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THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CHURCH PLANTER
PROFILES

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APPROVAL SHEET

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CHURCH PLANTER
PROFILES

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To Kerri,
my wife, who has sacrificed much so I could complete this program,
to Zach, Josh, TJ, and Mikellie,
for being wonderful gifts of God,
and to those involved in church planting,
thank you for serving our Lord, advancing the gospel,
expanding, and extending His kingdom.

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PREFACE

During the middle of my Master of Divinity program at Western Seminary, I began to pray about further education. That prayer was in part answered through completing the Master of Theology program at Western, but I still sensed the need or desire for further education. After praying for fourteen years, I told God that I was done praying. There were seemingly too many obstacles in the way. One year later, God began to open doors, and all the obstacles that I saw as barriers, God removed. I began the Ph.D. program awed by God's goodness.

This dissertation represents the conclusion of the doctoral program, but it does not represent the conclusion of being overwhelmed by God's goodness. Participating in this cohort program has allowed me to begin relationships with men who have blessed me. I consider it an honor to have them as friends and co-laborers for Christ. These men have challenged me, encouraged me, loved me, and included me in their lives. I am grateful to God for them.

The professors, especially Chuck Lawless and Timothy Beougher, helped me think with greater precision and write with improved clarity. Their passion for Christ and His mission has marked my life that I pray will be passed on to others. My supervisor, J. D. Payne, helped me see past my fears and hesitations to engage in God's wonderful mission task of church planting. His encouragement was the stimulant that began this dissertation, and his support and correction helped bring it to completion. I believe I am a more useful servant because of these three professors' investment in my life.

Though my name appears on the title page, I am certainly not the only one who has worked and sacrificed in its production. Our four children, Zach, Josh, TJ, and Mikellie, allowed me to be away from home to study in Louisville and allowed me considerable time to do homework. My wife, Kerri, has carried additional responsibilities throughout this program. She has encouraged and admonished me when I felt like throwing in the towel. She has listened to me ramble and wrestle with ideas, and most of all she has prayed for me. Kerri is a vivid reminder of Proverbs 18:22. I am looking forward to the adventures God has in front of us.

I have been blessed by God in many ways. I am humbled that He would invite me into a relationship with Him, and then call me to serve Him. I pray that the rest of my life will be an expression of 2 Corinthians 5:15. May my life point to Him, for from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

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Sioux City, Iowa

December 2011

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Church planting has been an important tool God has used to further the Great Commission. A key component in church planting has been church planters. The furtherance of the Great Commission is, in part, influenced by the selection of church planters. This dissertation has been written to help with the selection of church planters. Specifically, the dissertation seeks to theologially analyze current church planter profiles, hoping that the analysis contributes to improvements to those profiles and the assessment processes which utilize the profiles. The cause of Christ has benefited from the use of these profiles over the last twenty-five years.

This first chapter is an introduction to the theological analysis. The chapter begins with a statement of the purpose of the dissertation and the research questions that guided the analysis. The chapter also provides three overviews to introduce the reason for such a study. First, the importance of church planting to the Great Commission is discussed. Next, the need for theological analysis related to church planting is denoted. Third, the need of leadership for church planting is examined. In addition, the chapter reviews the research methodology deployed.

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to do a theological analysis of three prominent church planter profiles. The analysis will seek to answer the following five questions:

1. How do the church planter profiles correspond to the qualifications Paul listed for church leaders in the Pastoral Epistles?

2. Are there unique traits of church planters that would correspond with characteristics displayed by apostles in the New Testament, and as such might be described as apostolic functions?
3. Are the right characteristics, skills, and gifts being assessed for, or are there other issues that need to be addressed?
4. How do the profiles address the need for the church planter to have a spiritually vital relationship with God?
5. How do the profiles reflect or assess the potential church planter with respect to the missionary nature of the church?

Though a very long list of church planter profiles could be studied, this dissertation will be limited to three profiles. Those three profiles are the profile developed by Charles R. Ridley; the profile developed by J. Allen Thompson; and, the profile developed by a team led by H. Stanley Wood.¹ The second chapter of the dissertation includes background information about each of these profiles.

The Ridley Profile was selected for this study for three reasons. First, this profile was one of the first profiles developed for church planters. Second, it is perhaps the most widely used profile in church planter assessments and whether or not people use the label “Ridley’s 13 Characteristics,” this profile is what many people refer to when they speak of church planter assessments.² It is common for networks or organizations

¹Charles R. Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters: A Self-Study Manual for Recruiting, Screening, Interviewing and Evaluating Qualified Church Planters* (Pasadena, CA: The Fuller Evangelistic Association, 1988). J. Allen Thompson, “Church Planter Competencies as Perceived by Church Planters and Assessment Center Leaders: A Protestant North American Study” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 1995). J. Allen Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory: A PCA Qualitative and Quantitative Study* (Seattle: International Church Planting Center, 2007). H. Stanley Wood, ed., *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, Unadorned Clay Pot Messengers, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

²Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 96. Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 82.

that are developing their own assessment processes to start with Ridley's original work.³ Third, when people speak of Ridley and his involvement in church planter assessments, they refer to Ridley with terms such as premier expert or guru.⁴

The Thompson Profile was also selected for three reasons. First, Thompson was involved with church planting in the Presbyterian Church of America when they called upon Thomas Graham to help them develop an assessment process. Second, Thompson completed one of the few doctoral dissertations that directly addressed church planter profiles or assessment.⁵ Third, Thompson has continued to stay actively involved in church planter assessments in at least two ways. First, through his ministry at the International Church Planting Center, Thompson completed a follow up study in 2007 to his 1995 dissertation.⁶ Second, Thompson serves as a consultant to the influential church planting ministry of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, and his work is often referenced by the Acts 29 Network.⁷

³Scott Thomas, "Ten Qualifications of a Church Planter" The Acts 29 Network Blog, entry posted March 12, 2010, <http://www.acts29network.org/acts-29-blog/10-church-planter-qualities/> (accessed March 12, 2010).

⁴Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 196. Kevin W. Mannoia, *Church Planting the Next Generation: Introducing the Century 21 Church Planting System* (Indianapolis: Light and Life Press, 1994), 70.

⁵Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies." The only other dissertations discovered at this point that address church planter profile and assessment issues are Hutz H. Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions of Younger Evangelical Church Planters" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2008); John L. Shepherd, "An Analysis of the North American Mission Board's Assessment Process for Selecting Church Planters" (D.Min. project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003); and, Eric J. Tucker, "Competencies of Effective Hispanic Church Planters in Miami, Florida as Perceived by Reformed Hispanic Church Planters and Pastors" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 2006). Thompson was influential in Tucker's Ph.D. work. Eric J. Tucker, interview by author, Tumwater, WA, March 14, 2008.

⁶Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 1-54.

⁷Thomas, "Ten Qualifications of a Church Planter."

The Wood Profile was selected for two reasons. First, it is a recent study that examined new church leaders across a mainline denominational range. Using such a profile helps to identify any bias that might be shared by the other two profiles that were developed more from an evangelical context. Second, the study itself claimed: “This study represents the most complete exploration of the new-church development (NCD) phenomenon as it is currently understood within the United States.”⁸ The size and scope of the study merited its inclusion in this analysis.

These church planter profiles have been used to assess the selection of potential church planters. Though the word assessment has a broad range of meanings and applications, in this study, the term assessment is used to describe a formal process to select qualified candidates for unique positions. This understanding of assessment began with the introduction of formal assessment processes by the German military in World War I, and over time was then deployed to aid in the selection of church planters.

The profiles have been beneficial to the church planting process. This dissertation will hopefully make a small contribution to help understand those profiles from a biblical and theological standpoint, and if necessary offer suggestions to ensure fidelity of those profiles to the Bible. Scripture is vital to the mission of God.

The Importance of Church Planting to the Great Commission

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus communicated a number of powerful messages. Some of those were long discourses, such as the Sermon on the Mount, the Kingdom parables, or the Olivet Discourse.⁹ Others were brief, compact expressions that

⁸Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, 154.

⁹Many scholars hold that Jesus delivered five major discourses in the Gospel of Matthew: The Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1-7:29); Mission and Martyrdom (Matt 10:5-11:1); The Parables of the Kingdom (Matt 13:1-53); Life under Kingdom Authority (Matt 18:1-19:2); and, The Olivet Discourse (Matt 24:1-25:46). These discourses help to structure the book; cf. D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor’s Bible*

are quickly memorized. Two such examples would be Matthew 16:18, where Jesus stated, “I will build My church,” and Matthew 28:18-20, the passage commonly referred to as the Great Commission.¹⁰ Jesus placed considerable value on the importance of the church and the imperative of the Great Commission to make disciples. Those two memorable statements are important themes in the other twenty-six books that make up the New Testament.

The theme of the church can be found throughout the letters of the Apostle Paul. He wrote about matters pertaining to the church in a broad sense in 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, collectively known as the Pastoral Epistles.¹¹ He also addressed the subject of the church through the use of word pictures such as God’s household in Ephesians 2, and the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12. Perhaps the most dramatic statement Paul made about the church is found in Ephesians 3:10 where he said that the manifold wisdom of God is made known through the church to rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.¹²

Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1984), 50-57. Also Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 37-45.

¹⁰Please note all Scripture quotations in this dissertation are from the New American Standard Bible, updated ed. unless otherwise noted.

¹¹Hutz Hertzberg and Francis Lonsway suggested that “the pastoral letters – 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus – are letters written to church planting team members left behind in Ephesus and Crete”. Hutz Hertzberg and Francis Lonsway, “Church Planting: From Antioch to Acts 29 and Beyond,” *Journal of Evangelism and Missions* (Spring 2010): 94.

¹²In commenting on Eph 3:10, John Stott observed, “As the gospel spreads throughout the world, this new and variegated Christian community develops.” The story of history unfolds before an audience of heavenly beings. Stott suggested, “We are to think of them as spectators of the drama of salvation.” John R. W. Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 123-24.

The theme of the Great Commission is found throughout the New Testament.¹³ It is expressed in the opening verses of Acts 1, particularly Acts 1:8.¹⁴ The Apostle Paul made a strong plea for the first portion of the Great Commission process, the inviting of unbelievers to enter into a relationship with Jesus, in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. In Colossians 1:28, Paul described his ministry in a manner that could easily be interpreted as a restatement of the Great Commission.¹⁵ In places such as Galatians 4:19 and Philippians 3:12-14, Paul showed his concern for people to continue in the transformation that is part of the Great Commission. The church and the Great Commission are important themes in the New Testament.

The Book of Acts provides a narrative account of the intertwining of these two important themes.¹⁶ In Acts 2:47, Luke noted that proclaiming the gospel resulted in

¹³The Great Commission, commonly understood as recorded in Matt 28:18-20, can be defined as the making of disciples. Making disciples is a process that begins by inviting unbelievers into a relationship with the Lord Jesus, which would be signified by baptism. The process continues by guiding these new followers of the Lord Jesus in being transformed into the image of Christ, which requires teaching them to obey all that Christ commanded. A more precise understanding of the theme of the Great Commission requires recognizing that the Lord Jesus gave five statements of the Great Commission between his resurrection and ascension: John 20:21; Mark 16:15; Matt 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-49; and Acts 1:8. For a helpful study of these five statements see Marvin J. Newell, *Commissioned: What Jesus Wants You to Know as You Go* (St. Charles, IL: Church Smart Resources, 2010).

¹⁴Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 66.

¹⁵The word “proclaim” in Col 1:28 is viewed as almost a technical term for missionary preaching. The use of teaching in the verse underlines that Paul viewed his ministry not simply as a presentation of the gospel but also called for intense teaching. Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 44 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 87-88. See also Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 160.

¹⁶Aubrey Malphurs wrote, “If we desire to know how the early church understood Christ’s commission, we can find the answer in the Book of Acts. Acts is a church-planting book because much of what takes place does so in the context of starting churches.” Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A*

people joining the community of faith. Luke made editorial statements in Acts 5:14, 6:1, and Acts 8 that indicate more people were coming to faith and being added to the church. In Acts 11:19-26, Luke noted that as followers of the Lord Jesus shared the message of the resurrected Savior, many turned to the Lord and became part of the church.¹⁷ The interconnection of the Great Commission and church is expressed in Paul's journeys in Acts 13 through 19.¹⁸

As Paul traveled and shared the good news, churches were formed.¹⁹ Tim Chester observed, "For Paul, mission meant planting churches. In the New Testament, wherever the gospel was preached local churches were established. In Acts Luke deliberately portrays Paul as a church planter."²⁰ Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien observed, "We have already seen, particularly in Acts and the letters of Paul, that the advance of the gospel or the progress of the word of God leads to the founding of settled Christian communities."²¹ Craig Ott and Stephen J. Strauss stated, "One cannot

Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 25. Hertzberg and Lonsway stated, "Acts is largely devoted to events and circumstances of church planting throughout Asia Minor and Europe." Hertzberg and Lonsway, "Church Planting," 94.

¹⁷Bock, *Acts*, 412-16.

¹⁸Malphurs again noted, "A careful reading of Acts reveals that the early church implemented the Great Commission mandate primarily by planting churches. A study of the missionary journeys recorded in Acts reveals that they, in fact, were church-planting forays into what was predominantly a pagan culture. As a result of these trips, Paul and others planted high-impact churches in key cities such as Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, and Ephesus." Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, 42.

¹⁹The original recipients of the New Testament books 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians were churches that started out of Paul's missionary travels as recorded in Acts 16, 17, 18, and 19.

²⁰Tim Chester, "Church Planting: A Theological Perspective," in *Multiplying Churches: Reaching Today's Communities Through Church Planting*, ed. Stephen Timmis (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 38.

²¹Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the*

read Acts without noting that nearly everywhere the gospel was preached, communities of believers are formed.”²² Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird noted, “The story and practice of the early church, recorded in Acts, bears this out: the early church implemented the Great Commission mandate primarily by planting churches.”²³ Jeff Reed commented, “Acts was in essence a catechism for carrying out the Great Commission, that is, for multiplying churches worldwide.”²⁴ Craig Ott and Gene Wilson wrote, “Two aspects of the Great Commission as formulated in the Matthew 28:18-20 entail church planting: the command to baptize and the command to teach obedience to all that Christ commanded. These are virtually impossible to fulfill apart from planting churches.”²⁵ Those observations led to the conclusion of Richard Yates Hibbert, “Church planting is implied by the Great Commission.”²⁶

Though close to two thousand years has passed since the book of Acts was written, contemporary voices hold that the furtherance of the Great Commission is still connected with church planting. C. Peter Wagner originated an oft-repeated statement concerning church planting, “The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.”²⁷ Rick Warren, in the foreword of *Viral Churches*,

Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 11 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 267-268.

²²Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 118.

²³Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 26-27.

²⁴Jeff Reed, foreword to *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond*, by David J. Hesselgrave, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 9.

²⁵Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 22.

²⁶Richard Yates Hibbert, “The Place of Church Planting in Mission: Towards a Theological Framework,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 33, no. 4 (October 2009): 326.

²⁷C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA:

stated, “The single most effective method for fulfilling the Great Commission that Jesus gave us is to plant new churches! Two thousand years of Christian history have proven that new churches grow faster, and reach more people, than established churches.”²⁸ Ed Stetzer suggested that to ignite furthering the Great Commission, there is a need for aggressive church planting. He wrote, “Church planting is almost the most effective evangelistic strategy in the world. What’s the most effective? Church multiplication movements. When churches plant lots of other churches, our witness advances exponentially. We need that kind of movement today.”²⁹

J. D. Payne expresses his opinion on the issue this way:

Though there is no direct command to plant churches, our Lord was very clear about the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (literally, “peoples,” not nation-states). The best way to fulfill this mandate of evangelizing, baptizing, and teaching obedience is through the planting of contextualized churches among the various people groups and population segments of the world. For it is in the process of evangelizing, baptizing, and teaching that local churches are planted.³⁰

Timothy Keller wrote,

Virtually all the great evangelistic challenges of the New Testament are basically calls to plant churches, not simply to share the faith. The ‘Great Commission’ (Matt. 28:18-20) is not just a call to ‘*make disciples*’ but to ‘*baptize*.’ In Acts and elsewhere, it is clear that baptism means incorporation into a worshipping community with accountability and boundaries (cf. Acts 2:41-47). The only way to

Regal Books, 1990), 11.

²⁸Rick Warren, foreword to *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers*, by Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), xi.

²⁹Ed Stetzer, “Have Churches Forgotten How to Reproduce?” *Outreach*, March/April 2010, 22.

³⁰J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 4. Ott and Strauss expressed a similar thought, “Though there is no command to plant churches, there is the command to baptize (Matt. 28:19-20). Baptism is a sign not only of repentance, forgiveness, and new life (Rom. 6:3-4) but also of enfolding into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) and identification with the new community of faith.” Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 119.

be truly sure you are increasing the number of Christians in a town is to increase the number of churches.³¹

Marvin J. Newell concluded, “Church planting is considered the focal point of Great Commission strategy. . . . The two are interrelated and breed each other into existence.”³²

A recent article in *Christianity Today* expressed a similar sentiment.³³

From the brief overview just given, there does appear to be a connection between church planting and furthering the Great Commission both in the biblical record, and from the perspective of contemporary church scholars. Hutz Hertzberg and Francis Lonsway noted, “In fact, the expansion of Christianity is inextricably linked to the planting of churches.”³⁴ Chester added, “The story of the church is therefore inevitably the story of the seeding, germination, and growth of groups of Christians worshipping, learning, and witnessing together. In other words church history should always be read and studied with the planting of churches in mind.”³⁵ Lyle Schaller wrote,

But number one on this list of responses to the Great Commission has always been the creation of new worshiping communities called congregations or parishes or missions or churches. Throughout the centuries this has been the most common attempt to obey that directive of Jesus to make disciples from among those who have been living outside the faith.³⁶

³¹Timothy Keller, “Why Plant Churches,” Redeemer Presbyterian Church, <http://www.redeemer2.com/resources/papers/why%20plant%20%2011%20TLeaders.pdf> (accessed November 8, 2010). Italics are original.

³²Newell, *Commissioned*, 105.

³³Tim Stafford, “Go and Plant Churches of All Peoples,” *Christianity Today*, September 2007, 69. After dialoguing with Scott Thomas of the Acts 29 Network, Stafford noted, “Biblical rethinking also fuels the conviction that church planting is the ideal way to fulfill Jesus’ Great Commission.”

³⁴Hertzberg and Lonsway, “Church Planting,” 93.

³⁵Chester, “Church Planting,” 47.

³⁶Lyle E. Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 27.

The messages of the Bible and contemporary church writers are in agreement: church planting is important to the commission Jesus gave to his followers.³⁷ To be serious about the Great Commission requires giving considerable attention to church planting.³⁸ A desire to contribute to the furthering of the Great Commission is a desire to be concerned about and involved in church planting.³⁹

The Need for Theological Analysis Related to Church Planting

From reviewing literature related to the church, mission, and church planting, it appears that theological analysis related to church planting is indeed necessary for at least four different reasons: the current condition of the church, a current lack of theological analysis, the need for churches to be theologically driven, and fidelity to God's foundation for the church. This section provides explanations for the four reasons.

Current Condition of the Church

Many voices have denoted the sad state of the church in North America. One well documented example of such a concern is David T. Olson's book, *The American Church in Crisis*.⁴⁰ The information presented in the book is sobering. In referencing the

³⁷Ott and Straus concluded, "That church planting and development must indeed be considered central to the task of missions." Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 119.

³⁸David A. Womack opined, "There is only one way the Great Commission can be fulfilled, and that is by establishing gospel-preaching congregations in every community on the face of the earth." David A. Womack, *Breaking the Stained-Glass Barrier* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 88.

³⁹Newell stated, "The DNA of the Great Commission is summed up with the acronym 'EDP.' The EDP strategy consists of 'Evangelism,' 'Discipleship,' and 'Planting the church.'" Newell, *Commissioned*, 103.

⁴⁰David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis: Groundbreaking Research based on a National Database of Over 200,000 Churches* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

population growth of the United States between 1990 and 2006, Olson made this statement about the church:

More than 91 million people live in the United States today who did not live here 16 years ago. While this robust growth in the number of Americans has taken place, no growth in church attendance has occurred! In 1990, 52 million people attended worship each week – in 2006 the number remained unchanged. However, because of the sizable population growth, the percentage of Americans who attend church is declining.⁴¹

Olson noted, “Since 2001, established churches have declined in attendance every year, with the rate of that decline escalating.”⁴² And again, additional hard observations from Olson:

Each year from 2000 to 2005, an estimated 4,000 new churches were started in America. . . . Unfortunately, the 3,700 churches that close per year reduce the impact of the 4,000 new churches that start, leaving a net yearly gain of 300 churches in the United States. A net gain of 3,205 churches is needed each year for the American church to keep up with population growth; this is far less than the actually yearly gain of 300 churches. This means an additional 2,900 new churches need to be started each year in the United States to match population growth.⁴³

Ten years prior to the release of Olson’s book, Darrell Guder and other members of the Gospel and Our Culture Network combined to write *Missional Church*.⁴⁴

They explained why they wrote the book by stating:

The basic thesis of this book is that the answer to the crisis of the North American church will not be found at the level of method and problem solving. We share the conviction of a growing consensus of Christians in North America that the problem is much more deeply rooted. It was to do with who we are and what we are for. The real issues in the current crisis of the Christian church are spiritual and theological.⁴⁵

⁴¹Ibid., 36.

⁴²Ibid., 131.

⁴³Ibid., 145-46.

⁴⁴Darrell L. Guder, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). For more information about the Gospel and Our Culture Network, see www.gocn.org.

⁴⁵Guder, *Missional Church*, 3.

The church in North America is understood to be facing challenges or as noted above by Guder's team, a crisis.⁴⁶ The suggestion has been made that the issues which form this crisis are theological in nature. Theological issues would seem to suggest the need for theological analysis to discern theological solutions.

Lack of Theological Analysis

Much of the published writings on evangelism and church planting have been focused on issues of techniques and practical matters. Often, there has been minimal theological explanation given. Robert L. Plummer noted two observations regarding any type of theological analysis.⁴⁷ First, he noted that biblical teaching on subjects like missions and evangelism have largely been ignored by theological scholars.⁴⁸ Second, the studies available that do focus on missionary subjects rarely are done in accordance with the demands of rigorous biblical theology. Plummer summarized his observations this way, "Thus, we see that while New Testament scholars have neglected missionary themes, missiologists have produced mainly more popular works and have failed to construct a well-crafted biblical theology of mission."⁴⁹ Sadly, though scholars may assert views and positions, there is often a lacking of careful analysis and exegesis of

⁴⁶Olson would concur with describing the church as being in crisis. The opening sentence of his book stated: "The American church is in crisis." Olson, *The American Church in Crisis*, 15.

⁴⁷Robert L. Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 3-4.

⁴⁸Köstenberger and O'Brien noted, "Mission has thus far been one of the step-children of New Testament theology. Rarely has this significant theme been given its due in the overall discipline." Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 19.

⁴⁹Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 4.

New Testament passages to support their views.⁵⁰ There would appear to be a need for theological analysis, but currently, little analysis of substance has actually been done.

Theologically Driven Church

Hibbert made the following observation about the three-self formula: “The three-self formula of Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson helped to crystallize the focus among evangelicals on church planting as the key to mission, but their rationale for doing this was pragmatic – the missions needed to be relieved of the burden of financially supporting the new churches – rather than theological.”⁵¹ Churches and church leaders inevitably will have to make numerous decisions. Hibbert’s concern is that the basis for those decisions would more likely be consistent with God’s purpose for the church, if those decisions were informed by theological and biblical principles rather than pragmatism. This reason is not to suggest that pragmatism is evil, but this reason does suggest that theological and biblical values should be accorded a higher position in the decision making process than pragmatism. Unless theological analysis takes place, it is unlikely that church planting will be theologically driven. Pragmatism will be influential without theological analysis.

Chapter 2 highlights the overall history of assessment starting with the German military in World War I, up to its use in church planting. Assessment has been an effective tool in selecting personnel for a variety of occupations. Given the need to find church planters to further church planting, it may seem prudent to utilize assessment in selecting church planters. But in taking such an approach, it would seem to create the possibility of the church planting process being governed by pragmatically effective measures, without consideration given to theological and biblical principles. To

⁵⁰Ibid., 41.

⁵¹Hibbert, “The Place of Church Planting in Mission,” 319.

uncritically deploy tools for church planting, without subjecting those tools to theological analysis, may separate the church from her very source of life.

Fidelity to God's Foundation

A fourth reason for engaging in theological analysis related to church planting is to encourage the church to be in alignment with God's agenda for, and the foundation of, the church. This reason can be explained as a call for church planting to be driven and informed primarily by God's revelation of the church in the Bible. Hibbert noted, "While insights from the history of mission and the social sciences are extremely helpful in shaping church planting practice, a biblical and theological foundation is essential if church planting is to fulfill God's purposes for it."⁵² Verses like Matthew 16:18 strongly communicate that the church is a creation of God. He brought the church into being to accomplish his purposes. To neglect or avoid theological analysis would blatantly undermine God's intention for the church.

This reason was a major stimulant behind Stuart Murray's book, *Church Planting*.⁵³ Murray began his discussion by referring to Paul's comments about the starting of the church in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 3:6-11. He summarized those comments by stating, "Church planting involves laying foundations. The quality of these foundations has profound implications for what can be built on them."⁵⁴ That concern for foundations seems to contribute to his concern for a lack of theological reflection among those involved in church planting.⁵⁵ He noted, "I suspect many practical difficulties encountered in church planting are actually symptoms of underlying weaknesses in

⁵²Ibid., 316.

⁵³Stuart Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001).

⁵⁴Ibid., 11.

⁵⁵Ibid., 17.

direction and strategy.”⁵⁶ Direction and strategy can be understood as foundational issues. Without a significant foundation, the quality of what is built upon it will suffer as Murray noted above. He further stated, “My aim is to construct a theological framework for church planting that will provide a more secure foundation for action.”⁵⁷ Murray is suggesting that there is need for theological analysis related to church planting.

Payne would seem to be pointing to the same need in his book, *Discovering Church Planting*. He wrote,

Global church planting, regardless of the geographical location, must be guided by the biblical and missiological principles leading to making disciples of all nations. *Church planters must be both outstanding theologians and outstanding missionaries.* To be one without the other is a liability to the kingdom. Paul contended for the faith (2 Timothy 4:7), proclaimed the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), and appropriately contextualized his work (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) for the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches.⁵⁸

He also noted, “Church planters who fail to base their theological framework on the Bible tread on the shifting sands of contemporary fads, trends, and whims.”⁵⁹ Ed Stetzer noted agreement with the importance of the Bible to church planting when he wrote: “Before anything else, we start with the Bible to understand and build on the clear New Testament patterns of church planting. We’d be wrong to send out planters with organizational, strategic, and marketing tools but not the fundamental truths of God’s Word and the principles of Scripture from which to work.”⁶⁰

Similar to Murray, Payne is concerned about the foundations of church planting. He wrote,

⁵⁶Ibid., 18.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*, xxxi. Italics original.

⁵⁹Ibid., 5.

⁶⁰Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 37.

Beginning well is part of the process of ending well. When it comes to church planting, missionaries must begin well by having a healthy understanding of the Church. Without establishing this proper foundation, church planters will find themselves frustrated on the journey and with many problems when they reach their destination.⁶¹

To prevent the journey from being frustrating, and the final destination of the journey to be a complexity of problems, Payne made two statements. First, related to the journey, he noted, “In order to make any significant advancement for the kingdom, church planters must have a solid theological basis for their church-planting methods and strategies.”⁶² Second, with reference to the destination, Payne stated, “The establishment of a healthy theological foundation is necessary if church planters desire to finish well.”⁶³

In his own dissertation, Payne offered three methodological shifts that need to take place in North American church planting. The second of the shifts he listed related to research. He wrote, “In light of the necessary discernment, the second methodological shift needed is a shift toward more research in the area of North American church planting.”⁶⁴ His concern was that without research people involved in church planting might uncritically deploy methodologies that appear successful. Furthering the Great Commission is not about simply being busy doing something. To further the Great Commission requires being engaged in God-honoring activities. Research can help leaders discern more of how God does work.

Given the current condition of the church, the lack of theological analysis that has been done, the need for the church to be theologically driven, and the importance of being faithful to God’s foundation for the church, there is a need for additional research

⁶¹Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*, 18.

⁶²Ibid., 25.

⁶³Ibid., 26.

⁶⁴Jervis David Payne, “An Evaluation of the Systems Approach to North American Church Multiplication Movements of Robert E. Logan in Light of the Missiology of Roland Allen” (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001), 286.

to be done. Analyzing a variety for church planting issues from a theological standpoint could be a helpful part of that research. Bringing alignment between church planting practices and God’s revealed ways of working would only serve to enhance church planting efforts. Hertzberg and Lonsway noted the need for research specifically related to church planters: “Most all of the church planting research to date has been valuable, but it simply needs to be improved with the goal of shedding more light on the unique ministry of church planting and the preferred qualities important for church planters.”⁶⁵

The Need for Leadership for Church Planting

Leadership is a key component in many human endeavors. James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner stated, “Leadership is important, not just in your career and within your organization, but in every sector, in every community, and in every country. We need more exemplary leaders, and we need them more than ever. There is so much extraordinary work that needs to be done. We need leaders who can unite us and ignite us.”⁶⁶ The need for leaders is true also within the church. R. Albert Mohler, Jr. observed, “In today’s church, leadership has become something of an obsession. In one sense, this is almost natural and necessary, as leadership is absolutely essential to any organization, including the church.”⁶⁷ The writers of *Missional Church* noted,

The key to the formation of missional communities is their leadership. The Spirit empowers the church for mission through the gifts of people. Leadership is a critical gift, provided by the Spirit because, as the Scriptures demonstrate, fundamental change in any body of people requires leaders capable of transforming its life and being transformed themselves.⁶⁸

⁶⁵Hertzberg and Lonsway, “Church Planting,” 100.

⁶⁶James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), xvi.

⁶⁷ R. Albert Mohler, Jr., foreword to *Great Leader Great Teacher: Recovering the Biblical Vision for Leadership*, by Gary Bredfeldt (Chicago: Moody, 2006), 7.

⁶⁸Guder, *Missional Church*, 183.

The need for leadership in the planting of new churches is expressed by many who have written on church planting. Wagner stated boldly, “As I will reiterate time and again, the leader is the principal key to a successful church planting endeavor. There are many other important components of church planting, but they will stand or fall on the leadership available.”⁶⁹ Wagner’s statement has served a rallying cry to find qualified church planters.

Wood shared a similar observation: “In other words, no matter how much else was right, if the leader was wrong, the new church would be at best marginalized and would probably fail.”⁷⁰ Stetzer wrote, “The task of church planting requires people who are uniquely gifted.”⁷¹ Hertzberg and Lonsway noted, “Today, most church planting leaders would agree that identifying the right planter is essential to church plant success.”⁷² Thompson stated, “However, regardless of differences in theology and practice, leaders agree that the bottom line to effective church planting is the person who starts the process, the church planter himself.”⁷³ Schaller suggested, “Choosing and retaining the right pastor clearly is the key variable in planting a new mission that will continue decade after decade to challenge an ever-growing number of people with the Good News that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.”⁷⁴ If churches are going to be planted, there is a need for church planters to be found and deployed. The need for leadership has been identified. It is not optional. The church must invest to find leaders who can further the Great Commission through church planting.

⁶⁹Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*, 51.

⁷⁰Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, xviii.

⁷¹Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 81.

⁷²Hertzberg and Lonsway, “Church Planting,” 98.

⁷³Thompson, “Church Planter Competencies,” 1-2.

⁷⁴Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters*, 38.

Effective church planting that leads to the furtherance of the Great Commission requires leadership, and not just any kind of leadership. David T. Harvey expressed this sentiment when he wrote,

Here's one way to say it: *the height of church planting success is dependent upon the breadth of leadership gifting and diligence*. It's simple, but it helps us to understand the stakes. It also reminds us that identifying the scope of grace, faith and diligence – the leadership gift – and positioning men accordingly, is key to effective church planting.⁷⁵

In light of those observations and statements, a key question to ask is “how do you identify the right leader for this type of ministry?” A common response to that question for the last twenty-five years has been the development and deployment of church planter assessments.⁷⁶ The assessment process used in the selection of church planters is historically tied to assessments used by the German army starting in World War I.⁷⁷ The goal of the assessment process is to help inform better personnel decisions.

Assessments for church planters were introduced for at least two reasons. The first reason was to help prospective church planters answer the question, “Is God calling me to plant a church?” For some, the answer is affirmative, for others it is not. Stetzer and Bird noted, “Though everyone can help plant a church, not everyone is wired to be a church planter. Assessment helps those who do not have a call or giftedness for church planting to focus on areas of ministry where there is proper fit.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵David T. Harvey, “For the Sake of the Call: Crafting a College Course to Identify, Inform and Inspire Church Planters” (D.Min. project, Westminster Theological Seminary, 2001), 47. Italics are original.

⁷⁶Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 81. Hertzberg and Lonsway wrote, “It is noteworthy that hardly any of the church planting literature prior to the 1990s addressed the needed competencies of church planters. . . . Wise stewardship of people and resources necessitates the careful assessment and placement of church planters.” Hertzberg and Lonsway, “Church Planting,” 99.

⁷⁷The second chapter of the dissertation will unfold the history of the assessment process.

⁷⁸Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 97.

Church planting is challenging work. Ben Arment observed, “For many people church planting is a disillusioning experience.”⁷⁹ The disillusionment is undoubtedly a factor that causes many church planters to question their calling to ministry, and in many cases has led church planters to resign.⁸⁰ The Great Commission is hindered, not advanced, when people are damaged by being placed in the wrong ministry roles. Ridley noted, “Many ill-suited church planters are crushed by their failure. They become heavy laden with guilt, frustration, depression and loss of direction. Some even attribute their lack of success to a flaw in their spirituality or relationship with God. In many cases, nothing could be farther from the truth.”⁸¹ Kevin W. Mannoia, who at the time was overseeing church planting within his denomination, asked: “How can we prevent hurt to good-hearted, well-intentioned planters who are damaged or destroyed by a failed attempt to plant?”⁸² Deploying assessments to help people more effectively discern if God is calling them to church plant, has been a noted part of answering Mannoia’s question.

The second reason for the introduction of assessments to church planter selection was the expectation that assessments would lead to increased success in church planting.⁸³ Mannoia predicted, “One district reports a 34 percent success rate in church planting with no specialized evaluation of planter prospects. Simply implementing an effective PAS could raise the success rate by at least 100 percent.”⁸⁴ In his 2006 book on

⁷⁹Ben Arment, *Church in the Making: What Makes or Breaks a New Church Before it Starts* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2010), 14.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁸¹Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 2.

⁸²Mannoia, *Church Planting the Next Generation*, 13.

⁸³Ted Powers of the Presbyterian Church of America noted that the PCA got involved with assessments in the early 1980s because of a high failure rate. Ted Powers, re: Requesting Help with Church Planter Assessment, e-mail message to author, 30 April 2008, transcript.

⁸⁴Mannoia, *Church Planting the Next Generation*, 67. PAS is Mannoia’s

church planting, Stetzer noted a statement from the Green Lake Conference Center's web site which sounded very encouraging related to the effectiveness of assessments.⁸⁵ The web site stated, "Currently the national average of church starts resulting in a successful plant is only 35%. Candidates who attend the Assessment Center and follow through with the conditions and recommendations are experiencing a success rate of over 85%."⁸⁶ According to Dave Gallagher, the Green Lake assessment center coordinator, Green Lake defines a church as successful when the assessment center checks back with the church planter at some later date, and finds the church is still in existence. Success was not defined by growth rate or size, just that the church was still meeting in some manner.⁸⁷ As a measure of success, the simple existence of a church is less than desirable. The intention of starting new churches is the furtherance of the Great Commission, not simply the production of more churches. Better measures of success are needed to discern the usefulness of church planter assessments.⁸⁸

Though statements can be found that suggest that assessments are an effective tool for improving church planting, it is difficult to find evidence that leads to a definitive conclusion. A study by NAMB's Center for Missional Research in 2006 would seem to

abbreviation for Profile Assessment System.

⁸⁵Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 84. The Green Lake Conference Center regularly holds church planter assessments, having assessed over 400 candidates since 2004. For more information about Green Lake and its assessment program, see www.ac.glcc.org.

⁸⁶Assessment Center 4 Church Planters, "What is the Assessment Center 4 Church Planters," Green Lake Conference Center, <http://www.ac.glcc.org/What%20is%20AC4CP.pdf> (accessed August 11, 2011).

⁸⁷Dave Gallagher, re: One more Question from Lloyd Grant, e-mail message to author, 17 September 2011, transcript.

⁸⁸Measures such as the number of baptisms or the number of people who are discipled and are then discipling others, or the number of small groups that reproducing leaders would be more helpful to evaluating the furtherance of the Great Commission.

suggest that assessments do not make a measurable difference.⁸⁹ Research done by John L. Shepherd also questioned the effectiveness of assessments.⁹⁰ Charles Ridley himself, an originator of church planter assessments noted that he is not aware of any evaluation of his assessment process with respect to church planting effectiveness. In an interview with Stephen Thomas Gray, Ridley said, “I am not aware of any longitudinal, formal research that has been done on my work. I have only heard of informal studies and personal comments.”⁹¹

To evaluate the contribution and effectiveness of church planter assessments, at least three observations should be made. First, it should be noted that the two men viewed as the originators of church planter assessments, Thomas Graham and Charles Ridley, are psychologists.⁹² This observation is not in any way meant to suggest that these men are not followers of Christ. But rather, given the above mentioned tension regarding success and effectiveness, the source of assessments does have a strong connection to psychology. That raises the question: is there a biblical or theological foundation for assessments?⁹³

⁸⁹Ed Stetzer and Phillip Conner, *Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 2007: Best Practices* (Atlanta: Center for Missional Research, North American Mission Board, 2007), 8.

⁹⁰Shepherd, “Analysis of the Assessment Process,” 94, 97.

⁹¹Stephen Thomas Gray, “Factors Involved in Fast-Growing Dynamic Church Plants” (D.Min. project, Asbury Theological Seminary, 2007), 35.

⁹²Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 96. J. Allen Thompson, interview by author, Sioux City, IA, March 22, 2010. Thomas Graham was trained an organizational psychologist who specialized in helping teams learn how to accomplish tasks as a team. For more information about Thomas Graham, see www.comd.org.

⁹³Scott Thomas, referring to Ridley, wrote, “I told Churck [*sic*] that my challenge with his outstanding list was that one doesn't have to be a Christian or be competent theologically or biblically to qualify. His gracious response was that a planter's sending church or denomination will have already examined that. I would hesitate to assume those two factors today.” Thomas, “Ten Qualifications of a Church Planter.”

Second, leading within the church is not the same as leading any organization in society. David J. Hesselgrave noted, “Leadership in society at large is vastly different from leadership in the churches.”⁹⁴ Leadership is important in any endeavor, but not all endeavors are the same. The church has a unique foundation, which distinguishes it from other organizations. If assessments are solely or largely a psychological tool, is it possible that assessments, though well intentioned, will fail to increase success or effectiveness in church planting, because of lacking a biblical and theological foundation that appears to be foundational to the church?

A third observation concerning the effectiveness of church planter assessment, is the need to discern the call of the Holy Spirit in the lives of prospective church planters. Harvest Bible Fellowship and the NETS Institute for Church Planting are concerned with finding men whom God has called to serve as church planters.⁹⁵ In interviews, both organizations expressed that there is a real danger in type casting people only on the basis of personality and psychology. They expressed concern over the possibility of failing to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit in the process of assessment.

For close to one hundred years, assessments have been helpful tools for selecting individuals for leadership roles. Given our cultural attraction to success, there appears to be a need to give serious consideration to the biblical and theological foundation for assessments. Darrin Patrick wrote,

Sometimes a church’s view of the pastorate has been so influenced by the bottom-line, grow-at-all-costs American business model that there is little or no emphasis on finding someone who has been called by God. In the past few years I have been

⁹⁴David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 260.

⁹⁵David Jones, interview by author, Tumwater, WA, February 8, 2008. For more information about Harvest Bible Fellowship, see <http://www.harvestbiblefellowship.us>. Dave Appenzeller, interview by author, Tumwater, WA, January 25, 2008. For more information on the NETS Institute for Church Planting, see <http://www.netsem.org/index.php>.

asked to consult for several evangelical denominations and networks, as well as a few mainline denominations, regarding hiring, firing, and recruiting decisions. I have found that the main question both liberals and conservatives often start with is not, *Is this man a Christian?* But rather, *Can this man grow the church?*⁹⁶

Leaders are needed for church planting to further the Great Commission. Assessments have been used to help discern some of those needed leaders. It would appear to be unwise not to do all that can be done to ensure the selection of those people God has gifted, equipped, and called to such a ministry. To accomplish that, it would seem, in light of the reasons listed concerning the need for theological analysis related to church planting, to invest effort in doing a theological analysis of issues related to the assessment of church planters.

Methodology

The research that developed this study involved two main components. The first component involved the discovery of written materials related to assessment and profiles. From earlier research conducted during my Ph.D. course work, it was apparent that there was not a large quantity of written material related to the assessment of church planters. Given the small amount of written material, a second key component to this research was information and insights gathered from interviewing a number of people involved in or connected in some way to church planter assessments.

From that research two theological issues or factors related to assessments and profiles surfaced to form the context of the theological analysis. Those factors are: pastoral qualifications and the functions of apostles; and the missionary nature of the church. Clearly, a number of additional factors could have been used to formulate the analysis. This analysis was limited to two factors for the reasons expressed below.

First, with reference to pastoral qualifications and the functions of apostles, it should be noted that there is no detailed selection process for church leaders in the New

⁹⁶Darrin Patrick, *Church Planter: The Man, the Message, the Mission* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 23. Italics are original.

Testament. Yet there is a list of characteristics in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 that Paul instructed Timothy and Titus to use in the selection of leaders. Given the importance of a high view of Scripture in church planting, it seems wise to consider those lists given by Paul to aid in the selection of church planters today.⁹⁷ The addition of the issue of apostolic function or the gift of apostle to those qualifications stems from that fact that a number of different voices within the church today are discussing the role and office of apostles today.⁹⁸ Some of those voices appeared to be interested in apostles in terms of church governance.⁹⁹ Most raising the issues of apostles today are concerned with the role apostles might play in church planting and the furtherance of the mission of the church. To neglect such an issue would be an avoidance of an important debate which raises the potential issue of qualifications for church planting among the apostles. Many of the churches formed in the Acts had clear apostolic involvement.

⁹⁷Thompson urged for the inclusion of the pastoral qualifications in an analysis of church planter profiles. Thompson, interview.

⁹⁸Here are some examples of books that touch on the issue of apostles or apostolic function today: Larry W. Caldwell, *Sent Out! Reclaiming the Spiritual Gift of Apostleship for Missionaries and Churches Today* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992); David Cannistraci, *Apostles and the Emerging Apostolic Movement: A Biblical Look at Apostleship and How God is Using it to Bless His Church Today* (Ventura, CA: Renew Books, 1996); Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003); Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy: In the New Testament and Today*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000); Alan R. Johnson, *Apostolic Function in 21st Century Mission*, The J. Philip Hogan World Missions Series, vol. 2 (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009); Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*; Don Overstreet, *Sent Out: The Calling, the Character, and the Challenge of the Apostle Missionary* (Bloomington, IN: Cross Books, 2009); Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*.

⁹⁹C. Peter Wagner would be an example of this group. He wrote, “While planting churches is a very important apostolic characteristic (one that David Cannistraci even included in his definition above), not all apostles have a church-planting ministry.” C. Peter Wagner, *Apostles Today: Biblical Government for Biblical Power* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2006), 27-31.

The second factor of the theological analysis pertains to the missionary nature of the church and the intersection of that nature with leadership. Thompson expressed a concern that many of the church planter profiles are not driven by theology.¹⁰⁰ If church planting is about furthering the Great Commission, he believes that profiles should be tied to the theology of the church, particularly the missionary nature of the church. To plant churches that are engaged in the mission of God, it would seem prudent to select leaders who understand, and are engaged in the mission of God. Olson expressed a similar sentiment when he wrote,

In the post-Christian world, pastors, churches, and Christians need to operate more as the early church did. In the post-Christian world, the needs of outsiders become most important. Ministry is more like missionary work, with a renewed emphasis on the message and mission of Jesus. The role of pastors is to lead the church in its mission and equip members to understand and live out the message and mission of Jesus outside of the church.¹⁰¹

Thom S. Rainer identified six different types of church leaders in his book *Breakout Churches*.¹⁰² He described the six leaders using the following terms: the called leader; the contributing leader; the outwardly-focused leader; the passionate leader; the bold leader; and, the legacy leader.¹⁰³ Ideally, leaders will progress from being a called leader to being a legacy leader. From the descriptions given by Rainer, only a leader who has reached the bold leader level knows “the mission and purpose of the church and is willing to take whatever steps are necessary to keep the church focused and on track.”¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, from a study of 427 churches, Rainer concluded less than four percent of

¹⁰⁰Thompson, interview.

¹⁰¹Olson, *The American Church in Crisis*, 163.

¹⁰²Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 41-45.

¹⁰³Ibid., 42-44.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 43.

pastors have reached either the bold or legacy leader level.¹⁰⁵ From Rainer's analysis it appears that very few pastors are the kind of leaders who understands the missionary nature of the church and are capable of leading the church according to that nature. If the new churches started are going to live out what the church truly is, those churches will require unique leaders. To identify those leaders would seem to require some way to measure their grasp of the missionary nature of the church. For that reason, this factor was included in the theological analysis.

Conclusion

This first chapter is intended to serve as an introduction to the need for such a study as this theological analysis. Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of assessment and how assessments became a part of church planting. In addition it introduced the three profiles to be analyzed. Chapters 3 and 4 are designed to provide the information necessary to conduct the analysis, with chapter 5 being the actual analysis. Chapter 7 provides concise answers to the research question which guided this study.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 45.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF CHURCH PLANTER ASSESSMENTS

Though assessment processes are utilized in a number of different ways in contemporary culture to select individuals for a variety of roles, the actual use of assessment in church planting is a relatively recent phenomenon. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the development of assessment and how it came to be a part of church planting. As a part of that history, the chapter also provides an introduction to the three prominent profiles that are theologically analyzed. The chapter finishes by seeking to share some of the lessons that have been garnered by the use of assessments.

The Development of Formal Assessment in World War I Germany

Assessment became a tool to aid in the selection of personnel through the German military during, and immediately following World War I. The history of assessment had a rather humble beginning. A German military psychologist named Max Simoneit reported that the German military established a psychological testing center in 1915 to aid in the selection of motor transport drivers.¹ Presumably, the military leaders were encouraged by the quality of drivers selected through the psychological assessments tools used at the testing centers, because as the war continued, task specific assessments were developed for other roles including pilots and anti-aircraft personnel.

The development of the assessment process was influenced by a number of factors according to Philip E. Vernon and John B. Parry. Some of those factors were

¹Paul M. Fitts, "German Applied Psychology During World War II," *American Psychologist* 1, no. 5 (May 1946): 151. Simoneit played a significant role in the development of tests and methods that guided the early days of assessment.

mathematics and the statistical analysis of human traits. Educational reform and its influence on educational psychology also played a role. Vernon and Parry noted two precursors to the development: “Educational psychology was profoundly influenced again by nineteenth-century developments in evolutionary biology and psychopathology.”² Mathematics and statistical analysis provided ways to quantify information gained from psychological tests. Educational psychology held assumptions, from the influence of evolutionary biology, about the development of people to do certain tasks. Tests were developed to measure how an individual might do a certain task. The results could be quantified and compared to the results of others, serving to create an assessment of the individual’s ability to do that task.

The German military was not the only group to at least consider the use of these kinds of testing procedures to aid in assessing personnel. Vernon and Parry reported that Britain, France, Italy, and the United States were involved in developing similar tests for various military roles, though perhaps not to the same extent as the German military.³ Early assessment processes were largely influenced by German psychologists.

Another factor that would come to play a prominent part in the development of assessment processes occurred during this same time period. The American military utilized an intelligence test with close to two million recruits. The results provided a considerable amount of information both to the original researchers and those who would follow them.⁴ The results allowed for comparison between people who succeeded in an area and those who were being assessed to serve in that same area.

²Philip E. Vernon and John B. Parry, *Personnel Selection in the British Forces* (London: University of London Press, 1949), 16.

³Ibid., 17.

⁴Ibid., 17-18.

The next major contribution in the development of assessments was the Versailles Treaty. The German military needed to rebuild its army in the aftermath of World War I.⁵ Ladislav Farago described the situation this way:

After the war, when the Versailles Treaty limited the German army to 100,000 men and the navy to 15,000 men, the militarists proceeded to build up this skeleton force into a 'nucleus army of leaders' for the future war. The most intricate form of psychological selection now became inevitable, first, to find the best human material among the immense number of volunteers flocking to the 'nucleus army,' and, second, to choose the right man for the right place in the war machine, thus effecting the highest possible efficiency and co-ordination in the army as a whole.⁶

To make the best possible personnel selections, the military leaders turned to psychologists for help with assessments. In 1920, the German War Ministry issued an order calling for "development of psychology in the army."⁷ Though the Versailles Treaty did not allow Germany to establish a military academy, a psychological research center established at the University of Berlin in 1920 was used extensively to select and train officers for the new German army.⁸

The use of assessment to select army recruits and officers was a significant change for Germany. Before World War I, officers were drawn from the German aristocracy and upper middle class. As early as 1860, there were clear indications that this hereditary selection method was failing. Farago noted, "This system proved deficient in many instances, especially where leadership was required."⁹ During World War I, as the war developed and new technologies and machines became vital to the war effort, military leaders realized that new skills and a leadership capable of independent action

⁵Fitts, "German Applied Psychology," 151.

⁶Ladislav Farago, ed., *German Psychological Warfare* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 45-46.

⁷Fitts, "German Applied Psychology," 151.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Farago, *German Psychological Warfare*, 45.

and initiative was needed.¹⁰ Soon the Prussian officers, who had significant influence and control over the German army realized that the assessment process “would make it possible for men who possessed the right character traits and aptitudes to become officers regardless of family background.”¹¹

The influence of the assessment approach that was being developed by the German military psychologists grew during the 1920s. By 1927, all candidates for army officer training were required to take the psychological tests. The German navy put a similar requirement in place by 1928.¹² Though the English-speaking world largely ignored military psychology in the 1920s and 1930s, Germany used the assessment processes developed by her military psychologists to reconstitute Germany’s armed forces.¹³ The use of assessment in other areas, discussed below, is a product of the work of these German military psychologists.¹⁴

During the 1930s, the Germans changed little in terms of the procedures used in assessment.¹⁵ But as the Nazis began to prepare for a future war, there was a conscious intensification of the assessment process.¹⁶ Scott Highhouse reported, “In 1936, there were 15 German psychological laboratories – 84 military psychologists processed more than 40,000 candidates a year.”¹⁷ It was suggested that the speed of the recreation of the

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Fitts, “German Applied Psychology,” 160.

¹²Ibid., 151.

¹³Vernon and Parry, *Personnel Selection in the British Forces*, 21.

