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A STUDY OF THE FORMATION OF A MISSION STUDY
TASK FORCE AS IT RELATES TO THE PLANNING PROCESS
OF A CONGREGATION

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May 3, 1994

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DEDICATION:

To my wife, Jane, whose love and devotion
sustained me throughout this project

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE FORMATION OF A MISSION STUDY TASK FORCE AS IT RELATES TO THE PLANNING PROCESS OF A CONGREGATION

The purpose of this project is to form a Mission Study Task Force to gather suitable information for the Planning Committee. The group used statistical reports, interviews, and surveys with the theological framework of *kairos*, God's decisive time, to present pertinent data for the congregation's plans. The data, together with the concept of *kairos*, motivated the Planning Committee to design challenging goals. The members of the Task Force grew in their appreciation of the church's opportunities for mission; however, the members did not develop a close relationship with one another.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Whenever a pastor becomes familiar with the members of the church and the congregation's setting, he may feel that he should lead the congregation to set new goals for its future. Usually, he will urge the congregation to form a planning committee. He may feel unsure about his role as leader in this project, but he will work with the members of the committee to draft some goals and objectives. However, the pastor and committee members may notice that the proposed goals and objectives do not fully address the needs and hopes of the congregation. Also, the goals do not speak about any outreach efforts into the community. In fact, the members seem so apathetic about the goals that they are eventually disregarded. It is easy for the pastor to become frustrated with the whole planning process.

When the author of this paper accepted the call to St. James Lutheran Church, he noticed that the church did not have any specific goals for the future, but only reacted to a crisis or complaint. After two years of service, he encouraged the Church Council to form the Planning Committee to determine

future goals. The first planning meeting was a promising step, as the pastor and members proposed their goals and objectives. Everyone was enthusiastic about this process and looked forward to the completion of the goals.

Although the pastor was pleased that the committee worked well together to establish goals and objectives, he was somewhat disappointed that these new goals did not propose any outreach to the community. In addition, the Planning Committee did not propose a goal that was "a challenge that stretches but is realistic--it will make a difference in the church's life and ministry."¹ This committee made a valiant effort at establishing its goals and objectives; however, there was still room for improvement.

At the next Church Council meeting, several members also expressed their concerns that the Planning Committee did not propose any challenging mission goals for the community. However, they were reluctant to establish any outreach goals at the meeting, because they felt unsure about the congregation's mission and they did not know what the pressing needs of the neighborhood were.

These comments led the pastor to realize that he had omitted an important step in the planning process. In his haste to establish the Planning Committee, he had neglected to include any research to assist the members in their work. They needed more information about the church and the neighborhood before they could propose challenging goals for the community.

¹Duncan McIntosh and Richard E. Rusbult, Planning Growth in Your Church (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1983), 70.

Additionally, the practical aspects of planning were emphasized so much that the spiritual basis for the planning process was overlooked. The members of the committee needed to better understand God's involvement in the planning process.

Therefore, this Major Applied Project will explore the formation of the St. James Mission Study Task Force as it relates to the planning process of the congregation. This group will research data about the congregation and community through various tools in order to present comprehensive information for the Planning Committee to assist it in its work. In addition, the paper will examine how a pastor maintains a spiritual dimension throughout the planning process so that the members of the Task Force are aware of the Lord's guidance throughout the research.

This project is a challenge in several respects. First, the pastor must examine the necessary steps of the planning process for a Christian congregation. Second, he must determine what tools are needed for conducting research. Third, he is also responsible for contacting, training, and encouraging the members of a short-term group. In addition, he supplies the spiritual dimension for this project so that the members of the group are aware of the Lord's presence throughout the process. In order to complete this project, he must manage his time efficiently so that he maintains the regular administration of the parish, while he attempts to complete this project. Therefore, the pastor views this project as a major catalyst for his growth and prays for God's strength throughout the project.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

St. James is located in Old Brooklyn, one of the sixteen designated neighborhoods of Cleveland. The neighborhood is the southernmost one of the city and borders on the suburbs of Parma, Seven Hills, and Brooklyn. Although about 40% of the church membership now lives in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood, most of the other members who presently live in the suburbs have their roots in the neighborhood.

To describe the context in which St. James is located, it is helpful to follow the suggestion of Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney: "One of the most important parts of any community study is also the simplest. It involves setting aside a major portion of a day to walk through your neighborhood or community absorbing its sights, sounds, and aromas."² When one travels through the Old Brooklyn neighborhood, he discovers several important facets about the setting.

First of all, most of the houses are older, but well kept. People here take great pride in keeping their homes in order. While there are single houses, there

²Jackson Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, eds., Handbook for Congregational Studies (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1986), 51.

are also many apartments and double-houses, that is, one complete house upon another.

When a person walks down the sidewalk, he is immediately aware of the lack of parking spaces. Most of the people do not have garages, so cars sometimes line both sides of the streets, which makes traveling difficult. Most of the businesses are small and have only a few places for cars to park; thus, people are tempted to forsake the neighborhood stores and shop at the suburban malls. St. James itself is fortunate to have a large paved parking lot, so several neighborhood groups meet in the church facilities. The houses are built close to one another, so the people may feel confined. Their backyards are very small compared to those of the suburbs.

On the other hand, the Old Brooklyn neighborhood is blessed with several large parks. The city maintains these parks well, and most of them are large enough to hold several baseball games at the same time. The agencies sponsor "Old Brooklyn Day" in one of the parks, and this event gives the people a sense of pride in their community.

When someone walks through the community, he becomes increasingly aware that there are no large factories located nearby, only small shops. This indicates that the Old Brooklyn neighborhood is still a "bedroom community" for Cleveland, as it has been in the past. Probably a good percentage of the people commute to factories or offices downtown.

If a person needs help from a municipal agency, he probably will go to the corner of Pearl Road and Broadview Road. Deaconess Hospital is located on this corner and is the largest employer in the neighborhood. The two councilmen, Mr. Patrick O'Malley and Mr. James Rokakis, maintain their offices on Pearl Road. They have a good reputation for assisting people in their respective wards. In addition, several important agencies are found on these two streets, including the Old Brooklyn Housing Authority, Cuyahoga County offices, and also a police substation. Four very influential organizations, The Old Brooklyn Bridge, The Old Brooklyn Developmental Agency, Seniors Resources Center, and the United Labor Organization, are all located within a radius of two blocks from these streets. These organizations sponsor important programs for the community, including a food bank, a crime watch program, and "Old Brooklyn Day." It is a well-known fact that if these organizations support a certain program in the neighborhood, it will most likely succeed.

If someone is seeking a church, he will find various churches in the area. There are four churches in a two-block vicinity from St. James, including a Roman Catholic church, a United Church of Christ church, a Pentecostal church, and a Swedenborgian church. There are more churches in the immediate area, including a Methodist church, a Byzantine Catholic church (an Orthodox church that recognizes the primacy of the Pope), and a few ethnic churches. This indicates that there are many ethnic people in the area who prefer their worship services be conducted in their native languages. In addition, there are five

Lutheran churches in the area, including three Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod churches and two churches belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. When the St. James pastor contacts the visitors after the worship service, they will invariably tell him that they are "church-shopping," even for a Lutheran church. The variety of churches in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood allows newcomers to select their church preference.

When one visits the small shops in the neighborhood, he becomes aware of the various languages spoken there. Many people from Eastern Europe have moved to the Old Brooklyn neighborhood, which accounts for the variety of languages heard in the local businesses. St. James Lutheran Church will have some difficulty in reaching out to these people, unless it becomes directly involved in a cross-cultural ministry.

Most of the people who enter these shops appear to be blue-collar workers. They usually wear flannel jackets with blue jeans. These people appear to be hard-working people, but probably are not in management positions. Since the nearby factories are known to lay off workers at any time, these people have real concerns about their future employment.

When one looks directly at the people, he notices that many of the people are elderly. Perhaps these people are the ones most likely to populate the small shops, and they do form a major group in the area. The government under the HUD program has subsidized new apartments, which allows the elderly to live comfortably in their own homes, so probably more seniors will be moving to this

area. Recently, Deaconess Hospital received a \$3.2 million grant to build seventy new apartments for the elderly at Deaconess-Kraft Center and Deaconess-Zane Center.

The racial composition of the area is almost entirely white. Some Afro-American people have moved to the area, but this is a small percentage of the area's population. Some Hispanic people have also moved to the neighborhood, but mostly in the northern portion.

Even though many families with children have left the Old Brooklyn neighborhood, there is room for hope. Councilman Rokakis of the 15th Ward comments about the neighborhood: "Old Brooklyn is still a good place to live. We have beautiful houses and people are trying to make this place a good place to live. I'm hoping that we have turned a corner."³ Under Councilman Rokakis' direction, the Old Brooklyn neighborhood has experienced some growth in population. Councilman O'Malley of the 16th Ward is equally committed to the growth of the area and echoes optimistic feelings about the area.

St. James itself has a good reputation in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood. It ministers to people in some respects with its seniors' program, support groups, and evangelism programs, but it still needs to develop more defined programs for outreach into the community. The people in the neighborhood respect the church because it has an "open door policy" for the use of the facilities. Most civic

³Councilman James Rokakis, interview by author. Notes. Cleveland, Ohio. 23 November 1992.

groups use the fellowship hall for a nominal fee, including several Alcoholics Anonymous groups, an Al-Anon group, the Girl Scouts, and others. In addition, the church allows the city to operate voting booths in a classroom on election days. Thus, St. James has some potential for ministry in Old Brooklyn because people recognize that it has made some inroads into the community. Now the Mission Study Task Force will be responsible to see how St. James Lutheran Church can minister even more to the neighborhood.

CHAPTER 3

THEOLOGY

When the members of the research committee study the data about the local congregation, they may get the impression that it is basically a human institution. They study the church's statistics and survey the members, so they are delving into the humanity of the church. Even when they research the community, they may miss seeing that God is directly involved in the church's mission. Thus, it is the pastor's responsibility to keep the planning process within a spiritual framework. Before the planning process begins, the pastor should review with all the members of the committee the salient points about God's presence in the congregation and also in the planning process.

God Begins the Church by Grace

First of all, the Bible teaches that God is graciously involved in the beginning of a person's faith and his continued growth. In the same way, He is also responsible for the beginning and growth of the church. Paul points out God's gracious action in the church when he addresses the Corinthians: "To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy,

together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:2 NIV). Paul's words here are very relevant for understanding the nature of the church. Paul calls the people *te ekklesia tou theou te ouse en Korintho*. The word for church, *ekklesia*, can refer to a house church or a local congregation. In fact, it can refer to any gathering of people. For example, Acts 19:32 states that an assembly of Ephesians are thrown into confusion due to Paul's arrest. This gathering of people is actually a mob and not a formal gathering at all; and yet, it is called an *ekklesia*.

However, in verse 2, Paul does not refer to a general assembly, but he calls it an *ekklesia tou theou*. In this respect, the words *ekklesia tou theou* have their basis in the Old Testament expression "assembly of the Lord" (Deut. 23:1; Num. 16:3). When the Old Testament speaks of the "assembly of the Lord," it denotes that God calls His people together for His purpose. Paul continues this concept of assembly here and expands it by noting that this assembly of believers consists of people who are sanctified in Christ, *egiasmenois en Christou* (1 Cor. 1:2). The New Testament assembly is similar to the Old Testament one with the added dimension that Jesus Christ, who completed the work of redemption through His death and resurrection, now provides the basis for God's calling:

The church is still the *ekklesia tou theou* as in the OT, but with the new thing that God has fulfilled the covenant in Christ, and that Christ has manifested himself to his disciples and commissioned them to assemble a people in his name.⁴

⁴Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, trans. and abridged by Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster Press, 1986), 398.

Thus, no person can claim that he decided to become a member of the church, but he wholly depends upon God's calling:

The church is called "the church of God" not because at the time of their allegiance men gave themselves this label, but because God has here gathered men and joined them together. Just as the origin of the church was God's deed, so every subsequent membership results from God's deed.⁵

Sometimes people are unable to see how God is involved in the church, because they view it as an *ekklesia*, a general gathering of people. In some respects, it is similar to other organizations and institutions. However, the church is in reality an *ekklesia tou theou* because God graciously calls people to Himself. This assembly has a divine dimension within it and is unlike any other gathering of people.

Paul continues to explain how God is involved in this church, when he describes the Corinthians as "sanctified in Christ Jesus," *egiasmenois en Christo Iesou*. These people are sanctified because God declares them holy and righteous through the merits of Jesus Christ. These people cannot hope to become holy on their own because they are sinful. However, they are declared righteous by Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, and thus are sanctified.⁶

The Holy Spirit brings people to faith through the Word and Sacraments and incorporates them into God's church. Whenever the Word is proclaimed or read,

⁵Robert Kolb, Speaking the Gospel Today (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 180.

⁶Robert G. Hoerber, gen ed., Concordia Self-Study Bible (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 1747.

"The Spirit draws people to Jesus, that they may be restored to a right relationship with God through faith, call on their heavenly Father, and have a guarantee of the inheritance to come."⁷ Through the power of the Holy Spirit, people are sanctified in Christ. Even though Paul berates the Corinthians' errors in doctrine and practice, he addresses them in this verse as "sanctified" because they still have a relationship with God, who acts graciously toward them.

Paul also makes a striking statement about the Corinthian church when he refers to the people as "called to be holy," *kletois hagiois*. It is interesting that Paul describes them as holy. When one examines 1 Corinthians, he notes immediately that these people do not live exemplary lives. They have factions concerning the styles of preaching in their worship (1 Cor. 1-4). They allow immorality to occur in the church; in fact, they boast about it (1 Cor. 5). They have dissension about the eating of idol meat (1 Cor. 8-9). They squabble over the speaking of tongues in their worship services (1 Cor. 12-14). Some even dispute Jesus' resurrection (1 Cor. 15). Any modern Christian recognizes that these people are not acting as holy people in the usual sense of the word.

The word *hagios* itself refers to God's name, which is an expression of His nature. God's nature is totally different from that of people, since He is perfect and they are sinful. However, when God dwells with His people, they become holy (Deut. 7:6). God is called holy in the New Testament, and He calls His

⁷Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, A Theological Statement of Mission and a Bible Study on Romans (St. Louis, MO: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1990), 6.

people to be holy: "The Christian fellowship is holy as a temple of the Spirit centered on Christ as the Holy servant."⁸ Thus, these people are not holy only in themselves, but they depend on God's gracious action.

Paul also states that they are called *kletois*. This refers to God's gracious calling of people to Himself through the Gospel (Rom. 10:14; 2 Thess. 2:14). The Gospel is the means God uses to call people: "Through the Gospel we are graciously declared righteous before God, called into His family, and enabled to live as His servants. The Gospel brings the church into being."⁹ These Christians do not elect to become members of God's church, but He calls them through the Gospel.

Thus, the local congregation consists of Christians who have united in order to hear God's Word and partake in the Sacraments. It is important that the pastor preach the Gospel because it presents God's saving action in Christ to wounded sinners. It is God's means to build His Kingdom. The Sacraments also play an important role in communicating God's forgiveness to His people. The pastor and laypeople must never forget the central role of the Word and Sacraments for the church.

Paul also reminds the people that they are not alone as Christians as they face the future. They are united "together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours." These Christians are

⁸Kittel and Friedrich, 8.

⁹Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 6.

not the only ones "called to be saints." The Lord calls Christians from other places to Himself and sanctifies them in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. When these believers call on God in prayer, they share a special unity with their fellow believers. Paul urges the Corinthians to look beyond themselves and see that there are other believers who call on the name of Jesus.¹⁰

This passage is very helpful to the church and pastor as they begin to plan, because it reminds them that the church is not only a human institution, but its beginnings and present mission depend upon God as the Head of the church. It is important to focus on both the divine and human elements in the church: "These two facts about the church must be kept in tension: the church belongs to Jesus, and it functions as a human institution."¹¹ All the members of the committee must ask God to renew their faith so that they view Him as truly Head of the church and not a silent partner; He is actively involved in the church's ministry and mission.

Many of the authors who speak about the church's planning process encourage each church to recall its dependence upon the Lord for its origin and growth. McIntosh and Rusbult warn the reader about forgetting about the divine nature of the church:

¹⁰C.K. Barrett, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 34.

¹¹Kolb, 181.

The church has its origin and its identity in this Covenant-making activity of God. As God's people, the church has a history, a purpose, and a future. The church that loses sight of its history is in danger of becoming self-centered and exclusive.¹²

Jackson Carroll, Carl Dudley, and William McKinney also commend their readers to begin the planning process with this spiritual perspective:

This is a book which attempts to take congregations seriously in their givenness as earthen vessels through which the transcendent power of God is at work and made known (2 Cor. 4:7) and through which God's purposes in the world may be realized. We seek to provide a framework within which this givenness can be understood in a disciplined way and practical tools to facilitate such understanding.¹³

Thus, these authors encourage members of the planning committee to begin their work with a mutual understanding about God's gracious actions in the church.

The Church's Response to God's Grace

Even though Christians may realize that God begins the church by grace, they still may not see why they should participate in His mission as a response to His undeserved love. They become shortsighted about the church's mission, so they plan ministries that only touch the needs of members; they do not understand that God calls the church to reach out to others with the Good News. Even though this is a difficult situation, the pastor uses Scripture to help them understand why the church is involved in the Lord's mission.

¹²McIntosh and Rusbuldt, 44.

¹³Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 7.

An important passage that speaks to this issue is 1 Peter 2:9. Peter here describes Christians in certain terms which indicate that they are called to a life of service to the Lord and to others. In verse 5, Peter already develops a remarkable picture of the church. He describes the church as the new temple constructed of "living stones," *lithoi zontes*, who have been baptized and incorporated into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, "the living Stone" (1 Peter 2:4). These people cannot miss the fact that the Lord has called them together as the people of God through Jesus Christ. This is a very dynamic picture of the church.

In verse 9, Peter continues his image of the people of God: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." Peter uses several terms in this verse to indicate that Christians are God's people called to a life of service. First of all, he calls them "the chosen race," *genos eklekton*. This term is found in Deuteronomy 7:6 and Isaiah 43:20 to denote Israel as God's chosen people before the foundation of the world. Peter already states in 1 Peter 1:1-2 that these people are strangers and exiles, but they are chosen people, *eklektoi*, according to God's foreknowledge and sanctified by the Holy Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ. The word *eklekton* also appears in verse 9 and continues Peter's thought that these people are chosen according to God's grace.¹⁴

¹⁴Kittel and Friedrich, 522.

However, Peter surprisingly calls them an *eklekton genos*. When *genos* is used in the Septuagint, it refers to a certain group of people that is distinguished from other groups of people; this term applies to the people of Israel. For example, in Isaiah 43:20 the Septuagint translates "my people, my chosen" as *to genous mou to eklekton*. Paul also uses *genos* to refer to the Jewish people in Galatians 1:14 and Philippians 3:5. As one reads Peter's epistle, he cannot be sure that Peter's readers belong to the same race. Most likely they are not Jewish people, since Peter states in verse 10 "Once you were not a people," and the word *laos* is often used in the New Testament to mean the Jewish people. However, Peter calls them an *eklekton genos*, because they have all been baptized and have received benefits of Christ's death and resurrection. In fact, "the theme is developed in 2:4ff with the transfer of the OT promises and predicates from Israel to the community."¹⁵ Since they have been chosen for obedience (1 Peter 1:2), these people are ready to serve the Lord and to move out in ministry.

Peter also calls them a "royal priesthood." The word for priesthood, *hierateuma*, is a collective term, so these Christians are viewed as a whole group of people in service to the Lord. Since the adjective *basileion* indicates possession, this expression probably refers to a priesthood in the service of the king. These Christians are not royal in themselves, but rather they have been called to serve God as King. It is interesting that Peter even calls them a priesthood. In Old Testament times, the priests are a select group of the tribe of

¹⁵Ibid.

Levi who were set apart to serve God. The priests represent Israel as they make their sacrifices before the Lord; they are the ones who had direct access to God.¹⁶ Peter already mentions in verse 5 that these Christians have been called by God "to make spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." The sacrifices are not the animal ones mentioned in the Old Testament, but they include prayers, thanksgivings, acts of love, and offers of forgiveness to one another; that is, they are "spiritual sacrifices as they (the Christians) offer back their lives to God."¹⁷ Thus, Peter implies that these Christians do not make sacrifices to atone for their sins, but God moves them to offer their lives in service to one another and to people outside the community.

Peter also calls them a "holy nation," *ethnos hagion*. God's holiness involves a response of awe from the people because He is all-powerful and glorious (Rev. 4:8). God is certainly holy, perfect, and without sin. And yet, Peter commands his readers to be holy, because God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). Peter does not mean that the people can make themselves holy by following God's commands, but they are delivered from sin by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to live for the Lord (Rom. 12:1). St. Paul also points out in Colossians 3:12 that Christians are holy people and put on Christian virtues. So when Peter calls these

¹⁶J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1969), 98.

¹⁷Kittel and Friedrich, 343.

people "holy," he does not intend that they rest on their honors, but that they act in Christian love toward others.¹⁸

Finally, Peter also calls them "a people belonging to God," *laos eis peripoesin*. The word for people here, *laos*, is the exclusive term that the Septuagint reserves for Israel, God's chosen people. According to Exodus 19:5, the whole world belongs to God, but He has redeemed Israel as His own people. The word *peripoesin* is a modification of Isaiah's words in the Septuagint for *hon peripoiesamen*, "the people I formed for myself," (Is. 43:21) and conveys the thought that God chooses these people as His own through His mercy.¹⁹

All these terms together make it clear that Christians are called as God's people, even though they are not original members of the chosen people. However, Peter points out that they cannot rest on their honors, but they have been chosen for a purpose: to take part in God's mission. Peter emphasizes this important point in the next purpose clause: "that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light." When Peter urges his people to proclaim the Gospel, he uses the word *exaggeilete* which refers to a loud proclamation. The word for wonderful deeds, *aretas*, refers to the mighty acts of God, which He performs graciously for the people of Israel. Usually, these mighty acts are dramatic events, such as the Exodus. The Christians' exodus occurs in Baptism, when God rescues them from the slavery of sin and establishes

¹⁸Kelly, 99.

¹⁹Hoerber, 1908.

them as His people. Peter makes it evident that Christians do not keep this message to themselves, but broadcast it loudly to others.²⁰

This survey of the 1 Peter passage points out several important points about the mission of the church. First, every Christian is involved in the Lord's work. Peter uses the words *hymeis de* in verse 9 to emphasize throughout the verse that the following attributes apply to all Christians, so that they are all involved in the Lord's mission. Especially when Peter includes all Christians as a part of the royal priesthood, he does not allow for a special group of people to be the priests, but he views all Christians as being members of the priesthood.

Also, Christians must remember that God has called, redeemed, and sanctified them to be His people. They first become a part of God's people when they are baptized, but it is essential that they continue in the Word and Sacrament for their growth:

And this same church alone has nevertheless also outward marks by which it is known; for where the sacraments are administered according to it, there truly is the church; there are Christians, and this same church alone is called in Scripture Christ's body.²¹

When Christians partake in the Word and Sacraments, they receive anew God's power to crucify their evil natures and become new creatures. Now they are ready to accomplish His purposes.

²⁰Kittel and Friedrich, 12.

²¹Carl F.W. Walther, The Form of a Christian Congregation, trans. John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 32.

In addition, this passage also points out clearly that Christians are empowered as God's people to participate in His mission to make known His acts to other people. Since God calls His people, He moves them to share the Gospel with others. Christians minister to others with acts of love; these deeds often provide the Christian an opening to speak about Jesus to others at the opportune time: "Believers must always be wearing God's mercy on their sleeves, as they live lives which proclaim new life in deeds which support neighbors in a crisis and in words explaining the reality of God's love to those broken in crisis."²²

Therefore, when a church makes plans for the future, it takes into account that the Word and Sacraments are provided to all its members so that they might grow as God's chosen people. However, the church also gauges how well it enables people to participate in God's mission and share God's saving Word in their lives. The pastor and the planning committee make sure that their plans facilitate both inreach and outreach efforts in the congregation:

True Christianity is a balanced ministry, a combination of trust in God and commitment to action. It is allowing God to use you to accomplish those ends He deems important, through the application of the special gifts, talents, and resources He has entrusted to you for the purpose of building His Kingdom and bringing glory to His name.²³

While a discussion of the nature and mission of the church is very important in the planning process, the members of a task force are aware of the pastor's

²²Kolb, 204.

