CHURCH OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IMAGINE KANNAPOLIS CHURCH OF GOD:
A MODIFIED APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY STRATEGIC PLANNING INTERVENTION AND
ITS IMPACT ON THE CHRISTIAN FORMATION, RELATIONSHIPS, AND EMOTIONAL
HEALTH OF PERSONS IN A SOUTHEASTERN U.S. PENTECOSTAL CONGREGATION.

PROJECT PROSPECTUS
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INTRODUCTION

This research project aims to determine the effectiveness of using a strategic planning process as a means to foster Christian formation within a Pentecostal congregation in the United States. The given premises are that the current context of this particular church requires transformation to address major impending changes within the staff, the congregation and the community, that a formational leadership model is necessary to foster the appropriate changes, and that spiritual discernment by the entire congregation must undergird the endeavor. The major objective is to help prepare the congregation for the impending changes, and to understand how this process impacts the relationships, emotional health and Christian formation of the staff and congregation. A second concern is to assess the effectiveness of using an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) change model as a method of approaching the strategic planning process, and to consider the AI model for positive change possibilities in other areas of the church. The focus is deliberately on the congregation and staff of the Kannapolis Church of God in Kannapolis, North Carolina. While this focus is on one particular Pentecostal church located in the southeastern U.S., implications may be discovered in the research that would more broadly apply in other congregations.

My hypothesis is that this type of intervention will create a sound plan for ministry in the congregation and community, that the process of creating the plan will improve relationships between members of the staff and among the congregation, that emotional health will improve, and that through this positive-based strategic planning process—undergirded by a keen sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s guidance—Christian formation will be enhanced.
CHAPTER ONE – THE MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY/PROBLEM

Interests and Concerns

I have been the associate pastor at the Kannapolis Church of God for sixteen years. This church is a good church, stable, and many good things are happening. It is also an historical church, ninety-six years old since its formal organizing. We have a good staff—a good senior pastor, a good youth and family pastor, a good prayer pastor, a good children’s pastor, a good bookkeeper, good maintenance men, and I would qualify myself also as good. We have good worship services, some good outreach events, and we have good attendance. We have a good group of administrative elders, a good choir, some good Sunday School classes, a good children’s program, and several other good ministries going on. But we can be so much better. In fact, we could be great.

Since I have been at the church I have continuously pondered how I could best help the church be a great church. I have had endless conversations with the senior pastor, and some with the staff, in which we were together asking how we might lead the church to greatness. We have tried numerous approaches. Nearly all of them were good approaches, and had good results. Being influenced by the times, I thought about how we might change the church into a great church by utilizing the typical approach to change: thinking about the problem areas that are preventing us from getting there, and proposing a different approach. I have considered many of the possible variables. Maybe it was a leadership issue and we needed to look at a different model of leadership. Or, it could be a problem with organization. We certainly needed better organization and follow through. Perhaps it was a systemic problem—something that had been
going on throughout the history of the church, or that we were just a product of postmodernity. Maybe it was a spiritual problem—there was “sin in the camp” or we needed a revival to jump-start us again. I thought if I could explore deeply enough I could help find the problem.

This became one of my primary motivations for entering the Doctor of Ministry program. I wanted to understand better where we were missing it, so I could help the senior pastor and the staff change it. I felt the D.Min. model offered a good approach, since it was designed to help the student find a focus area that revolved around a problem or issue in ministry and a ministry project which culminated in a written thesis about that project. I certainly had a project—a church that needed change, and a staff that was getting increasingly tired and discouraged in trying to make it happen. I liked what I perceived as the approach—to begin by defining a “ministry problem.”

The problem was, I still had difficulty ascertaining what the problem was. As William Myers states, “The identification of a ‘problem in the practice of ministry’ is both the toughest and most important step that the D.Min. student must take.”¹ It certainly has been for me, at least until recently.

One of the directions that I took during my first year in the program was to focus on a different type of leadership. I have for some time had the conviction that in the church, even within a transformational leadership model which encourages engagement with one another in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to “higher levels of motivation and morality,” there is not much allowance for the work God does in and reveals to individuals, and in the corporate congregational body. This is especially true in regard to establishing the church’s vision. Typically, the pastor is given the role of determining the vision and then

establishing the organizational structure that fosters the ownership of the pastor’s vision by the congregation. In my opinion, this is not Pentecostal, and certainly does not align with the Scriptures.

Because of this conviction I was easily drawn to a “Formational Leadership” model developed by Pentecostal Theological Seminary (PTS) Professor, Dr. Jackie Johns. In this model the entire church together seeks a vision from God, and this process fosters Christian formation. This approach has come to be a central element of my project.

Two former students of the seminary, Jeremy McGinnis and Herschell Baker, had done projects in their church built upon the formational leadership model. McGinnis worked with his church’s pastoral staff and tested an intervention to move from a transformational leadership model to a “transformational/formational” model. Baker worked with his youth leadership team and studied the effectiveness of a formational leadership approach on developing competence within the team. Both of these interventions produced significant positive change within their church.²

I thought a similar process could be helpful in my church and discussed this with Dr. Johns, my academic advisor, who was also directing me in an elective Formational Leadership class. As Dr. Johns listened to my description of the church and my leaning toward a formational leadership model intervention he suggested a variation of his model. He described one area of the model that he was interested in approaching differently—the initial “analysis” step, in which

the participants are requested to identify areas of ministry they share that need improvement. It is in this step that the question is asked, “Where are we?”

He suggested that I might consider investigating something he had recently been interested in—Appreciative Inquiry (AI). The primary assumption in this approach is that an organization moves in the direction of the questions it asks. Rather than a “deficit-based” beginning, examining the weaknesses of the organization, it looks at the successes of the organization and builds upon them.

I had never heard of AI, but was intrigued. As I began to study the approach, something “clicked” for me, and the possibilities of using it in my project became exciting. During my research of AI, I came to the conclusion that if used correctly, and if it is carefully undergirded by spiritual discernment, it has great potential as a tool to help change our church from a good church to a great church. It also parallels, to a great extent, the formational leadership model, with the exception of the analysis step. I will provide a more detailed description of AI later in this paper.

The Ministry Situation

As stated above, we have a good church and a good congregation, and we are seeing some good things happening. But I sense that as we have worked hard and tried so many different approaches as a staff to lead the congregation to greatness, there have been negative consequences, both for the staff and for the congregation. For the staff, I have seen through the last few years a gradual change. A sense of tiredness exists now. There is less energy, less enthusiasm and less creativity. There is more irritability—some with each other and some with

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the congregation. The relationships among the staff seem stale, or at least not deepening. We are more disconnected from one another than I have seen before. No one seems content that they are reaching their own spiritual potential. While this assessment is no doubt in part a projection of my own thoughts and feelings, there is evidence through other means which affirms that it is not entirely my own interpretation. Conversations with staff members verify some of these feelings. Physical symptoms have also emerged that reflect the situation. For example, there seems to be a low resistance to illness. Emotional health is also being impacted. There seems to be among the staff less self confidence, less confidence in one another, less confidence in the congregation, and less hopefulness in general. Difficulty with memory is frequently discussed. I suspect that a certain amount of depression exists among all of the staff.

The negative consequences for the congregation are similar. There is more resistance to try new things and some complaints about the existing things, but in general there exists an attitude that the status quo is not that bad. Many are content to stay within their own small groupings and abhor the idea of trying to change anything one more time.

While the above deficit-based paragraph reflects some of my assumptions of what our “problems” may be, it does not reflect a very “Appreciative” approach. Nevertheless, it does provide a topic from which an AI intervention can begin. Summarizing what I see as a topic or “opportunity” for our church, is how to move from goodness to greatness. Specifically, what I would like to address, utilizing a formational leadership model that employs a positive AI approach, are the relationships and emotional health in the staff and congregation, and to do so in a way that Christian formation occurs. The method that I would like use and test for effectiveness is a strategic planning process which includes the staff and the congregation.
Statement of the Opportunity/Problem in the Ministry Context

Since we are a good church, but should not and cannot neglect our call to be great, here, then, is my primary question: “What effect does a formational leadership model utilizing a modified Appreciative Inquiry strategic planning process have on the Christian formation, relationships, and emotional health of Pentecostals?”

My hypothesis is that this type of intervention will improve relationships between members of the staff and among the congregation, that emotional health will improve, and that through the process of positive-based strategic planning which is undergirded by a keen sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s guidance, Christian formation will be enhanced, and we will progress as a congregation toward greatness.

I realize “good” and “great” are non-scientific, subjective terms that have no clear definition. The ambiguity is intentional. I think of greatness as a portion of a continuum. Ultimate greatness exists at that point when the fullness of the Kingdom of God arrives. Until then, we should be moving positively in that direction, following Paul’s exhortation to the Thessalonians to become more and more godly and full of love (1 Thess. 4:1, 10; 2 Thess. 1:3).
CHAPTER TWO – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Leadership

“Formational Leadership: A Pentecostal Model for Using the Decision-Making Process of the Congregation to Nurture Faith,” by Jackie David Johns.4

This paper was written developing Dr. Johns' idea that "within Pentecostalism the experience of the church as charismatic community of faith dictated that leadership be understood as a function of the body through a process of corporate discernment."5 His objective was also "to present a model for corporate decision making which facilitated discipleship."6 This model, which he adapted from Lois LeBar's "Educational Cycle" presented in Focus on People in Church Education, is his attempt to amend her cycle into a "teaching instrument for persons in shared ministry in the context of Pentecostalism."7

Johns provides a brief history of the transformational leadership model, which he gives credit primarily to R.J. House and James McGregor Burns, modified by Bernard M. Bass and others. This model was further modified through evangelical influences by Leighton Ford, Philip Lewis and Paul L. Walker, among others.

He critiques the transformational leadership model by suggesting similar terminology is used ("charismatic," "transformation," "vision," etc.) by both the model and Pentecostalism. However, for Pentecostals there are other things to consider. Three questions must be asked:

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., 1.
6 Ibid., 2.
7 Ibid., 3.
(1) "How should the church determine its missional vision?" (2) "From whom does the vision come?" (3) "How should it be authenticated?"

He proceeds to answer these questions through a Scriptural and theological study, and proposes his Pentecostal model for formation and leadership. This model must flow from a Pentecostal worldview and paradigm of the church, which understands that a Pentecostal worldview (1) is God centered, (2) is systemic and holistic, (3) is transrational and, (4) is apocalyptic. It also deals with (1) the importance of Scripture, (2) inclination toward action more than reflection, (3) resistance to bureaucratic authority (4) having a paradoxical view of power (personal power vs. God's omnipotence) and, (5) having a need for separation from the world.