¹⁴Douglas W. Bray and Donald L. Grant, “The Assessment Center in the Measurement of Potential for Business Management,” *Psychological Monographs* 80, no. 17 (1966): 1-2.

¹⁵Fitts, “German Applied Psychology,” 152.

¹⁶Farago, *German Psychological Warfare*, 46.

¹⁷Scott Highhouse, “Assessing the Candidate as a Whole: A Historical and Critical Analysis of Individual Psychological Assessment for Personnel Decision

Luftwaffe was largely due to the quality of the people selected to serve.¹⁸ It would appear that the assessment process delivered the expected results.

Though the assessment process seemed to be effective, Reichsmarshal Göring ordered the entire assessment program to be discontinued on February 11, 1942.¹⁹ There were at least two reasons suggested for this order and the ending of a program that other countries were just starting to develop. One reason was that the procedures developed during the peace time of the 1920s were perceived as too complicated for use during a war being fought on two fronts and three continents.²⁰ A second reason was political resistance by two key parties within Germany. The Prussian officers still favored the tradition of appointing young officers from families of military background. The Nazi party, seeking to have more influence and control over the armed forces, insisted that young men belonging to the Hitler youth groups should be given preference in the selection of officers.²¹

Deployment of Assessment by British and American Military

The next major event in the history of assessment was World War II. Vernon and Parry noted, “The importance of psychology becomes particularly obvious during periods of emergency such as the two World Wars, since the need for making the most effective possible use of human as well as of mechanical resources is then realized.”²²

Making,” *Personnel Psychology*, no. 55 (2002): 364-65.

¹⁸Vernon and Parry, *Personnel Selection in the British Forces*, 21. *Luftwaffe* is the German word for an air force. It was the official name of the German Air Force from 1935 to 1945.

¹⁹Fitts, “German Applied Psychology,” 152.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 160.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²Vernon and Parry, *Personnel Selection in the British Forces*, 11.

Assessment was a psychologically developed process. The demands created by the Second World War on the British and American militaries contributed to the further development and deployment of assessment.

Given that the British became involved in the war much earlier than did the United States, assessments were used first by the British military. As early as 1940, it was clear that the traditional methods the British military used to select new officers were failing.²³ The actual failure rate was reported to have risen to over 20 percent in many Officer Cadet Training Units and as high as 30 percent in some.²⁴ Ben S. Morris described those increases to be of “alarming proportions.”²⁵

The impact of that failure was not insignificant. Hugh Murray suggested that the “failures represent a great deal of effort wasted on unproductive training,” and “they created undue stress in the training units.”²⁶ Morris noted,

Besides its wastage, this state of affairs had a very bad effect on the morale of the ranks, and as a consequence applications for commissions were not being received in anything like the number required. Moreover, psychiatric examination of officers who had suffered a breakdown on service showed that many of these men should never have held commissioned rank. By the middle of 1941, the number of parliamentary questions, sometimes as many as thirty a week, reflected a growing public concern inside and outside the Army.²⁷

The “ninety day wonders” being produced by the selection process in place at the time, were often unable to complete the tasks they were given to do.²⁸ As 1941 was nearing

²³Ben S. Morris, “Officer Selection in the British Army 1942-1945,” *Occupational Psychology*, 23 (1949): 220.

²⁴ Hugh Murray, “The Transformation of Selection Procedures: The War Office Selection Boards,” in *The Social Engagement of Social Science: A Tavistock Anthology: The Socio-Psychological Perspective*, ed. Eric L. Trist, Fred E. Emery, and Hugh Murray (Baltimore: University of Pennsylvania, 1990), 45.

²⁵Morris, “Officer Selection in the British Army 1942-1945,” 220.

²⁶Murray, “The Transformation of Selection Procedures,” 45.

²⁷Morris, “Officer Selection in the British Army 1942-1945,” 220.

²⁸Thomas Graham, “How to Select the Best Church Planters,” *Evangelical*

completion, the British military needed to rapidly increase its number of officers; a major change in the selection process was needed. The British answer was the emergence of a major innovation in assessment, The War Office Selection Boards.²⁹

The War Office Selection Boards were not an original creation. The Boards themselves were inspired by the techniques used by the Germans that were noted above.³⁰ The British copied or adapted the procedures used by German military psychologists to aid in the selection of British officers.³¹ The source of this adaption is believed to have been an unnamed British Army Commander who was interested in the methods of officer selection used by the German army.³²

The Boards were set up in late 1941.³³ After being piloted for a number of months, they became the operating procedure for the selection of officers in 1942.³⁴ In a follow-up study related to the Mediterranean Campaign, seventy-six percent of the officers selected by this new approach were viewed as “giving completely satisfactory service. The clearly unsatisfactory amounted to 12 per cent.”³⁵ Evaluations from the officers who served in the British liberation forces in 1944 to 1945 saw the satisfactory level stay the same at seventy-six percent and the unsatisfactory drop to seven percent.³⁶

Missions Quarterly 23, no. 1 (January 1987): 73.

²⁹Murray, “The Transformation of Selection Procedures,” 45.

³⁰Ronald Taft, “Multiple Methods of Personality Assessment,” *Psychological Bulletin* 56, no. 5 (September 1959): 333.

³¹Ann Howard, “An Assessment of Assessment Centers,” *The Academy of Management Journal* 17, no. 1 (March 1974): 116. Bray and Grant, “The Assessment Center,” 1-2.

³²Murray, “The Transformation of Selection Procedures,” 47.

³³Highhouse, “Assessing the Candidate as a Whole,” 367.

³⁴Morris, “Officer Selection in the British Army 1942-1945,” 221.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 224.

³⁶*Ibid.*

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the entrance of the United States into World War II, President Roosevelt, in June 1942, created a new organization, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).³⁷ The OSS was the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency. The OSS was tasked by the President “to collect and analyze strategic information and to conduct espionage and special operations.”³⁸ General William J. Donovan was given the responsibility to build this new organization.

One year later, in 1943, the OSS “was busily and somewhat hazardously recruiting personnel without benefit of any professional or uniform screening process.”³⁹ The functions of the OSS meant that failure in recruiting the right personnel would have far reaching results. The need to select the best people for the unique responsibilities of the OSS was paramount. An OSS official in London, after visiting a British War Office Selection Boards unit, suggested that a psychological-psychiatric assessment unit be established in the United States.⁴⁰ The suggestion was greeted with excitement, and very quickly the OSS was developing its own assessment, derived from the British War Office Selection Boards.⁴¹ Just as the British had adapted the German approach, the United States adapted the British approach.⁴² The staff of OSS stated this lineage of assessment history:

³⁷CIA Staff, “The Office of Strategic Services: Research and Analysis Branch,” *Central Intelligence Agency*, June 28, 2010, www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-achive/2010-featured-story-achive/oss-research-and-analysis.html (accessed January 30, 2011).

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹The OSS Assessment Staff, *Assessment of Men: Selection of Personnel for the Office of Strategic Services* (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1948), 4.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹Rob Feltham, “Validity of a Police Assessment Centre: A 1-19 Year Follow-up,” *Journal of Occupational Psychology* 61, no. 2 (June 1988): 129.

⁴²Bray and Grant, “The Assessment Center,” 1-2.

These methods were first used on a large scale by Simoneit, as described in *Wehrpsychologie*, and the German military psychologists, and after them by the British. Our particular debt is to the band of imaginative and progress psychiatrists and psychologists who devised and conducted the War Office Selection Board (WOSB) program for testing officer candidates for the British Army.⁴³

Though the OSS was in the business of finding spies and saboteurs, the influences that guided its selection of personnel were more than espionage and military science. The OSS staff was influenced by two other factors. One was its understanding of the origin of humanity. They wrote,

To us it is self-evident that the science of man stands above all other sciences in the rank order of importance, especially today, at this critical point in the evolution of our species. Never so urgent has been the need for knowledge of the determinants, components, and consequences of social forces and interactions, the need for adequate means of surveying, measuring, interpreting, predicting, and controlling the behavior of men.⁴⁴

The second factor was the influence of Henry A. Murray and the factors that impacted him.⁴⁵ Though Murray was trained in medicine and not psychology, his holistic approach of personality was adopted by the OSS assessment staff and influenced how they evaluated candidates.⁴⁶ The major influence on Murray in this area was Carl Jung.⁴⁷

Assessment in Business

The next major marker in the history of assessment was the development of assessment centers by American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T).⁴⁸ The centers, under

⁴³The OSS Assessment Staff, *Assessment of Men*, 3.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 463.

⁴⁵Murray's involvement in assessment started with directing personality research at Harvard from 1934 to 1937. Taft, "Multiple Methods of Personality Assessment," 333-34.

⁴⁶Highhouse, "Assessing the Candidate as a Whole," 370.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸Joseph L. Moses, "Developing an Assessment Center Program for School Administrators," *NASSP Bulletin*, no. 61 (September 1977): 76. J. Allen Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies as Perceived by Church Planters and Assessment Center Leaders: A Protestant North American Study" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity

the direction of Douglas W. Bray, were put into use in 1956 to aid in the selection of middle and upper management personnel.⁴⁹ The significance of the AT&T assessment centers in terms of the history of assessment is explained by the fact that the AT&T assessment process was motivated and directed by research.⁵⁰ Over four summers, AT&T assessed 422 men to obtain basic data.⁵¹ The assessment centers and the data being collected were part of a management progress study the company used “to gain insight into the management development process and to identify the variables related to success.”⁵² This research continued for twenty-five years and included follow-up assessments with those employees who remained with the company.⁵³ The perceived effectiveness of the AT&T assessment centers led a number of other well known organizations to develop similar centers. Those organizations included IBM, Sears, Standard Oil of Ohio, General Electric, and government agencies such as the Peace Corps.⁵⁴

The stimulus behind this phase in assessment history was Bray and how he was impacted by reading the Office of Strategic Service’s book, *The Assessment of Men*.⁵⁵ The book was published in 1948 just as Bray was completing his Doctor of

School, 1995), 68.

⁴⁹Graham, “How to Select the Best Church Planters,” 73.

⁵⁰Howard, “An Assessment of Assessment Centers,” 130.

⁵¹William C. Byham, “Assessment Centers for Spotting Future Managers,” *Harvard Business Review* (July-August 1970): 151.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³ Douglas W. Bray, “Centered On Assessment,” International Congress On Assessment Center Methods, <http://www.assessmentcenter.org/articles/centeredonassess.asp/> (accessed February 13, 2010).

⁵⁴Graham, “How to Select the Best Church Planters,” 73.

⁵⁵The OSS Assessment Staff, *Assessment of Men*.

Philosophy degree at Yale.⁵⁶ Bray was greatly impressed by the book and its approach to psychology and assessment. His own words, “I couldn’t wait to try it!” depicted his level of excitement.⁵⁷ AT&T gave him the opportunity, eight years after reading the book, to develop and direct the assessment center that is widely noted as bringing assessment into the business community.

Though Bray’s work at AT&T was clearly a key component in the increasing use of assessment in the selection of personnel, it was not the first or only use of assessment or related psychological tests in business. Vernon and Parry noted that during the 1920s a number of German companies had psychological departments that were developing and applying selection tests for employment. The companies noted were Krupps, Zeiss, and Berlin Tramways.⁵⁸ Ronald Taft stated that before World War II it was common among American companies to employ psychologists in their personnel departments.⁵⁹ He prognosticated that in 1946 that there would be an increase of psychologists within businesses in the future.⁶⁰ John Munro Fraser noted the use of selection procedures to fill executive positions in industry in 1946.⁶¹ Taft noted in 1948 that the selection methods used by the British in World War II were being used to select industrial and administrative executives.⁶² Edgar Anstey also observed that the

⁵⁶Bray, “Centered On Assessment.”

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Vernon and Parry, *Personnel Selection in the British Forces*, 21.

⁵⁹Ronald Taft, “The Staff Psychologist in Industry,” *American Psychologist* 1, no. 2 (February 1946): 55.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹John Munro Fraser, “New Type Selection Boards in Industry,” *Occupational Psychology* 21, no. 4 (October 1947): 170.

⁶²Ronald Taft, “Use of the 'Group Situation Observation' Method in the Selection of Trainee Executives,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 32, no. 6 (December 1948): 594.

procedures used by the War Office Selection Boards were adaptable to the Civil Service context.⁶³ The procedures were used for three years, from late 1945 to 1948, as the British government worked to reconstruct following the war.⁶⁴

Assessment in Education

As the 1970s began, formal assessment was viewed as an effective tool for the selection of personnel. Joseph L. Moses wrote,

The assessment center in recent years has become one of the most significant techniques for identifying and measuring managerial and administrative potential. Widely used by business, industry, and many governmental agencies here and abroad, assessment centers measure skills needed for success in a variety of supervisory, managerial, and administrative areas.⁶⁵

The assessment centers did appear to be successful, though researchers were not certain why the centers were successful.⁶⁶ Due to this perceived success, there was noted interest in furthering the influence of assessment and contributing value to the selection process. Professionals in organizational psychology were eager to share their insights. Moses reported,

⁶³Edgar Anstey, "A 30-Year Follow-up of the CSSB Procedure, with Lessons for the Future," *Journal of Occupational Psychology* 50, no. 3 (September 1977): 149.

⁶⁴Ibid. It is not clear why they used the procedures for only those three years. The thirty-year follow-up study did appear to be successful. Anstey wrote, "Most of the 'Reconstruction' entrants have equaled or surpassed what was expected of them when they were originally appointed. This fact however, can be accounted for partly by an increase in the number of senior Civil Service posts between 1946 and 1975." Ibid., 152.

⁶⁵Moses, "Developing an Assessment Center Program," 76.

⁶⁶Richard Klimoski and Mary Bricker stated, "Although assessment centers are generally considered valid predictors of managerial success, the nature of those predictions and the underlying dynamics of assessment center practices remain a puzzle." Richard Klimoski and Mary Bricker, "Why Do Assessment Centers Work? The Puzzle of Assessment Center Validity," *Personnel Psychology*, no. 40 (1987): 243. Howard expressed her puzzlement this way: "As anyone familiar with the traditional psychometric literature can corroborate, the whole idea of assessment centers is preposterous. Howard, "An Assessment of Assessment Centers," 130.

Early in 1974, a pilot project known as the Technical Assistance Program was developed by the American Psychological Association's Division of Industrial and Organizational Psychology. This project grew out of an awareness that the psychology profession had considerable knowledge and expertise that might be valuable in settings where the services of industrial-organizational psychologists are not commonly found. By offering professional services to an agency in the public sector, psychologists could apply this knowledge and could perhaps indirectly, assist in developing the agency's public services.⁶⁷

After the creation of criteria to guide the selection of an agency and considerable deliberations, the National Association of Secondary School Principals was chosen as an agency to be helped.⁶⁸ The selection of principals has a far reaching impact on society.

A key factor in this entrance of assessment processes into education is the understood uniqueness of the role of a principal and the effectiveness of assessment in selecting for that type of uniqueness. Thomas A. Jesweld noted, "The assessment center technique is most useful and effective in predicting job performance when applied to 'threshold jobs' – jobs that differ substantially in skill and ability requirements from the positions in which candidates for these new openings are typically found."⁶⁹ Since this original pilot study, the National Association of Secondary School Principals has sought to deploy assessment, through regional assessment centers, to aid in the selection of principals.⁷⁰

Assessments in Missions

During the second half of the twentieth century mission organizations were facing a noticeable challenge. A growing number of missionaries were dropping out or leaving missionary service after just a short time of involvement.⁷¹ William David Taylor

⁶⁷Moses, "Developing an Assessment Center Program," 78.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Thomas A. Jesweld, "A New Approach to Identifying Administrative Talent," *NASSP Bulletin*, no. 61 (September 1977): 79.

⁷⁰Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies," 69.

⁷¹Larry N. Ferguson, "Issues in Missionary Assessment," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1983): 25.

noted a study done by the Missionary Research Library of New York in the 1960s that found that between 1953 and 1962, thirty-six mission agencies lost 1,409 missionaries after a very short period of time.⁷² Concerns over the missionary drop outs caused a number of mission organizations to look at their selection procedures. The organizations were concerned that their traditional procedures were not serving their missionaries or the missions effectively.⁷³

The early study noted by Taylor should have given cause to address these issues sooner, but a study in 1979 showed that many organizations did not maintain good records pertaining to these types of matters.⁷⁴ As a result, it is not totally clear what the actual attrition rates were for missionaries. Stanley E. Lindquist reported an attrition rate ranging from 10 to 50 percent. He suggested that for non-missionary overseas employees the first year attrition rate was 33 percent.⁷⁵ Thomas Graham suggested that mission boards reported first term attrition rates of between 10 and 40 percent.⁷⁶ Taylor suggested, “In terms of the global missions force, it is estimated that 1 career missionary in 20 (5.1% of the mission force) leaves the mission field to return home *every year*. Of those who leave 71% leave for *preventable* reasons.”⁷⁷ From those percentages, Taylor

⁷²William David Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*, Globalization of Mission Series (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1997), 13.

⁷³Graham, “How to Select the Best Church Planters,” 72.

⁷⁴Stanley E. Lindquist, “Is The Psychological Test Worth It?” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (April 1983): 115.

⁷⁵Stanley E. Lindquist, “A Rationale for Psychological Assessment of Missionary Candidates,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1983): 12.

⁷⁶Graham, “How to Select the Best Church Planters,” 72.

⁷⁷Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 13. Italics are original. Taylor described preventable reasons as a lack of home support, problems with peers, personal concerns, lack of a sense of call, inadequate pre-field equipping and training, poor cultural adaption, and a cluster of other factors. *Ibid.*, 10. Later in the book, personal concerns

suggested that every four years, 21,726 missionaries leave the field for preventable reasons.⁷⁸

The results of this attrition are sizeable. Graham suggested the financial cost of these departures could easily be in excess of twenty-six million dollars a year.⁷⁹ Lindquist offered that based on reports from mission organizations and executives, the cost could be sixty thousand dollars for each family unit that returned home early.⁸⁰ Beyond the financial cost, there is a very real cost to the missionaries and their work. Lindquist reported that these missionaries return home with a keen sense of frustration and failure.⁸¹ Graham summarized the impact this way: “An acute sense of failure in the individual missionary, fields are not developed, and lost persons are not reached.”⁸²

Though missionary selection was not the only issue that contributed to these results, it was viewed as being one of the issues. In an attempt to be more effective in missionary selection and reduce attrition rates, mission organizations began to utilize assessment. Lindquist stated, “The need for assessment services for missionaries is not only a choice on our part, it is a demand, even a requirement, to permit the work of the

were described as immature, spiritual life, health problems, inadequate commitment, personal concerns, lack of call, immoral lifestyle, problems with peer missionaries, and problems with local leaders. Ibid., 138. Unpreventable reasons for a missionary leaving the field were defined as normal retirement, political crisis in the area being served, death in service, marriage outside the mission, and a change of job due to completion of an assignment or a move to a new post. Ibid., 174.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Thomas M. Graham, *A Systems Approach to Organizational Mission and Personnel Deployment in Christian Organizations* (Colorado Springs: Center for Organizational and Ministry Development, 2006), 2.

⁸⁰Lindquist, “Is The Psychological Test Worth It?” 118.

⁸¹Lindquist, “A Rationale for Psychological Assessment,” 12.

⁸²Graham, “How to Select the Best Church Planters,” 72.

Kingdom of God on earth to go forward with fewer hindrances.”⁸³ The deployment of assessment in missions can also be understood as an expression of care by the organization toward the missionaries and also as an attempt to be good stewards of both financial and human resources.⁸⁴

Assessments in Church Planting

As was noted in the first chapter, placing the right person in leadership of a church plant is considered to be critical. Charles R. Ridley noted,

High-Quality leadership is needed to fulfill the Great Commission. Successful organizations are guided by strong and gifted leaders. The church is no exception. Christ commissioned Christians to make disciples of all people (Matthew 28). Perhaps, the lack of appropriately placed leaders is one of the greatest limiting factors to fulfilling the Great Commission. Making more and better disciples is achieved by selecting the right leaders to plant more churches.⁸⁵

For the last twenty-five years, the selection of church planters has become a matter of priority. Ridley stated further, “Selecting candidates who will perform effectively as church planters has emerged as a major concern in the church growth movement. This concern underscores the need for a good selection process.”⁸⁶

The first chapter noted that assessments became the chosen method for selecting church planters. Assessments were deployed for two reasons. The first reason was to help prospective church planters answer the question, “Is God calling me to plant a church?” An accurate and informed answer to this question would presumably reduce or prevent the hurt the challenging ministry of church planting had caused in many people’s lives. The second reason was the expectation that assessments would lead to

⁸³Lindquist, “A Rationale for Psychological Assessment,” 11.

⁸⁴Ibid., 11, 13.

⁸⁵Charles R. Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters: A Self-Study Manual for Recruiting, Screening, Interviewing and Evaluating Qualified Church Planters* (Pasadena, CA: The Fuller Evangelistic Association, 1988), 1.

⁸⁶Ibid.

increased success in church planting. The intention of the second reason and the potential benefit of accurately addressing the first reason would seem to correspond with similar reasons for developing and deploying assessments in both the military and mission histories reviewed earlier in this chapter. So from similar concerns, leaders in church planting did in fact begin to deploy assessments for church planters as other sectors had done already.

Church planting leaders understood clearly that some failures had taken place in church planting, particularly connected to leadership selection. Tom Zuercher and Jerry Peterson noted, “While we celebrate our successes over the past fifteen years, we must also face our failures which have left behind shattered dreams and broken people. Failure in new church development is caused by a number of factors, but one of the most critical is the selection of the wrong person for leadership.”⁸⁷

To address this factor of failure and to improve performance, assessment processes, which by this time were considered to be very effective in selecting the right people for positions, were deployed.⁸⁸ Graham was one of the originators of church planter assessments.⁸⁹ He stated, “In 1983 Mission to North America (Presbyterian Church in America) began experimenting with assessment centers as a means of improving procedures for selecting church planters for the United States and Canada.”⁹⁰

⁸⁷Tom Zuercher and Jerry Peterson, “Profile of the Ideal Church Planter,” *Brethren Life and Thought* 36 (Summer 1991): 206.

⁸⁸Ridley wrote, “The selection of church planters is an awesome responsibility. This task should not be approached in an irresponsible manner. To accomplish the goal of choosing the best possible candidates, we need to draw upon state-of-the-art selection procedures.” Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 2.

⁸⁹Hutz H. Hertzberg, “Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions of Younger Evangelical Church Planters” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2008), 41.

⁹⁰Graham, “How to Select the Best Church Planters,” 74.

Just as assessments were viewed in the area of missions as an issue of stewardship, there was a similar perspective in church planting. Ridley noted,

Carl George, director of the Charles E. Fuller Institute, has long recognized the difficulty in placing able candidates into church development projects. He was moved by the tremendous cost that inappropriate placement imposed on denominations. Thousands of dollars have been wasted on attempted church developments. Many of the failed starts are directly attributed to poor leadership selection. It was Mr. George's concern that provided the impetus for developing a more responsible approach to selection.⁹¹

In light of these observations, Hutz Hertzberg and Francis Lonsway concluded, "Wise stewardship of people and resources necessitates the careful assessment and placement of church planters."⁹²

Prominent Profiles

This section introduces the three prominent profiles that are examined in the theological analysis. As was noted in chapter 1, the three profiles are: the Ridley profile, the Thompson profile, and the Wood profile.⁹³ The history behind the development of each profile is shared, as well as the contents of the profiles themselves.

The Ridley Profile

The Ridley Profile is named for its original developer, Charles R. Ridley. Ridley completed his undergraduate education in 1970, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biblical Literature from Taylor University. Just one year later, he completed a Master

⁹¹Ridley, *How to Select Church Planter*, 2.

⁹²Hutz Hertzberg and Francis Lonsway, "Church Planting: From Antioch to Acts 29 and Beyond," *Journal of Evangelism and Missions* (Spring 2010), 99.

⁹³Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*. Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies." Also see J. Allen Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory: A PCA Qualitative and Quantitative Study* (Seattle: International Church Planting Center, January 2007). H. Stanley Wood, ed., *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, Unadorned Clay Pot Messengers, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

of Arts degree in Counseling and Personnel Psychology at Ball State University.⁹⁴ Ridley completed his formal education by earning a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Minnesota in 1978 in Counseling Psychology.⁹⁵

Prior to finishing his degree at the University of Minnesota, Ridley began teaching at Indiana University. He taught there from 1977 to 1979. For the 1979-1980 academic year, Ridley taught at the University of Maryland. For three years he was a consulting psychologist for Personnel Decisions, Incorporated in Minneapolis, Minnesota.⁹⁶ Ridley then moved to the Graduate School of Psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary where he taught from 1983 to 1990. It was during his time at Fuller that the Ridley Profile was developed.

From Fuller, Ridley returned to Indiana University for seventeen years. He taught psychology, and from 1999 to 2005, served as an associate dean for the university's Graduate School.⁹⁷ In 2007, Ridley moved to Texas A&M University where he currently serves as a professor in the department of Educational Psychology.⁹⁸

⁹⁴School of Education, Indiana University, "Faculty Vita – Charles Ridley, Ph.D.," School of Education, Indiana University, <http://www.indiana.edu/~inucate/facultyvita/crdiley.html> (accessed February 11, 2011). Presumably, the focus of Ridley's M.A. study was in Student Personnel Administration, given that his Texas A&M Faculty page listed his M.A. from Ball State as being in Student Personnel Administration. Texas A&M University College of Education and Human Development, "Charles (Chuck) Ridley," Texas A&M University College of Education and Human Development, <http://www.directory.cehd.tamu.edu/view.epl?nid=crdiley> (accessed February 19, 2011).

⁹⁵School of Education, Indiana University, "Faculty Vita – Charles Ridley, Ph.D."

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

⁹⁷*Ibid.*

⁹⁸Texas A&M University College of Education and Human Development, "Charles (Chuck) Ridley." It should be noted that on Ridley's faculty page at Indiana University, there was no mention of his work or publications related to the Ridley Profile. In fairness that page listed only a selection of publications. In contrast, a much more detail faculty page on the Texas A&M University website, which included a sixteen page vita, does make clear mention of Ridley's work related to church planting. The years

Development of the profile. In the late 1970s, Robert Logan had a dream that compelled him to be involved in helping church planters.⁹⁹ That commitment led him to develop a relationship with The Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth.¹⁰⁰ From that relationship, Logan shared his concerns with Carl George, then the director of the Institute.¹⁰¹ Those conversations, and the recognition that thousands of dollars had been wasted on attempted church plants, provided the catalyst to learn what changes should be made to increase church planting effectiveness. In seeking to find solutions to the issues raised by Logan and leaders from a variety of denominations, George sought out Ridley. Ridley summarized how he became involved this way:

During the mid 80s when I taught at Fuller Theological Seminary, I was approached by Carl George. Many denominations were struggling with the lack of performance of church planters. Carl ask [*sic*], "What can we do to improve performance?" I suggested that the problem was not performance but selection up front. We pulled together a consortium from several denominations. I conducted a job analysis to determine the benchmark. From this we developed the Church Planter Performance Profile.¹⁰²

listed for the development of the profile are 1987 to 1988. That would seem to contradict a document from the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, which suggested the development began in 1984. Charles Ridley, "Church Planter Performance Profile" (Pasadena, CA: Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, 1984), 1-3, photocopy. The 1984 date was affirmed by Robert Logan, who was one of the church planters interviewed as part of the development of profile. Robert Logan, interview by author, Sioux City, IA, February 18, 2011. In Ridley's *How to Select Church Planters*, which was written in 1988, Ridley also stated 1984 as the date for the start of the work on the profile. Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 7.

⁹⁹ Robert E. Logan, *Beyond Church Growth: Action Plans for Developing a Dynamic Church* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1989), 10-13.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰¹ Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 2.

¹⁰² Edward John Stetzer, "The Impact of the Church Planting Process and Other Selected Factors on the Attendance of Southern Baptist Church Plants" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003), 40. Stetzer referenced this quote to a Home Mission Board document. I contacted NAMB to request the document, but I was told that they no longer had it. The reference for the document is "Church Planter Performance Profile," in *Initial Assessor Training Church Planting System, Extension Section: Scottsdale, AZ, 13-15 August, 1996*, by the Home Mission Board, 3. Attempts

George and Logan played a role in getting 13 denominations to participate in a consortium and to help fund the work involved in doing the job analysis.¹⁰³ The denominations that participated were the following:¹⁰⁴

1. Christian Reformed Home Missions
2. Conference of Mennonite Brethren
3. North American Baptist Conference
4. Free Methodist Church of North America
5. Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society
6. California District of the Wesleyan Church
7. Mennonite Board of Missions
8. Conservative Baptists¹⁰⁵
9. The Michigan District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
10. Missionary Church
11. Baptist General Conference¹⁰⁶
12. Church of the Nazarene
13. Christian Missionary Alliance

were made to contact Ridley to confirm this information, but unfortunately, those attempts were unsuccessful.

¹⁰³Logan, interview.

¹⁰⁴Ridley, “Church Planter Performance Profile,” 1-2.

¹⁰⁵The Conservative Baptists were represented by three groups: the Conservative Baptist Association of Oregon, the Conservative Baptist Home Missions Society, and the Conservative Baptist Association of Southern California. All three of these organizations have since changed their names. The Conservative Baptist Association of Oregon is now called CB Northwest. The Conservative Home Missions Society is known as Missions Door. The Conservative Baptist Association of Southern California is known as CB Southern California.

¹⁰⁶The Baptist General Conference is now known as Converge Worldwide.

From the 13 denominations, 50 church planters were selected to participate in either group or phone interviews with Ridley.¹⁰⁷ The church planters came from 17 states, with California having the largest representation with 13 planters.¹⁰⁸ These church planters were interviewed using a job analysis questionnaire from July to early November 1984.¹⁰⁹ The questionnaire was also mailed to other recommended church planters who were not interviewed. Twenty-five of those questionnaires were completed and returned.¹¹⁰ From the results of those interviews Ridley identified 46 factors, and then 2 more were added for a total of 48 factors from the job analysis for church planters.¹¹¹ Those 48 factors are found in Figure 1 below.¹¹²

After Ridley completed the job analysis, a meeting was held with leaders of the 13 denominations. According to Logan, who participated in the meeting, Ridley opened

¹⁰⁷Ridley, "Church Planter Performance Profile," 1-3. The sample size of 50 contradicts David DeVries' reported statement of 100 church planters. David DeVries, "Church Planter Assessments," *The Missional Challenge*, entry posted April 1, 2008, <http://www.missionalchallenge.blogspot.com/2008/04/church-planter-assessments.html> (accessed April 4, 2008). Logan, one of the 50 church planters, affirmed that 50 church planters were in fact involved in the job analysis. Logan, interview.

¹⁰⁸Ridley, "Church Planter Performance Profile," 1-3.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*

¹¹⁰*Ibid.* Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird suggested that the Ridley's study brought together both successful and unsuccessful church planters. The terms successful and unsuccessful were not defined. Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 96. Logan also mentioned that unsuccessful planters were involved in the study. He did not mention the unsuccessful planters had participated in the interviews, which might suggest that unsuccessful planters were sent the questionnaires but were not part of the interview process. No evidence has been found to conclude if that was in fact the case or not. Logan, interview.

¹¹¹Stetzer, "The Impact of the Church Planting Process," 40. Logan confirmed this observation shared by Stetzer. Logan, interview.

¹¹²The figure is from Ridley's book, *How to Select Church Planters*, 13. Used by permission.

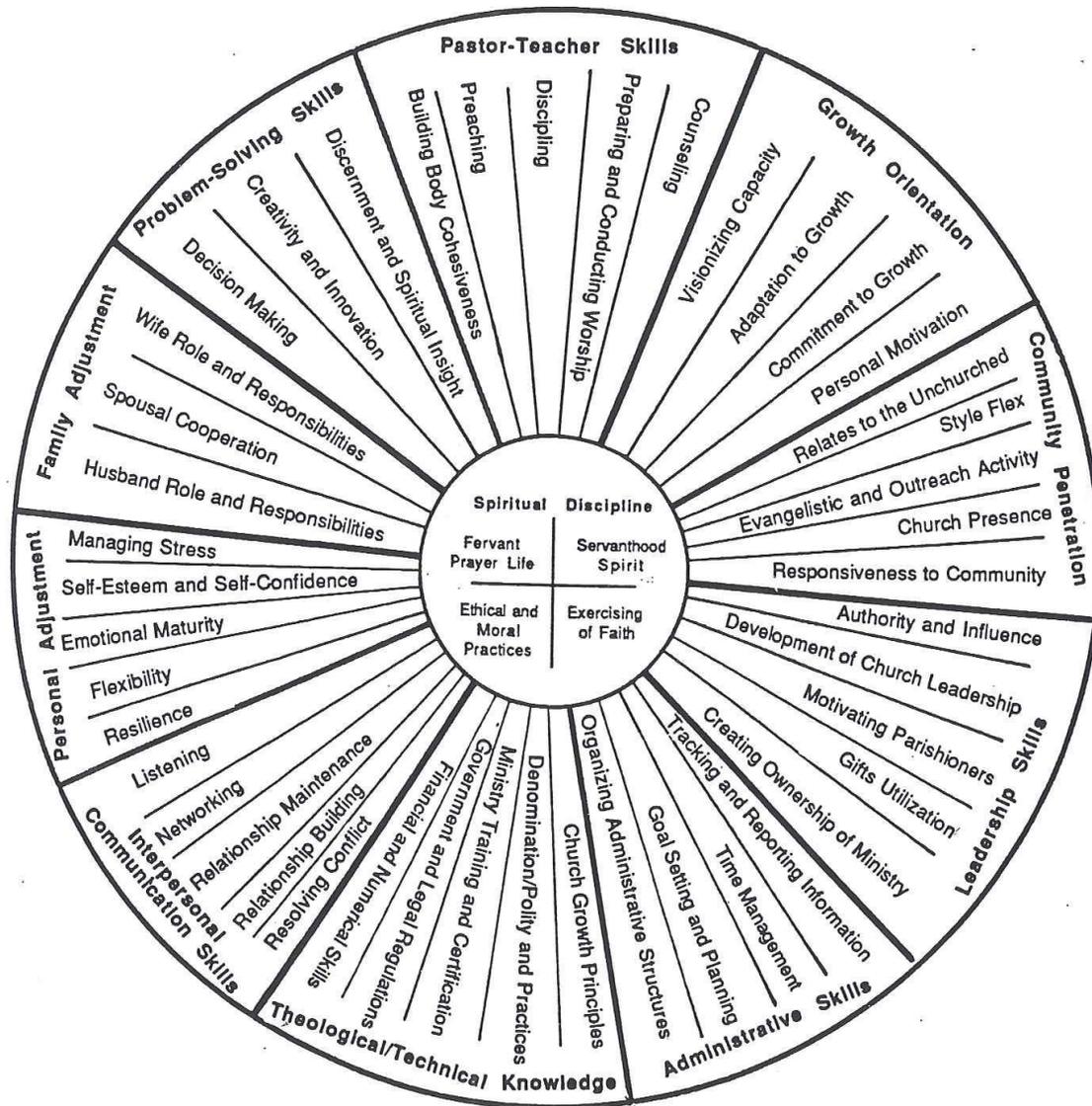


Figure 1. Church planter performance wheel

the meeting by stating, “The job of a church planter is awesome.”¹¹³ As the leaders examined the 48 factors, there was a sense that if this list of 48 factors was held up as the

¹¹³Robert Logan, re: Original Ridley Research, e-mail message to author, 18 February 2011, transcript.

standard which potential church planters had to meet, no one would want to serve as a church planter.¹¹⁴ As a result of that belief, the leaders collectively narrowed the list down to the 13 essential qualities that have become known as the Ridley Profile.¹¹⁵ Ridley described the relationship between the larger and smaller list of qualities this way: “Although all of the 48 qualities are important, these thirteen qualities are considered critical, if not essential. Since the 1984 study, these dimensions have been used with a very high degree of success in selecting and predicting effective church planters.”¹¹⁶

In his book, *How to Select Church Planters*, Ridley listed the 13 essential qualities for a church planter:

1. Visioning capacity
2. Intrinsically motivated
3. Creates ownership of ministry
4. Relates to the unchurched
5. Spousal cooperation
6. Effectively builds relationships
7. Committed to church growth
8. Responsive to community
9. Utilizes giftedness of others
10. Flexible and adaptable
11. Builds group cohesiveness

¹¹⁴Logan, interview.

¹¹⁵Ibid. The photocopied document that I received from Logan from that meeting showed notes that suggest that they did collectively develop the shorter list. Ridley, “Church Planter Performance Profile.”

¹¹⁶Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 7.

12. Resilience

13. Exercises faith¹¹⁷

Logan viewed the decision to reduce the list from 48 qualities to 13 as a pragmatic decision for the sake of gospel.¹¹⁸ As was noted in chapter 1, church planting and the Great Commission are interconnected. If churches are going to be planted, there is a need for church planters. Thus the decision was made to develop a list that would aid in the selection of church planters, but not in a way that would create too large of a barrier, so as to hinder or discourage prospective church planters from seeking to plant churches. At the conclusion of the meeting, Logan decided that he would promote the 13 qualities and would not mention of the longer list of 48.¹¹⁹ As a result, Logan's well known training resource, *The Church Planter's Toolkit*, makes much of the 13 qualities, but does not mention the 48.¹²⁰

The first 5 qualities were identified by Ridley and were viewed as the most important of the list. Logan has shared the top 5 qualities in 36 countries. The international leaders he has met have affirmed that Ridley's top 5 are the top 5 in their countries as well, suggesting to Logan the trans cultural quality of these dimensions.¹²¹ Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird affirm that Ridley's approach has been adopted in other cultures and countries.¹²² Given that the church planters who participated in Ridley's job analysis were all from Western culture, Ridley noted that generalizing its applications to

¹¹⁷Ibid., 7-11.

¹¹⁸Logan, interview.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰ Robert E. Logan and Steven L. Ogne, *The Church Planter's Toolkit: A Self-study Resource Kit for Church Planters and Those Who Supervise Them* (Pasadena, CA: Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, 1991).

¹²¹Logan, interview.

¹²²Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 96.

other cultures should be done with caution. At the same time, Ridley wrote, “Once more, I believe that the identified performance dimensions have relevance across cultural lines.”¹²³ It should be noted that Stetzer and Bird refer to the first 6 qualities as the most critical characteristics, and describe them as having developed the reputation of being known as “knock-out” factors.¹²⁴ If a prospective church planter did not score high on those first 5 or 6 factors in the behavioral assessment, he was considered knocked out from being a church planter. Scott Thomas of the Acts 29 Network also referred to the first 6 and not the first 5.¹²⁵

With the profile developed, Ridley did assessments of church planters himself and also trained leaders from the 13 denominations to use the profile in a behavioral assessment. As the profile was used and people perceived its effectiveness, another resource was developed, a tool for training assessors, called *Training for Selection Interviewing*.¹²⁶ The Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, the predecessor of the North American Mission Board, provided the funding for the video portion of the training. Logan managed the project, and he and Ridley wrote the training materials.¹²⁷

¹²³Ridley, *How to Select Church Planter*, 12.

¹²⁴Stetzer and Bird, *Vital Churches*, 96.

¹²⁵Scott Thomas, “Ten Qualifications of a Church Planter” The Acts 29 Network Blog, entry posted March 12, 2010, <http://www.acts29network.org/acts-29-blog/10-church-planter-qualities/> (accessed March 12, 2010).

¹²⁶Charles R. Ridley and Robert E. Logan, *Training for Selection Interviewing* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998). This resource was not listed on the ChurchSmart website, www.churchsmart.com on 19 February 2011, though it was published by ChurchSmart.

¹²⁷Logan, interview. This video appears to be the first formal connection Southern Baptists had to the Ridley profile.

The Thompson Profile

The second profile to be analyzed is the Thompson Profile, which was developed by J. Allen Thompson. Thompson became involved in church planter assessments when he was hired by the Presbyterian Church of America to direct the assessment and training of church planters.¹²⁸ He came to the role with a long history of cross-cultural ministry and experience in church planting in foreign countries.¹²⁹ Thompson earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbia Bible College, a Master of Divinity degree from Denver Seminary. He also received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Denver Seminary. While he was working for the Presbyterian Church of America, he earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Intercultural Studies from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His dissertation was focused on church planter competencies.¹³⁰ Hertzberg described Thompson this way:

J. Allen Thompson has influenced the selection of a generation of church planters through his research, writings and consulting. Specifically, his work has positively shaped the Presbyterian Church of America assessment center protocol. In turn, it influenced the development of assessment centers used by many other denominations and church planting agencies. Thompson also serves in an ongoing leadership/consultant role with the Redeemer Presbyterian Church (New York City) Church Planting Center.¹³¹

Development of the profile. Though Thompson's work came to have a very influential role in assessment, the development of the profile was preceded and stimulated by the work of Thomas Graham. By training, Graham was an industrial

¹²⁸Ted Powers, re: Requesting Help with Church Planter Assessment, e-mail message to author, 30 April 2008, transcript.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies."

¹³¹Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions," 48. Though Thompson no longer works for the Presbyterian Church of America, he is still involved in church planting. He serves as the President of the International Church Planting Center. Scott Thomas of the Acts 29 Network referred to Thompson as his friend and an expert in church planter assessment. Thomas, "Ten Qualifications of a Church Planter."

organizational psychologist, noted for having expertise in human resource development, personal assessment, and cross-cultural training.¹³² For thirty-nine years he was a faculty member and administrator at California State University, Los Angeles.¹³³ Graham was involved with the Peace Corps from 1963 to 1980 in a variety of capacities, all related to selection of personnel.¹³⁴ While on leave from California State University, Los Angeles in 1968 and 1969, Graham worked in Washington, DC, as the Peace Corps' Deputy Director of the Office of Selection. During that era, the Peace Corps was attracting 35,000 applicants for 7,000 volunteer positions. He finished his service in 1980, working on a team in Chile developing an assessment center approach for selecting candidates.

Starting in 1983, Graham applied the assessment center methodology he learned at the Peace Corps to the selection of church planters for the Presbyterian Church of America.¹³⁵ An old friend, who was involved with the Presbyterian Church of America's Mission to North America, approached Graham and asked him to apply the that methodology to the selection of church planters.¹³⁶ According to Hertzberg, "This was the first application of assessment center methodology to the selection of church planters."¹³⁷

Graham has stated that job analysis is always integral to any selection process.¹³⁸ As he started his work with Mission to North America, an extensive job

¹³²Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions," 41.

¹³³Thomas Graham, re: Request for an Interview from Lloyd Grant, e-mail message to author, 17 February 2011, transcript.

¹³⁴The Peace Corps was one of the organizations that adopted the AT&T assessment approach developed by Douglas Bray as noted above. Graham, "How to Select the Best Church Planters," 73.

¹³⁵Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions," 41.

¹³⁶Graham, re: Request for an Interview from Lloyd Grant.

¹³⁷Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions," 41.

¹³⁸Graham, re: Request for an Interview from Lloyd Grant. See also, Graham,

analysis was done by consulting with church planters and people who supervised church planters.¹³⁹ Graham used the same approach a year later when he undertook a similar project with Mission to the World of the Presbyterian Church of America to help with selection of missionary church planters.¹⁴⁰ According to Thompson, from the task list of responsibilities involved in church planting developed in conjunction with Mission to North America, a group referred to as subject-matter specialists “developed a fifteen-factor church-planter profile describing the competencies necessary to accomplish the church planting job successfully.”¹⁴¹ Subject-matter specialists (Graham also referred to them as subject-matter experts) were selected from people who were known to be excellent practitioners or people who were supervisors of the job. The criteria for a person to be a subject-matter specialists was a direct knowledge of how a job should be done and understanding of the necessary performance standards.¹⁴²

The factors identified by the subject-matter specialists were:

1. Dynamism (has an inviting disposition)
2. Self Image (maintains emotional stability under pressure)
3. Sensitivity (cares for persons’ feelings and needs)
4. Flexibility and Adaptability (welcomes new possibilities)
5. Oral Communication/Exposition (preaches with confidence)
6. Discipleship (builds new believers in the faith)
7. Evangelism (shares his faith with the unchurched)

A Systems Approach to Organizational Mission.

¹³⁹Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies," 9.

¹⁴⁰Graham, "How to Select the Best Church Planters," 74.

¹⁴¹Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies," 9.

¹⁴²Graham, *A Systems Approach to Organizational Mission*, 15.

8. Faith (actively relies on God’s grace)
9. Spirituality (demonstrates a growing walk with God)
10. Family Life (displays a mutual family commitment)
11. Philosophy of Ministry (articulates a specific “style of ministry”)
12. A Model of Ministry (envisions a clear model for church planting ministry)
13. Performance Orientation (has the ability to get things done)
14. Leadership Orientation (equips and uses others in leadership)
15. Planning Skills (develops realistic action plans).¹⁴³

The profile developed by Graham was utilized by Mission to North America for twelve years, with just slight modifications.¹⁴⁴ In reflection, Thompson noted, “From 1984 to 1992, 475 leaders and their spouses were evaluated using these insights. Effectiveness rose remarkably!”¹⁴⁵ But Thompson also recognized that since Mission to North America began to use the Graham developed profile, “no additional study had been conducted to confirm the validity of the church planter profile or to rank the relative importance of the competencies.”¹⁴⁶ It was at this point that Thompson engaged in research in conjunction with his Ph.D. program at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School to develop “a basic list of ministerial abilities that a church planter should possess to be successful in starting a new church in North America.”¹⁴⁷

Thompson began his study with two key assumptions related to assessment. First, he noted, “The keystone document in an assessment process is a cluster of

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 10.

¹⁴⁵Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 5.

¹⁴⁶Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies," 9.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

competencies necessary to accomplish successfully the job under consideration.”¹⁴⁸

Second, he believed, “Since the corner stone of the assessment process is the church planter profile, evidence that supports or amends the profile will have profound impact on the revision of the process.”¹⁴⁹ Thus, the focus of his study was to identify competencies.¹⁵⁰

In an attempt to develop a profile of competencies, Thompson designed “a descriptive survey aimed at finding out ‘what is’ from the perceptions of the chosen population.”¹⁵¹ His chosen population was 62 church planters and 31 assessors, all of whom were affiliated with the Presbyterian Church of America.¹⁵² The data was gathered from this population of “successful church planters and trained assessors” using a modified Delphi technique and Likert-type questions.¹⁵³

From the data collected, Thompson developed a profile of 21 competencies arranged in 3 clusters. The profile was referred to as the Church Planter Profile. The clusters were: Spiritual Life Dimensions; Church Planting Skills; and, Personal and

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 7.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 10.

¹⁵⁰Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions," 49.

¹⁵¹Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies," 75.

¹⁵²Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 5. Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies," 88.

¹⁵³Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies," 75. A modified Delphi technique is a method of collecting data using 2 or more rounds of questionnaires. In the case of Thompson's research, 3 consecutive questionnaires were used. The first round was an open-ended questionnaire to generate the 10-20 most important church planter characteristics. In round 2 participants rated the characteristics using a Likert-type scale. Round 3, a composite questionnaire was used. Ibid., 13-14. A Likert-type scale is “a measure that asks individuals to check the extent of their agreement or disagreement with various statements about a topic (e.g., strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree).” Joyce P. Gall, M. D. Gall, and Walter R. Borg, *Apply Educational Research: A Practical Guide*, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), 261.

Interpersonal Traits.¹⁵⁴ The competencies under Spiritual Life Dimensions were: Person of Prayer; Spirituality; Integrity; Spiritual Disciplines; Affirmation of God's Call; Family Commitment; Godly Character; and, Recognizes Limitations. The Church Planting Skills were: Leadership; Evangelism; Church Planting Skills; Preaching; Philosophy of Ministry; and, Discipling. The Personal and Interpersonal Traits were: Conscientious; Flexible; Resilient; Likable; Healthy Self Image; Sensitive; and, Dynamic.¹⁵⁵

After using the Church Planter Profile for a decade and assessing over 500 prospective church planters, Thompson believed there was a need to update the profile through additional research, adding or changing competences as needed.¹⁵⁶ He explained his rationale this way:

Now, however, the Christian church faces a new century with incredible opportunities and challenges. The world has changed dramatically. The population rush to major cities continues. Immigration has brought millions of newcomers to

¹⁵⁴Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies," 126. Please note the clusters and the competencies are from information contained in Thompson's dissertation, Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies." In Thompson's updated study from 2007 the clusters are labeled as Personal Characteristics; Ministerial Characteristics; and, Interpersonal Characteristics. Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*. Also in the 2007 document, the number of competencies is reduced from 21 to 18. In the 2007 document, Thompson cited his own dissertation. Hertzberg lists the 21 competencies and references Thompson's dissertation. Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions," 51. Thomas listed the 18 and also noted Thompson's dissertation. Thirteen of the competencies from the 2 lists are shared, but the others are labeled in very different ways. Thomas, "Ten Qualifications of a Church Planter." According to Thompson, the reason for the differences between the two lists was that in applying his academic research to actual field use, some adjustments in wording, arrangement of the competencies, and the number of competencies was needed. Though the changes made by Thompson were on a smaller scale, his adjustments may be comparable to what work Ridley and his team did in reducing the original 48 factors down to the 13 essential qualities. Thompson did not believe that the adjustments lessened the research done or the quality of the profile created by the adjustments. He stated, "Those adjustments are valid and do not negate the research." J. Allen Thompson, re: Hello, e-mail message to author, 20 September 2011, transcript.

¹⁵⁵Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies," 126.

¹⁵⁶Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 5-6.

North America. Secularism and religious skepticism is the dominant world view in our society. New churches, mega churches, have sprouted in suburbs leaving center cities devoid of the Christian message. We now need to investigate afresh what it takes to be successful in city, suburban, and ethnic church planting in North America.¹⁵⁷

This new study involved a group of 29 participants that were referred to Thompson by Mission to North America or the Redeemer Church Planting Center. The participants either were experienced church planters, who started churches that were perceived to be vital and growing, or were trainers, coaches, or church planting administrators.¹⁵⁸ The first phase of the research involved these individuals answering, by email, a set of 12 open ended questions.¹⁵⁹ The second phase was a three-day consultation with 10 church planters and 3 leaders-trainers from the group of 29. This group of 13 was given access to the data from the first phase and was asked to help develop a new competency list.¹⁶⁰ The results developed by this research are depicted in Figure 2 below.¹⁶¹

The dimensions on the left hand side of the figure are listed in a ranked order of importance. Thompson noted that the first 6 dimensions are considered as critical.¹⁶² In reviewing Thompson's study, Hertzberg wrote, "Thompson's recent study recognizes that today's church planters and pastors need a broader set of competencies than did their peers in the recent past. His work has produced a church leader inventory that is richer and broader than his previous profile."¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 16.

