbridge and Washington DC.

Because of the presence of the federal government and the military in the area, a small percentage of members are very transient. The average membership of transient members varies anywhere between two to 8 years.

Social trends:

There is a new social culture of liberalism that conflicts with the teachings of the Bible and it is rapidly growing. Like many other churches around the world we at DBC tend to put those issues under the rug versus dealing with them as a church and as a body of Christ.

Downtown Baptist Church SWOT Assessment



Threats:

The greatest threats to Downtown Baptist Church's Kingdom success is the DC-area's workaholic culture and a lack of reconciliation for some members following recent staff upheavals.

Workaholic culture:

The DC area draws high achieving, driven, and exceptionally talented people to work in dynamic, significant professions. These individuals often become part of our talented pool of lay leaders, but the church is often competing for their time and priority. Even the DC-area traffic impacts member's ability to engage in weeknight events, as they must endure a grueling commute into Old Town. Negative events in the life of the church over the last few years, particularly staff changes, were difficult for all members to process.

Reconciliation:

Some members continue to have unresolved feelings and lack a sense of closure on these challenging issues. The staff changes continue to be a sensitive topic for some members because they struggle to reconcile what happened with the loving, warm culture of our church.

ARTIFACT SECTION TWO

Cultivating the Mission: A Summary of “Nights in Old Town” Listening Sessions

Rationale

Listening sessions are gatherings in which members of the congregation have an opportunity to share their concerns, struggles, and hopes for the mission of the church. Listening sessions are a critical initial step in the formulation of a strategy for renewal. From a theological perspective, listening sessions embrace the idea that every member of the body of Christ is a minister and that vision is not just given to the leader in a congregation. In their book *Missional Leader*, Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk write: “An important role of a missional leader is cultivating an environment within which God’s people discern God’s directions and activities in them and for the communities in which they live and find themselves.”⁷

For a congregation that has experienced a season of decline, listening sessions provide the opportunity for individual and corporate lament. In order to move into a season of renewal, congregations need the opportunity to put the past in perspective, and often that includes a time of lament and grief. Listening sessions also create a sense of shared ownership for the future direction of the congregation. People are more willing to participate in what they help to create. For a congregation that has experienced a season of conflict, listening sessions can serve as pathways to reconciliation.

Resources

1. *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* by Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk.

⁷ Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), Kindle, Loc. 485.

2. *Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups* by Ruth Haley Barton.

3. The United Methodist Church, <http://gcsrw.org/Portals/4/Toolkit%20Listening.pdf>.

This document is a training guide for a listening session relating to a specific topic (the role of women in the church). However, the Participation Covenant may be used for any topic.

Summary of “Nights in Old Town” Listening Sessions

In August of 2015, I became the Senior Pastor of Downtown Baptist Church. My first initiative was to hold a series of listening sessions called “Nights in Old Town.” The purpose of these listening sessions was to hear the hopes, dreams, laments, and concerns of the people for the congregation. Six gatherings were held over a span of four weeks from mid-September through mid-October. Participants were asked to choose one session out of the six to attend. Ninety-two people participated in at least one session. The following questions and/or discussion prompts were used to guide the conversations:

1. If a friend asked you to describe DBC in one or two words, what would you say?
2. Please share with the group an important memory that you have of DBC. If you are new to the congregation, please share your first impression.
3. Why do you love this neighborhood/location?
4. In one year, what stories would you want to be telling others about our congregation?
5. What is the most significant strength of the congregation?
6. What challenge areas would you like to see strengthened?

7. My dream for DBC is that we would _____.
8. What else would you like to share with me (Phil) as I begin my ministry with you?

The responses from each listening session were captured on poster paper and each gathering closed with an extensive time of prayer around tables. I then analyzed and synthesized the responses from each listening session and prepared the presentation that can be found at the end of this section. I shared the first draft of the report with key leaders for their feedback. We then held three Town Hall Meetings to share with the congregation.

Vision 24, a directional guide for 2016-2017, was adopted as a result of these listening sessions. The leadership of the congregation acknowledged that our primary task for 2016-2017 is to pursue congregational renewal by focusing our strategic capitals on three core ministry functions: 1) Welcoming the Newcomer, 2) Connecting with God and others through transformational worship and incarnational hospitality, and 3) pursuing personal and corporate spiritual growth through discipleship and mission engagement. The leadership also committed to spend 2018 discerning God's vision for the church through 2022. The work of this artifact is being utilized in Vision 24 and sets the stage for the longer-term strategy.

The Five Capitals

Spiritual

Relational

Physical

Intellectual

Financial



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Vision 24



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I. What I Heard in the Listening Sessions



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Things to Celebrate

- We are a warm, welcoming, compassionate, and diverse congregation.



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- We have a strong commitment to Biblical truths and teaching.



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- We value the opportunity to have an impact on a transient population



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- We have a genuine desire to make an impact for Christ in our community and world through mission activity, support, and giving.



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- We have a genuine desire to impact younger generations (children, teens, and millenials) for Christ.



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- We enjoy the partnership that we have with other non-profits and ministries.



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- We are uniquely placed by God to have impact in the DC area.



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- We have a historic and beautiful facility that we want to use to bless our community.



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Challenges to Consider

- We have been in a lengthy season of transition.



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- Our volunteer base has gotten smaller, while our programmatic needs have remained at the same level. Therefore, we have a level of volunteer fatigue and burnout.



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- Attendance at both worship services *feels* considerably less than in previous years.



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- Some core ministries have been significantly challenged over the past 3 years. These ministries are: 1) Children, 2) Youth, 3) Music, 4) Adult Spiritual Formation.



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- We need a common, unifying goal that will move us from a mindset of surviving to thriving.



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- We struggle in the area of planning and communication.



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- We need a new, more efficient form of governance.



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- Change is hard.



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- Tangible results over the next 24 months should include:
 - 1) We are used by God to make more and better disciples of Jesus,
 - 2) We engage weekly in vibrant, corporate worship,
 - 3) We join our hearts together to



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raise our children and teens in the faith, 4) Every disciple commits to taking “next steps” to grow, 5) Our ministry is used by God to expand His kingdom outside the walls of the church.



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6) The stage is set for the ministry to multiply into a network of local gospel communities...



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- And...this emphasis should lead to us to experience the life of Jesus and His church with...

...joyful, glad
obedience.



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II. Directional Thoughts...



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Vision 24:

Back to the Basics:

Welcome * Connect * Grow



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Welcome the Newcomer



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An example of
key activities
would be:

- Strengthen the Sunday morning fellowship time by turning the fellowship hall on Sunday morning into the Downtown Café.





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- Cast the vision for Downtowners to intentionally reach out to newcomers on Sunday morning and invite them to participate in a small group or to join their peer group for Sunday lunch.



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- Host newcomer connections on a bi-monthly basis at 10 Norton.





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- Downtowners Embrace the Ministry of Hospitality Where We Live, Work, and Play



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- Improve & Update Signage on the 1st & 2nd Floors



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- Improve web site.



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- Leverage our building for key community activities such as First Night Out, Alexandria Art Festival, etc.



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Connect With God & Each Other



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Key activities would be:

- Return to one worship service...





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- Begin webcasting the worship service each week “live”.



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- Hold a 24-hour prayer vigil once per quarter for the next 2 years.





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- Develop an e-mail prayer team.



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- Encourage the formation of additional small groups that meet in neighborhoods.





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- Increase the Number of Volunteers Serving in Ministries to Children & Youth





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- Strategically balance our mission's portfolio so that we have an Acts 1:8 strategy for missions.



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Grow More & Better Disciples of Jesus



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Key activities would be:

- Each Downtowner committing to take next steps to grow in three directions: Up toward God in spiritual maturity and worship, 2) In toward a greater



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love for the family of faith,
3) Out on mission in our
neighborhood and world.



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- Each Downtowner commits to growing in generosity over the next two years.





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- As a church we develop an intentional plan to develop new congregational leadership.



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Two Additional Big Goals for the Next 2 Years:

- Engage in an international mission partnership (UK, Portugal, Spain, ??)



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- Develop a new, more effective and efficient form of governance and church operating procedures.

ARTIFACT SECTION THREE
Empowering the Mission: A New Framework for Congregational Governance

Rationale

Congregations that are strong and healthy typically have a system of congregational governance that functions well. Decisions are prayerfully and thoughtfully considered, and are made and communicated with clarity. The roles and relationships between the staff, lay leadership, and the congregation are clearly defined and maintained. There is a healthy process for evaluation and for handling criticism and conflict. And there are clear processes in place for succession, both for lay leadership and clergy.

There are three basic forms of church government: 1) Episcopal/Bishop; 2) Presbyterian/Elders; and 3) Congregational/Members. Within these forms of governance there can be a great deal of variety.⁸ I have served three Baptist churches that, while congregational in polity to a degree, functioned as more of a hybrid between Congregational and Presbyterian polity. Even churches that are small and informal such as house churches have some form of governance. It may not exist in a written constitution and by-laws, but it is often in some form of covenant understanding of how the community will function together.

The main purpose of church governance is to facilitate the work of the church and to ensure that the appropriate resources for mission are allocated and channeled to the various ministries of the church. It is critical that the size of the church governance match

⁸ Leith Anderson, *Leadership That Works: Hope and Direction for Church and Parachurch Leaders in Today's Complex World* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1999), 59-61.

the size of the congregation. There are two noteworthy governance challenges for churches that have experienced a significant season of decline:

1. The church governance was designed for the church when it was significantly larger. Like a toddler trying to walk in her mother's shoes, the smaller church simply cannot function well in a governance system that is too big. In many churches there can be more committee positions than there are capable and qualified people to fill them. This leads to poor decision making and burnout among leaders, and it drains human capital from direct mission engagement. Church members end up spending more time in committee meetings than in direct mission opportunities.
2. The church governance was developed in an era of church life that no longer exists. Many city churches that have experienced decline were at their peak in the age of the Builders, also known as the WWII generation. This generation was characterized by a deep sense of institutional loyalty and commitment. This attribute led them to develop complex committee structures and systems in the church that valued committee participation as a form of discipleship and expression of one's devotion to the church. Boomers, Xers, and Millennials do not share the same level of institutional commitment. This should not be mistaken for a lack of devotion to Christ and his church. It simply means their priority is to engage direct ministry action rather than indirect committee participation.

Churches that have experienced a season of decline would benefit from a review of their congregational governance. If it is working well and channeling adequate resources to the mission, then praise God and leave it alone! If it is not working well and

is experiencing one or both of the challenges above, it is one of the most important steps a church can take to prepare for a season of renewal. However, the wise leader should approach changes to the system of governance patiently and with a great deal of participation from the congregation.

Resources

1. *Leadership That Works* by Leith Anderson.
 2. *Who Runs the Church?* Edited by Paul E. Engle.
 3. *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership* by Dan Hotchkiss.
 4. *Five Signs that Bad Governance is Killing Your Church* by Carey Nieuwohof.
- <http://careynieuwhof.com/2015/05/5-signs-bad-governance-is-stifling-your-churchs-growth-and-mission/>

Summary of Empowering the Mission: A New Framework for Congregational Governance

DBC's constitution reads, "The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches."⁹ The current governance is congregational in polity with a heavy emphasis on committees for administrative oversight. The current organizational structure calls for 73 volunteer administrative committee positions in the following areas:

- Church Officers (6)

⁹ Church Constitution, Preamble, Paragraph 4, Downtown Baptist Church.