He suggests that Pentecostal expressions of the Christian life are systemic. Truth has purpose, function and structure. Orthodoxy is the purpose of knowledge. Orthopraxy is the reflection/action that results in encounters with God. Orthopathy is the right affections which "provide the structure/essence of a truth based paradigm."  

Formation within the Pentecostal community has only recently (at that time) been addressed by three primary Pentecostal writers: Cheryl Johns, James Bowers and Jerome Boone. These authors emphasize "the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit in the relational processes and worship experiences of the Pentecostal community as key ingredients in Pentecostal Christian formation."  

Johns' (Jackie) model builds on these foundational understandings: (1) the church must be viewed both as a living organism and as a discerning community under the lordship of Jesus Christ; (2) the function of elders is to equip the members for Christian service; (3) it is the

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8 Ibid., 17.  
9 Ibid., 20.
responsibility of the body of Christ both individually and corporately to discern how Jesus
desires his church to engage the needs of creation.

Several truths are evident concerning formational leadership:

- Formational leadership understands discipleship to be a faithful response to the
  revelation of Jesus Christ.
- Formational leadership accepts as the "leader's" responsibility the building up of the
  "follower's" faith.
- Formational leadership is also an expression of faith in God's presence with his
  people.
- Formational leadership begins with a call to share the pain of the hurting members of
  the community.
- Formational leadership requires a personal and corporate stance of repentance.
- Formational leadership engages the dialectic tension which emerges from competing
  felt needs and visions.

Johns maintains that "formational leadership understands discipleship to be a faithful
response to the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is an ongoing quest to know and do the will of God,
to fully participate in the reign of Christ."\(^{10}\) Faith is a communal way of knowing.

His model for implementing formational leadership includes a "cycle of ministry
development” which includes seven steps: (1) Analyze: Where are we? (2) Set Goals: Where
does God want us to be? (3) Select a Course: What course should we follow to get there? (4)
Plan for action: What must we do to make the trip? (5) Work the plan: Let's Go! (6) Evaluate:
Are we there yet? And (7) Celebrate: Remember the journey!

He finishes the paper by addressing the first stage, Analysis, by providing some helpful
illustrations of the model.

The historical development of the (secular) transformational leadership model which was
adapted by evangelicalism provided a good background for his formational leadership proposal.
His scriptural and theological justification of the model is clear, and the practical implementation

\(^{10}\) Ibid., 21.
method is valuable as the Kannapolis Church of God begins to move in the direction of a more engaged congregation that not only participates in discerning God’s direction, but finds empowerment and insight in planning for its accomplishment.

W. Warner Burke’s *Organizational Change: Theory and Practice*¹¹

W. Warner Burke’s background is in the area of organizational psychology, organization change and leadership. This book details the dynamics involved when an organization changes. He draws from numerous resources, examines several models and illustrates through different case studies how to diagnose change issues in organizations.

Two particular topics Burke addresses are of special interest in regard to this project. These are transformational leadership (Chapter 12), and leading organization change (Chapter 13). Burke defines leadership and examines the role of the leader in organization change. His position is that leaders matter, and can have a significant influence on organization change. Leadership is different from power. Power is the capacity to influence others, while leadership is the exercise of that capacity. So, leadership can be defined as “the act of making something happen that would not otherwise occur.”¹²

There is a distinction between leadership and management. Burke credits A. Zaleznik as one of the first (in 1977) to describe this difference. Zalenik said leaders see no distinction between their goals and the goals of the organization, while managers are more reactive or passive toward goals. A year later, James MacGregor Burns introduced his idea of transformational and transactional leadership. Burke sees Zaleznik’s leader as similar to Burns’ transformational leader, and Zaleznik’s manager as similar to Burns’ transactional leader.

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¹² Ibid., 228.
Leadership is also not the same as authority. Authority concerns the “right to” do something, and is given “from above,” while leadership comes “from below” and “from within.” Leadership is more about influence, not command and control. Leadership more often has to do with change, while management is more concerned with solving problems, effectiveness and just keeping the organization running.

Burke emphasizes the executive leader as being the most essential to the success in the early stages of organization change. He refers to S.J. Zaccaro, who describes two primary responsibilities of executive leaders: (1) boundary management, in which they monitor the external environment, analyze it and communicate the implications to organizational members; and (2) organization-wide coordination, which requires making sure units within the organization communicate, determining what decisions should be made and who should make them, and monitoring overall performance.

Zaccaro pointed out four primary conceptual perspectives (theories) on executive leadership; (1) conceptual complexity (analytical thinking); (2) behavioral complexity (emotional intelligence); (3) strategic decision making (congruence between the organization and its environment); and (4) visionary and inspirational (which requires charisma, transformational and visionary qualities). This emphasizes the necessity of the leader developing a vision that will focus and motivate followers. These theories overlap and affirm the importance of long-term goals, organizational directions, and boundary management.

Burke points out two sources that describe the importance of the leader using storytelling as a means to move toward organization change. Howard Gardner, a cognitive psychologist, studied successful leaders to understand their thinking abilities and patterns, and published his findings in *Leading Minds* (1995). He found these leaders provide “mental structures” that activate their
follower’s desires. These structures are about identity—who they are as an organization, what they want, believe, and how they want to be seen by others. These are most often conveyed through the form of a story about who they are, their aspirations, and the direction they need to take for the future. The story constitutes a journey that leaders and followers take together. Gardner later (2004) came out with a work, *Changing Minds*, describing how the leader can persuade people to his point of view.

Robert McKee (2003) was another who emphasized the importance of storytelling in organization change, and described the details of what the story should entail. His premise was that people are not inspired to change by reason alone—it also requires emotion, and the best way to do that was with a story.

Burke’s Chapter 13, “Leading Organization Change” is a “how to” chapter that provides a model to implement organization change. The leader’s role and function is described through four “linear” phases (that are not really linear at all). Phase 1 is the prelaunch phase, which requires the leader’s self-examination, gathering information from the external environment, establishing the need for change, and providing clarity of vision and direction. Phase 2 is the launch phase, which necessitates communication of the need for change, initiating key activities, and dealing with resistance. Phase 3 is the post launch phase or further implementation, which requires multiple leverage (interventions), taking a lot of heat, consistency, perseverance, and continually repeating the message. Phase 4 is sustaining the change, which deals with unanticipated consequences, maintaining momentum, choosing successors, and “launching yet again new initiatives.” This phase may be the most difficult to maintain.

Burke’s work has been thoroughly researched, and his interpretations and conclusions skillfully integrate a variety of different approaches to organization change. He emphasizes a
transformational leadership model which calls for the vision originating with the leader and the followers being led to embrace it. While this is embraced by many church leaders today, it lacks a Pentecostal paradigm which allows for vision to emerge from the congregation. Implementing Burke’s four phase model of organization change relies too heavily on the leader, and if used for changing the Pentecostal organization (church) utilizing a formational leadership model, would have to be modified to allow for more input from the congregation. In my opinion, a better approach to change, in which the congregation assumes much more responsibility, would be to utilize a formational leadership model with an Appreciative Inquiry approach, which will be described later in this paper. Finally, Burke’s research and practical suggestions of the value of using story is worthy to consider, but again relies primarily on the storytelling of the leader rather than utilizing storytelling among the members. This is also addressed in an Appreciative Inquiry approach.

*Appreciative Inquiry Handbook for Leaders of Change,*
by David L. Cooperrider, Diana Whitney and Jacqueline M. Stavros.¹³

This book is the “bible” of Appreciative Inquiry (hereafter referred to as AI), and details its theoretical and practical application for organizations desiring change. It is also descriptive of some of the most successful and longest-running AI change efforts.

AI is succinctly explained early in the book:

Appreciative inquiry is the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives “life” to a living system when it is most effective, alive, and constructively capable in economic ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. The inquiry is mobilized through the crafting of the “unconditional positive question,” often involving

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hundreds or thousands of people. AI interventions focus on the speed of imagination and innovation instead of the negative, critical, and spiraling diagnoses commonly used in organizations. The discovery, dream, design, and destiny model links the energy of the positive core to changes never thought possible.14

AI began to be developed in 1980, when David Cooperrider was a doctoral student at Case Western Reserve University. He was helping another student develop his dissertation on physician leadership at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. Physician leaders were asked to tell stories of their biggest successes as well as their biggest failures. Cooperrider was drawn to the success stories and the description of the positive cooperation, innovation and shared management at the clinic. With encouragement from his own advisor, Suresh Srivastva, Cooperrider began to examine the data exclusively in search of the positives that he recognized as giving life to the system and the people. His method was to systematically and deliberately “appreciate” the positives and speculate what could be. They developed this method and called it Appreciative Inquiry. The results of the study were extremely favorable. Cooperrider wrote his dissertation on this “holistic process.”15

AI’s theoretical framework is built on the assumption that every organization has something that works well, and that those things that work well are the starting point for creating positive change. When people are invited to participate and tell their own stories about their positive past experiences in an organization it generates energy for change. This energy is linked to the change agenda, and creates movement toward a shared dream.16

The following propositions underlie the practice of AI:

- Inquiry into “the art of the possible” in organizational life should begin with appreciation. This is called the “Discovery” step in a process Cooperrider calls a “4-D Cycle” described below.

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14 Ibid., 3.
15 Ibid., XXVII. The history of AI is described in more detail in this section.
16 Ibid., 3-4.
• Inquiry into what is possible should yield information that is applicable.
• Inquiry into what is possible should be provocative. That is, knowledge of “what is” becomes provocative to the extent that the learning stirs members to action.
• Inquiry into the human potential of organizational life should be collaborative.
• There is an immutable relationship between the process of inquiry and its content.\(^\text{17}\)

Two basic questions are behind any AI initiative:

1. What, in this particular setting and context, gives life to this system—when it is most alive, healthy and systematically related to its various communities? (2) What are the possibilities—expressed and latent—to provide opportunities for more effective (value-congruent) forms of organizing?

Cooperrider’s Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle is shown below and is followed with the cycles briefly described.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{17}\) Ibid, 4.
\(^{18}\) This chart comes from http://www.new-paradigm.co.uk/images/4-D%20Cycle.jpg (accessed February 12, 2010), and is similar to the chart on page 5 of the text.
1. Discovery. The first step is to discover and value the factors that give life to the organization. A topic is chosen, such as high quality, integrity, empowerment, team spirit, and so on. Individuals engage in dialogue and tell their stories that focus on appreciating the positive experiences of being in the organization and their interpretation of what factors led to their positive experience.

2. Dream. When the best of “what is” has been identified in the Discovery step, people begin to think about “what might be” in the future. This step uses the interview stories to elicit key themes that underlie the times when the organization was at its best.