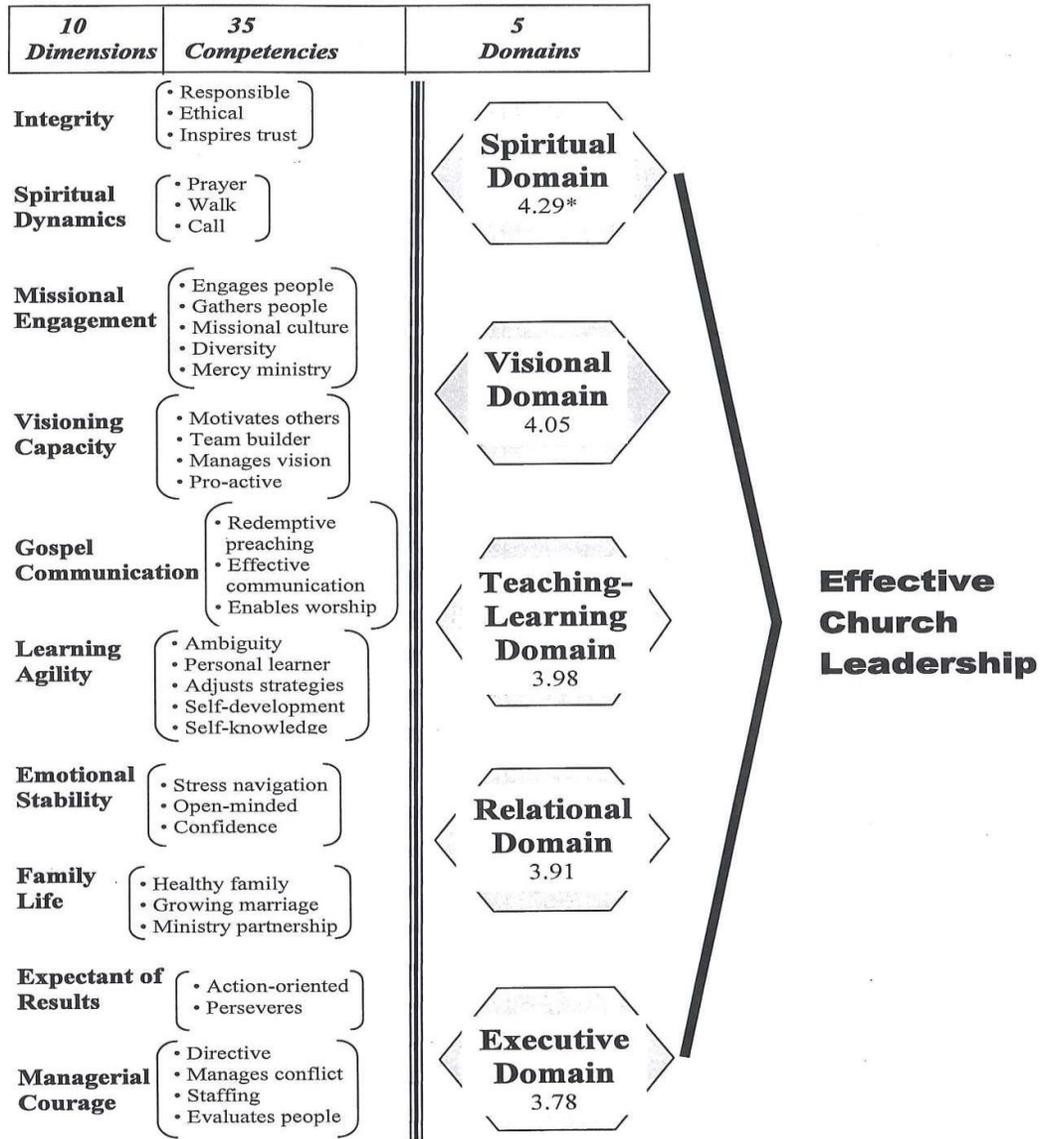
¹⁵⁹Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 15-16.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 51. Used by permission.

¹⁶²Ibid., 49.

¹⁶³Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions," 49.



* Likert scale importance ratings established by 23 subject matter experts (SMEs).

Figure 2. Church leader inventory

A unique feature of Thompson’s updated study is the inclusion of what he described as 4 “staller-stoppers.”¹⁶⁴ He defined staller-stoppers as “behaviors that may

¹⁶⁴Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 2.

hinder or destroy effectiveness.”¹⁶⁵ He further explained them by stating: “A staller/stopper likely results from many sources – what a church leader neglects, such as failing to identify issues that limit personal learning and what he may emphasize such as strong directive skills or over-confidence. Or it may have to do with deep character issues left unaddressed.”¹⁶⁶ The 4 identified staller-stoppers in ranked order are as follows: Self-centered; Does not relate well; Does not inspire; and, Non-strategic.¹⁶⁷

Though the depiction of the church leader inventory in Figure 2 gives a sense of prominence to the 5 domains, they are barely mentioned in the research used to develop the inventory. Thompson stated that “the domains indicate the areas that are surveyed by the 360-degree instrument.”¹⁶⁸ Presumably the domains are used to provide structure to questions asked by the assessors, though no evidence of that was found. It is not stated how the numeric values for the domains were derived. It appears that they may be an average of the numeric value of the two dimensions that make up each domain. The domains provide an organizational structure to the inventory, but they do not appear to be derived from the research findings, nor do they have significant bearing on the profile itself.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 44. Italics are original.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 49.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 50. The church leader inventory was designed to be used with an assessment process that utilizes 360 degree feedback. For more information on the process, see, J. Allen Thompson, *CLI & CLSI Certification Workbook* (Seattle: International Church Planting Center, 2008). The 5 domains are not mentioned at all in the *CLI & CLSI Certification Workbook*.

The Wood Profile

The third profile to be analyzed will be referred to as the Wood Profile.¹⁶⁹ The profile was developed from a Lilly Endowment study known as “New Church Development for the 21st Century.”¹⁷⁰ Wood, the lead researcher for the study, has been involved in church planting, or new church development, the term the mainline audience of his study uses to refer to the starting of new churches, for more than thirty years. He served within the Presbyterian Church (USA), but with a desire to benefit churches beyond his denomination.¹⁷¹ He prepared for ministry by earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from San Diego State University and then completing two degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary: a Master of Divinity, and a Master of Theology.¹⁷²

While engaged in ministry related to church planting, Wood also earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1978, and in 1996, he earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree from King’s College of the University of Aberdeen.¹⁷³ Wood’s dissertation was focused on leadership within new churches. The title of his dissertation was “Leadership Profiles of Church Extension Ministers in the Church of Scotland 1945-1965.”¹⁷⁴ The research methodology and approach Wood

¹⁶⁹Referring to this profile as the Wood Profile is in recognition that Wood was the lead researcher for a Lilly Endowment study. Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions," 58.

¹⁷⁰Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, vii.

¹⁷¹H. Stanley Wood, interview by author, Sioux City, IA, February 17, 2011.

¹⁷²Fuller Theological Seminary, "Church Planting Cohort," Fuller Theological Seminary, <http://www.fuller.edu/printable.aspx?id=7340> (accessed September 6, 2010).

¹⁷³*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴University of Aberdeen, “Wood, H. Stanley,” University of Aberdeen, https://aulib.abdn.ac.uk/F/KX5B4HJE64KXEE478LA9EU4EVAV7JEP337D2E5D9XRYPXJIMPB-14635?func=full-set-set&set_number=016858&set_entry=000002&format=999 (accessed February 18, 2011).

developed to complete his dissertation informed the approach used for the Lilly Endowment funded study.¹⁷⁵

Wood's experience in church planting has included serving as a new church development pastor and nine years as Associate for Church Growth and New Church Development in the Evangelism and Church Development Program Area of the National Ministries Division of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).¹⁷⁶ He also served for eight years as the Director for the Center of New Church Development as part of the faculty of Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia.¹⁷⁷ The research work related to the Wood Profile started while Wood was on the faculty of Columbia Theological Seminary. The results of the study were published during the four years he served as the Ford Chair of Congregational Leadership and Evangelism at San Francisco Theological Seminary.¹⁷⁸

Currently, Wood is serving in two roles related to church planting. He is an Adjunct Professor of Congregational Leadership and Evangelism at Fuller Seminary. The main focus of his role at Fuller is to lead the church planting cohort within Fuller's Doctor of Ministry Program.¹⁷⁹ Wood started leading the first cohort in October of 2010

¹⁷⁵Wood, interview.

¹⁷⁶San Francisco Theological Seminary, "SFTS Press Release Archive – Rev. Dr. H. Stanley Wood Appointed for Ford Chair," San Francisco Theological Seminary, http://www.sfts.edu/about/news_pressRelease_archive.asp#johnirvine (accessed February 18, 2011). Fuller Theological Seminary, "Church Planting Cohort."

¹⁷⁷Fuller Theological Seminary, "Church Planting Cohort." It should be noted that an examination of Columbia Theological Seminary's website on 18 February 2011 did not reveal any evidence of the Center for New Church Development still existing at Columbia. Columbia's web site is www.ctsnet.edu.

¹⁷⁸Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, viii. San Francisco Theological Seminary, "SFTS Press Release Archive."

¹⁷⁹Fuller Theological Seminary, "Church Planting Cohort."

and has committed to starting a second cohort later in 2011.¹⁸⁰ Wood's second role is launching a new ministry called the National Church Planting Network. The network is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA) and will most likely be renamed in the near future.¹⁸¹ The purpose of the network is two-fold: to identify church planters and to help churches start new churches.¹⁸²

Development of the profile. A uniqueness of the Wood Profile, in comparison to both the Ridley and Thompson Profiles, is the size of the research study that led to the profile. Wood himself described the study in the following way: “This study represents the most complete exploration of the new church development (NCD) phenomenon as it is currently understood within the United States. The study, though somewhat incomplete and flawed, provides more information about this important work than does any other study to date.”¹⁸³

The preparatory work for the study was done by Robert S. Hoyt, who was a leader in the office of New Church Development of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.¹⁸⁴ Presumably his efforts built off the dream of the leaders of seven mainline denominations, who had envisioned a research project to discuss information about the nature and workings of new churches. Their focus was on leadership. Wood noted, “They had a collective hunch that the NCD leaders tended to make or break a new church.”¹⁸⁵ Sensing that their new church development efforts would be improved by such a study,

¹⁸⁰Wood, interview.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

¹⁸²Ibid.

¹⁸³Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, 154.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., vii.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., xviii.

the leaders began to set aside financial resources.¹⁸⁶ The seven denominations were the following:

1. Christian Reformed Church
2. Episcopal Church
3. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
4. Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod
5. Presbyterian Church (USA)
6. Reformed Church in America
7. United Church of Christ¹⁸⁷

Additional financial support came from Lutheran Brotherhood, and the Center for New Church Development at Columbia Theological Seminary.¹⁸⁸ Collectively the denominational leaders applied for and received a Lilly Foundation Endowment Fund grant, which provided sufficient resources to launch the study.¹⁸⁹ The study itself was made up of two components: one quantitative in nature and one qualitative.

The quantitative component involved 704 pastors completing the Founding Pastor Church Development Survey.¹⁹⁰ These pastors started churches in the final two decades of the twentieth century. The survey was made up of 58 questions tabulated into 5 categories based on the size of the church.

The qualitative component was comprised of 6 focus groups of 7 to 10 pastors. Five of the groups included male pastors who were grouped based upon when they

¹⁸⁶Ibid.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., xix.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., vii, xviii.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., vii.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., xii

entered new church development between 1980 and 2000. One focus group involved women pastors.¹⁹¹ To be included in a focus group, the new church developers had to be considered “effective” developers by the denomination they served. Wood defined “effective” to mean, “1) those pastors who started and sustained new churches that achieved the highest membership growth within their respective denominations; and 2) those pastors who were able to attract and assimilate formerly unchurched persons into active church membership.”¹⁹² These pastors had been used by God to lead many people to affirm faith in Christ as part of their participation in the new church. In some cases up to 70 percent of the people who were part of the church had come to Christ through the ministry of that church.¹⁹³ Wood observed, “The most effective NCD pastors are likely, within any ninety-day period, to have assisted a person making a first-time affirmation of faith.”¹⁹⁴

The qualitative research generated a significant amount of data from the focus group participants answering two questions.¹⁹⁵ The first question asked the focus groups to identify several leadership competencies, functions or behaviors needed in the early stage of a new church. The second question asked if the leadership needed in later stages

¹⁹¹Ibid., xiii. Though there are differing views of the role of women in formal positions of ministry leadership among denominations in the United States, it is my personal conviction, derived from study of passages such as 1 Timothy 2:11-3:13, that the office of elder is limited to men only. I do believe that 1 Timothy 3:8-13 would open the office of deacon to women, but the office of elder is reserved for only qualified men.

¹⁹²Ibid., 32. One denomination did not have a new church developer who met the criteria of “effective.” The denomination was not identified in the published results. Ibid., xix.

¹⁹³Wood, interview.

¹⁹⁴Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, 82.

¹⁹⁵Wood, interview. Wood suggested that the data was the equivalent to six telephone books of information.

of church development was different, and if so, how it was different.¹⁹⁶ The results of the first question, as represented by Wood, are depicted in Figure 3 below.¹⁹⁷

Early Stage of New-Church Development (First 7 Years)		
Tier 1	Catalytic innovator	20%
	Vibrant faith in God	15%
	Visionary/vision caster	13%
		48%
Tier 2	Empowering leadership	8%
	Passion for people	7%
	Personal and relational health	7%
	Passion for faith-sharing	7%
	Inspiring preaching and worship	7%
		36%
Tier 3	Administrative skills	5%
	Other categories (7) ⁵	12%
		17%

Figure 3. Wood Profile for first seven years

Wood described the purpose of the research this way:

This study shows how leaders in new-church development have used personality traits and acquired skills to start and sustain successful new-church developments. The data detail what is known about these leaders, what they say about themselves, and what factors seem to contribute to their effectiveness. The main outcome from the data is a constellation of traits that form much of the energy, direction, and personal style of these leaders. Identifying and understanding these traits are critical for those involved in developing new churches – and those who support and educate them.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, 33.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 34. Used by permission.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., xxii.

Lessons Learned about Assessment

To complete this chapter, brief consideration will be given to two lessons that have been noted in research interviews. As assessments have been used over the last twenty-five years, a variety of people have been involved in assessing church planters. In the process of those assessments these lessons surfaced among the assessors.

The Need to Factor in the Cultural Context of the Church Plant

Westridge Church in suburban Atlanta is actively involved in church planting, in North America and throughout the world. In its first ten years of existence, from 1997-2007, Westridge helped plant 20 churches in Georgia, many within 20 miles of the church's campus.¹⁹⁹ Jim Akins, who led Westridge's church planting ministry, utilized Ridley's 13 characteristics as a part of the church's assessment process. Though those characteristics are not the only factors on which the church bases decisions, they are an important part of the assessments. Akins found Ridley's characteristics to be very helpful.

In contrast, Glenn Smith holds that some of Ridley's characteristics are not helpful, at least in some contexts.²⁰⁰ Formerly Smith was on staff at the Church at Sugar Land, where he led Sugar Land to plant over 50 churches. He currently heads New Church Initiatives in assessing, training, and coaching church planters. Sugar Land is in a suburb of Houston. Twenty-five years ago, Houston was largely a bi-racial city. Today, there are over 150 languages spoken in Houston. As Smith led Sugar Land to plant churches throughout Houston, he began to notice that the culture, and people those churches were trying to reach for Christ, were not necessarily the same as the people the Church at Sugar Land was attracting. The church planters being sent out by Smith were encountering situations that were becoming more and more like what might be expected

¹⁹⁹Jim Akins, interview by author, Tumwater, WA, February 19, 2008.

²⁰⁰Glenn Smith, interview by author, Olympia, WA, February 22, 2008.

by a missionary in a foreign country. Smith holds that the assessments for urban church planters in a culturally diverse setting need to be done with that cultural diversity clearly considered.

Smith suggested that when Ridley did his original work in the mid 1980s, diversity was not factored into the research. He believed that most of the focus on church planting at that point would have been toward white, suburban middle class neighborhoods. Smith suggested that Ridley's results may be very effective in those cultural contexts, but not in all cultural contexts. Ridley did note that a limiting factor in his study was that most of the church planters involved in the development of the profile were North American Caucasians.²⁰¹ Ridley stated further,

Generalizing the model across ethnic populations must also be taken with caution. Several ethnic founding pastors were included in the study. However, ethnic differences were not specifically ascertained. I believe that it would be useful to investigate these differences in another study. Again, I believe that the identified performance dimensions have relevance across ethnic lines.²⁰²

Though not a formal study, Smith's work in the multi-cultural context of Houston may have served as the follow-up study Ridley thought was needed. In cities with significant cultural diversity, Smith's observation may explain why Ridley's profile was not as useful. The cultural context may require a very different kind of church planter. A different kind of church planter may very well need a different assessment. Because of Smith's experience in Houston, he has made changes to how he does assessments.

Eric Tucker has been involved in church planters' assessment with the Presbyterian Church in America's Mission Board in Central America and wrote his doctoral dissertation on Hispanic Church Planters in Miami.²⁰³ Tucker found that in

²⁰¹Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 11.

²⁰²Ibid.

²⁰³Eric J. Tucker, "Competencies of Effective Hispanic Church Planters in Miami, Florida as Perceived by Reformed Hispanic Church Planters and Pastors" (Ph.D.

certain settings, particularly those settings where the target group of a church are upwardly mobile, assessing using Ridley's characteristics was useful. Yet, when the setting was different, for example in Mexico with rural people becoming urbanized, those characteristics were not effective.²⁰⁴ In Miami, Tucker used ethnographic research to identify competencies of effective Hispanic church planters. The list of competencies was noticeably different from Ridley's list.²⁰⁵

The examples gleaned from the assessment experiences of Smith and Tucker suggest that without factoring into an assessment the cultural context of the church being planted, an assessment may not prove to be a helpful tool to increase church planter performance. An additional concern might be that by not factoring in the cultural context, a potential church planter may be over looked, though in certain cultural context the potential planter could be very effective.

From his experience, Logan would disagree with these concerns. In discussing Ridley's profile, Logan noted that though Ridley's study pool was not diverse, in Logan's experience of working with church planting leaders in 36 countries, Ridley's top 5 qualities have transcended culture. Logan did suggest that qualities 6 to 13 might be different in various cultures, but "leadership is leadership" and the top 5 would hold true.²⁰⁶ Craig Ott and Gene Wilson expressed a similar sentiment concerning Ridley's profile, "Though the study was done among white North American males, many believe that the characteristics have cross-cultural validity because they describe functions that church planters must perform effectively to be successful in any context."²⁰⁷

diss., Trinity International University), 2006.

²⁰⁴Eric Tucker, interview by author, Tumwater, WA, March 14, 2008.

²⁰⁵Tucker, "Competencies of Effective Hispanic Church Planters," 264-65.

²⁰⁶Logan, interview.

²⁰⁷Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 362.

The research done by Wood would appear to be supportive of the concerns raised by Smith and Tucker. The results published in Wood's book were from the data for volume one of the Lilly funded study, which focused on "Euro-American NCD leaders."²⁰⁸ A projected second volume "will also further contextualize and address the multicultural complexities of new-church development as we enter the twenty-first century."²⁰⁹ In a similar vein, Thompson's concern to update his profile because of changes within the world in general, and the North American context in particular, would seem to suggest his thoughts would parallel Smith and Tucker.²¹⁰

Though Logan's experience and the comment by Ott and Wilson suggest that the Ridley Profile has a lasting impact, because in Logan's words "leadership is leadership," research may suggest a need to reconsider that conclusion.²¹¹ As noted above, thirteen denominations participated in Ridley's study.²¹² Two of those denominations, the Christian Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, also participated in the study for the Wood Profile.²¹³ Their participation in the second study raises a question. If a denomination's current assessment process was successful, why would the denomination choose to invest resources in a new study? Wood noted that the denominations involved in his study had participated in an expansion of church planting starting in the mid to late 1980s.²¹⁴ Some of the churches started flourished, but yet others floundered and ultimately failed. These denominations

²⁰⁸Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, xix.

²⁰⁹Ibid.

²¹⁰Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 5-6.

²¹¹Logan, interview.

²¹²Ridley, "Church Planter Performance Profile," 1-2.

²¹³Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, xix.

²¹⁴Ibid., xvii.

“had a collective hunch that NCD leaders tended to make or break a new church.”²¹⁵ The denominational leaders wanted to discern who the appropriate new church developers were. Though they had existing systems for selecting developers, they needed to study the matter further. The Ridley profile had been helpful, yet it was not sufficient. There appears to be a need to further evaluate the Ridley Profile.

The Need to Factor in the Type of Church Being Planted

Wooddale Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, has been involved in planting daughter churches for the last 20 years.²¹⁶ The church is dually affiliated with Converge Worldwide (formerly the Baptist General Conference) and the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, both of whom utilize the Ridley Profile as part of their denominational assessment processes.²¹⁷ Yet when Wooddale plants a daughter church, they do not use either denominations’ process; instead they use their own process. According to Rob O’Neal, who planted a Wooddale daughter church in September 2008, there was no mention at all of the Ridley characteristics in his assessment process.²¹⁸ Wooddale had certain qualifications that they looked for, but the major concern of the process Wooddale used was trying to determine if the potential

²¹⁵Ibid., xviii.

²¹⁶Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 65-66.

²¹⁷Paul Johnson, interview by author, Olympia, WA, February 15, 2008. At the time of the interview Johnson was serving as the Vice President of Church Planting for the Baptist General Conference (now called Converge Worldwide). He was also the pastor of one of Wooddale’s daughter churches, Woodridge Church. Ron Hamilton, interview by author, Olympia, WA, February 19, 2008. At the time of the interview, Hamilton was the Director of Church Multiplication for the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference.

²¹⁸Rob O’Neal, interview by author, Tumwater, WA, February 12, 2008. O’Neal’s assessment process completed prior to him joining the Wooddale staff in 2007.

church planter understood, and fit well with the Wooddale DNA, and the Wooddale way of operating.

Ron Hamilton of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference noted that Wooddale employs what it calls a “high birth weight model” of church planting.²¹⁹ By “high birth weight” Wooddale is referring to their practice of planting a daughter church that includes a large number of people from Wooddale. The number of people going from Wooddale to the new church plants has ranged from 25 to 250 people.²²⁰ Hamilton believed such an approach requires a different kind of pastor, thus explaining why Wooddale may have chosen a different assessment process.²²¹ Stetzer provided a helpful overview of this type of church planting in his book, *Planting Missional Churches*.²²² Harvest Bible Fellowship’s assessment process has a similar focus on the church planter fitting with the Harvest culture.²²³ The Acts 29 Network seems to have a similar concern in its assessment process.²²⁴

Wooddale, Harvest Bible Fellowship, and the Acts 29 Network are seeking to plant churches that are like the mother churches or churches that share deeply held values and convictions. In contrast, Westridge Church is not seeking to start “a bunch of Westridges.”²²⁵ A different type of church may very well require a different type of pastor. To think that all types of churches are the same is naïve. To think that an

²¹⁹Hamilton, interview. Hamilton noted that “high birth weight” is a Wooddale term.

²²⁰Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 66.

²²¹Hamilton, interview.

²²²Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 64-68.

²²³Kent Shaw, interview by author, Chicago, IL, December 14, 2007.

²²⁴Tyler Powell, re: Requesting Help with Church Planter Assessment, e-mail message to author, 12 March 2008.

²²⁵Akins, interview.

assessment could be done without factoring in the type of church being planted would be equally naïve.

In a similar vein, a denomination that participated in the Ridley study, the North American Baptist Conference (NAB) appears to have developed its own assessment process. They describe the process as including a behavioral assessment, but that assessment does not mention the Ridley profile. Instead the NAB stated that the behavior assessment they use is based on the values of what they call “The Irreducible Core.”²²⁶ The Irreducible Core is made up of six dimensions: “Confession of Christ; Love God with all your Heart, Soul and Mind; Love your Neighbor as yourself; Love one another; Make Disciples; and, In Partnership with the Holy Spirit.”²²⁷ The NAB formerly used the Ridley Profile. This new assessment process seems to be connected to a conference wide concern to disciple people in accordance with the Irreducible Core. As such it would seem that the NAB want their church planters to be in agreement with and effective in living out that core.²²⁸

Conclusion

Assessments have a history that spans the last one hundred years. Through the influences of psychology and the usage of assessment in military applications, business, and education, assessments have been used with church planters for the last twenty-five years. Those assessments have been beneficial to the furtherance of the Great

²²⁶North American Baptist Conference, “Multiplication – Assessing Church Planters,” North American Baptist Conference, <http://www.nabconference.org/multiplication/church-multiplication-resource-team-cmrt/assessing-church-planters> (accessed March 5, 2011).

²²⁷North American Baptist Conference, “Multiplication – The Irreducible Core,” North American Baptist Conference, <http://www.nabconference.org/multiplication/irreducible-core> (accessed March 5, 2011).

²²⁸Ibid.

Commission. With the cultural changes of the last twenty-five years, and the expanding deployment of church planter assessments in a variety of contexts, there is a need to study assessments, to both improve and enhance assessments so that church planter assessments lead to a furtherance of the Great Commission.

CHAPTER 3
THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS
AND APOSTLES

Church planter profiles provide a description of what a church planter should look like. For the profiles to be of value in the assessment process, they need to provide a realistic portrayal of a church planter. Does the New Testament provide any assistance with forming a church planter profile? The purpose of this chapter is to examine the biblical qualifications and depictions of church leaders. Specifically, attention is given to the qualifications and descriptions given for elders and apostles. From the Pastoral Epistles, examination is given to the characteristics Paul provided to Timothy and Titus, to aid them in the selection of elders. The second portion of the chapter discusses and evaluates biblical data related to apostles and the connection of apostles to church planting.

**Qualifications of Church Leaders
from the Pastoral Epistles**

The New Testament does not directly refer to church planters, thus neither does the New Testament provide a biblically defined profile of a church planter. Yet the New Testament, particularly in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, does provide a profile of sorts for church elders.¹ It should be noted that the two lists share a number of similarities. Philip H. Towner has suggested that Paul adapted or created a standard set of instructions for both situations.²

¹As noted earlier, it is my conviction that the office of elder is limited to qualified males.

²Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International

It is also worth noting that the list provided in Titus 1 was presumably given by Paul to Titus to help, very young churches in Crete, put leaders in place. Towner stated, “What is clear from the nature of the instructions is that the Cretan churches are still in the fairly early going.”³ William D. Mounce suggested that the issues facing the churches in Crete were the type of problems one would expect in a new church.⁴ Those observations by both Towner and Mounce would suggest that these lists do have some particular bearing on a new or young church with respect to its leadership. Paul’s focus on leadership is not on function or specific tasks, but on the character of the elder. The unique role of a church planter may not correspond exactly to the role of an elder. They may carry out different functions, but the characters of both would be important.

Before the actual contents of the lists are reviewed, two general observations should be made about the lists. First, the content of the lists are not particularly remarkable or unique. Darrin Patrick wrote, “In one regard this list of qualifications is noteworthy because it is so un-noteworthy. Almost all of what is required here of elders (or overseers) is required of any believer elsewhere in Scripture.”⁵ John MacArthur, Jr. stated, “Paul applies most of these character qualities to all believers in his other letters. So in that sense, whether you are male or female, these qualities ought to be the goals in your Christian life.”⁶

Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 249. William D. Mounce inserted a helpful chart in his commentary on the Pastoral Epistles that displays the noticeable overlap between the lists in 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1. See William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 156-158.

³Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 678.

⁴Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 392.

⁵Darrin Patrick, *Church Planter: The Man, the Message, the Mission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 45.

⁶John MacArthur, Jr., *Different by Design: Discovering God's Will from Today's Man and Woman* (Colorado Springs: Victor Books, 1994), 114.

D. A. Carson, discussing 1 Corinthians 4 and 1 Timothy 3, noted, “Leaders are not in a special priestly class. Rather, what is required in some sense of all believers is peculiarly required of the leaders of believers. There is a difference of degree.”⁷ The commonality of the list toward the lives of all believers reinforces the notion that church leaders are to be examples to both the people under their care and to those in community looking at the church and the message of Christ. Towner stated, “What may be more significant is the fact that most of the qualities concentrated in the duty codes are elsewhere applied to believers in general. The effect of gathering the traits together in these parenthetic texts is to stress that leaders are to be models of the behavior described for everyone in the church.”⁸ David A. Mappes noted, “Church leaders are to model a life of godliness so that others can imitate them.”⁹

Repeatedly the New Testament exhorts and commands followers of Christ to follow the example set for them by their leaders.¹⁰ Those imperatives would seem to flow out from the command given to elders in 1 Peter 5:3, “proving to be examples to the flock.”¹¹ Carson believed that the focus, in lists like those found in 1 Timothy and Titus, on characteristics and virtues that should be found in the lives of all followers of Christ,

⁷D. A. Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 95.

⁸Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 241.

⁹David A. Mappes, “Moral Virtues Associated with Eldership,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160, no. 638 (April-June 2003): 215.

¹⁰See 1 Cor 4:16; 1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6; 2 Thess 3:7; and, Heb 13:7.

¹¹The word translated “proving” is the Greek word γίωομαι. Peter used that verb as a present middle or passive deponent nominative masculine second person plural participle. The participle carries with it an imperatival sense from its connection with the main verb of the sentence, found in v. 2, “shepherd” from the Greek verb, ποιμαίνω, which Peter expressed as an aorist active imperative second person plural.

“is precisely what makes it possible for Christian leaders to serve as models, as well as teachers, in the church of God.”¹²

The importance of leaders meeting the qualifications in the lists and being examples to the church cannot be overstated. MacArthur noted, “Biblical history demonstrates that people will seldom rise above the spiritual level of their leadership.”¹³ Patrick denoted, “One of the reasons it is essential for elders to be godly men is that when elders are not godly, it is very difficult for the people to become godly.”¹⁴ The intention behind the lists in 1 Timothy and Titus is to propel the church toward what God desires the church to be: a vessel that furthers the Great Commission. Alexander Strauch suggested, “Much of the weakness and waywardness of our churches today is due directly to our failure to require that church shepherds meet God’s standards for office. If we want our local churches to be spiritually fit, then we must require our shepherds to be spiritually fit.”¹⁵ MacArthur also noted, “The character and effectiveness of any church is directly related to the quality of its leadership. That’s why the Bible stresses the importance of qualified church leadership and delineates specific standards for evaluating those who would serve in that sacred position.”¹⁶

A second general observation about the lists is they are mainly focused on the character of the individual, and not as much on the skills of the potential leader. Towner commented on the lists for elders and deacons from 1 Timothy 3 this way: “Each leadership role is regarded from the standpoint of qualifications, not duties, and from this

¹²Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry*, 96.

¹³MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 114.

¹⁴Patrick, *Church Planter*, 45.

¹⁵Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, rev. ed. (Colorado Springs: Lewis and Roth, 1995), 71.

¹⁶MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 113.

it is clear that Paul's stress was on the quality of the leaders' character, though the presence of suitable gifts and abilities would be an assumed requirement."¹⁷ Mounce opined, "These lists are not primarily vocational qualifications and duties. First and foremost – and this is understood in light of the Ephesians situation – Paul is concerned that the right *type* of person be appointed to leadership, a person whose personal qualities set him apart."¹⁸ Related is Strauch's observation that the New Testament provides more instruction on the qualifications of elders than any other aspect of being an elder.¹⁹ The primary issue in church leadership according to these lists is the character of the leaders. Strauch concluded, "A noble task naturally demands a noble person."²⁰

1 Timothy 3

The actual list of 1 Timothy 3 is found in verses 2 through 7 and reads as follows:

An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.²¹

¹⁷Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 239.

¹⁸Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 159. Italics are original.

¹⁹Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 70.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 188.

²¹Though it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explain in detail the offices of the church and the different names given to those offices, brief comments about the terms overseer and elder should be noted. Overseer is used in the 1 Tim 3 list and yet, in the Titus 1 passage, the term elders is used in v. 5 and overseer is used in v. 7 without any indication that the reference changed. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 162. Though eventually in the history of the church the overseer, usually referred to as a bishop, was placed above the elder and the terms came to refer to separate groups, there is evidence from the early church that these two titles did in fact refer to the same office. *Ibid.*, 308.

Above reproach. Paul's list to Timothy began with the characteristic of being above reproach. Though above reproach is a two word expression in English, those words are a translation of a Greek adjective, ἀεπίληυτος, which has a basic meaning of "aspects of behavior (inward and outward) that have observable results."²² To be above reproach suggests that the man is free from serious character issues and is respected by those who know him.²³ Being above reproach does not mean that the man in question is without sin. Mounce noted, "The emphasis here is on the type of external personal reputation that would be a credit to the church."²⁴

Though this trait is part of the list, it does have a unique role with respect to the list. Patrick concluded being above reproach was the most basic and fundamental qualification for a church leader.²⁵ Mounce noted, "The first stands as the title over all these qualities: an overseer must be above reproach; all that follows spells out what this

In Acts 20:17, 28 Luke appears to refer synonymously to the church leaders of Ephesus as elders and overseers. They are introduced in v. 17 as elders, but when the subject matter changes to discuss governing responsibilities, Luke recorded Paul as referring to them as overseers. Mounce suggested that overseer is more descriptive of the function. Ibid., 390. Towner noted that the terms do appear to be interchangeable. Overseer is used when the focus is on the function, and elder is used when the focus is more on position or status. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 246. Patrick also noted the interchangeability of the two terms. Patrick, *Church Planter*, 45. For a longer examination of this issue, see Benjamin L. Merkle, "Hierarchy in the Church? Instruction from the Pastoral Epistles concerning Elders and Overseers," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 7, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 32-43. As a result of that interchangeableness between overseer and elder, the terms will be treated synonymously throughout this dissertation.

²²Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 251.

²³Patrick, *Church Planter*, 46.

²⁴Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170.

²⁵Patrick, *Church Planter*, 46.

entails.”²⁶ Towner suggested, “In the code of 1 Timothy 3, the sentence structure of 3:2 shows that irreproachability is the broad requirement.”²⁷

The significance of being above reproach is enhanced by the conclusion of the list in verse 7. The list ends with the concern of having a good reputation with those outside the church. Mounce noted,

It is significant that Paul both begins and ends on the same note: a church leader should be above reproach; he should have a good reputation. This is one of the overriding concerns in the PE. . . . The grammar of the paragraph serves to heighten this: 1 Tim 3:2-6 constitutes one sentence with a parenthetical comment (v 5). 1 Tim 3:7 begins a new sentence and repeats the initial and primary concern.²⁸

Towner reiterated the importance of being above reproach by stating: “Its placement within the opening phrase and its wide scope suggest that this is the essential requirement for candidacy. Within the overseer code it is equivalent to the requirement of a ‘good reputation with outsiders’ with which the instructions concluded (v. 7).”²⁹

The husband of one wife. This characteristic, the first of six positive qualities that Paul employed to help describe a life that is above reproach, is the most difficult or contentious of the list to define.³⁰ C. K. Barrett described this characteristic as “notoriously obscure.”³¹ At least four basic interpretations and a number of variations of

²⁶Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 152. MacArthur expressed a similar notion, “As Paul delineates the other qualifications for overseers, he simply expands on the particulars of what it means to be above reproach.” MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 115. Similarly, Strauch stated, “The first and overarching qualification is that of being ‘above reproach.’ What is meant by ‘above reproach’ is defined by the character qualities that follow the term.” Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 74.

²⁷Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 241.

²⁸Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 153. PE is Mounce’s abbreviation for the Pastoral Epistles.

²⁹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 250.

³⁰Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 250.

³¹C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles in the New English Bible: With*

those views have been offered. Mounce listed the potential interpretations as “(1) ‘Must be married,’ (2) ‘Not polygamous,’ (3) ‘Faithful to his wife,’ or (4) ‘Not remarried/divorced.’”³² Sydney Page suggested that the trait was meant to exclude those who “(1) were unmarried, (2) were polygamous, (3) had been divorced, or (4) had remarried after the death of their first spouse.”³³ Ed Glasscock described the views as marriage as a requisite, one wife in a lifetime, no divorce, and faithful to one’s wife.³⁴ Strauch expressed the views as elders must be married, elders must not be polygamists, elders may marry only once, and elders must be martially and sexually above reproach.³⁵

Perhaps the simplest explanation for the challenge with this trait is that the phrase itself is unusual. Mounce noted, “The Greek has to be ‘squeezed’ to illicit any meaning.”³⁶ Glasscock concluded, “As one considers the many facets of the arguments related to the phrase ‘one-woman man,’ it must be admitted that there is no simple absolute answer.”³⁷ Homer A. Kent, Jr. wrote, “The interpretation of this short phrase has been disputed from the earliest times.”³⁸

Introduction and Commentary (London: Oxford University Press, 1963; reprint, Grand Rapids: Outreach Publications, 1986), 58.

³²Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170.

³³Sydney Page, “Marital Expectations of Church Leaders in the Pastoral Epistles,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 50 (June 1993): 106.

³⁴Ed Glasscock, “‘The Husband of One Wife’ Requirement in 1 Timothy 3:2,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140, no. 559 (July-September 1983): 245-49.

³⁵Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 190.

³⁶Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 172.

³⁷Glasscock, “‘The Husband of One Wife,’” 256.

³⁸Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles: Studies in I and II Timothy and Titus* (Chicago: Moody, 1958), 126.

To help interpret the expression, two considerations should be made. First, the overall tenor of the list deals with issues of character not events or conditions. Page observed that a marital fidelity view understands the phrase “the husband of one wife” not as a description of a condition that results from past events, but as “a moral quality that is currently being demonstrated.”³⁹ From a review of the grammatical structure of the phrase in the context of the list, Glasscock concluded that Paul was emphasizing the man’s character and not his marital situation.⁴⁰ MacArthur affirmed the same conclusion when he stated: “Paul is not referring to the leader’s marital status, as the absence of the definite article in the original indicates. Rather the issue is his moral, sexual behavior.”⁴¹ The first consideration gives merit to a marital fidelity view, which would be understood as Paul calling for an elder to be faithful in his relationship with his wife and with women in general.

Second, Page concluded from a study of the New Testament and comparable literature that there was no obvious way at the time to express the concept of marital fidelity in Hellenistic Greek.⁴² The lack of such an expression may be a result of excessive moral laxity within the Greek culture.⁴³ MacArthur noted this qualification of marital fidelity “was especially important in Ephesus, where sexual evil was rampant.”⁴⁴

³⁹Page, “Marital Expectations of Church Leaders,” 114.

⁴⁰Glasscock, ““The Husband of One Wife,”” 252.

⁴¹John MacArthur, Jr., *1 Timothy*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 104.

⁴²Page, “Marital Expectations of Church Leaders,” 119.

⁴³Glasscock, ““The Husband of One Wife,”” 252.

⁴⁴MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 116. From 1 Tim 1:3, it would appear that Paul wrote 1 Timothy to Timothy to address matters within the church at Ephesus.

In such a context Page noted, “If the author wanted to express the idea of one who was faithful to his marriage vows in a positive way, he may have had to coin a phrase.”⁴⁵

Though no view on this phrase is without some level of challenge, it would appear that a noted part of being above reproach as a church leader would mean that the man in question exhibits faithfulness and fidelity to the marriage relationship.⁴⁶ His interaction with his wife and women in general is worthy of imitation.⁴⁷ R. C. H. Lenski understood this trait as describing a man “who cannot be taken hold of on the score of sexual promiscuity or laxity.”⁴⁸ An elder is to be a man who is faithful to his wife, or if he is not married, an elder should be faithful to sexual purity.

⁴⁵Page, “Marital Expectations of Church Leaders,” 119.

⁴⁶Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 250-51.

⁴⁷R. Albert Mohler, Jr. pointed out in a recent blog article that 1Tim 3 appears to suggest that church leader will be married. He noted, “Now, the text does not explicitly state that a minister is not to be single, but it does hold out marriage as the default and normal state.” A church leader could be single, but there is an expectation in the text that often the leader will be married. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “Must a Pastor Be Married? The New York Times Asks the Question,” AlbertMohler.com, entry posted March 25, 2011, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2011/03/25/must-a-pastor-be-married-the-new-york-times-asks-the-question/> (accessed March 26, 2011). MacArthur, commenting on 1 Tim 3:2, noted that Paul did not intend to exclude single men from the ministry according to this verse. MacArthur, *1 Timothy*, 105. Steve DeWitt added a perspective somewhat in response to Mohler’s comments. Speaking as a single pastor, DeWitt observed, “Would Paul write qualifications that handicapped himself as a pastor? Further, we have no indication that Timothy and Titus were married. Yet they are charged with identifying and laying hands on elders who would serve under their leadership. It seems that what is good for the apostolic goose should be good enough for the pastoral gander.” Steve DeWitt, “‘That’s Odd’: On Bias against Single Pastors,” The Gospel Coalition Blog, entry posted March 26, 2011, <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2011/03/26/thats-odd-on-bias-against-single-pastors/> (accessed March 28, 2011). In the case of a single man, he too would need to display faithfulness to marriage in terms of having a moral character toward his sexual behavior. MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 116.

⁴⁸R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1946), 580.

Temperate. The second of the positive attributes listed by Paul literally refers to sobriety as the opposite of intoxication.⁴⁹ Given that the issue of wine is addressed in verse 3, the idea in verse 2 would be more a figurative sense of balanced and sober thinking.⁵⁰ The concern of this characteristic is that the man displayed a mental sobriety.⁵¹ His judgments were expressed with clarity of thought.⁵² And his life was free from debilitating excesses.⁵³

Prudent. This next attribute was one of the cardinal virtues in Greco-Roman ethical thought.⁵⁴ The stress of this attribute is self control that is expressed by such things as good judgment, discretion, and common sense.⁵⁵ Paul expressed with this attribute, the point that a church leader is to be a man who has control over his behavior and “the impulses and emotions beneath it.”⁵⁶

Respectable. The fourth characteristic is commonly associated with the third characteristic.⁵⁷ The frequent connection between the two traits may be explained in that prudent is more of an inward quality, whereas respectable is focused on “outward deportment or outward appearance.”⁵⁸ Kent suggested respectable “refers to a life which

⁴⁹MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 117.

⁵⁰Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 251.

⁵¹Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 193.

⁵²Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 173.

⁵³Patrick, *Church Planter*, 47.

⁵⁴Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 251.

⁵⁵Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 193.

⁵⁶Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 252.

⁵⁷Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 193.

⁵⁸Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 173.

is well-ordered, the expression of a well-ordered mind.”⁵⁹ Patrick noted, “To be respectable means that a pastor has a good handle on the responsibilities of his life, to the point that others view him not necessarily as a man who has it all together, but as one who can bear the weight and complexity of his life, which then qualified him to lead the various complexities of the church.”⁶⁰

Hospitable. The Greek word Paul used has a root meaning of “loving strangers.”⁶¹ Mounce suggested that “Overseers must be the type of people who will gladly welcome people into their homes.”⁶² Though some might view this trait as referring simply to a form of pastoral care, Patrick suggested that this trait is more about how a man and his family welcome those outside the faith.⁶³ It is perhaps unwise and inconsistent with the record of the history to limit hospitality to one or other. Towner noted that “the early Christian mission and churches depended on those who would open their homes and share their goods.”⁶⁴

Sadly, “Hospitality is becoming an almost forgotten Christian virtue in our style of life today.”⁶⁵ An absence of hospitality in the life of a church leader could very well have serious ramifications. It could contribute to creating an attitude of indifference

⁵⁹Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 131. MacArthur made a similar observation that respectable “means he handles every area of his life in a systematic, orderly manner.” MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 118.

⁶⁰Patrick, *Church Planter*, 49.

⁶¹Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 132.

⁶²Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 174.

⁶³Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 193-95. Patrick, *Church Planter*, 49.

⁶⁴Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 252.

⁶⁵Mortimer Arias, “Centripetal Mission or Evangelization by Hospitality,” *Missiology* 10, no. 1 (January 1982): 69.

toward the needs of others.⁶⁶ Also a failure to use one's home to show love to strangers to the faith would be neglecting a natural tool for sharing the good news. Michael Green noted, "One of the most important methods of spreading the gospel in antiquity was by the use of homes. . . . The sheer informality and relaxed atmosphere of the home, not to mention the hospitality which must often have gone with it, all helped to make this form of evangelism particularly successful."⁶⁷

Able to teach. The basic idea of this characteristic is the ability to impart knowledge to others.⁶⁸ To exercise this ability is dependent upon the man having knowledge of the Bible, being prepared to teach, and having the ability to communicate.⁶⁹ This trait is the only one of the list that could be described as a ministry skill or gift.⁷⁰ In the context of 1 Timothy 3, this trait distinguishes an overseer from a deacon.

Given the strong character bias of the profile Paul shared with Timothy, it is curious as to why Paul would add this skill or gift based trait to the list. Simply creating a distinction between overseer and deacon would presumably not be the only reason. MacArthur suggested a possible explanation when he wrote: "Some may wonder why Paul includes this qualification in the midst of a list of moral qualities. He does so

⁶⁶Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 195.

⁶⁷Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 318. Tim Chester and Steve Timmis shared examples of hospitality and evangelism in contemporary culture in their book, *Total Church*. Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 53-68.

⁶⁸Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 131.

⁶⁹Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 195.

⁷⁰Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 252.

because effective teaching is predicated on the moral character of the teacher. What a man *is* cannot be divorced from what he says.”⁷¹

Not addicted to wine. With the start of verse 3, the list moves from positive to negative qualities. The first negative quality is an expression used in the New Testament only here in 1 Timothy 3 and in the similar list in Titus 1:7.⁷² Some writers have suggested that the Greek word *πάροινος* means simply one who drinks.⁷³ Other scholars would suggest that the word has more a meaning of being addicted to wine. The word *πάροινος* is a compound of *παρά*, meaning “alongside of,” and *δίνος*, the word for wine. Mounce noted, “The picture is of a person who spends too much time sitting with their wine.”⁷⁴ The word seems to have a sense of time with and quantity of wine. Marvin R. Vincent noted that the related verb, *παροινεῖν*, means “*to behave ill at wine, to treat with drunken violence.*”⁷⁵ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr. reached a similar conclusion, observing that the word described a person addicted to wine, thus a church leader must be able to control his thirst of alcohol.⁷⁶ The verbal form was used once in the Septuagint in Isaiah 41:12, where the concern is violence from wine. The sense of

⁷¹MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 119. Italics are original.

⁷²Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 175. A similar concept is communicated in the list Paul offered for deacons starting 1Tim 3:8, but in that case Paul used a different Greek phrase.

⁷³MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 119. Also, Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 132.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 175.

⁷⁵Marvin R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1940), 4:230. Italics are original.

⁷⁶Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 111.

πάρσιμος seems to be that a church leader should be a person whose life is not influenced or controlled by alcohol or other substances.⁷⁷

Alcohol is, and has been, a charged topic within the church in the United States. Bill J. Leonard observed, “Clearly, the early Baptists in England and America followed prevailing Protestant sentiments that permitted the use of ‘spirits’ in moderation and in keeping with the common cultural practices of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. . . . Colonial settlers of all classes, and most religious persuasions, used various alcoholic beverages at mealtime.”⁷⁸ R. Alan Streett echoed a similar historical reflection but also noted an accompanying issue when he wrote: “Since America was first settled by the Puritans, the consumption of alcohol by Christians has been a hotly contested issue. These early pioneers, who regularly drank wine, beer and distilled spirits, soon faced a problem when their ‘covenant’ children abused alcohol and displayed unsavory behavior in the public square.”⁷⁹

This problem played a role in the development of negative attitudes toward alcohol usage within the church and created an atmosphere that saw value in abstinence. Streett noted further, “Widespread public displays of drunkenness declined whenever revival broke out, but resurfaced in time. Before long, questions arose whether Christians should drink at all, even responsibly. In the mid-1700s, the Methodist movement was one of the first to take a strong stand for complete abstinence.”⁸⁰ Yet, this seemingly

⁷⁷Eph 5:18.

⁷⁸Bill J. Leonard, “‘They have no Wine’: Wet/Dry Baptists and the Alcohol Issues,” *Criswell Theological Review* 5, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 5, 8.

⁷⁹R. Alan Streett, “Christians and Alcohol,” *Criswell Theological Review* 5, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 1.

⁸⁰Ibid. Leonard noted, “The increased consumption of ‘distilled spirits’ especially on the American frontier became a central issue in the rise of the early temperance movement.” Leonard, “‘They have no Wine,’” 9.

responsible reaction to the sinful misuse of alcohol may have gone too far. Leonard noted, “Evangelical revivalists made abstinence a sign of true conversion.”⁸¹

A possible result of this understanding was that cultural context may have taken on a greater than warranted influence in shaping convictions concerning alcohol. Daniel B. Wallace suggested, “Our attitude toward alcohol may well be conditioned by our culture more than we realize. Since the days of Prohibition, many believers have simply assumed that partaking of alcoholic beverages was sinful. What is interesting is that in many other countries God-fearing Christians see no problem with alcoholic beverages.”⁸²

Even if cultural influences have impacted views on alcohol, it must be clearly stated that alcohol has been and can be destructive in people’s lives. Any misuse of alcohol is a spiritually significant matter, given that alcohol is often sought as a means of comfort and can function as an idol. Patrick observed, “Not only is this physically, mentally, and emotionally dangerous, it is a sign of deep distrust in God’s ability to meet our needs and provide our strength.”⁸³ As such, great caution must be exercised with respect to alcohol.

Colin Brown expressed the need for caution when he noted: “The NT maintains a similar attitude to wine as the OT. On the one hand, it is one of God’s gifts of creation to be enjoyed. On the other hand, to refrain from drinking wine may be necessary for the sake of the gospel.”⁸⁴ Proverbs 20:1 denotes that a person who is lead

⁸¹Leonard, ““They have no Wine,”” 10.

⁸²Daniel B. Wallace, “The Bible and Alcohol,” Bible.org, <http://www.bible.org/article/bible-and-alcohol> (accessed March 22, 2012). Leonard offered that some Baptists “developed a higher hermeneutic that stressed abstinence on the basis of personal purity, discipleship and tradition rather than remain with the norm required by a certain biblical literalism they applied to baptism.” Leonard, ““They have no Wine,”” 16.

⁸³Patrick, *Church Planter*, 51.

⁸⁴C. Brown, “Vine, Wine,” “ἀμπελος. . .,” in *The New International Dictionary*

astray by alcohol is not wise. Richard Land and Barrett Duke observed that to fall prey to alcohol would be to go against the intent of Proverbs. They wrote, “The very purpose of the book of Proverbs is to impart wisdom. The one who allows himself to fall under the influence of alcohol is engaging in behavior contrary to that of a wise man.”⁸⁵

Proverbs 23:29-35 communicates the danger of tarrying over wine. Verse 32 describes alcohol biting like a snake and poisoning like a viper. Proverbs 31:4-5 counsels kings to not drink wine because the alcohol might hinder a king’s ability to perform his duties. In a similar fashion, Leviticus 10:9 forbids priests from drinking while they were serving at the tent of meeting.

In considering the various comments about alcohol, and seeking to discern how to best understand and apply this quality of not being addicted to wine, a conclusion of Daniel L. Akin is worth considering. He wrote, “Can I say it is always a sin to take a drink? No. Can I say it is almost always ill-advised? Yes, because it violates the biblical principles of wisdom and witness.”⁸⁶ At most, alcohol should have a very small place in a life of a church leader based on Paul’s directive in 1 Timothy 3:3.⁸⁷

One example of acceptable, but minimal use of alcohol in the life of an elder would be Paul’s directive in 1 Timothy 5:23 where Timothy was instructed to use a little wine. Presumably, Timothy, in an effort to disassociate himself from Paul’s opponents at Ephesus, who were known to be drunkards, had chosen to abstain from wine.⁸⁸ Paul

of New Testament Theology, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 3:922.