- Deacons (15)
- Trustees (3)
- Church Council (10)
- Missions (9)
- Personnel (6)
- Finance (9)
- Facilities (9)
- Endowment (6)

Notice the committee positions listed above do not include volunteers needed for core ministry functions such as children's teachers, youth leaders, worship team and choir members, media team, greeters, Table Group leaders, mission service volunteers, counting teams, or adult Bible study teachers. These core ministry positions require approximately 60 volunteers each week. The combined total of administrative committee and core ministry positions (133) exceeds the average number of adults that attend on any given Sunday.

This reality resulted in a high degree of volunteer burnout during the time of the pastoral transition in the year before I came to the church. This led to some key volunteers leaving the church and others feeling a high degree of frustration. It also led to many key leaders juggling several different volunteer responsibilities along with their full-time jobs and long commutes to and from work in the D.C. area. Additionally, many committees lacked the required number of volunteers as called for in the church by-laws. This led to approximately 12-15 volunteers, along with the ministry staff, making most of the key decisions in the church.

During the year of pastoral transition, the lay leadership of the church decided that a new more efficient and effective system of governance and organizational structure was needed. A team was formed in 2014 and the work started in earnest. It was put on hold during the pastor search process and then continued again in January of 2016.¹⁰ A draft of the new governance is included at the end of this section. The final draft is expected to be considered at three Town Hall meetings in the fall of 2016 and approved by the congregation in November 2016.

The new system of governance still adheres to a congregational polity, as all elected leaders are nominated and elected by the congregation. However, the new polity includes a Servant Leadership Council (SLC) that functions in a manner similar to Elders in a Presbyterian Church. The new by-laws go to great lengths to spell out the limits of the SLC's authority and details what decisions are only to be made by the congregation as a whole. Highlights of the new framework of governance are:

- A reduction of administrative committee positions from 73 to 28.
- A clear line of accountability for the Senior Pastor and staff.
- A clear membership process.
- The ability to continue or discontinue ministry teams based on congregational need and the ministry team's effectiveness.

¹⁰ During the interview process with the Pastor Selection Team, I requested that the Governance Task Force put a hold on their work until after I was called as pastor. I wanted to have a hand in shaping the work.

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Any person made or threatened to be made a party to any action or proceeding, whether civil or criminal by reason of the fact that he or his testator is or was a SLC member, Deacon, officer, employee or agent of the church, may be indemnified by the church, and the church may advance his related expenses, to the full extent permitted by law. The church may purchase and maintain insurance to indemnify: (a) itself for any obligation which it incurs as a result of the indemnification specified above; and (b) its SLC members, Deacons, and officers..... 22

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Preamble

These Constitution and By-Laws are established to enable Downtown Baptist Church (DBC) to faithfully pursue the mission of Jesus, to announce His gospel and to advance His kingdom in Old Town and beyond to the world. To this great mission we commit for the glory of God.

Constitution

Article I – Name

The name of this incorporated church shall be Downtown Baptist Church and it shall be located in Alexandria, Virginia (hereinafter the “church”).

Article II – Church Foundation

The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scripture.

Article III – Church Purpose

The avowed purpose of the church is to biblically function as a body of believers under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Article IV – Governance Structure

The attachment graphically displays the generalized church structure.

Article V - Doctrinal Foundation

The Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for church doctrine. The church subscribes to the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963.

Article VI - Church Ordinances

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the two ordinances of the church. They shall be administered in accordance with Scripture.

Article VII – Church Covenant

The following is the Church Covenant by which all Christians joining DBC agree to be bound by:

Having been led by the grace of God through the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit to repent of our sin and in faith turn to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and having given public testimony of this faith through baptism, we now joyfully and solemnly enter into this covenant with the members of Downtown Baptist Church:

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We commit, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to affirm and follow the Doctrinal Foundation and Covenant in the Church Constitution, to walk together in love, to remember one another in prayer, to help one another in times of need, to exercise gentleness and humility in our dealings with one another as we speak the truth in love, to be faithful in our responsibilities and commitments, to be just and honest in our dealings, and to honor ourselves and others for Christ's sake through sexual purity, personal integrity, and abstaining from things or practices which bring harm to our faith or the faith of another.

We commit to faithful participation in times of worship, prayer, study, and fellowship with other believers, to the building up of the church by using our spiritual gifts in ministry, to contributing cheerfully and regularly for the ministry and expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel to the world.

We commit to practice personal and family worship, to train our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, and to seek the salvation of our family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances, and all peoples of the world.

We have read the Statement of Faith in Article V, Membership affirmation confirmation, Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, and Bylaws including but not limited to those policies dealing with church discipline, conflict resolution and members' privileges and responsibilities and holy covenant and agree to be bound by the Articles, Constitution and Bylaws and accompanying policies and procedures.

Article VIII – Amendments

Members may propose changes to the Constitution that shall be submitted to the Servant Leadership Council (SLC) for consideration and comment. The SLC shall present the proposed changes and their comments at a duly called church business meeting. This Constitution may be amended by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present and voting, provided that the following procedure has been followed:

1. The proposed written amendment has been presented at a previous church business meeting;
2. The proposed amendment has been mailed or made available to the members at least four (4) weeks before the meeting to act on the amendment; and
3. The proposed amendment has been announced on a previous Sunday worship service at least two (2) weeks before the vote was taken.

BY-LAWS

Article I – Church Membership

Section I – Admission to Membership:

The terms of admission to Membership in the church shall be by one's public proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of the Living God and as Lord and Savior; by water baptism; and by affirmation of a majority of the Membership present during a church-wide service or meeting. The process for attaining membership shall be:

1. Make a request to a member of the Ministry team.
2. Complete a membership conversation with a member of the pastoral staff team at which time the requirements of Christian faith and Baptism shall be discussed.
3. Attend and complete a DBC membership class.
4. Sign the Members Covenant.
5. Affirmation by Membership by majority acclamation.

If a specific concern is raised with regards to a candidate for Membership, affirmation shall be postponed and the matter referred to the Servant Leadership Council (SLC).

All present members of the unincorporated entity known as Downtown Baptist Church shall, upon agreeing to be bound by the Articles, Constitution and Bylaws of the new church corporation, become members of this incorporated church. No member of this church or any officer, or any member of the SLC shall by virtue of such membership, office, or position, incur or be subject to personal liability to any extent for any indebtedness, obligations, acts, or omissions of this corporation. Individuals who join the church after its organization shall sign the Members Covenant.

The SLC shall have the authority to review and update the membership rolls at least annually.

Section II –Prerogative of Membership

All members present, without respect to age, shall have an equal opportunity to express opinion on church business matters. Every member in good standing, age eighteen (18) years or older, present at a duly called business meeting (voting by proxy prohibited) shall have the privilege to vote on the following matters (simple majority unless otherwise stated):

1. Call or removal of the Senior Pastor – three-fourths (3/4) majority;
2. Election of SLC and DTG members;
3. Election of Deacons;
4. Election of the Treasurer; and Assistant Treasurer

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5. Adoption of the Annual Budget;
6. Ratify candidates for membership;
7. Acquisition, sale, or transfer of any real property and related indebtedness – two-thirds (2/3) majority;
8. Amend the Constitution & By-Laws – as stated in Article VIII of the Constitution and Article XIV of the Bylaws;
9. Merger or Dissolution of the church – two-thirds (2/3) majority;
10. Sale of all or substantially all of the church's assets – two-thirds (2/3) majority; and
11. Any other major event or decision as designated by the SLC – simple majority unless otherwise stated.

Section III - Termination of Church Membership:

Members shall be removed from the Membership rolls for one of the following reasons:

1. Death.
2. Request for transfer to another church.
3. Personal request to terminate membership.
4. Dismissal by church discipline, as outlined in Section IV below.
5. Inactivity. A member's name shall be removed from the church roll provided all of the following apply:
 - a. The member has not been involved in or had any contact with the church for a period of at least one year;
 - b. Sincere efforts have been made by the Senior Pastor, his designee or a designee of the SLC, to locate, counsel, and restore that member into the active fellowship of the body.
 - c. If no interest in restoration is evidenced, the SLC may remove the member upon majority vote.

Section IV- Discipline and Reinstatement of Members:

1. Our Lord's guidelines in Matthew 18 serve as the basis for any church discipline. Should one member sin against another member or the Body of members (the church), the aggrieved members shall follow in a tender spirit the rules given by our Lord and Savior in Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14. If they sin against the body either in sinful moral failure or biblical heresy, the Pastors, SLC members, Deacons, and mature members are available for counsel and guidance. The church shall look to the SLC for the effective functioning and discipline of its members. In disciplining members, the SLC shall follow those biblical discipline procedures outlined in the church policy manual.
2. Reinstatement of former members to the Membership rolls:

Any member removed for Discipline or for Inactivity may be reinstated by requesting the same to the SLC. Such a request shall be reviewed by the Deacons and the SLC. If recommended for reinstatement by both the Deacons and the SLC, reinstatement must be approved via a business meeting of the Membership by majority vote of those present.

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Section V – Business Meetings:

1. A minimum of one regular business meeting shall be held annually.
2. Special business meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor, the SLC Chairman, or upon written request of twenty-five Members. No other matters shall be discussed or voted upon at a special meeting unless identified in the notice.
3. Except in the case of exigent circumstances, a minimum of two weeks' notice shall be given for regular and special business meetings. Notice shall be given in all scheduled and published church mediums (e.g. in church services, E-News, church bulletin and church newsletter). Notice shall include the purpose(s) and agenda of the meeting.
4. A quorum of 20% of the Membership present at the start of a duly called meeting is required to conduct a business meeting. If quorum is not met, then another meeting shall be called, with proper notice given. At the second meeting on the same subject(s), quorum is satisfied by the number of members present at the start of the meeting.
5. Business meeting decisions shall be made by a majority vote of the quorum unless otherwise specified in these By-Laws.
6. Meetings shall be conducted under generally accepted rules of order, e.g. Robert's Rules of Order.
7. The SLC Chairman shall serve as Moderator for business meetings. If the SLC Chairman is unable or unwilling to serve, then the SLC Vice Chairman shall serve as Moderator pro tem and facilitate the meeting.
8. Minutes of the annual and special business meetings of the Membership shall be taken and kept in the records of the church under the custody of the Secretary or a designated Church Clerk.

Article II – Servant Leadership Council (Serving as the Board of Directors)

Section I – General Duties and Responsibilities

The general corporate duties and responsibilities of the church shall be exercised by or under the authority of the Board of Directors, hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as the “SLC.” The authority, business and property of the church shall be exercised, conducted and controlled by the SLC for the purposes of overseeing the legal, business, financial and administrative affairs of the church with consensus agreement. If, in the course of the decision-making processes, the SLC cannot unanimously agree, then the decisions shall be made by majority vote of the SLC members present and voting at that meeting.

Section II – SLC Specific Duties and Functions:

Without prejudice to the general duties and responsibilities outlined above, and subject to the same limitation, the SLC shall have the following duties, powers and functions:

1. To establish governing principles, policies and determining practices for the church, including the creation and maintenance of policy and operations manuals, which shall contain all controlling policies and procedures governing any and all aspects of the church’s affairs, including, but not limited to, ministry team task descriptions and policies regarding the handling of funds, use of facilities, and employment policies and practices;
2. To oversee and be responsible for the strategic direction and the spiritual health and welfare of the church.
3. To establish strategies and objectives to fulfill the church’s purpose, and review progress against objectives to ensure that ministry operates consistently according to the strategies.
4. To recommend the borrowing of money and incurring indebtedness on behalf of the church and the case to be executed and delivered for the church’s purpose and in the church’s name, promissory notes, and other evidence of debt and securities.
5. To oversee the legal, business, financial, and administrative affairs of the church.
6. Such other powers and duties assigned by the church members and needed for the orderly administration of the church.

