

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Dissertation Projects DMin

Graduate Research

2017

Training The Members Of The Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church To Create Missional Communities

Brett Poynter
Andrews University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Poynter, Brett, "Training The Members Of The Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church To Create Missional Communities" (2017). *Dissertation Projects DMin*. 317.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/317>

This Project Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertation Projects DMin by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.

ABSTRACT

TRAINING THE MEMBERS OF THE HACIENDA HEIGHTS
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
TO CREATE MISSIONAL
COMMUNITIES

by

Brett Poynter

Adviser: Michael R. Cauley

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: TRAINING THE MEMBERS OF THE HACIENDA HEIGHTS SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH TO CREATE MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

Name of researcher: Brett Poynter

Name and degree of adviser: Michael R. Cauley, DMin

Date completed: May 2017

Problem

A 2011 analysis of the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church revealed it had poor missional health in it was not outreach focused, small group oriented, or a discipling community. This attributed to plateaued church growth with a congregation consisting largely of boomers and a significantly low percentage of GenX'ers and millennials.

Method

An intervention to train the members of the Hacienda Heights church to create missional communities was developed and applied as a means to improve the church's missional health and growth. The intervention was developed by studying missional

church literature and assessing the church and community. The resulting intervention included these modules: personal transformation, creating a sense of urgency, developing a guiding coalition, fostering passionate and authentic spirituality, mentoring disciples of Jesus, and developing missional communities. A follow-up assessment was conducted after the application of the intervention in order to determine its effectiveness.

Results

The intervention trained the church to create multiple missional communities. Missional health also increased as a result of the intervention, which led to improvements in spiritual development, mission and vision casting, organizational methods, outreach methods, leadership development, and discipleship. An increase in church growth was also observed among the millennial generation with eight baptisms, two recommitments, six new interests, and an increase in attendance of 21.

Conclusions

The conclusion of this project is the intervention effectively trained the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church to create missional communities. Secondly, it should be applied indefinitely to foster continued missional community growth and counteract the innate challenges of living missionally in the Los Angeles Metropolitan area. Lastly, without an intentional effort to create missional communities, a church inwardly focused will not reach outwardly on its own without a committed and equipped team of missional leaders to apply the intervention.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

TRAINING THE MEMBERS OF THE HACIENDA HEIGHTS
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
TO CREATE MISSIONAL
COMMUNITIES

A Project Document
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Brett Poynter

May 2017

©Copyright by Brett Poynter 2017
All Rights Reserved

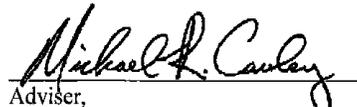
TRAINING THE MEMBERS OF THE HACIENDA HEIGHTS
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
TO CREATE MISSIONAL
COMMUNITIES

A project document
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Ministry

by

Brett Poynter

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:



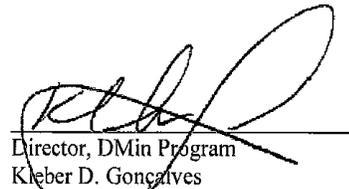
Adviser,
Michael R. Cauley



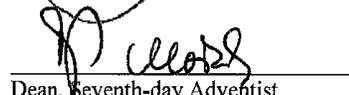
James Wibberding



Anthony Wagener Smith



Director, DMin Program
Kleber D. Gonçalves



Dean, Seventh-day Adventist
Theological Seminary
Jiff Moskala

March 22, 2017
Date approved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....		vi
Chapter		
1. THE NEED FOR MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES.....		1
Introduction.....		1
Context.....		2
Problem and Task.....		3
Delimitations of the Project.....		4
Description of the Project Process.....		5
Definition of Terms.....		9
Summary.....		10
2. A THEOLOGY OF MISSIONAL COMMUNITY BUILDING.....		12
Introduction.....		12
Mission in the Old Testament.....		13
Mission in the New Testament.....		17
The Ministry and Mission of Jesus.....		18
The Mission of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.....		21
Mission in the New Testament Church.....		23
Biblical Community.....		28
Conclusion.....		30
3. LITERATURE REVIEW.....		32
Introduction.....		32
The Church and Mission From the Early Church to the Present.....		32
The Praxis of Missional Ministry.....		38
Missional Movements.....		39
The Seventh-day Adventist Movement.....		40
Summary and Conclusion.....		43
4. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION.....		45
Introduction.....		45

Profile of the Ministry Context	46
Development and Description of the Intervention	50
Developing Personal Transformation as an Intervention.....	50
Description of Personal Transformation as an Intervention	51
Developing a Sense of Urgency as an Intervention	53
Description of Creating a Sense of Urgency as an Intervention	53
Developing a Guiding Coalition as an Intervention.....	55
Description of a Guiding Coalition as an Intervention	56
Developing Passionate and Authentic Spirituality as an Intervention.....	59
Description of Passionate and Authentic Spirituality as an Intervention	60
Developing Mentoring Disciples of Jesus as an Intervention.....	62
Description of Mentoring Disciples of Jesus as an Intervention ...	63
Developing Missional Communities as an Intervention	64
Description of Missional Communities as an Intervention.....	65
Summary and Conclusion	76
5. NARRATIVE OF INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION.....	77
Introduction	77
Personal Transformation	78
Fostering Passionate and Authentic Spirituality, Phase I.....	83
Creating a Sense of Urgency	84
Mentoring Disciples of Jesus, Phase I.....	87
Developing Missional Communities, Phase I	91
Fostering Passionate and Authentic Spirituality, Phase II	93
Developing a Guiding Coalition	93
Developing Missional Communities, Phase II.....	97
Fostering Passionate and Authentic Spirituality, Phase III.....	100
Developing Missional Communities, Phase III.....	101
Mentoring Disciples of Jesus, Phase II	102
Developing Missional Communities, Phase IV	103
Fostering Passionate and Authentic Spirituality, Phase IV.....	105
Developing Missional Communities, Phase V.....	106
Fostering Passionate and Authentic Spirituality, Phase V	107
Members' Personal Missional Efforts.....	108
Summary and conclusions.....	109
6. EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS.....	111
Project Summary	111
Description of Evaluative Methods and Conclusions	111
Church Assessment Survey.....	113

Pastoral Observation of Missional Factors	117
Congregational Assessment Matrix	122
Summary and Conclusion of Evaluations	123
Outcomes of the Intervention	124
Conclusions	124
Recommendations	126
Professional Transformation	128
REFERENCE LIST	129
VITA	137

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I thank God as the supreme reason this project was started and completed. I never envisioned moving in the direction of a Doctor of Ministry program until He encouraged me to do so shortly before my cohort started. For that I am truly appreciative for the life changing experience it offered.

Secondly, I thank my wife, Alesia, and children, Ethan, Ashton, and Hannah for their patient understanding throughout the course of this project. They know better than anyone how challenging ministry life can be, let alone having the additional load of a Doctor of Ministry project. I especially thank them for gracefully accommodating the extra hours required of me to complete the project document in time.

Thirdly, I thank my cohort instructors, Michael R. Cauley and Mike Cauley, for their superb teaching of the foundational missional principles needed for this project to be effective. They were an inspiration for the development of this project. I also thank, Michael R. Cauley, for his insights and encouragement as my advisor. He is truly gifted in offering direction and was very helpful during the fine-tuning of the project document. Furthermore, I thank my second reader, James Wibberding, for his timely review of my project document.

Last but not least, I thank everyone who played an instrumental role on the ground level. I thank my region director, Gerard Kiemeney, for being my mentor and listening carefully and asking the right questions.

I thank the members of the Hacienda Heights church who worked especially close with me over the years and were willing to let God lead their lives and take the leap of faith into missional living. Members include, Kevin Solomon, whose passion for mission led him to become a model missional community leader for the church. His efforts were second to none and produced lasting results for God's kingdom.

Also included are these members who earnestly supported the direction of the church during the implementation of the project: Robert Vance, Irene Jimenez, Isabel Vasquez, Gil Juan, William Waterhouse, Richard Perez, Veronica Perez, Brian Anderson, Deanna Anderson, Peter Eberhardt, Augustin Eberhardt, Janet Matsuda, Daisy Fernandez, Nancy Gallo, Duane Abel, Penny Peng, Iris Rodriguez, Matthew Blow, and Earlina Lohff. The changes that occurred in the church would not have happened without their help and prayers.

The content of the following pages was made possible with the efforts of not only the aforementioned people, but also many others.

CHAPTER 1

THE NEED FOR MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

Introduction

The church in North America is not the center of life like it once was and many outside the church from all generations struggle to find it tangible and life changing (Halter & Smay, 2008; Hirsch, 2006; Tickle, 2008). Furthermore, the church has devolved into a consumeristic, pastor-dependent, attractional model, where outsiders are invited to come in and consume the programs the church offers through its professional clergy (Cole, 2005). This fosters a lack of lay involvement and disciple making, which hinders the spread of the gospel and the transformation and healing the community desperately needs (Putman, 2010). As a result of these issues, over 80% of Adventist churches in North America are plateaued or declining (Burrill, 2004; Wilson, 2014, Location No. 712). To effectively fulfill the great commission, the church needs to return to its roots and create missional communities through which friendships are made, lives are changed, the gospel is spread, and the church grows (Guder, 2015).

This study develops an intervention to apply on the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church so it will create missional communities. This chapter presents the framework upon which the study is founded by first setting the context, problem, and task.

Then the delimitations are stated, followed by the description of the process and the definition of terms.

Context

My tenure as pastor of the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church began in July, 2010. While first getting acquainted with the church I observed its many admirable attributes. It was friendly, grace-filled, and concerned for the wellbeing of its youth and elderly constituents. Sharing the gospel with the community was also of interest and the multi-ethnic makeup of the congregation was beneficial for these intentions as it was reflective of the community near the members and the church campus (DeYmaz, 2007). Thirty-seven percent were Hispanic, 27% were Asian, 20% were White, 7% were Black, and 7% were from other ethnicities (Sahlin, 2009).

The church campus is located in the city of Hacienda Heights, a suburb of Los Angeles, California, located 20 miles East of downtown Los Angeles, and 17 miles North of Anaheim; the home of a famous theme park. A closer landmark is the Hsi Lai Temple, the first and largest monastery established in the West by the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order of Taiwan. The church campus is about two miles away, which is well within the boundary of the what is considered “holy land” by the Hsi Lai Temple community. As such, the immediate neighborhoods around the campus contain a high concentration of Buddhists who moved to the area to live near the temple.

Most of the active church members lived in or in the vicinity of the three connecting communities of Hacienda Heights, La Puente, and Rowland Heights. This attributed to the ability of the members to engage in ministry in the same context and in close proximity to the campus and surrounding neighborhoods. A 2009 report by the Center for Creative Ministry

indicated church members were also socioeconomically similar to their neighbors (Sahlin, 2009). Furthermore, the congregation was financially faithful with tithing, supporting the local budget, and maintaining an adequate facility and grounds with which to engage in ministry.

Just prior to the start of this project, a critical mass of lay members were involved in ministry. There were about 60 church officers, which was about 50% of the active attenders and 20% of the 300 members on the books. The standard ministries and departments like elders, deacons, and teachers, were adequately staffed; with the exception of personal ministries.

Problem and Task

During the initial observation period, it also became apparent the church had some problems that needed addressing. The lack of personal ministry resources and a discipleship program was a major concern. A review of the clerk's membership records indicated church growth was plateaued, and data from the church assessment survey highlighted the fact that the congregation consisted largely of boomers while the GenX'ers and millennials were the least represented generation.

It was also apparent the church at-large relied on professionals to minister to the youth, engage in outreach through giving Bible studies, and to carry the brunt of member care. The church was funding the salaries of a youth pastor and Bible worker through faithful contributions to the church budget and by renting out the campus on the weekends to two congregations. This fostered an atmosphere where the benchmark expectation for members was regular attendance at worship services and Sabbath school classes. Thus, the majority of

the church ministries were inreach oriented and supported worship services, Sabbath school, and the facility.

My assessment concluded the church was not outreach focused, small group oriented, or a discipling community; which were symptoms of the its poor missional health. Upon examining the church assessment survey report, these observations were confirmed. Sahlin (2009) noted the church's inward focus and recommended a change towards missional. I noticed further still the congregation did not have a sense of urgency to change, because paying others for specialized ministry and outreach, from their point of view, was a good deal that seemed to be working.

Yet, this path was not safe, because at 55-years old, it was on the verge of a slow 15-year decline to death, according to average life expectancies (Burrill, 2004). It was the right time to lead the church back on mission. While exploring this situation with the leadership in preparation for this project, I perceived their willingness to take the leap of faith and begin the missional journey.

The next step was to provide missional leadership and a suitable intervention to change the course of the Hacienda Heights Church into one that creates missional communities (Roxburgh, 2010). The delimitations and description of this plan now follow.

Delimitations of the Project

There are several delimitations of this project that should be stated. First, it is designed for and applied on the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist church. This is not to say its framework is not applicable in another context. Rather, as pastor of this church during the project development and deployment, it was the most relevant context for this study.

Because missional communities follow the Bible's instruction on mission and its example of community, the Old and New Testaments were chosen as the foundation for the theological review. The review of the Old Testament was limited to an examination of God's mission and its fulfillment through the Israelite community. The review of the New Testament was limited to an examination of God's mission as performed by the communities associated with Christ, the apostles, and the Early Church.

The literature review focused on relevant contemporary works written after 2005 and several seminal works priorly written. The topics explored were mission, the missional church, and missional communities.

The purpose of the creation of missional communities was to provide training, direction, and examples of missional communities. It was not to dictate the exact expression of each missional community and the direction it chose to go in service to the community.

Likewise, the purpose of the project was not to prescribe for each missional community every detail of how to make disciples and what curriculum, Bible passages, or methods to use to share the gospel. The Seventh-day Adventist church has ample resources available to meet the cognitive part of disciple making. Therefore, the parameters of the project were set to build a disciple making culture (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011; Putman, 2010). Each community was offered guidance and allowed to find its own rhythm for making friends, meeting their needs, desiring their good, and bidding them to follow Christ when the time was right (White, 1905, p. 143).

Description of the Project Process

Through the following process, this study developed and applied an intervention to train the Hacienda Height Seventh-day Adventist Church to create missional communities.

First, in order to evaluate the church's missional health and potential to create missional communities, the church was assessed through pastoral observation and by studying the report of the church assessment survey conducted on the church in 2008 by the Center for Creative Evangelism (Sahlin, 2009). The results were used to guide the creation of the intervention. Additionally, important information revealed by this report about the community at-large was considered during the development of the intervention. It was determined the church was not missional and not effectively reaching the community. However, the church had adequate ministry resources, budget offerings, and tithe, and it was a committed fellowship of believers who were demographically similar to the community at-large. These attributes were considered assets for reaching the community through growing missional communities.

Another part of the process was a study of Scripture with the purpose of developing a theology of missional community building by examining the mission of God and the acts and teachings of Jesus, the disciples, and the early church. This theology would then serve as the foundation for evangelistic methods the church could use to fulfill the Great Commission; one of which was missional communities.

The Old Testament study explored God's mission to restore the broken relationship with humanity through the covenant He established with the Israelite community. This study revealed they were set up as an example to the nations of how a community that is a faithful follower of God behaves. When they were serving one another with love and obedient to God's commands, it allowed for bountiful blessings to be poured upon them; the best of which was God dwelling with them in the tabernacle and the Messiah coming from the holy line of Israel to provide forgiveness of sins and complete restoration in the end.

The study of the New Testament revealed much about the next phase of God's mission to restore relationships with Israel and all of humanity. The Messiah dwelled with and served Israel and the surrounding communities and shared the good news that their salvation was at hand. His humble and loving service to all classes and ethnic backgrounds, fostered relationships that made disciples. He grew a community around Himself, which He sent out to love and serve in His footsteps. His sacrificial death in everyone's place, provided redemption for all who call upon His name and it gave power for His disciples to carry out the Great Commission after His ascension. The apostles carried on the work and grew a missional community around themselves that became a close family, cared for one another, and was passionate about humbly serving those who were not yet part of the community, transforming their lives with the power of the gospel, and calling them to join the community of the church.

A review of missional related works examined these areas: mission from the early church to the present, the praxis of missional ministry, missional movements, and the Seventh-day Adventist movement. This review presents an overview of the church from its beginnings as a missional movement that was growing disciples, to its evolution into a church that is consumeristic, pastor dependent, declining, and in urgent need of change. The conclusion of the review is churches need to again become a missional community movement that grows through lay involvement in mission rather than overreliance on professional clergy.

The intervention was developed using the guidance of the theology of missional communities along with teachings from the missional literature. The intervention contained these modules: personal transformation, creating a sense of urgency, developing a guiding

coalition, fostering passionate and authentic spirituality, mentoring disciples of Jesus, and developing missional communities.

My personal transformation was essential to be able to effectively lead the congregation down the missional path (Cauley, 2013). This process occurred through developing a rich personal devotional and prayer life, as well as focusing on personal leadership development.

The creation of a sense of urgency was important in the effort to encourage movement from the status quo towards creating missional communities (Kotter, 2008). Without seeing a need to change, the congregation will usually not change for change sake. Sermon series and multiple conversations concerning the need to change were used to create the sense of urgency.

Developing a guiding coalition was needed to serve as an influential force of change as a balanced collection of members who were operating within the fivefold spiritual gifts (Cole, 2014; Hirsch, 2006; Kotter, 2012; Woodward, 2012). The coalition was expressed in the members who worked closely with me to transform the church into a grower of missional communities. It was established as a simple structure, not concerned with policies, budgets, or the formalities of committees and boards (Lencioni, 2012). Anyone interested in fostering a missional environment in the church was welcomed to take part.

Fostering passionate and authentic spirituality was part of the intervention because the church will do great things for God as a result of spiritual transformation (Kidder, 2011). This was developed through several sermon series and multiple weekends of prayer and revival, along with persistently encouraging the church to seek God daily in prayer and devotion.

Mentoring disciples of Jesus was part of the intervention because disciple making is the most important role of a Christian (Putman, 2010). A culture of disciple making was fostered through discipleship classes, mentoring, and sermon series.

These modules were all foundational for the main purpose of the intervention; developing missional communities. It is essential that the church operates as a missional community to be able to influence and transform the culture in which it lives using the methods Jesus used while on mission (Halter & Smay, 2010). The process of creating missional communities entailed educating the church with examples from Scripture, the early church, and contemporary models. This statement from White (1905) served as a developmental guide for the process.

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me." (p. 143)

Included in the intervention development process was a planning session dedicated to brainstorming ways to follow Christ's methods and foster deep and meaningful relationships with the community through small groups and corporately serving the community through publically visible projects. The ideas that came out of this were assessed by the guiding coalition and leadership teams; after which, resources and training were provided to establish the most feasible.

Definition of Terms

If there is one thing certain from the study of the missional church and missional communities, it is there are many nuances to the definitions of these terms and their expression in the church.

For the purpose of this project, a *missional church* is understood as a church that defines itself, and organizes its life around, its primary purpose as an agent of God's mission to the world (Hirsch, 2006, p. 285). Mission will not be an afterthought or something contracted out to auxiliary organizations. As such, a missional church is by nature, a missional community.

The definition of a *missional community* used for this project is, “A group of three or more Christians united in growing their community by persistently pouring their lives into the people in their proximity who are not yet part of the community, in order to develop friendships and meet their needs through compassionate and humble service, and whenever they are ready, invite them into the community and disciple them in Jesus” (Adams, n.d.; Breen, 2010; White, 1905).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to develop an intervention that trained the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist to create missional communities. The intervention was developed by studying mission, missional church, and missional communities, as found in the Bible and current literature. Furthermore, the church and community was assessed in order to build the intervention with exacting specifications. The result was an intervention that included these modules: personal transformation, creating a sense of urgency, developing a guiding coalition, fostering passionate and authentic spirituality, mentoring disciples of Jesus, and developing missional communities.

The rest of this study follows this sequence: chapter 2 is an examination of mission and community from the context of the Old and New Testaments, and from the age of the Early Church until the present. Chapter 3 studies relevant literature related to mission, the

missional church, and missional communities. Chapter 4 describes and develops the intervention. Chapter 5 is a narration of the steps of the application of the intervention. Chapter 6 closes this document with evaluations and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

A THEOLOGY OF MISSIONAL COMMUNITY BUILDING

Introduction

The Israel of the Old Testament was called to help with God's mission by occupying the land given to them to be an example to all nations of obedient followers of God (Bosch, 1991, p. 18; Pfandl, 2013, p. 7). Then the New Testament church was called to be obedient followers by going out to make people of all nations His disciples. However, now the church occupies the sanctuaries it builds and makes disciples of the people who enter rather than emphasizing going out to make disciples (Halter & Smay, 2008, p. 56). The New Testament church was a model for missional community building and it needs to be closely followed today (Cole, 2005, p. 185).

This chapter will develop a theology of missional community building by studying the mission of God and the acts and teachings of Jesus, the disciples, and the early church. It will serve as a foundation upon which are built effective evangelistic methods that remain faithful to the great commission.

God's mission is to restore the order His kingdom lost upon Lucifer's rebellion (Guder & Barrett, 1998, p. 3). First, the Old Testament phase of this mission will be examined. Secondly, the New Testament phase will be explored. Finally, biblical community will be reviewed, as it relates to fulfilling the mission.

Mission in the Old Testament

The moment Lucifer rebelled, order in God's Kingdom was lost. Then his influence of Adam and Eve to follow in his footsteps brought another dimension in God's kingdom, which needed to be restored. Order will be restored through the vindication of His name, the redemption of humanity, the destruction of Lucifer and his followers, and the re-creation of His earthly creations to their pre-sin condition (Burrill, 1998, p. 101; Guder, 2015, p. 68; Hirsch, 2006, p. 129; Woodward, 2012, p. 28).

The beginning of God's vindication occurred upon the application of the plan of redemption. God made tunics of skin for Adam and Eve after they sinned, instead of killing them on the spot (Gulley, 2011, p. 47). The grace given to them pointed forward to the crucifixion of Christ (Bruinsma, 2009, p. 29; Gulley, 2012, p. 554). Then God chose Abraham to be the father of a new nation called Israel (Gen 17). God made a covenant with Abraham and Israel to bless them in many ways; especially through the birth of Christ (White, 1898, p. 44).

The Old Testament mission of God is demonstrated through the establishment of His kingdom in the people of Israel. They were to remain faithful to the covenant relationship as an example to other nations; thus ensuring a blessing on themselves and all nations through Christ (Lev 26; Pfandl, 2013, p. 4). Israel was the model of God's kingdom on earth when they were obedient to the covenant relationship as observed through their worship, celebration of the festivals, keeping the Ten Commandments, and taking part in the sanctuary services (Burrill, 1998, p. 131; Moskala, 2013, p. 67). Their observance was a public witness to their belief God intervened in the events of history for their benefit and would fulfill His promise to bless all the nations through the Messiah (Bosch, 1991, p. 18). For example, as

they celebrated the feast of unleavened bread they were proclaiming God freed them from slavery in Egypt. “By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Exod 13:14). For the Israelites, this same festival looked forward to redemption from sin through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

The most vivid element of God’s kingdom was demonstrated in the sanctuary and its related ceremonies (Gulley, 2011, p. 437; Moskala, 2013, p. 71). The great blessings and visual images of God dwelling among Israel are beyond comparison (2 Chr 7:1). This established the one place on earth at that time where anyone from any nation could come to experience God’s glory manifested in the lives of His followers (Wiersbe, 1998, p. 173).