²³George Barna, A Step-by-Step Guide to Church Marketing (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992), 12.

role in the process. The pastoral office has been instituted by God and is distinct from the priesthood of all believers; therefore, the pastor must be willing to participate in the church's work, including the planning process. Dr. Walther emphasizes the distinctive, yet serving position of the ministry when he states: "The [pastoral] ministry is not a special, or, in opposition to that of ordinary Christians, a more holy state, as was the Levitical priesthood, but it is a ministry of service."²⁴ Sometimes, the pastor may be tempted to delegate the whole task of research and planning to laypeople, while he continues his regular duties. Several authors stress that it is important that the pastor be directly involved in the process. Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney make this observation: "In some cases, it will be the pastor and lay leadership of the congregation who will take the initiative not only in calling for the study but in carrying it out."²⁵ The pastor does not take total responsibility for the project, but he provides leadership for the effort. In fact, Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke in their book Courageous Churches investigate certain churches that have bold plans for the future and discover in most cases, "Almost all the pastors have an intentional attitude to grow and work specifically for growth in God's kingdom."²⁶ Thus, the pastor plays an important role in the whole planning process.

²⁴Carl. F.W. Walther, Concerning the Holy Ministry (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 22.

²⁵Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 15-16.

²⁶Paul T. Heinecke, Kent R. Hunter, and David S. Luecke, Courageous Congregations (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 25.

God's Presence in the Planning Process

Once the members of the research group understand the divine initiative in their congregation to accomplish His purposes, they also realize that God is present in their research and planning process. Most of the church-planning books agree that God gives direction in the planning process. For example, George Barna in his book *A Step-by-Step Guide to Church Marketing*, speaks about obtaining God's vision in this way:

You need four major elements to capture God's vision for your ministry. Mastering any one or two of these areas is insufficient. First, you must know yourself. Second, know the ministry environment in which you have been called to operate. Third, know God intimately. Fourth, get wise counsel about what you believe to be God's vision.²⁷

Barna here does a fine job of expressing that God is involved in the church's planning process in regards to vision. The congregation itself has divine origin and purpose, so it is natural to expect God's direction in the planning process.

Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney also describe God's involvement in the planning process:

But congregational study that is rooted in a belief that God is at work for good in all things can inform a lively and playful imagination that leads us to push beyond a deterministic acceptance of the apparent givenness of the situation.²⁸

The authors here agree that God is involved in the planning process, as He motivates the congregation with a vision to go beyond their usual situation.

²⁷George Barna, *A Step-by-Step Guide to Church Marketing*, 124-25.

²⁸Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 18.

For example, in 1979 the members of Concordia Lutheran Church in Cincinnati, Ohio noticed that many families with young children were joining the church. The pastor and members of the committee believed that God was challenging them to begin a new elementary school. Even though some members expressed concerns about this new venture, the members voted to begin a new school. Today over 150 children attend the school, and many families join the church. God is involved in this congregation's planning process.

And yet, how do a pastor and planning committee determine God's direction in their planning process? If a planning committee establishes goals and objectives, but does not accomplish them, does this mean that God disapproves of the decisions? Here is a hypothetical example. The pastor and planning committee examine the congregational statistics and discover that the church has a good number of single people in their late twenties and early thirties. They design a goal to establish a new group for young singles in the following year. Several members offer to help begin the group. They hear about a successful singles' program at a nearby Lutheran church and receive advice about starting their own group. They survey the singles and discover that some of the singles sound interested in forming such a group. However, they are unable to find a capable leader, so the group flounders and finally disbands. Does this group's demise mean that God is not involved in their plans? How can a program be successful in one church but unsuccessful in another? How is God involved in the planning process?

These questions become more complicated when one surveys the book of Acts. This book demonstrates how God is often directly involved in the early church's plans. When the disciples seek a man to replace Judas, they consult directly with God through the casting of lots, and God chooses Matthias for them (Acts 1:12-26). God tells Philip to join the Ethiopian eunuch and actually carries him away when his witness is completed (Acts 8:26-40). When the church debates whether the Gentiles need to be circumcised to enter the church, God provides a direct revelation about the correct decision (Acts 11:11-18). When the Holy Spirit prevents Paul from preaching the Word in Asia, God sends a vision to him, telling him to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:6-9).

Whereas God often guides the early church directly, He does not seem to provide direct revelations to today's churches. A pastor and planning committee may wish that God would send a revelation to give His direction, but He does not seem to operate in this way. Most of the books about church planning acknowledge that God is present in the planning process through His vision. However, they do not explain how the local church obtains this vision, nor do they deal with any failures or defeats that may result from a supposed vision. For example, McIntosh and Rusbult speak of God's involvement in church planning in this way:

Churches need a vision of what they can be and do. Congregations need vision which will give members something to reach and stretch for, to invest in, to which they can be committed. Your church leaders need to be motivated by some of the possibilities to which they can respond, both in the church and in the community. Your church needs to be "striving and

stretching." How else can your congregation tap the resources of the unlimited power of the almighty God?²⁹

The authors note that God often supplies a challenging vision in the church's planning process. However, they do not explain how the church obtains God's vision and utilizes it in the planning process. There must be a way to put the planning process in a theological framework that the members of the planning committee will understand.

***Kairos* as a Model for Planning**

In order to discuss the issue about God's involvement in the planning process, this paper suggests a model of planning based upon the Greek word *kairos*. *Kairos* is used in the Septuagint to denote "a decisive point in time, but with stress upon the divine appointment rather than an ethical demand."³⁰ The New Testament continues this thought that *kairos* is the decisive time that occurs according to God's direction.

For example, in the Gospels Jesus is aware that His mission is set according to God's *kairos*, when He says: "The right time [*kairos*] has not yet come; for you any time is right" (John 7:6). When it is the right time, Jesus tells His disciples: "My appointed time [*kairos*] is near; I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples" (Matt 26:18). Paul echoes this theme in Romans 5:6: "You see, at just

²⁹McIntosh and Rusbult, 57-58.

³⁰Kittel and Friedrich, 389.

the right time, [*kairos*] when we were powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."

Thus, Jesus is very much aware that His mission is set according to God's *kairos*.

Kairos is also used in the New Testament to refer to the decisive time when man comes to faith under the Lord's guidance. For example, Jesus states in Mark 1:15: "The time [*kairos*] has come; The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news." Jesus is saying that the decisive time for the Good News is present and the people have the opportunity to repent and believe.³¹

Besides denoting the decisive times when people hear the Gospel and begin in the faith, *kairos* also refers to the decisive time when Christians reach out to others in word and deed. For example, Paul says in Galatians 6:10: "Therefore, as we have opportunity [*kairos*] let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the household of faith." The translation for *kairos* here, "opportunity," has a connotation today of a chance occurrence. However, since the Greek word for "opportunity" used here is *kairos*, it refers to the decisive times under God's direction when Christians do good to another person in need. Paul also counsels the Colossians: "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity [*kairos*]" (Col. 4:5). Again, Paul makes it clear that God allows decisive times to occur when Christians act in love to outsiders.³²

If a person surmises that *kairos* is used in a deterministic way, the Bible makes it clear that people can reject God and his Word at the decisive time.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

Jesus speaks in a negative way to the crowd who reject Him: "Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time [*kairos*]?" Jesus is questioning how these people can reject Him, even though their decisive time has come to take His words to heart. Jesus also weeps over Jerusalem for a similar reason: "Because you did not recognize the time [*kairos*] of God's coming to you" (Luke 19:44). Jesus is truly upset that His own people squander the precious time that has been given them to come to faith. Although God allows a decisive time to occur when people can believe in His Son, they ignore this time and reject Him which leads to their own destruction.

In this way, God allows a decisive time [*kairos*] to happen in the life of the Christian today and also in the church. Kolb expresses a view that is similar to that of *kairos* when he states: "The time (emphasis added) for the Christian to announce God's judgement on a life lived apart from Him is the very time (emphasis added) when God brings us together with a life that is turning sour for our neighbor."³³ He also states:

The great variety of unbelief in our culture contributes to this tension (as does the difficulty in distinguishing secure from broken sinners) in sorting out correctly the times (emphasis added) to speak God's message of wrath and the times (emphasis added) to speak His message of mercy.³⁴

³³Kolb, 204.

³⁴Ibid., 206.

Thus, according to this passage in Kolb's book, God arranges decisive times to occur in the life of a believer to hear either words of wrath or mercy.

Other authors also speak about the important role time plays in the planning process, but they do not necessarily make the connection that *kairos* is involved. Kennon L. Callahan in his book, Twelve Keys to an Effective Church, makes this statement: "Events that occur in the church and community are among the final ingredients in developing missional objectives."³⁵ When the author speaks about "events that occur," he approaches the concept of *kairos*, but he does not infer that God guides the church at the decisive time.

Lyle Schaller also notes the effect of time upon the church's planning process:

By definition, however, planning is a future-oriented effort based on the premise that God has given us this gift of today, he will give us another new day tomorrow. To plan is an act of faith, to express our trust that God will give us tomorrow.³⁶

Schaller here understands that the church should plan for the future, because God gives a new day. He does not express a view that God allows a decisive time to occur for the church to go out in mission, so he differs somewhat from the concept of *kairos*.

³⁵Kennon L. Callahan, Twelve Keys to an Effective Church (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1983), 8.

³⁶Lyle E. Schaller, Effective Church Planning (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979), 101.

What does *kairos* have to do with the planning process? The church should make plans for the future. As good stewards, church members need to plan for the future and decide what resources are required. However, each church must be committed to the Lord and remain open and flexible for His *kairos*. The congregation plans for the future, but the people understand that God will provide a new direction for mission and ministry at the right time.

For example, several years ago, St. Mark Lutheran Church was a small congregation in a sleepy village of Brunswick, Ohio, about thirty miles from Cleveland. The church did not make any impressive plans until Interstate 71 was constructed, giving an easier access to Cleveland. Then land developers began to establish new subdivisions in the immediate area, which encouraged people in Cleveland to move to this town. Now the church is booming and making plans for a new sanctuary and several new ministries. This all came about at God's decisive time.

In the same way, God allows positive things to happen for the local congregation at His decisive time. This event may be a secular event, such as the building of a new factory nearby, the widening of a street to become a main highway, or the development of a new subdivision. A positive event may occur within the local congregation, such as the time when an enthusiastic layperson volunteers to lead a group, or several people attend a stimulating seminar. All these events happen according to God's decisive time and provide exciting new directions for the congregation.

On the other hand, some negative circumstances may occur with God's direction that may effectively halt the congregation's plans for the future and direct the people to seek a different goal. Events such as the pastor taking a call, a major layleader being transferred to another state, a costly feud arising between several prominent members, or even the closing of a major factory, can quickly change a congregation's plans. The church may not need to jettison the whole plan, but it may have to change direction or make major modifications. The congregation definitely plans, but it is flexible and open for God's direction at the decisive time.

Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke demonstrate how some congregations throughout the United States make courageous decisions to begin new ministries. This book is instructive about the way the congregations respond to a situation with a new ministry according to God's *kairos*, whether it is a positive circumstance or a negative one.

For example, the members of Grace, Dewitt, Iowa, under the direction of Pastor Ronald Goodsman, responded to a negative situation, namely, a drought: "In the summer of 1988, in a year of drought including farm upheavals and bankruptcies, the congregation displayed their courage to serve by buying property for both [the elderly and church workers with troubles]."³⁷ Thus, this congregation developed a new ministry because a negative event occurred at the decisive time.

³⁷Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke, 107.

The members of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Atlanta, discovered a positive circumstance in 1979 that altered their plans for the future, when "the Atlanta area became a settlement center for Southeast Asian refugees, so three women members intentionally began serving refugees."³⁸ This influx of a new group of people became an opportunity for the congregation to minister and reach out to the refugees with the Gospel.

Sometimes the calling of a new pastor can become a positive *kairos* in the life of the church. For example, King of Kings Lutheran Church in San Antonio, Texas, was a small group of fifty older people with a large debt and little hope for growth. The *kairos* occurred when "the district convinced them (against their will, it turned out) to sell the property and begin a new congregation in an entirely new context 14 miles away in a fast-growing area of San Antonio and to call a new pastor."³⁹ This new pastor, the Rev. Henry Biar, led the congregation to establish itself in its new context and to establish a day-care center, which brought about growth in the congregation. These and other examples from the book demonstrate how God enables congregations to develop new ministries at the right time.

³⁸Ibid., 97.

³⁹Ibid., 114.

Planning According to *Kairos*

How, then, does a congregation plan according to *kairos*? The congregation plans in the usual way, except that it prays for God's direction when the goals are established. Whatever planning process a church selects, it also focuses upon prayer as an important aspect of planning.

Acts records certain times when the church prays before it makes an important decision. For example, the apostles pray before they cast lots to find a man to replace Judas (Acts 1:15-26). The early church prays together and receives power from the Spirit to speak the Word boldly (Acts 4:31). The church prays for Paul and Silas before they begin their missionary journey (Acts 13:3). Paul and Silas pray in prison when the earthquake occurs and opens the cell doors (Acts 16:25-27). When the church prays to God, the people do not manipulate God, but they ask Him to keep their hearts open to a new direction. They may not understand His guiding, but they pray to understand His leading.

In the same way, the church of today must be involved in prayer as it establishes its goals and objectives, so the members can better understand where God is leading them at the decisive time. Callahan views prayer as being very important for the church's planning process:

Effective long-range planning builds on a God-given hope that is prayerful and powerful. In prayerful ways--open to God's power--the long-range planning committee genuinely prays "What is God calling us to do--as His people?"⁴⁰

⁴⁰Callahan, xx.

Callahan's statement here points out that the planning committee and pastor are involved in prayer as they seek to ascertain God's guidance.

Barna also sees prayer as an important part of the planning process:

Once you have a good grasp on objective reality, you will be in a position to seek God's vision for your ministry. People cannot truly move the church forward without strong leadership. Strong leadership requires the determination of God's vision for the church and the effective communication of that vision.⁴¹

When the leadership and members of the congregation pray to the Lord, they will better understand God's leading at the right time.

In fact, Acts 1:15-26 provides a helpful model for the church to make a decision for the future. The apostles first define the common problem, the loss of Judas as one of the twelve disciples (Acts 1:15). They establish criteria for the new apostle and find out which men fit these criteria. They discover that two candidates are available, namely Matthias and Justus (Acts 1:21-23). Afterwards, they pray about the decision and ask God to show His choice for this ministry (Acts 1:24-25). God then directs through the casting of lots that Matthias is to be the next apostle.

The local church can use a model similar to the one described in Acts in its planning process as it tries to discover God's direction at the decisive time. The planning committee conducts the research and determines the possible goals and objectives for the following year. One of the boards examines how a certain goal will be implemented in regards to practical concerns such as leader, actual people

⁴¹Barna, A Step-by-Step Guide to Church Marketing, 129.

attending, finances, facility, advertising, and the like. While the different boards investigate the various goals and objectives, the members of the congregation all pray for God's direction. If the board determines that a certain goal can be achieved; that is, if a leader is found; if there are enough people who are willing to participate in the group; if the facility is equipped adequately to achieve the goal; if the church has enough finances; and if other concerns are answered, then the congregation is assured that the time (*kairos*) has come for the goal to be accomplished. If the pieces of the goal do not fit together at that time, although the church should be careful not to make finances the determining factor, then the church may conclude that its *kairos* has not yet come for this goal and postpone it until a later time. They may also decide to reexamine the factors to see if any of them should be modified to accomplish the goal.

Take again the example of the hypothetical church that proposes a goal to establish a group for single people. According to the model, this goal is placed on the list of their other goals and the members begin to pray for the goal. As they pray, the assigned board begins to investigate certain questions: Who will lead this group? Who will actually come? Do we have a facility for singles' ministry? At what time will this ministry operate? How much will it cost? If they find definite answers to all these questions, they conclude that God has provided the right time for this ministry to happen and begin making plans to achieve the goal.

On the other hand, if the committee concludes that they do not have a leader or enough participants for this ministry, the members agree that this is not

the proper time to implement the goal. They do not necessarily delete this goal from the list, but they still pray for it. Perhaps a person will join the church who is single and wants to lead the group; perhaps several single people decide to work together and establish the ministry on their own. This goal or any other goal may succeed if it is God's decisive time for everything to come together.

At the same time, although a congregation may establish a list of goals, God may use a certain event to change the direction of the church's ministry. For example, some churches in Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri might have established their goals in early 1993, but they probably have changed their goals drastically because of the great flood in the summer of 1993. Hopefully, other congregations in the United States also have changed their goals to meet this crisis. When a church prays for its goals, it must be flexible for any event that may arise.

Before a planning committee begins its work, it considers carefully the theology of the church as its framework. The members discover anew that the church is not only a human institution, but it truly rests upon God's gracious action as He calls and sanctifies His people. God's people have been chosen and redeemed in Jesus Christ for His purpose in ministry and mission. The church's planning process does not differ much from that of a secular institution, except that the members pray for God's leading at the decisive time. Every planning committee needs to review these facts of the church's theology as they begin their planning.

CHAPTER 4

DEFINITION OF THE PROJECT

The pastor must realize that he will use much effort in establishing a group to study the congregation and community. This is not a simple matter of delegating various tasks to an individual or a committee. However, when a pastor examines the total operation of a research committee, he will understand that it is a major task to initiate and maintain such a group of people. This chapter will define the project by dividing it into several categories: preliminary considerations, details of the planning process, selection of the committee members, and the first meeting.

Preliminary Considerations

Before the pastor becomes involved in the actual planning process, he first considers several important preliminary matters in regards to the project. First of all, he examines himself to see if he can serve as an enthusiastic leader of the Task Force. According to several authors, the pastor plays a key role in the group process. McIntosh and Rusbuldt state: "A contagious vital faith (of the pastor)

can stretch the imagination of those who listen and observe and can encourage those who are growing in their faith to take steps that they have never taken before."⁴² Barna also emphasizes the important role that the pastor takes in the planning process:

However, it is also a reality that an "official" leader from the upper strata of the church hierarchy must champion the process on behalf of the church. Having the sanction of the church leadership is essential to seeing the process catch on and make a difference.⁴³

This does not necessarily mean that the pastor has to take the central role, but he is ready to assume some kind of leadership position in the research. Thus, before the planning process begins, he must determine within himself whether he is ready to make a concerted effort for the project. Indeed, he needs to immerse himself in the Word and prayer so that God can strengthen him for this important task.

Second, he also considers the purpose for planning. Most often the pastor and the congregation begin a study in order to solve a problem, such as a declining worship attendance, lack of financial giving, or an expressed desire by members to conduct more outreach into the neighborhood. He may be concerned about the apathy of the members and wants a new ministry to serve as a catalyst. The members also may be concerned about the church's future and seek a new direction for the congregation. Everyone on the committee must be aware of the actual purpose for the survey:

⁴²McIntosh and Rusbult, 36.

⁴³George Barna, Marketing the Church (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1988), 15.

It is essential that as much clarity as possible be gained so that the task for study can be defined and limited. The key question, "Why do we want this study?" needs to be asked continually throughout all the steps in the study process.⁴⁴

Since a congregation seeks this survey, as opposed to a secular organization, a theological perspective is maintained in the planning process. This paper suggests that the biblical concept of *kairos* is a good way to maintain a theological perspective in the planning process.

Third, it must be determined if the members of the congregation will take ownership of the goals and objectives established by the planning committee. Even though the pastor desires a clear direction for the future, he may encounter resistance from the congregation, causing the project to fail. Thus, he is careful to consult with the church leaders and influential members of the church to determine their interest in the project. Indeed, the church council gives the authorization for the project, or else the members will not take the findings seriously. Several books point out the importance of the congregation's ownership in the planning process. For example, Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney note: "It is important to build ownership across the congregation for the study."⁴⁵ Dale McConkey also agrees that congregation's ownership is essential: "Study after study has demonstrated that the people will not be really committed to helping achieve a result unless they have had a voice in determining what the result will

⁴⁴Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 18.

⁴⁵Ibid., 16.

be."⁴⁶ If the people at first seem unwilling to take ownership, the pastor builds it in the congregation by encouraging them to consider Scripture and practical examples of other congregations that benefitted by planning.⁴⁷

Since St. James is classified as a middle-sized church, that is, a congregation with an average worship attendance of two hundred people, it is important to heed the advice of Lyle Schaller, who adds another perspective to the issue of ownership:

In summary, the awkward-sized church is large enough that it needs an organizational structure based on the concept of representative government, that affirms the role of committees, subcommittees, and task forces, that involves more people in ministry than in administration, and that does not require the minister to be present at every meeting of every committee.⁴⁸

Schaller's point is that the middle-sized congregation is not a participatory democracy, such as a small congregation. It is a republic style of democracy, where a small group of members represents the whole congregation. Thus, the research committee in a middle-sized congregation is usually answerable to the church council. The pastor makes sure that the council members are aware of the research process in terms of ownership.

Although most of the authors agree that these preliminary considerations are important for the planning process, they do not specify how long it takes to

⁴⁶Dale D. McConkey, Goal Setting (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House), 11.

⁴⁷McIntosh and Rusbult, 25-30.

⁴⁸Lyle E. Schaller, The Middle Sized Church (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 112.

complete these steps. However, they all point out that no pastor or congregation ignores these primary issues and initiates a planning process right away. These issues must be considered carefully before the planning process begins.

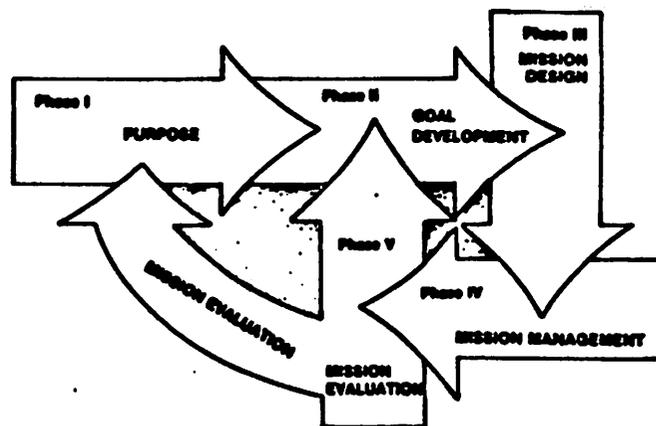
Therefore, it may take at least several months or more to prepare for the project.

Details of the Planning Process

After the pastor reviews these preliminary considerations, he is ready to examine the details of planning. While various authors present their own styles of planning, they are all similar in their terminology. Rusbuldt, Gladden, and Green present a very helpful planning process in their book, Key Steps in the Local Church Planning. The book presents five phases of planning, which are shown in Figure 1:

FIGURE 1

A DIAGRAM OF THE PLANNING PROCESS



Reprinted, by permission, from Judson, Key Steps, 13.

This diagram is useful because it shows graphically all the steps for planning. The members can understand how the planning process flows and see how they are expected to participate. According to the authors, there are five steps to planning:

1. Phase I Purpose: The purpose of the church is reviewed.
2. Phase II Goal Development: Goals and objectives are proposed based on the conducted research.
3. Phase III Mission Design: Program plans and their details are designed.
4. Phase IV Mission Management: The church does ministry according to Phase III.
5. Phase V Mission Evaluation: The whole planning process is evaluated according to the set purpose.

The authors then develop major points for these five phases and explain very well how these planning steps are interrelated.⁴⁹ According to the diagram, this study will focus upon Phase II, Goal Development.

Another important step in planning is the selection of the appropriate research design for the project. According to Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, there are four major task designs. The needs analysis model assesses the needs of the people within the congregation and the community so that programs can be developed to meet identified needs. Another model is the case study, which makes an intensive study of a single group to gain understanding, which can be

⁴⁹Richard E. Rusbult, R.K. Gladden, and N.M. Green, Key Steps in Local Church Planning (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press), 13-14.

transferred to other groups. The committee may also select the experimental model, which tests in a scientific way the effect of a variable upon a certain group. The group may also conduct a correlational design model, which attempts to discover and measure the relationship between two variables. This method does not manipulate one of the variables, as found in the experimental model, but the participants try to identify relationships that already exist in the congregation.⁵⁰ Any of these designs is a valid method for congregational study; however, the St. James Task Force is advised to use the needs analysis model because it is the simplest design to provide the congregation with a future direction to address those needs:

Although it calls for research at a very basic level, needs analysis can perform a critical role for the church, both by surfacing hidden needs and by creating a sense of ownership of the program suggestions which may emerge from the process.⁵¹

When the committee operates with the needs analysis model, it uses such tools as questionnaires, analyses of census data, and interviews to obtain the necessary data.

Although the needs analysis model is selected, there are some concerns about this tool as a method of research for a congregation. Some people may be concerned that this design promotes people's needs as the primary focus for the church and that the Gospel is minimized. This is a legitimate concern because

⁵⁰Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 151.