3. Design. In this step the participants coconstruct the future by designing an organizational architecture in which the exceptional becomes the ordinary. This is more than a vision; it is a “provocative statement” of the organization’s future.

4. Destiny. This step involves the members of the organization in finding innovative ways to help move the organization closer to the ideal. Since the ideals are grounded in the realities of past experiences the organization is empowered to make things happen.

Cooperrider provides a thorough description of AI’s effectiveness by detailing scientific research done by him and by others in the field of AI. In his conclusion he notes,

In sum, the position we have been developing here is that for action-research to reach its potential as a vehicle for social innovation, it needs to begin advancing theoretical knowledge of consequence—that good theory may be one of the most powerful means human beings have for producing change in a post-industrial world; that the discipline’s steadfast commitment to a problem-solving view of the world is a primary restraint on its imagination, passion, and positive contribution; that appreciative inquiry represents a viable complement to conventional forms of action-research, one uniquely suited for social innovation instead of problem solving; and that through our assumptions and choice of method we largely create the world we later discover.19

19 Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, Appreciative Inquiry Handbook, 381-2. This section is a reprint of an article he and Suresh Srivastva wrote called, “Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life.” See Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life: Appreciative Management (Euclid, OH: Lakeshore Communications, 1999), 401-441. This section presents a view of action-research based on a “sociorationalist” view of science.
Several chapters of the text are devoted to how AI has been utilized in diverse organizational environments, including the U.S. Navy, McDonalds, Save the Children and numerous other organizations, including religious organizations. The descriptions of the results are quite impressive.

It is interesting to note the similarity between Cooperrider’s 4-D Cycle and Johns’ seven stage Cycle of Ministry Development. The following chart illustrates the similarities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AI Model</th>
<th>Formational Leadership Cycle of Ministry Model</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Discover</td>
<td>1. Analyze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Discover</td>
<td>What gives life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dream</td>
<td>2. Set Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dream</td>
<td>What might be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Design</td>
<td>3. Select a Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Design</td>
<td>How can it be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Deliver</td>
<td>4. Plan of Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Deliver</td>
<td>What will be?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Deliver</td>
<td>How do we sustain?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Work the Plan</td>
<td>5. Work the Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Work the Plan</td>
<td>Let’s go!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Evaluate</td>
<td>Are we there yet?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Celebrate</td>
<td>7. Celebrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Celebrate</td>
<td>Remember the journey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of the first step in each of the models and the last step in the Cycle of Ministry Model, they are very similar. The primary difference in the first step lies in the approach taken. The AI model is based on those things that are working in an organization, while the Cycle of Ministry model asks what areas are in need of improvement. Cooperrider calls those models that begin with a focus on the problem “deficit-based” models.
Yballe and O’Connor have utilized AI to develop what they call Appreciative Pedagogy (AP). They build on Cooperrider’s premise that “positive images (ideals and vision) have a ‘heliotropic effect’; that is, they energize and orient human behavior toward the realization of the ideal,” which is similar to a plant growing in the direction of a light source. An organization therefore moves toward the positive images held by its members and is gradually transformed from what it is into what it can be.

The authors, who are with LeMoyne College’s Division of Business Administration, have used an appreciative pedagogy approach innovatively and successfully in the classroom. There have been numerous healthy outcomes, which they list as (1) more energized and sustained interactions with students; (2) less fear and intimidation to speak up in class; (3) a fuller and more hopeful view of the future; (4) concepts and insights are personally meaningful and relevant because they are rooted in personal experiences; (5) a greater trust in self and a heightened confidence in their experience; (6) ability to reframe the context of a problem into an opportunity; (7) the development of a more positive attitude toward other students; (8) possibly a more positive attitude toward the professor as a resource, guide and helper.

This article describes one of many ways that AI is used to transform organizations, and suggests the possibility that it could be an effective discipleship teaching model.

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21 Ibid., 475.
22 Ibid., 481-2.
Appreciative Team Building, by Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, Cherney and Fry.23

These authors have utilized AI as a way to build high performance teams. The purpose of their book is to help foster an understanding of why teams work when they do, and to stimulate a discovery process within the team that surfaces strengths and practices they have experienced in their own teams and other teams on which they have participated. One of the most important steps in AI is designing questions that generate stories from the participants. Numerous possibilities for questions are suggested and a practical, step-by-step AI method is offered.

Since I will be initially working with the staff and guiding them through an AI event, this book will be helpful in providing practical ideas for the process.

Memories, Hopes and Conversations, by Mark Lau Branson.24

Mark Branson, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, has written a wonderful book that describes his work utilizing AI in a congregational setting with First Presbyterian Church in Altadena, California. This church was historically an ethnically Japanese church, but had gradually incorporated some of other ethnic backgrounds. Branson described his initial visit to the church, in which he experienced a subdued, “perhaps even wounded”25 group of people in a declining church. This congregation had been tasked with the responsibility from their presbytery of preparing a report on the type of congregation they had so a new pastor could appropriately be selected to replace the former pastor. Branson was invited to serve as a consultant to assist the church in the process.

25 Ibid., 2.
He carefully designed an AI process, drawing from the method developed by Jane Magruder Watkins and Bernard J. Mohr, very similar to that of David Cooperrider’s model. Branson adapted the approach into four action steps:

(1) **Initiate** a congregational process that focuses upon the positive, shaped by gratefulness to God and to each other. Key leaders and groups within the church are introduced to the Appreciative Inquiry process and are invited to help shape the questions, identify who will be interviewed, and aid in the interpretation of the interview data. (2) **Inquire** into the stories of life-giving forces within the history and experience of congregational members. Members of the congregation begin to share those times when they felt most alive, most motivated, and most excited about their involvement in the congregation. (3) **Imagine** the shape of a preferred future by developing “provocative proposals.” Engaging in “grounded imagination,” participants interpret the interviews, seek common themes about “what might be,” and begin to surface shared images for a preferred future. (4) **Innovate** new and creative ways to manifest the imaginative futures within the ministry of the church. This final step deals with how the provocative proposals might become tangible and integrated into congregational life.

The entire process is formative as it shapes conversations, stimulates imaginations, cultivates new relationships, and takes shape in concrete proposals for change in the practices and ministry of the congregation. Thus, rather than a one-time planning process, Appreciative Inquiry becomes the normal way of life within the congregation. By exploring its roots in a wholistic and sustained manner, the congregation becomes radical: “While we became aware of increasing expectations, we also noted deeper patience, more participation, and a real trust that God was continuing to author this story. . .”

Branson’s narrative of the process through which he led the church describes a congregation that moved from near hopelessness to hopefulness as they were empowered by their stories of former successes to dream of what could be. They accomplished their task for the presbytery with a new sense of optimism and a clear sense of congregational identity.

Branson articulates a comprehensive theoretical and biblical approach to using AI in the church. This text will be referred to numerous times as my project is designed, implemented and evaluated.

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27 Ibid., xi-xii. This is a quote from Inagrace T. Dietterich in the Forward of the text.
“A Wesleyan-Pentecostal Approach to Christian Formation,” by James Bowers

This article is based on his Ed.D. dissertation, “A Wesleyan-Pentecostal Vision of the Christian Life with Pedagogical Implications for Christian Education.” Bowers contends that the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement lacks a sound theological approach to Christian formation. He suggests that Pentecostals have focused on a pragmatic, but “theologically naïve” approach, which has negatively impacted the movement. He calls for the development of a spiritual-theological vision and approach for discipleship which is rooted in Pentecostal spirituality.

His method is to process Pentecostal spirituality and discipleship from the perspective of its Wesleyan roots. He does this by providing an historical-theological background, observing similarities and differences between Wesleyanism and Wesleyan-Pentecostalism, and then proposes an organized, theologically sound approach to Wesleyan-Pentecostal Christian formation.

Bowers surveys the field of Christian education’s theological considerations regarding discipleship which leads to his conclusions that the church’s work of Christian formation must begin with theological questions that address the fundamental issues of Christian spiritual identity.

He argues that the Wesleyan-Pentecostals’ lack of a sound spiritual-theological formation has created a crisis in terms of Christian formation. This is reflective of a broader identity crisis with Pentecostalism and this new perspective can be attained through embracing its Wesleyan roots. What is needed is intentionality and theological vision. Since Wesleyanism had such a profound impact on the Pentecostal movement it is helpful to consider a constructive dialogue

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between the two. Bowers utilizes a dialectic of affirmation, critique and synthesis to do this. He considers theological bases of Christian life and understanding of sin, salvation, sanctification, Spirit baptism and eschatological vision. He compares religious experience and ethics. His finding is that the Wesleyan influence, along with the influence of the American Holiness movement, greatly assists as Wesleyan Pentecostals develop their own identity of being called to life in the fullness of the Spirit.

Bowers offers eight pedagogical objectives which aim toward the purpose of Wesleyan-Pentecostal Christian education, which is to disciple persons toward the fullness of life in the Spirit. With these objectives in view, he suggests a Wesleyan-Pentecostal approach to Christian formation. A curriculum compatible with Pentecostal spirituality is necessary. Emphasis should be placed on parents as models, which can only occur in the context of a faith community. Rediscovery of the role of the pastor as disciple is crucial, as is the need for a return to spiritual eldership. Small groups should be encouraged as sources of discipleship. Church structure and decision-making communicate what is really believed about Christian life and community. Membership and church discipline should reflect covenant relationships in the body. Finally, there should be a call and empowerment of believers for missionality.

Bowers assessment of the crisis of Christian formation in the Wesleyan-Pentecostal movement is valid, and his proposal to address the void through an intentional and theological revisioning process makes sense. His dialogic between Wesleyanism and Wesleyan-Pentecostalism was helpful, although brief. The strength of the article lies in his strong appeal for Wesleyan-Pentecostals to re-think their own particular identity as a Spirit-baptized movement. His proposal for a Wesleyan-Pentecostal approach to Christian formation seemed a fitting conclusion to his argument.
The Kannapolis Church of God is moving toward the intentional and theological revisioning process. Another step in that direction will be taken as we utilize the AI tools, undergirded with discernment, to re-think our identity as a Spirit-baptized church.

“Community and Worship: The Key Components of Pentecostal Christian Formation,”
by R. Jerome Boone.29

Boone argues that God has a purpose for the Pentecostal movement. There are specific Pentecostal distinctives that have been given to the Pentecostal movement that should not be compromised in an effort to strive for unity with mainline Christian denominations. Acceptance of Pentecostalism among these mainline denominations has increased the pressure to conform to mainline worship patterns, which threatens its efficacy as a reform movement.

Boone focuses on two key components of Pentecostal Christian formation which must maintain their distinctively Pentecostal emphasis if Pentecostalism is to continue its reformation character: community and worship. These two components have provided the substance of the revisioning of the Christian life that Pentecostals have provided, and must continue to be held.