Even though Israel was not actively evangelizing the nations, some people from nearby nations converted to Judaism (Bosch, 1991, p. 19). The book of Esther mentions that many from the Persian Empire converted because they respected the Jews (Esth 8:17). Certainly, this was a result of the Persians seeing the Jews overcome insurmountable obstacles and receiving many blessings. Anyone in close proximity to Israel could learn the distinct differences of Jehovah’s followers. In a time when public religious ceremonies played such a central part of life, the connection would be made that Israel’s prosperity came because they served Jehovah (White, 1900, p. 288). Any onlooker would be envious of the fruit of their covenant with God (Moskala, 2013, p. 75). This facilitated friendships being made that resulted in more exposure to the God of Israel. From this came conversions and commitments. God was prepared for this to happen and instructed Israel how to assimilate proselytes (Exod 12:48; Isa 14:1).

Although Israel had a unique religious culture, it shared in the social culture of the region (Bruinsma, 2009, p. 179). For example, when Abraham fed the three guests who came

to his tent, he was following a regional custom to entertain and care for travelers (Gen 18:1-8; Job 31:32). This was conducive to developing relationships without the purpose of proselytizing. Even so, the unique characteristics of Judaism would be acutely obvious to travelers being entertained by a Jew (Moskala, 2013, p. 67).

Even though not every interaction led to conversion, the relationships Israel built with people from other nations were helpful for their security and wellbeing while living in a hostile land. As a result, Abraham was able to receive help to rescue Lot from his captors (Kittel, Bromiley, & Friedrich, 1964, p. 22). Additionally, the relationships that lead to conversions, like Rahab's, fostered long lasting results, even to the point of setting an example of how Israel should relate to Gentiles as recipients of the gift of grace (Stulac, 1993).

At other times Israel needed to trade their wares (1 Kgs 5:6). Anyone doing business with Israel would be exposed to Jehovah and the blessings He bestowed on them. Hiram, king of Tyre, saw firsthand the faith of Israel during the course of Tyre's trade alliance which provided building materials for the temple (House, 1995, p. 121). Similarly, the Queen of Sheba is an example of someone whose curiosity in the God of Israel was raised through her interactions with Solomon (White, 1917, p. 66).

The Old Testament has no direct command for Israel to evangelize other nations (Bosch, 1991, p. 17; Moskala, 2013, p. 62). Yet, prophecies relating to Israel being a light to the nations might be called into question (Ps 96:9; Isa 2:5; 18:7; 19:23, 25; 25:6-8; 40:5; 42:6; 45:14, 22; 49:6; 51:5; 60:1-3). This should not be understood as God commanding Israel to evangelize in the same way as the New Testament church. Rather, they point forward to Jesus' crucifixion and the proclamation of the Gospel by the church. Jesus' death

on the cross draws people to Himself, thus fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy (John 12:32; LaRondelle, 1983, p. 95). This is an example of God's faithful fulfillment of the promise to bless Abraham's descendants and every nation (Acts 3:25-26). For now there is neither Jew nor Greek, for because of Christ all are Abraham's seed and heirs of the promise (Gal 3:28-29).

Israel was a living example of God's kingdom on earth as they testified they believed God would continue to be faithful to the covenant (Newbiggin, 1995, p. 21). This was shown in several ways. First, ceremonies were prescribed by God to commemorate God's mighty acts and to point forward to a future fulfillment (Gulley, 2003, p. 85). The Passover feast is one such example. It commemorated their salvation from Egypt and also it showed Israel looked forward to salvation from sin through the Messiah (Bruinsma, 2009, p. 29; Nichol, Cottrell, Neufeld, & White, 1976, p. 706). Secondly, each time the ceremonies were conducted, it gave opportunities to share the meaning with anyone who was curious (Deut 5:15). Thirdly, their faithful following of the ceremonies communicated to those looking on from other nations that Israel followed God because He had been so faithful in the past. It also proclaimed they believed God would also fulfill His future promises. They were declaring that because God was active in their history they were confident He would continue to remain faithful and fulfill His promises for the future (Bosch, 1991, p. 17).

Besides a commitment to worshipping God and following the rituals He commanded, Israel was supposed to care for one another (Rice, 1997, p. 211). As the elect of God, they were to serve God and one another (Isa 1:17.) They were not sent out to serve other nations or to evangelize them. They were to be an example for other nations through caring for their own, such as widows, orphans, and immigrants (Bosch, 1991, p. 17; Bruinsma, 2009, p. 179).

God's mission, as demonstrated in the Old Testament, is further understood when looking at the book of Jonah. The narrative teaches God was willing to save Gentiles who repented. However, God only sent Jonah on the mission to warn Nineveh of the consequences of not turning to God. He did not make it a requirement for every Israelite to go out and make converts at that time (Newbigin, 1995, p. 33). Sending Jonah was a foreshadow of Jesus' ministry on earth and an example of God's mission to redeem humanity regardless of nationality (Bruinsma, 2009, p. 26; Gulley, 2003, p. 729; Matt 12:41).

Similarly, in Isaiah we read that the Gentiles, symbolized as those by the coastland, would one day have hope in Him for their salvation (Isa 51:5). Furthermore, Israel knew God wanted to save all the nations (Ps 96:9). Even so, Israel became increasingly self-centered and did not evangelize the nations like we see Jesus, the disciples, and the church doing in the New Testament (Newbigin, 1995, p. 77). By the time Jesus began His ministry on earth, Israel had seemingly forgotten Gentiles would have a chance to become a part of the kingdom (Matt 12:41). Yet, Israel's posture communicated the message that the God of the universe reigns (Isa 52:7; Newbigin, 1995, pp. 21-22). The nations saw that God reigned on earth and had chosen Israel as the physical embodiment of His kingdom.

Mission in the New Testament

In the New Testament, we see a new phase of God's mission. This section of the chapter will first explore the ministry of Jesus Christ because it marks the beginning of the phase and it sets the foundation for everything the apostles and the early church did to help fulfill God's mission. Then it will cover the ministry of the apostles and the early church.

The Ministry and Mission of Jesus

It has already been stated the Jews were not commanded to evangelize the Gentiles. Jesus' ministry was also not at first concerned with the Gentiles (Bruinsma, 2009, p. 42). He was preaching to a "brood of vipers" as John the Baptist called them (Matt 3:7). Matthew's Gospel teaches Jesus was sent to the lost sheep of Israel (Matt 15:24). Furthermore, Jesus proclaimed God's kingdom had come to Israel. One way He demonstrated this was by selecting twelve Hebrews to disciple with ordinary backgrounds that were connected to the community (Bosch, 1991, p. 26; McNeal, 2011b, p. 103). By so doing, Jesus was inviting all Jews to follow Him, not just the pious religious elite or a remnant that wandered into the wilderness looking for the Messiah or for the Baptist (Bosch, 1991, p. 25; Hirsch, 2006, p. 143).

When most people within the Jewish society were shunning sinners, like prostitutes, the sick, and tax collectors, Jesus was choosing to disciple these types of people into members of His inner circle. Jesus' invitation to Matthew, the tax collector, is an example of such an all-inclusive mission to all of Israel (Matt 9:9-12). Another one is Jesus inviting Himself to the home of Zacchaeus, another wealthy tax collector (Luke 17:1-5). His relationship with Mary Magdalene, which led to her accompanying Him on the second Galilean tour, also demonstrates His approach to discipleship (Bock, 1994, Luke 8). Jesus is not bothered by the belief of His day that a religious leader should not associate with the sinful and outcasts (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Location No. 1976). Jesus welcomed them to repent and receive salvation. Many had a problem with Jesus eating with these people and associating with them; yet Jesus seemed to go out of His way to be among them (Matt 9:11; Chester, 2011; Guder & Barrett, 1998, p. 164). Jesus directly preached against the traditions

of the day when He proclaimed “love your enemies” (Matt 5:44). These outcasts had become enemies to the pious, but not to God.

Jesus’ mission was focused on leading Israel to accept Him as the Messiah. He warned everyone not to be like the people during the days of Noah who were unaware judgment was near (Matt 24:37-39). He shared compassion and grace, even to the enemies of God and to those who would reject the message, including the elite of Israel. The inevitable rejection by many did not deter Him from proclaiming the Good News of salvation was at hand and time was short.

Even though His mission was focused on Israel, Jesus did not inhibit the Gentiles from accepting Him as the Savior. Jesus going out of His way to offer the living water of life to the Samaritan Woman He met at the well demonstrates this point (John 4:13-14). Similarly, Jesus did not hesitate to treat the Gentile centurion the same as any Israelite asking for help. Jesus was amazed at the centurion’s faith in His ability and desire to heal (Matt 8:10).

Jesus broke down barriers with His mission and provided hope for everyone at a time when Israel had become increasingly self-centered by believing God’s kingdom on earth was only for Israel. Jesus opened the door to mission to the Gentiles; thus, preparing the way for the early church’s shift from a mission only to Israel to one predominantly to Gentiles. Furthermore, Jesus’ lifestyle and method of ministry set the foundation for the more inclusive direction of the early church, which communicated the message that God cares for everyone, including those on the periphery of society (Matt 10:28-31). Jesus walked among the people and lived life with them declaring they could repent of their sins to God, believe, and become part of the kingdom (Bonhoeffer, 1954, p. 17).

Jesus lovingly followed through with the Old Testament's message of forgiveness, healing, and blessings (Luke 4:18-19). He fulfilled the prophecies by healing the sick and forgiving them of their sins (Matt 9:1-7). This demonstrated His intention to restore the kingdom not only on earth, but also in everyone's heart. The restoration was manifested with the blessings of forgiveness and healing from disease and suffering (Guder & Barrett, 1998). Even though complete eradication of these things will not occur until after the Second Coming, He gave the world a taste of the kingdom to come by healing some of the sick around Him and easing their suffering (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Chapter 8, para. 7).

Jesus also wanted people to be free from traditions that impeded the essentials of the kingdom (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Chapter 8, para. 10; Mark 7:8-13). It was not uncommon for the Jews in Christ's day to put the law above a heart-based relationship with God. When this happens, it is highly unlikely people will be motivated for the right reasons to help those in need or even to help them at all (Bosch, 1991, p. 25; McNeal, 2011b, p. 36). Jesus addressed this by declaring the law is meant to help guide people into loving and serving one another (Matt 5:43-45; 22:37-40; Bosch, 1991, p. 35). One example of this is how Jesus ministered to the Samaritan Woman He met at the well. She was the product of generations of Israelites being separated from Gentiles by the barrier of tradition and keeping the letter of the law (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Chapter 8, para. 9). To keep free from "contamination" and anything that might influence breaking the covenant, Israel would not associate with Gentiles (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Chapter 8, para. 9). Yet God did not forbid Israel from helping a Gentile in need. Even so, Israel's behavior was a barrier that inhibited the Samaritan woman from being loved and served (Bosch, 1991, p. 27). Therefore, Jesus' interaction with her demonstrated Jews could love and serve Gentiles while loving

God and remaining faithful to the covenant. His lifestyle and way of engaging in mission and ministry showed the natural results of loving God and receiving His grace (Bonhoeffer, 1954, p. 23). It taught a follower of God will not only love and serve Him, but also love and serve his or her neighbors (Gal 5:13).

The Mission of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew covers more details concerning Jesus' ministry to Gentiles and other efforts to spread the Gospel beyond Israel. Matthew notes, more than the other gospels, stories and circumstances where Gentiles are connected with Jesus (Bosch, 1991, p. 60; Keener, 1997). By highlighting these, His contemporaries had enough information to understand that the Christian mission is to make disciples from everyone.

The first of these is seen in Matthew's inclusion of the Gentile women Rahab, Tamar, and Ruth in the genealogy of Jesus listed in chapter 1 (Matt 1:1-17). Furthermore, only Matthew notes the visit of the Magi after Jesus' birth (Matt 2:1-12). Another example is the centurion of Capernaum whose interaction with Jesus inspires Him to announce Gentiles will be in heaven (Matt 8:5-13). Jesus healing the Canaanite woman's daughter is another noted inclusion (Matt 15:21-28). Another example is the Roman centurion at the crucifixion of Jesus who, along with the others that were with him, declared Jesus was the Son of God (Matt 27:54).

These examples of Jesus ministry of the gospel to Gentiles, serve as a guide for disciples to know where to direct mission work (Guder & Barrett, 1998, p. 165). Matthew's gospel portrays Jesus as the Savior of all humankind, primarily focused on Israel. However, Matthew's inclusion of the connected parables of the two sons, the tenant farmers, and the wedding party illustrates the rejection of the Messiah by Israel will cause God to cultivate a

new vineyard, the Gentiles, with new farmers, disciples (Keener, 1997). It can be said these parables were teaching that sometime after Christ's crucifixion, mission and ministry directives would be updated to include Gentiles. Furthermore, by the time Matthew wrote his gospel, the apostles were already taking the Gospel to all the earth (Guder, 2015, p. 127). Therefore, Matthew provides support and encouragement for Christians to continue ministering to every tribe, tongue, and people (Bosch, 1991, p. 62).

At the conclusion of his gospel is the "great commission," in which Jesus issued a directive to His disciples for their work to do after His ascension to heaven. Everything Jesus told them to do, He was already doing with them prior to the crucifixion, with the exception of this commission to minister to everyone; including Gentiles (Bosch, 1991, p. 61; Guder & Barrett, 1998, p. 145).

In this commission, Jesus is commanding the eleven disciples to multiply themselves. The term "make disciples" is a principal verb in the imperative (Utley, 2000, p. 88). This is describing a chain reaction (Mills, 1999). This commission is not just for the eleven; it is for anyone who becomes a follower of Jesus (Burrill, 1998, p. 8).

It should also be noted Jesus is commanding the disciples to make disciples by baptizing and teaching people. The participles "baptizing" and "teaching" describe the form of the disciple making process (Burrill, 1998, p. 222). Therefore, a disciple will make more disciples, baptize them, and especially teach them to "observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19). Disciples will follow Jesus by being obedient to His teachings and commands.

The question of what commands Jesus is specifically speaking about is answered by examining Jesus' teachings as found in Matthew's Gospel. Most anything Matthew recorded

as being something Jesus instructed could be considered necessary to observe by a true disciple of Jesus. The most prominent instructions are arguably the ones given during the Sermon on the Mount (Bosch, 1991, p. 69). By following the commands in the sermon and teaching them to others, any disciple would be observing Jesus' instructions as found in the great commission. The result would make the disciples as a whole, ripe for building up the community of Christ. Who would not want to be around Christians if they behaved as Jesus instructed them? People who exhibit the good qualities outlined in the Sermon on the Mount will certainly be welcomed in most any situation and community. Consequently, the New Testament epistles encourage the church to make the changes necessary to help it be more like the benchmark Jesus laid out in the Sermon on the Mount (Eph 4:2; 1 Thess 5:14).

Mission in the New Testament Church

The New Testament church exemplifies what it means to be a disciple and how to be faithful to the Great Commission because it followed the apostles' teachings on discipleship, which they learned directly from Jesus (Newbigin, 1995, p. 41). When Jesus called people to believe, He meant more than believing in facts. Jesus called the apostles to believe so strongly that they would follow Him as disciples (Bruinsma, 2009, p. 34; Cole, 2005, p. 103; Matt 4:19). They followed and participated in mission with Jesus. He also sent them out on their own along with others to practice what they were being taught (Luke 10). In doing this, Jesus demonstrated how God reigning in the hearts of His followers results in changed lives (Cole, 2005, p. 115). Jesus declared those wanting to follow Him need to be willing to lose many things, including, their own life (Matt 10:38).

Being a disciple of Jesus requires many things, including commitment, long-suffering, and the willingness to love and serve those in need (Hunsberger, 1998, p. 106). It

also means participating with Jesus in the experience of being persecuted and rejected by those to whom the Gospel is being shared (Luke 10:16). The fact Jesus taught this message suggests it was not a common practice of the cultures of that day (Bosch, 1991, p. 38). Jesus' disciples were instructed to serve anyone in need and give up any worldly status to do so, "And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.'" (Mark 9:35). He further taught being a disciple requires going out into the world to share the gospel, announcing God's kingdom is at hand, and serving people in need (Matt 10:7-11; 25:44-46; Mark 16:15). This set the course for the disciples and the church going forward in the name of Christ (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Chapter 1, para. 20).

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus announced to the universe the end is in sight and sin will someday be eliminated from the earth. Because of the cross everything Jesus taught could be believed and followed by the apostles (1 Cor 15:12-28). Then, after Jesus's ascension to heaven, the apostles were empowered to continue on God's mission where Jesus left off on earth (Acts 1:8).

The apostles and the New Testament church followed the instructions of Jesus and carried on His mission and ministry of proclaiming the Gospel and meeting the needs of the people. However, at first the church did not formally emphasize sharing the Gospel with the Gentiles as it was still focused on convincing Israel that Jesus is the Messiah (Acts 3:12-26).

As a result of the persecution the church received, culminating with the execution of Stephen, Christians fled from Jerusalem, which resulted in the Gospel being shared with more Gentiles than ever before. God gave Peter a vision about a Roman centurion named, Cornelius, which Peter understood as God sanctioning the impartial preaching of the Gospel

to everyone and accepting into the church anyone who accepts Jesus as Savior. The conversion of Cornelius, which changed Peter's heart concerning Gentiles, marked the beginning of the church's push to share the Gospel with Gentiles (Guder & Barrett, 1998, p. 227).

The next area of change for the church was the application of the Torah and the teachings of Jesus in relation to the influx of new proselytes. The first example was the controversy over whether Gentiles should be circumcised in order to become Christians (Acts 15; Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Chapter 8, para. 19). The church in Antioch at first experienced the most converts from the Gentiles and it was not requiring them to be circumcised. At the same time, circumcision was required of Gentile converts in the church in Jerusalem. The Jewish law declaring it was forbidden to associate and participate in religious activities with the uncircumcised was a stumbling block for the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 10:28). Some of the leaders in Jerusalem wanted the Jewish Christians in Antioch to separate themselves from the uncircumcised Gentile Christians. A council meeting was then held in Jerusalem to settle the matter. After thorough investigation and hearing the opinions of many church leaders, the council voted to not require circumcision for Gentile converts. This was a monumental step forward for the continued fostering of the Gentile community (Bosch, 1991, p. 46).

Circumcision was not the only area in which the church in Antioch was influential in breaking down barriers in fulfilling the commission. In Antioch, Jewish and Gentile Christians were eating together, which caused controversy in Jerusalem. It incited a similar agitation for the church as when Peter entered the home of Cornelius and ate with him and his family (Acts 11:2). Antioch's approach to ministry provided a model of how Jewish and

Gentile Christians can work together to serve the community and share the gospel (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Chapter 1, para. 20). This opened the door for when Paul joined the ministry to be able to proclaim with boldness the mission of God is no longer just to create a renewed Israel, but to also build up God's kingdom from all the nations of the earth (Gal 3:26-29).

The church was growing into a community for everyone; Greek, free, slave, rich and poor. This was a very unique situation at the time because most other cultures had customs and class systems in place that delineated appropriate relationships (Bosch, 1991, p. 48). The church was breaking down these social barriers by engaging their neighbors as they built a community of faith through practicing the commands of Jesus to love their neighbors. As a result, the church began to take better care of the poor and sick (Acts 9:36). Furthermore, the church became advocates for prisoners and slaves and seen in Paul's letter to Philemon.

The church was increasingly engaging in mission more like the methods of Jesus and the example of Christianity as described in the Sermon on the Mount (Bosch, 1991, p. 98; Guder & Barrett, 1998, p. 137). Consequently, the church became a better servant to the community through its help with injustices like poverty, hunger, exploitation, violence, and discrimination (Guder & Barrett, 1998, p. 121). It also served the community through preaching the Gospel, healing, freeing those enslaved by sin, restoring relationships among members of the community, and discipling people into relationship with God. The net result of following Christ's commands was the church becoming a community of believers that lived life together to be on God's mission (Guder & Barrett, 1998, p. 127).

Just like Jesus fulfilled His mission, the church did not proclaim the Gospel through public speaking alone. It followed Christ's relationship with the people. "The Saviour

mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me'" (White, 1905). Jesus went out of His way to mingle with the people and did not allow public opinion to dissuade Him from pursuing the outcasts of society. "As Jesus sat down to eat in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners joined Jesus and his disciples at the table" (Matt 9:10, CEB). He could not hold back His compassion when He came across people who needed help. "When Jesus arrived and saw a large crowd, he had compassion for them and healed those who were sick" (Matt 14:14, CEB). When the time was right, Jesus would make the invitation to follow Him.

As Jesus and his disciples traveled along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' Jesus replied, 'Foxes have dens and the birds in the sky have nests, but the Human One has no place to lay his head.' Then Jesus said to someone else, 'Follow me.' He replied, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' (Luke 9:57-59, CEB)

Jesus did not need a home of His own. He was living right alongside the people to which He was ministering and they would welcome Him into their homes. "While Jesus and his disciples were traveling, Jesus entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him as a guest" (Luke 10:38, CEB). Many other passages recount Jesus entering the homes of the people. The amount of time He spent with them illustrates just how important living in community was for Jesus.

In comparison, the early church was engaged with the people just like Jesus (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Chapter 8, para. 20). The church members did not distance themselves from their neighbors after they became Christians; rather the church grew out of their homes and emptied out into the neighborhood.

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having

favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:46-47, NKJV)

The early church was functioning visibly as a community and not a building due in part by it continuing to maintain normal relationships with members of the community. Other than the synagogue, or temple, there was no convenient place to congregate indoors other than their homes. So then, the building and location of the congregation did not overshadow the church's mission and ministry, as buildings do today (Cole, 2005, p. 36). Their posture and proximity provided insight into what it is like to have God reigning in their lives, homes, and neighborhood (Halter & Smay, 2008, p. 136). God and the church became very much intertwined in the community. The early church was a missional community intent on building up the kingdom of God by pouring themselves into the lives of those around them and desiring their good (McNeal, 2011a, Chapter 1, Section 2, para. 5).

Biblical Community

Building a community of kingdom people was God's plan from the beginning (Burrill, 1998, p. 101; Cole, 2014, p. 7). A community is a group of people that have particular characteristics in common. God created humanity in His likeness, which allows for a personal connection. Furthermore, before creating Eve, God showed Adam that someone was missing from the community (Cole, 2014, p. 8; White, 1890, p. 46). He brought animals to Adam so he could name them; thus, causing awareness to the void in the community (Gen 2:18-20). Then God created Eve, which demonstrated it was not God's intention for humankind to be alone (Bonhoeffer, 1959, p. 96; Cole, 2014, p. 7).