⁵¹Ibid., 158-59.

the church depends upon the Gospel for its being. Perhaps a research committee becomes so enamored with the data that they forget the true purpose of the church. Therefore, it is necessary to keep this needs analysis model in a spiritual framework so that the Gospel receives the emphasis. If the concept of *kairos* is included, a research group may use the needs analysis model to help the congregation see the possibilities for mission at the decisive time. Kolb speaks about the importance of the church's mission in this way: "In every situation of our lives God wants us to be on the lookout, searching for lost and erring sinners."⁵²

One other important step in the planning process is the method of evaluation. According to McIntosh and Rusbuldt:

Evaluation is the last and perhaps the most valuable step in growth planning. It is not something done as an afterthought or as an exercise to be done because someone "expects" you to do it. The step of evaluation is the last growth planning step you will take. It is valuable for two reasons. First, evaluation will tell you how well you have done what you have set out to do. Second, it will provide some guidance and hints for the future.⁵³

The project is evaluated in several ways. First, the pastor listens to the informal feedback from the members at each meeting. If the members express concern or appreciation about a certain step of the process, these comments are noted and evaluated.⁵⁴

⁵²Kolb, 204-5.

⁵³Rusbuldt and McIntosh, 106.

⁵⁴Douglas W. Johnson, The Care and Feeding of Volunteers (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1978), 85-86.

Second, the members of the committee make a formal evaluation of the research process by filling out a questionnaire: "Formal definition evaluates, appraises, judges effectiveness, and commonly seeks to determine the extent to which goals have been achieved."⁵⁵ Therefore, both the members of the research group and the planning committee are surveyed to learn their perspectives about the planning process.

Selection of Committee Members

Once all the preliminary details of the planning process are in place, then people are selected and contacted to serve on the group. Even if a good planning process is designed, it will fail unless the right people participate and use their spiritual gifts to complete the tasks.

When the members of the congregation are considered as possible candidates for the research group, they are selected according to the skills they have to complete the project and their diligence in completing an assignment on time.⁵⁶ They probably are not the leaders of the congregation so that they can focus upon the task at hand and not be occupied with other duties. Some members may be recruited according to the length of time they have been members of the church so that they can interpret the data according to their remembrances of past church events.

⁵⁵Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 131.

⁵⁶McIntosh and Rusbult, 85.

Since a research committee involves various tasks, people with different spiritual gifts and skills must be recruited. In terms of spiritual gifts, people who have the gift of knowledge are necessary for research. These people display "the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discover, accumulate, and clarify information and ideas that are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the Body."⁵⁷ In addition, the pastor contacts people who demonstrate the gift of administration: "The special ability God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals . . . and to devise and execute plans for the accomplishment of those goals."⁵⁸

Besides their spiritual gifts, certain members are selected according to the special skills they possess. People who are very familiar with setting up and analyzing statistics are encouraged to participate. On the other hand, since this project involves questionnaires and interviews, members who enjoy talking to other people are recruited. Since this project calls for parishioners with diverse skills, those who possess at least one of these skills are contacted; they do not have to be skilled in all these areas.

Using the criteria above, certain people of the church were contacted to become members of the St. James Mission Study Task Force. When they were

⁵⁷C. Peter Wagner, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979), 260.

⁵⁸Ibid., 262.

first contacted by the pastor, they learned the purpose of the Task Force, the necessary tasks, the estimated time to complete the project, the number of meetings required, and the reason they were needed for this project. All the people were informed that they were under no obligation to participate in the group, but they were encouraged to consider this matter very prayerfully. This method of contacting members to serve on the committee is an important part of the pastor's leadership role:

The leader's role, primarily that of the pastor, has been identified as recruiter, supporter, planner, monitor, stimulator, and decision-maker. In short, a leader helps create a program for the church and then uses his or her talents to find individuals to make that program become a reality. The leader does not sit back and let volunteers do all the work.⁵⁹

While many laypeople of the church were contacted, a few agreed immediately to become involved in the research project. And yet, several people had concerns about the project. They were encouraged to express their concerns and a few of them participated in the project when their questions were addressed. Therefore, seven women and two men consented to become members of the St. James Mission Study Task Force.

It is instructive to note in Table 1 the ages of the members of the Task Force to see the different age groups represented.

⁵⁹Johnson, 82.

TABLE 1

AGE GROUPS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ST. JAMES TASK FORCE

Age Groups of Members	Number of People
20-30	1
31-40	2
41-50	2
51-60	1
61-70	1
71+	2
Total Number of People	9

The table points out the diversity of age groups in the Task Force. Almost every age group was represented.

In addition, it is also interesting to note in Table 2 the Task Force members' length of membership at the congregation to see the representation of long-term and recent members.

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERS OF TASK FORCE ACCORDING TO THEIR
LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP AT ST. JAMES

Length of Membership	Number of Members
1-3 years	2
4-6 years	2
7-10 years	1
10+ years	4

This table indicates that the group was evenly distributed between those who recently became members and those who had been members at St. James for some time.

Pastoral oversight is also an important facet of the project. The pastor cannot just delegate the tasks to the members and not remain in contact with them. He is the leader of the project and must let the group members know that he is available to help them with any difficulties they may have. Also, the pastor gives encouragement to the person who is not completing the task at the proper time; he may possibly assign a part of the project to other members. This means that he uses checkpoints of communication with the members between the meetings: "Checkpoints are not there so that the minister can see how well or how poorly a volunteer is doing. They are in the schedule so that both parties are

reminded of mutual obligations in finishing a job."⁶⁰ Especially when he has a good relationship with the members, the pastor gives positive encouragement to these volunteers.

The First Meeting

A well-planned first meeting is essential for the success of the planning process. It is the time when the various facets about the project are explained; its purpose, nature, and theology; the necessary job descriptions; the timetable to complete the task; the scheduling of the various meetings; the available resources and training; and the role of the pastor in the project. In addition, the members of the committee meet with one another as a group for the first time and become acquainted. Thus, the pastor needed to be ready for the essential points of this meeting: "Meetings are not just-happened-to-drop-by affairs for volunteers. Meetings are structured occasions in which some type of business is transacted for the church."⁶¹

When the pastor and members of the St. James Task Force met for the first time, groundwork was laid for a successful project. The agenda was presented to the members of the group (see Appendix 23). The meeting began with a devotion based on 1 Peter 2:4-9, which explains God's leading role in the beginning and upbuilding of the Church through the specific terms for His people. When the

⁶⁰Ibid., 68.

⁶¹Ibid., 93.

devotions were completed, the members were encouraged to introduce themselves and tell what excites them about St. James. Some of the introductions were humorous, some were fairly serious, so the members hopefully began a close relationship with one another, which is an important factor for the project:

It is important that task force members come to know each other on a personal basis. Persons on the Planning Task Force will be working for a number of months. Provide time for them to share their thinking around the theme, "What excites me about the church today."⁶²

The members were also urged to remain in contact with one another between the meetings.

Once the members of the Task Force introduced themselves, the theological foundations for the project were established. The pastor first explained the nature of the church and then focused upon the nature of the church as expressed in 1 Corinthians 1:1-3. He then informed the members about the theology of planning according to the concept of *kairos*. Several passages were used to point out that God sends Jesus into the world at the decisive time. The members also discovered that according to Scripture, Christians come to faith at God's decisive time and then God gives them opportunities to serve and share their faith. The word *kairos* was not used in this discussion, but rather the term "God's decisive time" was employed. The members understood that they do not determine God's *kairos* itself, but they provide research data for the Planning Committee to propose possible goals that will occur at His proper time.

⁶²Rusbuldt, Gladden, and Green, 34.

After these preliminary considerations, the pastor began to lead the people through the project itself. He explained the basic purpose of the project and how it supports the congregation in its work. He discussed with them the necessary tasks and the timetable for completing them. When he described the tasks, he also reviewed the necessary spiritual gifts and talents needed to complete each specific task, as well as the training and resources available to complete a certain job. He already discussed the particular tasks that apply to the members, but he wanted these responsibilities to be finalized. In this way, all the members of the Task Force found the position that interested them:

Planning is a procedure that allows people to be heard and taken seriously in program development. Good planning does not require that groups come to a consensus, but rather that they decide rationally between alternatives.⁶³

At the same time, the pastor explained his own role in the research process. First of all, he stressed that all the members of the Task Force, including the pastor, are sinful people under God's grace, so they accept one another's accomplishments and failings with one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. He pointed out that his role in this project is that of an overseer, involving encouragement and forgiveness. He also stated that he will remain in contact with them and help them with any problems; he also noted to himself the importance of periodically thanking the volunteers for their work:

⁶³Johnson, 82.

It is important to thank and recognize a volunteer for doing a good job. This is another part of the monitoring task. Again the pastor should pay attention in helping people feel they have fulfilled a ministry.⁶⁴

After some time was allowed for questions and discussion, the group indicated their eagerness to finalize their tasks and begin the research process. This meeting lasted about two hours.

Whenever a planning program is begun, it should be analyzed according to its advantages and disadvantages. The planning process used in this paper has several advantages. First of all, it allows the pastor and laypeople to work together in a project that is limited in time. Everyone in the group is actively involved in the responsibilities of the work. This process provides many avenues for all the members to express their ideas and feel that they are part of the group.

Second, another advantage to this method is that it helps the members of the committee examine pertinent facts both about the congregation and the neighborhood. In some cases the local congregation usually plans only programs to better itself and serve its own members. However, Christ calls the church to look beyond itself and move out in mission. Since a task force conducts research about the neighborhood as well as the congregation, it serves as a catalyst for a planning committee to establish goals and objectives that are less parochial.

This planning process is also helpful to the church because it helps the congregation understand that the Gospel touches the needs of people. Sometimes people think that the church only has to proclaim the Gospel without any regard

⁶⁴Ibid., 106.

to the person hearing it. While the Gospel is the Good News of salvation, the church must be aware that the listener does not hear the message in a vacuum, but has personal needs that the Gospel can touch. This does not mean that the church has to alter the message to reach the hearers, but rather it utilizes those facets of the Gospel that are directly applicable to the person: "We must cultivate a sensitivity to God's will and to the other person's needs which enables us to stand firm against wrong desires and yet show love and concern for the person."⁶⁵ This study enables members of the congregation to be sympathetic and compassionate to the needs of others, as they share the Gospel with them.

Finally, one other advantage is that the emphasis placed upon God's *kairos* in this project helps to keep the theological perspective in the research and planning phases. Usually a planning committee begins with a theological discussion, but the members soon become engaged in a secular discussion of goals and objectives. Very likely, when a committee begins to investigate the data for the congregation and community, it becomes so immersed in the secular facts and figures that it loses some of the theological impetus of the study. However, when a research committee conducts its study with the assumption that the study will help the church understand its mission under God's *kairos*, the members of the group will hopefully retain a theological perspective throughout the process.

On the other hand, there are some disadvantages to this method of research. First of all, each member must be productive and skilled enough to research the

⁶⁵Kolb, 199.

data. They must be willing to spend the time to complete their task on schedule. Since these people are volunteers, they may not always have a high priority for finishing their assignment:

They [volunteers] give time and energy as they are able. During some weeks or months the amount of time given may be substantial while at other times they can give little or no time. There is an ebb and flow to each volunteer's life and consequently to the amount of energy available to give to the church.⁶⁶

What can add to the pastor's frustration is that these people are serving on a volunteer basis and are also members of his congregation. He must decide how to deal with his people if they fail to complete their assignments. If several members do not fulfill their tasks, the task force may erupt into heated discussion and may possibly cause some people to quit the group, if not also the church. Thus, the pastor has to be very careful to maintain gracious "checkpoints" with the members and encourage them in their tasks.

Second, this study is also dependent upon the abilities of the individual laypeople. Although members select a certain task that interests them, they actually may not be skilled in that area. For example, a person may agree to calculate the statistics for a survey, but he may not have the necessary skills to complete the task. This problem may cause a disruption in the group. If a person does not have the skills for an assignment, the pastor appoints another skilled person to work with the member. And yet, this process is dependent upon the group members' abilities and spiritual gifts, which can become a disadvantage.

⁶⁶Johnson, 22.

This project is also limited in its definition of mission. While the study allows for the congregation to consider ways of ministering to members of the congregation and also to people of the community, it does not present ways for the congregation to participate in national and international missions. A research project such as this is limited in its mission scope. The pastor decides how to keep the total mission perspective in view of the congregation.

The pastor also may realize that the group members are becoming so involved in collecting data that they begin to think that the project is only a "numbers game" and that the church is only interested in pursuing its own advantage without a heart for ministry to people:

Believers are always tempted to make an idol of their church and their own activities in the church. It can happen that witnessing believers erect an altar of their own evangelistic activity and evaluate their own worth in God's sight on the basis of how well they witness or, worse yet, how many "converts they make." In so doing we replace our Lord as the center point of our lives with our own talking about Him.⁶⁷

The pastor can help this situation by reminding the members of the committee that the church ministers to these numbers of people as a response to God's grace. The church plans for ministry, not for boasting.

Finally, one other disadvantage to this method is that the emphasis on *kairos* may suggest to the members of the group that the church does not have to do anything in the way of mission, but depend solely upon God's direction. In some respects, this is true. God does give a direction for the church. However, some

⁶⁷Kolb, 202-3.

people may think that they have no responsibility at all in the planning process, but only rely upon God to tell them what to do. Several Bible passages dealing with *kairos* mentioned above may be useful to remind the members that God provides the power and direction for the church's mission, but they are called by God to some responsibility in serving the Lord.

CHAPTER 5

THE PROCESS

When the St. James Task Force began its work on the needs assessment analysis, it first required a schedule of the whole research process so that the members understood how their assigned tasks fitted together to complete the research project. Figure 2 on the next page shows the actual schedule. The Task Force used this schedule as a guideline and began its research with such tools as congregational and community statistics, interviews, and surveys.

Congregation and Community Statistics

One person examined the congregational statistics and plotted the data on a grid. Diane Barber and Kent Hunter's book, *Facing Facts for Church Growth!* provides helpful grids to chart the congregation's decadal worship attendance, Sunday school attendance, giving patterns, composite growth rate, and other statistics to obtain a clear, objective viewpoint about the congregation: "It is important to see measurements not as a personal judgement upon an individual,

FIGURE 2

SCHEDULE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Six months:

- a. Information gatherers will examine newspapers and magazines to find vital information about the community.
- b. A congregational analysis will be made that will analyze worship attendance, Sunday school attendance, giving, and other important facts.
- c. A group of people will make an analysis of the 1990 census and also the CEF survey of the 44109 area of Old Brooklyn.

Five months:

- a. The group will meet to share the news clippings and hear the reports of the congregational and community analysis.
- b. The congregation members will be surveyed concerning their views about St. James. Several people will tabulate the results.

Four months:

- a. The group will meet to discuss the news clippings and hear the report of the congregational survey group.
- b. Some people will accompany the pastor to interview "the opinion elite" of the area including the two councilmen, the editor of the "Old Brooklyn News," the head of Senior Resources, et al.
- c. A group of people will make phone surveys of the neighborhood asking the people their perceptions of community needs.

Two months:

- a. The group will meet to share the news clippings and hear the report of the community interview committee.
- b. A special committee will be appointed to formulate the recommendations of the Mission Study Task Force for the Planning Committee.

One month:

- a. The group will meet to examine the proposed booklet and make suggestions.
- b. Several volunteers will edit the booklet.

Planning Meeting:

- a. Hopefully, several members of the Task Force will be present to participate in the planning session as members-at-large.
- b. The participants of the Planning Committee will be surveyed concerning the booklet.
- c. A week after the planning meeting, all members of the Task Force will meet at the pastor's house for a time of fellowship; they will also fill out a survey.

but as a reflection of reality regarding the health and growth of a group of Christians."⁶⁸ When the church's statistics were plotted on grids, the members of the group could better visualize the growth and decline patterns for the congregation and make an analysis of the church's process.

An advantage to this method is that these statistics alert the church to the positive or negative changes in the congregation for the last ten years. The pastor and congregation will hopefully be motivated to consider some action when they see how the church has progressed. The laypeople may especially be spurred to action because they have never visualized the congregation's statistics before.

A disadvantage to this method is that people may differ in their interpretations of the data. For example, the grid concerning the St. James' decadal attendance shows that the church has been on a plateau for the last six years. In some respects, this is not an encouraging sign. However, many churches in the city of Cleveland suffered an enormous decline in membership, so a plateau in worship attendance may be a somewhat encouraging sign that new people are becoming members at the same rate as other members are moving away. It is possible to have several different interpretations of the same data.

Therefore, the key to using the congregation's statistics is in the interpretation: "Statistics can be read from various angles. It is important that

⁶⁸Diane Barber and Kent Hunter, Facing the Facts for Church Growth! (Corunna, IN: 1982), 15.

the facts and figures be studied in depth."⁶⁹ The members of the Task Force were encouraged to express their own interpretations of the data to arrive at a consensus about the figures.

Besides examining congregational statistics, the Mission Study Task force also researched data about the community. Members of the group studied the census reports to find the demographic patterns. The census reports are available in different formats at a rather inexpensive price; in fact, a neighborhood newspaper provided some specific data about the area. As in the case of the congregational analysis, an advantage to this method is that it is factual and alerts the people to the changes occurring in the community; the disadvantage lies in the large amount of data that may not be helpful to the group: "Just as the amount of available information may overwhelm you with overchoice, so the number of outlets offering various kinds of data may surprise you."⁷⁰

In addition, the Church Extension Fund of St. Louis also provided important demographic data based on the census reports. The congregation ordered a report about a certain ZIP code area or the vicinity around the church at a radius of two miles. Since the Task Force wanted to investigate the whole Old Brooklyn neighborhood, which is under one ZIP code, they ordered a complete report of the 44109 ZIP code. This report contained a general projection for the future, some basic growth patterns, and other relevant information about the designated

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Barna, A Step-by-Step Guide to Marketing the Church, 45.

area. For example, the report for St. James presented such facts as the immediate area around the church faces a 5% decline in the next ten years, a high percentage of elderly live in the area, and the area has a high percentage of apartments and two-family houses. These demographic reports are helpful, but again interpretation is very important to the process.

Barna also suggests another possibility for gathering data: "The local church ought to have several people who are responsible for thinking about and sifting through the wealth of secondary information flooding the marketplace."⁷¹ When the members of the Task Force became involved in this facet of research, they gathered surveys and reports about recent trends of the neighborhood. Some members of the Task Force collected public opinion polls, neighborhood trends, attitude and lifestyle information, and other reports from local newspapers and magazines.⁷² In this way, the group spotted recent trends about the neighborhood. The advantage to this method is that relevant information about the community is easily accessible to the pastor and laypeople. The disadvantage to this process is that the group is dependent upon other sources for the reliability of the information.

⁷¹Ibid., 67.

⁷²Ibid., 67-71.

Interviews

Another helpful tool for gathering data is personal interviews with knowledgeable people of the community. George Barna calls these people "the opinion elite": "In every community, a small cadre of opinion leaders and opinion recorders exists."⁷³ The group of "opinion elite" includes such leaders as local political officials, journalists, educators, law enforcement officials, and business leaders. The advantage to this type of interview is that these people have a good acquaintance with the neighborhood and can make important recommendations based on their experiences. However, a disadvantage to this interview is that these leaders may be biased and perhaps even prejudiced about certain issues affecting the community. They may not provide the whole perspective about the neighborhood. It is suggested that members of the church survey the "opinion elite" once every six months to gain more information about immediate issues affecting the community. These interviews convey to the leaders the fact that the congregation wants to take an active role in the neighborhood.⁷⁴

Surveys

In addition, the St. James Mission Study Task Force planned to conduct surveys of the congregation and community. The committee members first

⁷³Barna, Marketing the Church, 72.

⁷⁴Ibid., 73.

decided to take a survey of the congregation so that the members expressed their own perspectives about the mission of the church:

A congregation usually does not have the resources to respond to all the needs of the members, let alone of persons in the community. Nevertheless, an awareness of needs allows the congregation to focus the resource where the most good can be done. Needs assessment also helps in applying program resources to the level of need.⁷⁵

Thus, this survey may not be a far-reaching instrument, but it still serves as a barometer of the members' viewpoints about the congregation. Carroll, Dudley and McKinney present several surveys that are helpful models for constructing a survey.⁷⁶

The survey appears in Figure 3 on the following pages and employs statements that the members mark their quantitative responses. Several members of the congregation pretested the instrument and a few changes were made. The survey was given to the members during a worship service on a certain Sunday.

The advantage to this tool is that the committee has little trouble analyzing the data. Since the members basically use quantitative means to answer the questions, the survey points out their perspectives about the church. The disadvantage to this method is that it is not a random survey, so it may not represent the actual distribution of members in the congregation. The research group may have to make some allowances for the responses. Also, the results of this survey may not be completely accurate because people may not be honest

⁷⁵Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney, 123.

⁷⁶Ibid., 140-50.

FIGURE 3

THE CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

The Mission Study Task Force is interested in your views about St. James in a variety of areas. You will find here some statements about the church. You may mark the statement with: 1--STRONGLY AGREE, 2--MILDLY AGREE, 3--MILDLY DISAGREE, and 4--STRONGLY DISAGREE, or 5--DON'T KNOW.

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| STRONGLY
AGREE | MILDLY
AGREE | MILDLY
DISAGREE | STRONGLY
DISAGREE | DON'T
KNOW |
- ___ 1. We have a good process of visiting members with special needs.
 - ___ 2. Our church should be more concerned about the neighborhood.
 - ___ 3. We at St. James do a good job of welcoming visitors.
 - ___ 4. I try to carry my faith over to other areas of life.
 - ___ 5. Our Sunday school does a good job of educating the children.
 - ___ 6. Our preschool is an important part of St. James' mission.
 - ___ 7. We need a stronger youth program.
 - ___ 8. We could use more adult Bible classes.
 - ___ 9. The leaders of our church show a concern to know what people are thinking when decisions are to be made.
 - ___ 10. Our church building gives a fine appearance to the community.
 - ___ 11. We at St. James are concerned about the seniors.
 - ___ 12. We could do a better job of spreading the Good News of Jesus to the community.
 - ___ 13. Our worship uplifts and strengthens people to go out in their daily life.

- ___ 14. Our church provides for the guidance and growth of members' spiritual lives.
- ___ 15. St. James should develop more fellowship opportunities so that people can know one another.
- ___ 16. The members should be encouraged more to support the work of the church and Synod.
- ___ 17. The members should be encouraged to speak out as Christians to the social, political, and economic issues of the time.
- ___ 18. St. James should support families who send their children to Lutheran elementary or high schools.
- ___ 19. On the whole, I am satisfied with how things are progressing at St. James.

about the survey, but rather mark the survey the way they think they ought to respond. The committee needs to be careful as it analyzes the information.

One other tool for gathering data is the telephone survey. In this method, members are trained to contact random people of the community by phone and ask them about their perceptions about the neighborhood. Barna's book, A Step-by-Step Guide to Church Marketing, provides helpful information about the phone survey, including random samples, actual phone surveys, and other necessary information. He suggests that the group make at least one hundred to two hundred calls on people to arrive at a valid sample.⁷⁷

Although it sounds simple to devise a telephone survey, actual experience shows that such a survey requires much thought and effort. First, the actual purpose for the questionnaire must be determined. Second, the survey must be constructed in such a way that the questions are brief and easy to understand and also clearly articulate the purpose of the survey. Finally, the introduction to the survey must catch the attention of the respondent and encourage him or her to participate in the process.⁷⁸

Since this survey is conducted for a congregation, one may ask if the caller extends to the respondent an invitation to attend worship. Several surveys, including The Phone's For You, employ a survey form together with an invitation

⁷⁷Barna, Marketing the Church, 96.

⁷⁸Ibid., 77.

to attend worship. Barna takes the view that the survey should not be evangelistic in nature:

One final caution regarding the use of surveys. Please realize that a survey is not a means of leading into an evangelistic pitch. Many ministries have utilized this approach, starting out with a series of questions that lead up to a presentation of the gospel or an invitation to a church or some related event, but this is an unethical method.⁷⁹

Therefore, the St. James survey caller did not extend a direct invitation to any respondent to attend worship; however, if the respondent asked any questions about the church, the caller provided the necessary information. When the survey was ready, it was pretested with several members of nearby Lutheran churches to determine the clarity of the instrument. The form of this survey is found in Figure 4 on the next page. The respondents were first given the opportunity to indicate if a certain program is needed in the community. After they expressed their opinion about all the suggested programs, these people named the three possible ministries in which they were particularly interested. They were also encouraged to suggest other possible neighborhood programs. When the survey was completed, the caller was supposed to ask the person's age and the number of family members; however, if the person seemed reticent to share this information, the caller made an estimate.