⁸⁵Richard Land and Barrett Duke, “The Christian and Alcohol,” *Criswell Theological Review* 5, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 24.

⁸⁶Daniel L. Akin, “The Case for Alcohol Abstinence,” Danielakin.com, http://www.danielakin.com/wp-content/uploads/old/Resource_617/The%20Case%20for%20Alcohol%20Abstinence.pdf (accessed March 21, 2012).

⁸⁷Mounce noted that the New Testament does not recommend drinking for enjoyment. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 175

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 319. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 376.

called upon Timothy to alter his pattern for the good of his physical health.⁸⁹ Paul is not urging Timothy to drink in moderation. Mounce noted, “This verse has often been misused in popular exegesis as an endorsement of social drinking.”⁹⁰ That is not the sense or intention of this verse. Paul is noting that alcohol can be appropriately used for medical reasons.

Could an overseer appropriately use alcohol in other situations? From the directives of Leviticus 10:9 and Proverbs 31:4-5, it would seem that abstinence would be the wiser approach, and it would be an extremely rare situation in which it would be appropriate for a church leader to drink alcohol today.⁹¹ With leadership comes significant responsibility with respect to other people. Alcohol can easily hinder a leader from performing at his best, meaning being controlled and directed by the Holy Spirit.

Not pugnacious. The word Paul used for this trait, *πλήκτης*, pugnacious, is used only twice in the New Testament, here and in Titus 1:7.⁹² The root idea of the word is a quick tempered person who will strike with his fists.⁹³ Clearly Paul is against a violent man serving as an elder. Such a person would undoubtedly add explosions to the conflicts church leadership must address.⁹⁴ There is no place in church leadership for a

⁸⁹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 376.

⁹⁰Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 319.

⁹¹Possibly in a cross-cultural situation that included a wedding celebration or some other type of celebration, a leader might be in a context that a host expects the leader to participate in a toast, and to not participate would cause a significant offense. To take a very small sip in such a setting would not be wrong, but would be one of the rare occurrences when such an action would be appropriate.

⁹²Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 176. The word is not used in the Septuagint.

⁹³Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 132.

⁹⁴Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 196.

man who lashes out irrationally.⁹⁵ Towner wisely noted that the degree and modes of violence expressed by this word are numerous and thus: “the prohibition should be regarded as widely as possible.”⁹⁶

Gentle. Paul returned to positive traits by using a word that was often found in Greek literature related to rulers.⁹⁷ When ἐπιεικτής was used in the Septuagint, it was used to express a quality of God.⁹⁸ Strauch noted that this trait is “one of the most attractive and needed virtues required of an elder.”⁹⁹ Towner suggested that one can almost subsume all virtues into this one word. He contended that it expressed “a balance between honesty, tolerance, and gentleness.”¹⁰⁰ In using this trait, Paul expressed that leaders need to be reasonable, courtesy, and tolerant.¹⁰¹ A leader should be willing to yield when yielding is possible.¹⁰² This trait speaks directly to the need for church leaders to be void of stubbornness.¹⁰³

Peaceable. Though stated as a positive trait, the word translated peaceable is actually a negation of a word that is translated as fighting or quarreling in such verses as

⁹⁵Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 2nd ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 93.

⁹⁶Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 253.

⁹⁷Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 176.

⁹⁸Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 253.

⁹⁹Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 197. He also offered that no English word can adequately translate the full range of the meaning of the word.

¹⁰⁰Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 253.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Patrick, *Church Planter*, 52.

¹⁰³Ibid.

Acts 7:26, 2 Timothy 2:24, and James 4:2.¹⁰⁴ The word for fighting, μάχομαι, is a strong word that speaks of active and serious bickering.¹⁰⁵ Strauch stated that fighting has paralyzed and even killed local churches.¹⁰⁶ Clearly, a church leader must be a man who does not act in a manner that contributes to such fight. He must not be a quarrelsome person.¹⁰⁷ Towner described this trait by stating: “this irenic, constructive demeanor would heal rifts caused by bitter argument, aid in uniting the congregation, and positively contribute to the leader’s public reputation.”¹⁰⁸

Free from the love of money. Sadly from the earliest days of the church, specifically in Acts 5, there is evidence of the damage that loving money does to one’s life and to the church. Kent noted, “How frequently has the church suffered in reputation as well as in spiritual growth through the covetousness of some of her leaders.”¹⁰⁹ The love of money can have a corrupting affect on the soul of a leader. Loving money may contribute to being tempted to view people as means to increase financial resources, instead of people who need to hear the good news and be disciplined.¹¹⁰ Church leaders must be men who are free from the love of money. Regardless of the compensation given to a church leader, or even if there is no salary involved, the responsibilities of a

¹⁰⁴The negation was made by the addition of an alpha privative.

¹⁰⁵Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 176.

¹⁰⁶Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 197-98.

¹⁰⁷MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 119. Paul states clearly in 2 Tim 2:24 that a servant of the Lord is not be quarrelsome.

¹⁰⁸Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 253.

¹⁰⁹Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 133.

¹¹⁰MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 119.

leadership position present opportunities for dishonest and corrupt behavior related to money.¹¹¹

Manages household well. After a string of short descriptions of eleven traits, Paul completed the list of traits by providing longer descriptions of three additional traits. Paul began this set of three by examining the home life of a potential elder. Donald Guthrie suggested that this trait is “a most important principle, which has not always had the prominence it deserves.”¹¹² The reason for this trait is expressed clearly by the rhetorical question Paul asked in verse 5.¹¹³ Mounce noted, “With this rhetorical question Paul makes explicit what is implicit in v 4: there is a direct connection between a person’s ability to manage his family and his ability to manage the church.”¹¹⁴ Kent offered, “The way in which a man controls his home reveals his capacity for leadership and government. This ability is most obvious when there are children in the home.”¹¹⁵ Barrett observed, “His ability to control his own family will bear witness to his fitness for a responsible position in God’s family.”¹¹⁶

A key measure of whether or not a man is managing his household well is his children’s behavior.¹¹⁷ In the second half of verse 4, Paul provided a description of

¹¹¹Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 59.

¹¹²Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 93.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 180.

¹¹⁵Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 133.

¹¹⁶Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistle*, 59. The logic expressed in v. 5 and reiterated in the quotes of Mounce, Kent, and Barrett reflects a widely held conviction of the era that “one’s private behavior determines to some degree one’s potential to lead in the public arena.” Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 256.

¹¹⁷Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 199. See also Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 255.

“well.” A well managed household is a home in which the children are submissive to the father, and he has and is fathering them in a manner in which he has maintained their respect.¹¹⁸ Maintaining their respect implies that he has maintained his dignity. Dignity infers that the father “is not to be a spirit-crushing tyrant who gains submission by harsh punishment.”¹¹⁹ Instead of being some of sort of a dictator, the father should be seen to be caring and protective.¹²⁰ The type of leader Timothy was to seek according to Paul was a servant leader, one whom would care for the church of God according to verse 5.

Not a new convert. A church leader should not be a man who recently has come to faith in Christ. A beginner in the faith is not ready for the arduous task of shepherding a local church.¹²¹ This qualification denoted Paul’s concern for the spiritual maturity of the man taking on the responsibility of overseer.¹²² The provision of this trait is prudent, given that too rapid of a promotion or advancement might easily contribute “to excessive pride and instability.”¹²³ A new believer could easily be set up for the trap of pride as the words “become conceited” in verse 6 suggest. Strauch offered, “An elder, however, must be mature and know his own heart. A new Christian does not know his own heart or understand the craftiness of the enemy, so he is vulnerable to pride – the most subtle of all temptations and most destructive of all sins.”¹²⁴ With the development

¹¹⁸Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 177. According to Mounce, the expression in v. 4, “keeping his children under control,” means “that an overseer’s children must be characterized by submissiveness to their father.” *Ibid.*, 179.

¹¹⁹Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 199.

¹²⁰Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 178.

¹²¹Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 200.

¹²²Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 180.

¹²³Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 94.

¹²⁴Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 200.

of maturity in Christ should come a “sense of proportion that would prevent leaders from self-absorption with position and authority.”¹²⁵

The syntax of the final expression of verse 6, “fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil,” is not easily determined.¹²⁶ The New American Standard version of the verse just quoted, interprets the genitive expression, *κρίμα ἐμπέση τοῦ διαβόλου*, as an objective genitive, meaning the condemnation of God on the devil. The other option would be to understand the expression as a subjective genitive, meaning that the devil was actively involved in the judgment of the young overseer.¹²⁷ If this syntax is correct, it could “mean that Satan set up the judgment or that he is God’s agent in punishing sin.”¹²⁸ Either conclusion communicates a very sober tone to heed this trait.¹²⁹

Have a good reputation. The final trait in Paul’s list to Timothy served as a closing bracket to the list, repeating the parenetic verb, *δεῖ*, and the concern for a good reputation.¹³⁰ Mounce suggested the concern for a good reputation is a repetition of the main point of the paragraph from verse 2.¹³¹ The repetition of the main point is

¹²⁵Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 257.

¹²⁶Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 182.

¹²⁷Both Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 257-58, and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 182, have additional discussion of this syntax issue.

¹²⁸Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 182.

¹²⁹MacArthur concluded on the syntax issue, “That’s a reference to the judgment God pronounced on Lucifer, the devil.” MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 123. Mounce leans toward a similar conclusion. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 182. But Towner concludes the expression is a subjective genitive, based on seeing a parallelism to the devil’s active role in v. 7, Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 258.

¹³⁰Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 258. Also, Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 201. Strauch noted, “The verb ‘must,’ the same verb used in verse 2, again stresses the absolute necessity and importance of this matter.”

¹³¹Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 182.

strategically used by Paul to enforce the understanding that overseers must be reputable men in the community, specifically with those outside church, those who do not know Christ.¹³² Though it would be the leader that would fall into reproach according to verse 7, there would be a corporate implication that is tied to evangelism. Towner offered that “Paul’s ultimate motive is missionary in thrust.”¹³³ If a leader lacked credibility and was derided within the community, the church would be connected to that derision and the evangelistic mandate would be threatened.¹³⁴ Strauch suggested, “The church’s evangelistic credibility and witness is tied to the moral reputation of its leaders.”¹³⁵

To warn leaders of the importance of resisting temptation, Paul underlined the spiritual impact on the leader who did not have a good reputation outside of the church by speaking of the snare of the devil.¹³⁶ Though the expression *παγίδα τοῦ διαβόλου* could be understood to be an objective genitive, Mounce, Towner, and Strauch are in agreement that the phrase is a subjective genitive.¹³⁷ Paul used it to describe an action of Satan against a leader, presumably to entrap the leader in an increasing vortex of sin.¹³⁸

The role of a leader for any enterprise is significant. Paul’s list to Timothy stressed the importance of the character of an elder to the life, reputation, and mission of

¹³²Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 60. Also, Patrick, *Church Planter*, 54.

¹³³Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 259.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 201.

¹³⁶Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 259.

¹³⁷Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 183-84. Mounce noted some possibility for the phrase in question to be understood as an objective genitive, but his interpretation of the phrase *κρίμα ἐμπέση τοῦ διαβόλου* in v. 6 and Paul’s use of the snare of the devil in 2 Tim 2:26, led to his understanding of v. 7 as a subjective genitive. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 259. Towner also referenced 2 Tim 2:26 as a factor in his conclusion. Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 202.

¹³⁸Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 202.

the church. These traits served, and can continue to serve the church to strengthen its leadership and to “protect the church’s testimony in society.”¹³⁹ This list offers considerable wisdom to the formation of a church planter profile in that the list expresses the priority of God in the selection of church leaders.

Titus 1

The list of traits given by Paul to Titus to aid in the selection of elders is found in verses 5 to 9 of Titus 1:

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, *namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Scholars have noted overlap between the Timothy and Titus lists. Mounce noted that the lists in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 share remarkable similarities.¹⁴⁰ Towner observed that the shape or structuring of the two lists is similar to the extent that Paul used basically the same language to cover the same ground.¹⁴¹ Barrett and Guthrie also concur that there is a measure of agreement between the two lists.¹⁴² The tables below help to capture the amount of overlap between the two lists.¹⁴³ There are two unique traits that were only

¹³⁹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 260.

¹⁴⁰Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 155, 385.

¹⁴¹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 240, 681.

¹⁴²Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 128. Also, Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 196-97.

¹⁴³Mounce has a table that combines the Titus passage with the lists for both elders and deacons in 1 Tim 3. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 155-58. Prudent is listed as an exact parallel expression even though prudent is found only in 1 Tim 3, but not Titus 1. The same Greek word, *σώφρων*, is used in both 1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:8, it is translated as sensible in Titus 1:8 and prudent in 1 Tim 3:2.

found in the list Paul gave in 1 Timothy 3: respectable and not a new convert. In contrast there were five unique traits in the Titus list: God’s steward, loving what is good, just, devout, and holding fast the faithful word.

To understand the contribution of the Titus list to the selection of church leaders, three matters are addressed. First, the five unique characteristics from Titus are discussed. Second, consideration is given to why the concern for not a new convert was not included in the Titus list.¹⁴⁴ Third, the household explanations given in 1 Timothy and Titus are compared and examined.

Table 1: Exact Parallels Between 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1

Exact Parallel Expression	1 Timothy 3	Titus 1
Husband of one wife	Verse 2	Verse 6
Prudent	Verse 2	Verse 8
Hospitable	Verse 2	Verse 8
Not addicted to wine	Verse 3	Verse 7
Not pugnacious	Verse 3	Verse 7

God’s steward. This unique trait of the Titus list appeared in connection with a repetition of the concern to be above reproach. Verse 7, particularly this expression of God’s steward, provided an explanation for why an elder needed to be above reproach: he

¹⁴⁴Respectable was another term, found in 1 Tim 3, but absent from the Titus list. It is not included in the discussing of missing terms because Towner suggested that respectable in 1 Tim 3 came close to the idea of loving what is good in Titus 1:8. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 689.

was engaged in God’s business in God’s household.¹⁴⁵ The repetition might also have served to highlight the significance of the home life of an elder. Verse 6 connected being above reproach in the context of the elder’s home. Verse 7 seemingly built off of that notion. Being above reproach at home is a key to being above reproach in God’s household.¹⁴⁶

Table 2: Conceptual Parallels between 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1

1 Timothy 3	Titus 1
Verse 2 – Above reproach	Verses 6 and 7 – Above reproach
Verse 2 – Temperate	Verse 8 – Self-controlled
Verse 2 – Able to teach	Verse 9 – Able both to exhort and to refute
Verse 3 – Gentle	Verse 7 – Not self-willed
Verse 3 – Peaceable	Verse 7 – Not quick-tempered
Verse 3 – Free from love of money	Verse 7 – Not fond of sordid gain
Verse 4 – Manages his own household well	Verse 6 – Having children who believe

Strauch noted that the use of the word steward created an image of the church as being God’s household, and the steward being the house manager.¹⁴⁷ An elder must be

¹⁴⁵Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 197.

¹⁴⁶The trait of above reproach is listed as conceptual parallel because in 1 Tim 3:2 Paul used the Greek word ἀωεπίληπτος, but in Titus 1:6, 7 he used the Greek word ἀνέγκλητος. Paul used ἀνέγκλητος in 1Tim 3:10 to denote the need for a deacon to be above reproach. Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 197. Towner noted that the two adjectives are synonymous. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 241.

¹⁴⁷Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 231.

a man who understands that he is accountable and responsible to another for what has been entrusted to his care.¹⁴⁸ The expression “God’s steward” conveyed the message that God is the master of the household and that as an overseer, the steward, was a man who displayed faithfulness and commitment to the task given him by the master.¹⁴⁹ The steward image communicates the role of God in appointing a man to this task.¹⁵⁰ The steward image also suggested that the man was accountable to God for his stewardship.¹⁵¹

Loving what is good. The Greek word Paul used for this trait, φιλάγαθος, is a compound word that combines words for love and good.¹⁵² This use is its only occurrence in the New Testament.¹⁵³ The word itself was common in both Aristotle and Philo, and was used as a title of honor in Greek societies.¹⁵⁴ The notion of loving what is good sets this trait in contrast with self-love and provided a demonstration of faith.¹⁵⁵ One who trusts Christ will be increasingly transformed to love what God values. Strauch contended that this trait is required of those who want to help others and live as Christ

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 687.

¹⁵⁰The steward image may potentially suggest the idea of a call by God. Hutz H. Hertzberg noted, in his research of church planters, the importance of God’s calling and suggested further research should be done on the topic. The steward image of Titus 1 adds validity to the need for further research. Hutz H. Hertzberg, “Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions of Younger Evangelical Church Planters,” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2008), 131-32.

¹⁵¹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 687.

¹⁵²Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 391.

¹⁵³Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 129.

¹⁵⁴Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 391. The use of the word as a title of honor perhaps suggested that this trait was viewed as an integral part of what a leader needs to be. Given the disparaging description of many Cretans in Titus 1:12, this trait seems to suggest a distinct transformation must be the part of a leader’s life.

¹⁵⁵Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 689.

like examples.¹⁵⁶ Being a Christ like example certainly would contribute to being above reproach.

Just. The general sense of this trait would be that a church leader's behavior should be characterized as being in accordance with God's standards.¹⁵⁷ Such behavior would be fair and inherently honest.¹⁵⁸ As people interact with an elder, they should view him as being a principled man, one who can be counted on to make fair decisions.¹⁵⁹ The presence of this trait in Titus, but its absence in 1 Timothy, is understood as denoting the early stage the churches of Crete were in.¹⁶⁰ Though this trait may seem obvious in a more established setting, Paul did not want to make that assumption. Overseers are to be leaders. Leading requires the making of decisions that are in accordance with God's values, making this trait critical.

Devout. The word Paul used in Titus 1:8 suggests an inward purity of intention and devotion.¹⁶¹ The life of an elder should be unpolluted.¹⁶² The sense of such an image would have denoted a distinctiveness of behavior. Towner noted Paul's concern for holiness by stating: "a condition of inward purity that has outward results."¹⁶³ Elders must be men, who have experienced and are continuing to experience God's forgiveness and transformation. That transformation should be expressed by the behavior that flows

¹⁵⁶Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 233.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁵⁸Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 689-90.

¹⁵⁹Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 234.

¹⁶⁰Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 690.

¹⁶¹Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 53, 130.

¹⁶²Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 221.

¹⁶³Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 690.

from their lives. Strauch observed that a devout man would be one who was faithfully clinging to God and his word.¹⁶⁴ Such clinging would seem to be consistent with one who had experienced transformation and was seeking its furtherance in his life.

Holding fast the faithful word. The inclusion of this unique trait in Titus moves the list from just moral virtues to include a theological dimension.¹⁶⁵ Elders need to be men of character and virtue, but given the responsibilities of leadership, they also must have a noted level of theological maturity. Barrett stated, “The minister must be well grounded in Christian doctrine.”¹⁶⁶ This requirement is a necessary precursor to the exhorting and rebuking duties that are a part of being able to teach. An overseer must be able and prepared to hold firmly to God’s truth, to accomplish the double duties that Paul listed next in verse 9.¹⁶⁷ The idea behind holding fast is one of unwavering adherence.¹⁶⁸ Strauch observed that the word holding fast, ἀντέχομαι, means, “‘cling firmly to,’ ‘be devoted to,’ or ‘adhere wholeheartedly to.’”¹⁶⁹ The word used strongly suggests that an elder needs to be a man that has an unshakable, fervent conviction, and commitment to God’s truth.¹⁷⁰ To teach and lead God’s people, an overseer must be convinced of the trustworthiness of God’s Word.

¹⁶⁴Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 235.

¹⁶⁵Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 391.

¹⁶⁶Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 130.

¹⁶⁷Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 199. Mounce also noted that this trait provides the basis for exhortation and rebuke, Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 391. Similarly, Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 130. And also, Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 236.

¹⁶⁸Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 691.

¹⁶⁹Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 236.

¹⁷⁰*Ibid.*

The absence of no new convert trait in Titus. During the discussion of 1 Timothy 3, consideration was given to Paul’s concern that an elder in Ephesus was not to be a new convert. Various commentators offered strong reasons why a new convert should not serve as an elder. Yet curiously, this trait was not repeated in the list given to Titus.¹⁷¹ Why would Paul have been inspired by God to include this trait in 1 Timothy, but not in Titus? Although Strauch is, in a sense, correct that “we can only guess” why the trait was not included, consideration should be given to the matter.¹⁷²

There appears to be a consensus among commentators that the understood newness of the churches in Crete was a major factor in its absence from the list.¹⁷³ Guthrie concluded that the absence of the trait in Titus was because the “more recent establishment no doubt rendered it inappropriate.”¹⁷⁴ Kent held that “the ideal could not be insisted upon” in such a new work.¹⁷⁵ Towner understood that the pioneer situation in

¹⁷¹Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 181.

¹⁷²Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 201.

¹⁷³At the conclusion of the first missionary or church planting journey of Paul and Barnabas recorded in Acts 13 and 14, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in the cities they had started new churches in. The first journey was approximately two years long, either from AD 46 to 48 according to R. N. Longenecker. R. N. Longenecker, “Paul, the Apostle,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Or from AD 47 to 49 according to Donald Guthrie. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 1006. The list in Titus would appear to be consistent with the practice of this journey. Churches were started and they needed leadership, so Paul ensured that they had leaders, though many, if not all of those men appointed as elders would undoubtedly have been recent converts. In the case of a church like Ephesus, being ten or more years old when Paul wrote to Timothy, Paul directed Timothy to look for leaders who had developed a maturity that comes from a longer relationship with God. Paul was not suggesting one approach to Timothy and one for Titus. Rather, Paul was providing guidance in the case of a very new church in the case of Titus and in 1 Timothy, Paul was directing with respect to a more developed congregation.

¹⁷⁴Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 94.

¹⁷⁵Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 134.

Crete did not afford the luxury of being selective in its choice of leaders.¹⁷⁶ Mounce suggested, “The application of this rule would depend upon the relative age of the local church, its speed of growth, and many other factors that would vary from place to place and from time to time.”¹⁷⁷ The narrative example of Acts 14:21-23 and the contrast between the situations in Ephesus and Crete should be taken into consideration when selecting leadership for a new church.

Believing or faithful children? First Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6 are considered, by Mounce, to share a conceptual parallelism.¹⁷⁸ In Titus 1:6, most English versions translate the Greek adjective, πιστός, in an active sense of believing.¹⁷⁹ Three older English versions, the King James, the Geneva Bible, and the Douay Rheims, and three newer English versions, the New King James, the New English Translation, and the Holman Christian Standard Bible, prefer a passive translation like faithful.

The differences between English translations create a tension concerning how Titus 1:6 should be understood and the degree to which it shares a parallelism to 1 Timothy 3:4. First Timothy 3:4 addressed an elder as one who manages his household well, which is expressed by his ability to keep his children under control. The children are mentioned in relation to the father’s functioning. Speaking about 1 Timothy 3:4, Mounce noted, “Yet the criterion is based not so much on the character of the children, regardless of where they live, as on a man’s ability to manage his home, the results of which can be seen in his children wherever they live.”¹⁸⁰ In the English versions that

¹⁷⁶Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 257.

¹⁷⁷Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 181.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 157.

¹⁷⁹The Greek adjective πιστός is used in the accusative case in Titus 1:6.

¹⁸⁰Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 388.

translate πιστός in an active sense in Titus 1:6, the focus would seem to shift from the father onto the child.¹⁸¹ If πιστός is taken in an active sense, Mounce observed, “This would be a requirement for eldership that stands outside of the father’s direct control.”¹⁸² There would still be a degree of parallelism between Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3 in that both verses are concerned about the home or family life of an elder, but an active translation of πιστός would seem to create a different focus for the verse. The parallelism would be strained to a degree and a further requirement would be placed on an elder.¹⁸³ This tension raises a question, “What is the standard concerning elders’ children, ‘believing’ or ‘behaving’?”¹⁸⁴

According to Mounce, it is “not easy” to determine the correct interpretation of πιστός in Titus 1:6.¹⁸⁵ Norris C. Grubbs explained why the decision is not easy by stating: “The standard lexicons in the field of NT Greek are fairly united in dividing the semantic range of πιστός into an active and a passive meaning.”¹⁸⁶ In analyzing the usage of πιστός in the writings of the Septuagint, Philo, Josephus, the apostolic fathers, and the New Testament, Grubbs concluded that the vast majority of usages of πιστός were passive.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸¹Towner noted in this active sense, “The candidate’s reputation as a father comes under scrutiny indirectly as the behavior of his children is examined.” Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 682.

¹⁸²Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 389.

¹⁸³Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 197.

¹⁸⁴Norris C. Grubbs, “The Truth about Elders and Their Children: Believing or Behaving in Titus 1:6?” *Faith and Mission* 22, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 3.

¹⁸⁵Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 389. In two places in his commentary Mounce translated Titus 1:6. In one occurrence he expressed a passive translation and in the other an active translation. *Ibid.*, 155, 384.

¹⁸⁶Grubbs, “The Truth about Elders and Their Children,” 4.

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 9.

He wrote, “Approximately 92 percent of the usages of πιστός, a total of 241 occurrences, display the passive idea of ‘faithful,’ trustworthy,’ or ‘reliable.’”¹⁸⁸

Paul’s usage of πιστός in the Pastoral Epistles varies from that percentage of usage. Of the 33 times Paul used πιστός, 17 of those usages were in the Pastorals.¹⁸⁹ Six of the 11 times Paul used πιστός in 1 Timothy, he used it in an active sense.¹⁹⁰ In light of that, it should not be surprising to learn that many commentators agree with an active translation.¹⁹¹

Though, as Mounce noted above, making a decision on this matter is not easy, in contrast to the majority of the English translations, it would seem best to adopt a passive translation of πιστός in Titus 1:6 for the following reasons. First, when Paul used πιστός a second time in the Titus 1 list in verse 9 and in a similar list in 1 Timothy 3:11, it is normally translated in a passive sense. The usage in Titus 1:9 is not as strong a reason for concluding that Titus 1:6 should be understood passively, given that in verse 9, πιστός is modifying λόγος, rather than speaking in reference to a person. But in 1 Timothy 3:11, Paul clearly used πιστός with respect to describing a person.¹⁹²

A second reason for accepting a passive reading would be the parallelism between Titus 1:6 and 1 Timothy 3:4. Paul was concerned about potential elders in terms

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 8.

¹⁸⁹W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, eds., *A Concordance to the Greek Testament*, 5th ed., revised by H. K. Moulton, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), s.v. "ΠΙΣΤΟΣ."

¹⁹⁰Grubbs, “The Truth about Elders and Their Children,” 7. The verses πιστός was used in this active sense are 1 Tim 4:3, 10, 12; 5:16; and twice in 6:2.

¹⁹¹Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 197. Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 220. Towner concluded that the active meaning “corresponds better to the range of the ‘faith’ word group in these letters to coworkers.” Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 682.

¹⁹²This is true whether one understands 1 Tim 3:11 as a description of a female deacon or the wife of a deacon. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 265-67. Also see, Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 202-05.

of their home life. A passive reading of Titus 1:6 would seem to express the parallelism more clearly than an active reading.¹⁹³ Given that the other concern of Paul related to home life, the issue of an elder being a faithful husband, is the same in both lists, the passive reading in Titus 1:6 would contribute to a supportive parallelism to the household concept.

Another reason in support of the passive reading would be the structure of Titus 1:6. An active reading of πιστός would suggest that Paul is first addressing the eternal status of the child, and then “the next qualifier emphasizes the children’s behavior.”¹⁹⁴ In commenting on this understanding Kent wrote, “It is possible for one’s children to be professed Christians but still be a source of embarrassment to their fathers because of unrighteous lives.”¹⁹⁵ Such an understanding would seem to be in conflict with Paul’s understanding of the operative nature of God’s grace in Titus 2:11-14. With respect to Titus 2:12, Mounce stated, “Not only has God’s grace saved believers, but it has the ongoing task of teaching them to live righteously.”¹⁹⁶ The active translation in Titus 1:6 would seem to make it a very real prospect for children to be distant from the ongoing task of grace in their lives. That would not seem to fit the thrust of Paul’s message in Titus as a whole. A passive understanding would fit the overall context better, and would render Titus 1:6 as stating the behavior of children in both positive and negative terms.¹⁹⁷

A final reason for accepting a passive reading is related to the discussion above concerning new converts. A number of commentators noted that the requirements in

¹⁹³Grubbs, “The Truth about Elders and Their Children,” 11.

¹⁹⁴Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 388.

¹⁹⁵Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 220.

¹⁹⁶Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 423.

¹⁹⁷Grubbs, “The Truth about Elders and Their Children,” 13.

Crete may have been lessened to allow for the newness of the churches. An active reading would seem to be adding to the requirements in newer churches in Crete, which would be in contrast to the stance taken on new converts.¹⁹⁸ Though πιστός could mean either believing or faithful from a lexical standpoint, it would be best to understand it as faithful in Titus 1:6. The issue Paul addressed with respect to a potential leader was his ability to manage his household as depicted in the behavior of his children.

Conclusion from the Pastoral Epistles

To aid in the selection of elders, Paul instructed both Timothy and Titus to be particularly concerned about the character of the candidates. The assessment of character was based upon the ability of the man to be above reproach in the fullness of his life. That would include specifically being above reproach in his home life and with the non-believing community, and generally in terms of all his interpersonal relationships. The prominence of character in the selection of elders would seem to be instructive to the formation of a church planter profile. Church leaders must first be about character and then skill. Profiles should express this order and concern in some fashion.

Characteristics of the Office of Apostle

The remainder of this chapter addresses issues related to the topic of apostleship. In addressing this issue, it is important to note at the outset that this topic brings with it some inherent challenges that have not always been understood. Robert W. Herron noted that with the publication of J. B. Lightfoot's commentary on Galatians, Lightfoot was "probably the first scholar to fully appreciate the historical and theological difficulties connected with the NT apostolate."¹⁹⁹ Since Lightfoot's commentary, the

¹⁹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹⁹J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians: With Introductions, Notes and Dissertations* (1865; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957). Robert W. Herron, Jr., "The Origin of the New Testament Apostolate," *Westminster Theological*

challenges of studying the issue have developed along at least two fronts. One relates to the tendency of German scholars to see a sharp distinction between how Luke understood the concept of apostle in Luke and Acts, and how apostle was understood in the other gospels and in Paul's writings.²⁰⁰ The second front relates to the scholars' view of Scripture and history. Holger Mosbeck observed, "Reviewing the history of research, one cannot but notice that the conclusions arrived at are to a considerable degree determined by the investigators' total view of the evolution in the Primitive Church, and by their attitude towards the trustworthiness of the Scriptures of the New Testament."²⁰¹

Basic Idea of the Word Apostle

Given the challenges noted above, perhaps the most appropriate starting point for any discussion of apostleship, would be to define the word apostle, which in Greek is the word, ἀπόστολος. The word ἀπόστολος was derived from the verb ἀποστέλλω, first as a verbal adjective and then as a noun.²⁰² Robert Duncan Culver noted, "The bare elements of the Greek word ἀπόστολος mean 'one sent forth.'"²⁰³ Lightfoot suggested as an adjective it could also mean "dispatched."²⁰⁴

Journal 45, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 101.

²⁰⁰Colin Brown, "Note on Apostleship in Luke-Acts," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 1:135.

²⁰¹Holger Mosbeck, "Apostolos in the New Testament," *Studia Theologica* ii (1948): 166.

²⁰²D. Muller, "Apostle," "ἀποστέλλω. . . ," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 1:134.

²⁰³Robert Duncan Culver, "Apostles and the Apostolate in the New Testament," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 134, no. 534 (April-June 1977): 131.

²⁰⁴Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 92.

The word ἀπόστολος was rarely used in Greek literature until its use in the New Testament.²⁰⁵ Wayne Grudem noted, “It occurs only once in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint), once in Josephus, and not at all in Philo.”²⁰⁶ The use of ἀπόστολος in the Septuagint is even questionable. The one appearance is a variant reading of 1 Kings 14:6, that is absent from the best manuscripts of the Septuagint.²⁰⁷

When the word ἀπόστολος was used in Greek literature prior to the New Testament, it was used as a maritime or military term.²⁰⁸ It could be used to refer to “a naval expedition, a transport, an admiral or a group of colonists going by ship; in papyri we can observe the sense: order of dispatch given to a ship, export license etc.”²⁰⁹ In examining those meanings for ἀπόστολος and its use in the New Testament, many scholars have concluded its secular or profane use outside the New Testament is of little help in determining its meaning in the New Testament. J. Andrew Kirk noted, “It has long been acknowledged that the pre-New Testament profane use of the word ἀπόστολος does not help us much in discovering either the origin or meaning of the word in the New Testament.”²¹⁰ Lightfoot concluded, “The classical usage of the term gives no aid towards understanding the meaning of the Christian apostolate.”²¹¹ Similarly, Larry W.

²⁰⁵Donald T. Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles in Missions” (D.Miss. diss., Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 13.

²⁰⁶Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), 41.

²⁰⁷Morris Ashcraft, “Paul’s Understanding of Apostleship,” *Review and Expositor* 55, no. 4 (October 1958): 401.

²⁰⁸Culver, “Apostles and the Apostolate,” 132.

²⁰⁹Mosbeck, “Apostolos in the New Testament,” 167.

²¹⁰J. Andrew Kirk, “Apostleship Since Rengstorf: Towards a Synthesis,” *New Testament Studies* 21, no. 2 (1975): 250.

²¹¹Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 93.

Caldwell wrote, “The main difficulty concerns the fact that the noun *apostolos* is not used in the New Testament as it is in the classical Greek.”²¹²

In addressing the challenge of understanding *ἀπόστολος* two observations were made by scholars. First, given that *ἀπόστολος* was derived from the verb *ἀποστέλλω*, it was suggested it is vital to understand *ἀποστέλλω* in order to gain an understanding of *ἀπόστολος*.²¹³ Second, since the early church used what had been a rare word, *ἀπόστολος*, presumably there was a source which informed their utilization of the word. Caldwell suggested,

The Bible of the New Testament church was the Hebrew Old Testament and variant extant copies of it, as well as the Greek translation known as the Septuagint. To understand the New Testament’s idea of apostleship, therefore, it is necessary to understand its Old Testament background. It is especially crucial to study the Septuagint, and its environs, since the manuscripts of the early church’s writings were also in Greek.²¹⁴

Such an approach, understanding the New Testament view of apostleship from the Old Testament, presented a significant challenge, in that, as noted above, the word *ἀπόστολος* was used only once in the Septuagint, and that reading is not well attested. To confront that challenge, scholars made much of the first observation concerning the relationship between *ἀπόστολος* and *ἀποστέλλω*. Lewis McMullen stated, “The key to understanding the New Testament usage of this word is not found in the classical Greek usage but rather in its link to the New Testament verb *apostellō* from which it is derived.”²¹⁵ D. Muller, evaluating the discussion concerning *ἀπόστολος* concluded, “We

²¹²Larry W. Caldwell, *Sent Out! Reclaiming the Spiritual Gift of Apostleship for Missionaries and Churches Today* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992), 32. Italics are original.

²¹³Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 13.

²¹⁴Caldwell, *Sent Out*, 30.

²¹⁵Lewis Franklin McMullen, Jr., “Developing a Church Planter Assessment Model for the Suncoast Baptist Association” (D.Min. diss., Reformed Theological Seminary, 2003), 57. Italics are original.

consider that NT scholarship has not sufficiently considered the meaning of the vb. *apostellō* as a starting point for a solution.”²¹⁶

The linkage of *ἀπόστολος* to *ἀποστέλλω* led scholars to examine the use of *ἀποστέλλω* in the Septuagint. In contrast to *ἀπόστολος*, *ἀποστέλλω* is widely used in the Septuagint. Caldwell noted, “The Septuagint uses *apostellō* over 700 times, almost exclusively to translate *shalach*. As a result, it is proper to examine how *apostellō* was used in Greek thought roughly paralleling the time when the Septuagint was written. Surprisingly, its use was very similar to that of *shalach*.²¹⁷” Given the apparent connection between the Greek verb *ἀποστέλλω*, and the Hebrew verb *שָׁלַח*, scholars began to consider a connection between the nouns derived from those verbs, *ἀπόστολος* and *שָׁלִיחַ*. McMullen suggested, “Since *apostellō* was used as an equivalent of *shalach*, as the Septuagint indicates, it would not be difficult to imagine the early church using *apostolos* in the sense of *shaliach*.²¹⁸

Though Lightfoot did not detail his rationale on exactly why he made a connection between *שָׁלִיחַ* and *ἀπόστολος*, his 1865 essay from his commentary on Galatians expressed the same idea.²¹⁹ Lightfoot is noted for initiating this line of thought.²²⁰ Karl Heinrich Regnstorff expressed similar thoughts in his article in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.²²¹ The prominence of these two scholars elevated this view in the minds of others. But this view is not without noted problems.

²¹⁶D. Muller, “Apostle,” “*ἀποστέλλω*. . .,” 1:134.

²¹⁷Caldwell, *Sent Out*, 30. Italics are original.

²¹⁸McMullen, “Developing a Church Planter Assessment Model,” 58-59.

²¹⁹Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 93.

²²⁰Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles” 14.

²²¹Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, “Apostello, Exapostello, Apostollos, Pseudapostolos, Apostole,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:398-447.

The first problem is related to seeking to make a connection between the two nouns, *חִלְּשׁ* and *ἀπόστολος*. When *ἀπόστολος* was used in the variant reading of 1 Kings 14:6 mentioned above, it might have been assumed that *ἀπόστολος* was translating *חִלְּשׁ*. In fact, the noun *חִלְּשׁ* was not used in 1 Kings 14:6. Instead *ἀπόστολος* was used to translate a passive participle, *חִלְּשׁ*.²²²

The second problem also concerns the connection between the two nouns. Rengstorf noted that during Jesus' earthly ministry, there were a number of Jewish missionaries. But, these missionaries were never referred to as *חִלְּשׁ*. In addition the Hebrew and Greek verbs played no part in the description of these missionaries.²²³ Given the missionary sense of apostle in the New Testament, this noted lack of connection suggested a weakness to the view.²²⁴

The third problem concerns the late appearance of the Hebrew noun *חִלְּשׁ* in Jewish literature. Dent noted that *חִלְּשׁ* was not found until after the fall of Jerusalem.²²⁵ Arnold Ehrhardt concluded it did not appear until AD 140, making it questionable to view *חִלְּשׁ* as a foundation for the concept of apostleship.²²⁶ G. W. H. Lampe was confident that *חִלְּשׁ* came into use later than the New Testament, making it very unlikely that it played any role in the development of the Christian apostolate.²²⁷

²²²Ibid., 413.

²²³Ibid., 418.

²²⁴D. Muller, "Apostle," "ἀποστέλλω. . . ," 1:134.

²²⁵Dent, "The Ongoing Role of Apostles," 14.

²²⁶Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession in the First Two Centuries of the Church* (London: Lutterworth, 1953), 17-18.

²²⁷G. W. H. Lampe, *Some Aspects of the New Testament Ministry: Being the Stumpff Memorial Lecture Delivered at the Queen's College, Birmingham on 3 May, 1948* (London: SPCK, 1949), 15-16.

The debate over the origination of the apostolic concept has gone on for over one hundred fifty years without bringing consensus.²²⁸ Though Lightfoot and Rengstorf promoted a view that attracted a following, many were critical. Some criticism was only minimal. For example, Kirk departed from Rengstorf, yet made a similar conclusion when he wrote,

In other words, neither the word nor the function of an *ἀπόστολος* Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ can strictly be derived from *אֲפֹסְטוֹ* nor can its meaning be constrained by the sense in which it might have been used in first-century Judaism. As Rengstorf himself suggests, although the *idea* may have come from rabbinic Judaism its *characteristic use* in the New Testament has a peculiarly Christian origin and emphasis. Like many other words which occur in contemporary literature, its characteristic meaning the New Testament is quite unique.²²⁹

Other critics stated their views more strongly. Morris Ashcraft suggested the search for the New Testament apostolate in a Hebrew-Aramaic context is barren.²³⁰ Mosbeck concluded, “I had rather think that somewhere or other a mere accidental circumstance has induced the rendering *אֲפֹסְטוֹ* by *ἀπόστολος*.”²³¹ Dent’s conclusion may offer a needed perspective:

The apostle concept has roots in the language of the Septuagint and in Jewish culture, but it developed its unique Christian use in the context of a community that recognized that God was sending men to the nations. Our focus should not be on where the concept came from, but in how it was used in the New Testament and how we continue that function until the end of the age.²³²

²²⁸Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 17-18.

²²⁹Kirk, “Apostleship Since Rengstorf,” 252. Italics are original. Caldwell suggested that the best understanding of the origin of apostleship started with a synthesis of Rengstorf and Kirk, which would allow for the early church to give a new meaning to *ἀπόστολος* that could develop through its use in the New Testament. Caldwell, *Sent Out*, 38.

²³⁰Ashcraft, “Paul’s Understanding of Apostleship,” 402.

²³¹Mosbeck, “Apostolos in the New Testament,” 168.

²³²Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 83.

The root of the word ἀπόστολος suggested at least a minimum meaning of “one who is sent.”²³³ Dent offered, “This uncommon word consistently included two ideas: one commissioned to perform a task and the authority of the sender.”²³⁴ Dent also opined that the New Testament usage reinforced the same two ideas.²³⁵

To test the suggestion of Dent, and to arrive at a basic definition of the word ἀπόστολος, scholars like Harold E. Dollar and Muller would offer that the evaluation should be made from the writings of Paul.²³⁶ Though that is one option, given that the debate over the definition of ἀπόστολος stems from scholars, who make sharp distinctions between Luke and Paul’s usage of ἀπόστολος, a better option might be to consider Matthew and Mark’s limited usage.²³⁷ Kirk, based on Paul’s remark concerning apostles in Galatians 1-2 and then in 1 Corinthians 15, suggested that there seems “to be sufficient

²³³Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 41.

²³⁴Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 14.

²³⁵*Ibid.*, 18.

²³⁶Harold E. Dollar, “Apostle, Apostles,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 73. D. Muller, “Apostle,” “ἀποστε’λλω . . .,” 1:129.

²³⁷Brown, “Note on Apostleship in Luke-Acts,” 1:135. Kirk, “Apostleship Since Rengstorff,” 252. Rudolf Schnackenburg wrote, “Paul’s own understanding of his ministry as an apostle stands in obvious tension with the Lucan concept of an apostle as a witness to the earthly life of Jesus. Rudolf Schnackenburg, “Apostles Before and During Paul’s Time,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 288. ἀπόστολος is used by Matthew only in Matt 10:2 and by Mark only in Mark 6:30. The word ἀπόστολος is used once in John 13:16 in a comparative statement with the participle of πέμπω, which means to send. Given the grammatical relationship, ἀπόστολος is translated, in the New American Standard Bible, in a participle like manner rather than as noun, thus putting the emphasis on the verbal sense of sending. D. A. Carson noted that there is no overtone of the official “twelve apostles” in John 13:16. Though John did understand something of the unique group of the office of the apostle based on his use of “the Twelve” in John 6:67, 70 and 20:24. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 468.

evidence that the origin of the term apostle derives from the first mission of the Twelve in the ministry of Christ.”²³⁸ The first mission is recorded in both Matthew and Mark.

Matthew wrote in Matthew 10:1-2, 5, “Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these . . . These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them.” Verse 1 began with twelve men being called disciples. But with the giving of authority by the Lord Jesus, Matthew refers to the same men as apostles.²³⁹ Verse 5 noted that these men were then sent out by Jesus. The expression sent out was an aorist form of ἀποστέλλω. From the context of Matthew 10:1-5, Matthew’s usage of ἀπόστολος in verse 2, would appear to be consistent with ἀπόστολος meaning “one commissioned for a task with authority for the task coming from the sender.”²⁴⁰ In the later portions of the Gospel of Matthew generally, and specifically, following their return to Jesus in Matthew 10, these men are again referred to as disciples.

The passage in Mark began in Mark 6:2 with the men being called disciples. Verse 7 states, “And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.” The Greek verb ἀποστέλλω is again translated by the words “send out.”²⁴¹ The end of the verse was making it clear that Jesus

²³⁸Kirk, “Apostleship Since Rengstorf,” 260.

²³⁹R. T. France noted that Jesus gave his authority to the disciples. R. T. France, *Matthew*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 176. Leon Morris noted the same observation. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 243. Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 385.

²⁴⁰Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 14.

²⁴¹Walter W. Wessel noted that verb carried with it the idea of official representation. Walter W. Wessel, *Mark*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas, 601-793 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1984), 667.

was commissioning them with his power and authority.²⁴² The story of twelve being sent out was interrupted by the account of Herod and John the Baptist. When Mark returned to the story of these men in verse 30, he referred to them as apostles, which Walter W. Wessel noted is appropriate given that they were engaged in apostolic work.²⁴³ In the next references to these men in verse 35, Mark described them again as disciples.

Similar to Matthew's usage, Mark also used *ἀπόστολος* with the sense of one commissioned for a task with the authority of the sender. Caldwell noted that in both Matthew and Mark, these men became apostles because Jesus gave them authority and sent them out with special commissions.²⁴⁴ Dent stated, "The Synoptic Gospels make it clear that the Twelve were first called apostles because Jesus sent them with authority to perform a task. . . . Task and authority to accomplish it are inseparably linked in the commission that Jesus gave his disciples."²⁴⁵ J. Norval Geldenhuys noted that by the way Jesus called these twelve men and called them apostles: "They were to be His delegates whom He would send with the commission to teach and to act in His name and on His authority."²⁴⁶

Though there is some debate concerning the origination of the concept of the word *ἀπόστολος*, it would seem that a basic definition of the word in the New Testament is a person commissioned and sent out for a task with the authority of the sender. Given the context of its usage in Matthew and Mark, the task would be strongly related to the mission of Jesus and the authority would be the authority of Jesus. The mission of Jesus

²⁴²Ibid.

²⁴³Ibid., 672.

²⁴⁴Caldwell, *Sent Out*, 44-45.

²⁴⁵Dent, "The Ongoing Role of Apostles," 19-20.

²⁴⁶J. Norval Geldenhuys, *Supreme Authority: The Authority of the Lord, His Apostles and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 54.

would appear to be closely connected to the message of Jesus from Mark 1:38 where Jesus said, “He said to them, ‘Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.’” Wessel noted that for Jesus “coming into the world was more to proclaim God’s Good News and all that was involved in discipleship and suffering than to be a popular miracle-worker.”²⁴⁷ The authority Jesus gave in the Matthew and Mark passages is an authority to carry out mission, not an authority over an institution.²⁴⁸ George W. Peters noted a very similar meaning for apostle that emphasized authority in terms of mission and message; he stated that an apostle “means a person authoritatively sent forth with a message and on a mission.”²⁴⁹ For the purpose of this dissertation, *ἀπόστολος*, can be defined as a person authoritatively sent on a mission to share a message.

The Office of Apostle

Muller noted that “the apostolate was originally not an office but a commission.”²⁵⁰ Though that should be kept in mind, especially when seeking to define the word *ἀπόστολος*, it is important to understand the word and concept did become related to an office. This section will seek to define the office of apostle.

In examining the office of apostle, it should be noted that the word *ἀπόστολος* was used in a number of different ways in the New Testament. Dent suggested that *ἀπόστολος* was used to refer to four groups: “(1) the Twelve, (2) other commissioned eyewitnesses, (3) missionary apostles, and (4) envoys of the churches.”²⁵¹ John A.

²⁴⁷Wessel, *Mark*, 629.

²⁴⁸France, *Matthew*, 176. Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 242.

²⁴⁹George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody, 1972), 250.

²⁵⁰Muller, “Apostle,” “*ἀποστέλλω*. . .,” 1:131.

²⁵¹Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles in Missions,” 45.

Crabtree offered a four category classification of “primordial, foundational, general, and classical sense,” which he then summarized as narrow and broad ways to use the word *ἀπόστολος*.²⁵² Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent suggested that *ἀπόστολος* was used to refer to three kinds of people in New Testament beyond its reference to the Lord Jesus in Hebrews 3:1: the original twelve disciples of Jesus and Paul, several people not among the Twelve and other than Paul, and, false apostles.²⁵³

From any of those classifications it can be deduced that one way *ἀπόστολος* can be used is to refer to a small and seemingly defined group of individuals. This unique group is often understood to be the Apostles, or even the Twelve.²⁵⁴ This group is normally understood to compose the office of apostle. The idea of there being a small, unique group is communicated in at least three different ways in the New Testament. The first way is expressed within the New Testament by the unique role the Twelve fulfilled. Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:28-30 are statements of Jesus to a special group of his

²⁵²John A. Crabtree, Jr., “A Critique of David Cannistraci's Understanding of the Gift of Apostle and the Emerging Apostolic Movement,” *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* 9 (Fall 1999): 47.

²⁵³Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 231-33.

²⁵⁴The twelve are mentioned in 1 Cor 15:5, and then 1 Cor 15:7 mentions all the apostles. In v. 5, Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer concluded that the Twelve is “an official name for the Apostolic body.” Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911), 336. In commenting on v. 7, Gordon Fee stated, “‘The Twelve’ were a definite group who had a special relationship to Jesus and in the early church probably served in some kind of authoritative capacity. But the ‘apostles,’ a term that included the Twelve, were a larger group who in Paul’s understanding had seen the risen Lord and were commissioned by him to proclaim the gospel and found churches.” Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 732.

disciples, in which he describes a unique role that they will play in God's kingdom.²⁵⁵ Revelation 21:14 expressed a similar sentiment.²⁵⁶ In reference to Ephesians 2:20, John Stott offered that the word apostles in this verse must be a reference to a small and special group called by Jesus; it is not a generic reference to a broader use of *ἀπόστολος*.²⁵⁷ Jude 17 is another verse that speaks to a unique function of a small group of apostles.²⁵⁸

A second way the unique group of the office of apostle is expressed is through the replacement of Judas after his betrayal of Jesus, but yet not replacing James after he is martyred. In Acts 1, Peter and those gathered in the upper room, seem compelled to ensure that they have another witness to share in what verse 25 refers to as "this ministry and apostleship." Darrell L. Bock noted, "The combination of ministry and apostleship is really a hendiadys that can mean 'apostolic ministry.'"²⁵⁹ There was a unique role the Lord Jesus had called a group of twelve to, and the seeking of a replacement for the apostate Judas, reinforced the uniqueness of this group.²⁶⁰ This group needed to have a

²⁵⁵Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 495. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1740.

²⁵⁶Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation*, in vol. 12 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1981), 596.

²⁵⁷John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 107.

²⁵⁸Edwin A. Blum, *Jude*, in vol. 12 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1981), 394.

²⁵⁹Bock, *Acts*, 89.

²⁶⁰J. E. Young, "That Some Should Be Apostles," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 48 (April-June 1976): 97.

full complement of members as they waited the coming of the Holy Spirit. It was significant to them that there were twelve of them.²⁶¹

In contrast to Judas, when James was killed in Acts 12, there was no expression of seeking to fill his position. Judas removed himself by being unfaithful. There was a sense that James remained part of the Twelve because he had been faithful.²⁶² He would be able to fulfill the future responsibilities of these special apostles mentioned in Matthew 19 and Luke 22, even though he had died. They seemed to have an understanding of their uniqueness.