The fall of Adam and Eve was a devastating blow to their community and would have been immediately deadly had not God chosen to save them. He came searching and called for them (Gen 3:8-9). Once the situation was discussed, God declared the consequences. Besides

being cast out of the Garden of Eden, the most notable was the broken relationship with God (Exod 33:19-20). Adam and Eve's choice to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is an example of excluding God from their community and decisions (Bonhoeffer, 1959, p. 101). Even though they followed God's instructions and grew their community by starting a family, the consequences of their sin spread (Gen 1:28). Then they saw firsthand how a broken community and relationship with God created major problems for future generations when their son, Cain, murdered his brother, Abel. Consequently, rebellious behavior has been repeated in various degrees by all of humanity ever since, resulting in the need for the restoration of relationships and community (Halter & Smay, 2010, p. 12).

The gospel of Jesus Christ demonstrates God wants to restore relationships and the community (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Chapter 1, para. 3; Frost, 2011, Chapter 1, Section 4, para. 14). The exemplary life of Christ serving humanity, showing compassion by healing infirmities, teaching the Word, and dying in the place of humanity to pay for the wages of sin leaves no room for anyone to doubt His desire (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011, Chapter 1, para. 9; White, 1898, p. 37). The apostles and the early church followed Christ's model of community building (Cole, 2005, p. 166). They became a friendly community of Christians who sought to transform their neighborhoods by building friendships and making disciples (Acts 4:8-24; 18:1-8). This was achieved through the development of community relationships, which were strengthened as they served each other's needs (Acts 2:45-47; Halter & Smay, 2008, p. 51).

The Epistles are further evidence of the church's commitment to growing into a community. Some of the guidance contained therein instructs the church on how to behave

with one another and restore relationships (Eph 4:3; Guder & Barrett, 1998, p. 260). These instructions would not be needed if the church was not interested in building up the community of Christ. Evidently as they disciplined one another to grow spiritually, these instructions were taught.

Furthermore, as the Church grew, it spread the Gospel message while keeping connected to its neighbors (1 Cor 16:19; 2 Cor 1:1; Col 4:15-16). This is seen in the many churches that were raised up in the early church in various houses and communities (Cole, 2005). Community was fostered by associating in their homes and public spaces during daily routines, rather than moving to the wilderness and living a disconnected existence (Acts 18:1-8). Living among the people demonstrated an effective posture for the church community to fulfill God's mission to welcome anyone into the fold, regardless of culture or background (Gal 3:26-29).

The proximity and posture of the church, as God's ambassadors, clearly portrays God as one who loves all people and desires to enter into saving relationships with them (Halter & Smay, 2008, p. 42). The result was the church functioning as missional community builders. The church became a collection of communities centered around being on God's mission (Frost, 2011, Chapter 1, Section 2, para. 2). By doing so, it grew exponentially as new disciples were made who then went out to make more new disciples.

Conclusion

God's mission to eradicate the results of sin through the help of the church culminates with the church making missional communities. It has been shown the first phase of God's mission in the Old Testament was primarily to establish His earthly kingdom through Israel in preparation for the Messiah to be born. The second phase in the New Testament was

Christ's ministry calling people to accept Him as the Messiah and the salvation He provided through His life, death, and resurrection. The final phase of God's mission is being completed by the church fulfilling the Great Commission through missional community building.

Moreover, Christ, the apostles, and the early church set an example of missional community building. They made community by becoming deeply involved in the lives of others, rather than simply preaching without personal interaction. Additionally, they lived among the people with special intentions to lead them into a relationship with God after they were ready to be led. Relationships were built by way of being in close and regular proximity with people, serving the community, helping people with their needs, and eating and worshipping with one another in their homes. This was the church functioning as missional community builders. As the church was then, it should be now.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Much has been written in the last ten years about the church's need to develop missional communities to be able to effectively share the Gospel and foster church growth (McNeal, 2011a). This chapter will examine this premise by reviewing relevant literature in these categories: (a) mission from the early church to the present, (b) the praxis of missional ministry, (c) missional movements, (d) and the Seventh-day Adventist movement. The literature reviewed includes a majority written after 2005 and also several relevant seminal works priorly written.

The Church and Mission From the Early Church to the Present

The early church in its beginning was imbedded in the community and sharing everything in common, while regularly eating, worshiping and praying together (Acts 2:42-46). Hirsch and Ferguson (2011) attest this form of Christianity was a movement that passed from person to person with discipleship and the gospel as the vehicle by which communities of believers grew. They were committed to their purpose of existence to fulfill the great commission (White, 1941). The church was transforming the world by focusing on Jesus' methods and not relying on an institution, building, or professional clergy. The church was the sent community according to Halter and Smay (2010); a family of ministers called to show the world a picture of God. They actively shared the message of salvation to everyone because they believed all are elected to receive salvation (Newbigin, 1995). They were organized around and existed to be on God's mission to proclaim the good news and make

disciples (Burrill, 1998). These disciples became the indigenous leaders of small churches that were raised up in cities everywhere, resulting in the church growing and being led by laypeople (Bruinsma, 2009).

The church at that time did not have fancy church buildings in which to worship, professional musicians to lead lively worship services, or the organized collection of Scripture we have today; all elements many believe are essential for church growth. Even so, the early church grew from as few as 25,000 Christians in A.D. 100 to upwards of 20,000,000 by A.D. 310 (Stark, 1997).

Burrill (1998) shows that even with the church's faithful beginnings, it gradually became less faithful to the Bible's instruction to be a priesthood of all believers as it made a distinction between the laity and clergy. He also argues that by the second century the church had shifted to a non-biblical clergy dependent model where the clergy performed member care as a primary function of the church, while the laity became less involved in mission and church planting. Guder (2015) argues that in place of the laity, professional missionaries were sent off to distant lands to evangelize, which further diminished the church's missional emphasis. Additionally, the vetting process for clergy helped to solidify the clergy dependent model and perpetuated the new emphasis of the work of the clergy as being primarily member care and less missional. Bruinsma (2009) notes that the consequence of this was the person-to-person method of spreading the gospel became less common as people relied on clergy and church services for biblical proclamation.

By the fourth century the church was fully entrenched in its new mode of operation. Then Constantine's rise to power and conversion to Christianity further bolstered this model as he joined church and state and established Christianity as the state religion. Moreover, the

hierarchical structure of the church became more complex and the separation between clergy and the laity more profound. This was due to Constantine's organization of an administration system for the church he empowered with the state political system. Hirsch (2006) argues that the consequence of this shift greatly changed the landscape of the church's engagement in God's mission. Some of the most significant are: the movement of the church from the outskirts of culture to the center of town, orthodoxy determined by church leaders who were defended by the state, the construction of ornate houses of worship which formed huge congregations, a clear distinction between clergy and laity which influenced the laity to become passive, and the use of political and military force to inflict the Christian faith.

Furthermore, the church was then perceived by Christians and non-Christians as being defined by its rituals, symbols, religious professionals, and buildings (Hirsch & Ferguson, 2011). These authors further note the public perception of the church was far from the New Testament's description of the early church when it was a people of God engaged in the mission of God, proclaiming the kingdom, serving the community, while living in the community. Constantine's influence of the church led it to become institutionalized and filled with people who were not disciplined and almost forced to become believers while not held accountable for their lack of Christ-like service or their overreliance on professionals to lead and perform mission work. This new model expended many resources on nurturing church members mostly engaged in church activities while within the confines of the church building that had become very important for the church's identity (Stone, 2007). This trend carried on throughout the Middle Ages and the Protestant Reformation, and still influences churches today (Bruinsma, 2009). Certainly, there have been church movements that were not dependent on a building or professional clergy, and operated missionally like the early

church. Even so, it would be hard to find some aspect of these movements that were not influenced to some degree by Constantine's institutional model.

Another consequence of Constantine's influence was the church becoming consumeristic. The average church member became accustomed to going to the church building each week to sit down and receive the benefits provided by the religious services performed by the paid professionals. This weekly attendance came to be about the only time most members were involved with anything sacred, while the rest of the week was spent in secular duties. The separation of sacred and secular was stark and only strengthened the idea that church ministries existed to attract people to the church building where they can be recipients of the church's services (Stetzer & Rainer, 2010).

This consumeristic church model is still a predominate influence of churches today. As such, churches have shifted away from focusing on mission and what God wants out of the church, and have moved towards feeding the desires of its members (Bruinsma, 2009, p. 15). In an effort to increase worship service attendance, member satisfaction, and in turn, local budget offerings, these congregations emphasize providing emotive worship services with good music, and entertaining and informative sermons, among other things (Fitch, 2005). However, it has been shown churches that rely on worship services alone for church growth have a difficult time making disciples and becoming a missional community (Hirsch & Ford, 2011).

It should also be noted that even though the consumeristic model may foster churches to have large worship service attendance, they lack close community. This can result in sermons preached out of context because in the absence of community there is little peer-to-

peer discussion to help solidify the sermon's message and encourage accountability to prayerfully follow God's direction as presented in the sermon (Fitch, 2005).

A profound deficit of the consumeristic church is that it is not a *communitas* with a passion for mission. Frost and Hirsch (2011) use the term, *communitas*, to describe the church community that has bonded deeply as a result of going through the challenging experience of going out on mission. *Communitas* is strengthened with each successive step of the missional life, which results in momentum to continue moving forward on mission. *Communitas* is much like the comradery soldiers gain from going through battle together, and the subsequent commitment to help one another forever, no matter the cost. The church congregation gains this same commitment and as such, it will support each other and combine its resources to facilitate the challenging missional life (Bader-Saye, 2007). The church needs the encouragement and power of *communitas* in order to make it through the struggle that comes with living the missional life. Few would be able or willing to go through the ordeal alone of leaving everything to follow Christ and suffer for His sake. To have the power of community and the support of co-laborers in Christ, together going through the same experience, helps to make it a little easier to trudge forward.

The consumeristic church is not focused on growing the church by bringing the gospel to people by going out to be among them to make disciples. The church instead attempts to develop worship services that attract outsiders into the building by being sensitive to their preferences (Bruinsma, 2009). This attractional method is not very effective at reaching people who do not have a relationship with Jesus nor is it effective at making new disciples. This is in large part because 60% of the population that does not have a

relationship with Jesus will never be compelled to set foot inside the church building (Ferguson & Ferguson, 2010).

Even though many North Americans claim to be spiritual and desire a connection with God, they find it difficult to connect within the traditional church model (Cole, 2010a). For example, as the most unrepresented demographic in the church, 20 and 30 year olds are interested in God and spiritual matters, but they are not drawn to developing relationships with other Christians or God through the current church model (Halter, 2011). Furthermore, Kimball (2003) also notes the emerging generation and culture desire a relationship with God but does not respond to the seeker sensitive consumeristic church model. Kinnaman and Lyons (2007) argue their apprehension to associate with organized religion is largely related to the non-missional consumeristic model used by many churches.

Because the consumeristic church is not reaching new people very well, it is losing its relevance for society (Murray, 2004). Mega churches and even small churches are closing their doors and foreclosing on their expensive properties because of decreasing attendance and membership, coupled with a weak economy. Church growth studies show over 80% of churches in North America are plateaued or in decline as they face a difficult challenge to connect with the modern generation (Burrill, 2004; Wilson, 2014). The church needs to make a change very soon or its irrelevance for this generation will continue hindering the fulfillment of God's mission and lead to the demise of the church (Hesselgrave, Stetzer, & Terry, 2010). To avoid imminent extinction, the church needs to change its model with a sense of urgency because complacency is a breeding ground for disease and death (Cole, 2010a; Kotter, 2008).

The Praxis of Missional Ministry

The answer for the church is found in the church becoming missional through an incarnational ministry with Jesus-shaped spirituality and apostolic leadership (Frost & Hirsch, 2003). It needs to be organized and centered around mission so it will fulfill God's wishes by sharing the gospel, proclaiming the kingdom, and living among the community while serving it in love (Guder & Barrett, 1998; Hesselgrave et al., 2010). No longer should the church observe the differences between it and society at large while continuing to operate with the same ministry instructions that have been used for hundreds of years (Roxburgh, 2010). The church should operate on a new map that leads to a missional approach.

The missional church is a people who influence and transform the culture in which they live (Halter & Smay, 2010). They are united through Christian community, around a common service and witness to a particular neighborhood or community (Hirsch, 2008). Missional churches have the intense desire to touch these people's lives in the same ways Jesus did before His ascension; while praying they will fall in love with Jesus as a result.

The missional church is in an opportune position as the emerging generation and culture desires a relationship with God but does not respond to the seeker sensitive consumeristic church model (Kimball, 2003). They are leery of its attempts to evangelize and transform them into a peculiar people who disappear into the church building to socialize together once a week (McNeal, 2011a). The missional church is incarnational, anti-consumeristic, and its natural relationship strategy effectively reaches this generation through engagement where they live and work (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011). When the church primarily operates by sending its people into the communities to pursue relationships, with no strings attached, new friends will be made who have the potential to grow into disciples;

which is an opportunity that rarely would have happened through the attractional church model. The impact the missional church makes is such that if the church were to disappear overnight, a terrible loss would be felt by the community. This is an unsurprising result considering other qualities of the missional church.

For the missional church, mission occurs when it is completely involved with the world by being like Christ (Bosch, 1991; Frost, 2011). McNeal (2011a) characterizes the missional church as “the people of God partnering with Him in His redemptive mission in the world.” Frost (2011) says that as a result of letting God rule in its life, the church demonstrates Christ like character by being most concerned with sharing the gospel through loving service. The church then is an image of Christ in the form of a servant that does everything in its power to demonstrate God’s kingship by facilitating the salvation, liberation, and reconciliation of unbelievers, the exploited, and discriminated (Wilson, 2014). This creates a foretaste of what the world will be like in the new earth. This missional model is far removed from the consumeristic and attractional model that so envelops church culture today.

Missional Movements

The Christian church in its earliest and purest form was a missional movement. A missional movement is a people dedicated to the mission of God; while not being controlled by institutions, buildings, traditions, or church models. Missional movements exhibit extreme faith that leads to an unquenchable commitment to the cause of God and a willingness to do anything for Christ (Addison, 2011). Their commitment stems from being transformed by Christ, resulting in passion for sharing the gospel and contagious qualities like joy and brotherly love being exhibited (Guder, 2015). This is the catalyst for contagious relationship

building whereby other people want to become a part of the missional church as they desire the deep relationships they observe being formed through natural day-to-day experiences (Bevans & Schroeder, 2011).

In this context, a missional movement liberates society by sharing the gospel and making disciples, using a person-to-person method, much like a virus spreads (Hirsch & Ferguson, 2011). Gospel communities are created wherever this “virus” moves (Cole, 2005). Stetzer and Bird (2010) describe the missional movement as “viral churches” because they spread like a virus and exhibit many symptoms. As a result, church planting occurs in a holistic and incarnational way, whereby growth occurs by multiplication rather than addition because the new disciples become intricately involved in perpetuating the movement (Cole, 2008, 2009). The new churches thrive and begin to grow more churches rapidly as exponential growth begins to take place (Wilson, 2014). This chain reaction is difficult to stop because missional communities are resilient against external pressures and culture and they are not reliant upon an institution church or a building, which consume a lot of resources (Stetzer & Bird, 2010).

The Seventh-day Adventist Movement

The Seventh-day Adventist Church began as a missional community movement modeled after the first century church (Bruinsma, 2009). At that time, small groups were at the heart of the church and within this structure they came together to study the Scripture’s message of the second coming of Christ. In so doing, they accepted the great commission, made disciples, and proclaimed the gospel and the three angels’ messages of Revelation chapter fourteen. They were true disciples because they were proclaiming and living the three angels’ messages as observed by their faithfulness to Jesus and His example of ministry, and

their keeping of all ten of the Commandments of God (Burrill, 1998). Because of their belief Jesus would return soon and the gospel needed to be preached to the whole world for that to happen, the Adventist church worked intently to help fulfill this goal, which resulted in churches growing all over North America (Burrill, 1998). The growth was largely due to the an emphasis on church planting and establishing congregations more in line with the early church's missional model (White, 1902).

The church's emphasis on small groups was influenced by its many converts from Methodism (Bruinsma, 2009). The Methodist Church at that time espoused small group Bible studies held during the week in their homes in an effort to not only nourish the church, but to also share their lives and beliefs with everyone around them. They had no intention of limiting their sacred time to a one day a week worship service and Bible study conducted in private (Cole, 2005). They desired to see their neighborhoods transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ and were compelled to engage them as often as possible during the week. Thus, the early Adventist church was influenced to also be community-based with laypeople leading the congregation and conducting small groups, which produced a healthy church that was not reliant on a local pastor (Burrill, 1998).

The missional movement of the church was also fostered by an intentional establishment of the clergy after the first century church model. Thus, clergy in the early Adventist church were at first called apostles and evangelists and their primary role was to raise up new churches and train its new members to carry on the work of the local church (Bruinsma, 2009). They were not settled over the local church, and after its members were fully trained, the clergy moved on to establish new churches elsewhere. The local church was led by elders, pastors, and deacons who were laypersons in charge of member care and local

evangelism (Timm, 2013). This trend continued until the early twentieth century. With this structure, the church was thriving and new disciples were committed to being missionaries.

The training and discipleship process of the early Adventist church emphasized every member was to be a missionary and it was clearly understood that the congregation should not rely on clergy to do mission work in their community nor should the church focus primarily on member care (White, 1891, March 20). Additionally, from its beginning, the educational system established by the Seventh-day Adventist church provided missionary training for every student. It was expected that children and youth should also find and fulfill their role in missionary work (White, 1892).

Burrill (1998) documents clearly that the Adventist church in North America gradually moved away from the missional model of the early church starting in the 1920s when it began paying clergy to settle and pastor one or more churches. Although a few larger congregations had settled pastors prior to the 1920s, their role was still primarily training and evangelistic and lay involvement remained strong. The difference in the 1920s was clergy, acting as the pastor, took on more member care and less church planting, while the laity grew pastor dependent and became less involved in mission and ministry. During this period of transition some church leaders anticipated settling pastors in one location would impact detrimentally the church's missionary efforts; therefore, they encouraged the church to keep its first century church model. Their efforts did not help turn the tide and by the 1950s the settled pastor model was firmly established throughout North America and congregations were overly pastor dependent.

The detrimental effects of the church moving away from the missional community model are evident in the church growth statistics during the periods before, during, and after

the change to the settled pastor model. Because the church began as a church planting movement, data related to its effectiveness as such is a very relevant place to examine. The data indicates that before the 1920s it only took 10 pastors to raise one church. By the 1930s it took close to 30, and by the 1990s over 120 pastors were needed to raise one church. This correlates with the change to a settled pastor model during the same period, indicating doing so created a system of pastor dependency and low lay involvement in church planting. The conclusion is that the Adventist church in North America, which at first was a missionary movement of the laity, is now less mission driven and more focused on local member care. It too has succumbed to the influence of medieval church model and it will continue to struggle at making disciples unless it again adopts a missional church model.

Summary and Conclusion

This literature review presents an overview of the evolution of the church from its beginnings in the first century as a missional movement that was growing true disciples, to its current status as a church that is consumeristic, pastor dependent, declining, and in urgent need of change. For example, the church was more closely following the biblical model early in the first century when believers were missional and not dependent on clergy to share the gospel or care for existing members. As a missional movement, the church shared life together with the community so it could minister and serve like Jesus and make disciples. However, by the second century the church transitioned to a professional clergy driven model which fostered pastor dependency and reduced involvement of the laity. Then in the fourth century, Constantine gave credence to the model by adding a layer of church administration, mixing the powers of church and state, and building ornate houses of worship in which the clergy could serve the members. This resulted in creating consumeristic members who

believed the church was a building to go to once a week to consume the services provided by the clergy. The church members were by then not making it a priority to go out to make disciples in the community or to live missionally because they expected the clergy and missionary organizations to do this work. This pastor dependent consumeristic model became the norm and is still a predominate model today. As a result of this model continuing for so long, the church has become irrelevant for many in the community and its loss of effectiveness has caused its decline. Furthermore, the literature notes even though the Seventh-day Adventist church started as a missional movement, it also succumbed to the influence of the pastor dependent model and is struggling with increasing lay involvement in mission and becoming relevant for the community.

This literature review concludes churches need to again become a movement that seeks to build missional communities, because doing so fosters healthy growth whereby laypeople are vigorously involved in ministry and less reliant on professional clergy. Furthermore, missional community driven churches make disciples who go out to be like Christ and serve and minister to the people they live among which fosters the transformation of the community by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Introduction

As the literature review indicates, churches need to be movements that grow missional communities, not only to reverse declining growth, but to also be faithful to the great commission. While the New Testament church is the best example of missional, not all churches are using it as a guide. The Hacienda Heights Church was no exception; as a church in decline with no missional communities, it needed to change before it declined to death. For the church to become a grower of missional communities, a carefully planned intervention needed to be implemented.

This chapter outlines the intervention conducted on the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church. It begins with the presentation of the church's profile and context. It follows with the development and description of each of these necessary modules of the intervention: personal transformation, creating a sense of urgency, developing a guiding coalition, fostering passionate and authentic spirituality, mentoring disciples of Jesus, and developing missional communities (Breen, 2010; Kidder, 2011; Kotter, 2012; Lencioni, 2012). It concludes with a summary of the chapter.

Profile of the Ministry Context

The Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist church is a congregation that started out with missional intentions. It was organized as an outreach project in 1955 with 44 members of the Baldwin Park Seventh-day Adventist church. Not until it obtained its current property in 1963 was it able to begin its efforts to make inroads with the community through Pathfinders, vacation Bible school, evangelistic seminars, and providing aid for the poor of the community.

Over the course of its lifetime, the church at-large has faithfully followed the direction of leadership in its attempts to fulfill the great commission through ministry and mission methods it believed were necessary to foster growth. These were in the realm of inreach ministries and worship services with efforts to engage in outreach through door-to-door solicitations for Bible studies, healthy cooking classes, health screening clinics, and blood drives. Additionally, within the decade prior to the start of this project, the congregation funded two evangelistic series conducted by Amazing Facts. It was also funding a part-time Bible worker for about two years, just before the start of this project. Furthermore, several church members were giving Bible studies to students enrolled in the Discover Bible School operating from the church. However, it was notable there were no missional communities or small groups affiliated with the congregation at the time of this project's implementation.

The involvement of members of the congregation in general ministry was strong at the time the project started. Even though one third of the 300 members were missing or attending other churches, about 150 members were regular attenders and participated with various ministries. Furthermore, there was an average of 125 in attendance at the Sabbath

morning worship services. There were 63 church officers involved in official capacity, which is about 50% of the active attenders and 20% of the book membership. In other words, a critical mass of active members was available to participate in this project to become a grower of missional communities.