Even before the actual form for the telephone survey was completed, the sample of people in the neighborhood was determined. It is important to have the correct sample of people for a valid survey; otherwise, the survey is useless:

⁷⁹Ibid., 103.

All members of the target population must have a chance to be included in the sample. This means that the resulting sample has precluded bias based on nonrepresentative selection procedures. It is the bias from unequal selection that would render the results of a survey misleading.⁸⁰

Thus, the Task Force did not use a telephone book as a source for names because a certain group of people was excluded. Random phone numbers were not feasible for the survey because the survey focused upon a certain neighborhood in Cleveland. Thus, a street cross book was employed for the random names. This book listed the names of people and their phone numbers according to street addresses. The streets of the Old Brooklyn neighborhood were selected by random and then every twentieth name was selected. This sample is an example of simple random samples: "Simple random samples are the most pure of the sampling procedures. In a simple random sample (SRS), every element on the list (known as the simple frame) has an equal and known chance of being selected."⁸¹ After determining the survey and the random sample, the committee was ready to begin its work.

One advantage to the phone survey is that it provides a quick and efficient means to determine people's needs. The caller can complete the assigned calls in a short amount of time. Also, the respondent is promised anonymity, so he or she is more likely to give accurate responses. The telephone survey also is very

⁸⁰Ibid., 79.

⁸¹Ibid., 81.

inexpensive to operate compared to other methods of surveys, such as a mail survey.

The disadvantage to the phone survey is that people can easily become hostile to the whole process. Since telemarketers daily bombard people's houses, the respondents may quickly tune out any survey request; they may become suspicious about any request the caller makes or give phony answers to get off the line. In addition, another disadvantage to this process is that it is very dependent upon the skill of the caller. When some callers survey people on the phone, they become so passive that they hardly elicit any responses. This survey requires callers who enjoy talking to others and are able to encourage the respondents to make a response. Thus, people must be recruited as callers who are not only willing to make the calls, but also are somewhat courageous when they contact people of the neighborhood. In addition, the callers need adequate training so that they know how to make a correct call.

Another disadvantage to this method is that the callers may become discouraged about negative comments from the respondents. If they have problems with their calls, they may refuse to participate any further in the survey. The pastor can remedy this situation by contacting these people periodically to encourage them.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

The tools used in this research study included statistical reports, interviews, and surveys of the congregation and community. This chapter evaluates the effectiveness of these tools in the research process.

Statistical Study of the Congregation

The statistical reports of the congregation motivated the members of the Task Force to make some pertinent interpretations of the data. In fact, when the group members discussed the congregational statistics, two divergent perspectives became apparent. The longtime members approached the data from a historical viewpoint; they focused upon the factors within the congregation as the causes for decline or growth. Those who were members of St. James five years or less analyzed the data according to factors outside the congregation; they tended to suggest more complex reasons for the church's growth or decline. Thus, these members provided a balance in interpretation. The older members helped the group to see the historical significance of the data; the recent members helped the group to understand that outside factors also caused growth or decline in the congregation.

When the members of the Task Force examined the graph concerning the congregation's decadal communicant membership, they made several interpretations about the statistics. This graph appears in Figure 5 on the next page. The graph showed the members that the St. James membership was at a plateau from 1982 until 1985; however, from 1985 until the present, the congregation experienced a gradual decline in membership.

When the older members first examined the graph concerning membership, they expressed relief because most of them expected a sharper decline in membership than what was shown on the graph. They explained the decline in terms of forces within the congregation; namely, the retirement of the elderly pastor in 1988. This man told the congregation about his plans three years before he actually retired, and began to slow down in his ministerial duties. The group members suggested that this retirement announcement caused some people to leave the congregation. Lyle Schaller in his book The Middle-Sized Church agrees that the pastor's position has an important effect upon a middle-sized church such as St. James:

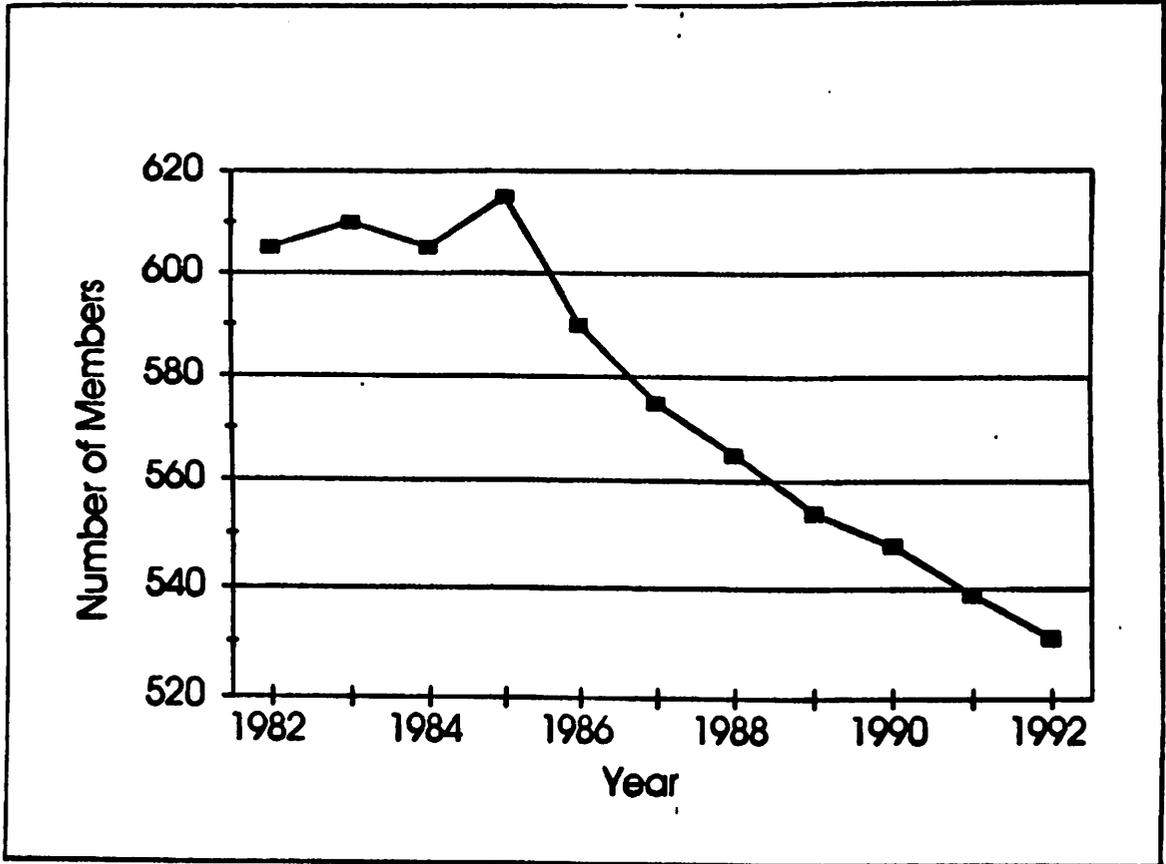
The awkward-sized congregation, to a far greater degree than smaller congregations, is highly dependent on the competence, compatibility, initiative, and tenure of a creative pastor. Like many larger churches, and unlike most very small membership congregations, the awkward-sized church frequently is greatly influenced by the ministerial leadership.⁸²

Thus, it is possible that the announcement of the beloved pastor's retirement had an effect on the church.

⁸²Lyle Schaller, The Middle-Sized Church, 104.

FIGURE 5

DECADAL MEMBERSHIP OF ST. JAMES



A related factor that may also have had an effect on the decline in membership was the dismissal of the Director of Christian Education in 1990. This man was responsible for several Bible classes, the Sunday school, and the youth group. Although he was well-respected in the congregation, the position was reduced to a part-time basis due to financial problems. This man then sought a call elsewhere, which caused a problem in the church's staffing. Lyle Schaller corroborates this point that changes in staff greatly affect membership in the middle-size congregation:

Often it is also a highly vulnerable congregation. When everything is going well, the attendance may climb to the 220 to 240 bracket, but any internal disruption can reduce that factor by one-third.⁸³

Since this congregation experienced several major changes in staffing within a few years, it is not surprising that the membership declined.

In addition to these inner forces that caused decline, several of the recent members focused upon outside factors for decline in membership; namely, the forced busing of Cleveland school children, which began in 1972, and also the completion of the interstate highway system around Cleveland which occurred in 1986. Since many children were bused several miles to other schools, the parents were no longer involved in neighborhood schools; many of the families responded to the situation by moving to the suburbs. Even though busing began in 1972, many families gradually left the area.

⁸³Ibid., 103.

The completion of the interstate highway system also allowed people to move farther away from the city. Before the highway system was completed, people lived close to the city in order to arrive at work on time. With the interstate system in place, people lived farther away and still arrived at their workplaces in a reasonable amount of time. Thus, many families decided to move out of the city to the suburbs and changed their membership to suburban churches. Several tables pointed out these changes in the congregation. Table 3 compared the distance that St. James members lived from the church in 1982 and 1992.

TABLE 3

**DISTRIBUTION OF ST. JAMES MEMBERS IN 1982 AND 1992
BY DISTANCE FROM THE CHURCH BUILDING**

Distance of Member's House from Church	Percentage of Members in 1982	Percentage of Members in 1992
0-2 miles	65%	40%
2.1-3 miles	27%	35%
3.1-5 miles	6%	18%
5 miles +	2%	7%

The table showed that the members of St. James in 1992 moved farther from the congregation and lived at a greater distance from the church. If this were true for the members of the congregation, then other members probably moved to the suburbs and joined congregations nearby.

Table 4 noted the number of families with children who transferred to a suburban congregation from 1986 until 1992, as compared to the total number of families who transferred to other suburban congregations.

TABLE 4

**NUMBER OF ST. JAMES FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN WHO
TRANSFERRED TO SUBURBAN CONGREGATIONS**

Year	Total Number of Families Who Transferred to Suburbs	Number of Families With Children Who Transferred to Suburbs
1986	9	3
1987	5	5
1988	7	5
1989	12	11
1990	10	6
1991	7	5
1992	9	7

This table showed that with the exception of 1986, families with children were the predominant group who transferred out of the church to suburban congregations, so forced busing along with the completion of the interstate system probably were contributing factors to the congregation's decline in membership.

In addition to these factors affecting the congregation, several changes in society were also mentioned. These changes included the lack of parental control in the family, the large number of mothers now working outside the home, the

high rate of divorce, the emergence of single-parent families, the lack of credibility of churches, and more. Even though these changes could not be gauged for their effect upon this church's decline in membership, there was a possibility that they did have some effect. Barna reports in his annual survey that Americans in 1992 showed a lack of commitment to the organized church:

Among people who called themselves Christians, the vast majority maintain traditional views about the local church. For instance, most adults acknowledge the importance of being somehow connected to a church and the importance of at least occasionally attending services or events at the church. The depth of commitment to a given church, though, does not appear to be strengthening, even in the wake of the reported increase in the spiritual commitment and interest of Americans.⁸⁴

The group reached a consensus that several factors worked together to cause the decline in membership.

It is instructive to note that the suggestions for the decline in membership did not pertain to the present pastor or present factors in the congregation. Perhaps people left the church because they were displeased with the present pastor or programs and policies of the church. This fact illustrates the frustration of interpreting the data. While the data alerted the Task Force to a problem in the congregation, it was often difficult to get to the root cause of the problem, especially if the group was not willing to examine the present causes for decline, of which they may be a part. Barber and Hunter reflect about this point:

There are always people who will ignore the facts, whether they be from a thermometer, a blood test, or a membership graph. Yet for most people,

⁸⁴George Barna, The Barna Report 1992-93 (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992), 90.

facing the facts is the beginning of a process or activity to improve. Those who are experts in the area of change say that positive change can never take place until the people see the need for change. The desire must be present.⁸⁵

Thus, the group needed to consider many possible interpretations of the data to arrive at a consensus.

Figure 6 on the next page presented the decadal worship attendance at St. James. This graph showed trends that were similar to the membership graph; namely, there was a plateau from 1982 until 1985 and then a sharper decline occurred from 1985 until 1992. It was likely that the same factors that caused the decline in membership were also at work in the decline in worship attendance. A further point of interest was the growth of attendance in the early worship service. This service originally did not attract many worshipers when it began in 1978, but this service will soon overtake the later service in attendance.

Figure 7 on the following page presented the decadal Sunday school attendance. Compared to the graphs for decadal membership and worship attendance, this chart showed some erratic patterns throughout the years. The Sunday school attendance rose one year and then it fell the following year. In the past three years, there was a steep decline in Sunday school attendance. The rises in attendance were attributed to the concerted efforts that the Sunday School staff made to stimulate Sunday school attendance; however, they did not maintain this effort, so the average attendance dipped the following year. The recent decline in

⁸⁵Barber and Hunter, 17.

Sunday School attendance was caused by the number of families with children who transferred to other congregations, along with the elimination of the Director of Education position.

Figure 8, found on the next page, presented the categories of gains and losses in the last ten years. The category that especially caused the most concern was the small number of people who transferred to St. James from another congregation.

FIGURE 6

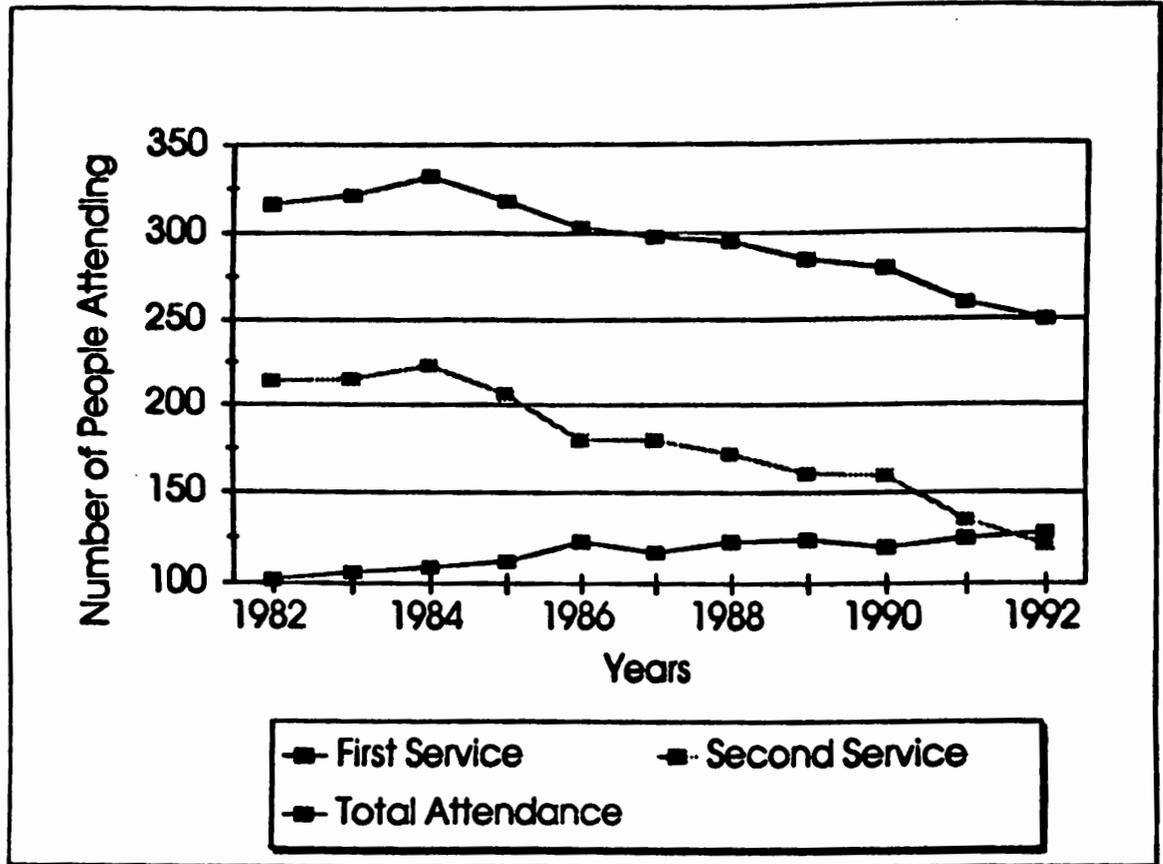


FIGURE 7

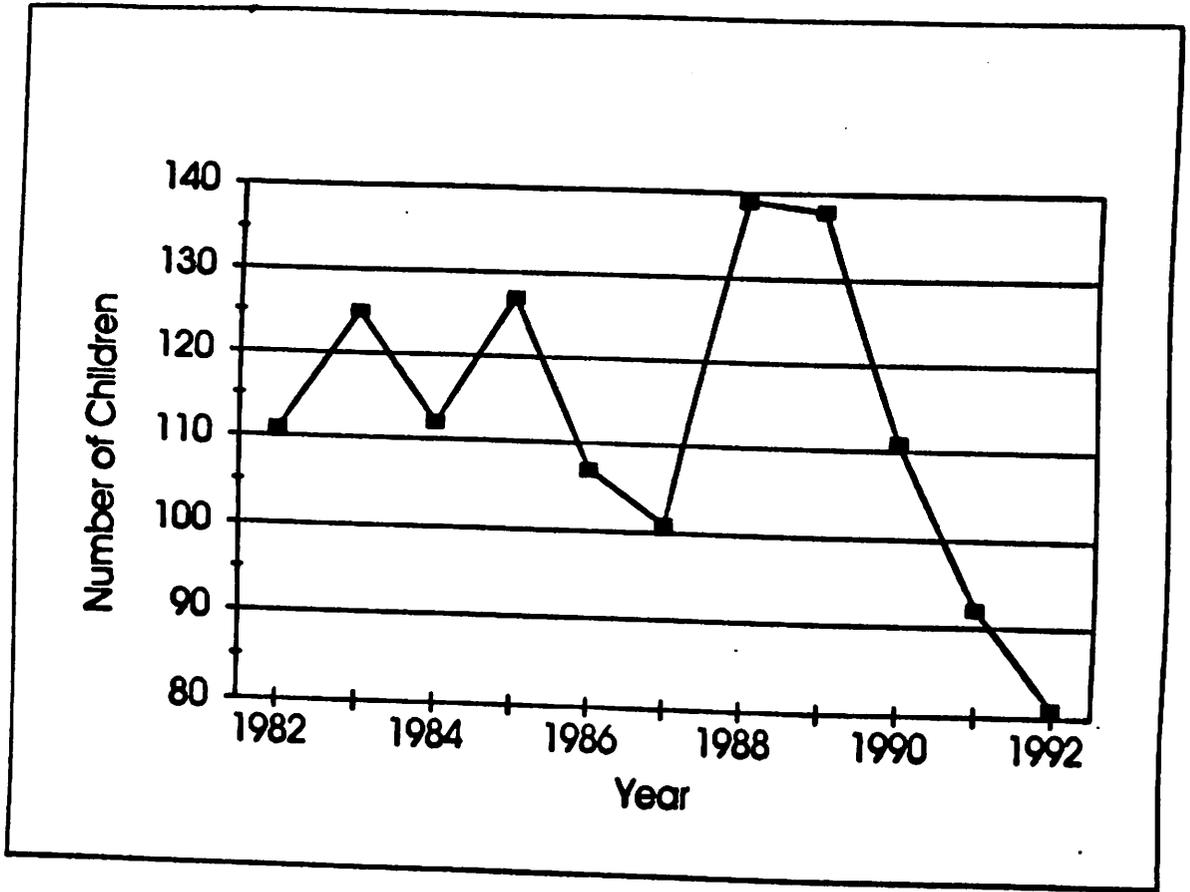
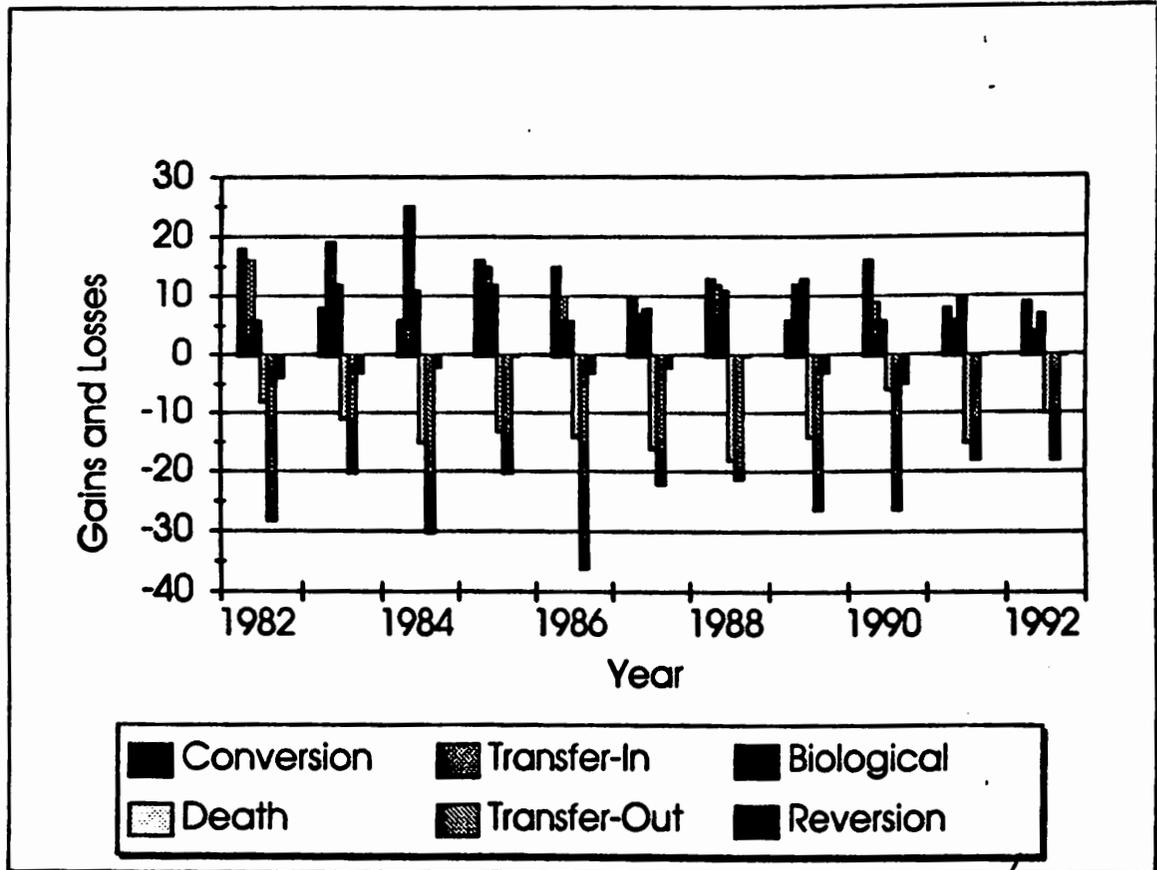


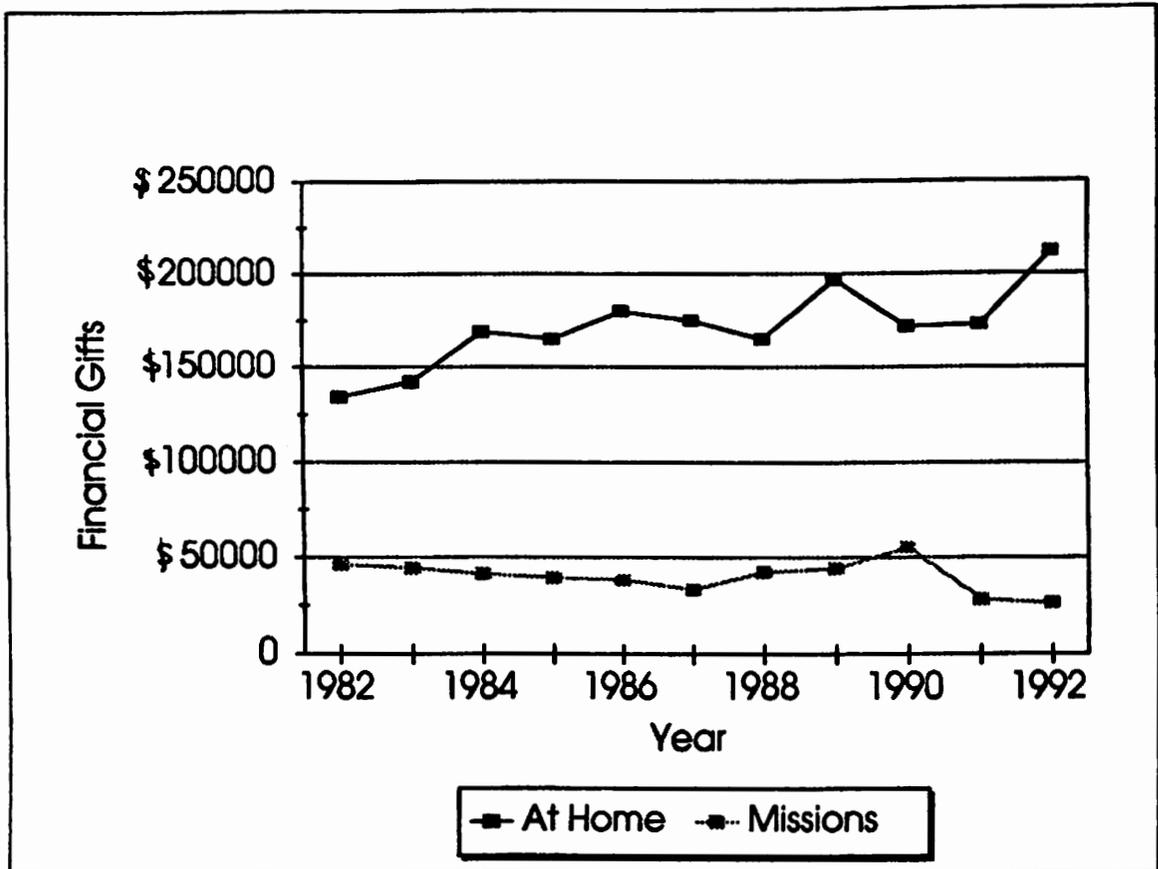
FIGURE 8



Each year a large number of people transferred to other churches in a steady stream, but the church used to count on a number of transfers in to offset this number. This graph indicated to the group members that the church could not rely on transfers in the future; it needed to plan more programs of outreach into the community and develop more fellowship groups.