A third way in which this unique group is expressed is the use of the expressions, “apostle of Jesus Christ” or “apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”²⁶³ Though the word *ἀπόστολος* is used a number of times in the New Testament, it is only used in these combinations to describe Paul, Peter, and the special group in Jude 17.²⁶⁴ By adding the modifier of Jesus Christ, it would seem to set apart these apostles from other apostles.

To evaluate the significance of this point, it is important to determine who are the apostles being referred to in Jude 17. The verse itself reads, “But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The words spoken by the apostles were part of the oral deposit of the faith of the

²⁶¹Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 47.

²⁶²Ibid.

²⁶³Apostle of Jesus Christ was used in reference to Paul in 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; and, Titus 1:1. It was also used in reference to Peter in 1 Pet 1:1 and 2 Pet 1:1. Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ was used in Jude 17.

²⁶⁴This view would run contrary to Kirk who suggested the title apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ was given to a few giants of the missionary task. Thus inferring it was not an office they were appointed to but rather a status they obtained. Kirk, “Apostleship Since Rengstorf,” 254.

early church.²⁶⁵ Jude 3 suggested that Jude was aware of, and wanted his readers to be aware of a body of truth that could be called “the faith.” Edwin A. Blum suggested that this body of truth refers to Acts 2:42 and the teaching of the apostles.²⁶⁶ If that is an accurate conclusion, the apostles of Jude 17 would be the same group of apostles referenced in Acts 1. In such a case, the office of apostle would be those twelve plus Paul, who is an apostle of Jesus Christ.²⁶⁷

Hebrews 2:3 expresses a similar idea to Jude 17. Hebrews 2:3 reads, “how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard.” The verse denotes the importance of the Lord Jesus in announcing the message of salvation. But it also referred to those who heard the message. It is important to note the verse appears to suggest that those who heard the message, heard it from the Lord Jesus and then repeated and confirmed that message to those who were reading the letter to the Hebrews. Guthrie noted the most natural reading of the verse would make those who heard the message from Jesus, the apostles.²⁶⁸ Leon Morris concluded from Hebrews 2:3, “It came through Christ and that this is the salvation Christ offered is guaranteed by its apostolic attestation.”²⁶⁹ These men could make that attestation because they had been called by Jesus in Mark 3:14 to be

²⁶⁵Blum, *Jude*, 394.

²⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 388.

²⁶⁷Hywel R. Jones stated Paul understood himself as being one with the Twelve, and Paul expressed this link through listing himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Hywel R. Jones, “Are There Apostles Today?” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 9, no. 2 (April 1985): 108-09.

²⁶⁸Donald Guthrie, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 82.

²⁶⁹Leon Morris, *Hebrews*, in vol. 12 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1981), 22.

with him, or in the case of Paul, had received special revelation of the gospel as noted in Galatians 1.

Though *ἀπόστολος* can be used in at least three or four ways in the New Testament, there is good reason to conclude that at times, one of those uses was to refer to a small, specific group of men who rightfully could be called apostles of Jesus Christ. The recipients of this title appear to be the ones for whom being an apostle is more than a commission to carry out a mission of sharing a message. It was also an office. In making such a differentiation, it raises the question, how was the office of apostle defined?

In reviewing the literature, it is possible to find a number of different lists of qualifications offered for the office of apostle. Fourteen different lists were examined.²⁷⁰ One of the most detailed lists was offered by Culver.²⁷¹ His six qualifications provide a structure to examine the different lists.

An apostle of Messiah (Christ) must be of Messiah's nation. Of the fourteen different qualification lists reviewed, Culver's list was the only one that drew attention to the ethnic heritage of an apostle. His initial explanation was from Matthew 10:6. He

²⁷⁰Dennis Othel Brotherton, "An Examination of Selected Pauline Passages Concerning the Vocational Missionary: An Interpretative Basis for Critiquing Contemporary Missiological Thoughts" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986), 89-94. Brown, "Note on Apostleship in Luke-Acts," 1:136. David Cannistraci, *Apostles and the Emerging Apostolic Movement: A Biblical Look at Apostleship and How God is Using it to Bless His Church Today* (Ventura, CA: Renew Books, 1996), 90-91. Crabtree, "A Critique of David Cannistraci's Understanding," 47. Culver, "Apostles and the Apostolate," 136-38. Dent, "The Ongoing Role of Apostles," 47, 50. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 229-30. Kevin Giles, "Apostles Before and After Paul," *Churchman* 99, no. 3 (1985): 245-48. Alan R. Johnson, *Apostolic Function in 21st Century Mission*, The J. Philip Hogan World Missions Series, vol. 2 (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 56-57. Jones, "Are There Apostles Today?" 110. Kirk, "Apostleship Since Rengstorff," 262-63. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 97-99. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 254. John Stott, *Basic Christian Leadership: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 18-19.

²⁷¹Culver, "Apostles and the Apostolate," 136-38.

wrote, “Messiah’s mission was first to the ‘lost sheep of the house of Israel.’”²⁷² He went on to suggest “Their Lord amply illustrated this limitation from the very first of His public ministry to its very end.”²⁷³ Such a statement seems like an overstatement that has not taken into account the exchange Jesus had with Philip, Andrew, and some Greeks in John 12:20-23.²⁷⁴ It would also seem to miss the statement of Jesus in John 10:16 about having “other sheep.” Merrill C. Tenney noted that the other sheep “probably refers to the Gentiles whom Jesus sent his disciples to (Matt 28:19) and whom he wished to include in his salvation.”²⁷⁵

An apostle must have received a call and commission to his office directly from Christ. A broad range of scholars would agree with this qualification. Stott wrote, “They had been personally chosen, called and appointed directly by Jesus Christ, not by any human being or institution.”²⁷⁶ Hywel Jones noted, “The apostle of Jesus Christ, however, was more than a witness of the resurrected Christ. He received a commission directly from Him.”²⁷⁷ Alan R. Johnson and Kirk expressed similar views.²⁷⁸ Grudem appeared to be in agreement with this qualification when he stated, “Having been

²⁷²Ibid., 136.

²⁷³Ibid.

²⁷⁴Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 438.

²⁷⁵Merrill C. Tenney, *John*, in vol. 9 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1981), 109. Carson noted this reference “must be to Gentiles.” Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 388.

²⁷⁶Stott, *Basic Christian Leadership*, 18.

²⁷⁷Jones, “Are There Apostles Today?” 110.

²⁷⁸Johnson, *Apostolic Function in 21st Century Mission*, 57. Kirk, “Apostleship Since Rengstorf,” 263.

specifically commissioned by Christ as his apostle.”²⁷⁹ But then somewhat curiously Grudem noted Lightfoot on the issue, expressing that Lightfoot discussed the qualifications in detail in his Galatians commentary. Lightfoot commented, “It does not follow that the actual *call to Apostleship* should come from an outward personal communication with our Lord, in the manner in which the Twelve were called. With Matthias it certainly was not so. The commission in his case was received through the medium of the Church.”²⁸⁰ Culver would take exception to Lightfoot’s view of Matthias’ call. Culver noted under the qualification of the direct call from Christ, “The choice of Matthias by lot (Acts 1:24-26) conforms to it (see Prov. 16:33) and, though somewhat irregular, is not exception.”²⁸¹

An apostle must have seen the Lord Jesus, being an eyewitness of His doings and an ear-witness of His sayings. This qualification seems somewhat forced by Culver. He explained it in reference to the Twelve being constantly with Jesus, and how that helped to give credence to Matthias, but with respect to Paul he simply stated, “Paul was at special pains to let it be known that he met this requirement as an apostle (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8; Acts 22:6-21).”²⁸² The verses Culver referenced are related to Paul seeing the resurrected Christ. The verses referenced do not show how Paul fit this qualification. It is also odd that though the verses referenced the resurrection, Culver did not specify the resurrection in this qualification. Of the fourteen qualification lists examined, only Culver and Johnson did not mention the resurrection, whereas all the other lists did mention the resurrection.²⁸³ Colin Brown offered a summary of the view of the other scholars when

²⁷⁹Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 230.

²⁸⁰Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 98. Italics are original.

²⁸¹Culver, “Apostles and the Apostolate,” 136.

²⁸²*Ibid.*, 137.

²⁸³Johnson, *Apostolic Function in 21st Century Mission*, 56-57.

he noted that a basic qualification for being an apostle was being a witness of Jesus' resurrection.²⁸⁴ Lightfoot stated, "An Apostle must necessarily have been an eye-witness of the resurrection. He must be able to testify from direct knowledge of this fundamental fact of the faith."²⁸⁵

An apostle must possess authority in communicating divine revelation, and what he wrote under divine inspiration was indeed "the voice of God." This qualification, at least the first portion of it, would seem to accord with the expression in Acts 2:42 about the apostles' teaching. And the second portion of the qualification would align with what Peter said about Paul's letters in 2 Peter 3:15-16. Stott offered support for this qualification from John 14:25-26 and John 16:12-15.²⁸⁶ The Lord Jesus did make significant promises in those verses that would seem to support this qualification. Jones understood apostles as being recipients of revelation from Jesus.²⁸⁷ Peters offered that this revelation may have come through the personal instruction of the Lord Jesus, perhaps repeated through the promise of John 14:25-26. In the case of Paul, this qualification would have required instruction by special revelation.²⁸⁸ Crabtree expressed this qualification when he stated: "These men became the absolute authoritative revelatory agents of God."²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴Brown, "Note on Apostleship in Luke-Acts," 1:136.

²⁸⁵Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 98.

²⁸⁶Stott, *Basic Christian Leadership*, 19.

²⁸⁷Jones, "Are There Apostles Today?" 110.

²⁸⁸Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 254. This view would align with Paul's comments about receiving the gospel through a revelation of Christ in Gal 1:11-12.

²⁸⁹Crabtree, "A Critique of David Cannistraci's Understanding," 47.

One potential weakness with the way Culver stated this qualification pertains to the issue of writing.²⁹⁰ It is true that apostles did write a significant portion of the New Testament. Matthew, John, Paul, and Peter account for a large portion of the New Testament. But most of the group of twelve did not write anything that is considered Scripture. It is also true that Luke, Mark, Jude, and James also wrote Scripture. Some will suggest that James might be considered as a possible apostle and even a member of the office of apostle, but that is not true for the other three.²⁹¹ And in light of the wording of Hebrews 2:3, it would seem that the human author of Hebrews was not a member of the office of apostle. Culver's statement could cause some confusion in light of the various human authors the Holy Spirit chose to inspire.

An apostle is required to furnish “signs of an apostle.” This qualification is concerned with miracles. Culver noted, “power at some critical juncture to perform undoubted miracles” was a qualification of an apostle.²⁹² Lightfoot noted the same qualification in his classic work.²⁹³ Crabtree also included it in his list.²⁹⁴ Certainly verses such as Acts 2:43, Romans 15:19, and 2 Corinthians 12:12 lend support to this qualification.

²⁹⁰Dent noted that Protestant theologians have focused considerable attention to affirm the unique role of the apostles in providing an inspired New Testament. He also noted that in the process Protestant theologians have de-emphasized the missionary task. Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 30. Noting this weakness is not an intention to undermine or demean the importance of Scripture. Rather it is intended to provide a balance that recognizes that the unique role of being inspired by the Holy Spirit to write Scripture was true for some of the apostles, but not all of the apostles. Inspiration alone was not a qualification for the office of the apostles.

²⁹¹Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 54.

²⁹²Culver, “Apostles and the Apostolate,” 137.

²⁹³Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 99.

²⁹⁴Crabtree, “A Critique of David Cannistraci's Understanding,” 47.

An apostle must possess plenary authority among all the churches.

Curiously only Culver's list of qualifications included the idea of overarching authority. There is a sense of authority within the basic idea of the word *ἀπόστολος*, but that authority is normally connected to the sender. Culver's support for this qualification began with Peter's action in Acts 5 toward Ananias and Sapphira. He suggested Peter judged with personal authority, not church authority.²⁹⁵ Yet Bock described the sin as "an act against fellowship."²⁹⁶ It would seem that Peter was expressing authority within the confines of a church, not an authority that went beyond a church simply because of who Peter was. Culver next suggested the example of Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 and judging a fallen man. Paul was not present, yet he was calling for decisive action.²⁹⁷ Gordon Fee noted, "In contrast to the Corinthians, . . . Paul takes decisive action. But the action cannot be his alone. It must be effected in the context of the gathered assembly, where both he and the power of Christ are present by the Spirit."²⁹⁸ Paul possessed a sense of authority, but not consistent with what Culver appeared to be suggesting. Perhaps George Hunter's words provide a needed perspective, "In the history reflected in the New Testament, the apostles exercised not command authority, but moral persuasion."²⁹⁹ This qualification, as suggested by Culver, does not seem consistent with the record of the New Testament.

²⁹⁵Culver, "Apostles and the Apostolate," 138.

²⁹⁶Bock, *Acts*, 222.

²⁹⁷Culver, "Apostles and the Apostolate," 138.

²⁹⁸Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 203.

²⁹⁹George Hunter, *Radical Outreach: The Recovery of Apostolic Ministry and Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 17.

Among those promoting a new apostolic movement, the issue of authority is significant. C. Peter Wagner, a leading voice for the movement, defines an apostle this way:

An apostle is a Christian leader, gifted, taught, commissioned, and sent by God with the authority to establish the foundational government of the church within an assigned sphere of ministry by hearing what the Spirit is saying to the churches and by setting things in order accordingly for the growth and maturity of the church and for the extension of the kingdom of God.³⁰⁰

A major concern for Wagner related to apostles is “extraordinary authority.”³⁰¹ In fact, he separated the mission task from the concept all together in his idea of apostle.³⁰² In evaluating Wagner’s attempt to make apostleship about authority, Dent concluded, “Wagner’s position can be described as biblically indefensible, missiologically confusing, and tragically influential.”³⁰³

Prior to offering a derived list of qualifications to define the office of apostle, one additional issue should be addressed. The words of Peter in Acts 1:21-22 were noted as a qualification by a number of scholars.³⁰⁴ The verses read, “Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us-- beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from

³⁰⁰C. Peter Wagner, *Apostles Today: Biblical Government for Biblical Power* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2006), 27. In another book Wagner defined the gift of apostle as, “*the special ability that God gave to certain members of the Body of Christ which enables them to assume and exercise general leadership over a number of churches with an extraordinary authority in spiritual matters that is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those churches.*” C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow: How to Find Your gift and Use It* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979), 208. Italics are original.

³⁰¹Wagner, *Apostles Today*, 22.

³⁰²Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts*, 195-216.

³⁰³Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 35.

³⁰⁴Brotherton, “An Examination of Selected Pauline Passages,” 89. Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 47. Giles, “Apostles Before and After Paul,” 245. Kirk, “Apostleship Since Rengstorf,” 263.

us-- one of these *must* become a witness with us of His resurrection.” As Kevin Giles noted, “According to the definition of an apostle given in Acts 1:21-22, Paul cannot qualify as an apostle in the same sense of the word as the twelve.”³⁰⁵

Giles’ solution to the issue was to develop a new set of qualifications particular to Paul.³⁰⁶ Though understandable, such a step would seem to remove Paul from the office of apostle, which creates a noted challenge with the phrase “the apostle of Jesus Christ.” Perhaps another solution can be provided from the observation of Kirk: “It is extremely significant that that the twelve apostles fade from the picture once the Gentile mission is under way.”³⁰⁷

In the case of the initial ministry of the office of apostle, the narrative of Acts shows it starting in the area of Jerusalem and surrounding regions. The initial mission efforts would have been directed toward many people who would have had the opportunity to potentially see the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus. Such a fact might underline why Peter emphasized the personal exposure to Christ’s earthly ministry. In contrast, virtually no one in the regions God sent Paul to would have had the opportunity to see the Lord Jesus. The focus of Paul’s ministry was not in Judea or the Galilee. The Lord Jesus himself stated in Acts 9:15, “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.’” Romans 11:13 shares a similar emphasis, “But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry.” The requirement of Acts 1:21-22 may have been an issue for the commencing of the apostles’ mission, but not later on. The uniqueness of Paul’s ministry did not call for a different set

³⁰⁵Giles, “Apostles Before and After Paul,” 245-46. Brotherton and Dent expressed similar conclusions. Brotherton, “An Examination of Selected Pauline Passages,” 92-93. Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 50.

³⁰⁶Giles, “Apostles Before and After Paul,” 247-48.

³⁰⁷Kirk, “Apostleship Since Rengstorff,” 263.

of characteristics. Paul's unique ministry did not mean he was not part of the office of the apostles.

Essential qualifications of the office of apostle. There are four essential qualifications of the office of apostle. First, the apostle must be called or commissioned by the Lord Jesus.³⁰⁸ Scripture records the Lord Jesus calling the original members of the Twelve in Mark 3. The commission of Paul is found in Acts 9. This qualification presents a challenge for Matthias, and for other who have been suggested as being members of the office of apostle. In the case of Matthias, the qualification may be met in the narrative of Acts 1, particularly the prayer of verses 24 and 25, where it seems to suggest that the other members of the Twelve sought the divine commission of the Lord Jesus in their drawing of lots. For others, such as Barnabas and James, there are not similar events recorded in Scripture. Second, given the vital importance of the resurrection, to be part of the office of apostle, the apostle must be an eye witness of the resurrection.³⁰⁹ Third, the apostle must be a recipient and transmitter of divine revelation for the purposes of evangelism and discipleship.³¹⁰ Fourth, the apostle must display the signs of the office, which include miracles, but from the record of Acts, should also include noted suffering for the Lord Jesus.³¹¹ Robert L. Plummer shared a similar description of the apostolic office when he wrote:

About the apostolic office and mission, the following things can be garnered from Paul's letters: 1. The apostles were eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection. . . . 2. The apostles were specially commissioned by Jesus, according to God's will. . . . 3. The apostles' mission was to make known the good news about Jesus' salvific life,

³⁰⁸Mark 3:14; Acts 1:8; Acts 9:15.

³⁰⁹Acts 1:1-3; Acts 9:3-6.

³¹⁰Matt 28:18-20; Acts 2:42; Eph 2:20; 2 Cor 5:18-20.

³¹¹For miracles, Acts 2:43; Acts 14:9-11. For suffering, Acts 5:40-42; Acts 9:16.

death, and resurrection. . . . 4. The apostles exercised a supra-congregational teaching and disciplining role. . . . 5. The apostles performed miracles in confirmation of the gospel.³¹²

Were There Apostles Beyond the Twelve in the New Testament?

As was noted above, Dent suggested that *ἀπόστολος* was used to refer to four groups: “(1) the Twelve, (2) other commissioned eyewitnesses, (3) missionary apostles, and (4) envoys of the churches.”³¹³ His analysis would seem to suggest that there were apostles beyond the Twelve who composed the office of the apostle. J. E. Young believed there was “a strong case for the existence of apostles other than the Twelve.”³¹⁴ In stark contrast, Culver stated, “There is thus no strong evidence that any New Testament persons except the original Twelve, Matthias, Paul, and possibly James the Lord’s brother, were ever esteemed in New Testament times to be apostles of Jesus Christ. Thus the so-called ‘lesser sense’ of apostleship cannot be defended successfully.”³¹⁵ Two very divergent opinions are held concerning the possibility of any apostles beyond the Twelve. To discern which opinion is correct, this section examines five different passages that mention apostles.

Acts 14

Acts 14 recorded a portion of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. Verses 1 to 7 described the happenings in Iconium; verses 8 to 19, Lystra. In recording the events in both cities, Luke appeared to refer to Paul and Barnabas as

³¹²Robert L. Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 46-47.

³¹³Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 45.

³¹⁴Young, “That Some Should Be Apostles,” 98.

³¹⁵Culver, “Apostles and the Apostolate,” 143.

apostles in verses 4 and 14.³¹⁶ The reference to Barnabas as an apostle was consistent with Paul's similar affirmation in 1 Corinthians 9:6.³¹⁷ Given that Acts 14 is the only place Luke used the word *ἀπόστολος* to refer to someone other than a member of the Twelve, scholars have been challenged to offer an explanation. I. Howard Marshall suggested that Luke "recognizes that there was a group of apostles, commissioned by Jesus, wider than the Twelve, and he does not deny that Paul and Barnabas belong to this group."³¹⁸ Dent concurred, "The best explanation of Acts 14:4, 14 is that Luke acknowledges a broader group of apostles chosen by Christ to serve as missionaries."³¹⁹ Dennis Othel Brotherton, along with Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest, shared a similar conviction concerning Barnabas.³²⁰ The evidence of Acts 14 would seem to strongly infer that Barnabas was an apostle, but he was not member of the Twelve, he did not belong to the office of apostle. Lightfoot declared, "The apostleship of Barnabas is beyond question."³²¹

³¹⁶David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 404. Bock, *Acts*, 470. Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts*, in vol. 9 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1981), 433.

³¹⁷Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 2nd ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 131. Andrew C. Clark, "Apostleship: Evidence From the New Testament and Early Christian Literature," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 13, no. 4 (October 1989): 355.

³¹⁸I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 234.

³¹⁹Dent, "The Ongoing Role of Apostles," 61.

³²⁰Brotherton, "An Examination of Selected Pauline Passages," 89. Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology: Spirit-Given Life: God's People Present and Future* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 3:267.

³²¹Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 96.

Romans 16

The issue of apostles is focused around verse 7, which reads, “Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.” Two issues have caused verse 7 to be debated. The first issue concerns the gender of Junias. Michael H. Burer and Daniel B. Wallace noted that the name Ἰουνιᾶν can be accented two different ways. One way, Ἰουνιᾶν, makes the noun masculine, the other way, Ἰουνίας, makes the noun feminine.³²² Thomas Schreiner offered reasonable evidence for accepting the feminine version. He wrote, “Since the contracted masculine name is lacking in Greek literature and since early tradition identifies Junia as a woman, the likely conclusion is that Junia is a woman, though certainty is impossible.”³²³ Douglas J. Moo indicated that prior to the thirteenth century, commentators were nearly unanimous in understanding this name as feminine and current scholarship has returned to that same view.³²⁴ If Junias is a female name, most likely Paul was referring to a married couple.³²⁵

The second issue in verse 7 pertains to how the reader should understand the phrase “outstanding among the apostles.” One possibility is that this couple is well known and appreciated by the apostles, but they themselves are not apostles. Heath R. Curtis and Burer and Wallace believe this view is the best understanding of verse 7.³²⁶

³²²Michael H. Burer and Daniel B. Wallace, “Was Junia Really an Apostle? A Re-examination of Rom 16.7,” *New Testament Studies* 47, no. 1 (January 2001): 76.

³²³Thomas Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 796.

³²⁴Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 922. Burer and Wallace noted the same observations. Burer and Wallace, “Was Junia Really an Apostle,” 76, 78.

³²⁵Giles, “Apostles Before and After Paul,” 250.

³²⁶Heath R. Curtis, “A Female Apostle? A Note Re-examining the Work of Burer and Wallace Concerning ἐποσήμεος with εν and the Dative,” *Concordia Journal* 28, no. 4 (October 2002): 440. Burer, and Wallace, “Was Junia Really an Apostle?” 90.

The other understanding of the phrase “outstanding among the apostles” is as a reference to this couple being apostles. Moo and Schreiner both view this understanding as a more natural way to translate the Greek expression.³²⁷ Lightfoot would also concur with this conclusion.³²⁸ Though Burer and Wallace took noted exception with Lightfoot, there does appear to be good scholarly support for understanding this couple to be apostles.³²⁹ They should be understood as apostles, not in the sense that they were part of the office of apostle, but that they are part of a wider group of apostles, in the sense of being commissioned to the task of itinerant evangelists or missionaries.³³⁰ At least in this verse, Paul appears to believe that there are apostles in the New Testament beyond the Twelve.³³¹

1 Thessalonians 2

First Thessalonians 2:6 is another passage that should be examined. The verse reads, “nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.” The reason for considering this verse is that the first person plural subject, “we” is being modified by the nominative plural form of *ἀπόστολος*.³³² The verse appears to be suggesting that the “we” are apostles. That raises the question, who are the “we” in verse 6?

Given the flow of the passage verse 6 is found in, it would seem that the “we” refers to the author or authors of the letter. According to 1 Thessalonians 1:1 the letter

³²⁷Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 923. Schreiner, *Romans*, 796.

³²⁸Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 95.

³²⁹Burer, and Wallace, “Was Junia Really an Apostle?” 91.

³³⁰Schreiner, *Romans*, 796.

³³¹George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 353.

³³²In the Greek text, the word *ἀπόστολος* is found in v. 7.

has three authors. The verse reads, “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.” Are these three men the “we” of 2:6? There is a range of views on the subject. John Walvoord spoke only of Paul in his comments on 1 Thessalonians 2:6-7, implying that Paul alone was the “we” of verse 6.³³³ Leon Morris held there was little doubt that Paul was responsible for the body of the letter, and so he too only spoke about Paul when commenting on verses 6 and 7.³³⁴ In marked contrast, Robert L. Thomas wrote, “Paul, Silas, and Timothy could legitimately have claimed the dignity associated with their apostolic office.”³³⁵ Lightfoot, Grudem, and Gene L. Green concluded that the “we” in verse 6 referred to Paul and Silvanus, but not to Timothy.³³⁶

To answer the question of whether or not there are apostles beyond the Twelve from 1 Thessalonians 2:6, at least two factors should be considered. First, why does the introductory verse of the letter not identify the authors as apostles? Of the 13 letters written by Paul, in only 4 (1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon), does Paul not identify himself as an apostle. If Paul had followed his normal pattern, this issue would largely be clarified. Why did Paul adopt a different pattern here? Thomas suggested the absence of the official title of apostle was because the Macedonian

³³³John F. Walvoord, *The Thessalonian Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967), 28-29.

³³⁴Leon Morris, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 2nd ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 40, 54-57.

³³⁵Robert L. Thomas, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1978), 253.

³³⁶Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 125-26. Green does offer it is possible that Timothy was also included in the “we,” but concludes it is more likely just Paul and Silvanus. Green also surmised that Timothy may have continued on the apostolic team in Thessalonica, though Acts 17:1-9 does not mention his participation. *Ibid.*, 47. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 233-34. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 96.

churches, Thessalonica and Philippi, did not question Paul's apostolic position as did many of the other churches.³³⁷

The second factor is whether or not the letter was actually written by all three authors. Green noted that in Romans 1:5 and 3:8-9, Paul employed an epistolary plural to reference just himself, similar to known customs of the era.³³⁸ Yet, Ernest Randolph Richards wrote, "It is quite unlikely, though, that Paul's references to others *by name* in his address was intended to indicate anything *less* than an *active* role in the composition of the letter. The practice of including others in the address as a 'nicety' is not supported by the evidence."³³⁹ Richard's statement suggests that all three were involved, at least to some degree, in writing the letter. Additional support for that conclusion may come from an analysis of the first person verb use in the actual letter. In only three verses in 1 Thessalonians, 2:18, 3:5, and 5:27, are first person singular verbs used. All the other first person verbs are plural. On a statistical level, 96 percent of the first person verbs in 1 Thessalonians are plural; in contrast to Paul's other letters with co-authors, this percentage is dramatically higher.³⁴⁰

There appears to be good evidence to suggest that all three men were involved in writing 1 Thessalonians, but does that mean that all three should be understood as the "we" of 1 Thessalonians 2:6? The immediate context of verse 6 would include a chain of first person plural verbs that goes back to verse 2. Verse 2 reads, "but after we had

³³⁷Thomas, *1, 2 Thessalonians*, 237. Fee and Green expressed the same reason. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 28. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 82.

³³⁸Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 56. It should be noted that Paul alone is listed as the author of Romans.

³³⁹Ernest Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 2, no. 42 (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1991), 154. Italics are original.

³⁴⁰Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 57.

already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition.” Grudem noted that verse 2 most likely refers back to the narrative starting in Acts 16:19, which described suffering encountered by Paul and Silas, but not Timothy.³⁴¹ Walvoord also noted with respect to verse 2 that Paul and Silas had come to Thessalonica from Philippi where they had suffered for the gospel.³⁴² Certainly the narrative of Acts 17:1-9, the story of the birth of the church in Thessalonica, mentioned Paul and Silas, but not Timothy. It should be noted elsewhere in the New Testament where Paul mentioned Timothy, Paul does not refer to him as an apostle.³⁴³ In two places, 2 Corinthians 1:1 and Colossians 1:1, Paul spoke of himself as an apostle, but simply referred to Timothy as a brother.

From the review of the context of 1 Thessalonians 2:6, it would appear that Silvanus was referred to as an apostle. The same cannot be said concerning Timothy. There again appears to be evidence to suggest that there were apostles beyond the office of apostle.

1 Corinthians 15

Given that the early verses of 1 Corinthians 15 mention the Twelve, and then use the phrase “all the apostles,” it has been suggested that this passage could provide a clear answer to the question of whether or not there are apostles beyond the Twelve. As might be expected, there is range of opinion on this issue. Morris, as well as Robertson and Plummer, held that the expression “all the apostles” does not mean that there are apostles beyond the Twelve. In their views, when 1 Corinthians 15:5 mentioned an appearance to the Twelve, it was referring to John 20:18-24 when Jesus appeared to the

³⁴¹Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 233.

³⁴²Walvoord, *The Thessalonian Epistles*, 23.

³⁴³Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 126.

disciples, but when Thomas was not present. When 1 Corinthians 15:7 spoke of all the apostles, it was referring to John 20:26-29, when Thomas was present with all of the other members of the Twelve.³⁴⁴

At the other end of the range, Fee, commenting on 1 Corinthians 15:7 stated,

‘The Twelve’ were a definite group who had special relationship to Jesus and in the early church probably served in some kind of authoritative capacity. But the ‘apostles,’ a term that included the Twelve, were a larger group who in Paul’s understanding had seen the risen Lord and were commissioned by him to proclaim the gospel and found churches.³⁴⁵

Lightfoot had a similar view, which he expressed this way: “St Paul himself seems in one passage to distinguish between ‘the Twelve’ and ‘all the Apostles,’ as if the latter were the more comprehensive term (I Cor. xv. 5, 7).”³⁴⁶ Schreiner offered that in 1 Corinthians 15, “Paul distinguished between the Twelve and the apostles.”³⁴⁷ Wagner shared the same sentiment from this passage.³⁴⁸

Oddly, none of the commentators necessarily explain their conclusions on this particular point. It appears that they simply state a conclusion as if it is obvious. Grudem suggested that the evidence given in the verses is insufficient to make such a decision in either direction.³⁴⁹ Brotherton noted interpreting the phrase “all the apostles” is a matter of conjecture.³⁵⁰ In consideration of that he wrote, “Paul might have been referring to the twelve, the twelve plus James, a group that included the twelve under the title of five

³⁴⁴Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 202-03. Robertson and Plummer, *First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 338.

³⁴⁵Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 732.

³⁴⁶Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 95.

³⁴⁷Schreiner, *Romans*, 796.

³⁴⁸Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts*, 207.

³⁴⁹Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 232.

³⁵⁰Brotherton, “An Examination of Selected Pauline Passages,” 96.

hundred brothers, or simply another group.”³⁵¹ Though this passage would have seemingly appeared to offer an answer to the question of whether or not there are apostles beyond the Twelve, in fact, it does not decisively point in either direction.

The same could be said for 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11 where *ἀπόστολος* is again used. In both of those verses it appeared to be used in the context of gifted people given to the church to accomplish important ministries. Some, like Stott, suggested that these references must refer to the already identified apostles, meaning the Twelve.³⁵² Others, like William E. Goff have concluded that “Paul mentions apostleship in Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:28, as if it were an ongoing gift for the church.”³⁵³ Ott, Strauss, and Tennent wrote, “Thus the references to apostles in Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12 are best taken to refer to an ongoing role of apostle in the church.”³⁵⁴ Though scholars offer opinions on either side of the debate, neither verse provides evidence that guides the interpretation. The conclusions reached on these verses are dependent upon outside considerations. As such these verses do not help address the issue of whether there are apostles beyond the Twelve in a direct fashion.

False Apostles

One final matter should be considered in seeking to answer the question of whether or not there were apostles beyond the Twelve. In 2 Corinthians 11:13 Paul used a compound word, *ψευδαπόστολος* that is not be found elsewhere in Greek literature.³⁵⁵ The

³⁵¹Ibid., 97.

³⁵²Stott, *God’s New Society*, 160.

³⁵³William E. Goff, “Missionary Call and Service,” in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 336.

³⁵⁴Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 234.

³⁵⁵Rengstorf, “Apostello, Exapostello, Apostollos, Pseudapostolos, Apostole,”

word literally means false apostle. Though this word is not used again, the concept of a false apostle is also found in Revelation 2:2. Paul's creation of the term false apostle, and his use of the concept in his argument in 2 Corinthians 11, would appear to suggest that the true apostles must have been a bigger group than the Twelve plus Paul. Lightfoot noted, "Had the number been definitely restricted, the claims of these interlopers would have been self-condemned."³⁵⁶ Andrew C. Clark concluded, "The fact that they could plausibly claim to be apostles in Corinth proves that the number of apostles was not definitely restricted."³⁵⁷ Dent stated a similar observation, "The existence of false apostle supports the view that the apostles of Christ were not confined to a particular, fairly small, group. It would have been practically impossible to pretend that they were from a small group of people."³⁵⁸ In light of the false apostle issue, Brotherton stated, "it must be affirmed that there were others besides the original twelve that bore that title."³⁵⁹

Summary

Clearly, there was a defined group of apostles that played a unique role in the founding of the church, the articulation of its doctrine and in some cases, the production of major portions of the New Testament. It would seem from the evidence reviewed above, that the apostles who composed the Twelve plus Paul would be the members of that group. They composed the office of apostle. In light of the basic definition of the word *ἀπόστολος*, a person authoritatively sent on a mission to share a message, and the biblical evidence evaluated above, it would appear that there were in the New Testament,

445. Dent suggested that Paul most likely coined this compound word. Dent, "The Ongoing Role of Apostles," 74.

³⁵⁶Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 97.

³⁵⁷Clark, "Apostleship," 360.

³⁵⁸Dent, "The Ongoing Role of Apostles," 75.

³⁵⁹Brotherton, "An Examination of Selected Pauline Passages," 151-52.

apostles beyond the office of apostle. The purpose of the next section is to suggest the mission of those apostles in the expansion and extension of the church in the New Testament.

Potential Characteristics of Biblical Church Planting Apostles

In concluding that there are apostles beyond the office of the apostle in the New Testament, scholars have needed to provide some type of explanation or description of the ministry of these other apostles. In examining the descriptions, two dominant images surface in the literature. The first image is one of the apostle being some type of missionary. Moo for example, in commenting on the use of *ἀπόστολος* in Romans 16:7 suggested that the word “probably means ‘traveling missionary.’”³⁶⁰ Schreiner, in reference to the same passage, offered the idea of “itinerant evangelists or missionaries.”³⁶¹

The second description of these other apostles would be in some way related to church planting. Dent suggested that their focus was on church planting “because Christ has commissioned them as proclaimers of the gospel.”³⁶² Jones expressed a similar idea.³⁶³ Johnson described the focus of these apostles as “preaching the gospel where it has not been heard, planting the church where it does not exist, and leading people to the obedience of faith so that they, too, will express Jesus Christ in their social worlds and participate in God’s global mission.”³⁶⁴

³⁶⁰Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 924.

³⁶¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 796.

³⁶²Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 76.

³⁶³Jones, “Are There Apostles Today?” 113.

³⁶⁴Johnson, *Apostolic Function in 21st Century Mission*, 75.

Though at first, at least within the popular North American understandings of missionary and church planter, the two descriptions may seem to be suggesting different roles for these apostles, that is not necessarily the case.³⁶⁵ Lewis and Demarest helpfully combined the missionary and church planter ideas in their description of these other apostles. They wrote that this type of apostle “approximates what we today call a ‘missionary’ – a spiritually gifted person who establishes and strengthens churches.”³⁶⁶

Earlier in the chapter, attention was given to the characteristics of a church leader, and to the qualifications of those few who served as part of the office of apostle. If there are apostles beyond those unique apostles, is it possible to identify characteristics or qualifications for these other apostles? Craig Ott and Gene Wilson offered two potential descriptions of what these apostles did. The first was “developing, empowering, and releasing local believers for ministry and mission from the very beginning.”³⁶⁷ In the second description they used terms like itinerant, pioneer, initiate, evangelize and disciple, and equip and appoint elders.³⁶⁸

In suggesting a potential list of characteristics for a biblical church planter, it must be taken into consideration that though there are New Testament references to church planting by apostles, the journeys of Paul being a good example, the references describe the work being done much more than they describe the qualifications of the one doing the work. A second factor that should be considered is that the New Testament in general, and the book of Acts in particular, were written to address certain issues and concerns. They were not intended to be exhaustive documents that might address directly

³⁶⁵In a later section of this chapter the relationship between apostle, missionary, and church planter will be discussed.

³⁶⁶Lewis and Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 3:267.

³⁶⁷Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 89.

³⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 102.

and concretely every question that might be asked. As such, there is not a detailed answer to this question found by turning to a certain chapter or verse. Suggesting characteristics for a biblical church planter is a descriptive process based on the record of church planting found largely in the narrative of Acts. As such, the description will largely come from Paul's life.

Five characteristics would seem to emerge from an analysis of the church planting that occurred in Acts. The first characteristic would be a willingness to move often. Clearly the journeys of Paul recorded in Acts certainly speak to this characteristic. It was not uncommon for Paul and his team members to only spend weeks in an area.³⁶⁹ In other cases, like in Corinth and Ephesus, Paul did stay longer, but still not long by the standards of today.³⁷⁰ Ott and Wilson noted that changing locations frequently would be difficult for families and would inhibit longer term relationships.³⁷¹

A second characteristic would be a comfort with or a commitment to initiate and serve in a frontier setting. Repeatedly in Acts, Paul and his team went to places where the gospel had not yet reached. Paul's explanation of his ministry to the church at Rome in Romans 15:18-25 expressed this characteristic. Verse 20 directly states, "And thus I aspire to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation." This trait would appear to be similar to the notion that it is very important that contemporary church planters need to be entrepreneurial in their thinking.³⁷²

³⁶⁹Acts 17:2.

³⁷⁰Paul was in Corinth for 18 months according to Acts 18:11 and in Ephesus for over two years based on Acts 19:9-10.

³⁷¹Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 99.

³⁷²Ken Behnken, "Apostolic Entrepreneurs: A Study of the Book of Acts as it Speaks of Entrepreneurial Church Planting" (New Orleans: Mission Partners, 2001, typewritten), 1-30.

Serving in frontier settings would require a servant who is capable of doing a number of different tasks. The third and fourth characteristics address that issue. A biblical church planter must have been committed to and capable of evangelism and discipleship. Paul's description of his ministry in Colossians 1:28 would seem consistent with that trait. Similarly, Paul's words to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20, particularly verses 24 and 27 emphasized a concern for both evangelism and discipleship.

The fourth trait would be the ability to equip and appoint leaders for the church. The role of a biblical church planter within any particular church would have been temporary.³⁷³ To ensure that the life and ministry of a church would continue, leaders needed to be put into position.³⁷⁴ The narrative of Acts 14:23 highlight this trait, as does the directives of Paul in Titus 1 that were considered above. Ott, Strauss, and Tennent noted, "Apostles might provide some initial care and teaching, but such ongoing ministry was quickly assigned by the apostles to local church elders."³⁷⁵

The final potential characteristic would be ongoing, supportive follow-up. Paul did move often, but that did not mean that he forgot about the churches he helped to plant. His personal words in 2 Corinthians 11:28-29 note that his relocations did not stop his concern. A number of his letters, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians for example, show a commitment to follow-up. Similarly, his meeting with the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 and his return visits to churches planted in Acts 14:21 also undergird this trait.³⁷⁶

The role of a biblical church planter, the other apostles of the New Testament, was not an easy one. These servants of God needed to be willing to move often, to start

³⁷³Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 89.

³⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 103.

³⁷⁵Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 235.

³⁷⁶*Ibid.*

new ministry sites in frontier locations, taking on the responsibilities for both evangelism and discipleship, always preparing the church for their departure by equipping and appointing new leaders, and though they moved on, they needed to provide supportive follow up. Without a doubt, these apostles had to be men who had a depth of spiritual maturity, fostered by spiritual disciplines.³⁷⁷ Though their role was not the same as the unique office of apostle, these other apostles played an important role in the expansion and extension of the gospel and the kingdom of God.

Validity of Apostles Today

The question of whether or not there are apostles today is a highly debated subject. Noted names can be found exposing very different views. Many are opposed to the notion that there might be apostles today. George Eldon Ladd, wrote only of apostles in the past tense and concluded, “Once the church was successfully founded, and the apostolic word of interpretation of the meaning of Christ deposited in written form, no further need existed for the continuation of the apostolic office.”³⁷⁸ Robert L. Saucy offered that in the apostles “the principle of the temporary nature of some spiritual gifts is established.”³⁷⁹ Grudem stated,

It seems that no apostles were appointed after Paul, and certainly, since no one today can meet the qualification of having seen the risen Christ with his own eyes, there are no apostles today. In place of living apostles present in the church to teach and govern it, we have instead the writings of apostles in the books of the New Testament.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 309.

³⁷⁸Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 353.

³⁷⁹Robert L. Saucy, *The Church in God's Program* (Chicago: Moody, 1972), 134.

³⁸⁰Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 235. Grudem's definition of apostle is tied to the 1 Corinthians 15 account and not necessarily to the definition of the word *ἀπόστολος*.

Stott concluded, “Indeed, we need to have the courage to insist that there are no ‘apostles of Christ’ in the church today.”³⁸¹

At the opposite of the continuum, David Cannistraci stated, “One office has yet to be restored in the same measure the other ministries have enjoyed, and I believe it is a missing link in the chain of restoration: *We still need the office of the apostle to manifest in its fullness.*”³⁸² Wagner would also hold that the church needs the office of apostle to be activated again, and has written an entire book calling for that to occur.³⁸³

A mediating group of scholars and pastors have suggested that though the office of apostle is closed, that does not mean that God does not call servants to be apostles in the sense of a biblical church planter. Reformer John Calvin, in reference to Ephesians 4:11 wrote:

According to this interpretation, which appears to me consonant both to the words and the meaning of Paul, those three functions were not instituted in the church to be perpetual, but only to endure so long as churches were to be formed where none previously existed, or at least where churches were to be transferred from Moses to Christ; although I deny not, that afterward God occasionally raised up apostles, or at least evangelists, in their stead, as has been done in our time.³⁸⁴

J. L. Dagg, after clearly stating that the apostolic office had ceased, stated in reference to Barnabas, who he understood to be “probably called an apostle, with reference to this fact; and, in this sense, the term corresponds in signification to our modern name *missionary.*”³⁸⁵ Similar to Calvin, Dagg appeared to be open to a continuation of the biblical church planting apostle.

³⁸¹Stott, *Basic Christian Leadership*, 20.

³⁸²Cannistraci, *Apostles and Emerging Apostolic Movement*, 18. Italics are original.

³⁸³Wagner, *Apostles Today*.

³⁸⁴John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 702-03.

³⁸⁵J. L. Dagg, *Manual of Church Order* (Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1990), 246-47. Italics are original.

Wolfhart Pannenberg concluded, “Primarily, then, the church’s apostolicity means that the sending out of the apostles to all humanity is continued by the church.”³⁸⁶ Ray C. Stedman offered, “The apostolic gift is still being given today, though in a secondary sense. There is no new truth to be added to the Scripture, but the body of truth which we have is to be taken by those who have an apostolic gift and imparted to new churches wherever they may begin.”³⁸⁷ John Vooyo suggested, “Since the church has been established and God’s word has now been given to us in both the Old and New Testaments, the function of these primary roles is complete. In a secondary sense, the church still has apostles, messengers of the church such as missionaries and church planters.”³⁸⁸ Goff opined, “The office and authority of the apostle ceased with the death of the Twelve, but the apostolic function continued as a gift and vocation.”³⁸⁹

Offering a Solution to the Debate

To answer the question of the validity of church planting apostles today, three observations should be made. First, the office of apostle appears, from the biblical record, to be unique.³⁹⁰ Part of the role played by the Twelve and by Paul, was critical to the formation of the church. Verses such as Acts 2:42, Ephesians 2:20, and Jude 3 provide strong reminders that a group of apostles did two important tasks related to God’s truth. They shared truths that helped to establish the church; truths vital to the foundation of the

³⁸⁶Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 407.

³⁸⁷Ray C. Stedman, *Body Life: The Church Comes Alive* (Glendale, CA: Regal Books, 1972), 72.

³⁸⁸John Vooyo, “No Clergy or Laity: All Christians are Ministers in the Body of Christ Ephesians 4:11-13,” *Direction* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 90.

³⁸⁹Goff, “Missionary Call and Service,” 336.

³⁹⁰Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 254.

church. And the truth they shared would also be vital to people who came to Christ after the disciples; they gave truth that those who would come later should cling to for their well being and the furtherance of the mission of the church.

For the Twelve, it would seem their ability to carry out that unique role was tied to having been with, and instructed by, Jesus.³⁹¹ For Paul, who was not a disciple of Jesus, his ability to participate in this unique role was the result of receiving a direct revelation from the Lord Jesus.³⁹² Peters noted, “Here apostleship is based upon personal discipleship in the narrowest sense concerning men chosen and personally instructed by the Lord, Paul receiving his instruction by special revelation.”³⁹³

A second observation is that there is good reason to conclude that this unique office of apostle closed with the deaths of the Twelve and Paul.³⁹⁴ Judas, who betrayed the Lord Jesus was replaced in Acts 1 by Matthias. Judas failed to serve in the unique role. In contrast, when James was killed by Herod the king in Acts 12, there was no record of seeking a replacement for James. The absence of any record of seeking a replacement for James would seem, at least implicitly, that he was part of a unique group that had served a role that was vital, yet temporary.

³⁹¹Mark 3:14; Luke 24:45-50; John 14:26; and, Acts 4:13.

³⁹²Gal 1:11-17. Possibly, one might argue that if Paul received a special revelation, perhaps another person might also receive that type of special revelation. Two factors would seem to seem to make what sounds logically possible to be highly unlikely. First, the importance of Paul’s contribution to the truth of God was affirmed by Peter in 2 Pet 3:15-16. Such an occurrence would not be possible for anyone since. Second, the canon of the New Testament is complete or closed. The completion of the canon is based upon three reasons. First, the ultimate revelation of God was his Son according to Heb 1:1-3. Second, the unique role of the office of the apostle was definitive for the church as Gal 1:8-9 communicates. Third, Rev 22:18-19 state that nothing can be added to the book of Revelation. Given the subject matter of Revelation, the story of the end of time and the entrance to eternity of all things, it would appear that there is no need for any other revelation. God has said all he needs to say to church as a whole.

³⁹³Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 254.

³⁹⁴*Ibid.*

Related to James would be the story of Paul. The words of 2 Timothy 4:6-8 suggest that Paul was aware that he was very near the end of his life.³⁹⁵ Mounce noted, “Paul knows he will die soon, and these verses express his spiritual legacy and his confident anticipation with Christ. . . . He is encouraging Timothy in the face of persecution to be steadfast.”³⁹⁶ The directives Paul gave to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-5, suggested that mission was not yet completed. Yet the strategy Paul gave to Timothy to further the mission of Christ was not concerned with Timothy assuming the office Paul had held. Paul did not delegate his role to his successor.³⁹⁷ Instead Paul’s concern was tied to the guarding and transmission of God’s truth.³⁹⁸

The mission was not focused on people assuming a unique role. Rather the mission required an accurate handling of the word of truth.³⁹⁹ Stott observed, “The succession from the apostles is to be more in the message itself than in the men who teach it.”⁴⁰⁰ Peters commented, “The apostles of Jesus Christ did not deposit their authority and witness in an office to be perpetuated, but in a *scriptura* which is to become the objective guide and authority of the church of Jesus Christ. This *scriptura* constitutes our New Testament, our apostolic witness, and our authority in doctrine and practice.”⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁵John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 113.

³⁹⁶Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 577.

³⁹⁷Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 255.

³⁹⁸2 Tim 1:12-14; 2:2.

³⁹⁹2 Tim 2:15.

⁴⁰⁰Stott, *Guard the Gospel*, 52.

⁴⁰¹Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 255.

The third observation is, from the discussion and conclusion above, that there were apostles beyond the Twelve in the New Testament. Caldwell suggested those who oppose the notion of any kind of apostle today “do so primarily because, from our perspective, they fail to see the variety of ways the word apostle is used in the New Testament.”⁴⁰² This type of concern is connected to the correct desire to uphold the doctrine of Scripture and the closed New Testament canon. Dent stated, “For conservative Evangelicals, the original Apostles played an unrepeatably role in providing the inspired New Testament. Because we accept the Bible as our unequalled authority, some Evangelicals view any talk of an ongoing role for the apostles to be a threat to this foundational premise of our faith.”⁴⁰³

Concern for mission and concern for Scripture should never be viewed as in opposition to one another. Donald Anderson McGavran, reflecting on an early experience that marked his life, wrote: “I came to see that any real missionary movement must depend upon an authoritative Word of God made known in the Bible and manifested by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”⁴⁰⁴ Adopting a view of Scripture or mission, which

⁴⁰²Caldwell, *Sent Out*, 79. Those who are opposed to the notion of apostles today believe that the gift of apostle was limited to those who either personally saw the risen Lord Jesus (1 Cor 9:3) or were personally connected to someone who did see the risen Lord. Given their conclusion that this restriction is the thrust of Scripture, to suggest that there could be apostles today is to infer, or perhaps even demand some type of apostolic succession. In contrast to that view, Eckhard J. Schnabel observed, “Paul’s reference to the various gifts that God has given to the church through the Holy Spirit suggests that since these gifts and ministries are grouped together, and since apostleship is one among many ministries that do not seem to require a supernatural ‘direct address’ by the risen Lord, that these narratives concerning the ‘missionary call’ of the Twelve and of Paul should not be reduced to a principle (a missionary call is necessary) nor to a rule (all missionaries must have been directly called by Jesus to full-time missionary ministry).” Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 385.

⁴⁰³Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 39-40.

⁴⁰⁴Donald Anderson McGavran, *Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1988), 36.

devalues the other, or forces a view that is incongruent with the message of and words used in Scripture, strongly suggest that the view must be review and revised.

In consideration of the three observations, to answer the question about the validity of church planting apostles today, four affirmations should be considered. First, with the completion of the New Testament canon, the need for the unique role of the office of apostle came to a close. Caldwell wrote, “Clearly the apostolic office for revealing true doctrine (the Twelve, Paul, and possibly James) was a once-for-all-time unique office that indeed did end with the closing of the New Testament canon.”⁴⁰⁵ McMullen noted, “After the death of the Twelve and Paul, the official office of apostle (one who sets doctrine and the foundation of the church) ceased functioning. This happened due to the fact that the teachings and doctrine of Christ had been established and put in written form through the Gospels and Epistles.”⁴⁰⁶

Second, though some throughout church history have thought otherwise, the mission of the church was not completed by those who were part of the office of apostle.⁴⁰⁷ There is still a need today for people to be told of the message of reconciliation and be urged to be reconciled to God by turning from sin to God and trusting the Lord Jesus as their Savior.⁴⁰⁸ In the New Testament era, apostles other than the Twelve appeared to play a major part in the spreading of that message. From the narrative of Acts and Paul’s accounts in his epistles, Paul played a unique role, but he also was actively involved in furthering the mission.