Christian formation occurs within the community of faith. The role of the Pentecostal community of faith is to communicate a world vision that allows for members to comprehend their roles and responsibilities in life. As these are internalized, the self reflects the community. It is therefore important that the rituals in the community’s liturgy reflect the worldview.

The ethos of the Pentecostal faith community must be grounded in the Holy Spirit who gives coherence to the testimonies (beliefs), practices and affections of Pentecostals, provides power for witness and is an eschatological sign of the return of Jesus. The Wesleyan emphasis on affection and the holiness emphasis on sanctification as a work of grace are important parts of

Christian formation, as are divine healing and spiritual gifts. But it is the active presence of the Spirit who is the agent of Christian formation.

The primary place where Christian formation occurs in the Pentecostal context is in the worship service. Ritual has transformative power, as long as it is received by the congregation. Pentecostal ritual has the power to transform lives. Singing, praying, testifying/preaching and worshipping are Pentecostal rituals that have distinctive ways of shaping Pentecostal Christians. The goal of the Pentecostal worship service is to have a personal encounter with God. Charismata and glossolalia signify the presence of the Spirit in the worship service and provide an occasion for encounter with him.

Boone’s article appropriately critiques the danger of assimilation and the tendency of Pentecostals not to maintain their own Pentecostal distinctiveness. Our local congregation will need to keep its focus on maintaining its distinctiveness in our community, and continually re-vision with that belief at the core.


Johns’ work focuses on the early church’s perception of the pedagogical role of the Holy Spirit. The teaching ministry and Christian formation in its broader sense was understood as being under the close supervision of the Holy Spirit. Although the following is a lengthy quote, to summarize it would lose much of its clear description.

The early church viewed people as creatures in need of redemption unto God. Jesus Christ was the provisionary gift from God whereby redemption was to be obtained. Through him God was calling forth a new order of creation. As in the original creation the Holy Spirit was the creative power of God working to bring forth new order. The role of the Spirit was to cleanse sinners and recreate them in new life. The new order was to be one in which God ruled supreme. Therefore

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31 Ibid., 1.
the Spirit worked within believers to create a certain knowledge of God and his righteousness. The Spirit guaranteed knowledge of the covenant of the kingdom and the ability to live accordingly. The new order was a messianic kingdom ruled by a charismatic Messiah, the resurrected Jesus. But in fulfillment of prophecy it was also a charismatic community, one which received an anointing from the Messiah and participated in his reign. The Holy Spirit was the anointing which Jesus received and therefore was the gift of anointing which he dispensed to his church in order that he might rule in, through and by it.

Christian formation was viewed as a process governed by the Holy Spirit. The process pivoted around the experiences of infolding into the church; cleansing, new life, and illumination at baptism, and empowerment and ordination for service at the anointing with oil. But the transformation associated with the rites of initiation was preceded by a period of careful preparation under the supervision of the Spirit.

Christian formation involved every dimension of human life. The flesh, soul, spirit, and heart were each in need of renewal. The mind was especially in need of changing. Thus, reason was appealed to throughout the process. Yet reason was not the dominant element or catalyst for development. Genuine knowledge of God was a reasonable possibility, but it was not achieved through mental processes. Rather, it was received through a direct encounter with God.

Preparation for encounter with God and life in the kingdom of God focused upon issues of volition, morality and understanding. In general they followed that sequence. Nonbelievers were challenged to seek life from Jesus. They were expected to demonstrate a sincere desire to at least know more about him, to choose to seek a better way of life from him. Thus, the first step in Christian formation was to willfully respond to an invitation by a Spirit controlled church to know God.

The catechumenate focused on morality. Persons seeking to know God were expected to cease all sinful behavior. Self-control, mastery of the flesh, upright conduct, and purity of motive were prerequisites for cleansing from past sins and for new life in the Spirit. The pattern of the ante-Nicene church was to insist that persons act like Christians before they received in baptism the knowledge of God. Because of their continuous association with the church catechumens were recipients of the Spirit's assistance in this quest. It was the Spirit who penetrated their being with the powerful gospel. The internalized Word of God worked from within to help the individual in their consciousness of and motivation toward righteousness. The Holy Spirit further drove away evil spirits which attempted to attach themselves to the learner and inhibit moral progress.

The period of intense preparation immediately preceding baptism focused on understanding. Candidates were expected to understand the rule of faith and the creed they would confess. Special attention was given to the covenantal demands of the gospel. Understanding did not produce the knowledge of God. Rather, it defined the terms under which God could be known and the requirements for life in his kingdom.

In baptism the Holy Spirit was thought to bring knowledge of God through encounter with him. It was then that the Spirit began to dwell in the believer and
function as an internal witness to the revelation of Jesus. The mysteries of life in Christ began to be unfolded.

As a result of receiving the Spirit believers were equipped to participate in the corporate life of the kingdom of God. The unction of the Spirit guided persons into service for God especially equipping them to be spokespersons for Christ.

Following the pivotal experiences of infoldment the Spirit operated in the pattern of the Johannine Paraclete. The internalized teacher began the task of leading the believer into all truth. The mysteries of life in the church were explained (with the help of the bishop). Because their minds were healed believers were able to understand more fully the Scriptures and other inspired content. But most emphatically the Spirit was now the immediate source of Christian knowledge. To have the Holy Spirit dwell within was to live in union and communion with God.32

Johns’ research and conclusion of early church thought reveal that Christian formation occurred by the Holy Spirit’s teaching “in gradations, gradually progressing to levels of greater understanding.”33 The importance of the Holy Spirit’s role in our congregation’s process of Christian formation cannot be underestimated. All we do, during this project and otherwise, should keep this focus.

Led by the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making, by Stephen E. Parker.34

Stephen Parker’s work attempts to construct a practical theology of Pentecostal discernment and decision making which emerges from critical reflection on the practices of a community of faith. Discernment is connected to action, thus his connection of discernment and decision making.

32 Ibid., 170-2.
33 See also Jackie David Johns, “Christian Formation and Discipleship: Biblical and Patristic Perspectives” [paper], 30. He also notes the diversity of opinion between the terms “discipleship” and “Christian formation,” and that while discipleship is more clearly defined term in the New Testament, Christian formation has no “key word from which to draw its meaning.” (Page 1). The evidence of the early church’s position on Christian formation being a process is evidenced in the method the church took in the steps toward a person’s full perfection/striving toward perfection.
To Pentecostals, leadings may be influenced by the Spirit, one’s own desires or diabolical influence. A method is needed that could inform good discernment and decisions made. Ideally, Pentecostal discernment and decision making should include, (1) a time for attending to the intuitive, affective dimensions of discernment and decision making; (2) a time for attending to and describing claims to experiences of Spirit leading; (3) enriching the description of Spirit leading experiences from multiple perspectives (from within and without the Pentecostal tradition); and (4) evaluation of these experiences (a final judgment made). Parker acknowledges that he knows of no congregation or denomination that uses all of these elements, however.

He also offers what he calls normative guidelines for practice. These include: (1) holistic knowing, which gives attention to both affective and intuitive dimensions; (2) integrating needs of self and community; (3) ultimate verses finite concerns, that is, do they emphasize the presence of God or the person; and (4) ambiguity, which allows for the uncertainty that one’s choices or allegiances are ultimately the right ones.

Parker argues that these “methods of decision making can build self formation, open up new possibilities for understanding self and God, empower people to action, and build community.” This accentuates the importance of undergirding our strategic planning with an intentional Pentecostal discernment and decision making effort.

36 Ibid., 190-8.
37 Ibid., 199-203.
38 Ibid., 203.
Emotional Health

*Portrait and Prospect*, James P. Bowers, Editor

According to this survey, “Church of God pastors made more negative responses than their pastoral peers in other denominations on the range of items focusing on wellbeing.” They were also less inclined to feel “calm and peaceful” and had more frequent periods of personal discouragement and depression than other pastors. More than half described personal struggles having a negative impact on their pastoral functioning. The survey included a strong recommendation that emotional health needs be a priority in leadership development efforts, and that pastors need to be encouraged and affirmed.

The conclusion reached by surveyors is that:

The health and stress profile provided by the U.S. Congregational Life Survey and the comparative data from Pulpit & Pew’s larger study of American pastors result in a rather troubling portrait of Church of God pastoral ministry in the USA. Many Church of God pastors are struggling to cope with health-imposed limitations and significant personal emotional stress as they endeavor to lead congregations to effective ministry in the twenty-first century American mission context. Satisfaction in relationships with denominational, peer, and lay ministry partners is comparatively low at the same time that Church of God pastors stress levels are greater than those of other American pastors. Consequently, Church of God pastors find themselves and their families more spiritually and emotionally vulnerable and more susceptible to feelings of isolation, loneliness, resentment, and alienation. They are, therefore, ultimately more likely to fall victim to ministerial burnout, moral failure, and voluntary or involuntary ministry termination.

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40 Ibid., 64.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 66.
43 Ibid., 68.
Dealing more specifically with relationships, “Church of God pastors expressed much less satisfaction with their relationships with laity than other pastor groups.”\textsuperscript{44} They were significantly less satisfied with relationships with other clergy and denominational officials. Those who participated in the project pastoral covenant groups also expressed frequent experiences of feeling mistrust and destructive competitiveness. While this survey focused on Church of God pastors, similar findings can be generalized for clergy emotional health and relationships in the U.S.A.\textsuperscript{45}

\textit{Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach}, by Peter Steinke. \textsuperscript{46}

Steinke proposes in this text a systemic approach to understanding the operation of healthy churches. Congregations promote their own health through responsible and enlightened behavior. Those who are in the best position to enhance the health of a congregation are the leaders who are, in fact, accountable for the welfare of the congregation.

Steinke defines health as “wholeness.” All of the parts of the body are working together to proved balance, an ongoing process. Health is not the absence of disease, because disease stimulates the healing capacities of the body and prepares it for even greater attacks in the future. Health is “the ability of a living system to respond to a wide assortment of challenges to its integrity”.\textsuperscript{47}

Health does not necessarily mean growth in size; it could involve simply the maintenance of the body’s current ability to fend off disease that would destroy it. Similarly, growth in the

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, 66.
\textsuperscript{45} See for instance, Becky McMillan, “The View from Pulpit and Pew: Provocative Findings on Pastoral Leadership in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century.” This was an article distributed in the October, 2009 DM903 class at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, and shows that clergy physical and mental health continues to be a problem. Numerous other surveys reflect similar results.
\textsuperscript{46} Steinke, Peter L. \textit{Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach} (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2006). See also, Steinke, Peter L. \textit{How Your Church Family Works} (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2006).
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., xii.
church does not necessarily mean that it is healthy. In fact, a large percentage of health requires maintenance. What contributes to the “unhealth” of a congregation is neglect, indifference, helplessness, passivity, hostility, rigidness, etc. Healthy congregations depend on all of the parts interacting.