The SLC may delegate some of its authorities and duties to individual pastors, staff, Deacons, ministry teams and others as long as the delegation does not breach its fiduciary duties to the church. The SLC may also invite the Leaders of the ministry teams and task groups of the church to be non-voting invitees to SLC meetings

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whenever projects or programs in which their ministry may be involved are to be considered, for example, preparation of the annual church calendar.

Section III - SLC Composition:

1. The composition of the SLC shall be the Senior Pastor and at least five (5) At-Large members elected by majority vote of the members at the annual business meeting. The authorized number of lay SLC members shall be such number as from time to time authorized by the SLC, provided that such number shall not be less than five (5) or more than twelve (12). No less than fifty (50%) percent of the SLC shall be lay members from the congregation and not related to paid staff.
2. Requirements to serve as a SLC member are generally as follows:
 - a. An active church member (e.g. small group, teaching, volunteering) for at least 1 year.
 - b. Demonstrated leadership within the church (e.g. ministry leader, teacher).
 - c. Demonstrated spiritual maturity (e.g. 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
 - d. Minimum 21 years of age.
 - e. Committed to the mission and values of the church.
 - f. A faithful steward providing ongoing financial support to the church.
3. SLC members shall be elected in the annual business meeting by an election process facilitated by the Discernment Task Group (DTG) as outlined in Article V.
4. There shall be three annual classes of SLC members so that approximately one-third (1/3) are up for election every year to maintain continuity and make for smooth transitions within the SLC.
5. Except for the Senior Pastor, SLC members serve 3-year terms and, if re-elected, may serve two successive terms for a total of 6 years. A SLC member may not be elected to 3 consecutive terms and must be inactive for at least one year before being eligible for re-election.
6. The SLC shall elect a Chairman and a Secretary from their lay members to serve for a one-year term.
7. Prohibitions and Exclusions.
 - a. A member may not serve concurrently on both the SLC and Diaconate.
 - b. The Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer are eligible to serve on the SLC if elected based on the election procedures outlined for all members.
 - c. Church staff other than the Senior Pastor are not eligible to serve on the SLC.
 - d. Married couples or close family members may not serve concurrently on the SLC (e.g. siblings, parents, children, spouses and in-laws).
 - e. No spouse, parent, sibling or child of a member of the church staff may serve on the SLC.

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Section IV – Vacancies on the SLC

A vacancy on the SLC because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or any other cause may be filled by nomination and election by a majority of the church members in accordance with these By-Laws for the remainder of the term.

Section V – Resignation and Removal

Any SLC member may at any time deliver a written notice of intent to resign to the Senior Pastor or Chair, which shall be effective upon acceptance by the SLC. Other than the Senior Pastor whose removal is provided below, any SLC member may be removed at any time with or without cause when, in the sole judgment and discretion of the SLC, by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the remaining SLC members that such individual should no longer serve on the SLC. In the event any SLC member is so removed, a new SLC member may be nominated and elected by majority vote of the members in accordance with these By-Laws for the remainder of the term.

Section VI – Transactions with Interested Parties

A contract or other transaction between the church and one or more of its SLC members, pastors, officers, Deacons, or family members thereof (hereinafter “Interested Party”), or between the church and any other entity, of which one or more of the church or its SLC members, pastors, officers, or Deacons are also Interested Parties, or in which entity is an Interested Party has a financial interest – shall be voidable at the sole election of the church unless all of the following provisions are satisfied:

1. The church entered into the transaction for its own benefit;
2. The transaction was fair and reasonable as to the church, or was in furtherance of its exempt purposes at the time the church entered into the transaction;
3. Prior to consummating the transaction, or any part, the SLC authorized or approved the transaction, in good faith, by a vote of a majority of the SLC members then in office, without counting the vote of the interested SLC members, and with knowledge of the material facts concerning the transaction and the Interested Parties’ interest in the transaction; and
4. Prior to authorizing or approving the transaction, the SLC, in good faith, determined after reasonable investigation and consideration, that either the church could not have obtained a more advantageous arrangement, with reasonable effort under the circumstances, or the transaction was in furtherance of the church’s tax-exempt purposes.

Common or interested SLC members may not be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the SLC (or a ministry team thereof) which authorizes, approves, or ratifies such contract or transaction. The SLC may adopt additional conflicts of interest policies, in addition to the above, that shall provide for full disclosure of material conflicting interests by SLC members, officers, Deacons or employees. These policies shall permit the SLC to determine whether the contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair and reasonable to the church. Notwithstanding the above, no loan shall be made by the church to any of its SLC members, officers, pastors, Deacons, or members.

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Section VII – No Compensation

No salary or compensation shall be paid to any member of the Board in his/her capacity as Member of the Board, but nothing herein shall be construed to preclude any Board Member from serving the Church in any other capacity and receiving reasonable compensation. Moreover, the Board member may receive reasonable reimbursement for travel and other approved expenses upon request and written documentation.

Section VIII – SLC Meetings:

1. The SLC shall generally meet at least monthly unless circumstances require otherwise. The SLC year is January 1 through December 31. Minutes from SLC meetings shall be taken and recorded by the Secretary who shall maintain custody thereof and be responsible for circulating copies to the SLC members in a timely manner. SLC meeting minutes may generally be available to the Membership upon request in the church office.
2. Special meetings of the SLC may be called by the Senior Pastor or Chairman for whatever purpose(s) at any time. The transactions of any meeting of the SLC however called and noticed and wherever held, shall be valid as though at a regular meeting.
3. Except in the case of exigent circumstances, SLC meeting dates shall be noticed a minimum of 1 week in advance. Notices shall include the time, place, and in the case of a special meeting the purpose of the meeting. Notice of a meeting shall be duly sent, mailed, or otherwise delivered to each SLC member.
4. The SLC may deem a portion of a meeting “Executive Session” at which time all non-voting invitees are required to leave.
5. The SLC shall generally hold quarterly Town Hall meetings to communicate plans and to receive feedback from the congregation (The term ‘congregation’ includes members and regular attendees). No voting shall occur at these meetings.
6. A simple majority of current SLC members, present in person shall constitute a quorum for all SLC meetings.
7. Except as otherwise provided in these By-Laws, the act of the majority of the SLC members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the SLC.
8. Any action required or permitted to be taken by the SLC members may be taken without a meeting, if all of the SLC members, individually, or collectively, consent in writing or via any means of electronic communication to the action. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as the unanimous vote of the SLC members. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the SLC.

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9. Members of the SLC or of any ministry thereof may participate in a meeting of the SLC or ministry by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment whereby all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. When such a meeting is conducted by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment, a written record shall be made of the action taken at such meeting, noting participation of those who were present by means of such communications equipment.

Article III – Church Policy Manual

1. The DBC Policy Manual is the sole responsibility of the SLC, or its designee, with professional consultation and review. The SLC shall retain final approval authority for all DBC Policy Manual content. In fulfilling this responsibility, the SLC shall give due consideration to input from Membership. The DBC Policy Manual shall address policies and procedures for the Diaconate, Ministry Teams as well as lines of responsibilities for all essential functions of the church. The SLC, or its designee, shall review the Manual at least annually, with the authority to recommend changes for the SLC to consider and vote on. The DBC Policy Manual shall be made available in the church office and all changes communicated to the Membership.
2. The SLC, or its designee, shall be responsible for compiling and maintaining the Policy Manual which shall cover day-to-day administrative functions of the church not outlined in these By-Laws. To the extent that the By-Laws and DBC Policy Manual conflict or are inconsistent with one another, these By-Laws shall govern and control.

Article IV – Ministry Teams and Task Groups

1. The SLC may establish such other ministry teams or task groups (standing and ad hoc) as needed to assist in the performance of its responsibilities. These ministry teams or task groups shall function under the oversight of the SLC but shall continue to pursue their assigned responsibilities as defined by the church and those tasks specifically delegated to them. An ad hoc ministry team or task group may not exist beyond the duration of one year without reauthorization by the SLC.
2. The organization, authority, and responsibility of each standing or ad hoc ministry team or task group not identified in these By-Laws shall be described more fully in the DBC Policy Manual.
3. Unless otherwise stated, members for each ministry team or task group shall be appointed by the SLC. Unless otherwise stated, the members of each ministry team or task group shall appoint a Leader to facilitate meetings and report to the SLC.

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Article V – Discernment Task Group (DTG)

The DTG shall nominate members for elected positions in accordance with the DBC Policy Manual unless otherwise stipulated herein. Elected positions are SLC members, Deacons, At-Large DTG members, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and any other position as designated by the SLC.

1. The DTG shall consist of no fewer than six (6) and no more than eight (8) members and shall include:
 - a. One Deacon as selected by the Deacon Chairperson for a 1-year term.
 - b. One SLC member as selected by the SLC Chairperson for a 1-year term.
 - c. 3-5 At-Large members from the Membership for 2-year terms. These terms shall generally be staggered so that approximately one-half (1/2) of the At-Large members shall be up for election every year.
 - d. The Senior Pastor shall have a permanent seat on the DTG task group.
2. The DTG shall solicit recommendations from the Membership and shall recommend to the church, prior to the annual business meeting, candidates to serve in elected positions.
3. Prior to the annual business meeting, the DTG shall publish the election process for elected positions. This process shall include the following:
 - a. Nominations for elected positions.
 - b. A review of nominations.
 - c. Interview of nominees
 - d. DTG recommendations of candidates for each position.
 - e. Election of candidates at the annual business meeting by majority vote of the quorum present.

Article VI – Church Officers

Section I – General:

The church officers shall be the Senior Pastor/President herein after referred to as the Senior Pastor, SLC Chairman, SLC Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and such other officers as the SLC may from time to time determine necessary. The Senior Pastor/President, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are elected by the church as specified herein. The SLC Chairman and the SLC Secretary are elected by the SLC. Such other officers as the SLC may determine necessary are elected as determined by the SLC. All church officers shall be members of DBC who actively support the programs and missions of the Church. Except for the President, all officers shall serve for a one-year term and may be reelected without limitation or until their successor is elected and qualified.

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Section II – Senior Pastor/President:

The Senior Pastor shall simultaneously occupy the position of President of the church corporation and, as chief executive officer, provide overall leadership for the affairs of the church. The President and/or the SLC, upon approval by the SLC, shall execute any necessary documents and instruments on behalf of the church, except where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the SLC to some other officer or agent of the church. The President shall be an *ex-officio* member of the SLC and all ministry teams and task groups of the church, unless he delegates such responsibilities. The President shall absent himself from the discussion and vote of the SLC wherein his duties, powers, and salary are being voted on.

Section III – Chairman:

The SLC Chairman shall work with the Senior Pastor to set the agenda for and facilitate the meetings of the SLC. The SLC Chairman shall also serve as the Vice President and, in a vacancy in the office of President, shall carry out the duties and responsibilities of the President and such other duties delegated to him/her by the SLC.

Section IV – Secretary:

The SLC shall annually appoint a Secretary from among its number. The Secretary shall record and preserve the minutes of all meetings of the SLC. Unless delegated to a church Clerk, the Secretary shall also serve as the clerk of the congregation and record and preserve the minutes of all business meetings of the Membership. The Secretary, or his/her designee, shall maintain an up-to-day membership roll and prepare and forward membership letters. The Secretary shall be charged with the duty of giving proper notice to the SLC and Membership of all respective business meetings.