⁴⁰⁵Caldwell, *Sent Out*, 79.

⁴⁰⁶McMullen, “Developing a Church Planter Assessment Model,” 100-01.

⁴⁰⁷Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 28-29; McMullen, “Developing a Church Planter Assessment Model,” 113-14.

⁴⁰⁸2 Cor 5:18-20.

Third, the furthering of the mission involves the sharing of message by messengers. This approach is consistent with the pattern the Lord Jesus followed in his own ministry. He came to share the message of the kingdom of God.⁴⁰⁹ It is also consistent with his directives to his disciples prior to his ascension.⁴¹⁰ Paul adopted this model in his ministry and prescribed the same approach in Romans 10, 2 Corinthians 5, and 2 Timothy 4.

Fourth, though the issue is debated, in light of the New Testament evidence for apostles beyond the office of apostle, and given that the mission of the church is still valid today, it would seem reasonable to conclude that there could be church planting apostles today. These apostles should never be seen as fulfilling the unique role of declaring new revelation. But these apostles should be seen as those gifted to continue the mission.⁴¹¹

The Issue of Terminology

In reaching the conclusion that there are church planting apostles today does present a challenge with respect to terminology. What term should be used to refer to these church planting apostles today? Should they be called “apostles?” Tim Chester responded to that idea by stating, “The term ‘apostle’ may carry too much contemporary baggage to be recovered.”⁴¹² Ott, Strauss, and Tennent noted, “To avoid confusing this term with the unique authority of the original Twelve and Paul, it may be best to speak of

⁴⁰⁹Matt 4:17; Mark 1:38.

⁴¹⁰Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.

⁴¹¹Caldwell, *Sent Out*, 79.

⁴¹²Tim Chester, “Church Planting: A Theological Perspective,” in *Multiplying Churches: Reaching Today's Communities Through Church Planting*, ed. Stephen Timmis, (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 39.

apostolic missionaries, rather than of modern apostles.”⁴¹³ Similar to Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, J. D. Payne, because of the wariness of people within the church to the word apostle, prefers to use the term “apostolic missionaries.”⁴¹⁴

Wagner takes great exception to this strategic avoidance of the word apostle.

He wrote,

For a number of our more tentative Christian leaders, the adjective “apostolic” seems to be acceptable, while the noun “apostle” is avoided. They speak of “apostolic leadership” or “apostolic churches” or “apostolic ministry,” with the implication that by doing so they are describing apostles. At times they even make the adjective a noun and refer to “the apostolic.” In my opinion, this choice of words weakens the biblical church government that God desires to put into place. In fact, I looked up the word “apostolic” in the concordance and in the entire text of my *New King James Version* and I couldn’t find it anywhere!⁴¹⁵

Wagner’s concern provides an explanation for the concern expressed by Payne, Chester, Ott, and his co-authors. Wagner used apostle in terms of church government. The others are using the term apostolic to communicate, not the authority of the office of apostle that has ceased, but rather the idea of being sent on a mission to share a message. There is within the mission a sense of authority, but that authority comes from the sender and the message of the mission. Because of Wagner’s usage, and the struggle many within the church have with the noun apostle, it does not seem inappropriate to use the adjective apostolic in its place. But is it justifiable to call these church planting apostles, apostolic missionaries?

Missionary, like apostolic, is not found in the Bible.⁴¹⁶ The English word missionary derived from the Latin word *mitto*, which means “I send.”⁴¹⁷ Its first

⁴¹³Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 234.

⁴¹⁴J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 383-84.

⁴¹⁵Wagner, *Apostles Today*, 63. Italics are original.

⁴¹⁶Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 249.

appearance in English occurred in 1656 when it was used to describe a person sent on a religious mission.⁴¹⁸ From an etymological standpoint, the Latin word *mitto* would be the equivalent of the Greek verb ἀποστέλλω.⁴¹⁹ The two verbs, and their associated nouns, apostle and missionary, are equivalent terms. With the production of the Vulgate, Latin grew to play a more prominent role within the church than Greek, resulting in *mitto* and its associated words being the more dominant.⁴²⁰ Dent noted, “Due to a quirk of linguistic history, the adoption of these two words into English resulted in our having both *apostle* and *missionary*, etymologically similar words originally used to translated each other.”⁴²¹

Though contemporary use of the words might suggest a broad distinction between apostle and missionary, the terms share a noted connection. Eckhard J. Schnabel wrote,

The Latin verb *mittere* corresponds to the Greek verb *apostellein*, which occurs 136 times in the New Testament (97 times in the Gospels, used both for Jesus having been ‘sent’ by God and for the Twelve being ‘sent’ by Jesus). The noun *apostolē* (‘sending, apostleship’) is used in Romans 1:5 to describe Paul’s missionary calling, in 1 Corinthians 9:2 for Paul’s ‘missionary’ or ‘apostolic’ work, in Galatians 2:8 for the missionary calling of Paul and Peter, and in Acts 1:25 in the technical sense of ‘apostolic’ office.⁴²²

From a biblical standpoint, apostle and missionary share a significant amount of overlap

⁴¹⁷McMullen, “Developing a Church Planter Assessment Model,” 47. In some sources, the Latin will be noted as *mittere*, which is the present infinitive form of the word. *Mitto* is the present active indicative first person singular form of the verb. Brotherton, “An Examination of Selected Pauline Passages,” 27-28.

⁴¹⁸Robert K. Barnhart, ed., *The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology* (Bronx, NY: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1988), s.v. “Missionary.”

⁴¹⁹Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 11; Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions*, 249; Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 27.

⁴²⁰William David Taylor, “Missionary,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 644.

⁴²¹Dent, “The Ongoing Role of Apostles,” 12.

⁴²²Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary*, 27-28.

in meaning.

Given the uniqueness of the office of apostle, the term apostle can be confusing to some. By using the expression apostolic missionary, the sense of the person being sent on a mission to share the message of Christ is still expressed, yet without the encumbrance of confusion related to the office of apostle. There are apostles today, but only in the sense of missionaries who are sent to further the mission of the church by sharing the message of Christ so that people come to Christ, and become part of newly formed local assemblies that engage in furthering the mission of the church.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the opportunity to discern the importance of character within the life of a church leader or elder. From 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, it would appear that character is the primary qualification for leadership within the church. In light of that, it would seem very appropriate to analyze church planter profiles for indicators of character and the need for a church planter to be above reproach in his character.

The chapter has also provided a lengthy review of a number of issues related to apostles. Clearly, there is a unique office of apostle that was limited and temporary, occupied by the Twelve and Paul. But, there were also apostles beyond the office. These other apostles were sent out on the mission of the church to share the message of Christ, and as a result, to plant new churches. Given that the mission of the church continues today, it was concluded that there still could be this other type of apostle today, though it might be best to call these individuals apostolic missionaries. The five characteristics noted for the biblical church planting apostles, the willingness to move often, a commitment to initiate and serve in a frontier setting, committed to and capable of evangelism and discipleship, the ability to equip and appoint leaders for the church, and providing ongoing, supportive follow-up, provide traits to use in the theological analysis.

CHAPTER 4

THE MISSIONARY NATURE OF THE CHURCH AND LEADERSHIP

For a church planter to be involved in the establishment of new local churches, he must have a strong grasp on the theological nature of the church. Craig Ott and Gene Wilson suggested, “Defining the church is the first obvious step in understanding church planting. . . . Church planters must clarify their ecclesiology in their own minds prior to launching a plant.”¹ J. D. Payne stated, “We must understand what the C/church is in order to be involved in properly planting it among the peoples of this world.”²

To serve in leadership within the church requires an understanding of the nature of the church. Charles Brock offered that a “perverted and tarnished view of what a church is constitutes one of the greatest hurdles faced by church planters.”³ One’s view of the church has noted influence on how a leader views the functions and structures of the church. Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk noted, “Tertullian’s theological understanding shaped his actions as a leader as well as all the practical questions about how to lead the church.”⁴ In the context of church planting, Tim Chester stated, “Your

¹Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 4.

²J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 1.

³Charles Brock, *Indigenous Church Planting: A Practical Journey* (Neosho, MO: Church Growth International, 1994), 49.

⁴Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 118-19.

view of what a church is and what it does (ecclesiology) has a profound impact on your approach to church planting.”⁵ Payne noted, “How church planters answer the questions, What is the church? and What are the functions of the church? will affect everything they do when planting churches.”⁶

A leader’s conception of the church impacts the church. To produce churches that accomplish God’s intended purpose requires finding leaders who understand what God intends for the church. In light of those observations, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a theological understanding of the nature of the church and how that nature is then expressed in the leadership of the church. A proper understanding of the nature of the church allows for the identification of important leadership traits that could be used in church planter profiles to aid in assessment.

The Theological Nature of the Church

To develop a theological understanding of the nature of the church two matters are considered.⁷ First, from the book of Acts, a description of the biblical nature of the

⁵Tim Chester, “Church Planting: A Theological Perspective,” in *Multiplying Churches: Reaching Today's Communities Through Church Planting*, ed. Stephen Timmis (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 23.

⁶Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*, 18.

⁷Given the focus of this dissertation on to church planting, the matters being considered display direct connections to church planting. In a more complete theological examination of the nature of the church, attention would need to be given to the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. Mark Dever stated, “In order to understand the church in the full richness of God’s revealed truth, both Old and New Testaments must be examined. Though some Christians use the phrase ‘a New Testament church,’ the shape of the visible church today bears a clear continuity – though not identity – with the visible people of God in the Old Testament.” Mark E. Dever, “The Church,” in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 768. Later in this chapter, the biblical image of the people of God is examined to help derive the theological nature of the church. The image, developed from the Old Testament, affirmed the nature of the church found expressed in Acts and the New Testament epistles.

church is provided.⁸ The nature of the church expressed in Acts informed and shaped the early church planting efforts. Second, that biblical description is then evaluated in light of other New Testament writings, which were written to recently planted churches. From that understanding, a brief evaluation of leadership in the New Testament is considered, as well as an overview of how different understandings of the church through history impacted church leadership.

Nature of the Church from Acts

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus promised that he would build his church. The inauguration of that promise occurred on the day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2.⁹ The critical event that initiated the church was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ David S. Dockery stated, “The Spirit’s special manifestation at Pentecost was the event which began the church age.”¹¹ The Holy Spirit’s involvement is fundamental to the church. Michael Green offered, “The Spirit is what creates, validates and energizes the church.”¹²

⁸Ed Stetzer stated, “Before anything else, we start with the Bible to understand and build on the clear New Testament patterns of church planting. We’d be wrong to send out church planters with organizational, strategic, and marketing tools but not the fundamental truths of God’s Word and the principles of Scripture from which to work. The book of Acts is the most important book ever written on the subject.” Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 37.

⁹Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983, 1984, 1985), 1048. Erickson provided a helpful discussion concerning the relationship of Old Testament believers to the church and the combining with New Testament believers to form one people of God. Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts*, in vol. 9 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1981), 271. Robert L. Saucy, *The Church in God’s Program* (Chicago: Moody, 1972), 64.

¹⁰Saucy, *The Church in God’s Program*, 65.

¹¹David S. Dockery, “The Theology of Acts,” *Criswell Theological Review* 5, no. 1 (September 1990): 46.

¹²Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 209.

The Holy Spirit is essential to the church. Dockery noted, “Acts leaves no doubt that the new church was essentially a community of the Holy Spirit.”¹³ First Corinthians 12:13 affirms Dockery’s observation. Darrell L. Bock agreed with Dockery, when he observed, “The Spirit is sent as ‘power from on high’ to lead the new community.”¹⁴ Edmund P. Clowney added, “Apart for the life-giving power of the Spirit, the church remains an empty shell, whatever its form or verbal profession.”¹⁵

The idea of the church as a community is expressed from the beginning of the church in the book of Acts. Following Peter’s message on the day of Pentecost, and the amazing response of people repenting and being baptized, Luke offered a description of the early church in Acts 2:42. The verse states, “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Bock understood the verse to be a summary of the community life of the church.¹⁶ The verses that complete Acts 2 also display community life through the sharing of resources to meet needs and participating in life together.¹⁷

As the narrative of Acts unfolds, there are additional evidences of the community character of the church. After Peter and John were released by the Jewish authorities in Acts 4:23, the church came together in community to pray. Verse 23 reads, “When they had been released, they went to their own *companions*.” Referring to the

¹³Dockery, “The Theology of Acts,” 52.

¹⁴Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 7.

¹⁵Edmund P. Clowney, “The Biblical Theology of the Church,” in *The Church in the Bible and The World: An International Study*, ed. D. A. Carson (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1987), 70.

¹⁶Bock, *Acts*, 149.

¹⁷Acts 2:47 also depicts the missionary nature of the church that will be discussed below.

expression, “own *companions*,” Bock stated, “The expression is not accidental, as it presses the point of how the early church saw itself as a community of mutually supportive friends.”¹⁸ Acts 4 ends with editorial comments by Luke that “stressed the common mind and the generosity of the disciples in their life together.”¹⁹

The first episode of Acts 6 highlights the church as a community. As the community grew, disparity instead of unity began to surface. Presumably, because of the importance of unity and community, the apostles took action to address the problem and restore the wholeness of community.

From the very early days of the church, it was apparent that by nature the church was a community that gathered to worship, to support one another in fellowship, to meet needs, and to pray together. This community was created by the Holy Spirit. But the presence of the Holy Spirit is not just about community. The Holy Spirit adds another component to the nature of the church. Jesus anticipated this component when he said in Acts 1:8: “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

By nature, the church is a community engaged in carrying out the mission of God to declare the good news. The Holy Spirit is vital to the accomplishment of this mission. Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent stated, “God has called the church into existence for the very purpose of serving his mission. . . . Nothing could be clearer from the book of Acts than this: the church in the power of the Spirit becomes God’s instrument to bear witness to the redemptive work of Christ and the coming kingdom.”²⁰

¹⁸Bock, *Acts*, 203.

¹⁹I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 108.

²⁰Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering*

The Holy Spirit is given by God to the community, the church, to carry out his mission. Robert L. Plummer concluded, “There can be little doubt that Luke presents the person of the Holy Spirit as a basis and guiding force for the early church’s mission.”²¹ John Howarth Eric Hull wrote, “The Church received the Spirit not for its selfish secret enjoyment but to enable it to bear witness for Christ.”²² Lesslie Newbigin suggested that the agent of this mission is the Holy Spirit.²³ The God who sent the Holy Spirit “is a communicator and a missionary – God reaches out to speak to people in his word, the gospel message, in order to introduce them to Jesus and lead them to salvation.”²⁴ Numerous summary verses in Acts note the furtherance of God’s mission, as seen by people responding to the good news.²⁵

Dockery suggested that the church understood its nature to be about God’s mission when he wrote: “The new community empowered by the Spirit and dependent on divine resources available through prayer understood its primary task to be witness and mission (Acts 1:8).”²⁶ As noted above, following the arrest of Peter and John in Acts 3 and their release in Acts 4, the community gathered to pray. The focus of their prayer in

Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 192-93.

²¹Robert L. Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 49.

²²John Howarth Eric Hull, *The Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Lutterworth, 1967), 178.

²³Lesslie Newbigin, “The Future of Missions and Missionaries,” *Review and Expositor* 74, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 218.

²⁴Steve Walton, “The Acts – of God? What is the ‘Acts of the Apostles’ all about?” *Evangelical Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (October 2008): 303.

²⁵Acts 2:41, 47; 5:14; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21; 16:5; 17:34; and, 19:20.

²⁶Dockery, “The Theology of Acts,” 52.

Acts 4:24-29 revealed much of their understanding of the nature of the church. In the face of very real persecution, they pray, “For their own strength and enablement in midst of persecution. . . . they pray to be able to preach the message boldly. . . . They depend on God to carry out the mission he has called them to and band together in prayer to show corporately their commitment to proclaim the message.”²⁷

Though the community was facing opposition, which might have threatened the community itself, their focus was on their function, not on the removal of their opponents.²⁸ They prayed “for enablement ‘to speak your word with boldness.’”²⁹ Serving as witnesses appeared to be an integral part of the character of the church. Richard N. Longenecker offered, “Luke has evidently taken pains to give us this prayer so that it might serve as something of pattern to be followed in our own praying.”³⁰

As the narrative of Acts continued, Luke provided further evidence of the missionary nature of the church. In the summary verse Acts 8:4, Luke recorded, “Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” I. Howard Marshall suggested from this verse that “It seems rather to have been regarded as the natural thing for wandering Christians to spread the gospel.”³¹ Acts 11:19-21 expressed a similar occurrence in the city of Antioch. As followers of Jesus gathered in Antioch, they continually shared the good news.

From the narrative of Acts, three components of the nature of the church can be identified. First, the church is a community formed by the Holy Spirit.³² Second, as a

²⁷Bock, *Acts*, 202.

²⁸Marshall, *Acts*, 107.

²⁹Longenecker, *Acts*, 309.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹Marshall, *Acts*, 154.

³²In community the church worshiped together, prayed together, shared fellowship, and was devoted to the apostles’ teaching.

Holy Spirit formed community, the church, by nature is a missionary community, witnessing for and proclaiming Jesus. Third, the church requires the empowering and directing of the Holy Spirit.

Nature of the Church from the Epistles

For the purpose of this chapter, a question needs to be considered: Does the nature of the church found in Acts find expression in the New Testament epistles?

Graham Tomlin has accurately pointed out that the New Testament epistles do not mention evangelism to a large degree. Tomlin described the writings of Paul, Peter, and John, men he understood to be actively engaged in church planting and evangelism, this way:

But when they get around to writing to the ‘ordinary Christians’ in these churches later on, they never seem to do what you’d expect them to: urge church members to be active personal evangelists. There is a lot there about Christian doctrine, about the person and work of Christ, the cross and the resurrection. There’s also quite a bit about the unity of the church, personal and corporate behaviour, relationships in families, households, civic society and the rest, but disappointingly little about evangelism *per se*.³³

Plummer stated, “Indeed, no clear allusion to the Great Commission can be found in Paul’s letters.”³⁴

From a broad, overview perspective, it would appear that there is some noted dissonance between the nature of the church in Acts, and the nature of the church in the epistles. Tomlin’s observation would seem to point toward the community structure carrying over from Acts to the epistles, but not the missionary function. Plummer’s quote would appear to add emphasis to that conclusion. Does that suggest that the church, by nature, is simply a community structure, but has no function beyond itself that is integral

³³Graham Tomlin, *The Provocative Church* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2002, 2004), 161.

³⁴Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 49.

to its nature? To answer that question, three issues are considered: the occasional nature of the epistles, Paul and Luke's mission stimulants, and biblical images of the church.

The occasional nature of the epistles. Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart stated that epistles "are all what are technically called *occasional documents* (i.e., arising out of and intended for a specific occasion)."³⁵ As such, the epistles were not written to be a complete statement on each and every issue of theology. Instead, they were always written as "Task theology," theology being written for or brought to bear on the task at hand."³⁶ This task nature of the epistles means they may seem like unfinished letters or incomplete discussions. Speaking of Paul, Plummer noted, "In fact, it is striking how ethically 'incomplete' any one of his letters is in isolation from the broader Pauline corpus and New Testament witness."³⁷ The occasional nature of the epistles makes it difficult to evaluate the biblical value of an issue based solely on the frequency of commands or instructions on a given subject.

But given the importance of the nature of the church, at least some explanation should be offered as to why the missionary function is seemingly absent from or minimally expressed in the epistles. With some degree of conjecture, Plummer offered: "It is likely that many of the churches that Paul addressed were already active in making known the gospel, so his main concern is not that they *begin* proclaiming the gospel, but that they *confirm* their witness through a faithful lifestyle."³⁸ Paul's writings were calling

³⁵Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for all Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 45. Italics are original.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 46.

³⁷Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 71.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 96. Italics are original.

the followers of Christ, who were children of light, to live as children of light.³⁹ Paul understood that conduct had a bearing on the proclamation of the message.⁴⁰

Similar to Plummer, Tomlin understood the absence of the missionary function as a result of the epistles being concerned with the conduct of the church. He viewed the epistles as urging the new community “to demonstrate, by the distinctiveness of its life and the harmony created among very different people, God’s variegated wisdom. The task is to learn to live the Christian life before we talk about it; to walk the walk, before we talk the talk.”⁴¹ Though there is a danger of taking Tomlin’s words to mean that some exceptionally high level of maturity must be attained before anyone could engage in the missionary function of the church, he does offer an explanation that should be noted. Teaching people to obey the commands of Jesus is a challenging task. For the message of the gospel to gain an increased hearing, the transforming lives of followers of Jesus are critical. Ott and Wilson concurred when they noted: “In other words, demonstration of Christian unity and fellowship has implications for evangelism!”⁴² The transformed life of a follower of Jesus is important to the missionary function of the church.

Paul and Luke’s mission stimulants. One reason why it may be difficult to see the missionary nature of the church in the epistles, is due to that fact that Paul and Luke used different expressions for the motivation of evangelism. Green, speaking of Luke’s statements in Acts, wrote: “Every initiative in evangelism recorded in Acts is the initiative of the Spirit of God. From 1:8 where the world mission is adumbrated, up to the Roman imprisonment of Paul at the end of the book which enables the gospel to be heard

³⁹Eph 5:8.

⁴⁰Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 97.

⁴¹Tomlin, *The Provocative Church*, 170.

⁴²Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 17.

freely in the capital, each new advance is inaugurated by the Lord the Spirit.”⁴³ Verses such as Acts 1:8; 4:29-31; 8:39-40; and, 13:2-4, are just a few of many examples of the Holy Spirit leading the missionary thrust of the early church. Bo Reicke noted, “Luke indicates that in principle it is the Spirit who is the power behind the expansion of the church.”⁴⁴ Yet at the same time, Plummer noted, “In Paul’s letters, however, we do not find such a frequent or prominent association of Spirit and mission.”⁴⁵ Plummer concluded that the motive for mission in Paul’s writings is the dynamic nature of the gospel itself, and that the nature of the gospel served as the theological basis for the expected missionary activity of the church.⁴⁶ As such, he was suggesting that the missionary nature was present in the epistles, but stated in a different manner than Luke had used in Acts.

Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O’Brien offered evidence for this understanding of the gospel from Philippians 1:14-18. Paul’s imprisonment for the gospel encouraged the Church of Rome to be engaged in spreading the gospel. They wrote, “As Paul writes to his Philippian friends he expresses no surprise that these believers should engage in active outreach for the gospel.”⁴⁷ They shared the gospel because the gospel, by nature, called them to share it.

⁴³Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 209.

⁴⁴Bo Reicke, “The Risen Lord and His Church: The Theology of Acts,” *Interpretation* 13, no. 2 (April 1959): 164.

⁴⁵Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 49.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 49-50. Lawrence Rose noted a connection between the gospel and the church when he wrote, “The Church is integral to the Gospel, and its nature is determined by the character of the Gospel.” Lawrence Rose, “The Nature of the Christian Church,” *Anglican Theological Review* 25, no. 1 (January 1943): 151.

⁴⁷Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology, vol. 11 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 193.

To add credence to Plummer’s view, two observations need to be made. First, when Paul spoke of the gospel, he, at times, would use expressions such as “the word of God,” or “the word of the Lord.” Examples of this type of usage can be found in 1 Corinthians 14:36; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-8; 2:2, 4, 13; and, 2 Timothy 2:8-9.⁴⁸

Second, Luke also used the same expressions to highlight the mission of the church. Steve Walton noted,

For Luke a key category in understanding the mission is that it is a mission of the word of the Lord or the word of God. . . . The message which the community speaks is the word of God (4:31). Growth of the mission is growth of the word of God (12:24; 13:39), so that when new groups respond to the gospel message they are said to ‘accept’ the word of God.⁴⁹

Additional examples of the word of God being tied to the missionary activity of the church can be found in a number of places in Acts. One example is summary statements related to the gospel being shared with the Samaritans in Acts 8:12, 14, and 25. A second example is found in the description of Paul and Barnabas’ ministry at Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13:44-49. A third example would be Luke’s summary statements of Paul’s ministry in Berea (17:13), Corinth (18:11), and Ephesus (19:10). Green summarized Luke’s description of the missionary activity in Acts by stating, “The man who, more than anyone in the early Church, has given us his assessment of the factors in evangelism is St

⁴⁸Speaking in reference to 1 Thess 1:8 and the expression “the word of the Lord,” Gene L. Green stated: “*The Lord’s message* (“the word of the Lord”) is a reference to the gospel itself.” Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 101. Italics are original. With respect to 2 Tim 2:9, William D. Mounce concluded. “The *λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ*, ‘word of God,’ is the gospel.” William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 514. Philip H. Towner concluded that “The phrase ‘God’s word’ is used here to describe the proclamation of the gospel in dynamic terms.” Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006). 503.

⁴⁹Walton, “The Acts – of God?” 302.

Luke. And for him the two main ones are the very factors which humans do not provide, namely the Spirit of God and the Word of God.”⁵⁰

Though Paul and Luke can use different expressions regarding the missionary function of the church, it would appear that they share much in common concerning the nature of the church. Both Luke and Paul seem to understand the missionary function as part of the nature of the church. The apparent difference between them is one of emphasis not of understood reality. Plummer wrote,

Consequently, we can see that Paul and Luke do not so much differ on their missionary theology, as they emphasize different complementary elements of the same vision. Paul emphasizes the effective *message* communicated by the Holy Spirit. Luke, on the other hand, emphasizes the *person* of the Holy Spirit who makes the gospel effective in its hearers. . . . Indeed, Paul and Luke are discussing the same reality – simply from two different angles.⁵¹

Biblical Images of the Church. One of the inherent challenges in understanding how the New Testament views the church is the significant use of images to describe the church. John E. Toews wrote,

To our surprise, the New Testament provides no theological definition of the church. Ecclesiology in the New Testament is shaped by images, not definitional statements. Nowhere are we told that the church is . . . New Testament ecclesiology is metaphorical, not doctrinal. Furthermore, the images used are many and diverse, not singular.⁵²

Avery Dulles stated similarly, “The Bible, when it seeks to illuminate the nature of the Church, speaks almost entirely through images, most of them, . . . evidently metaphorical.”⁵³ The actual number of images used in the New Testament is a matter of a

⁵⁰Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 209.

⁵¹Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 65-66.

⁵²John E. Toews, “The Nature of the Church,” *Direction* 18, no. 2 (Fall 1989): 10.

⁵³Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, expan. ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 19.

small debate. Toews suggested that there are at least seventy-three images, whereas Paul Sevier Minear offered ninety-six images from the New Testament.⁵⁴

It is beyond the scope of this study to analyze the large number of images, yet for the purpose of this study, two observations can be made. First, the majority of the images do reinforce the community nature of the church. The church is a gathered people. Second, within the images, there is an apparent missionary function expressed. Two prominent images help to illustrate this observation.

First, Toews concluded that “One of the most powerful images of the church in the New Testament is the people of God. The image is used by six writers in fourteen writings.”⁵⁵ According to Millard J. Erickson, “the concept of the church as the people of God emphasizes God’s initiative in choosing them.”⁵⁶ Peter referred to church as the people of God in 1 Peter 2:9-10. The verses read,

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

It is important to notice the conjunction Peter used following his Old Testament quotations in verse 9 to remind the believers who they were in Christ: the people of God. The conjunction, so that, $\delta\pi\omega\varsigma$, expressed why God choose them as his people: so they could share about who God is. Combined together in the image, the people of God, is the expression of both the structural sense of community and the functional sense of mission.

⁵⁴Toews, “The Nature of the Church,” 26. Paul Sevier Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 268-69.

⁵⁵Toews, “The Nature of the Church,” 11.

⁵⁶Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1035.

The second image to consider, the body of Christ, is perhaps the best known image of the church.⁵⁷ This image communicates that the church is the locus of Christ's activity at the present time.⁵⁸ This notion of the church being the locus of Christ's activity was perhaps first expressed in Acts 9:4 when Jesus asked Saul why Saul was persecuting the church, but Jesus refers to himself and not the church.⁵⁹ Erickson offered that "As the body of Christ, the church is the extension of his ministry."⁶⁰ Erickson held that the extension of that ministry is exemplified in the disciples following his command to make disciples.⁶¹ They were to carry on this work, as they were his body. The body image appears to inherently express the missionary function of the church within it.

Summary of the Biblical Nature of the Church. Though the missionary component of the nature of church is somewhat hidden within the epistles, as noted by a minimal amount of direct references in the epistles to evangelism, a closer examination does suggest the presence of the missionary nature.⁶² The missionary nature is also

⁵⁷Dever, "The Church," 774.

⁵⁸Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1036.

⁵⁹Bock noted, "This curious remark is unexplained at first but points to Jesus's corporate solidarity with the church. To persecute the Way is to persecute Jesus. Jesus closely identified with his own (Matt. 25:35-40, 42-45). The roots of the concept of the 'body of Christ' are here, although this does not dawn on Paul immediately." Bock, *Acts*, 357.

⁶⁰Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1038.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 1038-39.

⁶²Tomlin and Plummer both expressed concern about how few direct statements are made in the epistles exhorting the followers of Christ to be personal evangelists. Tomlin, *The Provocative Church*, 161. Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 49. Note, Paul's directives for people to follow his example, especially in light of his requests for prayer for his sharing of the gospel in both Eph 6:19 and Col 4:3-4, provides significance indirect evidence for followers of Christ to be personal evangelists. Douglas J. Moo and Peter T. O'Brien both find further suggestion of the need for followers of Christ to be personal evangelists, like Paul, in Col 4:5-6. Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The Pillar New

evident within two of the significant images used to describe the church. Though Paul and Luke often highlighted different emphases regarding the missional thrust of the church, examination does suggest an overlap. They both understand the church as having a missional component to its nature. The absence of extensive discussion of the missionary nature in the epistles is somewhat unsettling, but given the occasional nature of the epistles, a reasonable explanation for the absence of the missional thrust can be made.⁶³ In sum, it does appear that the New Testament writers understood the nature of the church to include a community structure and a missional function. The key to the church being a community with a mission is the Holy Spirit. Clowney rightly described the nature of the church when he wrote, “The fellowship of the Spirit that binds Christians together also calls and equips them to be Christ’s envoys to the ends of the earth.”⁶⁴

Leadership in the Early Church

The purpose of this section is to evaluate if leadership within the early church was informed by the nature of the church. Did the church being a community influence how the church was led? Was the mission of the church a factor expressed in leadership? Was the Holy Spirit and his leadership influential in the leadership of the church? If the nature of the church is an important element in how a leader provides leadership, the nature of church should have a measured level of bearing on the leadership of the church.

Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 329. Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 44 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 242.

⁶³For additional study on this issue, see Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 72-96. Plummer offered strong evidence for Paul expressing the mission function in passages from Ephesians, Philippians, and 1 Corinthians.

⁶⁴Clowney, “The Biblical Theology of the Church,” 87.

Acts 20 records the only speech of Paul to an exclusively Christian audience.⁶⁵ The discourse itself is conceptually similar to Paul's letters. The intent of Paul's words was to prepare the Ephesian elders for his absence and how they would need to lead following his departure.⁶⁶ As such, verses 17 to 35 provide a type of leadership primer for the elders. Paul had taught the elders fully, and now the elders needed to take responsibility.⁶⁷ How were they to operate as leaders?⁶⁸ Though Paul's first direct exhortation is not found until verse 28, the entire discourse was instructive. Marshall, beginning his comments on verse 28, yet looking back at verses 18 to 27, stated, "The first part has implicitly contained exhortation to his hearers in that his personal example was intended to be a pattern for them."⁶⁹

Implicitly, Paul underlined at least two components that would need to be part of the elders' leadership. One of those components was the missionary nature of the church. Verse 21 reads, "Solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." The missionary nature of church called for the proclamation of the gospel. To Paul, leading the church required this component. Verse 21 was a statement of his mission.⁷⁰ With Paul's impending departure, he wanted to impress upon the Ephesian elders the importance of mission in leadership. In verse 24, Paul added emphasis to that point. As a leader, Paul understood a major component of ministry to be the proclamation of the gospel. Paul expected leaders to lead in accordance with the missionary nature of the church.

⁶⁵Longenecker, *Acts*, 512.

⁶⁶Bock, *Acts*, 623.

⁶⁷Marshall, *Acts*, 329.

⁶⁸Bock noted, "Here we see a pastoral Paul passing the torch to the leaders of a community he has nurtured." Bock, *Acts*, 625.

⁶⁹Marshall, *Acts*, 329.

⁷⁰Bock, *Acts*, 627.

The second implicit component was expressed in verses 22 and 23. In those verses, Paul explained that the Holy Spirit was leading him to a difficult assignment in Jerusalem. A literal rendering of verse 23 would suggest that Paul was told he would face chains and tribulation.⁷¹ Knowing that, why would Paul travel toward Jerusalem? Marshall noted, “He knows that he is being guided by God to go, and therefore he must obey.”⁷² Leadership in the church is dependent upon God the Holy Spirit. Through Paul’s implied example, he was teaching the elders of their need to lead in concert with the Holy Spirit.

The explicit exhortation of verse 28 added a third component to Paul’s leadership primer. The elders were to be on guard for themselves and the flock. A particular emphasis of this guarding concerned the entrance of savage wolves into the church, and the defection of some within the church. Paul wanted to impress upon the elders the importance of the church community. Bock noted that Paul’s discourse was concerned with the church’s sense of community.⁷³ A portion of leading the church requires attention to the community character of the church.

Acts 20 is not the only passage that highlights leading the church according to its nature. Paul’s appeal for unity in the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 1:10 suggested the importance of community to a leader. Gordon D. Fee noted that “Paul is appealing to them with his full apostolic authority.”⁷⁴ The community of the church is an important issue to a leader. To lead according to the nature of church requires leaders to engage in restorative actions when elements like community are threatened.⁷⁵ The prayer of Jesus in

⁷¹Ibid., 628.

⁷²Marshall, *Acts*, 331.

⁷³Bock, *Acts*, 624.

⁷⁴Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 52.

⁷⁵Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 2nd ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
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John 17:20-23 also serves to highlight, for the leader, the importance of community within the church. This passage also underlines an element of the missionary nature of the church.⁷⁶

Paul's call for prayer support for his own sharing of the gospel in Ephesians 6:19 and Colossians 4:3-4, serve as reminders of a leader seeking to lead according to the missionary nature of the church. Paul's more general call for the spread of gospel in 2 Thessalonians 3:1 may be an even stronger expression of a leader pointing the church toward the missionary nature. The message of the church is one that must be spread. Paul's report to the church in Philippi about the advancement of the gospel in Rome connected to his imprisonment, affirmed that the advancement of the gospel, the missionary message of the church, is of greater significance than Paul being confined in chains.⁷⁷ Paul impressed upon them the importance of the missionary nature of the church.

The vital role of the Holy Spirit in the leadership of the church can be noted in the call of Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13:1-3. Bock noted, "Here the Spirit is directing the mission."⁷⁸ It is important to note that this calling took place within the context of the community of the church worshiping together. The missionary nature of the church is comingled with the community of the church, when, the leaders of the church are obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This event in Acts 13 was crucial to the history of the church.⁷⁹ It should be informative to how the church is led. The recording of the

(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 40.

⁷⁶D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 568-69.

⁷⁷Phil 1:12-18. Köstenberger and O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 193.

⁷⁸Bock, *Acts*, 440.

⁷⁹Marshall, *Acts*, 214.

Macedonian call in Acts 16:6-10 similarly, noted the importance the Holy Spirit's leading in the life of the church and its missionary nature.⁸⁰

Summary of the Theological Nature of the Church

By nature, the church is a community of people empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit, who have been given a missionary mandate. From the example of the New Testament, it would appear for the church to be consistent with its nature, it must be led as a community, toward its mission, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. For new churches to contribute to the furtherance of the Great Commission, two factors need to be kept in their forefront. First, they need to understand the biblical nature of the church. Payne stated, "We must understand what the C/church is in order to be involved in properly planting it among the peoples of this world."⁸¹ Second, for the biblical nature to be continually expressed, the churches must be led according to that nature. Stuart Murray observed, "If the missionary task of the church is recovered, the leadership required to help churches fulfill this mission must also be recovered."⁸² For the nature of the church to be expressed demands leadership that is both informed by that nature, and keeps the church committed to and focused on that nature. Church planters must lead according to the nature of the church.

Historical Revisions to the Nature and Leadership of the Church

To exemplify the importance of the relationship between the understood nature of the church and its leadership, this section highlights how leadership in the church was

⁸⁰Bock, *Acts*, 528.

⁸¹Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*, 1.

⁸²Stuart Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 212.

revised when the understood nature of the church was altered by factors beyond the biblical text. For the purpose of this study, three historical events are considered. They are: the impact of the Edict of Milan; the four attributes of the church from the Nicene Creed; and, the Reformation.

The impact of the Edict of Milan. The Edict of Milan, which granted full toleration to Christianity, was issued in AD 313 by Constantine and the eastern Emperor Licinius.⁸³ Prior to the issuing the edict, Christians had been subject to varying levels of persecution. Roger Welch noted that the persecution had a pronounced impact on the early church. He wrote, “The dynamic planting of the first century quickly changed to concerns with preservation in the face of persecution.”⁸⁴ After enduring significant persecution, the early church undoubtedly felt some sense of relief with the edict, and may have concluded that “the purposes of God had been achieved through the Constantinian settlement.”⁸⁵

Beyond the ending of persecution, the Edict of Milan contributed a number of impacts on the expression of the church.⁸⁶ One of those impacts is discussed here. The

⁸³Robert A. Baker, *A Summary of Christian History*, rev. ed., revised by John M. Landers (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 24.

⁸⁴Roger Welch, “Church Planting: A Historical Perspective,” in *Multiplying Churches: Reaching Today's Communities Through Church Planting*, ed. Stephen Timmis (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 47.

⁸⁵Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 192.

⁸⁶Baker, *A Summary of Christian History*, 25. The first impact was the diminishing or even loss of a missionary dimension of the church. A second impact was that the Edict of Milan contributed to a change in how the church understood itself and its role. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 13. A third impact was the creation of a status quo within the church. *Ibid.* A fourth impact of the Edict of Milan was that the edict put in place needed precursors that led to the creation of Christendom. Christendom is a period in Western history in which the church was viewed as the moral and spiritual centerpiece of society.

edict led to the diminishing or even loss of the missionary dimension of the church.⁸⁷ Ed Stetzer stated, “So the church was handicapped because it did not have to be missional; its mission muscles did not have to be flexed.”⁸⁸ As a result, the church understood itself and its role differently. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch wrote,

When Christianity was recognized and accepted in 313 and then gained favored status with the imperial courts, it altered the fundamental *mode* of the church’s self-understanding and its conception of its unique task in the world. Because a type of “contract” now existed between the church and the political powers, the church’s understanding of itself in relation to the state, culture, and society was profoundly changed.⁸⁹

They stated further, “With the Edict of Milan, the age of the missional-apostolic church had come to an end. Things were to be very different from then on.”⁹⁰ The edict changed the place of the church within its context, causing the church to view itself differently than it had in its history.

As the church changed how it understood itself, leadership in the church was revised. A new form of leadership, a priestly model, began to emerge.⁹¹ The persecutions created a heightened need for pastoral care. With the Edict of Milan, and the connection between church and state, there was a need to provide worship and the sacraments in geographic areas. The structure of priests shepherding a static people, corresponded well with the developing understanding of church. This changed understanding meant “the

⁸⁷David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, no. 16 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 489.

⁸⁸Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 32.

⁸⁹Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 13. Italics are original.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 8.

⁹¹Guder, *Missional Church*, 190-91.

apostolic, as in missional, nature of leadership evaporated under these conditions.”⁹²

Leadership became tied to a position and fulfilling a defined role within a community, rather than to a mission that looked beyond the community. Leadership no longer had to be concerned with mission, but rather as Frost and Hirsch noted, “maintenance mode.”⁹³

Four Attributes of the Church. Mark E. Dever wrote, “The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, fashioned by the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 affirms that Christians believe in ‘one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.’”⁹⁴ Though confessed broadly by Christians, the terms have been interpreted differently through the history of the church.⁹⁵ For the purpose of this study, the critical characteristic is the apostolic descriptor. Dever offered a common understanding of apostolic: “founded on and is faithful to the Word of God given through the apostles.”⁹⁶ This understanding of apostolic created a static sense of the church, leading it to be devoid of any function being critical to its nature. This understanding fit well with the priestly model of leadership that developed from the Edict of Milan. Yet it is contrary to the root idea of apostolic as being sent, which emphasized a sense of mission.⁹⁷

This static understanding distorted the nature of the church and as a result its leadership. Clowney noted, “Inspired apostolic teaching is the foundation upon which the

⁹²Ibid., 192.

⁹³Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 13.

⁹⁴Dever, “The Church,” 775.

⁹⁵Philip G. Ryken noted that to Roman Catholics, and to some Anglicans, apostolic means extra-biblical tradition and serves as reference to apostolic succession. For Charismatics, Ryken suggested that apostolic refers to the exercise of miraculous spiritual gifts. Richard D. Phillips, Philip G. Ryken, and Mark E. Dever, *The Church: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004), 94.

⁹⁶Dever, “The Church,” 777.

⁹⁷Guder, *Missional Church*, 83.

church rests. But the apostles are also those who are sent into the world with the message of the gospel.”⁹⁸ For the church to be the church, it must be committed to the apostolic teaching that formed the New Testament. But for the church to be apostolic, it needs to understand the fullness of the apostolic teaching and function. The church needs to be led in its mission. Jurgen Moltmann stated,

The historical church must be called ‘apostolic’ in a double sense: its gospel and its doctrine are founded on the testimony of the first apostles, the eyewitnesses of the risen Christ, and it exists in the carrying out of the apostolic proclamation, the missionary charge. The expression ‘apostolic’ therefore denotes both the church’s foundation and its commission.⁹⁹

With concern for the nature of the church, Clowney offered:

Unfortunately, the foundational aspect of the apostolic office, the authority of the apostles in delivering to the church the teachings of Christ, has been emphasized to the detriment of the missionary calling they fulfilled. This may seem strange in view of the extensive information that we have in the New Testament about that apostolic missionary *par excellence*, the Apostle Paul.¹⁰⁰

The Reformation. The Reformation began on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther posted ninety-five statements for debate on the door of the church at Wittenberg.¹⁰¹ Through the printing press, Luther’s protest was disseminated broadly, after it was translated from Latin to German.¹⁰² As the Reformation spread at least two issues of significance to the nature of the church were raised. First, the Reformers were concerned with differentiating the true church and false expressions of the church. They viewed the four attributes of the church (one, holy, catholic, and apostolic), as

⁹⁸Clowney, “The Biblical Theology of the Church,” 85.

⁹⁹Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 358.

¹⁰⁰Clowney, “The Biblical Theology of the Church,” 86.

¹⁰¹Baker, *A Summary of Christian History*, 206.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 207.

“insufficient to distinguish between a true and a false church.”¹⁰³ Ott and Wilson noted, “Luther spoke of the *right preaching of the Word* (doctrine) and *faithful administration of the sacraments* (baptism and the Lord’s Supper) as the essential marks.”¹⁰⁴ Since the Reformation, Protestants have held that the *notae ecclesiae*, the marks of the church, are what make a true church. When the Word of God is rightly preached and the ordinances of Christ are rightly followed, there is a true church.¹⁰⁵

Focusing on these two marks created a way of talking about the church that altered the understanding of the nature of the church. People began to talk about the church as “a place where certain things happen.” Guder noted, “This understanding was not so much articulated as presumed. It was never officially stated in a formal creed but was so ingrained in the churches’ practice that it became dominant in the churches’ self-understanding.”¹⁰⁶ Both the community and mission characteristics of the nature of the church found in the New Testament were unintentionally put aside. Functionally, the church was drifting away from basing its identity on being the people of God. The church became a place people went to do religious kinds of things.

A second issue of significance to the nature of the church involved the idea of apostolic succession.¹⁰⁷ Luther began to publically question the idea of apostolic succession in 1518.¹⁰⁸ John Calvin continued this dismissing of apostolic succession in

¹⁰³Dever, “The Church,” 819.

¹⁰⁴Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 5. Italics are original. With time, many churches added the mark of the exercise of church discipline.

¹⁰⁵Dever, “The Church,” 819.

¹⁰⁶Guder, *Missional Church*, 80.

¹⁰⁷Apostolic succession is the notion that popes and bishops held power because of being appointed by previous bishops or popes in a succession all the way back to the Apostle Peter. Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 29.

¹⁰⁸Baker, *A Summary of Christian History*, 207.

his *Institutes of Christian Religion*.¹⁰⁹ Though the Reformers were correct in seeking to remove a positional understanding of “apostolic,” they neglected to bring a correct understanding to apostolic. The impact of this oversight was noticeable. Stetzer observed, “When the Reformers (and later evangelicals) started to deemphasize the apostolic nature of the church, they inadvertently lessened the sending nature of that apostolic nature. The church that “reformed” lost touch with the God who sends, and the mission of the church suffered.”¹¹⁰

This apparent losing of touch with the God who sends, may have contributed to the understanding, of at least some of the first and second generations of Reformers, that the mission Jesus left with the apostles was finished in the first century. This understanding led to the conclusion, “Therefore it was no longer required of the church.”¹¹¹ The correction over apostolic succession contributed to a “thoroughly unmissionary” theology.¹¹²

The Reformation understanding of the church was in dissonance with the biblical nature of the church. Its view of leadership was also in tension with Bible’s approach to leadership. For example, the mark of the right preaching of God’s word appropriately gave prominence to the teaching and preaching aspects of the pastoral role. As a result, leadership developed a more pedagogical tone than it had previously in the priestly era.¹¹³ Teaching and preaching are important biblical practices, but they are not

¹⁰⁹John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 690-98.

¹¹⁰Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 29.

¹¹¹Guder, *Missional Church*, 80.

¹¹²Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 490. Bosch noted that in 1652, the Lutheran theological faculty in Wittenberg stated that the church had no missionary duty or calling at all. *Ibid.*

¹¹³*Ibid.*, 193.

the sum total of leadership based on the biblical nature of the church. The misunderstanding of apostolic within the nature of church, limited, or in some cases removed the missionary thrust from the leadership of the church.

As the church moved from the Reformation to a more developed era of modernity, the understanding of the church did not change dramatically, but new leadership models were added as the church discerned leadership approaches from within culture rather than from Scripture. The pastoral role was perceived as being that of an expert dispensary of religious care.¹¹⁴ This view of leadership could be labeled as professionalism.

This professional approach developed at least two sub-specialties. First, leadership was viewed with respect to caring for people and their spiritual journey. This understanding resulted in the development of a revised form of spiritual care, which could be labeled, “leader as counselor.”¹¹⁵ This leadership approach was based upon an increasing individualism or a privatization of faith.¹¹⁶ Both speak to a lack of the community understanding of the church. Second, advances in science, business, and engineering, elevated the cultural values of technique and management. Effectiveness was viewed as a product of organization and deployment of the right procedures. As such, leadership within the church displayed tendencies toward technical or managerial models.¹¹⁷ These approaches to church leadership seemingly made God a footnote within

¹¹⁴Alan J. Roxburgh, “Pastoral Role in the Missionary Congregation,” in *The Church between Gospel and Culture*, ed. George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 321.

¹¹⁵Guder, *Missional Church*, 196.

¹¹⁶Roxburgh, “Pastoral Role in the Missionary Congregation,” 322. Guder, *Missional Church*, 196.

¹¹⁷Guder, *Missional Church*, 197-198.

ecclesiology.¹¹⁸ These approaches to leadership appear to be concerned about mission, yet without the one whose mission it is. This approach may seem like a valid leadership model, but to remove God from the leadership model and the mission emphasis of the church is a dramatic departure from the nature of the church. God the Holy Spirit is integral to the nature and leadership of the church.

Historical Conclusion. Though the biblical nature of the church informed the leadership of the church during the New Testament, historical events impacted both how the church was understood, and how it was led. Guder noted, “The shape of leadership in any particular location is a matter of historical antecedents and deep cultural values. History and culture affect our present understanding of church leadership.”¹¹⁹ For church planters, especially in the North American context, these historical factors present at least two challenges. First, in seeking to understand the nature of the church, the planter will encounter articulate and reasoned positions from history that will offer various versions of the church. A planter will have to evaluate if those versions correspond with the biblical nature of the church, or even the context in which he finds himself serving. An understanding of the church that places church at a central point within culture, will call for a planter to lead based on the assumption that he will need to effectively engage people when they come. Assimilation is important in church planting.¹²⁰ But the biblical nature of the church calls for much more from a leader than just assimilation.

Second, the planter will also be exposed to numerous schools of thought in terms of leadership. Many of those schools of thoughts may be the product and thinking

¹¹⁸Roxburgh, “Pastoral Role in the Missionary Congregation,” 322.

¹¹⁹Guder, *Missional Church*, 190.

¹²⁰Robert E. Logan and Steven L. Ogne, *The Church Planter's Toolkit: A Self-study Resource Kit for Church Planters and Those Who Supervise Them* (Pasadena, CA: Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, 1991).

of a cultural context that is very close to context of the church plant. But, the planter must lead with the awareness that the church is not just about the current context. The mission of the church is tied to the full out working of the gospel in the plan of God to bring everything in submission to him.¹²¹ Guder expressed a necessary caution, “When leaders are shaped primarily by contextual needs, they fail to connect the gospel in a specific setting with its eschatological nature. The gospel’s eschatological horizon makes leaders aware that the church is always more than context.”¹²² To plant a church that leads to the advancement of the Great Commission, the planter must wrestle through both his understanding of the church and his approach to leadership. Any dissonance between his views of the church and its leadership, and the Bible, or tension between his understanding of the church and his approach of leadership, will hinder the effectiveness of the church for the purposes of God. The nature of the organization must inform its leadership.

The Missional Church.

As was noted in chapter one, the North American church finds itself in a crisis situation.¹²³ The missional church movement has contended that the issues of this crisis are spiritual and theological.¹²⁴ The missional church has sought to engage theologically to address the crisis of the church. It may perhaps be an overstatement, but Reggie McNeal opined, “So what’s the big deal about being missional? And why does everybody seem to be staking out a missional claim? The rise of the missional church is the single biggest development in Christianity since the Reformation.”¹²⁵ Though the expression

¹²¹1 Cor 15:20-28.

¹²²Guder, *Missional Church*, 204.

¹²³*Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*

¹²⁵Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the*

“missional church” was not a matter of significant discussion until 1998, with the publication of *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, it is virtually impossible to discuss the nature of the church without engaging the concept of the missional church.¹²⁶

The term itself, missional church, is not easily defined. Alan J. Roxburgh noted,

The *missional* language found expression as the book took form over that three-year period and thus, became its title. It has now become a part of the *lingua franca* of the church in North America. Almost everywhere one goes today the word *missional* or the phrase *missional church* is used to describe everything from evangelism to reorganization plans for denominations, to how we make coffee in church basements and denominational meeting rooms. In a very brief period of time a new form of language entered the common conversation of the church and diffused itself across all forms of church life. At the same time, it is still not understood by the vast majority of the people in either leadership or pew. This is a stunning accomplishment: from obscurity to banality in eight short years and people still don't know what it means.¹²⁷

Guder and the other researchers involved in writing *Missional Church*, provided a very brief description of missional. They wrote, “With the term *missional* we emphasize the essential nature and vocation of the church as God's called and sent people.”¹²⁸

Church (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), xiii.