The figures for adult conversion revealed that from 1982 until 1988 at least ten or more people became members; in three of the last four years, fewer than ten people became members of the church. The church promoted different methods of outreach, but it must consider intensifying its efforts in the future. Figure 9 on the following page showed the giving patterns of the congregation. The giving pattern for missions was at a plateau with a spurt of growth in 1990. In this year, the congregation adopted a special mission project and many members participated in the program. In the following years, the mission giving declined sharply, possibly in reaction to the extra push in 1990. The pattern for giving at home was more mysterious. Since there was a steady decline in membership, it was expected that the giving also declined. While there were several declines in the giving pattern, some modest gains occurred in 1991 and in 1992, and some spectacular gains occurred in 1989 and 1993. While it was difficult to account for these gains, some members suggested that the arrival of the new pastor in 1989 and the implementation of several new programs in 1992 explained the growth in giving. At any rate, the giving patterns did not follow the membership and church attendance patterns.

FIGURE 9

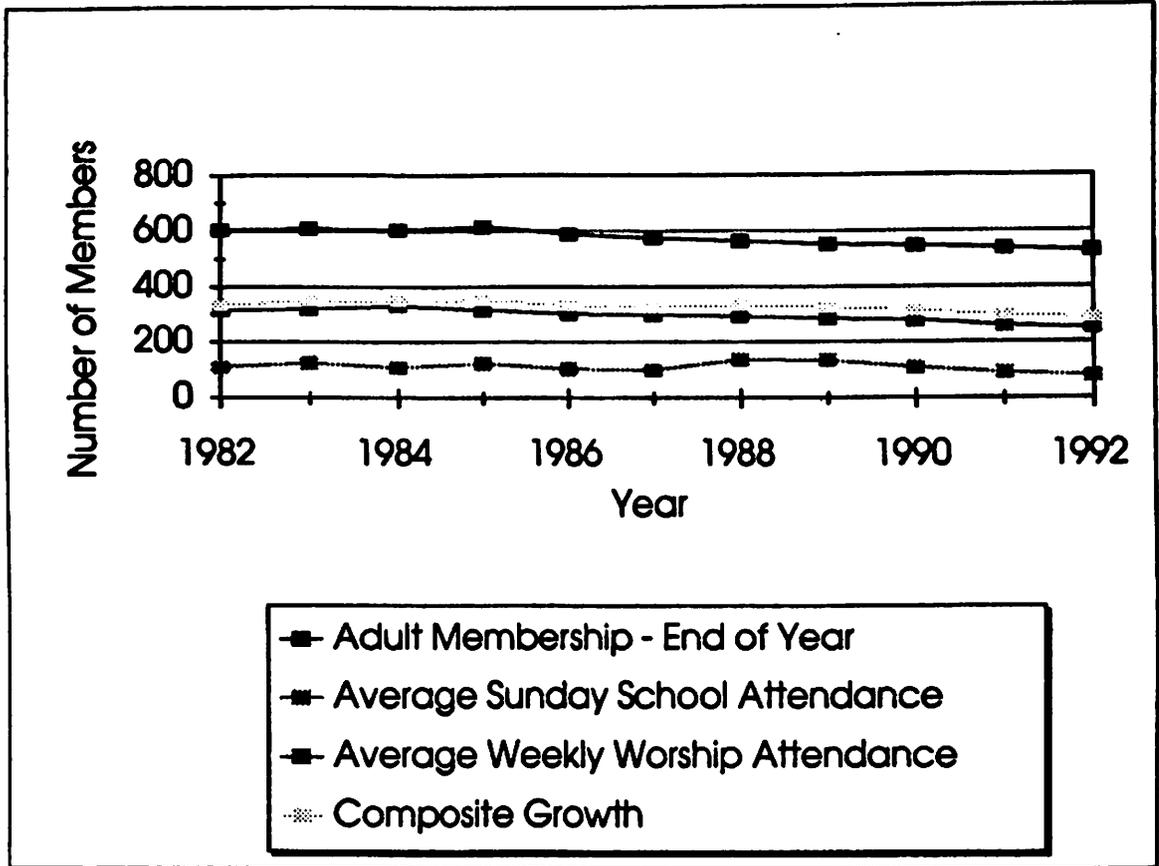


The composite growth of the church, as presented in Figure 10, reiterated the statistics that already appeared in the other graphs. The composite growth is calculated by adding the church membership at the end of the year, the average worship attendance for the given year, and the average Sunday school attendance for the year and dividing this number by three. Each year's figures can be computed for its composite growth.⁸⁶ This graph pointed out that the church faced a downswing in its attendance and membership. In addition, when the biological growth rate was projected alongside the composite growth, it revealed that St. James has not kept pace with the biological rate. The biological growth is computed by taking the number of communicants at the beginning of the decade and multiplying this number by the biological growth rate of 25%. When the result is added to the number of members at the beginning of the decade, the sum is the number of members expected in ten years, the biological growth.⁸⁷ So, St. James had 585 members in 1982. This number is multiplied by the biological growth rate of 25% to arrive at the figure of 146. When this number is added to the original number of members of 585, the final figure is 731. Thus, if the church only grew by the biological rate, it should have had at least 731 members. Unfortunately, the membership at St. James only numbered 531 in 1992. This fact indicated that St. James did not kept pace with the biological growth.

⁸⁶Ibid., 78.

⁸⁷Ibid., 52.

FIGURE 10



Two other graphs revealed important data about the composition of the congregation. Figure 11 presented an age pyramid of the congregation. Several interesting facts emerged from an examination of this graph. Even though St. James was perceived as a church that ministers to the elderly, people in the middle-age groups, ages 30-50, comprised a larger group by percentage (27%) than did the elderly group, ages 60 and beyond (25%). This fact illustrated the truth about kairos. There were several people of the elderly group who took leadership of their programs, whereas no one from the middle-age group volunteered to lead these people. Also, the middle-age people did not show interest in any programs, except for short-term ones, whereas the elderly members showed a great interest in their programs. It was also noted that there was a comparatively large number of post-teen people, ages 20-30, in the church (11%). This group was often neglected in a church and did not always display much interest in any church program. Perhaps a program should be developed for them. Finally, although the members of the congregation expressed a concern about the high school youth, they did not comprise a high percentage of people in the church (9%). This concern then was not based on number of youth, but rather on the special problems that they encountered. Figure 12, found on the following page, was a graph about the composition of the congregation according to family structure. This graph showed some important facts about the family structures in the church. The single people comprised by far the largest group in the

FIGURE 11

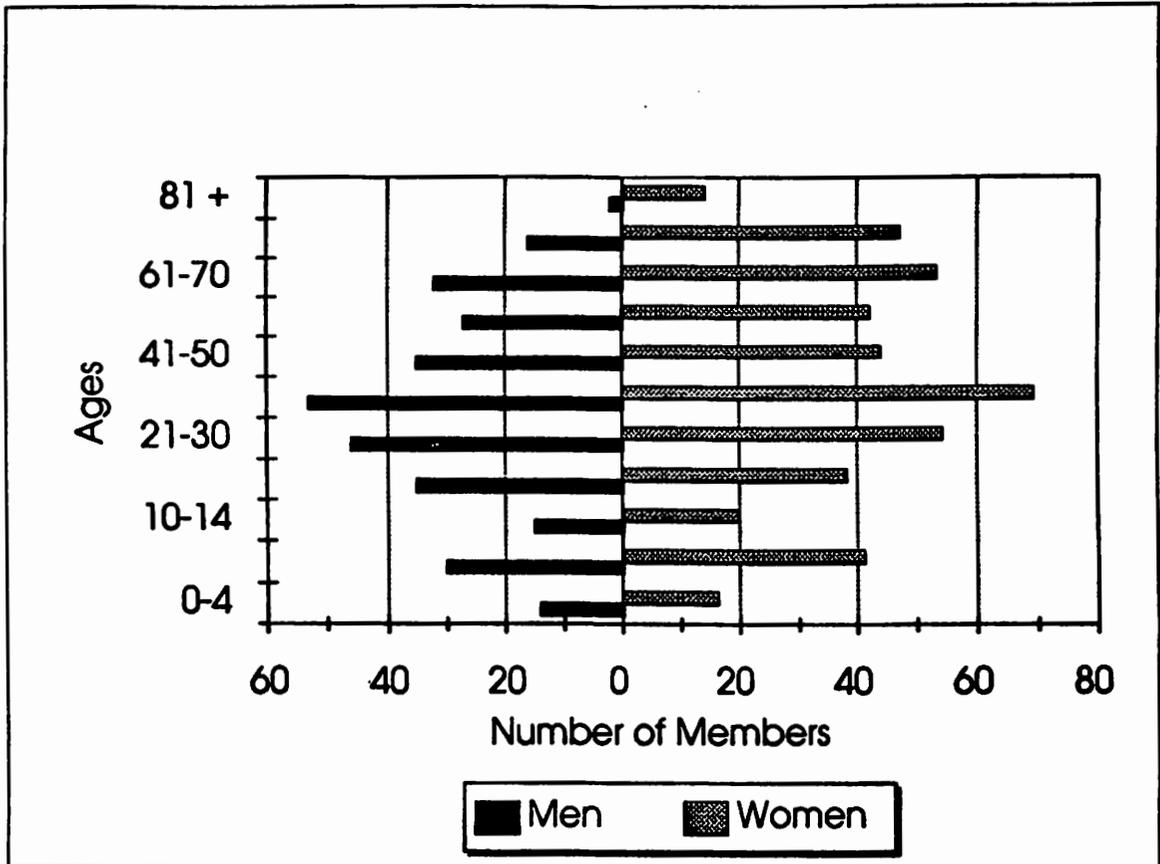


FIGURE 12

**COMPOSITION OF ST. JAMES MEMBERS
BY AGE AND FAMILY STRUCTURE**
Total number of people in the congregation: 743

<u>Family Structure</u>	<u>Number of Members in Congregation</u>
<u>Unmarried:</u>	
0-9	101
10-14	35
15-20	73
21-30	66
31-40	56
41-50	7
51-60	7
61+	10
	Total: 355 = 47%
<u>Married with children:</u>	
21-30	29
31-40	59
41-50	45
51-60	6
61-70	10
71+	5
	Total: 154 = 21%
<u>Married with children moved out of household:</u>	
41-50	12
51-60	20
61-70	36
71+	28
	Total: 96 = 13%
<u>Divorced:</u>	
21-30	5
31-40	7
41-50	7
51-60	7
61+	3
	Total: 29 = 4%
<u>Widowed:</u>	
41-50	8
51-60	29
61-70	26
71-80	30
81+	16
	Total: 109 = 15%

congregation. Of course, the unmarried children, ages 0-15, was a large portion of the unmarried group, but the other groups of singles also had a large number of people. The married people also had a large percentage of people in the congregation. It was interesting to note that there was a large group of married people who were over the age of 60.

The Task Force group members also noticed that the number of divorced people was not as large as expected. Some of the divorced people were active and clamoring for their own support group. Even though they were few in number, a group for divorced people could be established, if the right factors were present.

According to calculations, St. James had twenty-five fellowship and Bible study groups. Usually it is a good idea to have six groups per one hundred people, so in effect, St. James needed about thirty-six groups. The congregation established a number of fellowship groups, but it still should develop more groups.

Even though St. James was perceived as a church of widows, the actual figures demonstrated that they were not a large number in the congregation; however, since this group was very active in church activities and maintained contact with one another, people supposed that St. James had many widows.

It was also helpful to categorize the family structures according to age groups. The Task Force better understood the church's situation when the major family groups were listed according to age and family structure. In fact, the information gained from this chart was applied to the church's plans for the future. Usually, programs are not initiated because a church is aware that a

certain family structure needs a ministry or program. A church often begins a program because several people are advocates for a certain group and compel the council to investigate establishing a program. Perhaps if a church considers which major family groups are lacking programs, it would establish ministries with these groups in mind. Table 5 shows a list of family groups at St. James that presently do not have any specific program. These groups are ranked according to the number of people in the group.

TABLE 5
FAMILY STRUCTURES/AGES CURRENTLY NOT RECEIVING
ANY CHURCH PROGRAM
RANKED ACCORDING TO SIZE

Rank	Family Structure	No. of people
1	Unmarried, 20-30	66
2	Married/Children, 31-40	59
3	Unmarried, 31-4	56
4	Married/Children, 41-50	45
5	Divorced, 31-60	18

This table showed that unmarried people, ages 20-30, and also married people with children, ages 31-40, especially needed programs at St. James. Perhaps the programs will not be initiated right away, but the church can take some intentional steps to investigate how to begin a ministry to these groups of people and not always react to a situation. When the congregation was analyzed according to its statistics, several patterns were discovered that could lead to more

ministries. Thus, it was very helpful to examine the congregational statistics as a foundation for establishing its plans.

Statistical Study of the Community

After the Task Force reviewed the congregation's statistical data, the members examined the statistics about the Old Brooklyn neighborhood. The Old Brooklyn Development Corporation provided the census report, which contained specialized data about the area. The conclusions, which were gained from the 1990 census report, are found in Figure 13 on the following page.

The data established that the Old Brooklyn neighborhood was one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the city of Cleveland with an average income of \$27,757; however, it did not appear to be a wealthy area when compared to the \$36,000 average income of Parma, a nearby suburb. There were other suburbs with even higher average incomes.

This census report corroborated most of the observations made about the Old Brooklyn neighborhood in Chapter 2 concerning housing information, educational background, economic background, percentage of the people commuting to work, and racial composition. The statistic that caused the greatest concern was the projection that the neighborhood will decline by 11% in the next ten years. This decline will be very harmful to the neighborhood and also to St. James Lutheran Church.

The members of the Task Force gained many ideas by examining the census report. This data helped the members to identify possible target groups for outreach and gave general background about the people who lived there.

Besides the 1990 census, the Church Extension Fund report "Community Context for Congregational Planning: A User's Guide to Small Area Demographic Data" was used. This report utilized data from the 1990 census and added an extra dimension:

FIGURE 13**CONCLUSIONS FROM THE 1990 CENSUS ABOUT
THE OLD BROOKLYN NEIGHBORHOOD**

- A. This neighborhood has been predicted to have -11% growth around the church, but a growth pocket has been projected for an area north of Spring Road.
- B. The neighborhood is 48% male and 52% female. The average age is 35.87; the median age is 33.02. The largest age category is people ages 35-44 years old (14%).
- C. The average age of the neighborhood's houses is 50+ years, about 12% higher than the national average.
- D. About 46% of the people in the neighborhood live in apartments or double dwellings, about 10% higher than the national average.
- E. Most of the people living here do not work in the area; about 76% of the neighborhood population travel at least fifteen minutes or more to arrive at work.
- F. Only 16% of the adults are college graduates; in fact, 67% of the population did not go beyond their high school education.
- G. Only 12% of the people living in Old Brooklyn have professional occupations; the largest group of people employed is machine operators and machinists (15%).
- H. About 43% of the houses in the neighborhood have a value of \$50,000 to \$75,000, which is a high percentage when compared to the other neighborhoods of Cleveland.
- I. The average income of the area is \$27,757; the median income is \$24,798. This average income is the second highest one among the Cleveland neighborhoods.
- J. Racially, the Old Brooklyn neighborhood is 85% Caucasian, 3% Afro-American, and 12% Hispanic.

In addition to the demographic statistics, the EQUIFAX system includes a market segmentation or "cluster" scheme, which statistically groups or "clusters" the U.S. population into 50 segments with similar characteristics—age, income, education, family, composition, housing characteristics, etc.⁸⁸

Thus, this report placed the people into several categories according to their income, education, and the like, and gave basic information about them.

Figure 14 on the next page presents the pertinent data obtained from this report. Generally speaking, the CEF study pointed out that singles and older people are the majority living in the area. The largest cluster in the neighborhood, "Trying Metro Times," was a group of singles and elderly people who worked hard to survive. The second largest cluster was "Settled In," a group of elderly people who owned their homes. The fifth largest cluster, "White Picket Fence," included families with children; this was only 5.3% of the neighborhood population. Thus, this study indicated that singles and elderly people are the major groups of prospects for possible new ministries. The study also showed that only a few professional people lived in Old Brooklyn; its residents were mostly middle- to lower-class people. In this respect the people in the community were somewhat similar to the membership at St. James. This meant that the congregation did not have many cultural barriers to overcome in order to present the Gospel.

The report also pointed out that most of the clusters of people in the neighborhood struggled to survive. This fact indicated that the congregation might design a program that touched the physical needs of people together with their

⁸⁸Church Extension Fund Report, Commissioned by St. James Lutheran Church (St. Louis, MO, 1992), 5.

FIGURE 14

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE CHURCH EXTENSION FUND REPORT ABOUT THE 44109 AREA

According to the Church Extension report, these family "clusters" are most prevalent in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood. A description of these family "clusters":

1. **Trying Metro Times (33.7%)** - a mix of young or old with low income, low education, and low credit activity; they work as operators, fabricators, or laborers earning a low income. A little more than half own their own houses, while a significant number rent. They work hard to survive in an urban area, so they don't have much time for recreation.
2. **Settled In (18.8%)** - ages 55-64 white, average education; medium income bracket. They own their own houses, usually an older building built before 1939. The average household has two members. They usually work in technical, sales, and services.
3. **Metro Singles (18.3%)** - renters with low education, medium-low income and average rental activity. These urban people live in single rented apartments. Most walk or take a bus to work. They work in technical or sales positions.
4. **On Their Own (8%)** - young 20s-30s with no children and medium income. They work in technical, sales, and administrative fields; they mostly live in apartments. They are "incubators" - trying to get enough money to buy their own home.
5. **White Picket Fence (5.3%)** - young parents in their 20s and 30s with younger children, mostly 0-4. Their education level is slightly lower than average education; they own single family homes. The average household has three persons. They are frugal with their money. They could also be incubators.

Other important factors about the Old Brooklyn neighborhood:

- About 93% white people living here
- It has been predicated to have -11% growth around the church, but a growth pocket is predicted a little further north
- It has higher than the national average of older homes
- 46% of the people live in apartments or 2-9 people dwellings - way above national average
- The people use public transportation much more than the national average.

spiritual needs. When people struggle to survive, they are often ready to hear the Gospel:

Witnessing disciples sometimes forget the importance of their presence as well as their words, but for the alienated and the impotent, facing evil alone, simply the presence of someone who cares enough to spend time and invest concern, if explained as arising from Jesus' love, can be the most effective witness to God's intervention in our behalf.⁸⁹

As a whole, the Task Force gained some important information about the community from the 1990 census and the CEF Report. There were various interpretations about the reports. One person interpreted the data to mean that the neighborhood is collapsing. Another person compared the facts with the data of other neighborhoods in Cleveland and concluded that the area was flourishing. A person's point of comparison will affect his interpretation, so it may be difficult for a research group to arrive at a consensus.

Another concern about this interpretation of the census data was the members' familiarity with the neighborhood. Several people on the Task Force did not live in the area for some time and were not familiar with recent events, so they were not able to make an accurate analysis of the situation. This group must consist of present residents who understand the dynamics of the area and can make a suitable analysis.

On the other hand, this analysis of the census data and the CEF report was valuable to the Task Force as it suggested ministries for people in the neighborhood. The reports gave some striking portraits of the people who lived near the church and struggled to survive. The CEF report especially gave flesh to

⁸⁹Kolb, 191.

the statistics about the neighbors and allowed some deep discussion about serving these people.

The group members were frustrated with Barna's suggestion to scan the newspapers and magazines for recent surveys. They complained that they did not have time to find any surveys and they questioned the necessity of this activity. When the group members expressed more concerns again at the next meeting, this part of the project was canceled. Barna's suggestion is pertinent because the recent surveys supplemented the 1990 census reports, which become outdated very quickly. The group members seemed burdened by their other tasks, so they probably did not have enough time to fulfill this part of the project. Barna actually suggests that a separate group of people examine the newspapers and magazines for additional information, so perhaps a subcommittee will be assigned to this task the next time.

The Congregational Survey

Although the statistical reports provided a general background about the congregation and community, several surveys were required to focus upon actual needs. The congregational survey occurred on an announced Sunday. The members were notified about the survey by bulletin and the newsletter several weeks before the date of the survey so that the members were not surprised. The worship service for the day was shortened to allow the people enough time to complete their surveys after the service. To obtain the best results, the members

were urged to complete their survey at church and not take them home: "Our experience has shown that the most effective, efficient approach is to utilize in-service, self-administered surveys."⁹⁰ Actually, most members completed their surveys within fifteen minutes, so there were no complaints.

The results of the congregational survey appear in Figure 15 on the next two pages. The responses of the people appear directly below each question. In general, the surveys revealed an overall satisfaction with the church's present work; however, the surveys also showed that the members desired more outreach into the community. This was a desired outcome of the congregational survey:

The objective (of the congregational survey) is to gain feedback on how well the church is meeting the needs of the people who attend it. These people are the base from which the church must grow. If the church is not being

⁹⁰Barna, Marketing the Church, 115-16.

FIGURE 15

RESULTS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL STUDY

The Mission Study Task Force is interested in your views about St. James in a variety of areas. You will find here some statements about the church. You may mark the statement with: 1-STRONGLY AGREE, 2-AGREE, 3-MIDLY DISAGREE, and 4-STRONGLY DISAGREE or 5-DON'T KNOW.

NOTE: You will find the responses to each question printed below it. Each numerical category is printed together with the number of responses. For example, on question 1, 1-83 means 83 people answered the statement with a 1-STRONGLY AGREE; 2-40 means 40 people answered the statement with a 2-MILDLY AGREE, and so on.