Steinke draws heavily from system theory and suggests that health is observable in the interactions that take place, the information that is exchanged, and the influence that is reciprocally reinforced.”

Humans in any environment affect other people and are affected by them. Information is disseminated through “loops.” There is always some influence, or effect.

According to Steinke, wholeness in this life is not achievable. Only homeostasis is possible. Conflict is inevitable and essential to insure resistance is built. When congregations survive crisis it evokes creativity to reexamine its sense of purpose. “Health is 10 percent what happened and 90 percent how we respond.”

All illness is biopsychosocial. It is a mix of factors and conditions. Emotions can trigger potent bodily secretions that can impact the immune system. “The health of a congregation is multifaceted. It is a power-sharing arrangement. Attitudes count. Working together counts. Faithfulness matters. Mood and tone are significant.”

Research indicates the two emotions most detrimental to health are vengeance and bitterness, and the most productive attitude is gratitude. Healthy congregations are communities of forgiveness, thanks and praise.

Steinke’s book provides a helpful overview for understanding systemically what constitutes health in a congregation, and notes the importance of the leader’s undergirding of the necessity of the Holy Spirit’s participation and having a sound Scriptural basis, because beliefs influence behavior.

48 Ibid., 5.
49 Ibid., 18.
50 Ibid., 20.
Relationships


Cohen and Prusak study how social capital impacts organizations. Their definition of social capital is as follows:

Social capital consists of the stock of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviors that bind the members of human networks and communities and make cooperative action possible.\(^{51}\)

It is what makes an organization more than a collection of individuals pursuing their own individual purposes.

Their argument is that without social capital, cooperative action and productive work is impossible. Organizations should wisely invest in “giving people space and time to connect, demonstrating trust, effectively communication aims and beliefs, and offering the equitable opportunities and rewards that make genuine participation, not mere presence.”\(^{52}\)

Henry Ford said, “Why is it that when I buy a pair of hands, I always get a human being as well?” His question reflects the outdated attitude that people are only “machines” that enable organizations to produce products. Today’s organizations are realizing the importance of people who bring skills, experience, knowledge and creative thinking. Some, like Tom Boyle of British Telecom, argue that people’s “NQ” or network quotient—their capacity to form connections/relationships with one another—is more important than their IQ. Collaboration is a necessity in modern organizations.

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\(^{52}\) Ibid.
Organizational leaders should be intentional about building social capital. They do so by fostering an atmosphere of trust, valuing networking, building community, providing social space and time, and promoting communities. In other words, building an organization of relationships. Two areas the authors speak to are worthy of amplification, and relate to this project. The first has to do with the value of understanding, nurturing and building upon existing networks of people. Churches, including the KCOG, have numerous groupings of people in assorted types of networks. The importance of recognizing their existence, how they work and how the networks interact cannot be underestimated.

The second area—communication—has equal significance. The authors refer to the story of the Tower of Babel to illustrate the importance of communication (or lack of it in this case) in getting the job done. Organizations should promote methods to encourage face to face communication. Telling stories, as long as it is done appropriately, is one aspect of communication that helps build relationships. “People frame their thinking in stories; that’s the way they bring human values, feeling, and conviction into the process; it’s the way they bring social reality into a discussion of abstractions.”53 In other words, “stories tell their tellers.”54

Organizational stories are important as well. When stories about organizations are told it creates or sustains an organization’s identity. “These stories of organizational identity do much more than vision and mission statements to create the sense of membership and engagement. . . . They help tie together individual identity and organizational identity.”55 As Howard Gardner states, “stories of identity—narratives that help individuals think about and feel who they are,

53 Ibid., 114.
54 Ibid., 115.
55 Ibid., 116.
where they come from, and where they are headed—constitute the single most powerful weapon in the leader’s literary arsenal.”

Understanding, nurturing and building relationships within the KCOG is an important aspect of this project. The text emphasizes the importance of social capital—in other words, relationships. I suspect that telling our individual stories and our “organizational story,” through a shared, inclusive, approach in the intervention portion of the project (which is also foundational in an Appreciative Inquiry process) will help build relationships and will be formational.

_Generation to Generation_, by Edwin Friedman.\(^{57}\)

In this classic book, Friedman applies the concepts of systemic family therapy to the emotional life of congregations and their leaders. Of particular interest in this paper is his perspective that the method of functioning of the leader is key to an organization’s success. The overall health and functioning of the organization depends heavily on one or two people at the top. Leadership is essentially what he calls “an organic, perhaps even biological phenomenon.”\(^{58}\) The organism functions best when its “head” is well differentiated. “The key to successful spiritual leadership . . . with success understood not only as moving people toward a goal, but also in terms of the survival of the family (and its leader), has more to do with the leader’s capacity for self-definition than with the ability to motivate others.”\(^{59}\) There is some biblical truth to his claim that the successful leader is well self-differentiated. Joshua’s words may speak to this: “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the

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\(^{56}\) Quoted in _In Good Company_, 116.


\(^{58}\) Ibid., 221.

\(^{59}\) Ibid.
gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. (Josh. 24:15)

**Scripture Reflections**

The seven passages of Scripture listed below accentuate some of the dramatic differences between leadership in the world (the earthly kingdom) and the Kingdom of God. Jesus, Peter and Paul present a Christian leadership model that is unlike current (worldly) leadership models. Each of these passages exhibit truths that make little sense to those who adhere to most contemporary leadership principles.

1 Peter 5:1-4. *Christian leaders eagerly serve as shepherds who lead by example.*

The powerful apostle Peter, who was so human at times with his child-like spontaneity and impulsiveness, was honored by Jesus in dramatic ways. Chosen to be at Jesus' side, he was given the special privilege of hearing God's promise that he would be the "Rock" upon which the church was to be built. He also shared the "privilege" of being a witness to the suffering that the Savior endured (while at the same time it could be said that he was responsible for some of that suffering). This man, who had become such a powerful Christian leader, identifies himself in this passage with elders (like me) who have given themselves to leadership in the church. There is a common mission: to serve as Jesus' under-shepherds, entrusted with the care for those he desperately loves. They are to lead by example and with great eagerness to serve, not expecting anything but the joy of seeing the glory of God fulfilled in a future time. Where I am having difficulty with this is primarily in the "eagerness" area. I am finding myself these days serving more with tiredness and out of a sense of duty than I do with eagerness. God wants me to delight
in this wonderful privilege, so something is wrong. Christian leadership cannot be tired, dutiful leadership.


There is no place for worldly ambition in ministry. The desire to climb the ladder to the more prestigious position is not God's plan for his leaders. James and John may have been trying to indicate their loyalty to Jesus during the difficult time ahead, but more likely were at least lightly conspiring to use their relationship with Jesus to position themselves in the coming Kingdom. The Christian leader who positions himself as a willing servant of others demonstrates an authority that cannot be challenged, because he/she serves under and with the authority of Christ. Central to this passage is Jesus' powerful statement that he came not just to minister, but even to give his life as a ransom for others, proclaiming the good news of the gospel, but also modeling the ultimate expression of servanthood to his disciples.

Philippians 2:1-11. *Christian leaders empty themselves in humility and obedience to God's plan.*

Christian leaders do have a special incentive for being and doing ministry. Encouragement flows from being united with Christ. Comfort comes out of being loved. Relationship with the Spirit dwelling inside produces tenderness and compassion that cannot be manufactured in any other way. Paul's usage of the "If" words in 2:1 ("If you have encouragement . . ."; If any comfort . . ."; "If any fellowship . . ."; "If any tenderness and compassion . . .") suggest that he was not just theorizing, but rather asserting, "Surely you know you have it!" These wonderful gifts "naturally" drive out selfishness, encourage free expression of the worth of others and stimulate a servant's heart. The dramatic presentation of Jesus' emptying of himself in obedience to the plan of God (vs. 5-11) provides a powerful illustration to drive the point home.
Knowing God has a plan and that I am working within God's plan strengthens my determination to be obedient and to more honestly give myself to others in humility. If one could separate obedience from giving oneself away, I think I would be better at being obedient. Truth be told, too often I "treat others better" in a dishonest manner and secretly resent it, especially if I determine they are unworthy of my "gift."

1 Corinthians 9:5-27. Christian leaders go above and beyond to share freely.

"Rights" are available for the Christian leader. God's plan includes provision for those he selects for leadership. Paul was determined, however, to go above and beyond his "duty" and freely give out of his deep commitment to God. Even more so, he gave freely out of his joy over participating with Christ in the work of saving souls ("I do this all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings"). Paul's method of ministry included coming alongside of others, entering life with them, as Jesus did, in order to communicate God's love. And he did it with great integrity.

1 Timothy 3:1-7. Christian leaders are highly disciplined models of integrity.

Pastoring a church is a high calling. Paul gives Timothy a list of some of the qualifications. One's reputation must be impeccable. He/she must treat others as Christ treats the church, with love and respect. Self-control is absolutely necessary. Serving others is something done out of a heart of joy and appreciation for God's gifts. Teaching naturally flows from that joy. One cannot be sidetracked with self-indulgences or petty grievances. Maturity is necessary. Family management is critical, because taking care of the family of God is even more difficult. In fact, there is a war going on with one whose goal is to destroy ministers and the church.
Christian leaders cannot separate themselves or their families from the ministry they do. Dramatically different from leadership in the secular world, ministry is a package plan in which every aspect of the minister's life is evaluated both by those inside and outside the church. In one sense, this adds pressure to the already heavy load of ministry. In another, it is a beautiful picture of open expression of the working of God in ourselves and our families and the grace by which we spiritually survive. It is also wonderful freedom from the compartmentalizing, secret-keeping and fearfulness that often consumes the lives of those in the world outside of Christianity.

2 Timothy 3:10-17. Christian leaders' faithful relationships are central to accomplishing the mission.

Timothy's relationship to Paul enabled him to really know Paul and his Christian life. Relationships are crucial in leadership, especially in the training of upcoming leaders. It provides a model for learning and spiritual development. It provides hope for the disciple who may need reassurance, affirming that if the teacher could make it through difficult circumstances, so could the follower. The Christian leader provides straightforward truth about being at odds with the world and the reality of being persecuted as a result, but there is also a promise of fellowship in the suffering. Foundational to the leadership paradigm is the authority of Scripture, that God-breathed medium through which God chose to reveal himself and his plan, and to enable us to become "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

Matthew 9:35-38. Christian leaders participate with God in his compassion for souls.