¹²⁶Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 197. The earliest usages of the word missional to describe the activities of church can be traced to Francis M. Dubose's book, *God Who Sends*, and Charles Van Engen's book, *God's Missionary People*. Francis M. Dubose, *God Who Sends* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983). Charles Van Engen, *God's Missionary People* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991). The earliest known usage of the word missional was in reference to a Bishop Tozer, who was referred to as the “Missional Bishop of Central Africa,” and also the “fighting parson.” The word missional was defined in the context, just ascribed to the bishop. C. E. Bourne, *The Heroes of African Discovery and Adventure: From the Death of Livingstone to the Year 1882* (London: W. S. Sonnenschein, 1883), 191.

¹²⁷Alan J. Roxburgh, “The Missional Church,” *Theology Matters* 10, no. 4 (September/October 2004): 2. Italics are original. Later in the article, Roxburgh noted that “Simple sentence definitions are not adequate.” He then took three pages to describe what is meant by missional church. *Ibid.*, 2-4.

¹²⁸Guder, *Missional Church*, 11. Italics are original

The missional church developed from the confluence of two components. The first was the development of the concept known as *missio Dei* which began with Karl Barth's paper presentation at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932.¹²⁹ In that paper he "called for the grounding of mission not in ecclesiology, soteriology, or comparative religion, but in the activity of God himself."¹³⁰ Barth was one of the first theologians to articulate mission as an activity of God himself.¹³¹ Barth's paper was part of a worldwide theological discussion about mission and church that shifted attention from the church being the primary focus of mission to a focus on God as the missionary God.¹³² Karl Hartenstein, expressed a similar notion of mission being God's activity shortly after Barth's paper was presented.¹³³

This view of mission as the activity of God was furthered by a group of Germans at the International Missionary Conference in Tambaram, India in 1938.¹³⁴ The peak of Barth's influence was at the International Missionary Conference in Willingen in

¹²⁹Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 389.

¹³⁰Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 63.

¹³¹Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 389.

¹³²Darrell L. Guder, "Missional Theology for a Missionary Church," *Journal for Preachers* 22, no. 1 (Advent 1998): 4-5.

¹³³Wilhelm Richebacher, "Missio Dei: The Basis of Modern Theology or a Wrong Path?" *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 367 (October 2003): 590. Ott, Strauss, and Tennent noted the date for Hartenstein's expression as being in 1934. Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 63. In contrast Bosch suggested it was in 1933. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 390. Tiina Ahonen concluded that this view of mission was developed by both Barth and Hartenstein. Tiina Ahonen, "Antedating Missional Church: David Bosch's Views on the Missionary Nature of the Church and on the Missionary Structure of the Congregation," *Swedish Missiological Themes* 92, no. 4 (2004): 576.

¹³⁴Wolfgang Gunther, "The History and Significance of World Mission Conferences in the 20th Century," *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 367 (October 2003): 528.

1952.¹³⁵ The idea Barth expressed twenty years earlier sparked a noted change in the understanding of mission. Theo Sundermeier stated, “Willingen 1952 was the first time that mission was so comprehensively anchored in the doctrine of God.”¹³⁶ The anchoring of mission in God and his character was a dramatic realignment in mission thinking. Ott, Strauss, and Tennent stated, “In the mid-twentieth century a Copernican revolution took place in the understanding of mission. Mission came to be understood as *God’s mission* (Latin *missio Dei*), that is to say, mission is rooted in divine initiative and character.”¹³⁷

Nearly sixty years after Willingen, mission being understood as God’s mission is often referred to by the Latin phrase *missio Dei*. Though the concept of *missio Dei* was expressed at Willingen, the actual expression was not found in the final statement of the conference, nor was it used among the participants.¹³⁸ Wilhelm Richebacher found that curious given that the concept is often linked with conference.¹³⁹ The actual first use of *missio Dei*, was in a report by Hartenstein, following the conference.¹⁴⁰ Hartenstein wrote, “The sending of the Son to reconcile the universe through the power of the Spirit is the foundation and purpose of mission. The *missio ecclesiae* comes from the *missio Dei* alone. Thus, mission is placed within the broadest imaginable framework of salvation

¹³⁵Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 390. Bosch held that “the Barthian influence was crucial.” He wrote further, “Indeed, Barth may be called the first clear exponent of a new theological paradigm which broke radically with an Enlightenment approach to theology.” Ibid. Ahonen noted that Bosch minored in Systematic Theology under Barth. Ahonen, “Antedating Missional Church,” 576.

¹³⁶Theo Sundermeier, “*Missio Dei* Today: On the Identity of Christian Mission,” *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 367 (October 2003): 560.

¹³⁷Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 62. Italics are original.

¹³⁸Gunther, “History and Significance of World Mission Conferences,” 530.

¹³⁹Richebacher, “*Missio Dei*,” 589.

¹⁴⁰Ibid. Gunther, “History and Significance of World Mission Conferences,” 530.

history and God's plan for salvation."¹⁴¹ Hartenstein connected the mission of the church to the bigger mission of God. The church only had a mission because God had a mission.¹⁴² God was the source of mission. Mission was to be built on the foundation of divine will, and not human intentions.¹⁴³ As such, "Since Willingen, the understanding of mission as *missio Dei* has been embraced by virtually all Christian persuasions."¹⁴⁴ The idea that God is a missionary God, has found its way into the terminology of how Protestants, Eastern Orthodox, and Catholics express mission theology.

The second major component of the background of the missional church concept was the development of the Gospel and Our Culture Network. The network formed in the late 1980s as a continuation of a discussion about the gospel and culture in England.¹⁴⁵ The conversation started in 1983 with the publication of Lesslie Newbigin's short monograph, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for Churches*.¹⁴⁶ Newbigin had served as a missionary in India for over thirty years. Upon his return to England, he discovered that the Christian culture he had left thirty years earlier had basically

¹⁴¹Karl Hartenstein, "Theologisch Besinnung," in *Mission zwischen Gestern und Morgen: Vom Gestaltwandel der Weltmission der Christenheit im Licht der Konferenz des Internatinoalen Missinsrates in Willingen*, W. Freitag u.a. (Hg.) (Stuttgard, 1952) 65, quoted in Wilhelm Richebacher, "Missio Dei: The Basis of Modern Theology or a Wrong Path?" *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 367 (October 2003): 589-90.

¹⁴²Gunther, "History and Significance of World Mission Conferences," 530.

¹⁴³Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 63.

¹⁴⁴Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 390.

¹⁴⁵Guder, *Missional Church*, 3.

¹⁴⁶Ed Stetzer, "Monday is for Missiology: Missional Voices," Ed Stetzer: The Lifeway Research Blog, entry posted April 19, 2010, <http://www.edstetzer.com/2010/04/monday-is-for-missiology-10.html> (accessed May 4, 2010).

disappeared.¹⁴⁷ What had once been a Christendom society had become post-Christian, and to a degree anti-Christian.¹⁴⁸

Newbigin's monograph brought the matters into public discussion. This type of discussion led Frost and Hirsch to suggest that Christendom, especially in its understandings of church and mission, had failed, and as a result, a change was needed.¹⁴⁹ The discussion stimulated by Newbigin followed his missiological consensus to *missio Dei*.¹⁵⁰ The network participants concluded, "We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather, mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation."¹⁵¹

The awareness that the Western culture had become post-Christian introduced a new context for Western churches. The Gospel and Our Culture Network participants came to realize that they were in a "mission field."¹⁵² Alan J. Roxburgh and M. Scott Boren noted that Christianity has virtually expired in Western Europe, and the emerging generations in Canada have no memory of the Christian narrative, a dramatic change in the last twenty years. Going further, they stated, "America is not far behind. It's already happening in various regions. Beneath the façade of suburban megachurches are growing numbers of people (Christians) who want nothing to do with the church as it is."¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷Roxburgh, "The Missional Church," 1.

¹⁴⁸Guder, *Missional Church*, 3.

¹⁴⁹Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 15.

¹⁵⁰Guder, *Missional Church*, 3.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵²Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 198.

¹⁵³Alan J. Roxburgh and M. Scott Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church: What it is, Why it matters, How to become one* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 68.

The Gospel and Our Culture Network concluded that the church was in a crisis. And that crisis was tied to the church's understanding of itself. The influence of Newbigin and also of Bosch on the participants, led them to view the church not as the "purpose or goal of the gospel, but rather its instrument and witness. God's mission embraces all of creation."¹⁵⁴ By approaching church from its place within God's mission, ecclesiology and the nature of church are necessarily shifted. It also suggested that basic assumptions of the nature, purpose, and practice of the church, would need to be challenged, to ensure that they corresponded to God's mission and purpose for the church.¹⁵⁵

The converging of *missio Dei* and the conversation of the Gospel and Our Culture Network produced what is called the missional church. The missional church concept has given rise to considerable theological reflection that has been impacting how the church is viewed. The missional church has contributed at least two positive discussion points concerning the nature of the church. First, it returned God to the central place within the gospel and the church.¹⁵⁶ The church derives its identity from God. Ott, Strauss, and Tennent noted, "The identity of the church is to be found in its relationship to the Triune God, who has created it as his missionary people."¹⁵⁷ The centrality of God within the church reiterates the conclusion of the previous chapter, that being, the importance of a vital relationship with God.

¹⁵⁴Guder, *Missional Church*, 5.

¹⁵⁵Roxburgh, "The Missional Church," 2.

¹⁵⁶Roxburgh and Boren noted, "One of the ways the basic story of the gospel has been compromised is that it has become all about us and how God is supposed to meet our needs, and we have created attractional churches that are about how God does just that. This deforms God's story. It makes us . . . the subject and object of the gospel. . . . The gospel story is about God, not us; it is about what God is doing for the sake of the world, not about meeting the needs of self-actualizing, middle-class, Western people." Roxburgh and Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church*, 69-70.

¹⁵⁷Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 199.

Second, the missional church has also returned the sense of mission to the nature of the church. In doing so, it has kept God central to mission, and reinforced that the church participates in God's mission. Stetzer wrote, "The fact that God is a sender is connected with the very existence of the church."¹⁵⁸ God is the initiator of mission, and the church is the agent of that mission. Ott, Strauss, and Tennent stated, "The church does not determine its mission; rather, God's mission determines the church. In an ultimate sense the church does not *do* mission; rather, the church is taken up *by* and participates *in* God's mission."¹⁵⁹

Though valid concerns can be expressed related to *missio Dei* and the missional church, the theological discussions stimulated by both have help move the church back to a more biblical understanding of itself. The missional church conversation brought a reemphasis on the biblical components of community and mission. With an improved understanding of the church, a church planter is positioned to build his leadership off of the correct foundation.

The church should first and foremost be understood in light of biblical revelation. By nature the church is a community of mission called people, brought together by the Holy Spirit to fulfill the mission of God found in the person of Jesus. But in stating that, it must be recognized that a person's understanding of the nature of church, will, to a degree, be influenced by the historical understandings. Those understandings encourage approaches to leadership that do not necessarily completely align with the biblical nature of the church. In terms of church planting, the nature of the church is an important matter. A planter needs to firmly grasp the biblical nature of the church to ensure his leadership of the churches being planted, leads those churches to be

¹⁵⁸Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 28.

¹⁵⁹Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 199. Italics are original.

communities of called people who fulfill the mission of God in their community and world, as they are empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit. Without a firm agreement with the biblical nature of the church, a church planter's leadership may hinder the full expression of the purposes of God in the planted churches.

Missionary Nature of the Church and Leadership

R. Albert Mohler, Jr. observed, "In today's church, leadership has become something of an obsession. In one sense, this is almost natural and necessary, as leadership is absolutely essential to any organization, including the church."¹⁶⁰ C. Peter Wagner stated boldly, "As I will reiterate time and again, the leader is the principal key to a successful church planting endeavor. There are many other important components of church planting, but they will stand or fall on the leadership available."¹⁶¹ Leadership matters in the church.

A church planter's understanding of the nature of the church will impact how the church planter approaches leading the church. As the church moved from its founding on the Day of Pentecost until the contemporary era, the nature of the church was understood differently. These varying understandings also contributed to different leadership models being applied. The missionary nature of the church calls for an approach to leadership that is in accordance with that nature. Guder, in discussing the models of leadership that sprouted up in the North American church in the last thirty years, noted: "But these professional forms of leadership, once adopted without critical assessment of their presuppositions and functionality, drive the agendas of church

¹⁶⁰R. Albert Mohler, Jr., foreword to *Great Leader Great Teacher: Recovering the Biblical Vision for Leadership*, by Gary Bredfeldt (Chicago: Moody, 2006), 7.

¹⁶¹C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 51.

leadership and become operational ecclesiologies in and of themselves.”¹⁶² For a model of leadership to contribute to the extension of the Great Commission, it must be tied to the missionary nature of the church. Church planters cannot simply impose any model of leadership. Any model used, will impact the understanding of the nature of the church. Ed Stetzer and David Putman stated,

There is a lack of theological depth in much of the contemporary church planting and church growth movements because these are movements of technique, paradigms, and methodologies without genuine biblical and missiological convictions. If we do not have a missional strategy driven by solid theological and ecclesiological principles, we simply perpetuate culture-driven models of church and mission.¹⁶³

To ensure the missionary nature of the church is engrained within new churches, the form of leadership must match the biblical nature of the church.

It should be noted that matching an approach of leadership with the missionary nature of the church is a challenge. Roxburgh and Romanuk, writing from the perspective that church leaders will need to undergo significant change in order to operate according to the missionary nature of the church, observed: “The classic skills of pastoral leadership in which most pastors were trained were not wrong, but the level of discontinuous change renders many of them insufficient and often unhelpful at this point.”¹⁶⁴ Murray expressed concern that many being trained to serve as church planters and pastors were being trained from assumptions tied to an inaccurate understanding of the church.¹⁶⁵ As a result, their leadership was hindered in terms of furthering the Great Commission. The statements and observations of Roxburgh, Romanuk, and Murray, raise the question:

¹⁶²Guder, *Missional Church*, 198.

¹⁶³Ed Stetzer and David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church can Become a Missionary in Your Community* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 184.

¹⁶⁴Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 11.

¹⁶⁵Murray, *Church Planting*, 210-12.

what skills do church planters need to be assessed for, to discern if they will lead a church according to its biblical, missionary nature?

As the earlier portion of the chapter showed, the missionary nature of the church included three components. It included the actual community itself, the missionary function of the church, and it involved the empowering and directing of the Holy Spirit. As was noted above, the Holy Spirit is critical to the church being the church, the missionary people of God.¹⁶⁶ To lead according to the missionary nature of the church, all three components need to be expressed in the life and leadership of the church planter.

Leadership and the Holy Spirit's Empowering and Directing

The Holy Spirit fulfills a unique role in the church. The Holy Spirit is sent by God to create a community of people, called by God, to further the mission of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the directing, empowering, personal presence of God in the church.¹⁶⁷ To lead within the church requires a leader to be in step with the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁸ John 16:12-15 have bearing on what it means to keep in step with the Holy Spirit. In those verses, Jesus communicates a number of important matters related to the Holy Spirit. First, in verse 13, Jesus stated that the Holy Spirit does not speak of his own initiative, but rather he speaks what he hears.¹⁶⁹ Second, from the context of verses 12 and 14, it would appear

¹⁶⁶Marvin J. Newell stated a principle with respect to the Holy Spirit: "Spiritual work takes spiritual power to achieve spiritual ends. In light of this principle, it is imperative that we, like the disciples, be assured of where the source of power for mission originates." Marvin J. Newell, *Commissioned: What Jesus Wants You to Know as You Go* (Saint Charles, IL: Church Smart Resources, 2010), 78.

¹⁶⁷Acts 1:8; 4:31; 13:2; and, 16:6-10.

¹⁶⁸Gal 5:25.

¹⁶⁹Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 540.

that what the Holy Spirit hears, are the messages from Jesus.¹⁷⁰ Third, Jesus makes a noted connection between himself and the Father in verse 15. Thus, the message the Holy Spirit shares, ultimately is from the Father.¹⁷¹ Recognizing the connection of Trinity leads to an important component of the leadership. To lead in step with the Holy Spirit “requires a spirituality that lives in close relationship with and reliance on the directions of the Father through the Spirit.”¹⁷² In terms of practice that suggests leaders need to be engaged in regular spiritual disciplines, so the Spirit can provide the necessary guidance and facilitate the needed close relationship with the Father.¹⁷³ Stetzer and Putman noted to reach a community a leader must have “the heart of the Father for that community.”¹⁷⁴ They go on to note the only way to develop that kind of heart requires “spending serious amounts of time with the one who loved Jerusalem deeply enough to weep over it.”¹⁷⁵ Church planters must have growing relationships with God.

Church planting can be a challenging ministry that demands a great deal from the church planter. Jay Pinney has noted that church planters are visionary entrepreneurs, who operate as high energy leaders. He also noted that they are the very type of people that need to be reminded to nurture their personal lives.¹⁷⁶ Darrin Patrick observed the importance of a pastor’s spiritual life is to his ministry when he wrote:

¹⁷⁰Merrill C. Tenney, *John*, in vol. 9 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 1981), 158.

¹⁷¹Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 541.

¹⁷²Guder, *Missional Church*, 186.

¹⁷³*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴Stetzer and Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code*, 22.

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶Jay Pinney, "Essential Tools for Strengthening the Life and Ministry of Church Planters" (D.Min. project, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006), 11.

Most of the young men I've encountered who aspire to serve God in vocational ministry gravitate toward the pragmatics of ministry performance: preaching improvement, church growth, cultural engagement, etc. It is good to pursue excellence in these areas. However, the paradox of Christian ministry is that our peak performance in leading, shepherding, and preaching comes fundamentally from a rich spiritual life, and not from ministry skills per se. Becoming a better preacher, leader, shepherd, and cultural exegete depends entirely on the health and vitality of a pastor's spiritual life.¹⁷⁷

Church planters need to learn to approach ministry in the same manner that Jesus approached ministry, that being out of the context of his relationship with his Father. In the midst of ministry opportunities and demands in Matthew 14, Jesus sought to be with God. Michael J. Wilkins noted,

Twice in this narrative Jesus goes off alone (14:13, 23), which he often did at a momentous time in his ministry. He used these occasions to prepare himself for upcoming, significant events, where he needed to have all of the spiritual strength possible that accrued from time spent alone with his heavenly Father . . . A key to his ministry was the way he listened to and then obeyed his Father's will, which often took place through the discipline of solitude. With his impending withdrawal from Galilee in order to make the final destined trip to Jerusalem and the cross, Jesus seeks the fellowship, solace, and guidance of his Father.¹⁷⁸

For Jesus to carry out the noted mission and responsibilities given to him by God, Jesus knew that he needed to be in connection with his Father. His relationship with God was critical to the completion of his responsibilities. Luke 5:16 would suggest that this approach was in fact a habit that guided Jesus' ministry. In commenting on Luke 5:16, S. John Roth concluded, "There is a reason for Jesus' withdrawal beyond simply a desire to escape the crowds: he gets away in order to pray. Moreover, the parallel participial constructions ὑποχωρῶν and προσευχόμενος with the imperfect ἦν impress upon Luke's reader that this is a repeated pattern, perhaps even a habit."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷Darrin Patrick, *Church Planter: The Man, the Message, the Mission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 60.

¹⁷⁸Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary, ed. Terry C. Muck (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 513.

¹⁷⁹S. John Roth, "Jesus the Pray-er," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33, no. 6 (December 2006): 491.

The importance of a church planter having a growing relationship with God was also expressed by Jesus in John 15. Church planters want to be fruitful in their service of Christ. Carson noted the message of John 15:2 is that “Fruitfulness is an infallible mark of true Christianity.”¹⁸⁰ The cause of fruitfulness, as expressed in verses 4 and 5, is the connection of the branch to the vine. A branch, in and of itself has no ability to produce fruit. Merrill C. Tenney wrote, “The effectiveness of the believer depends on his receiving the constant flow of life from Christ.”¹⁸¹ Similarly, Carson noted, “No branch has life in itself; it is utterly dependent for life and fruitfulness on the vine to which it is attached.”¹⁸² The branch must be connected to the vine to be productive.

The concluding statement of the Great Commission, as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20, also emphasizes the importance of a relationship with God to the ministry of a church planter. R. T. France offered that Jesus’ promised presence was “not so much a cosy reassurance as a necessary equipment for mission.”¹⁸³ Jesus was affirming the importance of his relational presence to the disciples’ ministry. Wilkins denoted that Jesus’ presence is a crucial element to discipleship occurring; the very task he was calling the disciples to do.¹⁸⁴ The presence of Jesus was intended to impact the disciples’ ministry. Leon Morris noted, “The disciple is not going to be left to serve God as well as he can in the light of what he has learned from the things Jesus had commanded. The disciple will find that he has a great companion as he goes on his way through life.”¹⁸⁵ The disciples’ ministry was to be done in concert with the present Jesus. As a disciple

¹⁸⁰Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 515.

¹⁸¹Tenney, *John*, 151.

¹⁸²Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 516.

¹⁸³R. T. France, *Matthew*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 416.

¹⁸⁴Wilkins, *Matthew*, 958.

¹⁸⁵Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 749.

seeking to further the Great Commission, a church planter must have a growing relationship with God.

Leadership and the Community Life of the Church

With respect to the community component of the missionary nature of the church, certain skills also need to be exercised. As New Testament letters, such as 1 Corinthians and Philippians display, the community of God's people is not without tension and conflict. For community to be experienced in the lives of the congregation requires the handling of tension and conflict. Paul's letters to the Corinthians and the Philippians show a church planter leading according to the missionary nature of the church. Paul led by seeking to address and resolve conflict. Such skills are needed for the community to be consistent with its missionary nature.¹⁸⁶ The Holy Spirit creates a people of God through the forgiveness and reconciliation found in Christ. The leader needs to move the community to be people who embrace forgiveness and reconciliation in their relationships. Roxburgh and Romanuk noted,

The New Testament witness to the early Christians ("see how they love each other") reflected the fact that these Christians disagreed, argued, promoted divergent views of what the church should be, and were competitive and even power hungry. They did not suppress the reality of their life together but instead discovered the unity of the Spirit through their many conflicts. They loved one another in the midst of the messiness of their lives; they discovered God's community because of this reality.¹⁸⁷

If a new church is going to reflect the community it has as a group of redeemed people, the church planter must be able to lead them to embrace the unity they have in the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸⁶Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 12.

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 135.

Leadership and the Missionary Nature of the Church

The third component of the missionary nature of the church pertains to sending. The missionary nature of the church implies a “*sending impulse*” for the church.¹⁸⁸ Israel’s mission in the Old Testament was to be a centripetal people of God. The nations were to be drawn toward God by coming to Jerusalem, an identified center.¹⁸⁹ In contrast to that, the church is to be a centrifugal people of God. The church is to be engaged in going out to the nations and peoples of the world.¹⁹⁰ For the church to engage in such a mission requires leadership.¹⁹¹

Leadership in this regard involves at least two parts. The first part involves what Roxburgh called the “the role of pastor as apostle.”¹⁹² By that designation, Roxburgh means that a pastor must be more than a scholar or a teacher. A pastor must lead by being engaged in the cultural context.¹⁹³ A church planter is not to be focused only on the pastoral care of the people who have joined the church community. He must lead the community to engage and penetrate the cultural context of the community with the gospel. Roxburgh suggested that “Discipling and equipping require leadership that demonstrates, in action, the encounter with the culture.”¹⁹⁴ If the nature of the church truly is apostolic, thus meaning that people are to be sent, they need to be formed to be those people. It is unlikely that type of formation will occur without leadership that operates in accordance with that understanding. As such, the planter must be engaged in

¹⁸⁸Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 39. Italics are original.

¹⁸⁹Newell, *Commissioned*, 81.

¹⁹⁰Ibid. Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 39.

¹⁹¹Tomlin, *The Provocative Church*, 143.

¹⁹²Roxburgh, “Pastoral Role in the Missionary Congregation,” 326.

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴Ibid.

his cultural context with the goal of living out the gospel so others see a gospel formed life in a fallen world.¹⁹⁵ Guder noted, “The place of leadership is to be at the front of the community, living out the implications and actions of the missional people of God, so all can what it looks like to be the people of God.”¹⁹⁶

The second part of leading in a sending fashion involves helping members of the community to work out “what ‘life under the rule of God’ means in their own particular social and geographical context.”¹⁹⁷ If the people of God are going to be a missionary people, they need to be a people who are sure of their identity in Christ and how that identity informs their personal actions in the public arena and private enclaves of their lives. This part of leading calls a leader to equip people to adopt an approach to life that is governed by the gospel. Such leading will require teaching, persuasion, correction, and encouragement.

Conclusion

For a church planter, understanding the nature of the church is vital. His understanding of the church will mark how he functions and leads. This chapter has shown that the biblical nature of the church is a community of mission called people, brought together by the Holy Spirit to fulfill the mission of God found in the person of Jesus. The early church was led according to that nature. Though historical events have pressured that understanding of the church, and contributed to additional leadership approaches, the biblical record affirmed the understanding that the church needs to be led

¹⁹⁵Roxburgh and Romanuk offered Tertullian as an example of a church leader who thought theologically about the how the nature of church called for him to lead the church mindful of the formation of the people in the congregation. Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 119.

¹⁹⁶Guder, *Missional Church*, 186.

¹⁹⁷Tomlin, *The Provocative Church*, 157.

according to its nature. To ensure the church fulfills its God-given mission, three important leadership skills were identified. First, a church planter needs to be engaged in the spiritual disciplines to aid him staying in step with the Holy Spirit. He must have a vital relationship with God. Second, the church planter needs to be a conflict identifier and resolver, who leads the community to be a people of forgiveness and reconciliation. Third, the church planter needs to be a sending leader. This type of leadership involves being personally involved in the cultural context, and it involves equipping people to live public Christian lives.

CHAPTER 5

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PROFILES

The purpose of this chapter is to compare the three profiles introduced in chapter 2 with the theological factors examined in chapters 3 and 4. The intention of the analysis is to encourage church planter assessments to be informed, not only by important insights from the social sciences and historical reflection, but also from biblical and theological foundations that express God’s purpose for church planting. Paul’s words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 give a noted significance to the value of biblical truths for the equipping of God’s people for service. This analysis is intended to encourage the inclusion of biblical principles and truths in the selection of church planters. Ed Stetzer observed, recognizing that church planting involves many sources of strategic direction, the need to prioritize the Bible: “Before anything else, we start with the Bible to understand and build on the clear New Testament patterns of church planting. We’d be wrong to send out planters with organizational, strategic, and marketing tools but not the fundamental truths of God’s Word and the principles of Scripture from which to work.”¹

Each of the three profiles, the Ridley profile, the Thompson profile, and the Wood profile, are analyzed on the basis of the following theological factors. From the first portion of chapter 3, the profiles are examined with respect to a church planter being above reproach in his character. From the apostle section of chapter 3, the profiles are compared to the five characteristics of biblical church planting apostles: willingness to move often, commitment to initiate and serve in a frontier setting, committed to and

¹Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 37.

capable of evangelism and discipleship, ability to equip and appoint leaders for the church, and, provide ongoing, supportive follow-up. The analysis from chapter 4 evaluates the profiles in four different areas. First, the profiles are examined for expressions of the planter's relationship with God. Second, the profiles are examined for evidence of conflict resolution skills. Third, evaluation is given in terms of the planter's engagement in the cultural context, and fourth, the planter's equipping of people to live gospel lives.

The Ridley Profile

The analysis of the Ridley profile is based upon the information about the profile shared by Charles R. Ridley in his book, *How to Select Church Planters*.² As noted in chapter 2, the Ridley profile was one of the first profiles developed to assess church planters, and is perhaps the most widely used profile in church planter assessment. The profile itself was developed in 1984 and has not been revised since that time. The profile was composed of 13 essential qualities listed below:

1. Visioning capacity
2. Intrinsically motivated
3. Creates ownership of ministry
4. Relates to the unchurched
5. Spousal cooperation
6. Effectively builds relationships
7. Committed to church growth
8. Responsive to community

²Charles R. Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters: A Self-Study Manual for Recruiting, Screening, Interviewing and Evaluating Qualified Church Planters* (Pasadena, CA: The Fuller Evangelistic Association, 1988).

9. Utilizes giftedness of others
10. Flexible and adaptable
11. Builds group cohesiveness
12. Resilience
13. Exercises faith³

These 13 qualities were derived from a larger group of 48 dimensions that are found in Figure 4 below.⁴

Analysis from Elder and Apostle Qualifications

The focus of the elder qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 is the character of the elder. The overarching character trait is that of the elder being above reproach. The passages in the Pastoral Epistles suggest that being above reproach is expressed not only in the church, but also in the home, and among non-believers. With respect to the Ridley profile, in contrast to the lists in the Pastoral Epistles, there is very little mention of the character of a church planter. Robert Logan noted that character issues were not a matter of focus in the development of the Ridley profile.⁵ In examining both the 13 essential qualities and the larger list of 48 dimensions from which the 13 were derived, there is very little expression of character traits.⁶ The only possible expression of a church planter being above reproach is found in the description of the fifth essential trait of spousal cooperation. Ridley noted the need for “modeling wholesome family life before church and community.”⁷ This reference is probably best understood as an

³Ibid., 7-11.

⁴The figure is from Ridley’s book, *How to Select Church Planters*. Ibid., 13. Used by permission.

⁵Robert Logan, interview by author, Sioux City, Iowa, February 18, 2011.

⁶Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 7-13.

⁷Ibid., 9.

awareness of the importance and need of being above reproach rather than an explicit affirmation of being above reproach.

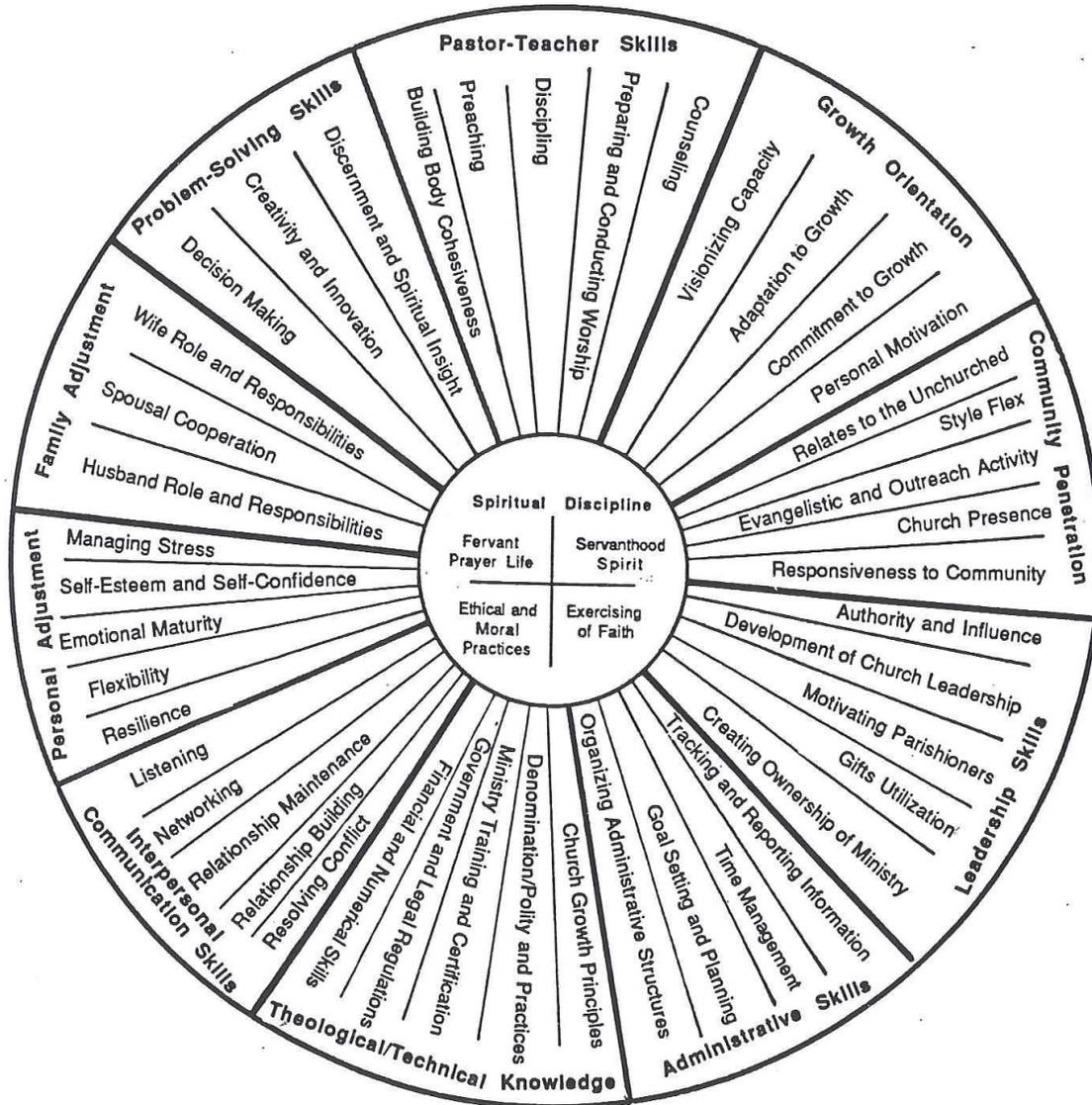


Figure 4. Church planter performance wheel

With respect to the first trait of a biblical church planting apostle, the willingness to move often, again the analysis did not find explicit references in the profile, but perhaps there is an awareness of this trait. In describing the qualification flexible and adaptable, Ridley stated, “Doing ‘whatever’ is necessary ‘whenever’ necessary.”⁸ Such a description could infer a willingness to move, though granted, the description is of such a broad nature, many other things could be inferred. The lack of this biblical trait may be explained by what J. D. Payne referred to as a faulty assumption. He wrote,

The North American Church has a significant and faulty assumption regarding church planters. In the United States it is not only assumed but also expected that if someone is going to plant a church, they will also pastor that church. The overwhelming majority of the church-planting literature, conferences, and training events geared to a U. S. audience presume this situation. Since at least the 1970s, the North American Church has categorized the plant-and-pastor model as the normative way to plant churches.⁹

The Ridley profile was created within the context Payne described. As such, the traits displayed by the apostle Paul in the narrative of Acts would not have been something considered within the model Ridley was selecting for.

In terms of the second trait of a biblical church planting apostle, commitment to initiate and serve in a frontier setting, the North American Church faulty assumption identified by Payne may have some carry over. Yet, two of Ridley’s essential qualifications may speak to the issue. Ridley’s description of the intrinsically motivated qualification as involving “being a self-starter with a willingness to build from nothing,” does seem consistent with serving in a frontier area.¹⁰ Similarly, the qualification of

⁸Ibid., 10.

⁹J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 382.

¹⁰Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 8.

relating to the unchurched would be imperative for starting a church in a frontier setting.¹¹

Surprisingly, the biblical church planter's commitment and competency in evangelism and discipleship appears to be absent from the 13 essential qualifications. Though Ridley stressed the importance of relating to the unchurched, it was the fourth qualification listed, none of his six descriptive statements for this qualification directly stated evangelism or communication of the gospel.¹² There was mention, in one of the descriptive statements, of the need to communicate in an understandable way, but that statement referred to style of communication and did not address the actual content of the message.¹³

Broadening the evaluation out to the 48 dimensions found in the church planter performance wheel does bring reference to discipling and evangelistic activity.¹⁴ But it is curious as to why those seemingly important ministry practices were not included in the top 13 qualifications. One potential reason might be the original list of 48 dimensions. When the list was presented by Ridley to the church planting leaders who participated in the research, there was a sense that if this list of 48 dimensions was held up as the standard which potential church planters had to meet no one would want to serve as a church planter.¹⁵ The list was reduced pragmatically for the sake of the gospel.¹⁶ For unstated reasons, discipling and evangelistic activity did not make the list. Perhaps another explanation is that Ridley focused his work on developing a behavioral list for

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., 13. The church planter performance wheel is found in Figures 1 and 4.

¹⁵Logan, interview.

¹⁶Ibid.

starting organizations. Logan offered that Ridley's work was theologically neutral and that the 13 essential qualifications could be used to assess people to start a Mormon church or a Jewish synagogue.¹⁷ The breadth of Ridley's work would move it away from the particularization of specific, biblical tasks. As such, it might be more accurate to describe the Ridley profile as a general organization initiator's profile, rather than a specific church planter's profile.

The fourth trait of a biblical church planting apostle is present within Ridley's ninth qualification, utilizing the giftedness of others. The explanation of that trait was "releasing and equipping people to do the task of ministry."¹⁸ Further, the 48 dimensions also noted the development of church leaders.¹⁹ This fourth trait of a biblical church planting apostle is clearly expressed in the Ridley profile.

In contrast, the fifth trait, providing ongoing, supportive follow up, is completely absent from Ridley's profile.²⁰ But similar to the discussion of the first trait, the willingness to move often, the North American Church faulty assumption articulated by Payne has bearing. The assumptions behind much of the church planting done in the North American context would negate the need for any type of supportive follow up. The church planter would be expected to be the pastor of the church. And, when he would leave at some point in time, most likely the assumptions of North American church life would suggest that his involvement with the church would largely be complete.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 10.

¹⁹Ibid., 13.

²⁰Ibid., 7-13.

Analysis concerning a Vital Relationship with God

The ministries of Moses, Jesus, and Paul, were all notably influenced by their relationships with God the Father. In evaluating the Ridley profile concerning a planter's relationship with God, such a relationship would not appear to be as significant. References are made to God in the qualifications of visionizing capacity, committed to church growth, and exercises faith; but none of the references are expressed in a relational sense.²¹

The concept of a fervent prayer life is expressed in a central location within the church planter performance wheel.²² Ridley described its location when he wrote, "At the hub of the wheel is the factor of Spiritual Discipline. I believe that this arrangement has literal and symbolic meaning."²³ In a document used in the development of the 13 qualifications, "spiritual disciplines" was the first major category listed.²⁴ But as the group of church planting leaders reduced the list from 48 dimensions to 13 qualifications, the relational component of spiritual disciplines failed to be prioritized. It may have been central in the diagram of the church planter performance wheel, but it was not included in the 13 qualifications.

As Logan made the pragmatic decision to promote the 13 qualifications, but not mention the 48 dimensions, the planter's relationship with God was not emphasized.²⁵

²¹Ibid., 7, 9, 11.

²²Ibid., 13.

²³Ibid., 12. Ridley did not explain what he understood by the literal and symbolic meaning of spiritual disciplines being at the hub of the wheel. It could perhaps be inferred that a planter's relationship with God is central to a planter's work, but he did not state that concept. He did go on to mention the importance of the 13 dimensions, a list which did not include spiritual disciplines.

²⁴Charles Ridley, "Church Planter Performance Profile" (Pasadena, CA: Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, 1984), 2-1, photocopy.

²⁵Logan, interview.

It may have been assumed, but it was not given the level of priority that such a relationship had within the biblical narrative. Again, Ridley's focus on a behavioral list has some bearing on the theology expressed by his work. He was concerned with helping denominations be better stewards of church planting resources. In the background of Ridley's work was the fact that "Thousands of dollars have been wasted on attempted church developments. Many of the failed starts are directly attributed to poor leadership selection."²⁶ Ridley was tasked with aiding in the selection of leaders. But in the process of selecting leaders, it would appear that the biblical importance of leaders being followers of God, was, unintentionally, not translated. In the attempt to select the most effective church planters, a relational quality that had been noted as of great importance to church planters was not included.²⁷

Analysis from the Missionary Nature of the Church

The first trait from the missionary nature of the church concerns conflict resolution. The concern for this trait was present in Ridley's eleventh qualification, builds group cohesiveness.²⁸ The profile noted that a church planter needs to deal "with conflict assertively, constructively, and tactfully."²⁹ It was also expressed separately in the church planter performance profile.³⁰

²⁶Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 2.

²⁷Dick Grady and Glenn Kendall did a research study of 85 successful church planters. The church planters were chosen as successful by the mission boards they serve. The first trait found among these successful church planters was that they spent more time in prayer, 4 hours and 15 minutes per week more, than their less effective colleagues. Dick Grady and Glenn Kendall, "Seven Keys to Effective Church Planting: Survey's Findings are Confirmed in Field Experience," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 28, no.4 (October 1992): 366.

²⁸Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 10-11.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 11.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 13.

The second trait from the missionary nature, a church planter's cultural engagement, is perhaps the most noted of the traits in Ridley's qualifications. References to matters of cultural engagement are found in the fourth qualification, relates to the unchurched, the sixth qualification, effectively builds relationships, and the eighth qualification, responsive to the community.³¹ Though evangelism and discipleship were not prominent in the qualifications, Ridley and the church planting leaders who were involved in his work, understood that their task was related to fulfilling the Great Commission.³² To further the Great Commission, these leaders knew that the church planters selected would need to be engaged in the cultural context. They displayed at least a partial awareness of the missionary nature of the church.

In comparison, the third trait, the planter's equipping of people to live gospel lives, is completely absent from the list of 13 qualifications. At best it is only indirectly found in the church planter performance profile under the discipling dimension. Ridley described discipling, in part, as "Showing how Biblical principles relate to all areas of life."³³ Equipping would involve more than showing, but equipping would at least start with showing.

Analysis Summary

The Ridley profile expressed some, but certainly not all of the theological factors uncovered in this study. Ridley started his book by stating, "Selecting candidates who will perform effectively as church planters has emerged as a major concern in the church growth movement. This concern underscores the need for a good selection process. The need is based upon several important factors. Most of these factors are

³¹Ibid., 8-10.

³²Ibid., 1.

³³Ridley, "Church Planter Performance Profile," 2-2.

theological in nature.”³⁴ Yet curiously, he never outlined the theological factors involved in a good selection process. In reflecting back on Ridley’s work, Logan offered that there really was not a theological or biblical backdrop to Ridley’s work.³⁵ Ridley produced a behavioral list of core leadership skills that Logan described as theological neutral.³⁶ The qualifications helped identify an objective standard that could be used to assess whether a person would be effective at starting an organization. The limited theological expression within the qualifications is the result of its focus. The Ridley profile was designed to aid in selection. It did not factor in how that selection fit into the overall scope of the plan and purpose of God.

The Thompson Profile

The Thompson profile originated from the early work of Thomas Graham, making it approximately the same age as the Ridley profile. Yet in contrast to the Ridley profile, the Thompson profile was updated in 1995 as a part of a doctoral dissertation and then further research was done in 2007 to update the profile yet again.³⁷ The newest version of the profile, known as the “Church Leader Inventory (CLI),” is the version that will be used for the analysis. The profile, found in Figure 5 below, is made up of 5 domains that can be subdivided into 10 dimensions that can be further broken down into 35 competencies.³⁸ One unique feature of the Thompson profile is the inclusion of 4

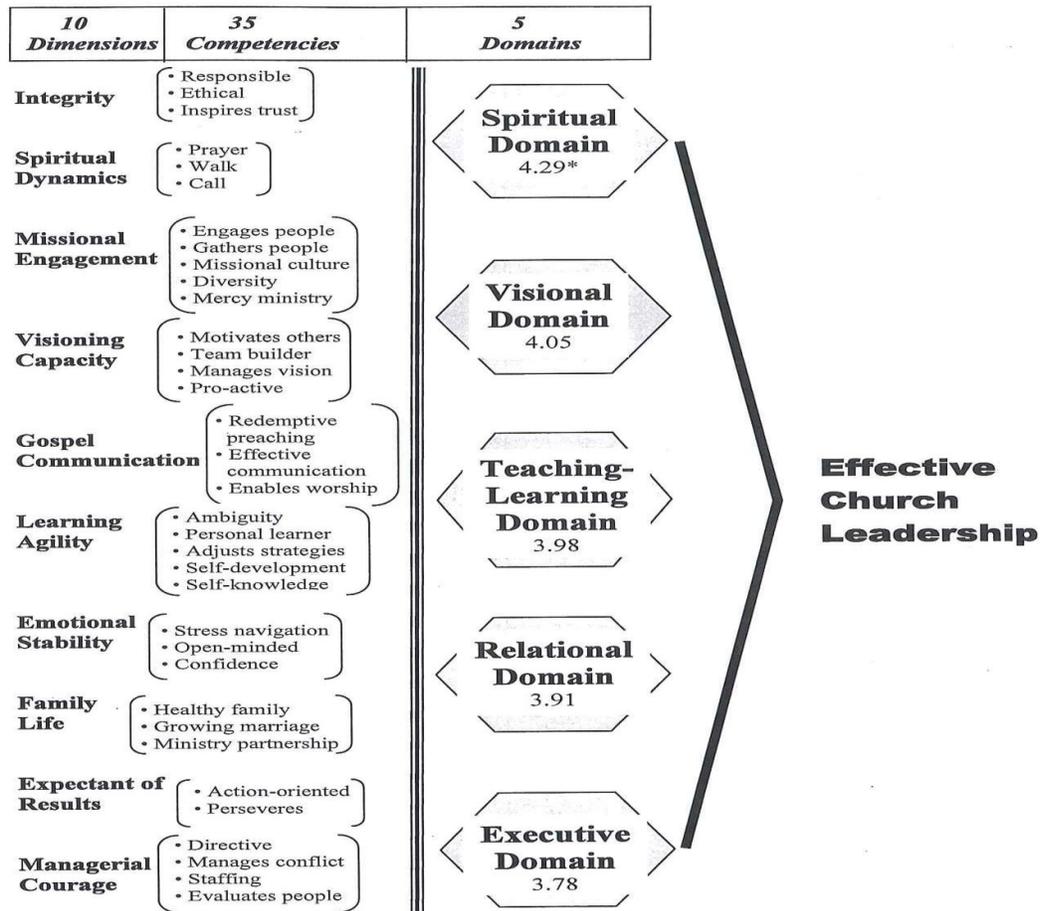
³⁴Ridley, *How to Select Church Planters*, 1.

³⁵Logan, interview.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷J. Allen Thompson, "Church Planter Competencies as Perceived by Church Planters and Assessment Center Leaders: A Protestant North American Study" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1995). J. Allen Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory: A PCA Qualitative and Quantitative Study* (Seattle: International Church Planting Center, 2007).

³⁸Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 51. Used by permission.



* Likert scale importance ratings established by 23 subject matter experts (SMEs).

Figure 5. Church Leader Inventory

stallers/stoppers within the profile.³⁹ J. Allen Thompson defined staller-stoppers as “behaviors that may hinder or destroy effectiveness.”⁴⁰ He further explained them by stating, “A staller/stopper likely results from many sources – what a church leader neglects, such as failing to identify issues that limit personal learning and what he may emphasize such as strong directive skills or over-confidence. Or it may have to do with

³⁹Ibid., 49

⁴⁰Ibid., 2.

*deep character issues left unaddressed.*⁴¹ The 4 identified staller-stoppers in ranked order are as follows: Self-centered; Does not relate well; Does not inspire; and, Non-strategic.⁴²

Analysis from Elder and Apostle Qualifications

With respect to the concern of the Pastoral Epistles for an elder to be above reproach, the Thompson profile expresses the same concern. The highest evaluated dimension in the profile, integrity, is directly concerned with being above reproach.⁴³ A second dimension, family life, speaks to the subset of being above reproach within the home. The antitheses of being above reproach, betraying trust and acting in an unethical manner, are clearly communicated by the staller/stopper of being self-centered.⁴⁴ The Thompson profile has a high view of the character of a church planter. That is not surprising given that Thompson understood 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 as the first summary of a qualification profile.⁴⁵ Logan held that Thompson's theological assumptions may have colored his work or caused him to focus on preconceived conclusions. But Logan also acknowledged that the Thompson profile was effective in the denominational context Thompson was working in.⁴⁶ If, in fact Thompson's work was colored by his theology, at least on this point, his theology aligned with Scripture. Such alignment would be consistent with God's process of church planting.

⁴¹Ibid., 44. Italics are original.

⁴²Ibid., 49.

⁴³Ibid., 51.

⁴⁴Ibid., 44.

⁴⁵J. Allen Thompson, interview by author, Sioux City, Iowa, March 22, 2010.

⁴⁶Logan, interview.

With respect to the qualifications of a biblical church planting apostle, there is dissonance between those qualifications and the Thompson profile. Three of the qualifications are completely absent from representation in the profile. The Thompson profile does not express any indications of the traits of the willingness to move often, commitment to initiate and serve in a frontier setting, or providing supportive follow-up. Similar to the Ridley profile, the Thompson profile may be subject to the North American Church faulty assumption observed by Payne. An indicator of the faulty assumption may be found in the relabeling that took place in 2007 revision. The 1995 version of the profile was referred to as the church planter profile. The 2007 version was named the church leader inventory.⁴⁷ The new name would appear to suggest a shift from simply planting a church to an ongoing pastoral role. That type of shift would lessen the importance of the three biblical church planting apostle traits.

The two other traits, committed to and capable of evangelism and discipleship, and the ability to equip and appoint leaders for the church, are expressed in the Thompson profile. The trait of evangelism and discipleship is expressed indirectly rather than directly. Under the dimension of missional engagement, the competency of gospel communication noted the importance of the gospel for evangelism and edification.⁴⁸ The missional culture competency referred to actions that are commonly understood as part of evangelism: challenging “non-Christians to make a commitment to Jesus Christ.”⁴⁹

The ability to equip and appoint leaders is noted in both positive and negative directions. On the positive side, the team builder competency, of the visioning capacity dimension, described a church planter as a person who invests “personally into the

⁴⁷Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 52.

⁴⁸Ibid., 40.

⁴⁹Ibid., 41.

development of individual leaders for effective ministry.”⁵⁰ From the negative side of the stallers/stoppers, the fails to build teams competency, under the dimension does not inspire or build talent, indicates how a church planter hinders ministry when he does not recruit and empower people to serve, but rather does things by himself.⁵¹

Analysis concerning a Vital Relationship with God

The Thompson profile has an entire dimension focused on the personal spiritual dynamic in the life of a church planter. The dimension is composed of competencies focused on prayer, walking with God, and a sense of God’s calling to church planting. The personal spiritual dynamics dimension combined with the integrity dimension to form the spiritual domain. The spiritual domain had the highest score from a Likert scale importance ratings.⁵² This combination appears to highlight that prior to considering leadership skills, the character and spiritual life of a church planter needs to be taken into account. Church planting is not just an intensive leadership process that requires considerable leadership ability. From the biblical examinations in chapters 3 and 4, ministry is an issue of a church planter’s character and his relationship with God. The Thompson profile places value on those foundational aspects of ministry.

Analysis from the Missionary Nature of the Church

With respect to the missionary nature of the church, the Thompson profile addressed two of the traits directly, but one of the traits was only marginally noted. The equipping of people to live gospel lives is weakly expressed in the effective

⁵⁰Ibid., 43.

⁵¹Ibid., 45.

⁵²Ibid., 51.

communicator competency of the gospel communication dimension.⁵³ The competency discussed equipping people to communicate the gospel effectively. It does not delineate the need to help people integrate the gospel into their lives. There is a sense of equipping, but perhaps not to the level that the missionary nature of the church would anticipate.