	1 STRONGLY AGREE	2 MILDLY AGREE	3 MILDLY DISAGREE	4 STRONGLY DISAGREE	5 DON'T KNOW
___ 1. We have a good procersss of visiting members with special needs.	1-83	2-40	3-3	4-1	5-36
___ 2. Our church should be more concerned about the neighborhood.	1-85	2-56	3-8	4-1	5-12
___ 3. We at St. James do a good job of welcoming visitors.	1-112	2-46	3-4	4-1	5-2
___ 4. I try to carry my faith over to other areas of life.	1-105	2-55	3-1	4-1	5-1
___ 5. Our Sunday School does a good job of educating the children.	1-102	2-32	3-7	4-0	5-22

- ___ 6. Our preschool is an important part of St. James' mission.
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-----|-----|------|
| 1-114 | 2-29 | 3-6 | 4-4 | 5-10 |
|-------|------|-----|-----|------|
- ___ 7. We need a stronger youth program.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|-----|-----|------|
| 1-85 | 2-41 | 3-4 | 4-4 | 5-25 |
|------|------|-----|-----|------|
- ___ 8. We could use more adult Bible classes.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-----|------|
| 1-29 | 2-56 | 3-37 | 4-7 | 5-29 |
|------|------|------|-----|------|
- ___ 9. The leaders of our church show a concern to know what people are thinking when decisions are to be made.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| 1-78 | 2-61 | 3-12 | 4-4 | 5-8 |
|------|------|------|-----|-----|
- ___ 10. Our church building gives a fine appearance to the community.
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1-122 | 2-32 | 3-6 | 4-4 | 5-0 |
|-------|------|-----|-----|-----|
- ___ 11. We at St. James are concerned about the seniors.
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1-127 | 2-27 | 3-1 | 4-0 | 5-7 |
|-------|------|-----|-----|-----|
- ___ 12. We could do a better job of spreading the Good News of Jesus to the community.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| 1-57 | 2-83 | 3-10 | 4-3 | 5-9 |
|------|------|------|-----|-----|
- ___ 13. Our worship uplifts and strengthens people to go out in their daily life.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| 1-96 | 2-51 | 3-8 | 4-5 | 5-2 |
|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
- ___ 14. Our church provides for the guidance and growth of members' spiritual lives.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| 1-99 | 2-43 | 3-12 | 4-3 | 5-4 |
|------|------|------|-----|-----|
- ___ 15. St. James should develop more fellowship opportunities so that people can know one another.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-----|------|
| 1-48 | 2-74 | 3-26 | 4-4 | 5-10 |
|------|------|------|-----|------|

___ 16. The members should be encouraged more to support the work of the church and Synod.

1-81 2-62 3-11 4-2 5-4

___ 17. The members should be encouraged to speak out as Christians to the social, political and economic issues of the time.

1-82 2-56 3-10 4-7 5-6

___ 18. I think we should support families who send their children to Lutheran elementary or high schools.

1-71 2-50 3-20 4-14 5-8

___ 19. On the whole, I am satisfied with how things are going on at St. James.

1-78 2-71 3-7 4-7 5-0

satisfied internally, there is little hope of reaching out to incorporate others into the body. A congregational survey can help identify how well the church is doing and highlight those areas of need that are not satisfactorily addressed.⁹¹

The survey pointed out that the members felt a general sense of satisfaction with the church's work.

However, it was not easy to interpret the results of this survey. For example, the group had a dispute over the fact that statement 8, "We could use more adult Bible classes", and statement 15, "St. James should develop more fellowship opportunities so that people can get to know one another," received comparatively fewer positive responses than did several of the other statements. Did this mean that the church had enough Bible classes and fellowship groups? The differences in interpretation of the surveys may affect the congregation's plan for the future.

The survey also indicated the congregation's desire for mission. The number of positive responses to statement 2, "Our church should be more concerned about the neighborhood," statement 12, "We could do a better job of spreading the Good News of Jesus to the community," and statement 16, "The members should be encouraged more to support the work of the church and Synod" indicated that church members desired a greater outreach effort for the church. These responses gave an impetus for the Planning Committee to design some goals and objectives for outreach.

⁹¹Ibid., 73-74.

The survey also revealed that members were not aware of all the activities and programs at the church. Since there was a comparatively large response of Don't Know to several statements in the survey, this showed that the church must communicate more about its programs and future plans. The surveys indicated that the people were especially unaware of the church's visitation program, Bible classes, and the youth program. The pastor and Church Council thought that they were doing an adequate job of reporting the church's activities in the bulletin or in the newsletter, but this survey relayed that they must use other media periodically to communicate the church's work and mission.

Several members of the congregation also made individual responses to questions concerning the work of the church. These responses were referred to the Board of Elders for further study.

The congregational survey as a whole was regarded as a successful project. While it basically pointed out that the members affirmed the work of the church, it also indicated generally that the members desired a greater emphasis on mission to the community and beyond the city. The members of the Planning Committee were persuaded to establish one or more goals for outreach when they looked at the results of this survey.

However, this survey was limited because it did not include any specific plans for mission. The survey did not reveal if the members would support a specific mission project; it only revealed that they generally desired more outreach. The Planning Committee in effect could not use the results of this survey to prove the

congregation's desire for a specific mission. For example, if the Planning Committee decided to establish outreach to the homeless people based on this survey, it might encounter some strong criticism from the membership so that the mission project is canceled. This survey did not give the congregation's blessing for a specific mission project. The separate projects will go through the usual channels of the church administration to be implemented by the congregation.

Indeed, Schaller questions if a congregation the size of St. James can use the needs assessment survey at all, since the middle-sized church is beyond the size of church that uses participatory democracy:

A fourth reason why polling the members often is not a creative part of the decision-making process in the awkward-sized church is reflected in the central themes of this book. The typical member of the middle-sized congregation believes that it is really a small church. One of the tried and proved methods of turning the middle-sized congregation into a small church is to operate on the assumption that it is a small parish.⁹²

Schaller is indeed correct that the members of a middle-sized church cannot all register their approval for every project; in fact, even a smaller church cannot function if the church use participatory democracy for every decision. Sometimes the pastor has to assume the role of "dictator" to get certain things accomplished. However, the congregational survey is still useful for the members of the middle sized congregation because it helps the church leaders know how the people they represent feel about certain issues in the church:

Often, church leaders become so immersed in the day-to-day reality of making ministry happen that they actually lose touch with the congregation.

⁹²Schaller, The Middle-Sized Church, 117.

A survey can help bring things back into focus, or confirm that things are already in focus.⁹³

However, Schaller does make a point that the leaders of the middle-sized congregation make the major decisions for the church and present them to the voters. In terms of planning, the members of a planning committee make the plans for the future; they cannot rely upon the voters to decide. They cannot use a survey as a means to avoid a decision. Therefore, the survey uses general statements so the members of the church indicate their general views about the congregation. However, in the middle-sized church, it is still the responsibility of the church council to implement these goals at the decisive time.

Community Interviews

The interviews with the "opinion elite" are important to the research process, because they allowed the leaders to share their ideas and views about community needs; also the visits communicated to them that St. James is interested in serving the community. In fact, these leaders were openly surprised, since most of them have never been interviewed by a church research group before. Several leaders at first groped for suggestions for community needs, because they were unsure what a congregation could do. Dr. Richard White responded in a typical way: "You usually see the UCC (United Church of Christ) or the (Roman) Catholic

⁹³Barna, Step-by-Step Guide to Church Marketing, 115.

churches doing something in the neighborhood, but you usually don't see a Lutheran church doing anything; they keep to themselves."⁹⁴

At the beginning of the interview, the leaders were asked to give their impressions of the neighborhood's future. All of the leaders felt optimistic about the neighborhood's future, mostly because the neighbors care for one another.

Councilman Patrick O'Malley noted:

In other parts of the city, the neighbors don't get together, because they aren't really sure if this person is a good person or the drug dealer. At least in Old Brooklyn, people maintain their houses and they look out for someone else. We have several units of Operation Crime-Watch, where the neighbors look out for each other's houses, and we support block parties so people can get to know each other. There are a lot of caring people here; we just don't get all the city funds that other neighborhoods do.⁹⁵

The other leaders expressed similar positive statements about the Old Brooklyn neighborhood.

When the leaders were asked about their concerns for the neighborhood, most of them felt anxious that families with children are leaving the area.

Councilman Rokakis commented: "These people create stability in the neighborhood, because more than any other group, they want to get involved because of their children."⁹⁶ The people who move into the neighborhood,

⁹⁴Dr. Richard White, interviewed by author. Notes. Cleveland, Ohio. 23 December 1992.

⁹⁵Councilman Patrick O'Malley, interview by author. Notes. Cleveland, Ohio. 12 January 1993.

⁹⁶Councilman James Rokakis, interview by author. Notes. Cleveland, Ohio. 16 January 1993.

notably the elderly and the single, do not always have much at stake in the area, so they do not become very involved in neighborhood issues.

In terms of the future, the Old Brooklyn neighborhood is very dependent upon the fortunes of the city of Cleveland. Councilman Rokakis observed:

Old Brooklyn started off as a "bedroom community," and in most respects, it is still a "bedroom community" for Cleveland, since we don't have any major industries. That means that Deaconess (Hospital) is really our only major industry. We are very dependent upon the decisions made at (Cleveland) city hall.⁹⁷

The civic leaders at first focused upon economic issues as needs for the community. Councilman O'Malley reflected: "If we can answer the economic concerns of the area, we would be able to deal with the other issues that are pressuring the community."⁹⁸ When the councilmen spoke about economic issues, they appeared open for a coalition of congregations to deal with these problems.

Several of the civic leaders mentioned that churches with elementary schools are urgently needed, because, as Editor Gerry Priessen commented: "They serve as an anchor to the community and encourage people with children to stay."⁹⁹

Several of the leaders were very concerned about the rise of crime in the area. Ms. Barbara Spaan noted:

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Councilman Patrick O'Malley, interview by author. Notes. Cleveland, Ohio. 12 January 1993.

⁹⁹Gerry Pressen, Editor, Old Brooklyn News, interview by author. Notes. Cleveland, Ohio. 7 January 1993.

People naturally assume that crime runs rampant in the city, while the suburbs have hardly any crime at all. This isn't always true. There has been a lot of crime in the suburbs with murders, thefts, and more. People tend to remember crime in the city more, and use it a reason to move out, especially the good people we need. We have to work with the police and make the area safe from crime, especially from the drug dealers.¹⁰⁰

Even though the Old Brooklyn neighborhood is relatively safe from drugs, prostitution, and other crimes, the civic leaders were especially concerned about the prevalence of youth gangs in the neighborhood and in other parts of the city. Spaan was unsure if a church could reach out to these youth, but she suggested ways to become involved:

These youth are not really candidates for any church's youth group, unless possibly they had a basketball court for them to play on. Several churches on the East side do that, but they still have to be careful about any fights after the games. The big problem is that these youth have parents who really don't give a care about them and let them run wild, and this causes problems for the whole neighborhood.¹⁰¹

Most of the leaders agreed that loneliness is one particular need in the community. Dr. Richard White is a well-known doctor in the community and appears on several commercials for MetroHealth Hospital. He still rides the buses and becomes acquainted with his fellow passengers. He described them in this way:

They're scared and they're lonely. They don't have the upper-level jobs, so they have to take orders from someone else. And they're always living under the possibility that they will be laid off or fired. They're unsure about their neighbors, and they want to stay off the streets at night. These people are

¹⁰⁰Ms. Barbara Spaan, Operation Crime-Watch, interview by author. Telephone. Cleveland, Ohio. 18 January 1993.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

really lonely and could really use someone to listen to them. That's what I do when I ride the buses: I don't say too much, but I listen to them. I think the church could also provide an ear that could listen to them.¹⁰²

Several other leaders also expressed concerns about the many lonely people in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood.

Figure 16 is a compilation of the suggestions that the "opinion elite" made in their interviews. Most of the responses involved major community issues such as unemployment, housing, and youth gangs. Some of the suggestions, however, were small enough that a congregation may develop for its own ministry, such as a crime prevention seminar or a neighborhood tutoring program. The responses showed that the civic leaders are very much aware of their neighborhood and provided some insights into new ministries for the area.

Community Survey

The final survey to be completed was the community survey. This survey was designed so that the individual in the community may comment about possible programs in the neighborhood. Since none of the members of the Task Force were interested in making the phone calls, four other people were asked to make the calls. After some training and practice, the callers were ready to make their contacts.

¹⁰²Dr. Richard White, interview by author. Notes. Cleveland, Ohio. 23 December 1992.

FIGURE 16

**RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE
"OPINION ELITE"**

People interviewed:

Dr. Richard White, Metro Hospital
Chaplain James French, Deaconess Hospital
Barbara Spaan, Chairman, Old Brooklyn Bridge
Doris Swabe, head of Senior Resources, Inc.
Gerry Priessen, Editor, Old Brooklyn News
Councilman James Rokakis, 15th Ward, City of Cleveland
Councilman J. Patrick O'Malley, 16th Ward, City of Cleveland

# of Responses	Suggestion
4	New businesses in the area
4	Help for peoples' housing
4	Direction for youth gangs
3	Direction for alcohol, AIDS
3	Tutoring and help for school
3	Crime-prevention seminars
3	Help for employment
3	Someone to listen to the lonely
3	Advocate for poor, youth, or elderly
3	General improvement of the neighborhood
2	A nurse for the area
2	Seminars about raising children
2	Help for "latchkey" children
2	Recycling program
1	An inoculation center
1	A sex education program

After the people finished their calls, they reviewed together their responses with the pastor. All four callers were enthusiastic about their calls and reported that they encountered only a few refusals; they encountered more problems with rescheduling calls with people who were not home. They were finally able to contact these people after a few attempts.

The callers were trained only to survey the people; however, several of them reported that they were given an opportunity to share some information about the church. Four people actually asked about the congregation and wanted more information about the upcoming programs. This telephone survey was probably the most successful tool of the research process, because it discovered some possibilities for service and conveyed the church's concern to the people in the neighborhood.

The results of the telephone survey are reported in Figure 17 on the next page. When questioned, some people agreed that all the programs would benefit the community, which was shown by the high number of yes choices for the particular categories of the survey. Therefore, the second question, "Of the activities mentioned above, which ones especially appeal to you?" served as the means to distinguish the importance of the programs. Usually, the people made three choices. Thus, the people especially wanted a place for teenagers (63 votes), a crime-prevention seminar (55 votes), and a support group for widows or other needs (54 votes). The callers reported that many of the respondents voted for the category "a place for teenagers to go" not because they were interested in

FIGURE 17

RESULTS OF THE COMMUNITY TELEPHONE SURVEY

HELLO, MY NAME IS _____ AND I'M CALLING FROM ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH. WE'RE CONDUCTING A SURVEY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE YOUR OPINION. YOUR ANSWERS WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS AND CONFIDENTIAL, AND I WILL NOT TRY TO SELL YOU ANYTHING. OKAY?

FIRST OF ALL, WE ARE TRYING TO DETERMINE WHAT PROGRAMS MAY BE NEEDED IN OUR OLD BROOKLYN NEIGHBORHOOD. I'M GOING TO LIST SOME PROGRAMS AND WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF YOU THINK THEY SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN IN OUR OLD BROOKLYN NEIGHBORHOOD. TELL IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED OR NOT, OR YOU DON'T KNOW:

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 100

	Event	Yes	No	Don't Know
8	A movie night for families	58	26	16
17	A seminar on budgeting and finance	60	25	15
31	A seminar about a book of the Bible	38	32	30
55	A crime-prevention presentation	78	22	0
43	A clinic for free inoculations	68	24	6
50	A seminar about raising children	66	21	4
63	A place for teenagers to go	84	14	2
17	A sports clinic	67	18	5
45	A presentation about recycling	68	16	8
54	A support group for widows or other needs	76	14	10

1. Of the activities mentioned above, which ones especially interest you?

see above column 1

2. Do you have any suggestions for other programs needed in the neighborhood?

- Other support groups such as single parents/divorced
- Clean up empty lots and glass
- AIDS awareness and drug awareness
- Self-defense classes for women
- Extra help for the elderly
- Sponsor activities for the city youth
- Pick up things for the elderly
- Forums with the councilmen
- Help with lawns and snow removal
- Phone assurance line for all lonely people
- Story time for preschool children
- Childcare co-op
- Drivers for the elderly
- Presentation about abused women

4. Just one question about yourself: How many people live in your house?

Resp.	Number of People
22	No answer
22	1
20	2
14	3
12	4
5	5
3	6
2	7

5. Turn downs by people: 54

6. Number of people showing interest in St. James: 4

the welfare of the youth, but because these homeowners feared the youth gangs and hoped that such a center would divert the youth away from their homes. It is interesting also to note that the people interviewed had some suggestions for community projects, including support groups for families with problems, an AIDS seminar, and a phone assurance line for lonely people. The Planning Committee examined some of these suggestions to see if the Lord is leading the church in these directions.

The research was finally completed. The members of the Mission Study Task Force expressed relief that the work was done. Now the data must be arranged in an attractive way for the Planning Committee. Will this information be helpful to the Planning Committee? That question will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

THE EFFECT OF THE PROJECT ON CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY

The members of the Mission Study Task Force spent long hours in conducting research about the congregation and community; however, this did not insure that the material would have a lasting effect upon the congregation. This chapter will investigate the effect of the research project upon the members of the Planning Committee, the members of the Task Force, and the church.

Preparations for the Planning Meeting

Once all the data was gathered and tabulated, a booklet was designed that presented the research in an attractive, readable form. This booklet appears in Appendix 24. Besides the data, a Bible study was included, which enabled the participants to understand the role of kairos in the planning process. The term "Providential Goals" was chosen to denote those congregational goals that awaited God's direction at the decisive time. These goals were determined by the members of the Planning Committee.

In order to communicate the importance of kairos in the planning process, certain steps were taken to make certain that the goals were established with God's purpose in mind. This plan appears in Figure 18.

FIGURE 18

A PLAN FOR ESTABLISHING PROVIDENTIAL GOALS

1. The Planning Committee members pray for the Lord's guidance.
2. The members look at the data presented.
3. They establish the providential goals--what do they think God wants accomplished at St. James in the next few years?
4. The Committee and congregation continue to pray for God's direction to have these goals accomplished.
5. Each providential goal is assigned to one of the boards to examine. They are given a worksheet to study the details of this goal (see pages 19 and 20 in the booklet).
6. If the board feels a goal is ready to be implemented, it notifies the Church Council; otherwise, it will note the obstacle(s) for the goal and encourage the church to wait for the Lord's direction.
7. Periodically, the Church Council and voters will review the providential goals and determine if God is leading the congregation to accomplish the goal.

In this way, the data presented by the Mission Study Task Force played an integral part in establishing the providential goals. The members understood that they were responsible for fulfilling the goals; however, they also realized that God

was definitely involved in the process. Both the divine and human elements were acknowledged in this method:

The church is indeed His. Many North Americans view their local congregation as a free association of individuals who want and like to be together in their own little group. Yet the church does not belong to its members; they, rather, as individuals and as a congregation, belong to the church's Lord and are directed by His Word.¹⁰³

Based on the data submitted in the booklet, the Planning Committee established the congregational goals for the following year. These goals appear in Figure 19.

FIGURE 19

PROVIDENTIAL GOALS FOR ST. JAMES CHURCH IN 1993 AND 1994

1. Establish at least two evangelism projects for outreach in the community.
2. Motivate growth in Sunday school attendance so that the average class attendance grows by 10 students.
3. Develop two social ministry projects that will touch the needs of 10 families in the area; they may be members of the congregation or people of the community.
4. Hold at least one presentation that will encourage the youth to consider a position in full-time church work or missions.
5. Investigate setting up a parish nurse program to reach out to members and people of the community.
6. Establish at least three new Bible groups or fellowship groups in the congregation.

¹⁰³Kolb, 180.

When these goals were reviewed, they revealed that the research booklet made a positive contribution to the planning process. These goals dealt equally with needs of the church together with those of the community and did not focus on the congregation alone. It is interesting to note that the Planning Committee did not devise a goal to increase worship attendance. Several months before this meeting, the elders announced an ambitious program to contact or visit all the members who missed worship over six weeks, so the members decided to wait and see if this program will increase the worship attendance. This decision was reflected in the goals.

The goals were also challenging ones, especially the goal that proposed hiring a parish nurse. Thus, it is true that the research data enabled the members of the Planning Committee to develop more challenging goals than what were devised in the past.

Evaluation of the Planning Committee

After the Planning Committee completed its work for the evening, the members were asked to fill out an evaluation form concerning the research booklet of the Mission Study Task Force. The results of that survey appear in Figure 20 on the next page.

This survey revealed that the members of the Planning Committee were satisfied with the planning process, though the distribution of the positive response was varied. The major complaint about the planning meeting was **its**

FIGURE 20**RESULTS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE SURVEY**

Total number of respondents: 13

Note: The tabulated responses are printed below the number value of the continuum.

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10

1. Being a member of the Planning Committee was an interesting experience for me.

1	2	3	4	5	10
4	4	3	1	1	
greatly agree				so-so	greatly disagree

COMMENTS: The meeting went too long. Learned a lot about our church. Will we really follow through? (2 responses)

2. Since I participated on this Planning Committee, I gained more understanding about the mission of St. James Lutheran Church.

1	2	3	4	5	10
4	3	2	3		
greatly agree				so-so	greatly disagree

COMMENTS: Thought I already knew about the mission of the church; we still don't know how to motivate people.

3. As a member of this Committee, I feel that St. James has some great opportunities for mission and ministry.

1	2	5	10
8	3	2	
greatly agree		so-so	greatly disagree

COMMENT: But the people keep moving away!

4. I appreciated the leadership of the pastor for this Committee.

1	2	5	10
10	1	2	
greatly agree		so-so	greatly disagree

5. I appreciated working with the other members on this Committee.

1	2	3	4	5	10
5	3	3	2		
greatly agree				so-so	greatly disagree

COMMENTS: Should have more younger people on this committee. Interchange of ideas is always good and should lead to positive action. I felt that people listened to my ideas.

6. This booklet, developed by the Mission Study Task Force, was very useful for planning our goals.

1	2	3	4	5	10
7	3	2	1		
greatly agree				so-so	greatly disagree
COMMENTS: The 1990 census may be too far back. Believe area changing rapidly. Social decline. Interesting surveys.					

7. I am satisfied with the goals we have established tonight.

1	2	3	4	5	10
7	5	1		1	
greatly agree				so-so	greatly disagree
COMMENTS: I just hope we do something with these goals! When I trust God's guidance, I am willing to try more challenging goals, as the parish nurse. (3 responses or similar)					

FIGURE 20 CONTINUED

1. What did you like about serving on the Planning Committee? What didn't you like about being on this Committee? Any suggestions?
 - + Liked new facts about the church and neighborhood and developing possible solutions (3 responses).
 - + Got to know how others think and feel and help the church plan (4 responses).
 - + I feel I had some input on planning for St. James' future.
 - + I received some fresh ideas about planning (2 responses).

 - I would prefer meeting earlier.
 - Not sure about planning; many of these things have been tried in the past (2 responses).

2. Do you have any comments about the Planning Book? Did the statistics and surveys help you? Was it too long or too short? Were you able to follow it? Do you have any other suggestions about the booklet?
 - + The book was very thorough and very helpful (8 responses).
 - + Statistics showed us a good history of where we have been (2 responses).
 - + I would like to know what other churches are doing for ministry in the neighborhood.
 - + I appreciated the time and effort put into this booklet.

 - The book was too long.
 - Could be even more thorough.

3. What did you learn by serving on the Planning Committee?
 - + God is involved in the planning process (4 responses).
 - + Most of us have similar ideas and feelings about the church (2 responses).
 - + We have many possibilities with God's help.
 - + New ideas for the church.
 - + Many members are serving us well.

length. Several members were also concerned about the follow-up of the goals.

This was a legitimate concern. If these goals were not pursued, then this meeting was a fruitless venture. Some provisions were made to assure that these goals would be continued:

"We made a lot of plans, but little ever happened." Those are well-worn words. Some churches have "papered the walls" with all kinds of plans on newsprint, but they never went any further than the newsprint. You need to check out your assumptions about those who have developed the program plans.¹⁰⁴

The members also agreed that they learned much about the church's mission from the planning experience; the positive responses again were varied. The two statements that received the highest positive numerical values were the statements about St. James' opportunities for mission and ministry in the future and the leadership of the pastor. Possibly the member at first did not feel very positive about St. James' mission opportunities. One person's remark, "But the people keep moving away!" typified the anxiety that these people felt about their church; many people who provided the church leadership were becoming older or were moving away. However, as one person mentioned orally, this booklet revealed that the St. James' mission opportunities were hopeful, since the community had not changed and the people living there were similar to the members. The church did not have to cross many cultural barriers to reach the neighborhood with the Gospel. For this reason, the booklet served an important purpose by enabling the members of the Committee to see possibilities for mission in the neighborhood.

¹⁰⁴McIntosh and Rusbult, 106.

The members of the Planning Committee also expressed appreciation for their co-workers on the Committee. Most of the members gave positive numerical values for their responses, but they were varied along the continuum. Several people asked if more people should serve on the Committee, especially younger people. They were also concerned that a small group proposed the direction for the congregation. However, Schaller points out that it is appropriate that a small group determines the direction for a congregation the size of St. James:

Therefore, every middle-sized church should be operating on a principle of representative democracy. The congregation chooses a small number of members to represent the interest of the whole at the decision-making table. When a congregation has as many as three hundred members, there is little difference between 90 percent not serving directly on the board and 96 percent not being on the board in any given year. In both cases a few are making decisions on behalf of the entire congregation.¹⁰⁵

Perhaps the pastor can review this point with the Planning Committee next time before it begins its work.