Jesus' mission in this passage is our mission. We are to be heralds for the King, bringing the good news to the world. We are to teach people what this means for living life (and we do this through the message of our lives). And we are to be God's active instruments of healing in a
broken world. The beautiful example of Jesus being filled with great compassion over the people moves us also to share his compassion. Jesus gave us his vision of the many souls that can be brought into the Kingdom—a task that is bigger than we are, and can only be accomplished fully with prayer and in God's response those prayers to send more leaders.

In summary, leadership in scripture is clearly seen as servant leadership. Leaders guide the way, much as a hunting guide leads hunters to game. The guide offers his/her wisdom and may steer the hunters in the right direction toward the game, but always knows when to pull back and allow the hunters to utilize their skills to reach the goal. When the game is bagged, everyone shares in the meal. Servant leadership is about helping people recognize their power in the Holy Spirit and in themselves so the body reaches the potential God has graced for it.

**Scripture Reflection on AI**

Gratitude lies at the core of a Christian’s perspective. God’s presentation of himself is one of goodness. His creation was good and he called attention to it (Gen. 1:10,12,18,21,25,31). Since God’s essential nature is relational, when he created man he established a relationship with him and provided the beauty of the garden and good food to eat. His creation of Adam’s companion, Eve, was done to provide goodness.

The message that runs throughout the Old Testament is a call to remember his goodness and give thanks. His willingness to be present in their lives and to be faithful to his promises to them gave them solid ground upon which they could build their personal and corporate identity as the people of God, an understanding of their own need to be faithful to him, and reason to hope.

The Psalms reflect this attitude of gratitude, even during those times when the writers would seem hopeless. The prophets continually call God’s people to remember his goodness and give
thanks, or to face the consequences of a broken relationship. Even during their failures God initiates an invitation to reenter their salvation by remembering their history of God’s faithfulness. They were encouraged to tell those stories to one another and to their children, because remembering and giving thanks are primary means of receptivity.

Jesus communicated the value of gratitude in his encounter with the sole leprosy-healed Samaritan who returned to thank him. Jesus’ response that the man’s healing was a result of his faith suggests that those who did not return limited the wholeness they could have received.

Luke’s account in Acts of God’s faithfulness and direct participation in the church’s formation provides a narrative upon which the church’s identity is built, and gives guidance and hope for future generations. Paul and the other epistle writers encourage churches that were facing real threats, difficulties, and sometimes their own dark sinfulness, by remembering God’s goodness, their own positive experiences of being in the light, and the opportunity for reconnection with the saving story God offers.

Similarly, the “worship service” experience in which John the Revelator participated when he heard Jesus’ words to the angels of the seven churches emphasizes remembering their own stories of the greatness of God, his work among them, and the opportunity to reconnect.

Pentecostals are known for their gratitude and their joy. Shouting, running, jumping, enthusiastic singing and other experiences of jubilance are practices that usually arise out of the reflection on God’s goodness. Testimonies, even when they contain expressions that portray the difficulty of living in a sinful, fallen world are expressions of gratitude for God’s active and powerful participation and intervention in their everyday lives. The sharing of these stories in the

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60 For instance, see Isaiah 17:10-11 and Jeremiah 18:15-16.
61 See Branson, Memories, Hopes and Conversations, 51 for a more in-depth discussion.
worship experience forms the identities of the worshippers and the context for living in an already-not yet kingdom.
CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF CONTEXT

External Environment

This section briefly describes the church’s external environment in regard to the social, cultural, demographic, economic and political factors affecting our community. This information, which focuses on our ministry area of Kannapolis, Landis, China Grove, Concord and other surrounding cities in southern Rowan and northern Cabarrus counties of North Carolina, is summarized below.\textsuperscript{62}

\footnote{62 This chart reflects compiled data taken from various internet sources in April of 2009.}
### Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Kannapolis</th>
<th>Landis</th>
<th>China Grove</th>
<th>Concord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>41,487</td>
<td>3107</td>
<td>3718</td>
<td>64,653</td>
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<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>20,066 (48.4%)</td>
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<td>1802 (48.5%)</td>
<td>31,583 (48.9%)</td>
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<td>Females</td>
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<td>1610 (51.8%)</td>
<td>1916 (51.5%)</td>
<td>33,070 (51.1%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med. Household Income</td>
<td>$39,104</td>
<td>$45,555</td>
<td>$45,537</td>
<td>$50,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est. Med. Home Value</td>
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<td>$123,892</td>
<td>$113,034</td>
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<td>Race</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
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<td>86.40%</td>
<td>81.70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<td>Black</td>
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<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>8.30%</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>5.40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 or more races</td>
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<td>1.10%</td>
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<td>1.20%</td>
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<td>Amer. Indian</td>
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<td>0.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Born Residents</td>
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<td>6.60%</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>H.S. or Higher</td>
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<td>70.00%</td>
<td>79.27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bach. Deg. or Higher</td>
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<td>Grad or Prof. Degree</td>
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<td>1.20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean travel time to work</td>
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<td>23 min</td>
<td>22.4 min</td>
<td>26.1 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
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<td>Never Married</td>
<td>22.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
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<td>58%</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<td>Separated</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>2.90%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>9.10%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9.70%</td>
<td>10.50%</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. Household Size</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Family Households</td>
<td>68.50%</td>
<td>70.10%</td>
<td>72.00%</td>
<td>71.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living w/unmarr. partner</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual Lifestyle</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Men</td>
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<td>0.20%</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents below poverty</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10.10%</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Living Index</td>
<td>81.40%</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
<td>79.50%</td>
<td>83.40%</td>
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<td>Pop. Density</td>
<td>1390</td>
<td>1263</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1253</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industries (male)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction (16%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles (10%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Indus (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industries (female)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthcare (16%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Textiles (11%)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Baptist</td>
<td>36.60%</td>
<td>34.20%</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>36.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMC</td>
<td>18.50%</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian (USA)</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
<td>6.20%</td>
<td>6.20%</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELCA</td>
<td>7.30%</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
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<td>UCC</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
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<td>4.50%</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God (Cleveland)</td>
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<td>1.70%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assy of God</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foursquare</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11.30%</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>11.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Political Affiliation by Counties**

Rowan County: Republicans - 36,841; Democrats - 33,182; Libertarians - 38; Unaffiliated - 19,297

Cabarrus: Republicans - 42,837; Democrats - 38,682; Libertarians - 108; Unaffiliated - 25,011
A Changing Community

Kannapolis has been a textile mill town since its beginning in 1906, when James William Cannon began building his dream of a “model mill town” with housing for workers, schools, and recreational and medical facilities. It became the location of Cannon Mills (producer of Cannon towels, sheets and other textile home products), one of the largest and most influential mills of its time. As the mill grew, so did Kannapolis.

In 1982 Pacific Holding Company acquired Cannon Mills, and shortly thereafter (1984) Kannapolis was incorporated as a city. Mill ownership changed hands three more times until 2000, when the current owner, Pillowtex, filed bankruptcy due to foreign imports and internal cash problems. Finally, in 2003, the mill closed its doors, and the final 4,300 workers lost their jobs, which put the city into a state of shock.

Shortly afterwards, David Murdock (CEO and owner of Dole Foods) purchased the property and in 2005 announced plans for a $1.5 billion scientific research campus to be built. Almost immediately the job of razing the old buildings began and new, modern facilities began to be constructed. Since the recent economic downturn, construction has slowed but is continuing, and it is estimated that the center will finish its building complex within the next few years.

Estimates vary on the number of additional jobs that will be available in the near future. Some estimates range as high as 30,000, and this in a city of only 41,487. Many of these jobs will be in the fields of science and education, and will undoubtedly bring in foreigners, changing Kannapolis’ population into much more of an international community.

The impending changes in the Kannapolis area have dramatic implications for the Kannapolis Church of God. Those to whom we minister will be largely from outside of our area, but also include those already here, many of whom have lost their jobs, are significantly
undereducated, and are trying to re-build their identities. These, if we are true Pentecostals, and take seriously Jesus’ words in Luke 4:18-19, will be our primary task! We do not yet know what all of the changes will look like, nor do we know how to prepare for them. But we must. God has placed us here to be a light of his presence. We must discern his voice, prepare ourselves, and do his work. The opportunity is exciting.

**Internal Environment**

**A Changing Church and Staff**

Changes in the church are also occurring. A large group of older members is quickly diminishing as people are increasingly becoming homebound or dying. A significant number of visitors to the church and new members are younger, many with children. Most do not have prior knowledge about the Church of God, and many know little about Pentecostalism. In addition, the current long-term senior pastor is nearing retirement within the next few years. The associate pastor, who has also been at the church for many years, will also be eventually retiring.

**Current Ministry Programs**

The Kannapolis Church of God's mission is to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in bringing people into relationship with God and into Christ-centered relationship to one another. As was mentioned, our ministry area includes Kannapolis, Landis, China Grove, Concord, and other surrounding cities in the southern Rowan and northern Cabarrus counties of North Carolina. We do not target specific segments of the community. The following list of ministries presents our current programs.
Sunday School
- Age specific classes for children and youth. Six adult classes which have evolved over many years that include mixed ages and backgrounds.

Children’s Ministry
- Nursery (infants and toddlers through age 2)
- Children's Church Salvation Station (Grades 1-6). This ministry directs children to participate in their own worship service.
- Adventures in Discipleship (Grades 5-6). After praise and worship in Salvation Station, these children go to another room for teaching at a more mature level.
- King's Kids (ages 3-5). This Wednesday evening group is a very active class of boys geared to help them learn the basics of Christianity.
- Girl's Clubs. Son Beams (ages 3-5), Bluebelles, (grades 1-3), Joybelles (grades 4-5).
- Boy's Club (Grades 1-5). Teaching boys learn how to live as Christians boys.

Youth Ministry
- The W.A.Y. (West A Youth). Wednesday evening youth service and activities.

Adults
- Monday night prayer meeting. Wednesday Evening Bible Study. Thursday A.M. Bible Study

Men
- Monday Night Football Group (during football season). Fellowship for men.
- Men's Bible Study on Wednesday mornings and another group that meets one time per month.
- Men's Softball and Basketball Teams
- Men of Acts. Group of men who assist people with needs and can't afford the labor costs.

Women
- Ladies Circles. Three small groups that meet for fellowship and study one time each month.
- Funeral Dinner Groups. Four groups that minister to grieving families by providing a meal at the church or home.
- Women's Softball Team.

Seniors
- Young at Heart. Adults age 50+ gather monthly for fellowship, food and entertainment.
- Big Elm Ministries. A multi-faceted outreach organism that provides support to those in hospitals, nursing homes, those who are home-bound, and for those who need care in other environments. Big Elm also provides parish nursing services for the church, including health screenings, training and other important information regarding health care.