Much of the following data on internal and community statistics and trends used for this profile is drawn from a 2008 survey conducted by Monte Sahlin of the Center for Creative Ministry (Sahlin, 2009). This report surveyed the local congregation and gleaned information from separate studies, including the U.S. Census Bureau and Percept Group, Incorporated.

The worship service and other inreach ministries were functioning adequately according to the members' response to the spiritual life satisfaction questions in the survey. Over 86% of the congregation found the worship service to be satisfying their spiritual needs.

One item of special interest was the church was not significantly outgoing when talking with coworkers or neighbors about topics such as personal or family needs or spirituality. The study noted the congregation would benefit greatly from discipleship training to help them be more outgoing in sharing their faith.

The members' observations of the most effective methods to bring in new members was significant and an important thing to consider because the intervention was going to rely heavily on small group and friendship evangelism methods. About 40% believed public evangelism was the most effective method while about 25% of other US Adventists saw public evangelism as effective. Another difference between the local church and other Adventists was observed in the view of friendship evangelism. Only about 32% of the Hacienda Heights membership believed friendship evangelism was effective while just over

50% of other US Adventists saw friendship evangelism as effective. Another significant difference between the groups was 35% of other US Adventists saw effective methods in other areas not commonly practiced and only about 2% of the Hacienda Heights members saw light in those other areas. This was factored into the development of the intervention in anticipation that some would reject new ideas at various degrees of anxiety which could result in resistance to change.

The ethnic mix of this church was similar to the community, which helps create a church environment familiar to most anyone from the neighborhood that might choose to visit the church on campus (DeYmaz, 2007, p. 4). Thirty-seven percent were Hispanic, 27% were Asian, 20% were white, 7% were black, and 7% were from other ethnicities.

A major demographic concern was the church, when compared to the community, did not have a similar age group by generation. Twenty-seven percent were born before boomers, which is almost three times as high as the community, which had only 10% in this generation. Thirty-two percent were baby boomers, which was not too far off from the community, which had about 22%. GenX'ers were underrepresented in the Hacienda Heights Church with only 12%, while the community had 27%. The same was true with the millennial generation where the community had 27% and the church reflected only about 17%. Therefore, the intervention would need to especially focus on these underrepresented segments of the population.

One very helpful quality of the congregation observed in the report is 50% of the households on the books lived in the same city or in an adjacent city near the campus. Furthermore, the most active members and regular attenders made up the majority of this group. This information was considered a benefit for the intervention because it had potential

to foster the church's development of missional communities in a natural geographical context.

The report indicated there are plenty of people in the community on which the church can focus its missional efforts, even though many of them have another religious affiliation. The religious preferences of Hacienda Heights residents according to Percept Group, Incorporated, are 24% Nones, 22% Catholic, 19% Protestant, 23% Evangelical, and 12% from some other group. In general, Hacienda Heights residents are less involved with religion when compared to the rest of the nation. Even so, they have needs that can be met by the church, and addressing them will serve as a catalyst in growing missional communities.

The most notable needs of the community are maintaining personal health and dealing with issues like stress, relationships, education, and occupational aid. Furthermore, those in the Hacienda Heights community interested in church programs want to see a variety such as: family outings, youth activities, Bible study and prayer groups, active retirement programs, family and personal counseling, and marriage enrichment seminars. In general, the community is more interested in personal development and recreation than social services and spiritual development.

The following summary of the report above highlights the areas that needed addressing in the intervention. Firstly, the church required training on how to be effective at outreach and connecting with the younger generations of people. Secondly, the residents of the nearby cities showed more interest in health improvement and social activities than they did to spirituality. The intervention should then facilitate developing missional communities that foster relationships and address their stated needs as the first step in ministering to them.

Development and Description of the Intervention

After the assessment of the church and community, the following components of the intervention strategy were determined: personal transformation, creating a sense of urgency, developing a guiding coalition, fostering passionate and authentic spirituality, mentoring disciples of Jesus, and developing missional communities (Breen, 2010; Kidder, 2011; Kotter, 2012; Lencioni, 2012). Not only are they identified as essential elements of the intervention, they also serve as an excellent system to continually have in place to foster the church's health and longevity. Their development and description will complete this chapter, while chapter 5 follows up with a narrative of the chronological details of the application of the intervention.

Developing Personal Transformation as an Intervention

The transformation of the church began with my transformation. As the leader of the church, I needed to intervene as a catalyst of change (Cauley, 2013). I cannot lead anyone somewhere I am not able or willing to go. For many years, I saw a need to become more missional in my everyday life, but day-to-day responsibilities always seemed to keep me focused on member care, committee meetings, and other tasks.

In order to be transformed by God, my first priority was to deepen my communion time with Him by listening to and following His voice of direction and praying to receive His passion for the lost and suffering (Herrington, Creech, & Taylor, 2003). More margin was needed in my life to accommodate the communion time and the subsequent spiritual and missional leadership development (Swenson, 2004). Then I could better foster the formation

of missional relationships during my day-to-day experiences without the demands of church administration and member care taking time away from mission.

Additionally, attention needed to be given to improving my missional leadership effectiveness as a catalyst for changing the church to become a builder of missional communities. I needed to demonstrate my commitment and support of the church's missional transformation by applying in my life the intervention methods I was encouraging the church to follow (Rendle, 1998).

Description of Personal Transformation as an Intervention

My personal transformation consisted of setting a goal to spend more time in deep communion with God, in pursuing missional relationships, and in missional leadership development. The communion time was enriched through focusing more time in prayer listening to God's voice and meditating on Scripture. First, I gave prayer even more emphasis in my life through journaling and connecting my prayer life more closely with the church's. Journaling guided my missional focus in prayer and provided encouragement by facilitating a record of answered prayers for which I could praise God. Secondly, I connected with the church's prayer life by way of my direct involvement on the prayer team. This afforded me the opportunity to pray for the concerns of the members, which resulted in the development of deeper relationships with the church.

The development of missional relationships was fostered by focusing more of my prayers specifically on my missional efforts. I especially prayed for God to open missional opportunities each day during my normal activities in places like my neighborhood and on the campuses of my children's schools. I was praying for God to guide my efforts to meet people, minister to them, and mentor them. To help with my missional example to the church,

throughout the duration of the project, I shared with my congregation stories of my personal missional efforts. Several of these stories are presented in chapter 5.

Missional leadership development was also fostered by reading and applying as many books as possible on general and missional leadership. One of my favorites was *Missional Communities*, by Reggie McNeal. I found helpful the many examples it gave of missional communities in various contexts. *The Faith of Leap*, by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, stood out because it dared me to step out to the edge of what I am used to in relation to mission.

Missional leadership was further developed through attending conferences and workshops on the topic. In 2012, I attended *The Greenhouse* training workshop presented by Neil Cole; author and church planter. Cole describes “The Greenhouse” as a context in which Christian leaders in a region can get together to share their journey of growing organic churches. Hearing about the experiences of people in my area trying to grow missional communities was inspirational and helped reinforce missional principles.

Next, in August, 2013, I attended the *Catalyst One Day Southern California Leadership Essentials* conference and implemented some of its teachings. Stanley (2013) claims that culture creates behaviors and behavior reinforces culture. I therefore examined the church culture in order to understand and change it so the church’s behavior would in turn change. Additionally, I improved communicating messages of change by following the advice of Groeschel (2013) who states, “just because we said it, doesn’t mean they get it.” So then, as often as practical and at the right time and place, throughout my transformation I communicated to the congregation I was pursuing personal development for the well-being of the congregation and myself. In so stating, the congregation could understand I was committed to practicing what I was preaching.

Furthermore, in October, 2013, I attended the *Exponential West Discipleshift Conference* held at Saddleback Church, in Lake Forest, CA. The conference's emphasis was on discipleship and one of the standout classes I attended was Jim Putman's, author of *Real-life Discipleship*. Putman (2013) defines a disciple as, "a follower of Jesus who is learning to live out the implications of the gospel." That resonated with me at the time because of the experiences I was having with my church as we learned to become missional.

Developing a Sense of Urgency as an Intervention

An important piece of the change process is moving people to the point they are not satisfied with the status quo. If the congregation does not see a need to change, they will generally not change for change sake. Kotter (2012) writes, "Establishing a sense of urgency is crucial to gaining needed cooperation. With complacency high, transformations usually go nowhere because few people are even interested in working on the change problem" (pp. 37-38). Developing the sense of urgency entailed clearly communicating why the Hacienda Heights Church needed to change and how continuing the status quo would result in further decline and death (Collins & Hansen, 2011). To aid in this endeavor, a timeline was established to alert members when changes needed to take effect and the benefits for reaching them.

Description of Creating a Sense of Urgency as an Intervention

The formal and public beginning of the application of the intervention outlined in this project paper started with the creation of a sense of urgency through an eight-week sermon series entitled, "The Forgotten Ways," which was inspired by Hirsch (2006). I also used data from Sahlin (2009) related to the congregation and the three surrounding communities. This

sermon series was a public proclamation that the church was not living up to its full potential and it should not be satisfied with engaging in ministry in the same ways it always had been. Church growth statistics were presented that suggested the church had about another 15 years of life before its demise if it did not change its consumeristic non-missional ways. It further built up the sense of urgency by making an emotional appeal for more laborers to help spread the gospel so Jesus can return soon (Heath & Heath, 2010). Building missional communities was presented as the most effective way to address the concerns by developing more laborers that engage in mission in order to finish the work.

The presentation of the sermon series was just the beginning of communicating the sense of urgency. The message of the need to be more missional became intertwined with the life of the church and not through the sermon series alone. Knowing most people only remember about 5% of a sermon, I repeated the core missional message at appropriate times during committee meetings, board meetings, and impromptu conversations with members. Additionally, the main details of the series were presented in summary at a vision casting and brainstorming dinner about a year after the sermon series was first presented. It was called the MVP dinner, because it was about mission, vision, and prayer. The purpose of the meeting was for the church to pray and have a dialogue about how exactly it could develop missional communities. The space of about a year between the sermon series and the meeting was intended to allow enough time for the missional concepts to be absorbed by a critical mass of the members and especially the leadership. It also was to allow for other needed elements of the intervention to be developed and to foster momentum in the efforts to grow missional communities.

Developing a Guiding Coalition as an Intervention

A guiding coalition was needed to serve as an influential force of change (Kotter, 2012). This group needed to consist of a balanced collection of people who were operating within the fivefold spiritual gifts (Hirsch, 2006). The APEST (Hirsch, 2009) online spiritual gifts assessment was selected as a guide in the development of the coalition around these gifts. Those interested in helping with the missional work would be encouraged to take the assessment and engage in mission using the spiritual gifts identified as their strengths. Anyone observed as having a passion for growing missional communities would be considered to be part of the coalition, and suitable to inspire others to join in the efforts to grow missional communities. There would be no prerequisite to hold elected office in order to take part.

This guiding coalition would also be used to foster the essential environment in which the fivefold gifts could thrive (Cole, 2014). The church functions biblically and efficiently through a gift-based ministry rather than emphasizing ministry and mission as elected offices filled through the orchestration of a select committee (Eph 4; Woodward, 2013). It also develops a culture of inclusivity, which allows Christians of all backgrounds to live out their faith with the body of Christ in a God ordained environment. People thrive in these situations, propelled forward with their passion and God's help, they achieve personal satisfaction while being able to overcome the challenges of mission. This environment also facilitates the growth of the coalition with new people who would not have been part of the effort were it not for the fivefold gift-based environment inspiring them to join in the missional movement (Hirsch, Catchim, & Breen, 2012).

After the guiding coalition is established, it will need to help improve the intervention process by applying organizational development models and guidelines in the following ways (Lencioni, 2012). Leadership shares common values and mission and communicates a clear strategy for achieving its goals. Decisions are made with input from members at-large, because they are the essential instruments of ministry. As such, they need to be connected to committees, the board, and other decision-making bodies. All ministries will be designed and carried out against the backdrop of a clear set of shared values and goals, the form of which follows function. The church's change process and mission endeavor is communicated clearly and as often as possible; while utilizing feedback mechanisms to determine necessary adjustments to the change process.

Description of a Guiding Coalition as an Intervention

The guiding coalition at Hacienda Heights Church was expressed in the members who worked closely with me to transform the church into a grower of missional communities. It started with the presentation of "The Forgotten Ways" sermon series, which kindled conversations among members and me about growing missional communities. The church was invited to get involved in the process and learn more by attending missional training in order to use their spiritual gifts to help. In this way, members could be part of the process regardless of holding office or previous ministry experience. Those who attended encouraged others and set an example for the church at large as they shared their belief in missional communities and their vision of the church as a missional community builder.

In order to provide easy opportunities for everyone to take part, I facilitated missional discussions during meetings of the church board, board of elders, and the personal ministry department. The intent was to understand how each person envisioned the church becoming

missional and impress upon them that they were needed to help with future decisions concerning mission projects, training options, and other details related to the intervention. The goal was also to bridge the departments and people together so they would realize the importance of becoming a grower of missional communities by working together without the boundaries of departments or committee meetings.

The guiding coalition is organic in its growth and function and does not operate like a formal department. Although it contains elders, board members, church officers, and department leaders, the objective of the coalition is not to work autonomously outside of the existing leadership structures or to take them over. Rather, it is to work with me in the endeavor to foster change in the church through each member's realm of influence in the church structures and relationships in which they are associated. As recommended for the health of an organization, the coalition is simple in structure and it does not concern itself with policies, budgets, or the rules generally associated with a committees and boards (Lencioni, 2012). Rather, it focuses on discussing the big picture of the mission and vision of the church and how the team can foster those ideals into the fine details of their existing ministry and mission work using missional appropriate methods.

The following questions from Lencioni (2012) were used as a framework to guide missional conversations in a productive way:

1. Why do we exist?
2. How do we behave?
3. What do we do?
4. How will we succeed?
5. What is most important right now?

6. Who must do what.

Throughout the long period of change the fears and frustrations voiced during missional discussions were addressed by using these guiding questions in order to work out a systematic solution together. This helped counteract the power of the “family system,” which influences churches to alleviate their fear of change by reverting to old evangelism methods that may produce just enough growth to create a false sense of security but do not address the core reasons for the lack of growth (Rendle, 1998).

An environment in which the fivefold gifts thrived was fostered through the following ways. All members of the discipleship training classes were encouraged to take the APEST spiritual gifts inventory. Many of those who took the class were already part of the existing leadership structure and everyone who completed the class became part of the guiding coalition. The results of the assessment showed the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher were represented among those in the coalition.

The needs of this project and the guiding coalition were considered when the church had to fill the part-time youth pastor position left vacant due to the previous pastor accepting a full-time position at another church. I believed it was crucial the next youth pastor should not only be gifted with youth and young adult ministry, but also have the qualities of a missional leader. This person would need to live the missional life and be comfortable helping to grow missional communities while working closely with me and the guiding coalition (Guder & Barrett, 1998, p. 186). These criteria helped us choose the next youth pastor. As expected, he fit in well with everyone and was committed to applying the modules of this project’s intervention into his own life and within his youth and young adult ministry

responsibilities. This addition to the guiding coalition and leadership team helped considerably.

A final note about the guiding coalition is throughout the implementation of the intervention, periodic feedback loops were used with members of the guiding coalition as well as with the board, elders, and personal ministries. During formal committee and departmental meetings, the feedback loops consisted of the discussion of the progress of the missional plans in an effort to determine if adjustments were needed. The last three Lencioni questions above, were used along with a review of the minutes of previous meetings to help focus these feedback discussions. The conclusions of the discussions were then acted upon accordingly.

Similarly, the feedback loop used with members of the guiding coalition occurred during planned and impromptu personal conversations in which I asked for a briefing on the progress of their area of responsibility. Likewise, the conclusions of these discussions were then acted upon accordingly. At the next opportune time, the feedback loop was completed when they personally shared a summary of these briefings with coalition members and members at-large, who were not part of the initial briefing, but were taking part in the intervention. By doing so, the coalition was guiding the church along the path toward missional using feedback loops as a communication tool.

Developing Passionate and Authentic Spirituality as an Intervention

To facilitate the transformation of the church, a strategy needed to be implemented to foster passionate and authentic spirituality among its members because, “When they are spiritually healthy, growing, trained, and equipped, they will do great things for God” (Kidder, 2011, p. 67). Furthermore, Wilson (2014) writes that the spiritual condition of the

church is an essential part of a fruitful missional life. So then, the spiritual development process was planned according to the observation that people's spiritual development can be characterized as a continual cycle of two stages: rapid growth followed by slowed growth that facilitates the ripening and maturation of fruit (Warren, 2013). Furthermore, Scripture compares spiritual development with the growing cycle of plants when it describes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as rain falling during the early and later parts of the growing season (Deut 11:14; Acts 14:17). So then, to correlate with the "early rain" of the first stage of the season, a revival weekend or week of prayer could serve as a way to facilitate the fast spiritual growth. While the "later rain" stage of fruit development could be fostered through the church reading and working through a spiritual formation or discipleship book together and/or a sermon series could be presented on the same content. The goal for both development stages is for the church to come together seasonally to call upon the Lord for spiritual revival, reformation, and development.

Description of Passionate and Authentic Spirituality as an Intervention

The development of passionate and authentic spirituality in the congregation began with me presenting two sermon series relating to spiritual development. The first covered the topic of holiness and its application in the Christian life and the series' intention was to encourage everyone to set themselves aside as holy for God's purposes. The second was a four-part series on reformation and revival presented during the same quarter that the Sabbath school lesson covered the topic. This series appealed to the congregation to pursue revival and reformation through spending time in communion with God by listening for His voice in thoughtful prayer and deep contemplation of Scripture.

The seasons of spiritual revival and reformation were then planned with members of the guiding coalition and personal ministries. I shared my perspective on the need for passionate and authentic spirituality, and the group agreed the congregation needed guidance for their spiritual development and a seasonal time of corporate spiritual renewal was in order. We determined it made sense for the first stage be held annually in the spring and the second stage to be held annually in the fall.

Over the course of the intervention, three spring weekend revivals were conducted using guest preachers who presented rousing and inspirational messages of reformation. The congregation responded to the revivals in multiple ways. Two young people were baptized, and dozens in the congregation from all generations recommitted their lives to Christ. Also observed was increased member involvement and commitment in areas like spiritual development, prayer groups, small groups, and other missional work. Furthermore, there was a noticeable change in the attitude of the church from inward focused to outward and mission focused. In comparison, the years immediately prior to this intervention saw little spiritual renewal and increased difficulty in raising up new volunteers for existing ministries and outreach efforts.

The second stage of the spiritual development was conducted using one seminar and two sermons series presented in the second half of each year. Firstly, a four-part seminar on the proper use of the writings of Ellen White was presented in order to guide the congregation to keep the Bible as a primary source of devotional reading, authority, and spiritual development. Secondly, a sermon series was presented about the remnant and its mission, which was designed to encourage the congregation to use their spiritual gifts for mission. Lastly, a sermon series was presented about the events leading up to the Second

Coming, which was designed to inspire hope and longing for the return of Jesus. The goal for each was to help the congregation mature in their faith by providing the guidance needed to gain more passion and authenticity in their spiritual lives through prayer and deep contemplation of Scripture, which was called for throughout each of the presentations.

The seminar and sermon series produced results that were not as measurable when compared to the first stage spiritual transformation methods. Even so, there were many positive comments from members stating the content of the presentations was enriching and transformative and there was much interest in the accompanying study guides and handouts. Some people stated they were happy some of their longstanding questions about the topics were finally answered. While others were grateful for the reminder and confirmation of the biblical truths in which they cherish. Furthermore, the feedback I received from members of the guiding coalition indicated the presentations were timely and seemed to meet the needs of the congregation.

Developing Mentoring Disciples of Jesus as an Intervention

For the church to effectively grow missional communities, it needs to value disciple making as the most important role of a Christian (Putman, 2010). Formal discipleship training classes needed to be developed as an intervention to facilitate the change to a discipling culture. Understanding that disciple making is the fruit of a true disciple, raises the bar for what it means to be a Christian (Cole, 2010a). Christians should worship God through Sabbath keeping and tithing. However, the great commission should be the highest standard of evaluation (Matt 28:19-20). Breen (2011) writes, “If you know how to disciple people well, you will always get mission” (Chapter 1, Section 2, para. 5). The two need to go hand in hand.

Description of Mentoring Disciples of Jesus as an Intervention

Discipleship training classes were offered to create a discipleship culture where the church sees itself as a “sent people” who makes it a priority to spend time in the community making disciples of Jesus. The classes were first advertised in conjunction with the presentation of the "Forgotten Ways" sermon series. The curriculum used was *The Tangible Kingdom Primer* (Halter & Smay, 2009). The eight-week course was offered twice for the church over the course of the intervention. The class emphasizes the great commission calls all Christians to go and make disciples. It also focuses intently on teaching about missional communities, building relationships, and how to go into the community and make the gospel tangible. The daily workbook exercises lead the participants in journaling and deep contemplation of the pertinent Scriptures. The class is scheduled around a weekly time to debrief and share experiences of following the workbook’s suggested disciple making practices.

A total of 20 members participated in the classes. Upon completion, each participant was encouraged to take the APEST spiritual gifts inventory to guide them in making disciples by using their strongest spiritual gifts (Hirsch, Catchim, & Breen, 2012). Those who chose to do so were inspired to explore disciple making in a fresh light by trying to operate within their strongest spiritual gifts among the fivefold (Tickle, 2008). Six class members completed the APEST assessment, the results of which indicated all of the fivefold gifts were represented in the group, which is considered essential for a missional movement to succeed (Hirsch, Catchim, & Breen, 2012). The training gave them a new found interest in disciple making and missional community building which made them suitable members of the

guiding coalition. Over the course of this project's intervention, everyone from the class helped with further efforts to grow missional communities.

The classes will be offered again as needed with advanced options available for those who are ready. A reassessment of the needs of the church and available curriculum will be taken to determine the best resources to use at that time.

Developing Missional Communities as an Intervention

Building missional communities is necessary for the church's health, vitality, and ability to make disciples (Guder, 2015). Without intervening, the church would have continued the decline to its death (Tickle, 2008). All of the modules of the intervention above are independently enriching for the church's health, and collectively, they facilitated the foundational changes necessary to nourish the intentional efforts to grow missional communities. The missional church is a community that influences and transforms the culture in which it lives using the methods Jesus used while on mission (Halter & Smay, 2010). It will by nature, build communities by serving and witnessing to various neighborhoods and demographics (Hirsch, 2008). Missional communities have the intense desire to touch these people's lives in the same ways Jesus did before His ascension; with the prayer, they will accept the gospel and fall in love with Jesus as a result (Wilson, 2014). The Hacienda Heights Church became a grower of missional communities through the application of the following elements of the intervention. The church was assessed to determine its missional orientation, potential, and training needs. Suitable missional training curriculum was taught to the members (Guder, 2015). Based on the church assessment, segments of the community were chosen as primary people groups on which the church corporately focused its missional efforts in a publicly visible way (Bevans & Schroeder,

2011). Additionally, small groups of members focused their missional efforts on people with which they came in contact in their day-to-day activities (Cole, 2014). The following section describes each of these elements in detail.