The final two statements were important to examine, because they came to the heart of the matter for the project. The members gave a high positive rating to the booklet, though some of the responses were varied. Most of the members were positive about the information found in the booklet. They expressed thanks to the members of the Task Force for doing a thorough job. Several people asked for even more information, but the basic view of the Planning Committee was that the booklet was very informative.

¹⁰⁵Schaller, The Middle-Sized Church, 110.

The final question concerning satisfaction in regards to the goals demonstrated the effectiveness of the research. Most of the members were satisfied about the goals, though some were still concerned about their implementation. Several members stated that the phone survey and the community statistical report especially enabled them to understand the needs of the neighborhood. At the previous planning meeting, they were not able to comprehend the needs of the community, so they were afraid to establish any goals. The booklet helped them to understand the community better in order to propose possible goals for the neighborhood.

The concept of *kairos* also gave freedom to the members to propose far-reaching goals. As one member commented, "Since I trust God's guidance, I am willing to try bigger goals, such as the parish nurse program." This was an excellent point. At a previous planning meeting, the pastor noticed how the members did not propose any challenging goals because they were afraid of a defeat. Since the Planning Committee placed its direction in God's hands, they were willing to propose more challenging goals.

The other responses in the survey pointed out that the members were positive about the ability of the planning booklet to educate, challenge, and motivate the Committee to seek more challenging goals. Thus, the booklet played an integral role in the establishment of goals for the congregation.

Evaluation of the Task Force

The members of the Task Force also filled out an evaluation form so they could express their views and perspectives about serving in the group. The survey appears in Figure 21 on the following page. The survey showed that the members had positive reactions about serving on the Task Force; however, they were concerned about the amount of time needed to complete the tasks.

FIGURE 21

RESULTS OF THE MISSION STUDY TASK FORCE SURVEY

Total number of respondents: 9

Note: The tabulated responses are printed below the number value of the continuum.

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10

1. Being a member of this Mission Study Task Force was an interesting experience for me.

1	2	3	5	10
4	3	1	1	
greatly agree			so-so	greatly disagree

COMMENTS: I learned a lot about St. James and the community. I learned how to work together with other people on a project.

2. Since I served on this Task Force, I gained more understanding about the mission of St. James Lutheran Church.

1	2	3	5	10
5	3	1		
greatly agree			so-so	greatly disagree

COMMENTS: There's a lot we can do in the neighborhood. I liked the openness of this Task Force and going through the surveys. The pastor helps with this openness.

3. As a member of this Task Force, I feel that St. James has some great opportunities for mission and ministry.

1	2	3	5	10
4	4	1		
greatly agree			so-so	greatly disagree

4. I appreciated the leadership of the pastor in this project.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10
6	2	1					
greatly agree				so-so			greatly disagree

COMMENTS: He helped keep the meetings going. He allowed us to be open about our ideas and feelings.

5. I appreciated working with the other members on this Task Force.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10
1	2		1	3	2		
greatly agree				so-so			greatly disagree

COMMENTS: I don't think we were always honest with each other about how we felt. I felt pressured by the group to do something that I really didn't want to do.

6. If asked, I would probably serve on another of these Task Forces again.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10
2	1			1	2	2	1
greatly agree				so-so			greatly disagree

COMMENTS: Once is enough! (3 responses). It made me feel I was doing something useful. Depends on my work schedule. We at St. James are going to have to keep abreast of things coming up.

FIGURE 21 CONTINUED

FILL-IN

1. What did you like about being on this Mission Study Task Force?
 - + I thought it was a good opportunity for me to understand God's direction for our church and the Old Brooklyn neighborhood. I liked doing the surveys (3 responses).
 - + I found out much about the people at St. James and also Old Brooklyn (2 responses).
 - + I learned much about our mission as a church (2 responses).
 - + Talking and listening to people (2 responses).

2. What didn't you like about being on the Mission Study Task Force? What would you suggest the next Mission Study Task Force do?
 - Allowing people to do the things on the Task Force that they want to do.
 - Get more people to help; have more people for input (3 responses).
 - Scheduled meetings are hard to keep for a large group.
 - More Bible study.

3. What did you learn by serving on the Mission Study Task Force?
 - + God is involved in our work (2 responses).
 - + It takes work to gather these facts!
 - + Our church has lots to do.
 - + Christian people have more in common with each other.
 - + Surveys help with a lot of the concerns of people at church and the neighborhood, and they turned out to be very informative.
 - + The general perception of the church is positive.
 - + There seems to be more ideas and opinions than volunteers and workers.
 - + I can serve the Lord despite my age!

The responses to the first two survey questions pointed out that the members regarded the research experience as an interesting one. Most members agreed that they learned much about the congregation and also the community when they conducted the research. These people were also very excited about the church's mission.

In the same light, the members of the Task Force were open for possibilities for mission and ministry in the neighborhood. Several people stated that they were concerned about the congregation, since many people transferred to other congregations. However, they felt more hopeful when they participated in the process. As one member wrote in the survey: "I never realized all the possibilities for mission that we have." When members became anxious about the church's future, the possibilities for mission can turn this anxiety into hope. Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke point out how mission can bring hope to the congregation, when they state: "Our study indicates that attitudes are changed and turned outwardly by being both taught and caught."¹⁰⁶ Therefore, this research was a vital way to open the eyes of the members of the Task Force to God's opportunities; perhaps the average member would also feel hopeful when he learned of the mission opportunities in the neighborhood.

While the members expressed appreciation for the pastor's leadership on the survey, they did not seem to enjoy each other's fellowship. They gave low responses to the statement in the survey about working with the other members

¹⁰⁶Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke, 32.

on the Task Force. This indicated that the Task Force did not have much cohesion. Perhaps this project concentrated so much on the task at hand that the members were not able to develop a close relationship with one another. On the other hand, people who serve on a short-term group possibly do not develop close relationships with one another because of the task at hand. This question needs to be examined later.

It is also instructive to note that the members gave the lowest marks of the survey to the statement about serving on the Task Force again. Even though the members and the pastor first perceived this research process to be an easy one, the actual experience pointed out that it did wear upon the members so that they were not willing to participate in the project again. Whenever the next research process is contemplated, it may be wise to enlist more people to serve on the Mission Study Task Force, or else enlist more people to serve on a subcommittee and complete a portion of a certain assignment. Indeed, this task of research is so extensive that perhaps the members may be expected to serve only one time on the group and then they are excused for the next research project.

The fill-in responses were also invaluable for this evaluation. Most of the responses were positive in nature and expressed greater interest in mission to the community. It was not surprising that several members expressed concerns that more people participate in the Task Force; this is an important consideration for next time. However, the negative comment that caused some concern was the one that read, "Allowing people to do the things on the Task Force that they want to

do." This comment implied that one of the members was not happy about the choice of assignments that she received. Although everyone was allowed to select the assignment that fitted his or her talents, it was obvious that some people felt slighted. It may be necessary next time to check with each person individually to make sure each one understands and appreciates the assignment.

The main conclusion that was drawn from this survey was that the members of the Task Force grew in their appreciation of the mission of the church, but they were somewhat overwhelmed by the immensity of the research task.

Effect of the Project upon the Congregation

In some respects, this research project did not affect the regular church member, unless he was a member of the Task Force or the Planning Committee. And yet, the typical member of the congregation needed to recognize the goals and become involved in their implementation:

Your congregation has only recently initiated the process for building growth program plans. It is now important that some of them be shared with the congregation. The congregation will not necessarily be interested in all the details. However, it is helpful and wise to bring to the church's attention the important things that are going to be happening. This will create awareness of the church's ministry, generate support for it, and help recruit new workers and leaders.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷McIntosh and Rusbult, 105.

Thus, the pastor communicated some of the details to the church at large through the monthly newsletter and weekly bulletin. He shared the basic points of the goals as well as the objectives to fulfill them.

Although the congregation was informed about the plans, the members also needed to feel a part of the implementation process. The best way to get laypeople involved with the goals is through prayer. Since the goals depend upon God's help for fulfillment, prayer is very essential. Callahan especially emphasizes the importance of prayer: "Effective long-range planning builds on a God-given hope that is prayerful and powerful."¹⁰⁸ Not only did the members of the Planning Committee pray for God's guidance, but all the members of the congregation were encouraged to pray. In this way, the members participated in the implementation process.

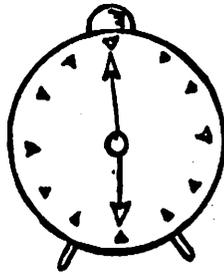
The members became acquainted with the prayer ministry through the St. James prayer cards. An example of the prayer card appears in Figure 22. As the members prayed for the church, they filled out the picture of the clock. The members were asked to pray for the pastor, the work of the congregation, and individual members, and they were encouraged to pray for the providential goals listed on the card. They also learned that God allows things to happen at the decisive time.

¹⁰⁸Callahan, xv.

FIGURE 22

ST. JAMES PRAYER CARD

- Pray for the ministry of our church.
- Pray for our members.
- Pray for God to direct our goals --
 - Caring Evangelism
 - Growth in Sunday school attendance
 - Assistance for families in need
 - Encourage youth for full-time church work
 - A program of health care (parish) nurse



Use this card as a reminder to pray. When you pray for an hour, turn card in, and pick up another!

The congregation reacted favorably to the prayer cards. Since the prayer card program began in late 1993, fifty cards were returned to the church office. Several people stated that the prayer cards helped them become more aware of the church's mission. Thus, prayer is a key for the members' involvement in the goals.

CHAPTER 8

CONTRIBUTIONS TO MINISTRY

Whenever pastors meet at a conference, they often share their trials and joys. They do not just listen to one another's concerns; they also make collegial comments and suggestions to aid the brother with his dilemmas. The purpose of this paper is to give a detailed explanation about the research process, but it is also intended to share insights with fellow pastors in hopes that they will benefit from this experience. This chapter will present general and specific observations to help bolster the pastoral ministry.

General Observations

A dominant theme found throughout this paper is that the research process does not happen overnight. The pastor and the committee need to take time to fulfill the purpose, scope, and details of the necessary research tasks. The congregation may decide to conduct research because it is facing a crisis and it wants immediate answers. The pastor and congregation must understand that it takes time to gather and interpret information for the congregation. Even if the data is ready in a few months, which is highly unlikely, the church must constantly

pray that God guides them; it cannot make an instant decision. The research and planning processes cannot be regarded as quick answers to the church's pressing problems.

Heinecke, Hunter and Luecke point out that the local church must be patient to learn God's direction, even if it faces a crisis. This book presents several examples of churches that waited for the time when God led them to mission. For example, Emmaus Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, faced a crisis because its neighborhood was deteriorating into the poorest part of the inner city. It once had over 2,800 members, but most of these people moved to the suburbs. After many lengthy discussions, the church decided to stay in the area and plan ministries that touched the needs of the neighborhood. This planning process took some time before the programs were in place. Now over six hundred people are members of the congregation.¹⁰⁹ This is only one of the book's examples of churches that took the time to research their situation and make deliberate plans for ministries in the neighborhood.

St. James Lutheran Church does not yet face a crisis situation; however, the members are concerned about the decline in membership and attendance. Some people want a quick solution to the problems. This paper demonstrates clearly that both the research and planning processes take time to complete. It took the Mission Study Task Force six months to complete the research about the congregation and community, and very likely, the timetable should have been

¹⁰⁹Heinecke, Hunter, and Luecke, 116-17.

extended to nine months or more. Even though the goals were established, the congregation will need time to examine what new ministries it will initiate in the neighborhood. The church may face a difficult situation, but it must be careful to complete the research correctly and accurately.

Another observation that this paper makes is that the church must be careful with marketing tools. George Barna's book Marketing the Church is a very practical book. It points out how the research committee uses interviews and surveys to understand the needs of the community. However, there is a concern about Barna's approach when he states:

First, specify your target market: Who are you seeking to impact? This might require listing the demographics of the target audience, how they can be found in your market, and any other distinguishing characteristics that will focus your actions.¹¹⁰

Philip Kotler's book Strategic Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations, provides many details for any non-profit organization about targeting certain audiences in the neighborhood and designing a program to fit their specific needs.

In fact, he makes this statement:

The main task of an organization is to determine the needs, wants, and interests of target markets and to adapt the organization to delivering satisfactions that preserve or enhance the consumer's and society's well-being.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰Barna, Marketing the Church, 102.

¹¹¹Philip Kotler and Alan Andreason, Strategic Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1987, 23.

According to Kottler, the organization does not just determine the needs of the target market, but it also adapts itself to make sure it satisfies the needs of the target audience. Perhaps a non-profit organization can make such an adaptation, but the church must be sure not to adapt the message of the Gospel. The church may alter its method and style of presenting the Gospel, but it must be careful not to change the Gospel itself. The CTCR document A Theological Statement of Mission makes this important statement:

At the heart of the congregation's life will be the forgiveness of sins, since there are no perfect congregations, only a perfect Savior, who has accepted and restored us to the Father. With the Lord Christ granting us this gift, our congregation will seek so to order their lives and activities that the Gospel holds sway as we are now sent out into the world as Christ's ambassadors.¹¹²

According to this document, it is important that the church not water down the message of the Gospel, as it adapts its programs to the needs of the people. The principles of church marketing must be carefully examined before they are utilized for the church's planning.

Another concern about church marketing is the method of establishing a target audience. Several books, notably Barna's and Kottler's books, indicate that a church focuses upon the needs of a large, identifiable group of people to establish its ministry. For example, a church may propose a support group for widows, since it has identified a large group of widows living in the vicinity. These

¹¹²Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 19.

books commend the congregation to find a target group and initiate a ministry with them in mind.

Although a church may begin some ministries with a certain group of people in mind, it must be careful not to disregard the other groups, just because they are not a part of the target audience. The congregation must maintain its mission of spreading the Gospel to all people in the neighborhood. Kolb expresses a concern about this principle of church marketing:

We may persuade ourselves that we minister best to people of our own socio-economic situation or racial or ethnic background. The social sciences would support that judgment, and we are tempted to take their descriptive observations of human interaction as prescriptive. We therefore deny the power of the Gospel to cut through human prejudice and we vitiate that power because we cater to our own social instincts.¹¹³

The church's research may note that there is a certain group of people who are especially open to the Gospel. The church designs a program that touches the needs of this group of people with the Gospel. However, as Kolb points out, the church must not limit the power of the Gospel by concentrating on a certain group of people alone. It is ready to share the Gospel with all people. In fact, the concept of *kairos* helps bridge the gap between the Gospel and marketing because it states that a certain ministry will happen at God's decisive time, whether it is intended for the target group or not.

One final general observation derived from this paper is that the church may touch people's physical needs to convey the Gospel, but the Gospel must not be

¹¹³Kolb, 206.

omitted from the church's ministry. When the members of the Task Force considered the data about the people of neighborhood, they suggested social ministry projects for people's physical needs. The group members focused so much on needs that they forgot the importance of proclaiming the Gospel.

A committee must understand that even though the research promotes a ministry for people's physical needs, the church utilizes this ministry to convey the Gospel, its final goal. A Theological Statement on Missions makes an important observation about the relationship of social ministry to the Gospel:

All of us have the calling to serve God, to spread peace, protection, justice and love, especially in our sinful world, by dedicating ourselves to the service of others through the tasks that the Lord has given us to do. Surprisingly, as we serve with a good will "as to the Lord," opportunities arise whereby we can testify verbally, with gentleness and reverence, to the hope that is in us.¹¹⁴

This document points out that the Christians share the Gospel at the right opportunity to the person in need. They serve out of love, and they are ready to testify to their hope in Christ. Thus, the Gospel must play a prominent part in every ministry to the neighborhood.

Specific Observations

While some observations are made about the research process in general, some specific comments can be offered as well. One comment deals with the interpretation of surveys. Several of the authors state that the research group

¹¹⁴Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 15.

separate their interpretations from their analyses. For example, George Barna makes this statement:

As you write out your report on the research, do your best to separate the analysis and the interpretation. Analysis is objective: you are simply telling what the numbers say. The interpretation is subjective: it represents your integration of the information with a real-world, nuts-and-bolts, let's-use-the-data-for-impact perspective. Those who read your report should be able to disentangle, without any difficulty, the objective and subjective statements.¹¹⁵

Although this comment sounds like a practical suggestion, it is very difficult to keep the research tools free from subjective interpretations. For example, the members of the Planning Committee requested hearing the Task Force members' interpretation of the data to help guide them through the data. Since the members of the Task Force spent much time in the research, their viewpoints were well respected; however, the members of the Planning Committee also made their own interpretations of the data. The major concern was that no interpretation became the overriding one without all the members expressing their own viewpoints. The group was tempted to adopt the first expressed perspective as the correct one without much comment. However, everyone was allowed to examine the data and express their opinion to arrive at a consensus. In this way, the leader was careful to facilitate the interpretation and not worry too much about combining analysis with interpretation.

Another specific observation deals with group dynamics. When a pastor leads a short-term group, he must be well-versed in group dynamics. When the present

¹¹⁵Barna, Step-by-Step Guide to Church Marketing, 114.

pastor organized the Task Force, he used some general principles, but he did not encourage fellowship among the group members. He kept the members on task so that they fulfilled their roles.

It is suggested that a leader becomes better acquainted with principles of group dynamics so that he can adequately serve as facilitator for the group process. The Task Force met often enough so that the people should have developed a closer relationship with one another and still remained on task to complete the project. The pastor must discover ways to help the members grow in their relationships with one another.

Another specific observation can be made in regards to pastoral oversight. The pastor may feel that he just delegates a certain task and allows the person to complete it on his own. This project indicates that the pastor as leader does not drop a whole assignment on a person without some support, not does he keep in constant touch with the member, as if he does not trust the person completely. He maintains a close relationship with the members of the group without becoming too authoritative.

Luecke in his book New Designs for Church Leadership presents an important aspect of pastoral oversight with his discussion of push and pull. When a leader pushes a person, he compels him to go in the direction that he desires. When a leader pulls a person, he attracts the person to move in a certain direction. While a pastor may be tempted only to push a person to complete a program, Luecke advises him to pull more with the Gospel:

More specifically, the way to get them into motion is to draw or attract their energy toward the action of interest. They have energy provided by God through the Gospel. Pulling them means encouraging, stimulating, exciting, and motivating them by finding ways to convey the meaning and power of God's grace.¹¹⁶

Luecke makes a valid point here. Whereas the members of the Task Force were mostly pushed into completing their portion of the project, they fulfilled their task, but they were not always excited about their work. They probably would have functioned better if they were pulled more by the power of the Gospel.

When the Gospel is used as a pull on the group, the members are encouraged, even though they only complete a small portion of their assigned task. They are reminded that God loves them and works through their efforts, no matter what they accomplish. When the Gospel is used in pastoral oversight, it provides a certain pull for the group and creates a closer fellowship with one another. Sometimes it is necessary to use a push on the members of the group, but the pastor must judge each situation and whether a push or pull is needed.

One other specific observation about the research and planning process is that the church must be sure to have a follow-up plan in place to begin implementing the established goals. The Task Force spent over six months in researching data. The Planning Committee also spent time reading the planning booklet to be ready at the planning meeting. These people expected to see a plan for implementing the goals that they researched or initiated. It is important then

¹¹⁶David S. Luecke, New Designs for Church Leadership (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1990), 58.

to develop a follow-up plan to establish accountability for the goals and objectives. When a congregation is aware of the goals' progress, the members become excited about the church's future prospects.

McIntosh and Rusbult state that the church must be informed about any progress in the goals; in fact, the congregation ought to celebrate when a portion of a goal is accomplished: "It is important for the membership to be informed about the accomplishments, whether small or large. It is just as important to celebrate 'baby steps' as it is large-size steps."¹¹⁷ This book encourages the congregation to have a follow-up plan in mind as it establishes its goals and objectives.

Thus, when the goals for St. James Church were established at the planning meeting, a plan was also presented to the participants that described the next steps for implementing the goals and communicating them to the congregation. Indeed, the pastor as leader was ready to take the lead in promoting the goals to the congregation.

¹¹⁷McIntosh and Rusbult, 107.

CHAPTER 9

CONTRIBUTIONS TO PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Whenever pastors attend a seminar or conference, they expect that it will help them grow personally and professionally. They hope that the seminar will spur on their professional growth and create a change in them, only to discover later that it really does not cause any noticeable differences. They revert to their old way of doing things. Although they learn something beneficial for their ministry, they have trouble putting this into practice. Indeed, the difficulty in making a change mirrors the life of a Christian as he tries to live the new life in God, but continues to revert to the old sinful way of life.

At this time, when I review the project and the D. Min. program, I realize that I have not only learned many new ideas and perspectives about the ministry, but also new directions for personal growth. And yet, how does one apply these new ideas and attitudes to his professional and personal life without reverting back to his old habits? If I only report about my growth as a pastor and do not employ these attitudes as part of my pastoral lifestyle, they will disappear quickly and the D. Min. program means little more than a diploma on the wall. Therefore, I need God's help to maintain these new habits and skills through the

rest of my professional life. The three areas of professional and personal life that are enunciated in this chapter are deliberate ministry, confidence in the Gospel, and presence in the community.

Deliberate Ministry

As I consider my years as a pastor, I do not classify my ministry as a deliberate one. In the past, I reacted to the situation and tried to find a way to deal with the problem. I did not have any plan or vision for the future, but I dealt with the burning issues of the time or I handled any complaints that arose. This truly was a reactive ministry that accomplished little. Sometimes, I questioned my function as a pastor because I was only dealing with minor issues. If someone raised a complaint about my method of conducting ministry, I tried to resolve the complaint according to the person's way of thinking. I did not have my own deliberate plan for ministry.

The D. Min. program and this project in particular raised my vision of ministry. I learned through this program that when a pastor shepherds a congregation, he must first know who he is as a child of God and then construct through Scripture his theology of ministry. He is ready to minister to people deliberately according to his theology and not necessarily defer to the wishes of an individual.

It is very possible that the pastor's concept of ministry does not always agree with that of a parishioner. For example, the pastor may rank training laypeople as

a high priority in his ministry, while a layperson does not consider this training a high priority. If the member complains about the pastor, the pastor does not necessarily have to compromise his theology of ministry because their viewpoints differ. He listens to the parishioner's concern, but still acts deliberately according to his own perspectives. In order to retain this deliberate ministry, the pastor must be aware of his own strengths and weaknesses, his theology and philosophy of ministry, and his pastoral plans for the future.

In the same way, the pastor who has a deliberate ministry will take responsibility in getting things accomplished. In the past I was somewhat responsible. I prepared the sermon and Bible classes on time, but I often procrastinated about administrative and programmatic details. This program and paper in particular taught me that I am responsible for my actions. The Lord has entrusted spiritual gifts and skills to me as an individual, and He has entrusted me with His congregation as the pastor. This means that I cannot procrastinate about a certain project or not anticipate a deadline coming up, but I must manage my time deliberately and prioritize the listed events coming up, so they will be completed at the right time. I cannot just prepare for the day, but develop a plan of action to anticipate events coming up in the next months and beyond.

During these last six years, I balanced my parish ministry with the classes and papers; I finished the reading and papers on time as well as made sure that the stewardship and visitation programs were completed on time. I learned to manage my time better. In this way, I completed both pastoral and professional work on

time; in fact, more activities and programs were accomplished when I participated in the doctorate program than the times when I was not involved in the D. Min. program. Especially as I worked through the research project, I learned how to serve as a deliberate pastor and insure that everything was done on time.

Another facet about deliberate ministry is that the pastor deliberately performs his role as pastor. I read many books throughout my D. Min program, but the most influential and important book I read was Luecke's book, New Designs for Church Leadership. According to this book, there are three basic roles for the pastor: the carpenter, who does the basic tasks of ministry himself; the contractor, who contacts and trains people to do the work of ministry; and the architect, who hears the needs of the people and fashions the vision for the congregation.¹¹⁸

All three roles that Luecke describes are a part of the pastor's deliberate ministry. The pastor must be deliberate in his carpentry role. He must complete the sermons and Bible classes on time; he must decide whom he will visit and what is the best time to visit them. The pastor also must be deliberate as a contractor. He must decide whom he will recruit to perform a certain task and decide how he will oversee the project. The pastor must also be deliberate in his role as architect. Dr. Luecke describes the role in this way: "When they have the talent, pastors are the logical leaders to provide the creative integration that yields

¹¹⁸Luecke, 26-40.

a compelling vision for a specific project."¹¹⁹ Thus, the pastor performs a deliberate ministry as he listens and clarifies the needs of the congregation and presents a new vision for the congregation. This does not mean that the pastor must work in isolation to define the vision. Dr. Luecke observes:

An architectural pastor does not do all the planning any more than a contractor pastor does all the hands-on building. That would not be a good use of time for someone with broad spiritual leadership responsibilities, even if one could lay all the details out for others which would not be wise, acceptable in many cases, or effective. Functioning as an architect, a pastor will strive to assure that specific planning is done through joint effort and that all the fellowship builders have as much support as they can use.¹²⁰

Using Luecke's terms, the architect pastor is deliberate as he works together with fellow members and proposes a vision for the congregation. He becomes involved in the work of planning and enables the congregation to obtain a vision for the future.