Music and the Arts
- Adult Praise and Worship Team. Sanctuary Choir. Sanctuary Band
Brief History of the Kannapolis Church of God

Eight years after the first Church of God General Assembly in 1906, two men, George T. Broyer and A.H. Bryans, came to the small mill town of Kannapolis, North Carolina to hold a tent revival meeting. They found receptive hearts, one of which was Reese Pethel. In his home, Pethel held Sunday school classes until it was decided to start a church in 1914. The Rev. W.M. Stallings was installed as the first pastor, and one room of his three-room home was dedicated for services. A church and parsonage were later erected on Oval Street under his supervision. Stallings served as pastor from 1914 to 1919. In 1936, under the leadership of Pastor H.L. Whittington, the church moved to Elm Street and became known as the Elm Street Church of God. In 1941, Rev. A.V. Childers (1941-46) came to be the pastor. He built an education wing of the church and also began an orphanage, which was in 1945 assumed by the Church of God in North Carolina. In 1980, under the leadership of I.C. Morris, a new church building was built on West A Street, where it remains today. The church has been a continuously influential church and has helped establish more than sixteen other churches in the surrounding area. In the late 1980’s it built Big Elm Retirement Home and later Big Elm Nursing Center. Numerous Church of God pastors have served, including Wade H. Horton, James L. Slay, P.H. McCarn, J. Frank Spivey, A.V. Beaube, G.E. Weatherby, Sr., Douglas Allen, Bobby Sustar, Jim O McClain, Sr. and numerous others. Many pastors, music ministers and youth pastors emerged from the congregation, including James Griffin, Roosevelt Miller, Bill Sheeks and others. The current senior pastor is Sam R. Crisp, who came to the church in 1993.

Church Narratives

The earlier quote by Howard Gardner regarding organizational stories of identity being important for helping people think and feel about who they are, where they come from and
where they are headed, applies also to the church. A few brief stories about our church provide important background information in regard to its core values and identity, and its possible future direction.  

“Gambling Rock”

The Pentecostal movement came to Kannapolis in 1914, when the Rev. W.M. Stallings met with 12 charter members to organize the Kannapolis Church of God. The congregation began a building program in 1917, funded by contributions from members and financial assist from J.W. Cannon. As a result of the successful program, a church building was erected on what became known as Oval Street and was dedicated debt-free upon completion. . . .

During the leadership of Pastor Harry Whittington, the church moved to Elm Street as a result of a directive from God. The Rev. Whittington was burdened by “Gambling Rock,” a place on the Cabarrus-Rowan county line where men met regularly to play cards and drink moonshine. So convinced was he and so bold his vision, he would actually go to the site where the men were and kneel down and pray asking God to give him the rock for his church. Charles Cannon was so happy to hear of Whittington’s efforts to clean up that part of town that he offered to give the church “Gambling Rock” provided they construct a church on the site. The new church was dedicated and debt-free by 1936. The church’s present location is 2211 West A Street.

This published story is the shortened form of a more detailed story told by church members. Whittington began going to Gambling Rock in 1934, heavily burdened for the area and the city. He often knelt there within hearing distance of the gamblers and drinkers and prayed loudly for them, and for God to build a church on the site where the evil was occurring. After the new church was built, financed largely through C.A. Cannon’s generosity, the church grew dramatically. There was an evangelistic fervor in the worship services that was not contained within the church. People were being saved, sanctified and baptized in the Holy Ghost, and a great deal of it occurred outside of the church building. Spontaneous prayer meetings would occur in the mill and other places. Many of those who had been saved went to

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63 These stories contain both fact and fiction. This is a description of the stories only, not proof that the events occurred.
64 Kannapolis: A Pictorial History (Kannapolis, NC: City of Kannapolis, 2008), 32.
their supervisors at the mill and confessed to having taken towels or sheets, and repaid the company for the items they had stolen. Converts were won to the Lord all over the town. There was a dramatic impact on the community.

The Gambling Rock story is still frequently told, primarily by the older church members who were either directly involved or were children of those directly involved. When the church moved from Elm Street to its present location in 1980, a piece of Gambling Rock was broken off, a cross etched in it, and it was placed in the foyer of the new church. It still remains in that location, with a brief explanation attached.

“The Move”

Much less frequently told, and certainly less thrilling, is the story of when the church moved to its present location. It is said that the Elm Street church had grown beyond its ability to serve all who were coming (up to 1200 in attendance), and talk had begun about moving to another location to build a bigger church. The church was having dramatic success and everyone in the community knew it. Some of the success went to some of the member’s heads. Not only did they need a bigger church, they needed to build the biggest church, and the most impressive church. And so they built the largest, most beautiful church (at that time) in Kannapolis.

Unfortunately, according to the story, the culture of the church also changed. Many of those who were attending the Elm Street church did not feel comfortable in the large, “fancy” church. The congregation soon began to have the reputation of being “that rich church,” or “that snooty church.” Gradually the church lost much of its influence in the community, and membership declined to less than half of what it had been at Elm Street. Some say that one of the unfortunate consequences of moving to the large comfortable facility, and the ensuing
struggle to pay for it, resulted in the congregation having no clear sense of a common goal to reach or direction in which to go. As a result, the congregation grew “lazy,” or “comfortable.”

These two narratives describe both positive and negative events that, to an extent, reflect our current and potential congregational identity, values and norms. They also relate to the variables of relationships, emotional health, Christian formation and organization.

Two Perspectives

There are two opposing perspectives that can be taken from these two congregational narratives. First, our heritage suggests, and many in the congregation long for, a future that parallels the spiritual vitality and hard work evident in the Gambler’s Rock story. Many still remember the enthusiastic worship services, dramatic miracles of healing, fervent prayer meetings, gifts of the Spirit working, intense study of Scripture, passion for witnessing, and unity that was evident. The later outreach to the suffering that was evidenced by the formation of the orphanage, the retirement center and the nursing center calls us to build on those values and expand our ministries outside the walls of the church. We can also remember from the “Move” story how important it is to stay focused, to maintain a healthy perspective, and a unified vision and plan for the future. This perspective necessitates maintaining a positive perspective on the events in both narratives.

A second perspective could be taken that would use the stories in a different way. Summarized, “Things were great, they got worse, and now they are only good. But it’s not as bad as it could be.” This is good, but it’s not great. Unfortunately it is currently the predominant perspective.
Two Approaches

Our church has a choice about how to approach the changes that need to occur to make us great. The first option is to take a “fix it” approach, in which we simply decide what we want to do, focus on the problems that we had and have, select strategies to fix them, choose a plan and implement that plan. While this may be a valid, modern strategic plan model, in my opinion it is more difficult and involves much more energy to accomplish. In addition, it does not work well within a formational leadership model.

The second choice, which takes a positive approach, is generative. As our stories are told and our history is reflected upon it can be used, with discernment, to discover once again our core values, vision, strengths and potential opportunities. Then, we can imagine the future of what God has for us, innovate the way to get there, and work to make it happen. As we all work together to make a better organization, our relationships will improve, we will be emotionally stronger, and in the process will grow in Christ.
CHAPTER FOUR – PROJECT MODEL

The Opportunity for the Kannapolis Church of God

Our church has a wonderful opportunity for ministry within the next five years. Our community is rapidly changing from a small textile mill town into a scientific biotech research city that will not only be attracting thousands of people from other areas of the world to live and work here, but will also include those who are currently here and are being displaced by the new context. God has placed our church here and he has used the church in the past to profoundly impact our community. We have a whitened field to harvest, now and in the future. We are a good church, but we must be a great church. We must strengthen ourselves in Christ and use the opportunity that God has given us—just outside of our walls—to minister in His Name. In a general sense, this project will address that opportunity.

Specific Goals

Growing in Christian formation involves growth of the whole person—flesh, soul, spirit and heart. We are continually in need of renewal. The Holy Spirit is the agent of Christian formation and leads us into all truth. Our knowledge of God comes through continual encounter with him, and is experienced both individually and in community.

A community is made up of relationships. Relationships impact how the community operates, and how the community operates impacts relationships. Similarly, emotional health of individuals in the community, and of the community itself, impact relationships, and the
relationships impact emotional health. Each of these variables—Christian formation, relationships and emotional health are intertwined, and movement in one impacts all.

I am interested in conducting an intervention that addresses each of these variables in both the pastoral staff and in the congregation as a whole. I am also interested in doing that within the framework of a formational leadership model, modified by the use of Appreciative Inquiry.

Specifically, what I would like to address, utilizing a formational leadership model that employs a positive AI approach, are the relationships and emotional health in the staff and congregation, and to do so in a way that Christian formation occurs. The method that I would like to use, and test for effectiveness, is an Appreciative Inquiry strategic planning process which includes the staff and our congregation.

**The Question**

My question then is, “What effect does a formational leadership model utilizing a modified Appreciative Inquiry strategic planning process have on the Christian formation, relationships, and emotional health of Pentecostals?”

**My Hypothesis**

My hypothesis is that this type of intervention will improve relationships between members of the staff and among the congregation, that emotional health will improve, and that through the process of positive-based strategic planning, which is undergirded by a keen sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s guidance, Christian formation will be enhanced, and we will progress as a congregation toward greatness.
Project Design

The research design graph below summarizes the approach that will be taken.

Research Design Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUPS</th>
<th>Staff Pre Test</th>
<th>Staff Training</th>
<th>Staff Post Test</th>
<th>Congregation Pre Test</th>
<th>Appreciative Inquiry Summit</th>
<th>Congregation Post Test</th>
<th>Cong. &amp; Staff Post-Post Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tbody>
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The Plan of This Work

Groups

Three groups will be involved in the project. The staff involved is the senior pastor, associate pastor, youth and family pastor, children’s pastor, prayer pastor, fine arts (music) director, and the bookkeeper-secretary/Girl’s Clubs director. The congregation will consist of all of those who willingly participate in the AI Summit. The control group will consist of congregational members who are unable or unwilling to participate in the Summit.

Administration of Evaluative Instruments

There will be three quantitative instruments and one qualitative interview to obtain data.

1. Team survey (completed by staff only).

2. T-JTA (completed by staff, 10 randomly selected participants in the AI Summit, and 10 randomly selected non-participants in the Summit). If funding for T-JTA cannot be obtained, a battery of three other instruments will be utilized (described below).
3. Spiritual inventory, constructed by the author and C-BCG (completed by all participants).

4. Qualitative interviews (with staff, the 10 participants, and 10 non-participants, as a post-post test).

Purpose of the Evaluative Instruments

**Team Survey.** The metaphor for leadership in Scripture is the shepherd. The shepherd-leader is not one that leads removed from where the sheep are. The shepherd-leader does not simply minister to the flock when they suffer, but suffers along with them. They live life together. There is a reciprocal, dialogical relationship between the shepherd-leader and the sheep. Therefore, leadership is about relationship.