The concern for being skilled in conflict resolution was clearly expressed in the Thompson profile. The managerial courage dimension had an entire competency dealing with conflict management. In terms of cultural engagement, the Thompson profile had an entire dimension focused on missional engagement. This profile was very concerned with discovering church planters who would be invested in their communities, both showing and sharing God's love. In the numerical ordering of the profile, missional engagement immediately followed integrity and spiritual dynamics.⁵⁴ From the foundation of character and relationship with God, a church planter should be moved to engage people for Christ. This missional engagement appears to capture the missionary nature of the church.

Analysis Summary

Thompson has expressed concern that assessments and profiles have not been driven by theology. To him, that seems to be odd, given that potential church planters are being assessed to start new churches.⁵⁵ He believed that assessments should be grounded in the qualifications found in the Pastoral Epistles and in missional theology.⁵⁶ Given those convictions, it is not surprising that his profile gave attention to both of those areas. In discussing the changes from the 1995 version to the 2007 version of the profile,

⁵³Ibid., 42.

⁵⁴Ibid., 51.

⁵⁵Thompson, interview.

⁵⁶Ibid.

Thompson noted movement in a missional direction of leadership, away from more professional models.⁵⁷ Hutz H. Hertzberg stated, “Thompson’s recent study recognizes that today’s church planters and pastors need a broader set of competencies than did their peers in the recent past. His work has produced a church leader inventory that is richer and broader than his previous profile.”⁵⁸ As theologians, pastors, and lay people have a greater focus on understanding the nature of the church, additional profiles may need to follow the example of the Thompson profile and be re-evaluated to more accurately reflect what is needed in the life of a church planter. A noted advantage of the Thompson profile has been the ongoing research and reformatting of the profile based upon the results of the research.

The Wood Profile

The Wood profile is different from both the Ridley and Thompson profiles in at least three ways. First, the Wood profile was developed from a recent study that examined new church leaders across a mainline denominational range.⁵⁹ Second, the research study involved a much larger sample of church planters than did either the Ridley or Thompson profiles.⁶⁰ The study itself claimed: “This study represents the most

⁵⁷Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 37.

⁵⁸Hutz H. Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions of Younger Evangelical Church Planters" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2008), 56.

⁵⁹The denominations were Christian Reformed Church, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church of America, and the United Church of Christ. H. Stanley Wood, ed., *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, Unadorned Clay Pot Messengers, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), vii.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, xii. The research for the Wood profile involved 704 church planters. In contrast, the Ridley profile was based on research interviews with 50 church planters for 13 evangelical denominations. There were an additional 25 church planters who completed and returned questionnaires by mail. Ridley, “Church Planter Performance Profile,” 1-3. The 1995 version of the Thompson profile was developed from research

complete exploration of the new-church development (NCD) phenomenon as it is currently understood within the United States.”⁶¹ Third, the Wood profile included a group of female church planters in its research study.⁶² The profile is made up of 10 categories that are grouped into three tiers, based upon their prominence in the qualitative research results.⁶³ The first category, catalytic innovator, was subdivided into five subcategories: charismatic leader, tenacious perseverer, risk-taker, flexible adapter, and self-starter.⁶⁴ The 10 categories grouped in the three tiers, as presented by Wood, are depicted in Figure 6 below.⁶⁵

Analysis from Elder and Apostle Qualifications

Though the Wood Profile expressed that specialized personality traits and behavioral characteristics may be needed in the life of a new church developer, there does not appear to be any direct references in the profile to being above reproach.⁶⁶ A second tier category, personal and relational health, does discuss issues related to quality marriage and family relationships, a key component of being above reproach, but the category also is concerned with the planter being a person of energy.⁶⁷ That kind of

done with 62 church planters and 31 assessors, all of whom were affiliated with the Presbyterian Church of America. Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 37. The 2007 version was developed from a study with 29 participants from Mission to North America of the Presbyterian Church of America or the Redeemer Church Planting Center. *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶¹Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, 154.

⁶²*Ibid.*, xiii.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 34.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 36-48.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 34. Used by permission.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 60.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 75-80.

combination does not strongly point to a biblical understanding of being above reproach. It does express characteristics that are important in church planting, but it does not put a focus on the character of the church planter. The study noted that the inclusion of this category in the profile was “because of the strong emphasis of women NCD pastors on relational health in the family and relational care for children in particular.”⁶⁸ H. Stanley Wood did note that the only discernible difference between the male and female pastors in the research was how the women talked about family.⁶⁹

Early Stage of New-Church Development (First 7 Years)		
Tier 1	Catalytic innovator	20%
	Vibrant faith in God	15%
	Visionary/vision caster	13%
		48%
Tier 2	Empowering leadership	8%
	Passion for people	7%
	Personal and relational health	7%
	Passion for faith-sharing	7%
	Inspiring preaching and worship	7%
		36%
Tier 3	Administrative skills	5%
	Other categories (7) ⁵	12%
		17%

Figure 6. Wood Profile for first seven years

⁶⁸Ibid., 75-76. As was noted above, though there is differing views on the formal roles of women can play in ministry, it is my conviction that the office of elder, the lead pastoral office, is limited to only biblically qualified males. NCD is an abbreviation for new church development, though at times in the book, Wood appeared to use NCD as an abbreviation for new church developer. Ibid., 46.

⁶⁹H. Stanley Wood, interview by author, Sioux City, Iowa, February 17, 2011.

With respect to the qualifications of a biblical church planting apostle, there is a noticeable variance between the qualifications and the Wood profile. Similar to the other two profiles, the qualifications of being willing to move and providing supportive follow-up are absent from expression in the profile. This absence would seem to be another illustration of the North American Church faulty assumption Payne identified.

The qualification of being willing to serve in a frontier setting may potentially be found in the profile's top category, catalytic innovator. The subcategories of being a risk-taker, a flexible adapter, and a self-starter, suggest a willingness to serve in a new area. Wood described a willingness to serve in the frontier when he wrote: "NCDs must adapt to the new environment they serve; they must analyze where they are and who surrounds them; and they must develop a ministry that meets the needs of the new environment in appropriate and exciting ways."⁷⁰

In terms of being committed to and capable of evangelism and discipleship, the qualification is present in the profile in the second tier category of passion for faith sharing.⁷¹ The first comment listed to describe the category was "a passion for evangelism and discipleship."⁷² Wood, from his own personal concern for sharing the gospel, had hoped this category would have been much higher on the list of categories, even being the top category, but the research data did not allow for that.⁷³ Though that was unsettling for Wood, based on Romans 12:2, he believed that with training, people could grow to share their faith effectively. As people grow to love God with their minds,

⁷⁰Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, 46-47. This quote is an example of Wood using NCD as an abbreviation for new church developer.

⁷¹Ibid., 80.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Wood, interview. In the conclusion of describing this category, he wrote, "The profile trait 'passion for faith-sharing' may not stand at the head of the list of NCD leader traits, but it is central to the core paradigm from which these top developers operate." Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, 85.

transformation will occur in their lives.⁷⁴ Many of the church planters involved in this study had a lifelong zeal for evangelism. It was common for the effective church planters to assist another person in making a first-time commitment to Christ every ninety days.⁷⁵

Somewhat curiously, though discipleship was listed with evangelism in the first description of this category in the profile, the discussion of the category was focused on evangelism. Discipleship was not discussed to any length. In fact, the word discipleship was not referred to again in the section.⁷⁶ The passion for evangelism among the studied church planters should be applauded, but the seemingly minimal reference to discipleship does put this profile, at least to some degree, in discord with the qualifications for a biblical church planting apostle.

In contrast, the profile and the qualification of equipping and appointing leaders, display a high level of agreement. An entire category of the profile is focused on this very qualification. Wood noted, “Highly effective NCD developers put a continuous and urgent premium on the identification and training of indigenous leadership.”⁷⁷ These church planters understood that part of their responsibility was to nurture and develop new leaders. Wood described their behavior as leading “to give their leadership away.”⁷⁸

Analysis concerning a Vital Relationship with God

The second category in the Wood profile, vibrant faith in God, is clearly focused on a church planter’s relationship with God. This biblical qualification is prominent in the profile. Wood noted,

⁷⁴Wood, interview.

⁷⁵Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, 82.

⁷⁶Ibid., 80-85.

⁷⁷Ibid., 66.

⁷⁸Ibid., 69.

Vibrant faith in God is a trait to be nurtured, one that is cultivated and nourished by making prayer and reflection on Scripture a disciplined priority in life. This trait is quite unlike the action-oriented, hard-driving characteristics of the catalytic innovator, who seems to be make things happen by sheer force of personality. Nonetheless, to be effective in new-church development, one must cultivate a vibrant faith rooted in Scripture.⁷⁹

The Wood profile places value on a planter's relationship with God. Even suggesting that "effective leadership is not rooted in personal strengths or mental acumen but in a strong and consistent walk with God."⁸⁰ This understanding suggests an active recognition of the importance of God to the life of both the church planter and the church.

Analysis from the Missionary Nature of the Church

The qualifications developed from the examination of the missionary nature of the church in chapter 4 are difficult to find in the Wood profile. With respect to conflict resolution, the only possible evidence in the Wood profile might be in the passion for people category.⁸¹ The focus of the category is on relational skills. Certainly conflict resolution is an important relational skill, but it was not directly referenced in the discussion of the category.

Cultural engagement of the church planter is also a qualification that does not find much expression in the profile. Perhaps indirectly, the efforts of the church planter in the passion for faith-sharing category could be understood as cultural engagement. But, given that the book that presents the profile, *Extraordinary Leaders in Extraordinary Times*, includes an eight page section titled, "'Missional Theology' Defined," it seems odd, that at least this component of the missionary nature is not more noticeably expressed.⁸² A possible explanation for why the missionary nature is not more obvious in

⁷⁹Ibid., 51.

⁸⁰Ibid., 52.

⁸¹Ibid., 70-75.

⁸²Ibid., 2-9.

the profile came from the book itself: “One conclusion is inescapable: most Western churches are, by definition, not missional.”⁸³ Though the profile itself was produced in the early years of the twenty-first century when the missional church discussion was developing among theologians and some church leaders, the church planters who made up the research sample, had all started their churches prior to 2000. The planters’ view of ministry and the church may not have been informed or influenced by the missional church conversation. As such, they may have approached their leadership from models that were more professional in nature, rather than in accordance with the missionary nature of the church. They did not think of the church or their role in the church, from the foundation of the missionary nature of the church.

The same explanation may also clarify why the equipping people to live gospel lives is absent from the profile. The veiled references to discipleship noted above, may also be a reason for the absence. These church planters were passionate for evangelism and seeing people enter into a faith relationship with Christ. They also were concerned about the development of leaders. But the lack of equipping to live gospel lives infers a focus on the development of a church in an institutional, rather than in an apostolic sense. These church planters were in fact successful in developing new churches, but the nature of those churches was not necessarily informed or shaped by the missionary nature of the church in the New Testament. The conclusion of the Wood profile noted, “But one great truth seems to emerge clearly from the remnants of Christendom: the church has lost its missional focus. That focus needs to be restored. Churches are no longer evangelizing communities.”⁸⁴ The planters actively engaged in evangelism to develop new churches, but the churches themselves appeared to have static, rather than dynamic natures.

⁸³Ibid., 7.

⁸⁴Ibid., 155.

Analysis Summary

Along with the other profiles examined, the Wood profile has been recognized for making a valuable contribution to the field of church planter assessment.⁸⁵ But similar to the other profiles, there are varying degrees in which this profile does not appear to express key theological values. That observation does not suggest necessarily that the Wood profile is in error, but rather it does raise the question why theological values are not more readily found in the profiles. The final section of this chapter seeks to offer an explanation for the disjunction between the profiles and the theological values.

Additional Theological Analysis

Any time an analysis is done, the absence of a factor or a few factors, is only to be expected. It is not a surprise that each of the profiles had factors missing when compared to the qualifications garnered from the biblical and theological reviews in chapters 3 and 4. But what might be considered a surprise was the noticeable absence of the apostolic qualifications and those concerning the missionary nature of the church. To a lesser degree, even the partial absence of being above reproach might be considered unexpected. From the standpoint of theology, those components would seem to be foundational aspects of the church and leaders of the church.

The absence of those components calls for a broader theological analysis in order to explain this absence. Briefly, four areas are discussed. First, how the profiles were developed is considered, and how theological factors do or do not fit within that development. Second, the perspectives of the approach to church planting of the profiles and Scripture are examined. Third, how changes in the cultural and historical contexts may impact the profiles are taken in to account. Fourth, is a church planter's relationship with God a matter for assessment?

⁸⁵Hertzberg, "Personal Characteristics and Ministry Perceptions," 64.

Development of the Profiles

The data collected to develop these profiles was derived from self-reporting research.⁸⁶ Ridley and Graham performed job analyses to learn from church planters what was involved in their actual work.⁸⁷ Graham has stated that job analysis is always integral to any selection process.⁸⁸ Thompson's work, which built off of Graham's, utilized an initial open-ended interview technique, followed by a three day, in-depth study of the results of those interviews, by a group of practitioners and supervisory leaders.⁸⁹ Wood noted concerning his study:

It is important to remember that these characteristics are derived from the analysis of focus-group discussions; they are neither psychometric measures nor behavioral indices. For that reason, their power and ability to inform is both limited and focused. These factors can tell us relatively little about what is conclusively 'true' about effective new-church development.⁹⁰

From a research standpoint, a self-reporting form of data collection is often used, but as Wood noted above, it does present limitations that must be kept in mind when evaluating the results. In the case of the theological analysis, a portion of the limitation needs to be considered when evaluating the results. How the respondents themselves understand the nature of the church and church planters would have a significant impact on the information they self-reported. Their theological views, whatever those views were, impact the things they believed were most important.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Logan, interview. Logan was one of the fifty church planters involved in the job analysis done by Ridley.

⁸⁸Graham, re: Request for an Interview from Lloyd Grant. See also, Graham, *A Systems Approach to Organizational Mission and Personnel Deployment in Christian Organizations*.

⁸⁹Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 2.

⁹⁰Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, 59.

Given the subjective nature of self-reporting data, it is difficult to state with precision, the exact profile of a church planter. The efforts of Ridley, Graham, Thompson, and Wood, offer helpful contributions, but the subjectivity of their data collection introduced a bias to the profiles. As Thompson noted in his 2007 study, many factors had changed since his 1995 research.⁹¹ Thompson commented that “We now need to investigate afresh what it takes to be successful in city, suburban, and ethnic church planting in North America.”⁹² Thompson’s comment suggested that profiles may be accurate for a certain time, or perhaps in certain types of situations, but as variables change, the profiles may need to be revised to continue to be accurate and effective. Chapter 5 noted changes in the views of leadership in the church because of changes in the context around the church. Those types of changes are an expression of the same subjectivity.

In recognition of the subjectivity that has entered into the thinking of the church, there are voices calling for a return to Scripture and theology to move the church forward. One of those voices would be Stetzer, who was quoted at the start of this chapter. Another voice is Darrel L. Guder, who perceived the post-Christendom context as sending “us back to Scripture and the church’s apostolic foundations to learn, in surprising ways, what we are called to be and do as the witnessing community of Christ.”⁹³ A third representative voice is Timothy C. Tennent. He expressed this view in a recent address given at Asbury Theological Seminary, in which he repeatedly called for the church to engage in theological reflection so that the church would truly be the

⁹¹Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 5-6.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 6.

⁹³Darrell L. Guder, “Leadership in New Congregations: New-Church Development from the Perspective of Missional Theology,” in *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, Unadorned Clay Pot Messengers, vol. 1, ed. H. Stanley Wood (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 8-9.

church.⁹⁴ A fourth voice is Payne, who has written two books on church planting, *The Barnabas Factors* and *Discovering Church Planting*, that engage in significant biblical and theological reflection with respect to church planting.⁹⁵ *The Barnabas Factors* in particular takes the reader to the biblical text to learn more about the kind person who should serve on a church planting team.⁹⁶

To further enhance the profiles, increased biblical and theological reflection should be pursued, and when warranted, the profiles should be revised to ensure greater alignment with the objective revelations of the Bible. Real church growth is not the result of entrepreneurial leadership, but rather it is a work of the Spirit in and through the lives of entrepreneurs.⁹⁷ Perhaps the church planting efforts of entrepreneurs could have an

⁹⁴The transcript of Tennent's address is found in six successive postings on his blog site. Timothy C. Tennent, "Our Mission to Theologically Educate," Timothy Tennent.com Blog, entry posted September 10, 2011, <http://www.timothytennent.com/2011/09/10/our-mission-to-theologically-educate/> (accessed September 30, 2011). Timothy C. Tennent, "I Don't Like that Style of Worship," Timothy Tennent.com Blog, entry posted September 15, 2011, <http://www.timothytennent.com/2011/09/15/i-dont-like-that-style-of-worship/> (accessed September 30, 2011). Timothy C. Tennent, "God is, like, my pal," Timothy Tennent.com Blog, entry posted September 19, 2011, <http://www.timothytennent.com/2011/09/19/god-is-like-my-pal/> (accessed September 30, 2011). Timothy C. Tennent, "Bumper Sticker Christianity," Timothy Tennent.com Blog, entry posted September 21, 2011, <http://www.timothytennent.com/2011/09/21/bumper-sticker-christianity/> (accessed September 30, 2011). Timothy C. Tennent, "Theologically Educate," Timothy Tennent.com Blog, entry posted September 23, 2011, <http://www.timothytennent.com/2011/09/23/theologically-educate/> (accessed September 30, 2011). Timothy C. Tennent, "Optimistic of Our Mission to Theologically Educate," Timothy Tennent.com Blog, entry posted September 26, 2011, <http://www.timothytennent.com/2011/09/26/optimistic-of-our-mission-to-theologically-educate/> (accessed September 30, 2011).

⁹⁵J. D. Payne, *The Barnabas Factors: Eight Essential Practices of Church Planting Teams* (Smyrna, DE: Missional Press, 2008). Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*.

⁹⁶Each chapter of the book includes a significant biblical exposition of passages that examines the life and ministry of Barnabas. Payne, *The Barnabas Factors*, 10.

⁹⁷Wood, *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, 52.

increased level of effectiveness if their actions were informed to a greater degree by Scripture.

Perspectives on Church Planting

In analyzing the profiles, the faulty assumption noted by Payne about perspectives on church planting, mainly in the North American context, offered an explanation as to why there was a noted difference between the profiles and the biblical qualifications. Other writers echoed similar sentiments to Payne. Craig Ott and Gene Wilson stated,

The approach of the apostolic church planter is radically different from that of pastoral or catalytic church planters. This church planter seeks to follow the model of the apostle Paul, who as far as we know never became the pastor of a church he planted. Instead, after initial evangelism, he focused on empowering the local believers, primarily laypersons, to carry on and expand the work after his departure. His ministry was more itinerate, seeking to plant reproducing churches with local leaders so that he could move on to pioneer work among new unreached people.⁹⁸

Church planters do not have to serve as the long term, permanent pastors of the churches they start. As Ott and Wilson pointed out, the apostle Paul presumably never served as the permanent pastor of a church, yet he was involved in the planting a number of churches. His example played a significant role in the development of the biblical qualifications. The assumption of the need for the church planter to serve as the pastor does not align with the normative practice expressed in the book of Acts.

In terms of theological analysis, it might be worth discerning what has influenced the formation of the assumption that a church planter needs to serve as the pastor. Stuart Murray would suggest that centuries of Christendom have generated a view of church leadership that makes a settled pastoral ministry normative.⁹⁹ Perhaps a

⁹⁸Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 95-96.

⁹⁹Stuart Murray, *Church Planting: Laying Foundations* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001), 210.

question should be considered given the tension between current practice in North American church planting and the biblical record. Should church planting practices be changed or at least expanded to include an apostolic version of church planting? Glenn Kendall described the difference between two church planters in what was known as a “tough mission field.”¹⁰⁰ One took an approach similar to the common North American church planting practice. After fifteen years, there was one church of sixty people. The other planter operated in a fashion similar to the apostolic model noted in chapter 3. In four years, this planter had started two churches and was working on a third.

Payne stated, “In order to make any significant advancement for the kingdom, church planters must have a solid theological basis for their church-planting methods and strategies.”¹⁰¹ The noted absences in the profiles, combined with Kendall’s practical examples, and Payne’s statement, raise the potential to be concerned about the theological basis of the methods the profiles inform. The concern is not meant to suggest that such methods or the profiles are in error. Rather, the concern notes that further theological reflection and possible refinement of the methods and profiles, though time consuming, may be advantageous to the furtherance of the Great Commission.

Cultural and Historical Changes

Ott and Wilson stated, “Generic church-planter profiles are time sensitive, because culture evolves and urban environments are increasingly pluralistic and diversified.”¹⁰² They offered the Thompson profile as an example of a profile that responded to some of these changes. Thompson, after noting the effectiveness of his 1995 profile, explained why he updated it in 2007 when he wrote:

¹⁰⁰Glenn Kendall, “Missionaries Should Not Plant Churches,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (July 1988): 218.

¹⁰¹Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*, 25.

¹⁰²Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 308.

Now, however, the Christian church faces a new century with incredible opportunities and challenges. The world has changed dramatically. The population rush to major cities continues. Immigration has brought millions of newcomers to North America. Secularism and religious skepticism is the dominant world view in our society. New churches, mega churches, have sprouted in suburbs leaving center cities devoid of the Christian message. We now need to investigate afresh what it takes to be successful in city, suburban, and ethnic church planting in North America.¹⁰³

The world has undergone dramatic changes in the last twenty-five years that assessments and profiles have been a part of church planting. Broad examples of the changes would include the fall of communism in Europe, the rise of the internet, and a marginalization of the church in the North America and its expansion in places such as Africa, South America, and South East Asia. Culture has not been static, and by nature, is not static. As culture changes, different issues that previously were assumed, may require specific attention. Ott and Wilson noted that “personal integrity is now specified as a critical trait, whereas a few generations ago it would have been assumed.”¹⁰⁴ Scott Thomas, speaking in reference to Ridley, wrote, “I told Churck [*sic*] that my challenge with his outstanding list was that one doesn't have to be a Christian or be competent theologically or biblically to qualify. His gracious response was that a planter's sending church or denomination will have already examined that. I would hesitate to assume those two factors today.”¹⁰⁵

Ott, Wilson, and Thomas believe that the cultural context in which church planting occurs has changed. With the increasing secularization of the North American context, faith communities “must be, do, and speak their witness in a diverse and often very difficult mission field.”¹⁰⁶ The theological analysis noted absences in the areas of

¹⁰³Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory*, 5-6.

¹⁰⁴Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 308.

¹⁰⁵Scott Thomas, “Ten Qualifications of a Church Planter,” The Acts 29 Network Blog, entry posted March 12, 2010, <http://www.acts29network.org/acts-29-blog/10-church-planter-qualities/> (accessed March 12, 2010).

¹⁰⁶Guder, “Leadership in New Congregations,” 8.

apostolic approach and traits from the missionary nature of the church. Given the changes in the cultural context to a more post-Christian society, the analysis may suggest the need to evaluate the profiles in light of the context. If the profiles are missing salient traits that match the current context, there is reason to address the need to revise the profiles. The absence of the traits may be an indication of hesitancy to acknowledge the changes. To further the Great Commission requires ministering in the cultural context that is present, not the one that is preferred.

Is Relationship a Matter for Assessment?

From chapter 4, there does appear to be biblical warrant that suggests that a church planter needs to serve God in connection to his relationship with God. But does that mean serving in that manner is necessary for effectiveness? Is this issue of relationship of sufficient importance to be included as part of a church planter's profile for assessment? The purpose of this section is to consider the reflections made by ministry participants as they consider the correlation between relationship and ministry effectiveness.

John Stott opined, "Fundamental to all Christian leadership and ministry is a humble personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, devotion to him expressed in daily prayer and love expressed in daily obedience. Without this, Christian ministry is impossible."¹⁰⁷ James E. Means observed, "The static nature of the typical church often testifies to the weakness of clergy's personal relationship God."¹⁰⁸ Similar to Stott and Means, Charles H. Spurgeon stated, "For the herald of the gospel to be spiritually out of order in his own proper person is, both to himself and to his work, a most serious

¹⁰⁷John Stott, *Basic Christian Leadership: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel and Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 101.

¹⁰⁸James E. Means, *Effective Pastors for a New Century: Helping Leaders Strategize for Success* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 22.

calamity; and yet, my brethren, how easily is such an evil produced, and with what watchfulness must it be guarded against!”¹⁰⁹

Ministry effectiveness appears to be correlated to a servant’s relationship with God. Without a vibrant relationship with God, a church planter may well find his efforts ineffective. The furtherance of the Great Commission would be compromised because of this relational weakness. Concern for the Great Commission and fulfilling ministry responsibility requires attentiveness to a church planter’s relationship with God. Richard Baxter noted,

If it be not your daily business to study your own hearts, and to subdue corruption, and to walk with God – if you make not this a work to which you constantly attend, all will go wrong, and you will starve your hearers; or, if you have an affected fervency, you cannot expect a blessing to attend it from on high. Above all, be much in secret prayer and meditation. Thence you must fetch the heavenly fire that must kindle your sacrifices: remember, you cannot decline and neglect your duty, to your own hurt alone; many will be losers by it as well as you.¹¹⁰

Derek Prime and Alistair Begg wrote, “The most powerful influence we can have upon people is example. The strength of our example – of which we ourselves are seldom, if ever, aware – comes from the reality and sincerity of our inner and secret life with God.”¹¹¹ Andrew Bonar, commenting on the ministry of Robert Murray M’Cheyne, observed, “Indeed, he could not neglect fellowship with God before entering the congregation. He needed to be bathed in the love of God. His ministry was so much a bringing out of views that had first sanctified his own soul, that the healthiness of his soul was absolutely needful to the vigour and power of his ministrations.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁹Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1998), 8.

¹¹⁰Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 62.

¹¹¹Derek Prime and Alistair Begg, *On Being a Pastor: Understanding Our Calling and Work* (Chicago: Moody, 2004), 89.

¹¹²Andrew Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M’Cheyne* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), 52.

The personal relationship of a servant with God has a significant impact on the ministry of the servant. Though that is true, it does not necessarily follow that every servant will continually have a vital relationship with God. Collin Hansen wrote,

Evangelical leaders serve out of their personal relationship with Christ, modeling the life of faith for others. Yet it is exceedingly difficult to tend to this most important relationship, not to mention our friends and family, when work consumes every day. . . . Does our work truly point others to the power of Christ? If not, it may draw attention to the one who plants and waters, not the God who gives the growth (1 Cor. 3:7). Ministers who lose this perspective are in danger of losing their congregations, not to mention their families.¹¹³

Means echoed, “Pastoral service often takes place in the muddy waters of excessive busyness, leading to tragic loss of perspective, cloudy vision, and insensitivity to the reality that personal relationship with and accountability to God cannot be subordinated to anything.”¹¹⁴ Robert C. Anderson also noted,

The most important aspect of a pastor’s private life I have left until last – his relationship with the Lord. Many people would take the relationship for granted and would insist that it is unnecessary even to mention it in a book such as this. However, I have learned from painful experiences that a close walk with the Lord does not come automatically.¹¹⁵

Though it is seemingly obvious that a pastor’s ministry should be connected to his own personal relationship with God, it is common to become caught up in the challenges and busyness of ministry, to the extent that one’s own relationship with God is not attended to and nurtured. Such an action will noticeably hinder the life and ministry of a pastor. A healthy ministry demands ministering from the context of one’s own relationship with God; a relationship which is marked by vibrancy, closeness, and dependence on God. Without those qualities, the ministry will suffer. Spurgeon stated,

¹¹³Collin Hansen, “The Toll of Our Toiling,” *Christianity Today*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/marchweb-only/23-21.0.html> (accessed December 30, 2010).

¹¹⁴Means, *Effective Pastors for a New Century*, 23.

¹¹⁵Robert C. Anderson, *The Effective Pastor: A Practical Guide to the Ministry* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 27.

“The labour of the Christian ministry is well performed in exact proportion to the vigour of our renewed nature. Our work is only well done when it is well with ourselves.”¹¹⁶ A church planter’s relationship with God has noted bearing on the ministry of the church planter.

To not include this relational issue in church planter assessments would be an understandable, but unwise error. It would be understandable in that the issue of a personal relationship with God seems obvious. But further consideration might in fact, make the issue of a church planter’s relationship with God not so obvious. Craig Ott and Gene Wilson observed,

Many church planters, being highly task oriented, have a tendency to overlook personal challenges and neglect some dimensions of their personal lives. Most church-planting books fail to address the personal dimensions of church planting, but our observation is that planters are just as likely to fall short because of personal inadequacies or an inability to work on a team as they are because of a flawed strategy.¹¹⁷

To not give consideration to a factor that could easily lead to the demise of the church, the church planter, and his family, would be irresponsible. Proverbs 13:10 warns about the danger of insolence or presumptiveness: it will lead to strife. Wisdom requires changing the current oversight of this relational factor. Pinney wrote, “Though the church planter himself is an essential component of the church plant, the planter’s personal and spiritual life has yet to receive adequate attention in current literature and training.”¹¹⁸ The planter’s relationship with God should be a valued part of a church planter profile.

¹¹⁶Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 18.

¹¹⁷Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 305.

¹¹⁸Pinney, "Essential Tools for Strengthening," 8.

Conclusion

The three profiles displayed varying degrees of correspondence to the traits developed from chapters 3 and 4. The most noticeable voids were connected to the missionary nature of the church and the biblical church planting apostle criteria. This void can in part be explained by the way in which the data was collected to develop the profiles.

Another part of the explanation may be found in the perspective on how church planting should be approached. Though churches have been planted in a number of different ways, the theological analysis does suggest that perhaps reflection and refinement of those perspectives may serve to enhance church planting. In addition, the analysis may suggest that though the cultural context has changed, perhaps the profiles have not changed or been updated in accordance with those changes. For the profiles, and the assessments that use those profiles, to maximize their contribution to the furtherance of the Great Commission, there would be value in the profiles giving further consideration to the theological criteria from chapters 3 and 4.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Church planting has played an important role in furthering the Great Commission. A noted component in church planting is the church planter. Selecting and deploying the individuals God has prepared for the role of church planting is significant to advancing the cause of Christ. The purpose of this chapter is to address three issues associated with selecting those men for service. First, this chapter provides concise answers to the research questions, which guided this examination of church planter profiles. Second, this chapter offers tentative suggestions about changes to church planter profiles that should be considered in light of the analysis. Third, suggestions are offered with respect to potential areas of further study related to church planter profiles and assessments.

Answers to Research Questions

The five research questions presented in chapter 1 helped to guide the research for, and writing of, this dissertation. These were the five questions:

1. How do the church planter profiles correspond to the qualifications Paul listed for church leaders in the Pastoral Epistles?
2. Are there unique traits of church planters that would correspond with characteristics displayed by apostles in the New Testament, and as such might be described as apostolic functions?
3. Are the right characteristics, skills, and gifts being assessed for, or are there other issues that need to be addressed?
4. How do the profiles address the need for the church planter to have a spiritually vital relationship with God?

5. How do the profiles reflect or assess the potential church planter with respect to the missionary nature of the church?

This section provides concise answers to the questions from the dissertation.

Question 1

The analysis revealed that the overall focus of the qualifications listed by Paul in the Pastoral Epistles, the issue of being above reproach, was only found in one of the three profiles. Though the qualifications have a prominent place in those epistles, in terms of selecting church leaders, that prominence was not translated over to the profiles. This observation does not mean that the profiles are wrong, but it might suggest the need to broaden the considerations made in the profiles. The profiles are needed to aid in the selection of church planters. Clearly skills and behavioral traits that contribute to initiating a new organization are necessary. But in the process of developing a profile, there is value in seeing more than just the skills necessary to start a church. A church leader is to be concerned with more than starting the church. The leader must recognize his role as a model and example within the church. Behind the qualifications listed in the Pastoral Epistles, is an understanding that the leader's model and example is important to his leadership and to the people being led. Philip H. Towner noted, "What may be more significant is the fact that most of the qualities concentrated in the duty codes are elsewhere applied to believers in general. The effect of gathering the traits together in these parenetic texts is to stress that leaders are to be models of the behavior described for everyone in the church."¹

The minimal correspondence between the profiles and the qualifications from the Pastoral Epistles would appear to be a weakness in the profiles. The profiles capture many of the traits needed to be a church planter, but in missing these qualifications, the

¹Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 241.

profiles can contribute to a distorted idea of what the church or a follower of Jesus is striving to become in Christ. Churches are not started to simply have more churches. Churches are started to further the Great Commission. The Great Commission is, in part, concerned with the transformation of the lives of people. To not include these qualifications from the Pastoral Epistles can potentially remove a helpful stimulator of that transformation, the life of a leader, who serves as an example and a model of a follower of Jesus.²

Question 2

Chapter 3 discussed matters concerning apostles and some of their functions. In the process of examining apostles in the New Testament, three conclusions were made. First, it was concluded that there was a unique office of apostle in the New Testament. This office was present in the earliest days of the church, but the office did not continue after the Twelve and Paul died. The unique office itself had four qualifications. First, the apostle must have been called or commissioned by the Lord Jesus.³ Second, given the vital importance of the resurrection, an apostle must have been an eye witness of the resurrection.⁴ Third, the apostle must have been a recipient and transmitter of divine revelation for the purposes of evangelism and discipleship.⁵ Fourth, the apostle must have displayed the signs of the office, which included miracles, but from the record of Acts, should also include noted suffering for the Lord Jesus.⁶

²1 Cor 4:16, 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6, 2:14; 2 Thess 3:7, 9; and, Heb 13:7.

³Mark 3:14; Acts 1:8; and, Acts 9:15

⁴Acts 1:1-3; and, Acts 9:3-6.

⁵Matt 28:18-20; Acts 2:42; Eph 2:20; and, 2 Cor 5:18-20.

⁶For miracles, Acts 2:43; and, Acts 14:9-11. For suffering, Acts 5:40-42; and, Acts 9:16.

A second conclusion made concerning apostles, was that there were apostles in the New Testament, beyond those who made up the office of apostle. This conclusion was reached from examining four passages in the New Testament that used the word *ἀπόστολος*, one passage that used the word *ψευδαπόστολος*, and importance of the root meaning of the word *ἀπόστολος*, a person authoritatively sent on a mission to share a message.

The third conclusion reached concerning apostles, was that these other apostles were church planters who displayed five characteristics. The first characteristic was a willingness to move often. A second characteristic was a comfort with or a commitment to initiate and serve in a frontier setting. Third, a biblical church planter must have been committed to and capable of evangelism and discipleship. Fourth, the church planter must have had the ability to equip and appoint leaders for the church. The fifth characteristic was providing ongoing, supportive follow-up.

The five characteristics could be described as apostolic functions, meaning that carrying out those functions would be a furthering of the ministry of the apostles in terms of their mission to share the message of the gospel. Those characteristics would also seem to describe important church planting functions. Because the apostles did those things, churches were planted.

As the analysis in chapter 6 revealed, the five characteristics of the biblical church planting apostles were noticeably absent in the profiles. The faulty assumption of North American church planting noted by J. D. Payne, offered a strong explanation for the absence of the characteristics.⁷ But the faulty assumption raises a question: should those characteristics be absent? Chapter 3 showed evidence of a lack of consensus concerning the presence of apostles today. Regardless of where a person finds himself or

⁷J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 382.

herself on the issue of apostles today, furthering the Great Commission involves church planting. If church planting today was approached, at least in part, according to the five characteristics of church planters from the New Testament, the apostolic function of furthering the Great Commission would be expressed. Though some may be uneasy with the idea of apostles being present today, perhaps the issue of apostolic function should be given consideration in terms of approaches used in church planting.

Question 3

The absence of characteristics, derived from the theological and biblical reflections, in the three profiles would appear to suggest that there may be certain areas that should be assessed for, which currently are not being assessed. The analysis seems to indicate that the profiles could be strengthened by the inclusion of additional characteristics for assessment. Charles R. Ridley stated twenty-seven years ago that “the job of a church planter is awesome.”⁸ Ridley’s statement influenced the reduction of the original 48 dimensions down to the 13 essential qualities. There is an obvious tension in the selection of church planters. Creating a profile that is perceived as too complicated or excessively large, may cause some potential church planters to pursue other ministries. Yet at the same time, to serve potential church planters and their families well, it could be a harmful miscalculation to leave out vital characteristics. From the analysis, it would seem prudent to consider adding characteristics to the profiles.

Question 4

The need for the church planter to have a spiritually vital relationship with God was clearly expressed in both the Thompson and Wood profiles, but was completely absent in the Ridley profile. The Thompson profile had an entire dimension focused on this spiritual relationship. It was the second highest dimension according to Thompson’s

⁸Robert Logan, interview by author, Sioux City, Iowa, February 18, 2011.

ranking system.⁹ The concern for a church planter to have a vibrant relationship with God is noticeably present in the Thompson profile.

Similarly, the Wood profile understands this need for a vital relationship to be a matter of importance. The vibrant faith in God category is the second highest category in the Wood profile.¹⁰ Both the Wood and Thompson profiles were developed from self-reporting collected data. Church planters themselves brought the issue of their relationships with God to the forefront. They perceived that ministry flowed from their relationships with God. The job analysis data that formed the Ridley profile did not address the issue of a planter's relationship with God.

Church planting is not just a task for a planter to accomplish. Ministry in general, and church planting specifically, is a joint venture between God and his servants. For church planters to be effective in their service, they “consistently need the close comfort of God.”¹¹ The relational foundation for ministry is necessary for empowering the church planter, and given that churches are planted to further the Great Commission, meaning people come to Christ and then grow in relationship with Christ, the church planter needs to have a vital relationship with God to point others toward the same relationship.¹² Though the issue of a church planter's relationship with God has not been given an appropriate level of attention in many church planting resources, at least two of the profiles appreciably address the need for the church planter to have a spiritually vital relationship with God.¹³

⁹J. Allen Thompson, *Church Leader Inventory: A PCA Qualitative and Quantitative Study* (Seattle: International Church Planting Center, 2007), 49.

¹⁰H. Stanley Wood, ed., *Extraordinary Leader in Extraordinary Times*, Unadorned Clay Pot Messengers, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 34.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 51.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and*
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Question 5

The elements uncovered in chapter 4 concerning the missionary nature of the church are present to a degree within the profiles. The Thompson profile expressed two of the three elements. The Ridley profile expressed one element clearly and one indirectly, but the Wood profile did not appear to express any of the three. Unfortunately, one of the elements, the equipping of people to live gospel lives, is not expressed in any of the profiles. The limited presence of the elements, and the fact that they do not appear in a developed form that might be expected, given the missionary activity of church planting, suggests that the missionary nature of the church is not a critical component to the profiles.

The elements used to perform the analysis are based upon biblical assumptions of church planting. Payne has noted that a large portion of church planting in North America, the context of the three profiles, is based upon a faulty assumption. The faulty assumption is “In the United States it is not only assumed but also expected that if someone is going to plant a church, they will also pastor that church.”¹⁴ Though more and more scholars and practitioners are discussing concepts such as *missio Dei*, and there does appear to be a growing understanding of the missionary nature of the church, the discussions and conversations have not translated themselves into actual behaviors in church planting approaches and practices. As a result, what appear to be important elements from a biblical vantage point, still have not found their way into expression in the profiles.

Best Practices for Multiplication (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 305. Jay Pinney, "Essential Tools for Strengthening the Life and Ministry of Church Planters" (D.Min. project, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006), 8.

¹⁴Payne, *Discovering Church Planting*, 382.

Suggested Changes to Profiles

From the research in chapters 3 and 4, and the analysis in chapter 5, the following three changes to the profiles are suggested. First, given the importance of the character qualifications of elders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, profiles for church planters should include a rigorous depiction of the biblical character qualifications. The inclusion of those qualifications in the profiles, and in the assessment process, would give noted priority to a biblical factor that is important for church leadership. Though not based on the qualification of elders from the Pastoral Epistles, but on passages concerned with Barnabas, Payne's book, *The Barnabas Factors*, would be an example of a profile that that gives priority to the biblical texts in selecting individuals for church planting.¹⁵ Related to this change, would be the continued presence in the profiles of the church planter's relationship with God. These two factors provide an important balancing of the profiles between observed traits necessary to start a church and leadership essentials prioritized in the Bible.

A second change would be to include all the elements uncovered related to the missionary nature of the church. These three elements, conflict resolution, the cultural engagement of the church planter himself, and the equipping of people to live gospel lives, are necessary to ensure that the churches being planted are true to the nature of the church. The Great Commission is not necessarily furthered when additional gatherings of people occur. But the Great Commission is usually furthered when churches are started. When the missionary nature of the church is imbedded within a church, the people of the church are usually stimulated, individually to be messengers of the gospel, and, collectively to plant more churches.

The third suggested change concerns the five characteristics of biblical church planting apostles discussed in chapter 3. The change itself will not start with the five

¹⁵J. D. Payne, *The Barnabas Factors: Eight Essential Practices of Church Planting Teams* (Smyrna, DE: Missional Press, 2008).

characteristics. Rather the change suggested must start with the underlying assumptions of church planting. Specifically, the profiles need to be broadened, or complimentary profiles need to be developed, to take into account the approaches used by church planters in the New Testament. The current profiles seem to be based on the assumption that the church planter will be the permanent pastor of the church. God has used such an approach to plant new churches in North America, but such an approach does not appear to be normative in the book of Acts. Such an approach is not leading to the rapid and needed development of new churches. Craig Ott and Gene Wilson stated,

If launching a locally sustainable, reproducing church-planting movement is the goal, . . . very different approaches must be adopted. Perhaps most central will be a new understanding of the role of church planters. They will need to take an approach much closer to that of Paul’s band of missionaries in the New Testament, what we call *apostolic church planting*. . . . By “apostolic church planting,” then, we mean church planting that follows the apostolic model of developing, empowering, and releasing local believers for ministry and mission from the very beginning. The planters’ role in the local church plant is temporary.¹⁶

Furthering the Great Commission may very well mean making changes to the approaches and methods currently being used. From the research done as a part of this study, one of the key areas of change that is needed concerns the assumptions behind the profiles and behind church planting itself. This suggestion does not mean that a church planter should never serve as the permanent pastor of a church, but rather, serious consideration should be given to selecting church planters who can operate based on the five apostolic characteristics discussed in chapter 3. Adding church planters who can function according to apostolic function would seem to offer a way to plant more churches that can lead to a rapid furtherance of the Great Commission. The five characteristics outlined in chapter 3 provide a starting point for changes that could be made to the profiles to render them adaptable to this additional approach to church planting.

¹⁶Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 89. Italics are original.

Suggestions for Further Research

During the process of the researching and writing of this dissertation, areas that might be considered for further research were noticed. One area of further research would involve an evaluation of the effectiveness of the church planters who were assessed using the three profiles found in this study. Discovering such information would possibly lead to further refinements of the profiles, allowing for an increased furtherance of the Great Commission. Another additional research area might be to analyze additional church planter profiles using the same or similar criteria.

The discussion in chapter 3 related to apostles suggested a couple of different areas that might be considered for further study. One would be additional examination of apostles beyond those apostles who composed the office of apostle. The study could more fully examine what unique roles and tasks were fulfilled by the additional apostles. Another related topic would be a study of the ongoing role of apostles today and the doctrine of Scripture. A question such as, is it possible to affirm a closed canon and hold to an ongoing role of apostles today?, should receive further study.

With respect to the missionary nature of the church, further study concerning leadership structures, functions, and approaches in light of the missionary nature should be pursued. Chapter 4 noted how leadership within churches was swayed by both perspectives of the church, and leadership approaches and models within the cultural context. Church planters would be more thoroughly equipped for their leadership roles, if they had a more developed understanding of how to lead in accord with the missionary nature of the church.

Another area that should receive further study is the assumptions that inform how church planting is approached. Payne, Ott and Wilson, Stuart Murray, and Glenn Kendall, all offered noted reasons to consider an apostolic approach to church planting. Such research could focus on the theological foundations of different approaches. It could also focus on the missiological implications or limitations of the different approaches. If

an apostolic approach was to be more broadly embraced in the North American context, further study on how the apostolic approach would align with different denominational structures and policies could be done. An apostolic approach would undoubtedly require changes in funding church planting for example. It would also require consideration of the selection of permanent pastors or elders for the churches started.

Conclusion

Charles R. Ridley, Thomas Graham, J. Allen Thompson, and H. Stanley Wood have made significant contributions to facilitate the selection of effective church planters. These men should be thanked for their efforts. Their work has helped advance the cause of Christ over the last twenty-five years. From this analysis, it is apparent that more can be done to aid in the selection of effective church planters. Steps can be taken to refine and enhance the profiles. Thought and discussion can be held to improve the assumptions behind church planting. Additional attention to both the orthodoxy and the orthopraxy of church planting is merited. Prayerfully, this study will make a small contribution to enhance the selection of church planters, who will participate in the furtherance of the Great Commission to the glory of God.

APPENDIX 1
OTHER CHURCH PLANTER PROFILES

The appendix has examples of other church planter profiles. These profiles could be used for further theological analysis of church planter profiles. The first example is from Bob Roberts, Jr. of NorthWood Church.¹ The same profile is found on the church planter's notebook page of the New Church Initiatives' web page.²

1. Spiritual vitality
2. Personal mastery
3. Marriage and family readiness
4. Clarity of calling
5. Relationship building
6. Personal evangelism
7. Contextualization skills
8. Entrepreneurial leadership
9. Entrepreneurial resilience
10. Disciple-making skills
11. Leadership development skills
12. Futuring skills

¹Bob Roberts, Jr., *Transformation: How Glocal Churches Transform Lives and the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 171-75.

²Glenn Smith, "The Church Planter's Notebook," New Church Initiatives, <http://www.newchurchinitiatives.org/notebook/index.htm> (accessed November 12, 2011). Neither Roberts' book nor the New Church Initiatives' web page referenced the other.

The second example is from Nelson Searcy of Church Leader Insights.³

1. Must complement vision by working toward goals, setting up accountability and maintain discipline
2. Must be willing to change without losing determination
3. Must understand and embrace true creativity
4. Must display confidence and optimism about the task at hand
5. Must be diligent
6. Must be a voracious learner
7. Must be motivated and driven to succeed
8. Must be willing to embrace the “inner entrepreneur”
9. Must enthusiastic about this new church

The third example is from the web site of Randy Knutson of Church Resources Ministries.⁴

1. Exercises a clear sense of the call of God
2. Possesses a faith-driven, inspiring vision
3. Leadership development skills
4. The ability to gather people
5. Healthy communication skills
6. Creative evangelistic skills

³Nelson Searcy, “9 Characteristics of Successful Church Planters,” Church Leader Insights with Nelson Searcy, <http://www.churchleaderinsights.com/resources/cp-9characteristics.php> (accessed February 17, 2010).

⁴Steve Nicholson and Jeff Bailey, “What Does a Church Planter Look Like?” Randy Knutson.com, <http://www.randyknutson.com/page/What-Does-a-Church-Planter-Look-Like.aspx> (accessed October 9, 2010). Steve Nicholson and Jeff Bailey served with the Vineyard Churches in church planting. Randy Knutson served with Church Resources Ministries focused on coaching Vineyard church planters.

7. Intentional, strategic planning skills
8. Financial management skills
9. Vineyard values and methods
10. Solid marriage and family
11. Emotional maturity and resilience
12. A vital spiritual life

A fourth example is from J. D. Payne's book *The Barnabas Factors*.⁵

1. Walks with the Lord
2. Maintains an outstanding character
3. Serves the local church
4. Remains faithful to the call
5. Shares the gospel regularly
6. Raises up leaders
7. Encourages with speech and actions
8. Respond appropriately to conflict.

The fifth and sixth examples are from posted made by Scott Thomas on the Acts 29 Network's blog page. The first is from a posting on March 12, 2010.⁶

1. Spiritual vitality
2. Strong marriage and family life
3. Theological clarity
4. Missional lifestyle

⁵J. D. Payne, *The Barnabas Factors: Eight Essential Practices of Church Planting Teams* (Smyrna, DE: Missional Press, 2008), 10.

⁶Scott Thomas, "Ten Qualifications of a Church Planter," The Acts 29 Network Blog, entry posted March 12, 2010, <http://www.acts29network.org/acts-29-blog/10-church-planter-qualities/> (accessed March 12, 2010).

5. Emotional health
6. Entrepreneurial aptitude
7. Disciple-making skills
8. Leadership abilities
9. Clarity and strength of calling
10. Relationship building

The second list is from a posting on April 1, 2010.⁷

1. Am I a Christian? (Integrity is the number one value of a church planter)
2. Am I passionately in love with Jesus and is He the Lord of every area of my life?
3. Do I believe His word and does it affect my life deeply?
4. Am I Spirit-filled, Spirit-directed, Spirit-led and Spirit-controlled? (Acts 1:8)
5. Am I qualified as an Elder? (1 Timothy, Titus)
6. Do I love the local church as the expression of a gospel community on mission?(Matthew 28:18-20)
7. Am I a missionary to the city? Am I sent for the advancement of the gospel in the city?(John 20:21)
8. Do I have a clear vision for this new work? (Nehemiah 1:3, 4; 2:11-18)
9. Am I willing to pour myself out in obedience to the vision?
10. Am I healthy?
11. Am I the kind of leader many people will follow? Have I served as a church leader successfully?
12. Can I preach effectively?
13. Can I guard the doctrinal door with Biblical clarity and tenacious confidence?

⁷Scott Thomas, “Am I a Church Planter?” The Acts 29 Network Blog, entry posted April 1, 2010, <http://www.acts29network.org/acts-29-blog/am-i-a-church-planter/> (accessed April 1, 2010).

14. Can I architect a new work with entrepreneurial skill?
15. Am I called to plant a church at this time and in this place?
16. Have my church leaders commended me for this calling?
17. Am I a hard worker? Am I persevering?
18. Am I adaptable to new people, places and concepts?
19. Can I raise the funds needed for my family's needs?
20. Am I humble enough to learn from others-particularly from those who have gone ahead of me in different areas?

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ABSTRACT

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CHURCH PLANTER PROFILES

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012
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This dissertation seeks to theologially analyze three prominent church planter profiles. Chapter 1 explains the need for such a study by giving consideration to the place of church planting in the Great Commission and the importance of leadership within church planting.

Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of assessments in a variety of fields that led to the inclusion of assessments within church planting. This chapter also introduces the three profiles as well as some lessons learned from the use of profiles in assessment.

Chapter 3 introduces the first area of theological analysis. The chapter discusses the pastoral qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Considerable attention is also given to apostles and the role of apostles in church planting.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the nature of the church. For a church planter to lead a church, he needs to understand the nature of the organization he is seeking to lead. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the church that can be used to analyze the profiles in terms of their understanding of the church.

Chapter 5, building upon the previous two chapters, is the theological analysis of the three profiles. The analysis of the profiles follows the content of the previous three chapters and examines the three profiles according to the nature of the church, which also surfaced the concern of the leader's relationship with God, the character issues raised in the Pastoral Epistles, and the role of apostles in church planting.

Chapter 6 provides concise answers to the research questions which guided the dissertation. The chapter also offers suggestions about changes to church planter assessments in light of the analysis. Additional suggestions are offered also with respect to potential areas of further study related to church planter assessments.

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