Description of Missional Communities as an Intervention

The church's missional orientation, potential, and training needs were assessed at three stages during the project. The first and second assessments will be addressed in this section, while the third will be presented in chapter 6 as part of the evaluation and learnings. The first assessment occurred at the beginning of the project in 2012, before any missional concepts were shared with the congregation. Discussions with church leaders indicated they believed the most urgent needs of the church were in member care and worship service improvement. Moreover, I observed there were no small groups being used for outreach, nor were there any mission projects established with which the laity could participate, and the ministries that could have been oriented toward mission, were focused inward. These observations were compared with the assessment conducted by Monte Sahlin in 2008, and found to be very similar. The conclusion of both was the church was oriented inward, the laity had little interest in mission, and training was needed for it to become a missional church.

The second assessment was made at the end of the second year of this project using the results of the MVP (mission, vision, and prayer) planning session. More about these results and the findings of the assessment are in the next section. However, it should be noted that by the time of the MVP session other modules of the intervention were in motion, discipleship classes had been taught, two missional sermon series were presented, and the missional conversation was well underway among members of my guiding coalition. In

attendance at the MVP session were over forty people, which included most of the officers and other heavily active members. One essential purpose of the MVP planning session was to assess how far the church had progressed in its missional understanding and interest. During the first part of the session I presented a summary of all of the missional concepts that had been taught so far. The conclusion of the presentation was a call for the church to take the essential next steps to grow missional communities. The first suggested step was to confirm and live by a new mission and vision of the church. The second was to identify how it would go about fulfilling the mission and vision by growing missional communities.

The vision statement presented to the Church for consideration was: The Hacienda Heights community transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The mission statement presented to the Church for consideration was: to develop missional communities in Christ through investment of time, people, and resources to transform the greater Hacienda Heights community. These statements, were well received and understood by the members and were published with the report from the meeting. They were officially adopted during a follow-up meeting several weeks after the MVP planning session.

The second step of determining how to proceed with growing missional communities was started during the planning session in response to the questions I asked during the presentation. The group brainstormed together to make a list of ways it believed the church could foster deep and meaningful relationships with the community by way of (a) small groups and (b) corporately serving the community through publically visible projects.

Small group ideas included: anonymous support groups, special interest clubs, establishing an everyday presence in a locally adopted park, hosting parties in the home for neighbors and colleagues, and developing home churches. Some of the ideas for publically

visible projects were: expanding and improving the Veggie Meals on Wheels ministry that serves the elderly, disabled, and homeless; building a teen center, offering financial security seminars, organizing sports leagues, and making the campus a center of health information. Ideas for the center of health included, developing the vacant land on campus into an organic farm to be able to offer healthy food to the community free of charge. Parcels of the land could be cultivated as community gardens, and healthy lifestyle and disease reversal seminars could be offered to the community. While free medical clinics could be conducted for the community periodically.

The second stage missional assessment occurred shortly after the MVP planning session as I debriefed with the guiding coalition and the personal ministries department using the results of the brainstorming session. It was my observation that the church advanced considerably in its mission mindedness up to this point. This was based on noting the types of ideas that came from the brainstorming session. They seemed to be viable for our church to develop and many were similar to ones being used by missional churches documented in current missional literature (McNeal, 2011a). Furthermore, the church now had an enthusiasm for mission considering the attenders of the planning session voiced their desire to help with the missional work and in the fact members kept sharing ideas with me for weeks after the MVP planning session had adjourned. The assessment concluded the church was ready to become a grower of missional communities and training was needed to equip the church to develop some of the ideas from the planning session.

It was unreasonable to attempt to carry out all of the larger publically visible missional ideas because the list was too large and diverse to handle with a church of this size. With the help of the guiding coalition and the personal ministry department, the list was

prioritized and organized based on the urgent needs of the community, logistics, feasibility, spiritual gifts of the members, and the number of members interested and available to help. The decision was to first address the health-related ideas because they were identified as the community's highest interest and the church was already moving in that direction. New projects not directly connected to health improvement were tabled indefinitely. The plan was to make the campus a place of healing; physically, mentally, and spiritually. Health services were chosen as the way to meet people's health improvement needs; while small group development was chosen to help foster new friendships, make new disciples, and grow the community from among those connected to health services.

The following health services were planned and offered for the community: healthy cooking classes, a CREATION Health seminar, and the CHIP complete health improvement program. The cooking classes had the most in attendance, who were not already connected to the church as members or family of members. However, these classes were presented before suitable small groups were operational, which may have contributed to the fact that deeper relationships were not made with the visitors of these classes. More observations about this are found in chapter 6. The CREATION Health seminar had five in attendance who were first connected to the church through the healthy cooking classes. Additionally, there was one neighbor of a church member who was a first-time attender. Although there were small groups functioning, more time is needed to serve these people in order to foster these relationships to the point they will be open to attending a small group or engage with members outside the safety of a seminar. It should be noted the CHIP program was offered, but no one enrolled due to the high registration fee. More about this will be addressed in chapter 6 as well.

The reasons are twofold for the interest in developing the vacant land on the campus as a farm and community garden in conjunction with health ministries. First, the church would be able to provide a complete health package to the community as part of the healthy cooking and lifestyle classes by offering campus grown fruits and vegetables to the class members and the community free of charge. Furthermore, accommodating the cultivation of community garden space not only contributes to the health package, but also has the potential to develop friendships as people come together on campus to participate as a community in working the land to make undeveloped space beneficial for the neighborhood.

Both ideas were explored to determine the feasibility and the requirements of establishment. Community gardens proved to be the simplest to start. Within the first month of exploration, contact was made with Los Angeles County's extension office. That department donated materials and labor to build three raised garden beds on our campus for the benefit of the community and to educate the children of the Japanese language preschool operating on campus. The school adopted the plots and the cultivation of the garden beds brought a few parents of the students together to garden from time to time. This demonstrated the community garden concept will put people together on campus; however, the cultural and language barrier kept the church members from building friendships. Additional garden plots will draw more people together. Even so, an intentional effort by the church to develop friendships is needed for this community service method to be a fruitful tool for building missional communities. Unfortunately, before we could explore the farm further and expand the community gardens, the water shortage crisis hit California and we had to put both on hold indefinitely.

At two stages during this project small groups were being developed as a way to grow missional communities. The first was in the beginning during the presentation of the series “The Forgotten Ways.” Life Transformation Groups were presented as a way to grow community in small groups. The LTG model emphasizes reading large portions of Scripture and getting together as a small group to pray for the people each member is trying to lead to Christ. During the group meetings members discuss the Scripture read previously and they pray it effects a change in each group member. Three female members started a LTG together and found it helpful for their spiritual growth and for forming a deeper relationship with each other. One of the elders considered starting a LTG, but opted to use a Bible study small group model instead, and started a group that met weekly at his place of business.

The second stage small group development came after the MVP session as the missional ideas were assessed. With input from the guiding coalition and personal ministries, I confirmed the church needed more guidance and encouragement in the development of small groups as a viable part of growing missional communities. I chose the curriculum, *Growth Groups Training*, because it is simple, has a video presentation as part of the resources, and it is endorsed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Adams, n.d.). Twelve members participated. As a result of the class, the essential need for small groups was reinforced in their minds and they were inspired to get involved. However, for 11 of them, inspiration was not enough to overcome their personal household living arrangements, which were prohibitive to hosting a group in their home. Even so, they indicated they were willing to help with a group in someone else’s home or an alternate location.

Fortunately, our youth pastor, Kevin Solomon, attended the training and had a suitable living arrangement. The Growth Groups training empowered him and his wife to

develop a small group which they hosted in their home. Their group consisted of people they met during their day-to-day experiences and while walking around their neighborhood. They incorporated elements from several small group models to create what was needed for the people to which they were ministering. At the time of this writing, the major results of their group were: two baptisms, two recommitted lives to Christ, and the creation of a missional community that nurtured group members through addiction recovery and transition from incarceration. This small group became a missional community that is part of the church at-large which resulted in the Hacienda Heights Church seeing a 100% increase in attendance and involvement of youth and young adults with mission work, ministries, and church services. Many from this group have been assimilated into the church community and are now active in outreach ministries like literature evangelism and they also have roles in the worship service and in music ministry. Also, because they grew to value their time spent together in community they added additional time during the week to get together in a café setting. When logistics and schedules impeded them from getting together in person, Skype meetings served as a substitute. The community atmosphere of their group setting spilled over into the Friday night vespers and Sabbath school ministries on campus. This helped strengthen the relationships between other youth and young adults to the point they became accountable to each other and disciplined on another; resulting in the baptisms of two youth.

The small group model taught in the *Growth Groups* manual was only the beginning of training for the church. The personal ministry team examined the needs of the church and community and determined recovery groups were needed and a suitable curriculum was *Journey to Wholeness*, published by Adventist Recovery Ministries. The personal ministries leader, her husband, and I, became certified facilitators of *Journey to Wholeness*. At the time

of this writing, recovery groups were not yet started because we were not available to facilitate a meeting as consistently as required. Recovery groups will start as soon as schedules open up enough or an alternate member is trained to be a facilitator.

Another example of growing missional community is the modifications the parenting support group made to become missional. The support group was originally created to nurture parents of the Adventurer Club children during Adventurer club meetings. By thinking missionally, they selected curriculum that had a balance of science and Scripture and decided to advertise group meetings publicly in a local mailer. The group also created a relational atmosphere in which visitors would feel safe. These adjustments resulted in two new families from the community joining the support group while their children joined Adventurers. This influenced these children to join the children's choir and to frequently attend worship services and Sabbath school along with their parents. The support group fulfilled its purpose as it helped one another through very difficult life moments. The parenting group functioned for over about three years, meeting once or twice a month, before it disbanded after the leaders moved out of the area. It seems the new families were not involved with the support group long enough to become assimilated into church life. Their closest relationships were with the group leaders, and after they moved, the families' involvement eventually ceased, even though we did our best to foster relationships. None the less, through the ministry of the parenting support group the church saw more evidence of the power of the missional church and how the support group serves as a model for those who choose to develop similar groups.

Still another example of modifying existing ministries to become more missional is the Veggie Meals on Wheels community service ministry. For years prior to the start of this

project it focused on providing healthy meals for the elderly, disabled, and house bound in the church community. Mostly they were connected to the church either as members or family of members. After the modules of this project's intervention began to move, the Meals on Wheels team felt called to become more missional and therefore they expanded the ministry to include the homeless population near the church campus. They identified them as a group to serve with the methods of Jesus in preparation for leading them to the cross once their hearts were fertile. With the help of a team member who was homeless for many years, they set out to find homeless people to minister to weekly by engaging in conversation, offering them lunch, prayer, spiritual reading material, and an invitation to come to the campus to take a shower and rest for a little while. All of the homeless to which the team has ministered have rehabilitation needs the church is not yet equipped to help. Even so, they continue to search them out in an effort to love them as would Jesus.

It was while ministering to the homeless that the team met a man, who lived in the community and was also ministering to the homeless. He was a new believer and just beginning his walk as a disciple. He felt called by God in a dream to minister to the homeless in his neighborhood everyday by feeding them and spending time with them in conversation, sharing his gift as a singer songwriter of Christian music, and praying with them. He was even trying to help as many as he could get clean and sober. The team invited him to get involved in our church ministries and attend worship services. He accepted the offer, attended, built relationships with church members, studied the bible with us, engaged in outreach, and was eventually baptized. He has become a great example for the church of living the missional life.

The addition of a women's small group was another missional improvement of the church. It met each week on campus and from time to time in the park. Its purpose, besides studying the Bible together, was to create a small group community that could help one another through daily struggles, grow closer to each other, and especially develop strength and courage to reach out and help other women in need of care, regardless of whether or not they are believers. The anticipation and preparation of the group to minister to those not yet in the group was another sign of church becoming a missional community.

Still more is how divine intervention inspired a family from the church to open up their home on Friday evenings to share the Sabbath with their neighbors and friends. They did not attend the small group training; rather, their efforts were in response to the Holy Spirit and the new missional emphasis of the church. They designed the evening to be informal and comfortable for anyone regardless of their professed faith. Their goal was to build new relationships and then minister accordingly.

Another example is how a new church leader for the first time decided to step out of his comfort zone and invite people he and his wife knew to a mid-day Bible study during the week at his business. He determined the space was more conducive to Bible study and relationship building than his home at the time. Furthermore, he chose not to host the study on the church campus because through the training, he was now thinking missionally and considered his guests would appreciate neutral ground.

As the church matured into a missional community set on making disciples, other individuals began to reorient their ministry priorities towards mission. For example, one of the elders for several weeks, missed Sabbath morning worship service, in order to develop a better relationship with an interest who desperately needed a friend to talk with about spousal

and family difficulties. During their time together they also studied the Bible's guidance on the matter. The reason the elder chose to miss worship was because our worship service was at the same time the interest's spouse was away; making it the best time to get together to talk, study, and pray over the matter. Prior to the church becoming missional, church leaders would never have interrupted their traditional worship service attendance so often with this type of missional opportunity.

Another example of individuals prioritizing their lives toward mission is seen in a couple who felt called to develop relationships with the community through medical evangelism. Their interest first grew by helping with the healthy cooking classes and then still further by becoming certified CHIP facilitators. They grew so much they were willing to move out of their comfort zone across the country to receive intense training in medical evangelism. They became so dedicated to their new missional calling, that after their training was completed they relocated permanently to another state to partner with an organization's medical missionary work. Furthermore, serving as an example to their peers, they mentored another church member during their journey. That person believed God was also calling her to the medical evangelism work, and thus she also relocated out of state to receive in-depth training to fill a position with another organization developing a missional community specializing in health evangelism. For her, this move was the biggest leap of faith of her life. She had always lived within a few minutes of family, yet she received courage to accept God's call and move hundreds of miles away to build missional communities through medical evangelism.

Summary and Conclusion

By closely following the six modules of the intervention, the church became a missional community that also grows a network of missional communities. The transformation started as the church and I became spiritually renewed, after which time we gained more passion to develop relationships with the community and lead them to Christ. The sense of urgency created at that time provided the needed motivation to make the sacrifice to live missionally and lean on Christ for strength. Furthermore, the building of a guiding coalition aided spiritual gifts based ministry as each coalition member's example and testimony encouraged others to come along on the road to missional. Finally, members were drawn to creative ways to build relationships and community by prayerfully loving as Jesus loved, and serving as Jesus served. Disciple making then became the benchmark of being a disciple rather than worship service attendance and Sabbath keeping alone.

This chapter outlined categorically the development and description of the modules of the intervention. The following chapter narrates chronologically the development and implementation of the intervention so the reader can better understand how each piece fits into place. The final chapter explains the conclusions, evaluations, and learnings of this project.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE OF INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

When I first contemplated Luke's description of the early church being united and sharing everything in order to help those in need, I wondered how my church could transform its community in a similar way (Acts 2:44-45).

Furthermore, I read:

Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved. (Acts 2:46-47)

I wondered if the secret to transforming the community was as simple as operating as a house church. This statement from White (1905) to me suggested an answer:

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me." (p. 143)

It was a timely discovery when I first learned about the Missional Church cohort and its description. I felt confident the class would provide the academic structure I needed to find more guidance on the matter. Upon reading the missional church books required for the first class, my suspicions were confirmed.

Hirsch (2006) writes:

We need to move from evangelistic-attractional to missional-incarnational. This transition can best be recovered by seeing mission as an activity of God and not primarily an activity of the church. We participate in God's mission and not the other way around. If this is conceded, then it follows that we must engage in ways that mirror God's engagement with the world ... and that takes us directly to the missional-incarnational impulse that clearly marks the phenomenal Jesus movements in history. (p. 148)

Numerous statements like this convinced me that my church needed to become a missional church that grows missional communities; and in so doing, it would begin to look more like the early church than the consumeristic pastor dependent church it had become. The following narrative documents chronologically the steps my church and I took on the journey to becoming a grower of missional communities by applying the project intervention.

Personal Transformation

The required reading for this cohort started the transformation in my life that continues to this day. Hirsch (2006) writes that the pastor needs to be transformed into a missional leader in order for the church to become a missional church. That was a motivator for me as I wondered if I was transformed enough into a missional leader. Swenson (2004) writes that people need margin in their lives in order to maintain balance in relation to not overworking and neglecting their overall health. He influenced my self-examination in determination of my level of margin. Then there is Cole (2010a) who writes that the missional life Jesus lived consumed His time. I began to wonder how consumed I was in living a missional life. Furthermore, Halter and Smay (2008) write that a missional life can be lived in the realm of the normal life rhythms and daily activities each of us experience. It was encouraging to know I did not need to move overseas to be more missional. A missional leader will be engaged in mission all throughout the day, by fostering deep and meaningful relationships with the people who are within reach. The missional leader will instruct and

lead the church on how to purposefully connect with people to get to know them, meet their needs, and bid them to follow Jesus once they are ready. I wanted to be this kind of leader.

I then set out to make the necessary changes in my life to become a missional leader by setting a goal to spend more time in deep communion with God, in pursuing missional relationships, and in missional leadership development. In chapter 4, I explained the development of my spiritual life and missional leadership. In the following section I will highlight how creating margin aided in my overall development and then I will share several examples of the development of personal missional relationships and how they aided in strengthening my missional leadership.

To aid in providing adequate time for communion with God and developing missional relationships, I had to regain margin and set proper boundaries so my overall emotional, spiritual, and physical health would be allowed to have adequate room to grow. With these foundations in place, I could maintain focus on living missionally while training the church to live the same. Jesus modeled a life with perfect margin where He maintained balance among living a busy mission life, time alone spent in communion with His Father, and moments throughout the day to connect with those closest to Him. Furthermore, Swenson (2004) writes having enough margin in life is key to good health and happiness. As a result of these influences I began creating margin in my life in the spring of 2012.

My family, relationship with God, and my health are the most important areas in my life to protect with margin. If other responsibilities in life encroach on them, personal stability will erode and result in a diminished capacity to maintain effectiveness in all other areas of ministry. I thoughtfully blocked out time on my schedule to accommodate each of these important areas and only emergencies were allowed to get in their way. This increased

margin and resulted in a satisfying amount of engagement in my top priorities. My family began complaining less I was spending more time with church people than I was with them. Interestingly, I was spending appropriate amounts of time engaged in outreach and church administration. However, because I was not missing appointments as much with my family, they were more satisfied with the quality of time I gave them. Furthermore, the increased margin gave me more time for prayer and devotions, which bolstered continued effort to maintain margin in an effort to grow closer to God and my family. From this came a stronger desire to become more missional and lead the church along with me in implementing the project.

The development of missional relationships in my life began with a simple and essential prayer asking God to turn ordinary moments in my family's day into missional moments. I also asked for wisdom to identify and develop them further. As I prayed this each day, I became increasingly aware that our daily surroundings provided many potential opportunities. Then I began to make simple changes in my routine to maximize my time in order to be available to develop missional relationships. Furthermore, I became more purposeful in the missional process by placing its development at a high priority. This meant I had to be willing to sacrifice time I would normally spend in preparing for sermons, administrative duties, and even church services. In other words, I had to make a missional shift in my posture to truly be available to foster missional relationships. The following stories are examples of how I navigated the missional shift in my life and in turn developed as a missional leader by sharing these stories with my congregation during discipleship training, sermons, and conversations related to the project intervention.

The first notable missional opportunity presented itself to my family early in the course of this project. Tragically, the mother of one of my son's good friends died unexpectedly during the night. Upon hearing the news, I remembered she and her son were at my son's birthday party in our home some weeks before. To help with funeral expenses and to offer emotional support, families from the community organized a fundraiser at the park filled with games, food, and fellowship. Naturally, we wanted to attend as a family to offer our support in any way possible. However, the event was scheduled on a Saturday during the time we are normally participating in Sabbath church services. After praying for missional guidance, we decided to put ministering to my son's friend at a higher priority than church services that Sabbath, because of the help it would provide for the family and the relationship opportunities that might arise. Therefore, my wife and children attended the fundraiser at the park, while I attended to my regularly Sabbath duties. My son's friend appreciated the support and my family was grateful to have had the opportunity to help cheer him up. Consequently, my family's absence during church services was most noticeable during the afternoon family ministries time. When asked where they were, I was able to answer by sharing how we chose to live missionally by helping a friend in need.

As I continued to pray for God to guide my missional living and example, I began thinking about further missional opportunities that could arise by way of becoming more involved in the community. Shortly afterwards, my daughter told me about the need for volunteer helpers in her class, and I realized God was giving me a sign. However, next I thought I was too busy to volunteer because of the DMin project I was implementing and the sermon preparation still needed before the end of the week. Then God reminded me that I was praying for missional opportunities. Therefore, I agreed to volunteer, with the hope I

could be helpful to the class while also being available for whatever missional moment God had planned. During my first shift, it did not take long for me to realize why God directed me to help that day. There happened to be another father volunteering in the class at the same time. As we were getting acquainted with each other while we worked, he shared with me that his family was going through a family crisis. I offered to pray for his family and I brought up my prayer team as well. He welcomed the prayers. Later, I followed up with him to check on how the family was doing. That whole experience started our friendship which I shared with my congregation as an example of how God will answer prayers that ask for Him to turn our day-to-day moments into missional opportunities.

Unfortunately, I did not handle every missional opportunity presented to me in an ideal way. Even so, every one of them did provide a teaching moment for the church and me. An example is the time I noticed our new neighbors walking home from the same school my children attended. They were less than a block away from school and about a mile and a half from home. Although, not a huge distance, the 20-minute walk would not be pleasant that day because it was almost 100 degrees. As I was driving by them I told my children I presumed the father and son recently moved back in with the father's parents who live across the street from us. One of my sons remembered seeing the boy on campus for the first time and commented he had recently started attending the school. At first, my missional mind told me to stop and see if they wanted a ride, which I thought could help kindle a relationship. Then my logical mind warned me that developing a relationship with the father might not be a wise idea, judging from the amount of times in previous years the police had to intervene at his home. Those signs suggested to me he had not been associating with safe people in the past. Perhaps he was still involved, I thought. I did not want that type of ministry opportunity

in my life at that time, so I drove past without offering them a ride. Later, I prayed about it and asked for forgiveness for not stopping.

Later that week, I saw them walking home again in the same hot conditions. The same battle in my head ensued, and once again I did not stop. This cycle occurred several more times. Finally, after more prayer I felt empowered and inspired by God enough to commit to asking them for a ride the next time I saw them. I then started watching for them on campus as I picked up my children. After several days of not finding them, I asked my children if they had seen the boy on campus lately. They told me he moved away about a week or two earlier. My heart sank. The opportunity to offer them help was gone for good. I will not know until Christ tells me in heaven how this story would have changed if I had offered them a ride. However, I learned missional transformation at times can be a slow process that presents many challenges, all of which are surmountable through persistent prayer and patiently practicing the methods of Jesus. As a result, I became more understanding with my members, knowing they would face similar challenges which also can be overcome through fostering passionate and authentic spirituality. In fact, as helpful as sharing these stories with my members was for their guidance and establishing my missional example, the most essential part of the intervention was their personal spiritual development.