I would like to learn what kind of relationships our staff has—with one another, and with the congregation—and work together to improve those relationships. As leaders who will guide the congregation in the upcoming AI Summit, it is important that we model shepherd-leadership with one another and with them. The Summit will not be a top-down directive experience, but rather, will be a process in which everyone in the church will have an equal opportunity to contribute. The staff will take the position of fellow participants with the congregation in the journey, leading them in such a way as to encourage their empowerment and to be encouragers of the need to discern the Holy Spirit’s direction. The staff will also take the lead in guiding them through the Summit process.

The team survey will provide information about staff relationships, but will also be formative in the development of those relationships. Therefore, I will administer a pre test of the Team Survey, followed by a post test Team Survey at the end of the staff training process to determine if any changes have occurred. The final Team Survey will be administered when the congregation and staff post-post testing is conducted.
As stated earlier, relationships and emotional health have a reciprocal relationship. It is widely known, and affirmed by the earlier referenced *Portrait and Prospect* survey conducted with Church of God pastors, that the emotional health needs of clergy must be addressed. Stress, discouragement, periods of depression, mistrust and destructive competitiveness was clearly present in the survey results, and numerous additional problems are clearly evident among today’s pastors and church staff members. Therefore, elements of emotional health will also be included as a part of the team survey.

The Survey will be a combination of two different parts. One part of the instrument has been constructed by our staff and by my Context-Based Covenant Group, and includes questions that they felt best addressed relationships and emotional health. The other part of the Survey will be the Mental Health Inventory (MHI), developed as a part of the National Health Insurance Study, and which evaluates mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, behavioral control, positive effect, and general distress. The instrument helps in the measure of overall emotional functioning, but only does so within the last four-week period. It includes eighteen items in which a six-point Likert-style response is utilized.65

**T-JTA.** The T-JTA continues to be an effective instrument to measure eighteen different dimensions of personality that are important components of personal adjustment in personal relationships. While it has limitations, and caution needs to be used in its interpretation, it will be valuable as a tool to determine any changes in strength areas between pre-test and post-test administrations, and for discussion in the post-post qualitative interview (described below).

**Alternate Inventory.** In the event that funding cannot be obtained for the T-JTA, a battery of three different inventories will be administered. These include (1) Liking People Scale (LPS), a

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65 The authors of this instrument are C.T. Veit and J.E. Ware, Jr. and the instrument was obtained from [http://www.statisticssolutions.com/methods-chapter/directory-of-survey-instruments/mental-health-inventory/](http://www.statisticssolutions.com/methods-chapter/directory-of-survey-instruments/mental-health-inventory/)
15-item inventory which measures interpersonal orientation;\textsuperscript{66} (2) Adult Hope Scale (AHS), a 12-item inventory which measures the positive motivational state;\textsuperscript{67} (3) Personal Growth Initiative Scale (PGIS), a nine-item scale which measures a person’s active and intentional involvement in changing and developing as a person, and provides information concerning one’s psychological well-being as well as psychological distress.\textsuperscript{68} The battery is included in the Appendix.

**Spiritual Inventory.** An obvious challenge exists with measuring spirituality. Gathering and measuring information in a scientifically verifiable way can only be done by measuring a range of indicators that can be observed. I would like to specifically look at the *manifestations* of spirituality that can be seen by the existence of certain behaviors and in the self perceptions of those who participate. By this I am suggesting that “behaviors” include such things as the rituals, habits and experiences of people, while “self perceptions” involve beliefs, attitudes, cognitive allegiance, satisfaction levels, emotions, and so forth. These do not measure relationship to God, but can be indicative of how one is seeking to relate to God.

A number of questions have been formulated with my C-BCG to address these areas. Five different areas will be examined: (1) private devotional practices; (2) participation in corporate worship and practices; (3) outreach; (4) beliefs and attitudes; and (5) Pentecostal experiences. This Inventory is included in the Appendix.

**Qualitative Interviews.** Personal interviews will be conducted on each staff member, the ten randomly selected participants, and the ten members of the control group as a post-post test to obtain information in each of the areas previously addressed, and to allow for the possibility of

\textsuperscript{66} This scale is included in Kevin Corcoran and Joel Fisher, *Measures for Clinical Practice: A Sourcebook* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 211-12. The author of this instrument is Erik E. Filsinger.

\textsuperscript{67} The author is C. R. Snyder from the University of Kansas. This was obtained from http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/hopescale.pdf.

\textsuperscript{68} Author, Christine Robitschek
receiving additional unforeseen information which may not have been addressed by the previous surveys. Additionally, questions will be asked which will attempt to verify or refute my own interpretations and conclusions drawn from the earlier surveys. This questionnaire is also included in the Appendix.

Description and Process of the Intervention.

The intervention will include preparation, an Appreciative Inquiry Summit, and follow-up work which will occur over a five-month period. Not including preparation, the intervention will be conducted in four phases which correspond to the “Four D” AI model described previously (Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver). The following outlines the process.

Preparation.

The church staff and my C-BCG will serve in the preparation stage. This will be accomplished in a working retreat at a nearby retreat center during the month of April, 2010. (Spouses will be invited to participate.) The goals for this event are: (1) introduce Appreciative Inquiry as a tool for change; (2) participate in an AI event together; (3) decide on a theme for the AI Summit; (4) create positive questions for the AI Summit interviews; and, (5) organize the details of the Summit. Preparations for the summit will proceed through the month of May, 2010.

The Appreciative Inquiry Summit

The entire congregation and church membership will be invited to participate in the AI Summit during the month of June, 2010. The length of time of the Summit will be decided by

It is important that a clear, concise theme is created by the entire staff. I will suggest a theme of “IMAGINE KCOG in 2014” as a way of engaging them, but ultimately there must be consensus for the direction of the Summit. This illustrates the dynamic process of AI which is carried forward into the Summit, and has been described as a “Holographic Beginning” that creates an atmosphere in which everyone participating can express their ideas and share their greatest hopes and dreams early, and actually creates the agenda for the meeting. See Diana Whitney and David Cooperrider, “The Appreciative Inquiry Summit: An Emerging Methodology for Whole System Positive Change,” Journal of the Organizational Development Network, 32 (2000), 13-26.
the staff during the preparation; however, I will recommend at least two and one-half days in order to adequately address the topic.

Phase One – Discovery.

During this phase we will set the task focus by giving a brief introduction to the context and purpose of the meeting. We will also conduct the Appreciative Interviews, in which all of the participants engage in one-on-one interviews, of approximately 45 minutes duration, organized around the topic of the meeting and answering the questions developed during preparation. This time will be for sharing stories of who we were and are at our best, and discovering together our strengths, resources, capabilities, competencies, positive hopes and feelings, and relationships. This can be done on a Friday evening of the weekend Summit.

Phase Two – Dream (in the Spirit).

This phase is a phase of envisioning, with intentional dependence on the Holy Spirit’s leading, our church’s greatest potential for positive influence on one another, our community, and the world. We will share our dreams through small group discussions of the dreams collected during the interview process, and then these will be presented to the entire group for group reflection and biblical discernment. This could be accomplished on Saturday morning (Holy Spirit willing).

Phase Three – Design.

During Phase Three the participants focus on crafting “provocative propositions” or design statements which are affirmative statements of the future of the church that stretch the church
toward the dreams. These propositions are not specific statements of specific actions to be taken, but they are actionable. This could be accomplished on Saturday afternoon.

Phase Four – Destiny.

This is the time to actually begin working on the specifics of what will be done. During this phase we will seek to invite personal and group initiative and self-organizing. We will encourage the congregation’s commitment to action and provide support for those who choose to go forward working on behalf of the congregation. This can be started on Saturday evening or at another meeting during the next week.

Follow-up will be done by the staff and those who have begun working in their respective areas of responsibility during the course of the next year, and subsequent Summits will occur to maintain the evolving needs of the congregation and community.

The AI Model as a Strategic Plan.

Most recent strategic planning methods originate from what is commonly called the “SWOT” model, in which internal and external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are assessed. In this model problem solving is central. The progressive steps in this model are: (1) felt needs or identification of the problems is evaluated, (2) analysis of the causes and (3) possible solutions are considered, and (4) action plans are formulated.

The model for the proposed project emanates from an AI model called the “SOAR” model. This approach begins with a “strategic inquiry” in which strengths (greatest assets) are

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70 An example of a provocative proposal, which is written in the present tense, might be: “At KCOG all people have ample opportunity to utilize their ministry gifts in a shared environment of discernment, support and encouragement.”

shared together, and the best opportunities are envisioned. “Appreciative intent” follows, reflecting on the aspirations for the preferred future, and the measurable results that are expected. Steps in this model are: (1) initiating AI by introducing leaders to theory and practice, deciding focus, and developing initial steps to discover the organization’s “best”; (2) inquire concerning “the best” of the organization’s narratives, practices and imaginations; (3) imagine “what might be” by interpreting the interviews, taking the risk of imagination, and building toward consensus concerning “what should be”; and, (4) innovate “what will be” through discourse, commitment, and equipping, with the largest possible level of participation.72

Anticipated Results

My hypothesis is that this type of intervention will improve relationships between members of the staff and among the congregation, that emotional health will improve, and that through the process of positive-based strategic planning which is undergirded by a keen sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s guidance, Christian formation will be enhanced.

I am also excited about other unknown possibilities, what the Holy Spirit may reveal, how He will challenge and direct us, and His ongoing guidance as we work toward greatness.

Need for Collaboration

It is acknowledged that my own objectivity must be closely monitored throughout this process. I sincerely want to see positive spiritual growth in our church, and a church that is stable and prepared for the challenges ahead. It is important to me that the work of my senior pastor and my own work in support of him for the past sixteen years is substantive and maintains continuity. In other words, in the remaining few years of our ministry I want us to “finish well.”

72 See Branson, 138, for a chart of this structure.
Because of my own personality tendencies, I am inclined to approach challenges analytically, and must be intentional not to let the task become the all-important responsibility. I need to stay focused on the larger picture. For these reasons, and a host of others, I will rely heavily on my C-BCG and my D.Min. Cohort group for input, and hope to have ongoing help from my faculty advisor when his schedule permits. I will also rely on guidance through the Summit intervention process from a peer group of professionals connected with Case Western Reserve University who are being trained in Appreciative Inquiry. I will attempt to interpret data obtained in a scientific, professional manner after this project is completed. Finally, and most importantly, I will sincerely seek individual and corporate discernment from the Holy Spirit.