Section V – Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer:

1. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer may or may not be SLC members. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are responsible for proper receipt, accounting, and disbursement of church funds in compliance with church policies and good accounting practices. The Treasurer shall ensure a financial report is made available to the SLC and shall ensure that a financial report is made available for Membership at the annual business meeting and such other business meetings wherein a financial report is deemed necessary. A copy of the financial records shall likewise be available to the Membership on a quarterly basis. Proper records and books concerning incoming and outgoing funds shall be kept and such records and books shall be made available for auditing or inspection. The Assistant Treasurer shall stand in for the Treasurer if unavailable and shall have the same duties and responsibilities.
2. Immediate family members may not serve concurrently as Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

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Article VII – Church Pastoral Staff

Section I – Identity and Qualifications:

The position of Senior Pastor is the sole mandatory Pastoral/Ministry Staff position. All Pastoral Staff shall meet and continue to adhere to the scriptural qualifications of an overseer identified in 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; and Titus 1:6-9.

Section II – General Ministerial Duties:

The Senior Pastor, shall be recognized as the authority to oversee the spiritual affairs of the Church. The Senior Pastor provides spiritual leadership and direction to the church to determine and attain its mission, to proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers, and to care for the members and other persons in the community. The SLC shall exercise an oversight role over the Senior Pastor, and shall hold him accountable for performance of his pastoral duties. In the absence of a Senior Pastor, the SLC shall provide missional direction.

Section III – Calling a Senior Pastor and Term:

If a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor occurs for whatever reason, the SLC shall serve as or create a Pastor Selection Team (PST). The PST shall appoint a Chairperson and secretary from among their number. The Membership may inform the PST of any additional qualifications they desire in a Senior Pastor. The PST shall present to the SLC only one person at a time for their consideration. Upon consensus approval, the SLC candidate shall call a business meeting of the Membership to vote on the candidate. Election will be by secret ballot and an affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and voting shall constitute a call. The PST shall inform the candidate of the voting results as soon as possible. Upon election, the Senior Pastor shall serve for an indefinite term or until the sooner of his death, resignation or removal. The PST shall serve up to 1 year after the Senior Pastor is called and shall meet quarterly.

Section IV – Compensation:

The SLC shall specify a pastor's compensation. The Senior Pastor shall be recused from any discussion and vote regarding his/her compensation. The church shall provide an adequate salary and, as possible, such other benefits as requested and approved by the SLC in accordance with the church's annual budget. These benefits may include, but are not limited to, a housing allowance, health insurance, continued education, pension, vacation time, and other special funds as needed for his ministry. The church may also defray the costs of sending the Senior Pastor to out-of-town conferences, conventions or mission trips attended for the church, as approved by the SLC.

Section V – Senior Pastor/Resignation and Removal:

A Senior Pastor may at any time submit a written notice of intent to resign to the SLC, which shall be effective upon acceptance by the SLC unless otherwise agreed to by the parties. If any two (2) members (with a preference to unrelated persons) have a

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grievance against a Senior Pastor, those members must present their grievances to the SLC. If the conduct of the Senior Pastor is immoral or egregiously improper, the SLC, upon consensus agreement, shall call a special business meeting of the Membership for this matter. Membership vote shall be by secret ballot and a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and voting shall constitute a termination.

Section VI – Associate Pastors/Ministers:

Additional Pastoral/Ministry Staff positions, other than the position of Senior Pastor, may be identified and filled by the SLC. All Pastoral Staff shall work under the general supervision of the Senior Pastor (or the SLC if the office of Senior Pastor is vacant). A job description and compensation package for the specific Pastoral Staff position shall be created by the SLC, with recommendations by the Senior Pastor.

1. If a Senior Pastor is present, the addition and/or termination/elimination of any other Pastoral Staff positions, to include interim/temporary positions, shall be recommended by the Senior Pastor, and approved by the SLC.
2. If a Senior Pastor is not present, any other Pastoral Staff positions, to include interim/temporary positions, shall be approved and/or terminated/eliminated by the SLC.

Article VIII – Church Support Staff

Section I – Selection:

The SLC shall identify and fill Support Staff positions required for the proper functioning of the church.

Section II – Duties and Responsibilities:

The number, scope and responsibilities of any Support Staff positions are the responsibility of the Senior Pastor with the advice and consent of the SLC.

Section III – General Oversight and Supervision:

The SLC shall ensure the proper supervision of all Support Staff:

1. Under the oversight of the SLC, the Senior Pastor shall be responsible for the supervision of all Support Staff unless the SLC deems other supervision more appropriate.
2. In the absence of a Senior Pastor, the SLC, or its designee, shall ensure staff supervision.

Section IV – Resignation and Termination:

Any support staff may at any time submit a written notice of intent to resign to the Senior Pastor. Any support staff may be terminated upon recommendation by a supervising staff member and approval by the SLC. Such termination of support staff may be reported to the Membership, but does not need Membership approval.

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Article IX – Diaconate

Section I – Diaconate Composition:

1. The Diaconate, in consultation with the SLC, shall determine the number of needed Deacons on a yearly basis.
2. Requirements to serve are as follows:
 - a. An active church member (e.g. small group, teaching, volunteering) for at least 1 year
 - b. Demonstrated service within the church (e.g. usher, greeter, and nursery).
 - c. Demonstrated spiritual maturity (e.g. 1 Timothy 3:8-12).
 - d. Minimum 21 years of age.
 - e. Committed to the mission and values of the church.
 - f. A faithful steward providing ongoing financial support to the church.
3. Deacon's terms of service.
 - a. Deacons are elected for 3-year terms of service.
 - b. Upon rotation off, a Deacon will be ineligible for Diaconate membership for one year unless the individual was elected to serve a term of less than 3 years.
 - c. One-third of the Diaconate rotates off at the end of each year, unless circumstances require otherwise.

Section II – Diaconate Election:

Deacons shall be elected in the annual business meeting by an election process facilitated by the DTG as outlined in Article V.

Section III – Duties and Responsibilities:

Deacons are the servants of the congregation, and are responsible for caring for the congregation consistent with New Testament instruction and practice.

Section IV – Resignation and Removal:

Any Deacon may at any time deliver a written notice of intent to resign to the Deacon Chair, which shall be effective upon acceptance by the Deacons. Any Deacon may be removed at any time with or without cause when, in the sole judgment and discretion of the Deacons, it is determined by three-quarters (3/4) vote of the Deacons that such individual should no longer serve as a Deacon. In the event any Deacon is so removed, a new Deacon may be nominated elected for the remainder of the term in accordance with these By-Laws.

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Section V – Meetings:

The Deacons shall meet as often as necessary to carry out their duties and responsibilities. A Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary shall be elected annually from among Deacons to facilitate meetings and regularly report to the SLC.

Article X– Finances

Section I – Annual Budget and Audit:

1. The SLC shall ensure the preparation of a budget on an annual basis. The budget shall show sufficient detail for specific items that require expenditures for the fiscal year, January 1 – December 31. The budget shall be prepared by the SLC, or its designee, on a schedule that will allow for Church Membership review and approval of the budget at the annual business meeting..
2. The SLC, or its designee, shall conduct or arrange for an annual review or audit of a type and nature it deems appropriate; however, every five (5) years, the church shall conduct either a review or audit by an outside auditor.

Section II – Accounting Procedures:

All expenditures and financial transactions shall be managed and recorded in accordance with sound financial and accounting practices, and shall comply with all applicable government laws and regulations.

Section III – Deposits:

The SLC shall select banks, trust companies, or other depositories in which all funds of the church not otherwise employed shall, from time to time, be deposited to the credit of the church.

Section IV – Checks:

All checks or demands for money and notes of the church shall be signed by such officer or officers or such other persons as the SLC may from time to time designate. Any check over the amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) shall require two authorized signatures from two disinterested SLC members or officers.

Section V – Fiscal Year:

The SLC, in consultation with the necessary ministries, shall have the power to fix, and from time to time to change, the fiscal year of the church. Accurate records shall be kept by all organizations of the church and report made on the fiscal year basis. All funds handled by any and all organizations shall be reported to the SLC.

Section VI – Contracts:

The President or Chairman can sign contracts to bind the church once approved by the SLC or according to its procedures. However, the SLC may authorize any officer or

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officers, agent or agents of the church, in addition to the officers so authorized by these Bylaws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of or on behalf of the church, including real estate transactions once proper approval has been sought and obtained. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. All contracts for major services or expenditures of \$25,000.00 and over, should be reviewed by a competent attorney.

Section VII – Endowments:

The SLC may establish on behalf of the church any endowments for the general purposes or for any special purposes of the church. The creation and administration of any endowment fund shall be more fully explained in the church policy manual.

Section VIII – Designated Contributions:

The church may accept any designated contributions, grant, bequest, or devise consistent with its general tax exempted purposes, as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation. As so limited, donor designated contributions will be accepted for special funds, purposes, or uses as approved by the SLC, and such designations generally shall be honored. However, the church reserves all rights, title, and interest in and to and control of such contributions, as well as full discretion as to the ultimate expenditure or distribution thereof in connection with any funds (including designated contributions) to assure that such funds shall be used to carry out the church's tax exempt purposes.

Section IX – Benevolence Fund:

The SLC, or its designee, shall establish procedures to receive and disburse by check, funds allocated to them in the Benevolence Fund. It shall be the duty of the SLC or a designated Benevolence Team to determine needs of the congregants or others in the community as they arise.

Section X – Partnerships, Joint Ventures, LLC's and Auxiliary Corporations:

The SLC may authorize in writing any officer(s) or agent(s) of the church to enter into any partnerships or joint ventures or create auxiliary corporations or limited liability companies that the SLC determines shall advance the religious purposes and goals of the members as described herein and not violate the church's tax exempt status.

Section XI – Real Property and Borrowing Money:

Neither officers nor agents of the church may transfer, purchase, or sell real or personal property on behalf of the church unless authorized by the SLC and in cases of real property, the members according to these By-Laws. Any borrowing of money must be approved by the SLC and the members according to these By-Laws. The SLC is limited to borrowing up to \$50,000.00 within a budget year provided that no real property of the church shall be used as collateral for such loans. Any monies borrowed above \$50,000.00 in a budget year or that require collateralization of the church's real property shall require Church Members approval.

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Article XI – Settlement of Disputes Within or Against the Church

In any dispute arising between or among church members, the dispute may be resolved by the SLC (or a duly appointed ministry team of the SLC) under the Christian Conciliation Rules and Procedures published at www.Peacemaker.net. All employees of the church shall sign policies or contracts with the Christian Dispute Resolution clause in it. All contractors and vendors of the church should be asked to sign policies or contracts with the Christian Dispute Resolution clause in it.

Any dispute between a member and the church, or its agents in their representative capacity, shall be resolved through Christian Conciliation. Christian mediation should be attempted but if it does not resolve the dispute then legally binding Christian Arbitration shall be employed by the SLC or individuals selected by the SLC in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation found at www.Peacemaker.net. A decision shall be reached after prayerful consideration, in a spirit of humility, with each Arbitrator seeking that which most glorifies God and regarding one another before himself.

Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. Jurisdiction and venue shall be the city and state where the church is located and Virginia law shall apply to the dispute. Members, pastors, staff or third party vendors/contractors shall understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising against the church and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another or the church for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision. In that case, judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered by any court having competent jurisdiction, in conformity with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Notwithstanding this above provision, to protect the church and its members and under its risk policy procedures, the church is required to maintain liability insurance. Therefore, this conflict provision is conditioned upon agreement by the church's insurers that, in light of the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the disputed matter, this provision, and the process it establishes will not diminish any insurance coverage maintained by the church.