Fostering Passionate and Authentic Spirituality, Phase I

The strategy of fostering passionate and authentic spirituality in the church was first implemented through addressing the church's prayer life. Just as I needed to be spiritually transformed, so did the congregation. Prayer is the first place to start and I believed simple changes to the congregation's prayer habits would make a profound influence. The goal was to strengthen the church's prayer life to the point it became a seamless part of the fabric of its

existence. In January, 2012, after reassessing the church's corporate prayer life, I determined to promote more heavily the recently added intercessory prayer time, held directly after the worship service, and the email prayer chain, created to help the church stay better connected in prayer. So then, I first promoted prayer by inviting people to come together to pray during the weekly prayer meeting and the new intercessory prayer time after the service.

Announcements were made from the pulpit, in the bulletin, and on the church's website.

Furthermore, during the welcome portion of the worship service, as I shared a few announcements and oriented people to the day's important items, I directed everyone to the pew card and indicated it can be used to not only update the church with changes in their lives, but also to share prayer requests. Then I reminded the congregation that the intercessory prayer team and email prayer chain will pray for them. Additionally, many times in my sermons I encouraged people to add more time spent praying together as a church as a way to foster the personal changes for which the sermon was calling.

Creating a Sense of Urgency

I realized early during the development of my project that my personal transformation and having the church more engaged in prayer was not enough to be a catalyst for the change needing to take place in the congregation. Even so, I was convinced that if the church followed the missional resources I had been reading, it could move in the right direction towards missional. The church needed a good reason to make the effort to change from the status quo.

In January 2012, with my project freshly approved, I began informally talking to board members, department leaders, and other influential members of the church about the missional church concepts; not only because I was excited about the project, but also to plant

seeds and inspire the leaders to begin thinking about the concepts. If someone asked me how I was doing, I would tell them I was excited about the missional church project. I would go on to share that there was so much growth potential for the church if it developed missional communities, did better at making disciples, and received training to be more engaged in outreach. Another example is the occasion when the church leaders with which I was conversing began to inquire how the church could take better care of shut-ins or facilitate members getting to know one another better. I responded by explaining how developing missional communities would also help with member care and improve the overall health and quality of relationships among the members and visitors.

Not long after, I was approached by several parents who wanted to form a parenting support group for the parents of the children who were attending the Adventurers Club. Of course, I thought this was something that would be a great outreach as well. Therefore, I encouraged them to consider thinking about how to reach those in the community who are not Adventist or Christian. I continued to explain that support groups can be a helpful tool for a missional community, and that I believed the church needed to become a grower of missional communities. Even though I had not yet provided the training this intervention would later offer, I knew it was as good a time as any to lead the parents in the missional direction as we developed the support group format. So then, together we set out to design the support group to meet the needs of both the church and the community at-large. We selected a contemporary book on parenting as the required reading for the group and started advertising the group to the church and community. Modifications were made to the group along the way during its three years of existence. It met the needs of the church and

connected with three families in the community. In chapter 6 I will share what we learned from offering this group.

On September 15, 2012, I started the first major emphasis of the project by presenting the eight-part “Forgotten Ways” sermon series during the 11 a.m. Sabbath worship service. The series was named after Hirsch’s (2006) seminal work on the missional church, because I wrote it by following the key points of the book. The concepts were adapted to fit the Adventist context as expressed at the Hacienda Heights church. In an effort to communicate their relevance to our context and to raise the sense of urgency, I also shared church growth statistics that indicated the church was plateaued and heading towards decline and death in 15 years if it did not turn around soon (Sahlin, 2009). Furthermore, the series made it clear the church was not living up to its potential to fulfill the Great Commission.

A call to action was given at the conclusion of each sermon in order to foster a sense of urgency to fulfill the Great Commission by devoting less time focusing on inreach and traditional program driven elements in order to spend more time making the changes necessary to become a missional church. At the conclusion of the series I announced I would soon offer mission training classes. Furthermore, for those interested in discipleship, Bible study, and prayer groups, I encouraged members to try Life Transformation Groups (Cole, 2010b). Each person received a response card to communicate with me their interest. I was pleasantly surprised that about 20 people returned cards. From that batch, three people started a LTG and 12 attended the first round of missional training classes.

The LTG was a women’s group and it functioned for about three months. They appreciated the format and found spiritual enrichment in the Bible reading regiment. Their relationship with each other and with God grew stronger through the time spent in

conversation and prayer. The group eventually disbanded due to transportation and scheduling issues inhibiting them from meeting consistently.

As much as I wanted to immediately offer a missional training class directly after the sermon series, I knew the holidays would inhibit consistent attendance, and the other ministry plans on the schedule were too extensive to allow me adequate time to offer the classes sooner. Furthermore, waiting until January, 2013, to begin the class would allow more time for me to develop a guiding coalition and continue discussing the missional concepts with the members in order to foster more implementation ideas. In the meantime, I did my best to talk about the missional ideas during member visitations. Those conversations suggested to me there was renewed excitement about outreach and at the same time, they were waiting for me to lead the way.

Mentoring Disciples of Jesus, Phase I

In January, 2013, the first missional training classes began on campus and the *Tangible Kingdom Primer* was used as the teaching manual (Halter & Smay, 2009). I selected it because its top qualities are simplicity, it contains ample supporting Scripture, functions as a devotional, it offers practical ideas to help people strengthen their missional muscles, and the eight-week format seemed ideal for our context. Everyone was very excited to continue working through the workbook each week. Some could not help reading ahead in eagerness to learn more about reaching people for Jesus through relationships with no strings attached. The workbook is structured with eight chapters that contain daily reading and devotional assignments which teach and reinforce the missional concepts. The class time is organized around a weekly debriefing meeting meant for everyone to share the experiences of the week.

I was overjoyed and praised the Lord as class members shared how their lives were being transformed. Some were moved to tears as they commented how they finally felt like they had the spiritual gifts to be involved in leading people to Jesus. Another person commented that everyone in the church should take the class. This same person, also a Sabbath school teacher, told us she had begun pitching the class to her Sabbath school students, hoping they would join the class the next time it was offered. It was inspiring to hear she was taking the time to share the missional ideas as she was learning them. I interpreted it as a great sign the class was working and missional momentum was building up. Furthermore, she was struggling with understanding the missional concepts in a tangible way when I was first sharing them in the “Forgotten Ways” series. This class made all the difference for her.

Another person commented tearfully, “Where has this been all my life? I wish we had this taught to us long ago!” She was seeing promise in the concepts helping to make the church more understanding and loving to those who are not yet part of the church. All of us were happy to be exposed to exciting and simple ways to become missional in our everyday rhythms, without having to relocate or lead some new ministry department or start a new program; unless we wanted to do so, of course.

Another class member shared her experience trying the manual’s suggestion to move out of the box and “go” out on faith like Abraham to a “new land.” She tried the idea of just walking across the street to talk to a neighbor she did not really know, even after living in the same home for over twenty years. The moment she set out to do so, she saw her neighbor sitting on the curb. It was something she had never seen her neighbor do before. As she approached her neighbor, she found her crying. It was that moment when they formally met

each other. She sat down with her neighbor, listened, and prayed for her needs; right there on the curb. She described what she did as a huge leap of faith. This was way out of the box as she is normally very shy, polite, and reserved. Yet, she felt bolder and ready for more interactions as a result. For the rest of us, we were inspired by her testimony. Interestingly, she is not a member of our congregation; rather, she happened to choose to visit at the time the “Forgotten Ways” series started, and she decided to continue attending until the series ended. Afterwards, she resumed attending her home church’s worship services. However, she returned to attend the missional training class, which was conducted on Sabbath afternoons.

Besides what the *Tangible Kingdom Primer* taught about the missional life, I knew it was important each person learn more about their spiritual gifts. In so doing, they could focus on missional approaches that draw upon their strengths, rather than only trying something because it worked for someone else. The APEST spiritual gifts inventory seemed like an ideal assessment for our setting (Hirsch, 2009). It is simple, not lengthy, automatically scores the results, and especially it emphasizes the five-fold gifts of Ephesians 4. Before inviting the class to complete the inventory, I first completed it in order to review the assessment and to also learn more about myself. I was convinced it was suitable for the class and therefore added it to the course content and advertised it during the introductory class session.

During class time of week five I emphasized spiritual gifts and invited everyone to take the APEST spiritual gifts assessment. I announced that those who felt comfortable doing so, could share their results with the class so we could learn what gifts were represented among us. Hirsch and Ferguson (2011) make the case that without each of the five-fold represented among members of a movement, missional group, or church, it will never succeed.

Six of the class members completed the assessment and shared their results. It was concluded that all five gifts were represented among the six participants. It was encouraging to know the church was blessed with this group of people who were equipped by the Spirit to pursue the mission of God and grow missional communities. Four of the assessment participants knew of their giftedness from completing a different assessment years earlier, and the APEST results correlated. For one of them, it was the first time to complete any kind of spiritual gifts assessment. That person thought the results made sense and felt encouraged to continue pursuing mission in the same direction.

Another one of the participants was pleasantly surprised to understand why she was so uncomfortable teaching a Bible class each week. She learned her strongest gift was shepherd, while her weakest was teacher. She realized she did not have to feel guilty for somewhat dreading when she had to serve as a teacher. Now she had a clear direction on where else she could serve. She commented that she did not have the same feelings about personal Bible studies. After talking with her about this more, she understood that she enjoyed personal studies because it was being powered by the shepherding gift.

With the first missional class completed I could better assess how to proceed through the next steps of the intervention. Although there was a small number who attended the class, I observed it was 12 out of about 60 officers; which is 20% of the leaders and officers. This indicated a critical mass of members was trained and had the potential to be catalysts of change in leading the church towards growing missional communities. I then followed up with key leaders who were showing interest in the missional movement, to get their input about when to offer another round of training. It seemed offering another session sooner than later was in order. So then, two months later, in June, 2013, the missional training class was

offered again. Eight members joined the class that time around. This class had similar experiences and the training empowered them to become more missional. However, none of them took the APEST assessment. This was due in part to some of them missing the meeting at which I emphasized spiritual gifts. Even so, the class produced another group of members who could better contribute to growing missional communities.

Developing Missional Communities, Phase I

The signs the church was becoming a missional community were first seen in the summer of 2013. Some of those who took the missional training class, as well as other members who were already interested in mission, planned together how to develop mission and outreach on Sabbath afternoons because they felt it was more urgent than being involved in the usual afternoon fellowship, Bible doctrines class, or similar inreach program. They felt called to help the homeless they passed on their way to the campus on Sabbath mornings. Their plan was to prepare plates of food from the Sabbath luncheon and deliver them to the homeless, as well as to pray with them, offer spiritual reading material, and to invite them to campus to take a shower and cool off. Furthermore, those who were also part of the Veggie Meals on Wheels ministry, planned to do the same on Thursdays. They were excited to come to me with their ideas and ask for my input. I told them it was an excellent way to start becoming more missional. I was very excited they got the ball rolling on their own. It seemed the training was influencing them to reach out, and of course the Holy Spirit was guiding them as well.

The summer continued to be a time for the church to plan additional ways to engage the community. After several meetings with the elders, we decided to make in-roads with the community by offering healthy cooking classes. We went this direction after reviewing the

results of the community survey conducted in 2008 which indicated the number one interest of the community was in health improvement. Once again, the team ran with the plan and women's ministry volunteered to take the lead and the elders pledged their support along with some other members who had great interest in making relationships with the community through health evangelism. The team decided to present a series of healthy cooking classes in the winter of 2014, with the kickoff weekend led by a guest chef who is able to present a cooking show styled presentation.

In the meantime, during the summer of 2013, another idea to live out the Gospel in the community was explored by the guiding coalition. It was noted some people in the community wanted to be able to grow healthy food, but did not have the place to do so. The team decided to explore the idea of establishing community gardens on the undeveloped land on campus. We believed it had potential to foster relationships with the community, which over time could become deeper and lead to more ways to serve and love like Jesus. The decision was made to apply to the Los Angeles County extension office for assistance. Our campus was approved to be recipients of an educational grant that provided labor and materials to establish three raised garden beds to augment the educational program of the Japanese language preschool, which the church operates on campus. On November 6, 2013, the county installed the garden beds while demonstrating cultural practices to the preschool students and parents.

We found the gardens facilitated more interaction than we would normally experience otherwise, between some church members and the parents of the students. The families of the students are 95% Buddhist and English is a second language. Any interaction around a

common interest is welcomed because it has the potential to help break down cultural and language barriers.

Because of the arrangement with the county, the gardens are used primarily for the school; which is why the school oversaw the management of the gardens with volunteers from the parents and staff. The church then began observing the upkeep requirements of the gardens as part of a feasibility study concerning establishing more gardens on the campus for public use.

Fostering Passionate and Authentic Spirituality, Phase II

The spiritual health of the congregation is crucial for the successful growth of missional communities. I observed the church was growing closer and opening up more about their spiritual lives in conversations and I attribute that to the increased emphasis on sharing in prayer together. Certainly, the missional training classes that were offered earlier in 2013 were also instrumental in helping foster passionate spirituality in the members who took the classes. However, there is always room for more direction in spiritual development. I decided to address this by presenting a series of sermons from July through September, 2013. The first one covered the Holy Spirit's role in spirituality. The second one covered the topic of holiness and it encouraged the congregation to dedicate itself holy to the Lord. The third covered the steps of spiritual formation.

Developing a Guiding Coalition

Next it was necessary to focus more on building up and utilizing the guiding coalition to help determine the new vision and mission for the church and to unite the church around a common missional purpose. Prayerfully I wrote the first draft of the vision and mission

statements using the Great Commission of Matthew 28 and White (1905, p. 143) as my launch points. After a few weeks contemplating the draft, I called a special elders meeting on October 22, 2013, at which I shared the vision and mission statements and examples of their application. Furthermore, I summarized the essential elements of this project and all I had taught them up to that point.

At the conclusion of the presentation we discussed the main points and they understood and believed them to be a fine way to move forward on mission. Even though the ideas were well received, I announced we should spend time praying about what I shared and working out these details together. Additionally, I noted that this presentation would be shared with the church at-large so it could take part in praying for God to continue directing the development of its vision and mission. I emphasized how including the whole church would acknowledge them as part of the coalition; thus, encouraging their commitment to help the church grow missional communities.

We then planned to share the content of my presentation with the church during a special dinner called the Mission Vision and Prayer (MVP) dinner. In the meantime, I continued to work out the statements and obtained feedback from mentors, colleagues, and church leaders, in preparation for the upcoming MVP dinner.

The dinner meeting was held on November 9, 2013, and was attended by most every leader and active church member. While everyone was eating, I shared a slightly more in-depth and fine-tuned presentation from that which I shared with the elders the previous month. Even so, the information was not completely new to the church, as they had heard pieces of it over the previous months in my sermons and in personal conversations. The vision statement as presented was “the Hacienda Heights community transformed by the

Gospel of Jesus Christ.” The mission statement as presented was “to develop missional communities in Christ through investment of time, people, and resources to transform the greater Hacienda Heights community.”

After concluding the presentation, I asked if there were any questions; however, none were raised. We then transitioned immediately to the brainstorming session. During this time, we spent about 15 minutes in small groups sharing ways the church could minister to the neighborhood with small missional communities and how it could also work together on larger and publicly visible service projects. Time was then given for each group to report. I concluded the meeting by announcing that their ideas would be published along with the vision and mission statements and at a future meeting, we would affirm the statements and announce future missional plans.

My assessment of the church’s move towards missional was that the project intervention was helping it in the right direction because the church seemed to understand the missional concepts. Their ideas were feasible, missional, and some were the same as ones published in prominent missional literature.

In time for the upcoming Sabbath service, the missional ideas were compiled, categorized, and published in the bulletin and included for several weeks thereafter along with the vision and mission statements. In this way, even those who did not attend the dinner were able to pray about the direction the church was headed.

Next, I had conversations with key departments and coalition members in the weeks ahead to get more input and guidance in selecting which of the ideas to start. Once ready, the final plans and vision and mission statements would be presented for adoption at a business meeting.

During this time, the personal ministry department needed a jumpstart so it could serve as an important part of the guiding coalition. It had not been functioning since about 2010, and now that a group of gifted people was recently elected to the department, it was a perfect time for it to convene. I chaired the first few meeting of this new group, in January, 2014, and mentored the department head to assume the chair afterwards. We first used Lencioni's guiding questions to help the team understand the department's purpose. Then we used them to guide the assessment and prioritization of the ideas shared at the MVP dinner. The main consideration was narrowing down the list to a manageable size of ideas that were feasible without spreading people too thin and hindering vital services. It prayerfully determined serving and developing relationships with the community using health evangelism methods was of highest priority. It made this decision based on the results of the 2009 community survey which indicated health improvement was the community's major concern.

Before plans could be developed further, the church needed to come together at a special meeting to affirm the ideas and the vision and mission statements. In consultation with the guiding coalition, we planned for a business meeting party to celebrate the missional direction and vote the vision and mission. The evening entitled, "The Great Commission Celebration," was held on February 15, 2014; three months after the MVP dinner. Just like the MVP dinner, most of the leaders and active members of the church were in attendance. The vision and mission statements were voted and the missional ideas were affirmed. I then announced that the elders, personal ministries, and I would be working diligently to help develop their missional ideas. The group was then reminded that the start of publicly serving

the community through health improvement was scheduled to begin the following weekend with the healthy cooking classes and lectures.

Developing Missional Communities, Phase II

The health evangelism kickoff weekend scheduled to start on February 23, 2014; just a week after the Great Commission Celebration dinner. The weekend marked the church at-large working together as a missional community hoping to begin developing relationships with them as a result of using a large public service to meet the needs of people desiring a healthy lifestyle.

The weekend was led by a professional chef who has an entertaining way of demonstrating healthy cooking while sharing his testimony of how changing his eating habits dramatically improved his health. The Saturday portion of the weekend was geared towards the church members. He preached a sermon during the Sabbath morning worship service in which he shared his conversion testimony. Then in the afternoon he presented another sermon that added more details of his life story. The main event was the cooking class held on Sunday afternoon entitled, "Dinner and a Message." While he demonstrated how to cook several healthy vegetarian recipes, he shared an audience appropriate version of his lifestyle change testimony. Out of about one hundred in attendance for the Sunday afternoon cooking class, about 40 were non-Adventist community residents. Everyone valued the class and many indicated they would attend the classes planned for the next ten Saturday afternoons. These were led by our own members, without the help of an outside professional. With about 40 in attendance at each class, eight to 10 were the non-Adventist community residents who attended the first cooking class.

During the month of February 2014, as health evangelism was ramping up, I began to spread the word through the guiding coalition and personal ministries that it was time to equip the members to be able to build community through small groups. Ideally, the church should have had training provided before the health evangelism weekend started. However, the health plans were already in motion through a natural process and I did not want to hinder the church's desire to reach the community, knowing even if the church was not equipped to foster relationships with those in attendance at the cooking classes, the church was still offering a service to the community with no strings attached.

In March 2014, I met with the personal ministry department again and formally shared the need to emphasize small groups. We then approved the purchase of training materials for leading an anonymous women's support group for the church and community. Also, an elder was sponsored to become a certified bereavement facilitator through the chaplain's department of Adventist Health, in order to offer a bereavement support group for the community.

Lastly, the department was in favor of my desire to teach as soon as possible the *Growth Groups* training curriculum by Adams (n.d.). So then, in April 2014, I facilitated the *Growth Groups* training using the provided video presentations. The class of 12 consisted of active members, a few department leaders, an elder, and the youth pastor. The Growth Group model helps foster relationships through small groups that exist for “those who are not yet in them” by creating a defined time in the home of the group leader to build friendships and follow a suggested Bible study curriculum. The participants understood this small group model as an example of a way small groups can function in the Adventist context and among non-Christians in general. When I assessed the makeup of the class on the first day, I was

unsure how many of them would be able and willing to lead a group in their own home after receiving training. Afterwards, I understood all but one of the participants had living arrangements prohibitive to hosting a growth group in their home. Even so, the training they received was not wasted because they could still serve as members or co-leaders of a group that meets somewhere else. Just as important, they could help promote the value of small groups for fostering deeper relationships with the people the church is serving.

The youth pastor, Kevin Solomon, was the one person in the class who was able to start a small group in his home. Many of the group members were people he and his wife met while walking their dog in the neighborhood and local park; while others were friends of those they met. By first meeting their felt needs, friendships were kindled, which led to the acceptance of the invitation to join the group. They formatted their meeting to better fit the group by adapting ideas from the *Growth Groups* training as well as what they learned from other small group models. Their group started in May of 2014 and in less than a year it was fostering significant changes in the group members. Most importantly, members experienced the Gospel in action and the love with which they were treated by the youth pastor and his wife, led them to Jesus. It became a missional community that not only helped one another, but also reached out and welcomed others in. They supported those struggling with addiction, life trauma, homelessness, and adjusting to life outside of prison. Even more, many of the group members became assimilated into the Hacienda Heights Church. This is remarkable considering the church is one hour away from their residence in Loma Linda, and numerous Adventist churches are much closer.

Other notable results of this small group that became a missional community are: two baptisms, two recommitted lives to Christ, and the involvement of the group with the church

in outreach efforts and in leading corporate worship. Furthermore, it has become a model for the church at-large of how a small group functioning as a missional community can be a powerful instrument in making disciples. As such, the group members became involved with the youth and young adult ministries on campus and began to function as a community that disciples one another. As a result, two youths were baptized from those who were involved with ministries on campus but never attended Kevin's home group meetings.

Fostering Passionate and Authentic Spirituality, Phase III

Next was the third phase of fostering passionate and authentic spirituality; a weekend of prayer and revival conducted on Friday and Saturday, May 30 and 31, 2014. The Friday night session was an intimate gathering in the fellowship hall held during a meal. I led the evening, which consisted of a devotional, Scripture readings, individual and group contemplative Bible study, and prayer.

This weekend was also the beginning of 40 days of prayer for the church. Each participant of the Friday evening session was encouraged to write out a prayer request on the card provided, and then seal it in a self-addressed envelope. I held onto them until the 39th day, at which time I mailed them so they would arrive at each person's home on the 40th day. Everyone who opened the envelope was reminded of that night's experience and the daily spiritual changes that occurred to them during the 40 days of prayer.

The second session of the revival weekend was Sabbath morning during the worship service. A guest preacher shared a message of hope and encouraged everyone to seek a deeper relationship with God so as not to be led astray. After the sermon, a call was given to participate in a special prayer time. A card similar to the one given the night before, was in the bulletin. The congregation was invited to write on it a special prayer request. Those who

wanted to participate could walk up to the front of the sanctuary and place their requests in a clay vessel placed in front of a wooden cross that was on the platform especially for this occasion. Shortly after the worship service the prayer team received the requests and prayed for them over the course of the 40 days of prayer.