As a whole, this project and total D. Min. program helped me to develop a more deliberate ministry in all three roles. I became more deliberate in the carpentry role, as I decided priorities in ministry to complete as I worked on the project. I learned how to manage my time better as I focused upon the necessities of ministry.

This project especially helped me become more proficient and deliberate in my role as contractor. If I decided to begin a new ministry, I learned from this project how to contact, train, and work with people on the given task. I delegated

¹¹⁹Ibid., 37.

¹²⁰Ibid., 39.

part of the work to the laypeople and trusted that they would perform it to the best of their ability. I continued to oversee them and gave them encouragement, but they participated in their own special way. I plan in the future to continue my role as contractor and utilize people in various forms of ministry.

And yet, this project was instrumental in my growth as an architect pastor. Several times in the past, I participated in planning meetings, but not much was accomplished because I did not take a leadership role in the process. I allowed the members to establish the goals and remained in the background.

When I participated in this project, I exercised leadership as the architect to insure that the data was complete. Both surveys from the Task Force and the Planning Committee indicated that the members respected my leadership in the total process. I acted deliberately as an architect pastor in the project. It is very likely that I will also make suggestions about definite objectives to achieve the goals and the laypeople will respect this input.

Thus, as I become more deliberate as a carpenter, contractor, and architect pastor, I will also feel more confident about my role as pastor in the congregation and will lead the people of God to seek higher levels of excellence. Indeed, this is an important facet of pastoral leadership:

There will always be more of Christ's full stature to reach for. A church will always have something more to do and somewhere to reach. Striving for excellence in building a fellowship is a constant challenge for leaders trying to build the body of Christ.¹²¹

¹²¹Ibid., 145.

Confidence in the Gospel

In some respects, I have always been confident that the Gospel of Christ creates changes in people's lives. Paul speaks about the power of the Gospel, when he says in Romans 1:16: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for everyone who believes: for the Jew first, then for the Gentile." Here Paul indicates that the Gospel has power to change people from pagans to believers with a new way of life. Indeed, as the church moves out in mission, it proclaims the Gospel to people to create a change in people's lives. There is a remarkable statement in the recent CTCR report A Theological Statement on Missions about the mission of the church: "Our mission is therefore to proclaim the Gospel, which transforms our lives and our relationships through faith in Jesus Christ."¹²² The authors of the document not only locate the source of missions in the Gospel, but they also point out its power to change people's lives. As the church preaches the Gospel in the worship service and in daily encounters with the world, it provides the very means to cause changes in the lives of the people.

As I review my work as a pastor, I realize now that when I preached the Gospel in the worship service, I was sure that it would bring people to faith or renew them as believers. However, I was not confident about its power to bring neighborhood people to faith. The second most important book that I read throughout this D. Min. program speaks to this very issue. It is Kolb's Speaking the Gospel for Today. This book especially reassures me about the power of the

¹²²Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 6.

Gospel in the world today, not just in the worship service. The book explains thoroughly the meaning of the Gospel today by examining the work of the Trinity in evangelism. Kolb considers the meaning of the Gospel and shows its practical implications in its proclamation to people. For example, he speaks about the relation of the Gospel to social ministry in this way:

Witnessing disciples sometimes forget the importance of their presence as well as their words, but for the alienated and the impotent, facing evil alone, simply the presence of someone who cares enough to spend time and invest concerns, if explained as arising from Jesus' love, can be the most effective witness to God's intervention on our behalf.¹²³

In this way, Kolb demonstrates effectively that the Christian can be engaged in acts of love to people of the neighborhood and also share the Gospel at the right opportunity. The Christian's acts of love and spoken witness work together in the Spirit to bring the Gospel to the person in need.

As I worked on this project, I understood anew the power of the Gospel to motivate mission in the neighborhood. When a layperson and I interviewed a community leader, I often discovered that God provided an opportunity to share the Gospel with a leader beleaguered with many burdens and troubles. The callers who surveyed people in the neighborhood mentioned that they were able to share portions of the Gospel with the people. Throughout this project, I became increasingly aware of the power of the Gospel to create change in the lives of people; I also discovered anew how God provides many opportunities to share the Gospel with others.

¹²³Kolb, 191.

I am not sure why I was reluctant to share the Gospel with outsiders. I felt sometimes a sense of shyness with the Gospel; I also had a fear of rejection. This program especially taught me that people definitely need the Gospel. The D. Min classes and especially this program brought a new confidence within me to share the Gospel with other people. Especially when I became aware of God's *kairos*, I was patient with the people in the neighborhood and knew that God gave an opportunity to share the Gospel with them. This project helped me to focus on power of Gospel proclamation.

Presence in the Community

As I look at the architecture of St. James Lutheran church, I am aware that it resembles a fortress. People need a fortress when they are afraid and want God's reassurance, and the church admirably fills this concern. However, the neighborhood does not need a fortress that separates the people of God from the people in homes nearby. The pastor and the people are called to become a part of the community and share the Gospel.

This project was very helpful to me because it provided new avenues to meet with the leaders and people of the community. Even though St. James enjoyed a good reputation in the Old Brooklyn neighborhood, it achieved this through the use of the building and not from its ministries. The people of the community were impressed that they were able to use the church facilities at a low price, but they still were not aware of the power of the Gospel, which can truly affect their lives.

This project opened my vision to see the many opportunities for ministry in the community.

One direct consequence of this project is that I now know the leaders of the community, and I want to cultivate this relationship with them. Whereas in the past I kept at a distance from the leaders, now I try to see them more. In fact, recently one of the councilmen asked me to lead a discussion with the people of the community about a certain issue. I am also much more aware of the issues affecting the community, and I am willing to participate in certain ways to help in the neighborhood.

The book that encourages the church's presence in the community is George Barna's Marketing the Church. Even though I felt cautious about using his principles of marketing, I was encouraged by this book to enter into the community and establish a Gospel presence there:

Some churches have attempted to change our product, to make the Church more palatable to the average consumer. This has resulted in a watered-down version of the gospel. Those churches do not really proclaim the saving grace of Christ, and the consumer is not gaining a closer, more meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ.¹²⁴

This book reminds me again of the importance of maintaining a Gospel presence in the community. The church cannot rely upon its "open door" policy to meet the needs of people; it must rely upon the power of the Gospel to affect the lives of people.

¹²⁴Barna, Marketing the Church, 56.

When I examined the statistics about the neighborhood people and reviewed the community surveys, I became increasingly aware that these people need the Gospel. They may have many struggles in their lives, so the Gospel is the proper means to address their needs and concerns. As the Lord gives the opportunity, the church continues to investigate how it may share the Gospel with people. This project enabled me to be more confident as I lead the church to develop a Gospel presence in the neighborhood.

When I reviewed these changes within me as pastor, I knew that I experienced other changes as well. However, I wanted to emphasize the importance of being deliberate in ministry, having confidence in the Gospel, and establishing more of a Gospel presence in the neighborhood. May the Lord grant me the power to continue to reflect and utilize these three important concepts in my personal and professional life.

CHAPTER 10

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this project was to bring together a group of laypeople in a Mission Study Task Force so that they could gather information about the congregation and community under a theological framework of *kairos*, God's decisive time. The members of the Task Force were expected to develop a greater appreciation for the church's mission and also have a close relationship with one another. It was also expected that the data would provide an impetus for the Planning Committee to devise more challenging goals for the congregation.

The results of this study were mixed. The members of the Task Force appreciated the church's opportunities for mission; however, they did not have a close relationship with one another. Many of the members did not plan to serve on the Task Force again. And yet, the data provided by the Task Force enabled the Planning Committee to devise challenging goals for both the congregation and the community.

There are several recommendations for future study. First of all, this study used only a few tools to study the congregation. Several books, notably Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney's Handbook for Congregational Studies and McIntosh and

Rusbult's Planning Growth in Your Church, suggest other types of surveys that a congregation may use to examine itself and also the community. It may be interesting to use a different research design and see what information it yields.

Another recommendation is to study more extensively the dynamics of a group of volunteers. When most books discuss the pastor's role in overseeing volunteers, they speak in terms of a one-on-one situation. How does the pastor deal with a group of volunteers? This question needs investigation.

It is also recommended that the research and planning process be reexamined to include national and overseas missions. When the Planning Committee established the goals, it proposed them only for the congregation and community, but not for national or overseas missions. How does a research group investigate missions beyond the community? This question has many possibilities for study.

There are also several recommendations to investigate specific concerns about the research process itself. First of all, how often is it necessary to research the congregation and community? The census data is becoming progressively obsolete, so a research group may follow Barna's suggestion and clip out new surveys from newspapers and magazines. If the congregation desires an annual survey, it may need a plan to find new people to conduct the research and not rely upon the same members. How does a church maintain a research committee? It may be interesting to look into this question.

In the same way, now that a church has established lines of communication with the leaders of the congregation, how does it cultivate this relationship? These leaders provide many insights that may prove helpful for the church's future work. How often are they visited, and who takes the responsibility for visiting them? This question of cultivation provides some new directions for investigation.

Although this study only focuses upon the importance of research in the planning process, it is obvious from the recommendations above that there are many aspects that still need to be studied.

APPENDIX 23

AGENDA FOR MISSION STUDY TASK FORCE

1. **OPENING DEVOTION:** Like a Rolling Stone? Let's look at 1 Peter 2:5-9, page 1014.
2. **WHY ARE WE HERE?**
 - a. We are the church; look at 1 Corinthians 1:1-3, page 1367.
 - b. We plan as the church; look at Mark 1:15, page 1183.
3. **INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS:** Say your name and share what excites you about St. James.
4. **PURPOSE OF THE GROUP:** To research data about St. James congregation and the Old Brooklyn neighborhood to provide vital information to the Planning Committee in its planning process. This Task Force should complete its task in nine months.
5. **PLAN OF ACTION**
 - a. Information gatherers will examine newspapers and magazines to find vital information about the community.
 - b. A congregational analysis will be made beginning in early January 1993 that will analyze worship attendance, Sunday school attendance, giving, and other important facts.
 - c. On January 18, 1993, a group of people will make an analysis of the 1990 census and also the CEF survey of the Old Brooklyn area.
 - d. **GROUP MEETING - FEBRUARY 1:** We will meet together to share the clippings and hear the reports of the congregational analysis and community analysis; we will decide together what facts are most pertinent for the Planning Committee.
 - e. On February 14, the congregation will be surveyed concerning their views of the mission of St. James. A group will tabulate the results.
 - f. **GROUP MEETING - MARCH 1:** We will meet together to share the clippings and hear the report of the congregational survey group; we will decide together what facts are most pertinent to the Planning Committee.

- g. During February, some people will accompany Pastor to interview "the opinion elite" of the area, including city editors, councilmen, principals, the head of Senior Resources, etc.
- h. From February 1 until March 8, a group of people will make phone surveys of the neighborhood, asking people their perceptions of community needs.
- i. **GROUP MEETING - APRIL 19:** We will meet together to share the clippings and hear the report of the community interview committee; we will decide together what facts are most pertinent to the Planning Committee. A special group will be appointed to put together some recommendations for the Planning Committee using the data we have established.
- j. **GROUP MEETING - MAY 24:** We will meet together to examine the booklet and make suggestions.
- k. **PLANNING MEETING - JUNE 15:** Hopefully, several members of the Mission Study Task Force will be present to participate in the Planning session as members at large. The participants of the Planning Committee will be surveyed concerning the booklet of recommendations in regards to its helpfulness.
- l. **FINAL MEETING - JUNE 21:** Everyone participating will get together at Pastor's house for dinner and also a time for debriefing: What did you learn from this experience? How do you feel about the mission of St. James? How did you feel about the group? How did you feel about the pastor?

6. TASKS NEEDED

- a. **INFORMATION GATHERER:** This person will read sections of the newspaper and/or magazines and clip out pertinent information about the neighborhood and city. Such information includes political issues, social issues, financial news, changes in lifestyle, changes in the family structure, rates of population growth, and information about churches in the area. **TALENTS/GIFTS:** Enjoys reading and gathering facts.
 - Jann Woehrmann: religious section Plain Dealer
 - Bill Kleinschmidt: Metro/City section PD/Old Brooklyn News
 - Karin Thompson: Cleveland Magazine
 - Pastor: financial section PD/Crain's Small Business

- b. **INFORMATION CATALOGUER:** This person will catalog all the news clippings into categories and put them into a file. **TALENTS/GIFTS:** Systematic person; enjoys putting things into categories
- Ann Woehrmann
 - c. **CONGREGATIONAL ANALYST:** This person will examine the basic facts about the congregation and organize them into a meaningful whole. **TALENTS/GIFTS:** Enjoys mathematics; can put together graphs.
- Ann Woehrmann
 - d. **CENSUS FORM ANALYST:** This person will examine the 1990 census of the area as well as the CEF analysis of the neighborhood and make appropriate recommendations. **TALENTS/GIFTS:** Enjoys mathematics and making analysis.
- Don & Karin Thompson
 - e. **CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY TAKER:** This person will examine the congregational survey and make appropriate recommendations. **TALENTS/GIFTS:** Interest in mathematics and statistics; likes to make analysis.
- Don & Karin Thompson/Bill Kleinschmidt
 - f. **"OPINION ELITE" INTERVIEWER:** This person will accompany Pastor when he interviews "the opinion elite" and take part in the discussion and also make analysis of the interview afterwards. **GIFTS/TALENTS:** Should be free during the day; enjoy talking and listening to people.
- Louse Barker/June Zippelli
 - g. **TELEPHONE SURVEY TAKER:** This person will interview community people on the phone and ask them their opinions about community needs. The interviewer will NOT ask the person about his or her church attendance or attending St. James.
- Louise Barker/Edna Bardis/Melinda Fawcett/Sandy Tews/Dorothy Baumann/Nona Meier/Pastor
7. **WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?**
8. **WHAT DOES PASTOR PLAN TO DO?**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, Roland. Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962. This book takes Paul's methods of administration seriously and argues that mission boards should not be overly patronizing of the native people, but give them the responsibility of leading their churches, even if they fail. He provides a good biblical overview about God's direction in the early church and urges churches to trust that the Holy Spirit will accomplish much through people who are newly converted.

Barna, George. The Barna Report -- 1992-93. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992. This book in itself becomes dated very quickly as it reports findings about the religious views of the American people in 1992. The book gives some good examples to research committees about constructing relevant survey questions. Among the findings that are presented in this book: 91% of all non-Christians think that churches are not very sensitive to their needs; also, nearly two-thirds of Americans have watched a Christian program on television. Some people may question the validity of the statistics in this book, but pastors will find some of the data helpful for sermon illustrations and planning.

----- Marketing the Church: What They Never Taught You About Church Growth. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1990. Whenever pastors feel that their churches cannot reach out into the community, they should read this book. Barna is very encouraging as he gives details for a church to discover the community's needs. Some pastors may question Barna's view of church marketing, but he does provide some concrete ways to understand the community. He gives practical examples of congregational surveys and also suggests interviews with the "opinion elite." Barna sometimes becomes overly enthusiastic about the usefulness of these tools to discover community needs, and he tends to sound oriented to a "social gospel," but a committee can learn much about research by reading this book.

----- A Step-by-Step Guide to Church Marketing: Breaking Ground for the Harvest. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992. This book is very similar to Barna's other book, Marketing the Church. It provides the same groundwork for conducting research into the community, but it gives more details about every process and also a larger bibliography. He also promotes focus groups as a method of interviewing community people in a group along with a moderator. Perhaps a church can invite the leaders of the community to participate in this group. This book also has some interesting Bible studies in the appendices, along with some samples of written and phone surveys.

Callahan, Kennon L. Twelve Keys to an Effective Church. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1983. This book is a very practical book about administration. The author demonstrates that the local church must be proficient in six relational and six functional characteristics, if it wants to grow. Callahan never veers from the importance of preaching the Gospel and using prayer in the life of the church, and he also demonstrates some practical ideas, complete with diagnostic charts. Among his insights: the church should not try to improve its weaknesses, but claim and build on its strengths. This book can be read many times with profit!

Carroll, Jackson; Carl S. Dudley; and William McKinney, eds. Handbook for Congregational Studies. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1986. The authors explain the importance of researching a congregation in terms of four dimensions: program, process, context, and identity. They also provide definite ways for a congregation to examine these four dimensions. A congregation may use the tools in this book for several years and never finish them all. The authors suggest different research designs which may also be profitable to the research committee. The book contains many helpful models of surveys. Since they are several writers involved in this book, it sometimes seems repetitious and even confusing. For example, the needs assessment design appears in at least three different sections of the book. Despite the choppy editing, the book is very helpful for research.

Commission on Theology and Church Relations. A Theological Statement of Mission and a Bible Study on Romans. St. Louis: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. This document is very relevant in its presentation about the mission of the church. It points out that the church must be involved in the mission of proclaiming the Gospel to all people. The following chapters explain in a practical way how the church can accomplish this mission. This document is an effective blend of ecclesiology and missiology. The Missouri Synod has had a reputation in the past as being standoffish and not very interested in evangelism. This document proves beyond a doubt that the Synod is officially gearing up for mission.

Dudley, Carl S. Basic Steps Toward Community Ministry. Washington, DC: The Albany Institute, 1992. The author discusses the basic steps of research and planning, and he helps the planning committee to focus on people who are lowly and destitute. The planning process is based on this question: Who are the "invisible" people in the neighborhood?; that is, the ignored, marginalized, or simply out of sight. This book has many concrete examples of churches that minister in the urban setting. However, it has a strong social gospel flavor to it, so the pastor should be careful when he uses **this** book, so that the Gospel is not lost in all the efforts of ministry.

Heinecke, Paul T., Kent R. Hunter, and David S. Luecke. Courageous Churches. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1991. This book is a compendium of "courageous churches" that faced decline and yet developed new ministries at the right time and now are flourishing. The authors first establish several generalities about these churches, such as spiritual growth and celebrative worship; and then they focus on the way these churches performed new ministries for growth. The authors definitely point out that the pastor cannot be on the sidelines, but must be the leader. This book gives hope to any church that is floundering, but it does not produce any surefire answers; churches must remember that they may not receive the same results from their situation, since the setting, people and circumstances are different. This book provides the models for outreach in the community, but each church must design its own program. This book is helpful in pointing out the effect of *kairos* on a congregation.

Johnson, Douglas. The Care and Feeding of Volunteers. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1981. The author gives some good ideas about recruiting and maintaining a system of volunteers. He stresses the importance of volunteers in the church and reminds the pastor and staff to respect them as volunteer help. He does not provide any information about working with a group of volunteers, but only with a single volunteer. This book has some helpful ideas, but many of the ideas can be gained from experience. This book is rather disappointing and leaves the reader looking elsewhere for more information about dealing with volunteers.

Kolb, Robert. Speaking the Gospel Today. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984. This book is a marvelous book that should be in every pastor's library. The author analyzes the theology of evangelism completely so that the reader comes away with new perspectives about sharing the Gospel. Kolb demonstrates how all three persons of the Trinity are involved in the evangelizing process; he also explains in detail a very thorny issue in evangelism: the role people play when they share the Gospel. Kolb is always careful to keep the Gospel in the forefront. This book is theological, but it also is very practical for the pastor wanting to become more involved in evangelism. For example, he points out the different stages of an unregenerate man who hears the Gospel. One other practical insight: When people ask a theological question, the pastor does not need to answer it right away, but rather asks, "Why do you want to know?" This book can be read many times for more insights into the theology of evangelism.

Kotler, Philip and Alan Andreason. Strategic Marketing for Non-Profit Organizations. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Publishers, 1987. If someone thinks that Barna has a lengthy discussion about church marketing, he should see the detailed discussion of marketing in this book. The authors present many marketing concepts unheard of in any other church marketing books. For example, they speak of the eight states of demand, image management, the product/opportunity matrix, and more. Granted, this book is intended for all non-profit organizations, including colleges, helping agencies, and the like, but churches are also included in the text. Pastors may use the principles found in this book with profit, but they must balance these ideas with their own theology.

Luecke, David S. New Designs for Church Leadership. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1990. When pastors serve their congregation for some time, they begin to complain that they learned much about exegesis and systematics, but little about administration. If every seminarian would read this book before he was ordained, he would not have this problem. This book is extremely helpful for explaining the administrative roles of the pastor, membership building, and styles of pastoral leadership. The author does not give information about the details of administration, such as how a pastor should run a meeting, but he gives a general overview about the basics of pastoral administration. As reported in this paper, Luecke's discussion of the carpenter, contractor, and architect roles of the pastor along with his explanation of push and pull with members, can serve as a catalyst for any pastor wanting to improve his administrative role. A pastor should read this book at least once a year to familiarize himself anew with these administrative concepts.

McConkey, Dale D. Goal Setting. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979. This small book presents the basics of the planning process for a congregation. Most of the steps he suggests are found in other books. Unfortunately, the author is not a pastor, but a professor of management, so he speaks more in business terms than in theological ones. Since there are other planning books that are directed to churches and speak theologically about the planning process, a pastor could pretty well disregard this book.

McIntosh, Duncan and Richard E. Rusbuldt. Planning Growth in Your Church. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1983. This book looks at the planning process from a church growth perspective. The authors point out that the church must first develop its purpose for ministry, then design its vision, and then devise goals in the areas of evangelism, caring, worship, education, service, and administration. The book contains many practical ideas and resources for beginning programs in each of these program areas. The discussion of planning is adequate, but the program ideas make this book profitable. The appendices contain several helpful surveys for the congregation and community.

Rusbuldt, Richard E.; R.K. Gladden; and N.M. Green. Key Steps in Local Church Planning. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1980. As noted in the body of the paper, this book contains a good explanation about the church's planning process and supplies a very helpful diagram of planning. The steps of the process are similar to the other books, but the authors explain the subject thoroughly so that the pastor and planning committee obtain a good idea about the whole planning process. This book is highly recommended for any church looking for a workable design for planning.

Schaller, Lyle E. Effective Church Planning. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1979. This is a strange book. The author does not focus upon church planning itself; in fact, he does not really discuss any form of planning until page 100. He does not touch upon any specifics of planning, but talks in generalities. A reader may get the impression that the author is not really interested in the topic, but is pressured to write a book. He does have a helpful discussion about leadership and membership, but he does not deal with the planning process itself. There are other books in this bibliography that provide the necessary information.

----- The Middle-Sized Church. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983. This book, on the other hand, is very productive and gives practical insights about the middle-sized church. Schaller defines the middle-sized church as one with weekly worship attendance between 160 and 260 people. He points out that these churches are unique and have their own special characteristics. He also demonstrates very effectively that the common problem to all these churches is that they do not act their size. Members of middle-sized churches view their churches as being small, so they do not recognize the capacities of their congregations. Schaller strongly suggests that probably most middle-sized churches are under-staffed and need another worship service on Sunday. A pastor of a middle-sized church will recognize his church on every page. He should give copies of this book to the members of his church council to enlarge their thinking about the middle-sized church.

Walrath, Douglas A. Planning for Your Church. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1979. This book provides a helpful scheme for church planning, but gives so many details to each step of the process that a planning committee may be reluctant to begin the process. The steps of planning are similar to other books, but the author does not leave any stone unturned as he explains all the details. The pastor and committee may become overwhelmed when they read this book, so perhaps they can use this book as an overview for their planning.

Walther, C.F.W. The True Visible Church and the Form of a Christian Congregation. Trans. by John Theodore Mueller. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1988. Both of these titles are combined into one book in the Concordia Heritage series. As one reads this book, he can tell that the author has deep convictions about the orthodox church maintaining its doctrinal purity in view of the heterodox churches. He first distinguishes between the visible and invisible church and states that the visible church can be recognized by the pure marks of the Word and Sacrament. He uses Scripture, passages from the church fathers, and the Confessions to show how the true church functions in the world. Walther does not touch upon the mission of the church to the outside world, except in a few paragraphs. Yet one can be sympathetic with Walther as he attempts to maintain the true church in a crooked world.