Article XII– Liquidation

The church is not organized for profit. In the event of liquidation or dissolution of the church, all of its assets and property of every nature and description whatsoever, shall be paid over and transferred to the NorthStar Church Network or its successor. In the event that NorthStar Church Network ceases to exist and there is no successor, all of its assets and property of every nature and description whatsoever shall be paid over and transferred to the Baptist General Association of Virginia. If neither entity is in existence, then the church's assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as determined by the SLC and approved by the church. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of exclusively for such exempt purposes by a court of competent jurisdiction of the city or county in which the principal office of the church is then located.

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Article XIII – Indemnification

Any person made or threatened to be made a party to any action or proceeding, whether civil or criminal by reason of the fact that he or his testator is or was a SLC member, Deacon, officer, employee or agent of the church, may be indemnified by the church, and the church may advance his related expenses, to the full extent permitted by law. The church may purchase and maintain insurance to indemnify: (a) itself for any obligation which it incurs as a result of the indemnification specified above; and (b) its SLC members, Deacons, and officers.

Article XIV - Amendments

Members may propose changes to these By-Laws that shall be submitted to the SLC for consideration and comment. The SLC shall present the proposed changes and their comments at a duly called business meeting of the Membership. These By-Laws may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting, provided that the following procedure has been followed:

1. The proposed written amendment has been presented at a previous church business meeting;
2. The proposed amendment has been mailed or made available to the members at least two (2) weeks before the meeting to act on the amendment; and
3. The proposed amendment has been announced at a previous Sunday worship service at least two (2) weeks before the vote was taken.

I, the undersigned Secretary of Downtown Baptist Church do hereby certify that the above Constitution and Bylaws were adopted on _____ by the SLC and the Membership at a duly called meeting and that this Constitution and Bylaws are current and in operation as of that time.

Secretary

Date

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ARTIFACT SECTION FOUR
Fueling the Mission: A New Framework for Resource Allocation

Rationale

The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood.¹¹ Jesus, God’s rescue mission to redeem humankind, had to become flesh and blood in order to fulfill the mission. The doctrine of the incarnation reminds us that God’s mission is always “fleshed” out in some form or another. It becomes tangible and touchable. The Church, the body of Jesus on earth today, steps into the mission of God with tangible and touchable resources such as financial capital, human capital, and the most limited commodity of all for many—time.

In order for a strategy for congregational renewal to be effective, critical resources such as staff, volunteers, finances and the calendar (time) need to be aligned to support the new ministry initiatives. A strategy for renewal that does not call for the realignment of strategic resources more than likely does not take sufficient measures to facilitate the change that is needed to bring about renewal. The necessity to realign critical resources also adds a sense of gravitas to the strategy. It is easy to develop creative new strategies and to even persuade others that they are necessary if there are no hard choices to make. Aligning strategic resources to support the new strategy requires saying “no” to some ministries and personnel so that a greater “yes” can be said to the new ministry direction.

Appropriate alignment of resources to support a ministry strategy is ultimately an act of empowerment. In the opening chapter of Acts, we find Jesus engaging this exercise of resource alignment. He tells the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they receive the

¹¹ John 1:14, The Message

gift, the Holy Spirit, from God. Then they are to go out and to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. After the apostles received the Holy Spirit and as they engaged their mission, God continually provided the resources they needed to fulfill their mission. Sometimes it was supernatural power, as experienced by Peter and John when they healed the crippled beggar at the temple gate called Beautiful. Other times it was in the form of offerings taken for the poor or land sold by believers to provide for the early church. In each case, resources were strategically aligned.

Resources

1. *Leadership that Works* by Leith Anderson. (The section in chapter 12 on Parish Poker alone is worth the price of the book.)
2. *Building a Narrative Budget* by the Center for Faith and Giving.
<http://centerforfaithandgiving.org/Resources/AdministrativeResources/BuildingaNarrativeBudget/tabid/950/Default.aspx>
3. *Planning and the Budget* by Alban at Duke Divinity School.
<https://alban.org/archive/planning-and-the-budget/>
4. *How to Ensure Your Church Staff is the Right Size* by Larry McSwain.
<http://www.ethicsdaily.com/how-to-ensure-your-church-staff-is-the-right-size-cms-21948>
5. *The Most Important Staffing Position in Your Church* by Bill Wilson.
<http://www.ethicsdaily.com/the-most-important-staffing-position-in-your-church-cms-23029>

Summary for Fueling the Mission: A New Framework for Resource Allocation

A significant step in DBC's journey of renewal is the reallocation of financial capital and human capital to support the new strategy of multiplication through smaller cells called Table Groups. The current resource allocation model is heavily weighted toward the attractional and support aspects of the ministry. The intention is to gradually

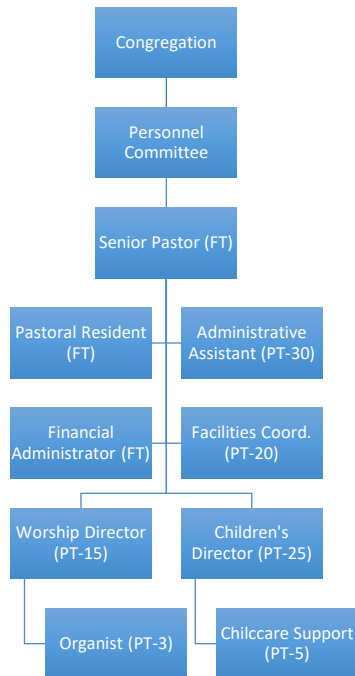
shift more resources toward member engagement, incarnational ministry, and mission mobilization.

The work below represents the direction that I *sense* the church should go and the concepts that I will ask our leaders to consider as we work together to fine tune this strategy. I feel strongly this is the path we need to take, yet I also hold these plans with open hands and an open mind as we pursue the Spirit's leadership in developing details and timing. This will be the priority work of the new Servant Leadership Counsel that is addressed in Section 3.

Current Staff Investment

The current staffing model for DBC is almost exclusively focused on program leadership for the “gathered” church and administrative/facility support. There are no staff resources directly invested in member engagement and mission mobilization. The current staffing model makes up 55% of the church's \$732,332 annual budget.¹² The current model is as follows:

¹² This budget figure is the combination of a \$682,000 General Budget and a \$50,000 Christmas Missions Budget.



One of the most pressing challenges in the current model is that the church is investing \$169,194 in a few staff positions that have decreased significantly in scope as the church has declined. These funds represent critical resources that need to be reallocated to support the new vision.

“Fueling the Mission” Staff Plan

In June 2016, I shared my concerns about the current staff configuration with the Personnel Committee. They recognized the challenges that are before us and asked me to develop a staffing plan that I would like us to consider going forward. Eventually, it will be the responsibility of the Servant Leadership Council¹³ to finalize the plan and recommend it to the congregation for approval.

¹³ The Servant Leadership Council will be established when the new model of governance is adopted in November of 2016.

Several key issues factored into the new staff plan. They are:

1. Old Town has a transient population filled with people who do not live close to extended family. Hospitality and community play a significant role in evangelism and discipleship. In the new plan, staff resources are invested in helping people connect with a Table Group where they can know and be known by others.
2. The Washington D.C. area is filled with people who have a powerful sense of idealism and desire to change the world through political involvement, issues-oriented activism, and government/military service. People engage the life of the church predisposed to using their gifts, time, and talents to be a blessing to others. In the new plan, staff resources are invested in equipping and mobilizing people for mission engagement inside and outside of the church. This will lead to volunteers picking up some responsibilities that are currently being handled by staff.
3. Reductions have been made in the ministry areas that can be covered with fewer staff hours or at a more reasonable rate per hour than what is currently being invested.
4. This plan is gradual. Eventually, I would like to see more of the percentage of staff resources invested in missions and member mobilization.

This new staffing plan represents a net decrease of \$65,588 from the current model and it is 51% of a new reduced budget (see below).

Staff Position Summaries

Lead Pastor (FT)

The Lead Pastor will be responsible for: cultivating the vision, serving as the primary teacher during corporate worship on Sundays,¹⁴ resource development, and working closely with the SLC (missional and strategic oversight) and Deacons (pastoral care). The Lead Pastor will also work closely with the Pastor of Community Life and Volunteer Mobilization to develop and multiply Table Group leaders. The Lead Pastor will also supervise the Pastoral Residents.

Pastor of Community Life & Volunteer Mobilization (FT)

The Pastor of Community Life & Volunteer Mobilization will be responsible for: helping people connect with a Table Group, recruiting, equipping, and deploying volunteers for mission engagement inside and outside of the church, developing local, regional, and global mission partnerships. The Pastor of Community Life and Member Mobilization will also supervise youth and children's ministry programs and interns.

Administrative/Communications Assistant (PT-30)

The Administrative/Communications Assistant is responsible for: church print and digital communications, providing administrative support for the pastoral staff, and general office management.

Director of Worship (PT-15)

The Director of Worship will be responsible for: planning worship services and leading the congregation in worship utilizing the praise team and choir, and recruiting and developing volunteers to serve as musicians and media artists.

Financial Administrator (PT-20)

The Financial Administrator will be responsible for: accounts payable and receivable, payroll, basic financial functions, and coordinating the volunteer counting team.

Facilities Coordinator (PT-20)

The Facilities Coordinator (FC) manages vendors and volunteers who work on the building. The FC also schedules and coordinates groups that desire to use the DBC facility.

Children's Ministry Coordinator (PT-15)

The Children's Ministry Coordinator will recruit, develop, and manage children's ministry volunteers.

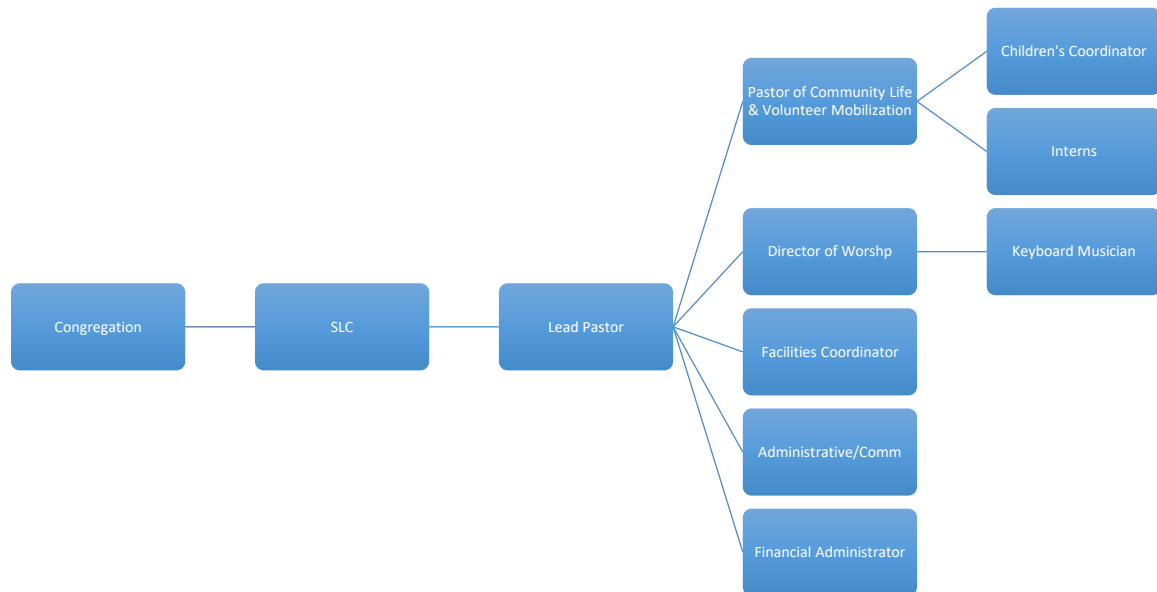
Youth Ministry Intern (PT-Seasonal)

The Youth Ministry Intern will supplement the work of Youth Ministry Volunteers.

¹⁴ The Lead Pastor will preach approximately 35-40 times per year and is responsible for developing Lay Preachers and Pastoral Residents as part of a rotating teaching team.

Keyboard Musician(PT-3)

The Keyboard Musician provides worship service support and reports to the Director of Worship.

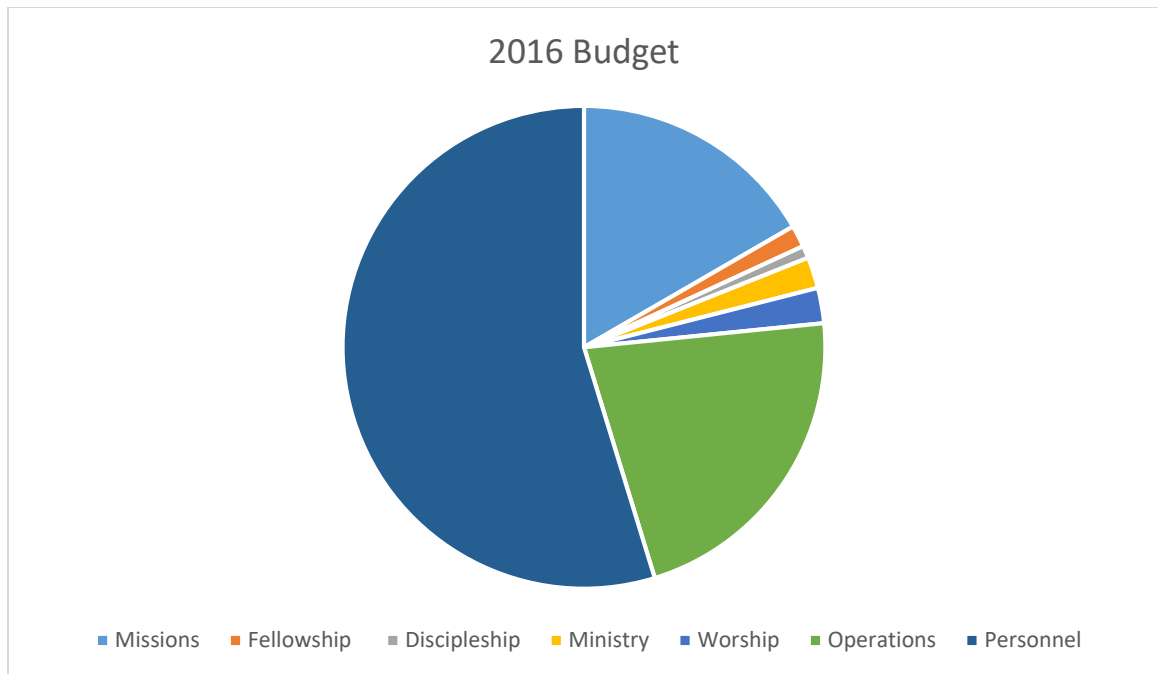


Current Financial Investment

DBC has historically been a very generous congregation. However, the decline of the last five years has taken a toll on the overall budget and financial support. The General Fund alone has decreased 35% from \$1,047,908 in revenue in 2010 to \$710,000 in 2015. The total budget for 2016 is \$732,332. This funding comes from three revenue streams:

1. General Tithes and Offerings: \$646,332
2. Designated Missions Offerings: \$50,000
3. Rental Income from Pastoral Residence: \$36,000

This pie chart represents how the resources of the Ministry Operating Budget are allocated.

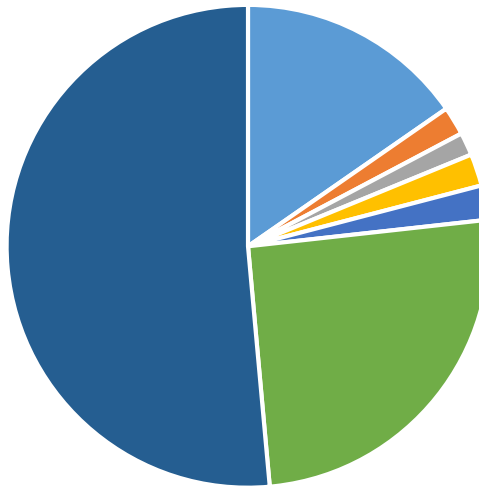


1. The Ministry category represents financial resources invested in Children's, Youth, and Adult ministries.
2. The Operations category represents financial resources invested in Facilities, General Operations, and Office Operations.

Fueling the Mission Financial Investment

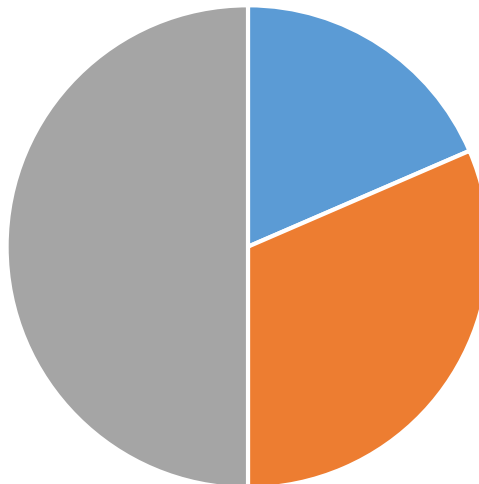
The new budget plan shifts some resources from traditional program areas such as worship, age-graded programming, and block-grant missions to key areas such as fellowship (community life) and discipleship. In the Personnel category, strategic reductions are made in areas where the current level of investment is greater than the actual need and redirects these funds to support a new position responsible for member engagement and volunteer mobilization. The total budget is \$651,757 which represents a reduction of \$80,575.

Fueling the Vision Budget



■ Missions ■ Fellowship ■ Discipleship ■ Ministry ■ Worship ■ Operations ■ Personnel

Missions Allocations



■ Local ■ Regional ■ International ■

Calendar

The most precious commodity many have in the D.C. area is discretionary time. Long work hours and commutes cut into discretionary time significantly, leaving little time to invest in family life and church activities. In city churches that have experienced decline, many volunteers serve on multiple ministry teams and committees, which can lead to burnout. When people burn out, they will often leave a church and the church gets caught in a vicious cycle of losing volunteers. Additionally, most of the volunteer energy is spent on internal ministries and there is little or no energy left for missional endeavors. A church seeking renewal would benefit from a calendar audit to see exactly where volunteer hours are being utilized.

In traditional Baptist life, the church calendar would be filled weekly with ministry programs Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday night. In addition, leaders would be expected to attend training opportunities and committee meetings on other nights during the week. For the average church leader, a great time was spent on the campus of the church. In its early years, DBC followed this type of heavy campus-based programming.

In the 1990s, the church stopped having Sunday night programming due to declining attendance. Recently, the leaders of DBC made the decision to cease Wednesday night ministry programs so that the church could focus more energy on Sunday morning ministries, the neighborhood-based Table Groups, and mission opportunities. I believe this decision will help liberate the church from a campus-based ministry to one that is equally invested in the many neighborhoods we call our mission field.

ARTIFACT SECTION FIVE

Living the Mission: A Summary of the Pilot Program “Extending the Table”

Rationale

Jesus did some of his best work in homes and often around the table. He invited himself over to the home of Zacchaeus after finding him in a tree. After their time was over, Zacchaeus had experienced salvation and proclaimed that he would make restitution to anyone he had cheated. Reclining at the table in the home of a Pharisee, Jesus was anointed and worshiped by a sinful woman and she received mercy and forgiveness. Jesus taught his friend Martha about the need for respite and friendship when he was in her home for a meal. He threw a picnic for the masses with five loaves and two fishes and taught his disciples about trusting in the generous provision of God. He juiced the party for newlyweds as he changed water into wine. He issued the mandate to remember him with broken bread and poured-out wine—at the table.

There is a sweet and mystical communion that happens when people gather around the table to break bread, share stories, and open their hearts to the presence of Jesus. In *Tablet to Table* Leonard Sweet writes,

The table is the place where identity is born—the place where the story of our lives is retold, re-minded, and relived...The story of Christianity didn’t take shape behind pulpits and altars or in books. No, the story of Christianity takes shape around tables, as people face one another as equals, telling stories, sharing memories, enjoying food with one another.¹⁵

A crucial element of the renewal journey at DBC is to leverage the synergy between the attractional and incarnational impulses of the church. I contend that the table represents a powerful bridge between the two. As the church gathers for corporate

¹⁵ Leonard Sweet, *From Tablet to Table: Where Community Is Found And Identity Is Formed*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress), Kindle, page 2-3.

worship (attractational impulse), we gather around the table of the Lord, we tell our story as his disciples, and we share in his story as we remember him in Holy Communion.

When we scatter to our homes for mission in our neighborhoods (incarnational impulse), it is not as if we leave the corporate table behind. Just as we each take a piece of bread from the whole loaf and just as we each take a sip of wine from the common chalice, we take a piece of the corporate table home with us in our hearts and in our spirits. Our tables in the home become spiritual table leaves—extensions of the larger table around which the church family gathers.

Both tables “feed” off the other. As more people feast at the communal table in corporate worship, they have a desire for the deeper connection that a Table Group in the home offers. Table Groups are groups of 6-10 that meet in homes over meals. They are intended to be a place where friends outside the faith can find hospitality and a non-threatening atmosphere in which faith can be explored as stories of real people in pursuit of the life of Christ are shared. As these friends become followers of Jesus, they will often make their way into the life of the church. In our context at DBC, we have started calling this dynamic between the larger corporate table and the extended tables our “Eucharistic Mission.”

Resources

1. *From Tablet to Table* by Leonard Sweet.
2. *Organic Church* by Neil Cole.
3. *The Amore Project* by Fresh Expressions U.S. <http://freshexpressionsus.org/what-we-do/#amore>
4. *Live to Tell: Evangelism for a Post-Modern Age* by Brad Kallenberg.

Ministry Summary: Extending the Table

In the D.C. area, and I would imagine in other large cities, many people live away from their extended family. While there are exceptions, one of the blessings of extended family is they provide another place where we are known and another table around which we can share our story. Extended family members can drop by and we are not too worried about the messy kitchen or laundry that is unfolded in the laundry room. As my mother used to say, we don't have to put on "airs" when we are with family—we can just be as we are. Or as a missionary friend used to say when I would visit, "Don't mind the mess, we've just been living here." For city dwellers away from extended family, a surrogate family is needed to step into the gap. This makes the ministry of hospitality for a city church a most important aspect of evangelism. In the area closest to the church campus of DBC, 42.6% of the households are classified as 1-person households.¹⁶ Almost half of our immediate community lives alone!

In the summer of 2016 we (DBC) launched a Pilot Project titled *Extending the Table*. This new ministry initiative featured geographically based Table Groups that consisted of 6-10 people each. Ideally, the Table Groups would include both people from DBC and people who do not yet have a relationship with Jesus or a church home. The format a Table Group followed was very simple. The groups met in homes and shared a potluck meal together. During and following the meal the Table Group leader would guide the conversation to a specific spiritual topic. After the conversation seemed to

¹⁶Demographic Comparison Report, Alexandria, Virginia, 1-3-5-mile radius of 212 South Washington Street west of the Potomac River, DemographicReports, www.demographicreports.com.

conclude, there would be a time of prayer. The ministry followed a simple plan of development:

- Table Group leaders were recruited by the Pastor and were asked to make certain leadership commitments that are included below.
- Downtowners were given an opportunity in May 2016 to sign up to participate in Table Groups. Participants were placed in a Table Group and received a personal welcome from their Table Group leader.
- Table Groups were asked to make a minimum commitment of meeting twice monthly from June-August with the option to continue indefinitely if the group desired.
- Table Group participants were asked to begin praying for unchurched friends and neighbors they could invite to dinner with their Table Group.
- Table Group leaders met monthly in the home of the Senior Pastor for encouragement, prayer, and coaching.
- Table Groups leaders were asked to poll their groups in August to see if the participants desired to continue meeting indefinitely.

Sample Table Group Gathering

The following is a suggested guide for Table Group leaders to use to lead their groups. They have been given a great deal of freedom in how they facilitate the experience. Leaders have been encouraged to make sure the experience is more of a conversation than a Bible study. They have also been encouraged to follow the Spirit and allow the conversation to unfold as participants express various questions, concerns, and needs.

Table Leaders' Guide:

- Three days from your Table Group meeting date, send an e-mail to the group to coordinate the logistics of the dinner, location reminder, etc. If your group will be basing their conversation off the sermon of the week, send them the video link to the sermon in case they missed that Sunday.
- 6:30-7:30ish: Enjoy a nice leisurely dinner around the table. This is a great time to catch up with everyone and get acquainted with guests.
- When you sense people are finished eating and the general conversation winding down, introduce the topic for the night. Read the passage of scripture that you have chosen for the evening and prompt the conversation with 2-3 questions. (See example below)
- When you sense that the conversation has ended, close with a time of prayer. Don't feel that you need to take prayer requests from everyone. I like to open the time of prayer with two questions: 1) How have you seen Jesus at work this week? 2) How do you need to see Jesus at work in your life this week?
- After prayer enjoy dessert and more conversation.
- If possible, wrap up between 8:30-9:00. Don't be rigid, but more than two hours begins to be cumbersome on a work night. If you get a chance to offer a casual benediction, do so. It is important to bless people as they leave.

Sample Conversation Guide

I. Read Matthew 26:17-30

II. Conversation Prompts

- Does anyone have a mealtime memory they would like to share?
- Where did you sit at the dinner table growing up? Why?

- Jesus and Judas were dipping from the same bowl. Typically, the place beside the teacher was a place of honor. Why would Jesus have Judas so close to him?
- If you knew your death was imminent, what song would you choose to sing?

Note: The first two questions above could be discussed over dinner. You probably won't have time for all four.

Table Group Leadership Commitments

This document was sent to Table Group leaders when they were recruited.

Extending the Table

Purpose: The purpose of *Extending the Table* is to gather people in your community together to share a meal and engage in conversations about faith matters.

Goal: There are two primary goals for each Table Group:

- People who are not yet Christians or do not have a church home will have a chance to explore spiritual conversations with Christians around a time of sharing in a meal together. An ideal *table* will have a mixture of Downtowners and non-Christians. Therefore, *TABLE GROUPS ARE OUTWARD FACING*. The point is to first and foremost build relationships so that the Christian life can be shared.

Note: It is expected that Table groups will grow over time as Downtowners invite unchurched friends and neighbors to join in.

- A deeper sense of communal mission is shared by Christians. In order to live in community with others, we have to also share a common mission. Christians will grow deeper in their relationship with Christ and other Christians through the mission of the Table Group. As life is shared, we experience encouragement and support from one another.

Duration: Each Table Group will begin by mid-June and last throughout the summer. If a Table Group is going well, it is the hope that they will continue indefinitely.

Frequency: In the first gathering of the Table Group, participants will determine meeting logistics such as day, time & frequency. The expectation is that groups will meet at least 2 times per month.

Format: The format for Table Groups is simple:

- The group gathers to share a meal
- Conversation during the meal is focused on relational connections
- After the meal an intentional topic/Bible passage is explored that will lead to deeper conversations.
- Prayer

Leadership Resources: The leaders of each Table Group (if married, both husband and wife are leaders) will gather together with Phil and Jody¹⁷ twice before the first meeting and once monthly afterwards. The focus of these leadership gatherings will be to:

- Model a Table Group experience
- Become equipped for spiritual conversations
- Prayer and mutual encouragement

All leadership gatherings will be at 10 Norton Court (Phil and Jody's Home) and will include a meal.

Dates are:

- Sunday, May 22nd @ 5:30 PM
- Sunday, June 5th @ 5:30 PM
- Sunday, June 26th @ 5:30 PM (Tables should have met once before this date)
- Sunday, July 17th @ 5:30 PM
- Sunday, August 21st @ 5:30 PM

Forming the Tables: Downtowners will be introduced to the concept of Table Groups during the worship service on Sunday mornings throughout the month of May and encouraged to indicate their interest in participating in general. Once all the host homes have been identified, participants will be *encouraged* to join the Table Group closest to where they live.

Note: To be a leader of a Table Group does not necessarily commit the leader to hosting the group. Some may be more comfortable with leading but not hosting and vice versa.

Before our first Leaders' gathering please read the *Qualities of a Missional Table* and come prepared to discuss.

Qualities of a Missional Table
(Adapted from Timothy Keller's Marks of a Missional Church)

¹⁷ Senior Pastor and Wife

1. A positive view of the city/community/neighborhood. Hospitable environments are built on positive views of one's context.
2. Be careful with Biblical language and terminology. Don't avoid it, but when you use it acknowledge the emotional weight of it and explain it. Expect non-believers to be present.

Example: If you make a statement like, "Jesus died to turn away the wrath of God when he shed his blood for our sins" make sure to acknowledge that the statement can be hard to accept and carefully explain the meaning.

3. Avoid Tribal Language. Unnecessary pious, evangelical/denominational language or DBC insider info. Language that sets a spiritual tone that non-Christians won't understand. Also avoid we/them language when referring to those outside of the faith.

Examples of tribal language:

- God is good. All the time. And all the time God is good.
 - The Lord told me to share this word of prophecy with you...
4. Learn how to share your faith with scripture as a foundation, but not necessarily referring to the Bible. Case studies, stories, the Story of God.
 5. Don't underestimate the role and power of prayer.
 6. Avoid the "we just want to go deeper" sentiment. Consider what it means to go deeper in mission. Christians and non-Christians can be impacted with the same teaching.
 7. Serve together. In a post-Christian culture, it is not unusual for non-Christians to have a desire to serve with Christians and to participate in mission work before they dedicate their life to Jesus. When you serve together talk about how your faith motivates you to serve.

Pilot Project Results and Future Multiplication Plan

The Pilot Project for *Extending the Table* exceeded expectations. Eight Table Groups were launched this summer with 72 participants. This represents over 50% of our average worship attendance throughout the summer. Of the eight groups, two struggled to meet twice per month. One group struggled with scheduling their connections around kid schedules. In the other group, the leaders moved to a new neighborhood this summer and

could not keep the commitment to meet twice per month. Of the 72 participants, nine were people who do not have a relationship with a church. We are still in the discerning phase regarding their relationship with Jesus. We are praising God for a good strong launch for this ministry. All eight groups have indicated a desire to continue in the fall.

Our plan for multiplication is simple. This fall, we are launching two additional Table Groups focused on reaching Millennials. This will bring our total to ten groups. This fall, one focus of the leadership community will be to pray for five new apprentice leaders to join the leadership community in January 2017. At that time, the apprentice leaders will join the leadership community and participate for three months prior to launching their new groups. By the summer we should have 15 Table Groups up and running. In the fall of 2017, we will begin praying for seven new apprentice leaders to join the leadership community in January 2018. This should give us 22 Table Groups by Easter 2018. We will continue the pattern of trying to preparing and praying to launch new groups at a rate of 50% of the total groups each year. This would give us 50 Table Groups by Easter of 2020. The leadership community will split in half in 2017 and again in 2019 to have a total of four leadership communities by 2020.

| # of Table Groups in the Fall | Number of Apprentices Needed in January | Table Groups Launched on Easter | Total Number of Table Groups |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| 2016-10 | 2017-5 | 2017-5 | 15 |
| 2017-15 | 2018-7 | 2018-7 | 22 |
| 2018-22 | 2019-11 | 2019-11 | 33 |
| 2019-33 | 2020-17 | 2020-17 | 50 |

ARTIFACT SECTION SIX

Sharing the Mission: A Summary of a New Ministry Initiative-MissionStories

Rationale

The desire to engage in the missio Dei is caught, not taught. God's people have always told stories of how God is working in the world. We would have never received God's word as we know it if it were not for the oral story-telling tradition. Telling the story of God at work both outside and inside the community of faith is a powerful resource for the city church in need of renewal. As stories are told and celebrated, people are encouraged and faith is strengthened. Often churches that have experienced decline suffer from a collective low morale. The emphasis on telling missional stories helps to heal communities and build morale.

Resources

1. Check out this story-gathering resource from Austin Stone Community Church.

<http://austinstone.org/stories/share-your-story>

2. *Five Practical Ideas to Know the Story*, The Verge Network.

<http://www.vergenetwork.org/2013/04/17/five-practical-ideas-to-know-the-story-josh-reeves/>

3. *Getting to Know a Congregation through Its Stories in Order to Unleash Its Narratives* by Christine Rose Burke Cook.

<http://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1698&context=ecommonsatdissertations>

A Summary of *MissionStories*

MissionStories is a ministry initiative designed to cultivate stories of how God is working in and through Downtown Baptist Church. The stories are approximately five minutes in length and they are captured on video. The stories will be posted on the church's web site and shared in the corporate worship experience. *MissionStories* can be personal stories of faith or stories of Downtowners and/or our mission partners actively engaged in mission. The ministry will be launched in September 2016 with the goal of cultivating and producing two stories per month.

***MissionStories* Subjects for September-December 2016**

- September 11—FaithStory-Variou Downtowners Respond to the Question:
Where Did Jesus Find You?
- September 25—Alive! Furniture Distribution to Families in Need
- October 9—Carpenter's Shelter Homeless Ministry
- October 23—Casa Chirilagua Mentoring Ministry
- November 6—FaithStory—Jared Terry
- November 20—Samaritan's Purse Packing Experience
- December 4—Downtowners Reflect: What Does Christmas Mean to You?—Part 1
- December 11—Christmas Offering Story
- December 18—Christmas Offering Story
- December 25—Downtowners Reflect: What Does Christmas Mean to You?—Part

ARTIFACT SECTION SEVEN

A Summary Description of MissionTogether

Rationale

An overarching theme of this artifact is focusing the strategic resources of the church for greater impact. Section three treated the subject of restructuring the governance and organizational framework so that more volunteer energy could be invested in direct mission engagement. Section four discussed the realignment of staff and financial resources for greater missional effectiveness. This section briefly explores the concept of focusing the congregation's missional activity for deeper and more sustaining impact in our community and beyond.

Laser Versus Flashlight

It is tempting for a city church in need of renewal to get involved in a number of mission activities rather than focusing their energy on just a few. There are several reasons this happens: 1) City churches are in proximity to a significant amount of human need. There is a genuine desire to meet as many needs as possible; 2) City churches often draw activist-oriented people, many who are deeply committed to a specific cause and have a desire to see the church support their passion through tangible resources. Churches that have experienced decline may struggle to say “no” to such requests out of fear of alienating the activist and causing them to leave the church; and 3) Churches in decline often lack strong pastoral and lay leadership that have the ability to lead a church to say “no” in order to say a greater “yes.” The result is a church that supports many different mission causes with a smaller investment of human and financial capital.

In *Missional Moves*, Rob Wegner and Jack Magruder write: “We call the ‘more is better’ way of thinking the Flashlight Approach. Like a flashlight, light is diffused to

shine on as many places as possible. A flashlight only manages to flash a thin layer of light so it can cover as much real estate as possible. It shines a photon-thick film over everything, but it really doesn't change anything in the room.”¹⁸ However, when light is focused like a laser it has tremendous power. When a church is able to focus its missional resources like a laser beam, it has far deeper and greater impact. It also gives parishioners an opportunity to form deeper relationships with those whom they are seeking to help, which leads to a more holistic approach to community engagement.

Resources

1. *Missional Moves: 15 Tectonic Shifts that Transform Churches, Communities, and the World* by Rob Wegner and Jack Magruder. Chapter 7 is a must read on this topic.
2. *A Theology as Big as the City* by Ray Bakke.
3. *The New Parish* by Paul Sparks, Tim Sorens, and Dwight Friesan.

***MissionTogether* Summary**

MissionTogether does not represent a specific ministry or program as much as it does a directional thinking for DBC's mission engagement. Currently, DBC has a classic “Flashlight Approach” to mission activity. In the 2016 missions budget, there are 17 different organizations and 2 denominational missions' agencies receiving funding. This does not include collections of tangible items for Samaritan's Purse, Angel Tree, or food drives and collections for school supplies at the end of the summer. This approach not only diffuses the impact that we are seeking to have, it also can alienate and confuse members who are constantly being bombarded to give.

¹⁸ Rob Wegner and Jack Magruder, *Missional Moves: 15 Tectonic Shifts That Transform Churches, Communities, and the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), Kindle, pg. 132.

Beginning with the 2017 budget, I am going to ask our lay leadership to consider an Acts 1:8 strategy for mission engagement. Jesus told his followers that they would be his witnesses in Jerusalem (Local), Judea (Regional), Samaria (Cross-Cultural), and the ends of the earth (International). This represents four distinct categories of mission engagement. I am going to ask them to select one mission cause to support in each category by considering the following criteria:

1. The team discerns that the Spirit is calling us to focus on this specific mission in this category.
2. We have the opportunity to be involved in ways other than financially. We do not only want to invest financial capital; we want to invest physical, intellectual, relational, and spiritual capital as well.
3. The organization articulates a need and desire to partner with DBC.
4. Members of the organization will visit with us in worship and share their story.
5. The mission relationship will be evaluated every two years.

The mission organizations that are not selected for funding will be given 90 days' notice that our current funding will be terminated.

ARTIFACT SECTION EIGHT
A Missional Liturgy for Worship

Rationale

Another area of emphasis for this strategic guide is the relationship between the attractional and incarnational impulses of the church. The experience of corporate worship is brimming with the possibilities of leading individuals and the entire congregation to consider the deeper purpose to which they are called: to glorify God by making his name known among the nations. When Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman at the well,¹⁹ after the awkward conversation about the woman's relational challenges (5 husbands and currently working on number 6) the topic turned to worship. By the end of the conversation, the woman went into town and told others about Jesus. She went for one purpose, to get water, and left her water jar at the feet of Jesus to pursue the deeper purpose of telling others about him.

Corporate worship lights the fire in our hearts for mission. Mission engagement, seeing lives changed and healed by Jesus, ignites the fire for worship. The two are inextricably linked and the synergy between the two is a significant means of grace that makes personal and congregational renewal possible. Yet, regrettably, the linkage is not made in many corporate worship services. Often worship services focus on the gathered church in worship and overlook the need to hear stories of the church on mission and God at work in the world. God is a missionary God (the concept of *missio Dei* explored in the Written Statement); therefore, an appropriate liturgy for worship will feature what God is doing in the world through the Body of Jesus. Darrell Guder writes in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*:

¹⁹ John 4:1-42.

A missional ecclesiology for North America will need to address the centrality of worship for the life and witness of the mission community, both as centered congregation and as covenant community. We need to learn how worship concretely calls and sends us into Christ's service, and how it is a facet of our mission itself. For this to happen, worship must primarily be the people's encounter with the God who sends...Above all, the public worship of the mission community always leads to the pivotal act of sending.²⁰

The public gathering for worship inspires and sends believers out on mission. It also needs to be developed and facilitated in such a way that the elements of the service are comprehensible to the person outside of the faith and communicated in the vernacular of the culture. This has far more to do with the language that is used and deals with the way people receive and retain information. In *Giving Blood: A Fresh Paradigm for Preaching*, Leonard Sweet writes that preaching should be EPIC (experiential, participatory, image-rich, and connective).²¹ I would add a second "C" for "Contagious." Our desire is for people to leave the service and tell others good things about the God and people encountered. A missional liturgy for worship will seek to incorporate the EPIC² paradigm throughout the entire service.

Resources

1. *Worship Evangelism* by Sally Morgenthaler
2. *Missional Church* by Darrel Guder and Lois Barrett. (chapter 8)
3. *Evangelistic Worship* by Timothy Keller.

http://download.redeemer.com/pdf/learn/resources/Evangelistic_Worship-Keller.pdf

²⁰ Darrell L. Guder and Lois Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1998), Kindle pages 241-243.

²¹ Leonard I. Sweet, *Giving Blood: A Fresh Paradigm for Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), Kindle page 43.

4. *Giving Blood* by Leonard Sweet.

5. *Worship and Mission After Christendom* by Alan and Eleanor Kreider.

A Sample Missional Liturgy for Worship for DBC

Service Guide

Note: The times listed for each element is a guide and not to be rigidly followed. It is important to note that the D.C. culture is extremely time-sensitive and extending much beyond an hour is cautioned.

Pre-Service Music & Video (10 minutes before the service)

(During the pre-service, participants will be encouraged to use this time for prayer at the cross, in their pew, or by texting prayer requests to our prayer team. Participants will be offered the option of having their prayers listed on the screen and/or read aloud during the service if they want their prayers offered by the church in worship.)

Praise and Worship (7-10 minutes)

(The worship leader will offer a greeting and share the theme of the service before the time of praise and worship begins. Newcomers will be encouraged to text a number to receive a greeting and link to fill out a digital guest card.)

The Passing of the Peace (3 minutes)

Prayers of the People (10 minutes on non-Communion Sundays)

(Prayers for others will be shared. There will be a time of meditation before the prayer is voiced by the leader, during which participants may verbally voice prayers for everyone to hear. Participants may also text prayer requests that are displayed on the screen. During the time of meditation, participants are invited to move around the sanctuary if they desire to go kneel at the cross or to light a candle for a specific prayer requests. This time will end with a hymn or song.)

Sermon (25 minutes)

(Sermons will strive to follow the EPIC² paradigm for preaching. Participants will be encouraged to take notes, draw pictures, and write poems and/or reflections during the sermon.)

MissionStories (3-5 minutes)

(A MissionStory will be shared by video or “live” testimony.)

Tithes and Offerings Received (5 minutes)

Doxology (2 minutes)

(The ushers will collect the offering and then place them in one basket. The presiding minister will then go to the center of the stage and symbolically lift them to the Lord as the doxology is sung.)

Invitation to Mission, Reflection & Discipleship (3 minutes)

(Mission opportunities will be highlighted and participants will be invited to share any reflections, artwork, poems, or God-promptings they had with others at the cross immediately following the Benediction. Participants are also invited to speak individually with a deacon to share any commitments they have made or for prayer. Also, two communion stations will be open for people to receive communion every week after the service if they desire. On the 1st Sunday of the month, communion and baptisms are celebrated by the entire church.)

Benediction (1 minute)

ARTIFACT SECTION NINE

Questions for Evaluation

Note: It is expected that the *Extending the Table* strategic journey will take at least two years to fully implement. Some elements were implemented in fall 2016. In May 2018, the following questions will be explored with the congregation in a survey format.

Section One: An Overview of the Ministry of Downtown Baptist Church, Alexandria, Virginia

- 1. Was the new strategy intentionally connected to the story of the church and received as a continuation of the church's mission to be a redemptive presence in Old Town?*
- 2. Did the new strategy adequately address the shifting demographics of Old Town?*
- 3. Were the changes implemented with a sound change management strategy that would be able to absorb resistance without the congregation spiraling into another debilitating conflict?*

Section Two: Cultivating the Mission: A Summary of "Nights in Old Town" Listening Sessions

- 1. Did the new strategy genuinely reflect the concerns, hopes, and dreams of the people?*
- 2. What were the "gaps" in what people said they wanted to see and what they were actually willing to implement?*
- 3. How have the needs of the congregation changed since Pastor Phil conducted the Nights in Old Town Listening Sessions in the fall of 2015?*

Section Three: Empowering the Mission: A New Framework for Congregational Governance

- 1. Did the congregation affirm the new plan of governance as recommended by the Governance Task Force?*
- 2. If not, what changes were made?*
- 3. If so, how has the new plan of governance had an impact on the average Downtowner?*
- 4. Are there more volunteers engaged in direct mission engagement?*
- 5. Are congregational decisions and processes more efficient than before?*
- 6. Are decisions made and actions taken by the SLC communicated effectively?*

Section Four: Fueling the Mission: A New Framework for Resource Allocation

- 1. Did the new staffing plan adequately address the needs of the congregation and support the new emphasis on both the attractional and incarnational ministries of the church?*
- 2. Were the staff members who were released from their responsibilities released redemptively and with dignity? Was Jesus pleased in how we made these changes?*
- 3. Did the new budget emphasis adequately fund the new direction of the ministry?*
- 4. Did the congregation support the new budget and has support for the ministry increased?*
- 5. Did the congregation embrace the new schedule of gathering on Sundays only and discontinuing the Wednesday Night tradition of prayer and Bible study?*

Section Five: Living the Mission: A Summary of the Pilot Program *Extending the Table*

- 1. Was the Extending the Table Pilot Program adopted as a long-term approach to community and hospitality evangelism? (Note: Our leadership voted to adopt it as a long-term program in August 2016.)*
- 2. How many Table Groups are currently active?*
- 3. How many Table Groups were discontinued?*
- 4. What is the rate of multiplication for the Table Groups?*
- 5. Are new Table Group leaders being recruited, equipped, and empowered to launch new Table Groups?*
- 6. How many Table Group Leadership Communities do we currently have?*
- 7. How many people have come to faith through the ministry of Table Groups?*

Section Six: Sharing the Mission: A Description of a New Ministry Initiative: *MissionStories*

- 1. Are the new MissionStories cultivated from the life of the congregation?*
- 2. Are MissionStories shared at least twice per month in the worship service?*

3. *Have new ministries been launched by people who have been inspired by MissionStories?*
4. *What are the current communication channels for MissionStories?*
5. *Are people in our community hearing about what God is doing at DBC and is God being praised?*

Section Seven: A Description of *MissionTogether*

1. *Did the congregation embrace the Acts 1:8 strategy for mission engagement and invest deeply into one mission recipient per area of focus? (Local, Regional, International)*
2. *If yes, describe the impact DBC has had on the mission recipients chosen.*
3. *Has financial support for mission causes increased or decreased in the last two years?*

Section Eight: A Description of a Missional Liturgy for Worship

1. *Did the congregation embrace the new missional format for the worship service?*
2. *Does the worship service feel transcendent?*
3. *Are Downtowners inspired for service and mission when they participate in the worship service?*
4. *Is the worship service EPIC²? (Experiential, Participatory, Interactive, Connected, and Contagious?)*
5. *Are people making and sharing faith commitments in the worship service?*
6. *What is the average worship attendance?*