Among the requests for healing and renewed spiritual lives was a request from a 14-year-old boy asking for guidance concerning his desire to be baptized. The Lord led Him along as the church prayed for him for 40 days and on the 42nd day, July 12, 2014, he was baptized. To remind people about the power of corporate prayer, during his baptism ceremony I shared the fact he submitted his prayer request on the Sabbath of the prayer revival and the church was praying for him during the 40 days of prayer. It was a blessed outcome considering their faithful prayers, and it bolstered the importance of fostering a strong prayer life among the members of the church.

Shortly after this weekend, I met with the guiding coalition, personal ministries, and the elders to get their input on the revival weekend. They saw the value of having a regular prayer and revival weekend offered for the church every year. I reminded them of the early and latter rain, and suggested the idea that a revival weekend should be held in the Spring of each year and an enrichment seminar or evangelistic series should be offered in the fall. Everyone was in agreement with the idea, so I set out to find another guest speaker for the 2015 revival weekend.

Developing Missional Communities, Phase III

By June, 2014, the guiding coalition, personal ministry department, and elders had a good grasp of what needed to be done to engage the community, minister to their needs, get to know them, and help heal them. Because it was understood that the community is most

interested in having good health, it was agreed that health ministry should continue to be the major emphasis used in developing missional groups to reach the community. So then, at a June, 2014, personal ministry meeting, funds were approved to send Peter and Agustin Eberhardt as representatives of the church to receive facilitator training for the Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP) in July, 2014. The Eberhard's shared CHIP with me beforehand; asking if the program would fit with our missional emphasis. I told them they were thinking in a great direction in relation to the church's mission "to develop missional communities in Christ through investment of time, people, and resources to transform the greater Hacienda Heights community." I agreed with them that CHIP meets a felt need in the community, and offering it brings an opportunity to develop friendships.

The Eberhardts returned from the training eager to share the CHIP program with the community. They immediately set up appointments with personal ministries and me to explain the program in order to determine if it was feasible for the church to produce effectively. The advice given was for them to begin planning the details in preparation for the next officer term which was set to begin in October, 2014. I shared with them that I was confident they would be elected to serve in the health ministry department, which is most suited to carry out their plans.

Mentoring Disciples of Jesus, Phase II

In the meantime, it was important I continue to implement the modules of the intervention. In consultation with the guiding coalition, it was determined the church needed to be mentored on how to understand and interpret the writings of Ellen White. The guidance White's writings provide is most helpful when they are read and applied correctly. It seemed to the elders and me some of the members of the church were relying more heavily on her

than the Bible. In this situation, offering a seminar is more effective and a better use of time when compared to one-on-one training. Therefore, beginning on the last Sabbath afternoon of September, 2014, I started a four-part seminar entitled, “Reading Ellen White: How to Understand and Apply Her Writings.” I used the book with the same title by Knight (1997) as my main resource. The seminar reiterated the Bible is the highest authority and White’s writings are subordinate to the Bible. It also taught rules of interpretation for the effective use of her writings. After the seminar, many commented they were encouraged to read their Bibles more and understood better how to use White’s writings. This suggested to me the seminar was helpful in mentoring disciples of Jesus.

Developing Missional Communities, Phase IV

After this seminar, in November 2014, health ministries had its first meeting in over four years and it included new members, the Eberhardts. The team officially affirmed the CHIP plans at this meeting and began working out the details with the Eberhardts. Afterwards, health ministries reported their plans to personal ministries and then the board. With the major leadership bodies of the church behind CHIP, preparations began in earnest for a January 13, 2015, launch date.

Everything in the leader’s manual was followed, advertisements were sent out, a few attended an informational meeting, but no one enrolled in the program. That was a disappointment, but not a surprise because of the high enrollment fee. Even so, this did not squelch this couple’s passion for health ministry. It actually encouraged them to continue learning more ways to reach people with health improvement. In so doing, they felt called to attend a health evangelism school in Tennessee for several months to receive training. Their

passion continued to grow so much that after graduation, in July, 2015, they accepted a call to serve as health evangelists in Missouri.

This was an outcome that was not expected when the church first set out to become a grower of missional communities. However, what the Eberhardts did was missional. The church mentored them to take part in mission and to follow their heart and spiritual gifts. They both participated in the first missional training class. As they continued to grow and realized their calling to health evangelism, they prayerfully became empowered to accept God's invitation to go out and find people to serve and love with the Gospel. Although, the church would have liked for their path to remain in town, it led them to Missouri. They in turn were mentoring a close friend and church member, and in April, 2016, she also accepted a call to go out to a "new land" and serve in health evangelism. The church misses their presence on campus, and at the same time it thanks the Lord they are being faithful to His call to go out and make disciples.

Let us now go back to January 2015, just after the attempt to offer CHIP to the community. Even though no one attended the program, the leadership was not deterred in serving the community with their health needs. Personal ministries revisited the list from the MVP meeting and decided to next build recovery groups because so many in the community need this type of help. It determined the *Journey to Wholeness* recovery group curriculum, published by Adventist Recovery Ministries, seemed suitable to offer to the community. The church sponsored the personal ministries leader, her husband who serves as an elder, and me to become certified facilitators of *Journey to Wholeness*. Afterwards we reported to personal ministries we were certain *Journey to Wholeness* was perfect for the church and the community. The team then endorsed the curriculum and left it up to the us to determine when

to start the first group meeting. However, we could not offer recovery groups at that time because we were not available to facilitate the meetings as consistently as required. Even so, everything was in place for a future time when schedules would accommodate a consistent group meeting.

Fostering Passionate and Authentic Spirituality, Phase IV

Plans for the Spring 2015, annual prayer and revival weekend began in 2014, when I shared with the guiding coalition that Dr. S. Joseph Kidder was available to come and help foster passionate and authentic spirituality in the congregation through his messages and life stories. He was no stranger to those who were part of the leadership team in 2012, at which time I asked everyone to read his book, *The Big Four Secrets*. So, it was a unanimous decision to invite him to lead us for that weekend.

The revival was held on Friday and Saturday, March 27 and 28, 2015, and the theme for the weekend was “Experiencing God.” Dr. Kidder’s message on Friday night focused on experiencing God’s power. The Saturday portions were about experiencing God’s presence and grace. The Lord blessed Dr. Kidder and the congregation by sending the Holy Spirit to touch lives. Many responded to the altar calls and the church was inspired to live more prayerful and faithful lives in service to God making disciples.

Looking back, I see this weekend and its messages were timely, as we did not know then we would be facing several very difficult obstacles that year. I believe the church was able to make it through in part because we took the time over those last few years to come together to pray and seek spiritual renewal as a family. It drew us closer to God and to one another, and when times became tough and painful, we were compelled to support one

another. During the darkest of times we experienced God's presence, power, and grace, while He carried us through 2015.

Developing Missional Communities, Phase V

After the revival weekend, we again focused mission on trying to build community through serving people's health improvement needs. We already decided several months earlier that soon after the revival weekend I would lead the CREATION Health wellness seminar, produced by the Florida Hospital. The Southern California Conference had recently equipped all of the pastors in my area to become certified leaders of the program; which made it all the more favorable to the leadership team.

We advertised using our standard methods like word of mouth, social media, weekly mailers, and direct mailing to our mailing list. I was not surprised the 35 out of 40 in attendance at the first meeting were members of the Hacienda Heights Church. However, I praised the Lord the five in attendance who were not Adventist, were residents of the community which had attended our cooking classes in 2014. Furthermore, a neighbor of a member became connected with the church for the first time when she started attending the series about halfway through. More interaction with them at future engagements needs to happen in order for friendships to develop. Other ways to get know class members like them would be to teach CREATION Health using the small group format and/or hold the seminar in a public place like a community center or adult education campus. The latter being neutral ground, fosters an environment in which people can let their guard down against proselytizing.

The rest of 2015 was focused on maintaining connections with the guiding coalition and supporting existing mission work, mentoring disciples, providing member care for the

tragedies and life trauma we were going through as a church family, and dealing with challenges to the physical plant.

Fostering Passionate and Authentic Spirituality, Phase V

The Spring 2016 revival was planned with the youth and young adults in mind. The youth pastor, Kevin Solomon, brought up the name of Nico Hill as the revival speaker because, having heard him speak at a revival not too long before, he knew the youth and young adults would be able to connect with Nico's message. Nico is a retired mixed martial arts world champion fighter who also starred in action movies and appeared in television shows. His life was headed out of control due to fame, fortune, and addictions. At the brink of death, he converted to Christ and was baptized, and joined the Adventist church. He now shares his story of finding forgiveness, being freed from addiction, and how living all for Christ rather than serving his own worldly desires has opened doors to ministry he never thought possible. I agreed he would make a good fit as the next revival speaker.

The revival took place on Sabbath, February 27, 2016. Although, not technically Spring yet, it was the only time Nico was available near Spring in 2016. Even so, it was close enough to keep the yearly cycle in place of a Spring revival and an Autumn enrichment or evangelistic series. The youth and young adult department made all the preparations for the weekend; from advertisements and planning to leading all aspects of the worship services. Of course, the members of Kevin's small group were also involved.

In the weeks leading up to the revival, Kevin's group was ministering to one of their own. Having recently found sobriety, Danielle accepted Christ into her life and began sharing the good news of the gospel with people. She was baptized during the Sabbath morning portion of the revival. Her spiritual and personal transformation stand as a testimony to

God's power working through missional communities, which the Hacienda Heights Church was now growing.

Members' Personal Missional Efforts

The missional efforts detailed above are the planned applications of the intervention. The following are members' personal missional efforts which occurred as a result. First, beginning in 2012, the elders began praying earnestly for new people with which to study the Bible. God answered their prayers and sent new people to our campus. With the influence of the missional teachings, they made more of an effort in their study time to develop relationships with their interests, rather than just keeping to the lesson. One of the elders went so far as to start a study group at the office of his business. Another elder sacrificed Sabbath morning worship services for several weeks in order to minister to her Bible study interest at the only time during the week the interest's husband was away. This allowed time to develop a friendship and listen and pray about this Bible study interest's marital trouble.

Also, I started observing them apply patient discipleship techniques. This was especially so in relation to bearing with the difficult personalities or problems with living displayed by those they were discipling. Before the application of the missional intervention, the tendency was to reject people with apparent problems. But by early 2013, the elders and I would prayerfully work together on how to best minister to each person's needs without driving them away or allowing toxic behavior to hurt others.

This helped with the intentional effort to minister to the homeless in mid-2013. With an increased emphasis of reaching out to help with their needs and develop friendships, comes more interaction with people who have problems with living in society. The Meals on Wheels ministry took the lead on reaching out and they were not easily deterred due in part

to keeping their eyes on the church's vision and mission and praying for patience and wisdom to be able to love and serve as Jesus, with no strings attached.

In 2014, the Meals on Wheels team met Eric, who was ministering to the homeless with food, prayer and song. By applying the missional techniques of the intervention, several in the church disciplined him further along on His walk with Christ. An elder studied the Bible with him regularly and meals on wheels invited him to be a part of the team.

My most comprehensive personal example for the congregation of discipleship was discipling Eric. I dedicated time on a weekly basis to develop the friendship, study with him, rehearse worship music together, and to offer guidance and support concerning those to whom he was trying to reach with the Gospel. Through the collective efforts of the church and the Holy Spirit, Eric was baptized in December 2014. After which time he became increasingly more connected to the church and its missional efforts.

It was about September of 2014, when a member excitedly shared he and his wife started opening up their home on Friday evenings to share the Sabbath with friends and neighbors. They considered some may not be Christ followers, so they planned the evenings to be friendly to all. This couple did not attend any of the discipleship or missional classes, but they were part of the guiding coalition and attune to the missional methods. They took it upon themselves to fulfill their own suggestion from the MVP dinner.

Summary and Conclusions

This narrative has detailed the transformation of the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church into a missional community that grows missional communities by applying the modules of the intervention, which are: personal transformation, creating a sense of urgency, developing a guiding coalition, fostering passionate and authentic spirituality,

mentoring disciples of Jesus, and developing missional communities. While aiming for the ideal scenario, they were applied practically, feasibly, variably, and incrementally throughout the duration of this project.

The first step was the genesis of spiritual transformation in the church and me. From there it was a cyclical series of steps consisting of missional education and training from the pulpit, practical learning and discipling through small group interaction and tangible applications, efforts to build friendships and community with neighbors and serve their needs, consistent communication and networking among the guiding coalition, and the gathering of the church to pray and seek spiritual reformation.

Writing this chapter helped me to see not everything played out as I expected. Many times adjustments had to be made along the way to make the transition from the theories on paper to the reality of working with people. It also gave me a new perspective from which to move forward; refining the intervention so it can help the church become a more vibrant and fruitful missional community. Overall, it was a blessed experience and I am committed to continuing the efforts of the project indefinitely.

The next chapter, among other things, summarizes the whole project and examines its outcomes in order to formulate conclusions as to the viability of the methods of the intervention. It also notes changes that are needed and additional study required to further the project along.

CHAPTER 6

EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

This chapter brings this document to a close by evaluating the project through an examination of several aspects of the intervention. It begins with a summary of the project. Next, is the explanation of the evaluation methods, interpreted data, and the stated conclusions. It continues with an examination of the outcomes of the project's intervention. Then there is a review of the conclusions drawn throughout the document and an examination of the overarching conclusions they support. Next, is a list of recommended further action and study. Finally, the chapter is drawn to a close with a description of how I was transformed professionally through the DMin experience.

Project Summary

This study's purpose was to develop an intervention to apply on the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church so it would create missional communities. First, mission and community were examined from the context of the Old and New Testaments, and from the age of the Early Church until the present. Relevant literature related to mission, the missional church, and missional communities was also studied. Then the church was assessed to determine its missional health. Afterwards, the intervention was designed accordingly and applied. Finally, after the intervention was applied, its effectiveness was determined through a reassessment of the church's missional health.

Description of Evaluation Methods and Conclusions

The intervention was evaluated by assessing the church's missional health before and after its application and by quantifying the amount of missional communities created. I

crafted this definition of a missional community, used as the framework for this project and assessment,

A group of three or more Christians united in growing their community by persistently pouring their lives into the people in their proximity who are not yet part of the community, in order to develop friendships and meet their needs through compassionate and humble service, and whenever they are ready, invite them into the community and disciple them in Jesus. (Poynter, 2012)

This can be expressed in a variety of ways. One way is church members forming a growth group dedicated to reaching out to people in their neighborhood. Another is the health ministry team holding health improvement seminars and engaging the attendees in an effort to forge friendships. Each of these cases show the church functioning as a missional community, and each is also an example of a smaller missional community connected to the larger missional community; the church at-large.

For the purpose of this study, missional health correlates to the degree of existence of factors that determine if a church is missional or equipped to become so, and by the amount of change in those factors before and after the application of the intervention. The missional factors were measured in three ways: studying two church assessment surveys conducted on the congregation, through pastoral observations made before and after the implementation of the project, and through a self-assessment completed using pastoral observation. First, is a description of the surveys, the missional factors they measured, the evaluation method used, and the conclusions drawn from the data. Then, is the description, interpretation, and conclusions drawn from the missional factors observed by pastoral observation. Finally, is a description of the self-assessment and the conclusions drawn from the data. At the end of this section of the chapter is the main conclusion from the three assessments as a whole.

Church Assessment Survey

The Center for Creative Ministry was commissioned by the Southern California Conference to administer church assessment surveys on the Hacienda Heights Church in 2008 and 2015 as part of the conference's periodic church assessment process. The data from these surveys is applicable for study as part of the assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention of this project. For both years, the responses were recorded and reported anonymously. The 2008 respondents were members at-large and church leaders. The 2015 survey respondents were church leaders and guiding coalition members. The results of both surveys provide insight into the perception of the congregation in relation to questions pertaining to its missional health.

The 2008 survey data is valid as a reference to compare with the 2015 survey data because as it was administered within a reasonable period prior to the application of the intervention at a stage in the life of the church when it was plateaued and not emphasizing mission. Also, the makeup and demographics of the active church members and leaders did not change significantly between 2008 and when the project started in 2012. The 2015 data is also valid because it was administered after the intervention had been applied long enough to complete multiple cycles of each of its modules. Therefore, because corresponding missional questions exist in each data set, they were compared and the results were used to measure the intervention's effectiveness at changing the perception of the respondents.

A change in the perception of the respondents concerning the missional questions suggests an external influence. By nature, these surveys rely on the subjective perception of the respondents, which were at a professional level of response rate, and therefore a statistically valid representative sample of the congregation. It is therefore accurate to say

what effects the respondents also effects the congregation at-large to a comparable degree. No other intervention was being applied during this project. Therefore, a positive change in the missional factors suggests the intervention was positively effective on the respondents, and the congregation. The reverse is also true.

The following is the pertinent data from the surveys and the interpretation of the data. The respondents were asked to indicate which methods were most effective at bringing in new members. In 2008, only 7% of the respondents saw health outreach as most effective; whereas, in 2015, it was rated as the most effective, with 42% seeing it as such. Considering the intervention was training the congregation to serve the community using methods like health outreach, this is revealing data. Because the comparison indicates a significantly higher percentage of the respondents in 2015 believed health outreach to be the most effective method, it is reasonable to conclude the intervention has a positive effect in improving the missional health of the church. So then, each additional missional factor showing significant positive change correlates to an increased effectiveness of the intervention.

These additional responses to the same question about the most effective outreach method also show the intervention's positive effect on the perception for the members. Personal contact: 9.5% increase from 32.5 to 42%. Community service: 33% increase from 9 to 42%. The 22% decrease from 39 to 17% in public evangelism is also a positive effect of the intervention because this shows the respondents became more aware of the ineffectiveness of public evangelism in its traditional and typical application. Likewise, the 10% decline from 10% to zero in media ministries also shows a positive effect.

However, the perception of small groups is of concern. It declined by 5% from 13 to 7%. Yet, the respondents' overall evaluation of small groups indicated a 13% increase from 51 to 64%, which has an overall rating comparable to most of the other areas. This indicates they perceived small groups as viable even though at the time of the survey, they perceived other methods were working better. However, in actuality, small groups were working better overall according to the church growth data, which is located later in this chapter. Therefore, further training and fostering of small groups is in order to strengthen their perception.

The following question and responses bring insight into the effectiveness of the intervention with spiritual development. The question is, "How much have you grown in your faith in the last year?" The responses with the most change were a 10% reduction in "growing faith through outside sources," and a 12% increase in "growing faith through private activities." Because the intervention was attempting to foster personal spiritual development, this suggests the intervention helped lead people to spend more time in devotions and prayer rather than relying more on a worship service led by the pastor or other leaders.

The following question correlates to the respondents' perception of the church, and as such, it helps bring insight in the intervention's effectiveness at mentoring disciples. How well do these statements describe the church? This church is warm and friendly: 92% with a 5% increase. This church is grace-oriented: 84% with a 17% gain. The increase in both of these indicates the intervention is fostering a discipling environment, which needs to be grace centered and friendly.

Another question related to mentoring disciples is "How often do you have conversations with coworkers about their personal or family needs or spiritual topics?"

Although the “almost daily” responses went down by 9%, the “once a week” responses increased by 22%. Furthermore, the “once in a while” and “never” went down. This suggests the respondents improved in their missional conversations in public, which is crucial for effective discipling.

The effectiveness of the intervention in strengthening the guiding coalition can be assessed by looking at the following questions and responses. “How involved are you at making important decisions?” Seventy-five percent often participate, which is a 50% gain. This indicates the guiding coalition believes they have a voice and are needed in leadership; further suggesting the intervention built up the coalition. Furthermore, the overall evaluation of pastoral leadership was at 83%, which is a 29% gain. Additionally, the overall evolution of the board was at 67%, which is a 16% gain. These suggest further still the intervention helped build up the guiding coalition.

When looking at the respondents’ view of the community, there was another noticeable change in relation to the question, “What are the major needs in the community that should be addressed?” In 2008, most respondents cited there were more internal issues to deal with before addressing the community. In 2015, religious needs, health needs, and other needs were all at 30%, while existing programs were only at 10%. This suggests the intervention helped with community awareness by preparing the church internally to be able to connect with and assess the needs of the community while fostering a desire to help them.

The final area that will be noted related to the church assessment surveys is the response to the question asking if the church has a clear sense of mission. There was a 1% gain in “describes very well,” a 6% drop in “not sure,” and a 5% gain in “describes poorly or not at all.” Even though 58% perceive the church as having a clear sense of mission, which is

on par or higher than other areas, when that figure is compared to the 25% that do not, it shows an area of future focus. This suggests the intervention was not as effective at improving the communication of the mission as it was with improving other modules of the intervention. As Groeschel (2013) says, “just because we said it, doesn’t mean they get it.” More should be done in the future to clarify and teach the mission so it permeates all areas of life of the church.

The following is a summary of the church assessment data. It indicates the intervention was effective, based on the fact that six out of eight missional factors measured in the survey showed significant positive changes, one showed mixed to little change, and one showed a negative change. The six factors with positive changes were: church growth methods, spiritual development, friendly and grace-filled environment, outreach conversations, teambuilding, and community awareness. On the other hand, the small groups category showed mixed results with an increase in the overall rating of small groups, while having a reduced perception of its effectiveness in church growth. Finally, a clear sense of mission showed only a 1% positive change and a negative change of 5%. The conclusion is the intervention is effective at changing the missional outlook of the church; although future iterations of the intervention should improve on ways to increase a clear sense of mission and emphasize small groups.

Pastoral Observation of Missional Factors

The intervention was also evaluated through pastoral observation of missional factors not measured by the assessment surveys. The preeminent missional factor to measure quantitatively in relation to this project is the church’s creation of missional communities. However, the presence of other missional factors also indicates the effectiveness of the

intervention to improve the church's missional health and its potential to create missional communities. A church will never become missional if it is not trying to become so; therefore, any movement towards missional is a sign in the right direction. The case can be made that the more missional factors exist, the more missional is the church and greater is the potential to create missional communities. Again, because the church was plateaued and not emphasizing mission prior to the application of the intervention, and no other was being applied, the existence of any missional factors qualifies the intervention.

The following areas were examined through pastoral observation in June, 2016, to assess the church's missional health and the effectiveness of the intervention: missional communities created, group efforts to make friends in the community, personal efforts in outreach and relationship building, and missional preparation and training efforts.

The church created eight missional communities. The church at-large working collectively to engage and disciple the community through missional community building was counted as one missional community. The seven other missional communities were various types of small groups.

Five small group missional communities were formed through the efforts of ministry departments. For instance, the Meals on Wheels ministry was already in existence prior to the intervention, but it made adjustments and became a missional community due to the influence of the intervention. As a result, it led to one baptism.

Furthermore, the youth department also became a missional community through the influence of the intervention and through the influence of Kevin Solomon's home group. As such, it reached out to the community in several ways, and the group mentored one another

better which led to four baptisms and an increased attendance of one new interest from the neighborhood.

The health ministry department became a missional community in its efforts to reach the community at-large through health improvement and lifestyle changes by conducting healthy cooking classes and the CREATION Health lifestyle seminar. This missional community should continue trying to meet the needs of the community, while making adjustments to its methods as needed, and results will follow.

Women's ministry became a missional community through its creation of a small group to meet the needs of women in the community at-large who needed friendship and support from other females. Relationships among group members have been strengthened as a result.

The children and family ministry department became a missional community through the formation of the parenting support group, which was designed to make friends with and provide mutual support for parents in the community. Its efforts resulted in three families from the community getting involved in the support group, kids club, children's choir, and worship service attendance; which was a combined attendance increase of nine people.

The two missional communities formed through personal efforts were created separately by two married couples. Kevin and Deirdre Solomon formed their home group with people they met in their neighborhood and elsewhere. This group's efforts resulted in two baptisms, two recommitments, six new interests, an increase in attendance by 11, and the influence of the youth department at-large to become a missional community. The Peng-Abel family started their home group by inviting friends and creating a welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere.

Another area examined was group efforts to make friends in the community. There were two separate group efforts to make friends in the community. The youth department, along with a few members of the guiding coalition, decided to start a GLOW literature evangelism ministry as a way to meet people in the neighborhood in order to befriend and help them. They developed a community survey to use when going door-to-door or wherever they would meet people along the way.

The other group effort was members of the guiding coalition coordinating the establishment of raised garden beds for the preschool, to be used as a way to develop friendships while tending the garden. It was also a first step in exploring a larger community garden project with the potential to open the door to even more friendships.

There were also five personal efforts by members to help people and befriend them. Firstly, the Andersons, were able to connect with one family near the church through their mutual love of dogs. This resulted in plans being made to help them with the difficult task of bathing their large dogs. Although, the plans fell through, and the family moved away not long afterwards; the Andersons were excited to report how they were trying to be missional and connect with the community.

The second was the Eberhardts becoming medical evangelists and moving away to follow their calling to help a community in Missouri improve their health and eventually be able to disciple them in Jesus. Modules of the intervention, like missional training and spiritual development, helped lead them to be willing to go out on that leap of faith. Thirdly, their efforts to mentor their friend, Daisy Fernandez, from the Hacienda Heights church, led her on a personal missional effort by also accepting a call to a similar medical evangelism

ministry in another community in Missouri. The intervention was also instrumental in influencing her to live a missional life.

The Fourth personal effort was the formation of a workplace Bible study group by a coalition member. The last, was the efforts of a member to be more missional in building relationships at a senior center where she volunteered. As a result, about ten from the senior center regularly attended the healthy cooking classes offered by the health ministry department.

It was also observed the church made preparations and received training in order to become a creator of missional communities. Spiritual preparation was essential; thus, three revival weekends were conducted, several sermon series on the topic of prayer and spirituality were offered, and prayer was brought more to the center of the life of the church. This resulted in one baptism and increased inspiration in the members to continue on the missional journey. The MVP planning dinner is an example of the church coming together to prepare its missional path. Finally, this is the list of the training the church received: missional classes using *The Tangible Kingdom Primer*, Growth Groups, the *Journey to Wholeness* recovery groups, and bereavement support groups. It can therefore be stated these preparation and training efforts indicate the church was actively trying to improve its missional health. The conclusion is the intervention was effective at influencing the church to prepare itself to become a creator of missional communities.

In summary, this section evaluated the intervention through pastoral observation of the creation of eight missional communities, five group efforts to make friends in the community, five personal efforts in outreach and relationship building, and eight missional preparation and training efforts. The combined baptisms from these efforts were eight, with a

combined attendance increase of twenty-one. The conclusion drawn is the intervention effectively helped the church create missional communities while improving its missional health; which increased church membership and attendance.

Congregational Assessment Matrix

The third assessment process was the Congregational Assessment Matrix, which is a self-assessment completed using pastoral observation to record the condition of the church before and after the application of the intervention (Horner, N.A.). This tool was chosen for this study because of its simple and concise framework for tracking and measuring the attributes of the church. The purpose of the Congregational Assessment Matrix is to evaluate the church's resources and missional attitude in order to determine its missional health; the results of which can be correlated to the effectiveness of the intervention. To help identify the church's attributes, the assessment asks 20 questions; 10 concerning church resources and 10 concerning its missional attitude. Each question can be answered by indicating positive/strong, average, or negative/weak. The total score for resources and missional attitude are used together to determine whether or not the church is missional.

This assessment labels churches using the following terms. Type 1 churches are "at risk" due to low resources and missional attitude. In other words, mission is not at its core. Type 2 churches are "followers of Jesus" because they have a knowledge of and passion for mission as the center of its life, while being low on financial or facility resources. Type 3 churches are a "fellowship of believers" in that they have plenty of resources and the congregation functions well together, but mission is not at its core. Type 4 churches are "healthy missional churches" as they have adequate resources and mission is the center of its

existence. The church works together to foster missional and spiritual development in itself as it actively engages the community with the gospel.

The first Congregational Assessment Matrix was completed using the observations made just before the start of this DMin project, in 2011. The results indicated the church was a Type 3, fellowship of believers, with a resources summary number of six and a missional attitude summary number of negative four. At that time, the church was strong on resources, budget, and tithe, but had very weak missional outreach to the community.

The second matrix was completed using observations made in April 2016. The results indicated the church changed to a Type 4, healthy missional church, with a resources summary number of nine and a missional attitude summary number of six. The matrix indicates the church's available resources improved and the missional attitude changed considerably. The conclusion drawn from the Congregational Assessment Matrix is the intervention was effective at improving the missional health of the church, which fostered its ability to create missional communities.

Summary and Conclusion of Evaluations

The overarching conclusion of the evaluation of this project is the intervention effectively improved the missional health of the church and transformed it into a creator of missional communities. The church assessment survey and the Congregational Assessment Matrix indicated improved missional health, and pastoral observation noted the creation of missional communities and other attributes of a missionally health church. There is more to report on this study; the details of which are contained in the outcomes, conclusions, and recommendation sections to follow.

Outcomes of the Intervention

The outcome of the application of the intervention was the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church became trained to create missional communities and created missional communities as a result. This was the intended outcome; however, the intervention offered more than missional training alone for the congregation. It also helped with spiritual development, mission and vision casting, organizational methods, outreach methods, leadership development, and discipleship.

The comprehensive nature of the intervention also helped to increase the missional health of the church and created a new missional attitude, which focused the church outward and inspired it to make disciples by loving as Jesus loved, and serving as Jesus served. As such, it became friendlier, more grace-filled, forgiving, and understating to those to whom it was ministering. During the missional journey, the messy lives of newfound friends of the church were addressed with Christ-like love. Prior to the intervention, they likely would have been avoided or chased away. Lives became transformed, addictions conquered, broken relationships mended, and spiritual connections were strengthened.

Lastly, church growth is an outcome observed in baptisms, recommitments, new interests, and increased attendance. The missional communities were instrumental in producing seven baptisms and two recommitments to Christ. The spiritual development and discipleship modules of the intervention produced one baptism. Furthermore, missional communities reaching out in service and in love resulted in six new interests and an increase in attendance by 21 people.

Conclusions

The research, development, and deployment of this project created a landscape from

which to draw multiple conclusions. The overarching conclusion is corroborated by conclusions drawn from a study of the theology of missional community building, a review of missional church literature, and from the development, implementation, and results of the intervention.

A study of the theology of missional community building shows God's mission to save humanity from the wages of sin is accomplished in the present day with the help of the church making missional communities. Furthermore, Christ, the apostles, and the early church set the example of creating missional communities through persistent, humble, and loving service to those in their proximity who were not yet part of the community. Therefore, the success of that model for the early church supports the conclusion it should be followed today.

A study of the missional church literature reveals the evolution of the church from thriving by making disciples within missional communities, to becoming consumeristic and pastor dependent, which caused its decline and irrelevance for the majority of the population. The literature makes the argument that by moving back to the missional community model, laypeople will again become involved in making disciples and transforming the community by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The conclusion drawn from the literature review is the church should return to making missional communities in order to effectively fulfill the great commission to make disciples.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the study of the development, implementation, and results of the intervention. First, by applying the intervention the church became a missional community that also created missional communities. Second, even though the intervention was in effect for a little over three years at the time of this writing,

the presence of missional leadership is required to continue the momentum of creating missional communities. Third, more cycles are needed of missional communities creating missional communities so this cycle becomes imbedded in the fabric of the church deep enough to overpower any tendencies to revert to a consumeristic pastor dependent model.

The overarching conclusion of this project is the intervention effectively trained the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church to create missional communities and it should be applied indefinitely to foster continued missional community growth. This is derived from noting many in the church were willing to go on the journey towards missional; however, they needed direction and leadership to overcome obstacles of change. Finally, without an intentional effort to create missional communities, an inward focused church will not reach outward on its own without an intervention and a committed team of leaders equipped to blaze the trail.

Recommendations

Looking back upon the completed project gives insight into recommendations for its continued implementation at the Hacienda Heights church and for applying it on a new congregation. Even though the intervention was effective at training the church to make missional communities, it should not be considered a one-time application. It serves as a helpful way to maintain the missional health of the church; therefore, it should be applied indefinitely with room for needed adjustments. For example, flexibility should be allowed for adjusting the order of the modules of the cycle and even for adding additional modules as needed.

Overall, I am pleased with the results of the intervention. However, I am disappointed a simple church in the home was not started and more home growth groups were not created.

They have powerful potential as observed in Kevin Solomon's group. The intervention covers all of the areas of development in the life of the church essential for the formation of home groups. However, it seems it is not enough to overcome the realities of life in Southern California. With arguably the most congested roadways in the country taking 10 or more hours away from many members each week, little time is left for them to join a group, let alone host one. Furthermore, the cost of living has enlarged the segment of the congregation cohabitating with extended family or friends to share the expense of rent and mortgage. These living arrangements also hinder the formation of groups in the home. I recommend that continued efforts to lead the church in creating missional communities should include teaching creative ways to form groups in public spaces and how to schedule groups around the natural rhythms of the weekly schedule.

Finally, I am overjoyed to have observed the most receptive to missional community small groups were millennials. More growth occurred among them than any other age group in the church. The future of the church hinges on the growth of this group. It is therefore recommended to pay special attention to mentoring them to stay connected to their small groups and to strengthen their ability to start their own group when needed. In so doing, when school, career, family, or friends inhibits them from attending their current group, they will be able to take a piece of the church with them and live incarnationally wherever they relocate or during whatever new timeframe they have available. Although, no longer as closely connected to their original missional community, they will be able to grow a new community by persistently pouring their lives into the people in their proximity who are not yet part of the community, in order to develop friendships and meet their needs through

compassionate and humble service, and whenever they are ready, invite them into the community and disciple them in Jesus.

Professional Transformation

I am very grateful to have been part of the DMin program because of the many ways it transformed me professionally. Firstly, I became more prayerful in my approach to life as a result of the spiritual development module of the intervention and because the demands of implementing the DMin project while managing everything else in life is impossible without prayer. During the times it seemed impossible to continue, God answered my prayers and opened doors at just the right time.

Secondly, I was inspired, equipped, and sent out on the journey of a lifelong learner. This has fostered in me a more thorough study method in assessing situations rather than jumping to conclusions. By doing so, I have become more understanding and patient with the people I am discipling and leading when circumstances do not turn out as expected. This has also given me the ability to be at peace and take confidence in my ministry decisions.

Finally, I have been strengthened tremendously through the rigors of the DMin program. For me, the great challenge of meeting the academic timelines of the classroom while managing ministry in the field was an exercise requiring persistent concentration and prayer; which resulted in building in me a spiritual foundation I believe can handle future challenges much easier.

REFERENCE LIST

- Adams, W. M. (n.d.). *Growth groups training*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Addison, S. (2011). *Movements that change the world: Five keys to spreading the Gospel* (Rev. ed.). Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books.
- Bader-Saye, S. (2007). *Following Jesus in a culture of fear*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.
- Bevans, S. B., & Schroeder, R. (2011). *Prophetic dialogue: reflections on Christian mission today*. [Kindle DX Version]. Retrieved from Amazon.com
- Bock, D. L. (1994). Luke. *The IVP New Testament commentary series* (pp. 412). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Bonhoeffer, D. (1954). *Life together* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Harper.
- Bonhoeffer, D. (1959). *Creation and fall: A theological interpretation of Genesis 1-3*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Bosch, D. J. (1991). *Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Breen, M. (2010). *Launching missional communities: A field guide*. Pawleys Island, SC: 3DM.
- Breen, M. (2011). *Building a discipling culture*. [Kindle DX Version]. Retrieved from Amazon.com
- Bruinsma, R. (2009). *The body of Christ: A biblical understanding of the church*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald.
- Burrill, R. (1998). *Recovering an Adventist approach to the life and mission of the local church*. Fallbrook, IL: Hart-Books.
- Burrill, R. (2004). *Waking the dead: Returning plateaued and declining churches to vibrancy*. Fallbrook, CA: Hart Books.

- Cauley, M. R. (2013, May). Critical indicators for missional church leadership. *Transformational Leadership and Organic Systems Thinking*. Lecture conducted at Andrews University Theological Seminary Missional Church Cohort Intensive, Winter Park, FL.
- Chester, T. (2011). *A meal with Jesus: discovering grace, community, and mission around the table*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.
- Cole, N. (2005). *Organic church: Growing faith where life happens* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Cole, N. (2008). *Search & rescue: Becoming a disciple who makes a difference*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Cole, N. (2009). *Organic leadership: Leading naturally right where you are*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Cole, N. (2010a). *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the future of the church* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Cole, N. (2010b). Life transformation groups [Pamphlet]. Sugar Hill, CA: CMA Resources.
- Cole, N. (2014). *Primal fire: Reigniting the church with the five gifts of Jesus*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House.
- Collins, J. C., & Hansen, M. T. (2011). *Great by choice: Uncertainty, chaos, and luck: Why some thrive despite them all* [Kindle DX Version]. Retrieved from www.Amazon.com
- DeYmaz, M. (2007). *Building a healthy multi-ethnic church: Mandate, commitments, and practices of a diverse congregation* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/John Wiley.
- Edersheim, A. (1896). *The life and times of Jesus the Messiah* (8th rev. ed.). New York, NY: Longmans Green.
- Ferguson, D., & Ferguson, J. (2010). *Exponential: How you and your friends can start a missional church movement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Fitch, D. E. (2005). *The great giveaway: Reclaiming the mission of the church from big business, parachurch organizations, psychotherapy, consumer capitalism, and other modern maladies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

- Frost, M. (2011). *The road to missional: Journey to the center of the church* [Kindle DX Version]. Retrieved from www.Amazon.com
- Frost, M., & Hirsch, A. (2003). *The shaping of things to come: Innovation and mission for the 21st-century church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Frost, M., & Hirsch, A. (2011). *The faith of leap: Embracing a theology of risk, adventure & courage*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Groeschel, C. (2013, August). Communicating with staff and volunteers. *Catalyst One Day Southern California Leadership Essentials*. Lecture conducted at Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA.
- Guder, D. L., & Barrett, L. (1998). *Missional church: A vision for the sending of the church in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
- Guder, D. L. (2015). *Called to witness: Doing missional theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Gulley, N. R. (2003). *Systematic theology: Prolegomena*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.
- Gulley, N. R. (2011). *Systematic theology: God as Trinity*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.
- Gulley, N. R. (2012). *Systematic theology: Creation, Christ, salvation*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.
- Halter, H. (2011). *Sacrilege: Finding life in the unorthodox ways of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Halter, H., & Smay, M. (2008). *The tangible kingdom: Creating incarnational community: The posture and practices of ancient church now* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Halter, H., & Smay, M. (2009). *The tangible kingdom primer: An eight-week guide to incarnational community*. Littleton, CO: Missio.
- Halter, H., & Smay, M. (2010). *AND: The gathered and scattered church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2010). *Switch: How to change things when change is hard* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Broadway Books.
- Herrington, J., Creech, R. R., & Taylor, T. (2003). *The leader's journey: Accepting the call to personal and congregational transformation* [Kindle DX Version]. Retrieved from www.Amazon.com
- Hesselgrave, D. J., Stetzer, E., & Terry, J. M. (2010). *Missionshift: Global mission issues in the third millennium*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic.
- Hirsch, A. (2006). *The forgotten ways: Reactivating the missional church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.
- Hirsch, A. (2008). Defining missional. *Leadership Journal*, (Fall). Retrieved from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2008/fall/17.20.html>
- Hirsch, A. (2009). APEST. Retrieved from <http://www.theforgottenways.org/apest/>
- Hirsch, A., & Ferguson, D. (2011). *On the verge: A journey into the apostolic future of the church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Hirsch, A., & Ford, L. (2011). *Right here, right now: Everyday mission for everyday people*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Hirsch, A., Catchim, T., & Breen, M. (2012). *The permanent revolution: Apostolic imagination and practice for the 21st century church*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Horner, J. (n.d.). Congregational assessment matrix [Pamphlet]: Metropolitan New York Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- House, P. R. (1995). *1, 2 Kings*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.
- Hunsberger, G. R. (1998). *Bearing the witness of the spirit: Lesslie Newbigin's theology of cultural plurality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Keener, C. S. (1997). *Matthew*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Kidder, S. J. (2011). *The big four: Secrets to a thriving church family*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald.

- Kimball, D. (2003). *The emerging church: Vintage Christianity for new generations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Kinnaman, D., & Lyons, G. (2007). *Unchristian: What a new generation really thinks about Christianity—and why it matters*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Kittel, G., Bromiley, G. W., & Friedrich, G. (1964). *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 5). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Knight, G. R. (1997). *Reading Ellen White: How to understand and apply her writings*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald.
- Kotter, J. P. (2008). *A sense of urgency*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Kotter, J. P. (2012). *Leading change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.
- LaRondelle, H. K. (1983). *The Israel of God in prophecy: Principles of prophetic interpretation*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University.
- Lencioni, P. (2012). *The advantage: Why organizational health trumps everything else in business* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- McNeal, R. (2011a). *Missional communities: The rise of the post-congregational church* [Kindle DX Version]. Retrieved from www.Amazon.com
- McNeal, R. (2011b). *A work of heart: Understanding how God shapes spiritual leaders* (Updated ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mills, M. S. (1999). *The life of Christ: A study guide to the gospel record*. Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries.
- Moskala, J. (2013). Mission in the Old Testament. In Á. Manuel Rodríguez (Ed.), *Message mission and unity of the church* (Vol. 2). Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute.
- Murray, S. (2004). *Church after Christendom*. Milton Keynes, FL: Paternoster.
- Newbigin, L. (1995). *The open secret: An introduction to the theology of mission* (Rev. ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

- Nichol, F. D., Cottrell, R. F., Neufeld, D. F., & White, E. G. H. (1976). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary: The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment* (Vols. 1-3, rev. ed.). Washington, DC: Review and Herald.
- Pfandl, G. (2013). The people of God in the Old Testament. In Á. Manuel Rodríguez (Ed.), *Message mission and unity of the church* (Vol. 2). Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute.
- Putman, J. (2010). *Real-life discipleship: Building churches that make disciples*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
- Putman, J. (2013, October). Intentional relational discipleships. *Exponential West Discipleship Conference*. Lecture conducted at Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA.
- Rendle, G. R. (1998). *Leading change in the congregation: Spiritual and organizational tools for leaders*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute.
- Rice, R. (1997). *Reign of God: An introduction to Christian theology from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective* (2nd ed.). Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.
- Roxburgh, A. J. (2010). *Missional map-making: Skills for leading in times of transition* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sahlin, M. (2009). *Christ's mission in Hacienda Heights*. Center for Creative Ministry. Milton-Freewater, OR.
- Stanley, A. (2013, August). Getting your staff to behave. *Catalyst One Day Southern California Leadership Essentials*. Lecture conducted at Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA.
- Stark, R. (1997). *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, CA: Harper.
- Stetzer, E., & Bird, W. (2010). *Viral churches: Helping church planters become movement makers* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Stetzer, E., & Rainer, T. S. (2010). *Transformational church: Creating a new scorecard for congregations*. Nashville, TN: B & H.
- Stone, B. P. (2007). *Evangelism after Christendom: The theology and practice of Christian witness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.

- Stulac, G. M. (1993). *James*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Swenson, R. A. (2004). *Margin: Restoring emotional, physical, financial, and time reserves to overloaded lives* (Rev. ed.). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
- Tickle, P. (2008). *The great emergence: How Christianity is changing and why*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Timm, A. R. (2013). Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiology, 1844-2012: A brief historical overview. In Á. Manuel Rodríguez (Ed.), *Message mission and unity of the church* (Vol. 2). Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute.
- Utley, R. J. (2000). *The first Christian primer: Matthew* (Vol. 9). Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International.
- Warren, R. (2013, October). Shifting from teaching to modeling. *Exponential West Discipleshift Conference*. Lecture conducted at Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA.
- White, E. G. (1890). *Patriarchs and prophets*. Oakland, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1891, March 20). Home missionaries needed. *General Conference Daily Bulletin*.
- White, E. G. (1892). *Gospel workers: Instruction for the minister and the missionary*. Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald.
- White, E. G. (1898). *The desire of ages*. Oakland, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1900). *Christ's object lessons*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald.
- White, E. G. (1902, January 8). The work in greater New York. *Atlantic Union Gleaner*.
- White, E. G. (1905). *The ministry of healing*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1917). *The story of prophets and kings as illustrated in the captivity and restoration of Israel*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.
- White, E. G. (1941). *Christ's object lessons*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald.
- Wiersbe, W. W. (1998). *Be delivered*. Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor.

Wilson, T. (2014). *Spark: Igniting a culture of multiplication* [Kindle DX Version].
Retrieved from <https://exponential.org/resource-books/spark/>

Woodward, J. R. (2012). *Creating a missional culture: Equipping the church for the sake of the world*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books.

VITA

Name: Brett Poynter

Date of Birth: I was born on December 8, 1973 in Hanford, California.

Family: I married Alesia Lewis on October 11, 1998. We have three children, Ethan (Born in 2002), Ashton (Born in 2004), and Hannah (Born in 2006.)

Education:

2017 Doctor of Ministry, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University

1999-2001 Master of Divinity, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University

1996-1998 Bachelor of Science, California State University, Fresno

1988-1992 High School Diploma, Shenandoah Valley Academy

Ordained:

2005 Ordained to the Seventh-day Adventist Gospel Ministry

Experience:

2010-Present Senior Pastor of the Hacienda Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church (Hacienda Heights, CA)

2001-2010 Associate Pastor of the Temple City Seventh-day Adventist Church (Temple City, CA)

1999-2001 Chaplain with Adventist Information Ministry, Andrews University

1998-1999 Bible Worker, Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists