EVALUATING A COMPREHENSIVE, TRANSFERABLE, AND

COLLABORATIVE CHURCH REPLANTING PROCESS

FOR TEXAS BAPTISTS

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by

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APPROVAL SHEET

EVALUATING A COMPREHENSIVE, TRANSFERABLE, AND

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For the glory of Christ and the good of His bride

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ECNT	Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
NAC	New American Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

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PREFACE

I am grateful to my father, Les Jacobson, for his guidance and inspiration in deepening my love for Jesus, the Bible, and the local church. He was a mentor and a spiritual father to me, and I miss him greatly. Without my wife Melissa's unwavering love and support, I could not have attempted this project. She is my partner in serving Jesus and my closest friend. I am blessed to have known and received research advice from Dr. Ed Foster, a dear friend. In addition, I am grateful to Texas Baptists, my employer, and all my colleagues who have contributed to my growth and development in ministry and service to the local church. It is an honor to serve alongside these men, including Paul Atkinson, Tom Howe, Phil Miller, Gary Patterson, Jonathan Smith, Josue Valerio, and others who have generously shared their wisdom, experience, and perspectives. I am indebted to Dr. Bill Henard, my writing advisor, for his crucial feedback and guidance in completing this project. I am blessed to have been a student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I also want to express my gratitude to the professional doctoral office at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, as well as many faculty, staff, and Dr. Matthew Haste, for their grace and encouragement throughout this project. Lastly, I would like to thank Jennifer Stec for her time and editing skills. Working with her on the final steps of this project was a joy. I pray that God will revive his churches for the sake of his glory. Even though people may falter, I believe Jesus will remain steadfast and continue building his church (Matt 16:18).

Clay Jacobson

Hurst, Texas

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Speaking about the future of Christianity in the Western world, Os Guinness, visiting fellow at the Oxford Christian Center of Apologetics, stated, "The story of Christian reformation, revival, and renaissance underscores that the darkest hour is often just before the dawn, so we should always be people of hope and prayer, not gloom and defeatism."[1] While many Southern Baptist churches in America have plateaued or are declining, churches must cling to the promise that Jesus will build his church (Matt 16:18). [2] There is hope. God has always been in the business of breathing life into that which had none. From forming man from dust to the valley of dry bones to the resurrection of Christ to breathing life into those dead in their trespasses, God has been in the business of bringing about new life through his Son and by his Spirit (Gen 2:7; Ezek 37:5; Rom 8:11; Eph 2:5). Replanting churches and breathing new life into dying congregations is an expression of Jesus building his church and is therefore worthy and important work. Considering the challenging current context, Texas Baptists have been developing a church replanting process that aims to be comprehensive, transferable, and collaborative. The evaluation of this process by subject-area experts has greatly benefited the cause of replanting churches in Texas Baptist life and may provide other denominational entities with valuable insights.

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[1] Ginny Mooney, "Os Guinness Calls for a New Christian Renaissance," *The Christian Post*, June 18, 2011, https://www.christianpost.com/news/os-guinness-calls-for-a-new-christian-renaissance-51309/.

[2] Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2014), 40.

Context

Church replanting is critical because the glory of God, the substantial investment of time, prayer, energy, and resources from generations of faithful Christians, the proclamation of the gospel, and the fate of future generations are at stake.[3] In the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), 900 churches close their doors every year.[4] Texas Baptists (TXB), also known as the Baptist General Convention of Texas, is one of two Southern Baptist state conventions in Texas and has roughly 5,300 churches in the state convention. It is estimated that as much as 10 percent of churches in America are close to closing their doors and an additional 40 percent are declining. Applying this statistic only to TXB churches would mean over 500 churches in TXB life are on the verge of closing, and over 2,000 churches are declining.[5]

The importance of church replanting has been recognized by many denominational leaders. Processes and practices for assisting churches in replanting are utilized by many local associations, state conventions, and the North American Missions Board (NAMB). These denominational entities (DE) are pioneers in strengthening dying churches in the context of twenty-first century America. At Texas Baptists, one of two Southern Baptist state conventions in Texas, I have benefitted from working with various levels of denominational entities in church replanting.[6] I am a Church Starting Strategist for North Texas on the Texas Baptists Church Starting team and work with church plants and replants in my region. One of the great challenges for these entities are the competing

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[3] Matt Schmucker, "Why Revitalize?," *9Marks Journal* (Nov-Dec 2011): 11–13.

[4] Mark Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory: Revitalizing Dying Churches* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2016), 5.

[5] Yonat Shimron, "Study: More Churches Closing Than Opening," Religion News, May 26, 2021, https://religionnews.com/2021/05/26/study-more-churches-closing-than-opening/.

[6] The Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) does business under Texas Baptists branding. The second Southern Baptist convention (started in 1995) is the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC).

interests between DEs.[7] The interrelationship between the local churches, local

associations, state conventions, and the SBC means that often what hurts one institution

will eventually hurt another. Sometimes what seems best for a local association, a state

convention, or the national convention may adversely affect other cooperating DEs. The

decline of local congregations also means that these DEs are in turn declining since

Southern Baptists operate under principles of voluntary cooperation. Follow the funding,

and it becomes clear how complicated decision-making can be, especially combined with

the competing interests among DEs.[8]

Often DEs are required to look out for the interests of other DEs that are

supplementing their operations, in addition to their local churches. Funding does not

simply move in one direction from the local church to the local association and upwards

organizationally but becomes even more complex with state conventions and the SBC

sometimes supplementing local associations and dividing the interests of those closest to

the local church.[9] Josh Ellis, the executive director of Union Baptist Association in

Houston, notes the significance of how funding moves between denominational entities:

"If the SBC ever decides that churches can contribute directly to the CP [the Cooperative

Program] without state convention channels, it will have profound impacts on the

association, both positive and negative."[10] A decision like this by the SBC would be

adverse for state conventions, though it would increase the resources at the SBC's

disposal. Though the SBC has issued no official statement to this regard, the concern of

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[7] Stetzer's blog post is no longer available through Christianity Today, but the Kentucky Baptist Convention has reproduced Stetzer's article in full on their website. See Ed Stetzer, "The Future of the SBC—Local Associations," *Christianity Today* (blog), June 21, 2016, https://www.kybaptist.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Future-of-Associations-by-Ed-Stetzer.pdf.

[8] Grant Arinder, "First Person: What's Going On at the North American Mission Board?," *The Baptist Record*, September 15, 2020, https://thebaptistrecord.org/whats-going-on-at-the-north-american-mission-board/.

[9] Josh Ellis, *Repaving the Road: Mapping the Future of Southern Baptist Associations* (Houston: Union Baptist Association, 2012), 9.

[10] Ellis, *Repaving the Road*, 25.

this possible future looms large in Southern Baptist life outside the Southern state conventions.[11] In addition to this challenge, DEs are having to reimagine their identity as they adapt to the twenty-first century.

Many local associations and state conventions are reexamining their purpose and structure as they look to the future.[12] DEs are casting a new vision for the future, arguing for relevance in the twenty-first century, and addressing the cultural shift of increasing cynicism towards institutions.[13] These challenges, coupled with competing interests, create obstacles to sharing lessons learned from failures and successes between DEs, though there are some network meetings and events for DE leaders to discuss church replanting.[14]

Replanting churches is one of several revitalization methods. Revitalization approaches and processes are being developed across the country to address the crisis of declining churches. Several approaches to church revitalization detail the denominational entity's role in assisting local churches. Typically, the representative of the local association or state convention serves as an analyst and coach who helps the church assess their place within a church life cycle and determines the church's health.[15] This representative also presents to the church the available options for how they might pursue

[11] Ed Stetzer, "The Future of the SBC—State Conventions," *Christianity Today* (blog), May 22, 2016, https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/june/future-of-sbc-state-conventions.html.

[12] Ronnie Floyd, "Do State Conventions and Associations Have a Future in the Southern Baptist Convention?," Ronnie Floyd (blog), February 8, 2016, http://www.ronniefloyd.com/blog/10125/southern-baptist-convention/do-state-conventions-and-associations-have-a-future-in-the-southern-baptist-convention/.

[13] Bruce Drake, "6 New Findings about Millennials," Pew Research Center (blog), March 7, 2014, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/03/07/6-new-findings-about-millennials/.

[14] North American Mission Board, "Replant Events," accessed April 3, 2018, https://www.namb.net/events/replant.

[15] Union Baptist Association, "Revitalizing Churches Together," accessed October 30, 2021, https://www.ubahouston.org/revitalize.

revitalization.[16] Along the way, this denominational employee coaches the church leadership as they navigate what path they will pursue and develop a plan for pursuing that particular path.[17] Paths for church revitalization can be categorized in the following approaches: targeted revitalization, revitalization, marriage merger, adoption merger, replant, and legacy replant.[18] A targeted revitalization is the need to re-vision and restructure a particular ministry or program of the church in order for the church to see growth again in a particular ministry. This approach is recommended for churches that have plateaued in their growth but are still fairly healthy in their attendance and finances.[19] Revitalization is recommended for a church that has seen a decline in finances and attendance over the course of several years but is likely to be financially self-sustainable over the next three to five years. Revitalization is a process that a church can undergo to re-vision and restructure to rediscover its mission and purpose so that it is viable and growing.[20] A marriage merger is an option for a struggling church that is seeing the possibility of closure in its near future; in this merger, two churches of similar sizes would come together to make one stronger church. An adoption merger would also be a viable option for a church looking at closing soon; this church would instead merge with a stronger and typically larger congregation. [21] A replant is the embrace of a new identity with new leadership to execute a new plan for the gospel mission of seeing

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[16] Dallas Baptist Association, "Next Steps," accessed October 30, 2021, https://www.dba.net/next-steps/.

[17] Saint Louis Metro, "Church Revitalization," accessed December 20, 2018, http://www.stlbaptist.com/revitalize/.

[18] Saint Louis Metro, "Church Revitalization."

[19] Bill Henard, *ReClaimed Church: How Churches Grow, Decline, and Experience Revitalization* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2018), 118–22.

[20] Michael F. Ross, *Preaching for Revitalization: How to Revitalize Your Church through Your Pulpit*, rev. ed. (Glasgow: Mentor, 2006), 17–18.

[21] James Nugent, "Models for Church Revitalization/Restarting from a Southern State Perspective," South Carolina Baptist Convention (blog), March 15, 2021, https://www.hopeforchurches.org/blogdefault/models-from-church-revitalizationrestarting-from-a-southern-perspective.

people follow Jesus. A legacy replant is an approach that allows the struggling congregation to continue doing what they have always done, but a new church is started on the property and will eventually own the property once the legacy congregation is no longer able to financially support the property.[22]

The Church Starting Team at TXB has worked with four of these six approaches to church revitalization: the marriage merger, the adoption merger, the legacy replant, and the replant approaches. TXB have been replanting churches through their church planting process. A church must meet three of the five following criteria to enter the church planting process: new leadership, a new name, a new location, a new strategy for reaching people, and a new target group. Once meeting these criteria, a church comes into the church planting process and is resourced as a church plant, though it is a replanting or merging church. Though this approach capitalizes on the church-starting process's strengths, there are additional considerations taken for a replanting church.

Historically, we have utilized our church planting process to facilitate these methods and assist struggling churches, to see them flourish once again. The strength of utilizing this system is that the accountability processes, funding models, and resources provided are already developed and serve revitalization well. The limitation of utilizing a church starting process for replanting is that this process is only designed around the church planter and his vision. The assessments and onboarding process are designed for the prospective replanting pastor but not for an existing congregation. Because Baptists are historically congregational and affirm the autonomy of the local church, believe in the priesthood of all believers, and value cooperation, there must be a different onboarding process for an existing church that is looking to merge or replant. This onboarding process should have an assessment and consultation with a local congregation, respecting the autonomous church's affirmation of their desired revitalization path and parallel to the

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[22] Henard, *ReClaimed Church*, 115–18.

onboarding processes focused on the replanting pastor. Additionally, there must be a process that assists the congregation and replanting pastor in the development of their vision and strategy before attempting a replant or merger as they explore and discern God's will for their future. Working with both the pastor and congregation creates a more unified, congregationally vested, and congregationally agreed upon identity and strategy for the future.

Rationale

TXB Church Starting is a solid process for starting new churches, averaging sixty church plants annually. Over 82 percent of these churches are self-sustaining, supporting the Cooperative Program, and still meeting after five years. There are three major elements of Texas Baptist church planting that distinguish it from other processes and are the basis of its success: accountability, funding methodology, and cooperative partnerships.

Distinguishing Marks of TXB
Church Planting

Several accountability measures exist for all parties involved in the church planting process. The first is the church planting covenant, which clearly states the expectations for each partnering organization and is signed by representatives of each organization. The required signatories include a representative of the state convention, a sponsor church, and the church plant. Ideally, a local association would also partner in this process. This covenant is signed once an assessment of the church planter has taken place, a thorough church planting prospectus has been developed, and a budget has been established to support the church planting strategy. This ensures that all partners are fully aware of what they are supporting. The state convention representative and department are answerable to an external board, the Mission Funding Council (MFC), because the prospectus and budget are presented to this council for funding approval. The MFC votes

on any funding for church planting or replanting and determines the total resources that can be used for each church. There are preset limits for resourcing each church and clear qualifications to determine what level of funding is provided. This protects the convention from perceived or actual bias in funding new churches. Accountability for the church planter is maintained through monthly reports submitted and received by all covenant signatories, known as Strategic Partners. Quarterly meetings are held with the Strategic Partners to review what God has done in and through the church, identify challenges and needs, and set goals for the next quarter. These quarterly meetings allow the Strategic Partners to ask questions, review a six-month overview of the monthly reports, and find ways to support the church planter's strategy for the next quarter. The clear expectations of all the Strategic Partners, the external oversight of state convention funding, and the transparency between Strategic Partners provide the accountability and trust helpful for successful church planting.[23]

The funding model for the church planting process is an additional factor contributing to a church plant's ability to be financially self-sustainable by the end of the process. This funding model differs from others in that the state convention funds a church plant's budget—not the church planter—through its sponsoring church. It may seem like a minor distinction to fund the budget, but it is designed to help the new church grow into its responsibility to support its pastor. Additionally, funding the church's budget helps the new church leadership think strategically about how they will make up the budget gap once their outside financial partners are no longer supporting the budget. The process also has a policy that the monthly funding, which is provided for 36 months, cannot exceed 50 percent of the internal tithes and offerings of the church. This policy is designed to prevent new church plants from developing an unhealthy dependency on the

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[23] Tom Cheyney, J. David Putman, and Van Sanders, eds., *Seven Steps for Planting Churches* (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board, 2003), 10.

state convention and outside resources. Over-resourcing a new work can create a false sense of security that shatters at the end of the funding process. This funding method provides good stewardship over the resources given to the state convention by the local churches and has been instrumental in the success of the new churches started.

The final factor that has been essential to the success of planting new churches has been the way TXB partners with other Baptist entities to cooperate in supporting new churches. The most influential partner in the church planting process is designed to be the local church sponsor. The sponsoring church representative, often a pastor, chairs the group of Strategic Partners and has ultimate veto power. These practices flow from a commitment to empowering local churches to plant churches rather than operating a process that minimally requires a church endorsement. Ensuring that the new church is in the same geographic region of the sponsoring church is a best practice, as this allows the sponsoring church to be a mentor and the first line of support for a new church. Also, the sponsoring church is most familiar with the immediate context of the church plant and often is best positioned to critique, contribute to, and support the contextualized church planting strategy. The local association is not required in the process but is strongly encouraged to participate because it too has a firm grasp of the community context and can often contribute additional resources and training. The state convention can provide additional financial resources supporting the new church, five years of access to and funding for Christian counseling for the planter's immediate family, coaching, continued leadership development, architectural consultation, a lending agency for purchasing and building facilities, worship minister training, financial administrative assistance, and a proven process. Even though the state convention often provides a significant portion of support to a new church, the resources provided are to assist the local sponsor church in planting a new church. These partnerships give a new church a strong support system to ensure it will reach a point of being a self-sustaining, self-replicating church.

Development and Implementation of a
Specialized Replanting Pilot

Working with the director of Texas Baptist Church Starting, Tom Howe, I have been able to implement a new replanting process for Texas Baptists in North Texas over the last couple of years. When this doctoral project began, the process was theoretical, but the needs of several local churches demanded the development and implementation of a specialized replanting process. In 2018, Tom and I consulted with five churches exploring replanting while Tom Howe was the Director of Urban Mission Projects. We worked together across two departments to help struggling churches because of a shared conviction and background in church revitalization. Also in 2018, three church replants in North Texas that had been part of the previous process closed their doors. I did not desire to see the churches we consulted with meet the same fate.

As we worked together with the five churches, Tom and I combined our ministry experience, training, and study in church revitalization to create consulting resources and strategies for replanting. We began implementing these developments in late 2018, and once Tom became the Church Starting Director in 2019, we began to make further adjustments to the replanting process. Tom also began consulting beyond the North Texas region and brought those additional consulting experiences to bear on our joint efforts. The first two churches we consulted with were in contexts where the demographics had changed in their neighborhoods, yet the churches had remained the same. One was close to closing its doors and was down to twelve people. The other church was already moving toward relocating but did not know how to navigate starting fresh with a new identity. Both ended up replanting in 2018. As we met with these congregations, we created tools for consulting and assessing the congregation and processes to onboard these churches into our church-starting process.

A third church was a replant working with Dallas Baptist Association (DBA). The director of missions and other DBA staff had already done significant preparation with the existing congregation to merge with a core group and create a new identity. The

work that DBA had done provided us with insights to incorporate into our replanting process as we were working with other North Texas churches. The last two churches we consulted with opted to become satellite campuses for larger churches in the area. We had worked with the existing congregations and pastors extensively over several months and gleaned significant insights from these experiences.

Four other churches were brought into the replanting process in 2021, which allowed us to take what we had learned and developed from the original five congregations and further improve the process. The 2021 version of the replanting process is the piloted process referred to in this project. The piloted replanting process has benefited from the critique and feedback from the church revitalization content experts who participated in this project. The content experts' feedback helped evaluate the assumptions, goals, tools, and metrics of the pilot replanting process.

Developing a Distinct TXB
Replanting Process

Although the church planting process is strong at present, there is more that TXB can do to better serve churches needing to replant. There are some unique challenges and needs in a church replant that are not present in a new church plant. A distinct replanting process is needed to better serve these local churches. From a state convention perspective, there must be a comprehensive, transferable, and collaborative process for replanting TXB churches. The process must be comprehensive because the scope of the process must support the whole health of a congregation and its replanting pastor. Additionally, the process must be transferable. TXB works with a variety of diverse churches that represent different cultures and contexts. An internal 10-year study of the church planting process in 2018 provided a demographic breakdown of 5,347 TXB-established churches: 51 percent Anglo, 19 percent Hispanic, 16 percent African American, 4 percent Asian, 4 percent Western Heritage, 3 percent multi-cultural, 2 percent multi-ethnic, and 1 percent other. A replant process must be adaptable to best

serve this diversity. Finally, a process for replanting local churches must be collaborative. Modeling the TXB Church Starting process, TXB aims to partner with local churches in replanting by equipping, supporting, and empowering local churches to lead this work.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to evaluate a comprehensive, transferable, and collaborative process for replanting TXB churches.

Goals

Four goals signified this project's completion. Each goal describes the progressive process of the project.

1. The first goal was to utilize a qualitative Delphi study to elicit feedback from content experts and determine the criteria for a rubric (the Church Replanting Process Evaluation, or CRPE) evaluating the TXB church replanting process.

2. The second goal was to have a panel of content experts evaluate the TXB church replanting process using the CRPE developed from the Delphi study.

3. The third goal was to determine what adjustments needed to be made to the TXB church starting process based on an analysis of the CRPE results.

4. The fourth goal was to recommend refinement to the TXB church replanting process based on any weakness identified by the analysis of the CRPE.

Definitive research methodology measured the success of these four goals.[24] The research methodology and instruments used to measure the success of each goal are detailed in the following section.

Research Methodology

The first goal was to utilize a qualitative Delphi study to elicit feedback from a panel of content experts and determine the criteria for a rubric evaluating the TXB church replanting process. The Delphi method was developed in the 1950s by Norman Dalkey

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[24]Although the research instruments were not reviewed by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project, each research instrument contained the informed consent, confidentiality clause, and agreement to participate.

and Olaf Helmer and was "devised in order to obtain the most reliable opinion consensus of a group of experts by subjecting them to a series of questionnaires in depth interspersed with controlled opinion feedback."[25] This project used a series of three rounds and six stages (two stages per round) in which content experts in the area of church replanting completed online surveys on the church replanting process. Fifteen content experts in church replanting were invited to participate, including five experts at the academic level, five experts in denominational positions, and five experts in the local church or with local church experience. The first goal was considered successfully met when ten content experts participated in all three rounds of the Delphi Study and produced a set of seventeen criteria for a rubric to evaluate the TXB church replanting process.[26]

The second goal was to have a panel of content experts evaluate the TXB church replanting process using the CRPE developed from the Delphi study. Of the ten content experts who participated in the Delphi study, seven experts conducted the CRPE. The same panel of content experts completed the Delphi study and the CRPE; this minimized confusion concerning common definitions of the seventeen criteria identified in the first goal. This goal was considered successfully met when the content experts used the CRPE to evaluate the TXB church replanting process.[27]

The third goal was to determine what adjustments needed to be made to the TXB church starting process based on an analysis of the CRPE results. This goal was measured using a relative frequency table to evaluate the context expert responses. This goal was considered successfully met when the relative frequency table demonstrated a supermajority agreement (a minimum of 76 percent agreement) on areas of weakness and

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[25] Norman Dalkey and Olaf Helmer, "An Experimental Application of the DELPHI Method to the Use of Experts," abstract, *Management Science* 9, no. 3 (April 1963): 458–67.

[26] See appendixes 3, 5, 6, and 8.

[27] See appendix 8.

strength in the church replanting process.

The fourth goal was to recommend refinement to the TXB church replanting process based on any weakness identified by the analysis of the CRPE. This goal was considered successfully met when recommendations for refinement were developed presenting the possible options for addressing each weakness identified by the CRPE. These recommendations for refinement will be presented to the Director of Church Starting at TXB for consideration and approval.[28]

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms were used in the ministry project:

Church replanting. Church planting is the process by which members of a dying congregation let go of their own desires and purposes for their church, submit to and pursue God's will and vision for the church to continue in the Great Commission under the direction of the Bible and power of the Holy Spirit, and pursue a new direction led by their replanting pastor and supported by other churches and denominational entities.

Two delimitations were placed on the project. First, the number of content experts invited to participate in the Delphi study and associated evaluation of the replanting process was limited to a maximum of fifteen individuals. Second, this project was confined to a six-week timeframe. This allowed time for determining the rubric for the CRPE, the development of the CRPE, the evaluation by the content experts using the CRPE, the analysis of the completed CRPE to determine recommendations, and the formation of recommendations to refine the TXB church replanting process.

Conclusion

The work of replanting local congregations is critical for the future of TXB life

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[28] This meeting is scheduled for August 2023.

and beyond. There are great opportunities for denominational entities to collaborate in church replanting. The evaluation of the TXB church replanting process was an effort to contribute to this area of study and bless other DEs striving to curb the closure of local churches through a cooperative effort. Collaboration is the key to advancing the gospel.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE PROJECT

The book of Revelation may possess one of the most varied and debated methodologies of interpretation in Scripture. The literary genre utilized by the author is foreign to Western culture and as a result, often leaves interpretation of this work to the imagination of the modern reader.[1] Despite the challenges posed by the book of Revelation, there is enough agreement in the pastoral applicability of chapters 2 and 3 to make these passages easier to utilize across multiple, autonomous, and varied church settings. These chapters express Jesus's encouragements, commendations, exhortations, and corrections to multiple churches in different situations and contexts so that they might be faithful in their gospel mission. As lamps in pagan darkness, their wicks need to be trimmed and their oil replenished so that they may better "give forth the Light of the world."[2] Jesus's message to his churches is relevant for all churches—past, present, and future.[3] Replanting churches strive towards the same end: to see churches faithfully carry out their gospel mission. The message to the seven churches well informs a replanting process.

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[1] Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1.

[2] Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Cosmic Drama: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1971), 38.

[3] John R. Yeatts, *Revelation*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2003), 92.

Interpretative Issues

   To faithfully utilize the seven letters to the seven churches requires the consideration of a few interpretive issues. The authorial intent and meaning behind some key images significantly impact how these verses are understood and applied. Providentially, the author makes his intentions clear in his writing. The author's indications should have more significant influence over the book's interpretation than any other guiding principle or context external to the text.[4] The author explicitly indicates that the revelation reveals Christ, clarifies his identity, and elaborates on the implications of Jesus's present and future reign as King.[5] The intention of this study is to ensure these truths are heard, lived out, and proclaimed, informing Christians in a manner that encourages and exhorts faithful living amid a chaotic, tumultuous, and often hostile world.[6]

   Interpretations range from historically-bound perspectives to mystical, metaphysical musings and everything in between.[7] Fortunately, Revelation chapters 2 and 3, the letters to the seven churches in Asia, might be the easiest text for acquiring pastoral application.[8] Some futurists have interpreted these chapters in a manner that applies to the universal church.[9] Even those who understand Revelation as primarily fulfilled in the first century (preterists) also recognize the pastoral nature of chapters 2 and 3.[10] This general consensus removes much controversy from these chapters, making these passages more

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[4] John H. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 150–51.

[5] Buist M. Fanning III, *Revelation*, ECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 89.

[6] G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 33.

[7] Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, rev. ed., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 39–45.

[8] Paige Patterson, *Revelation: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, NAC, vol. 39 (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2012), 70.

[9] Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1–7: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 125–26.

[10] David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, WBC, vol. 52A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 119.

easily utilized in church replanting regardless of a congregation's or pastor's eschatological leanings.

The Context of an Exalted Christology

Revelation begins with the exalted Jesus revealed in all his glory and majesty so that readers and hearers might understand Jesus as he is currently, rather than only perceiving Jesus as revealed in his earthly ministry before his resurrection. Patterson notes that a major focus of Revelation is presenting an "exalted Christology."[11] This book is a cosmology, properly understood through the revelation of the King of the cosmos.[12] Revelation unveils a Christ-centered cosmology. In this King and Judge, Christians find their identity and proper place before God.[13] The implications of Jesus's person for the universal church are fleshed out in the letters to the seven churches and are essential for faithfulness. The exalted Christology that flows from the first chapter of Revelation provides the aspects of Jesus's person and power that correlate to each church's condition in chapters 2 and 3, reminding them of whom they worship and how he can support them in facing their challenging circumstances. The person and work of Jesus, as he uniquely reveals himself, applies to each of the seven churches' given challenges.[14] Each of these letters to the seven churches fleshes out the implications of a Christocentric framework for understanding the cosmos. John Stott writes that when a church is fighting for survival, "It needs more than moral exhortation and pious entreaty; it must see Christ."[15]

A church must recognize the present reality of Jesus's reign over his creation, specifically his church. Doing so places all other earthly authorities inside and outside

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[11] Patterson, *Revelation*, 69.

[12] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 216.

[13] Patterson, *Revelation*, 61–62.

[14] Patterson, *Revelation*, 76.

[15] John R. W. Stott, *What Christ Thinks of the Church: Expository Addresses on the First Three Chapters of the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 15.

any local church in their proper place: in submission to Jesus's sovereignty. Jesus's sovereign reign means that any authority outside the church is limited in what it can and cannot do to Jesus's church for Jesus's purposes. Recognition of Christ's authority should subvert attempts inside the local church to establish leaders who operate without concern for God's will. The reality of Christ's sovereignty also serves as a reminder to any institution serving local churches that before him, all are servants, as John self-identified in Revelation 1:1. This exalted view of Christ informs the local church and denominational entities. TXB approaches Jesus's churches as a servant ready to assist in replanting churches that are close to dying.

Christ's Diagnostic

Jesus desires his church to flourish and maintain its faithfulness to him, despite the opposition that any church may face. Those in opposition may be internal to a church, external to a church, or both.[16] The seven letters written to the seven churches in Asia are Jesus's words as communicated to all churches. This is indicated by the phrase repeatedly used in each letter: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."[17] He desires that these letters are considered not only compartmentally but collectively in their application and obedience. In considering all the letters collectively, Christ has provided a diagnostic that encourages, exhorts, and corrects so that the churches may remain faithful amid the struggles and opposition they will face until he returns.[18] This diagnostic creates parameters for assessing the spiritual health of a local church and its minister when considering the possible paths of revitalization, specifically replanting.

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[16] Jean-Pierre Prévost, *How to Read the Apocalypse* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 73.

[17] Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 119.

[18] Hubert J. Richards, *What the Spirit Says to the Churches: A Key to the Apocalypse of John* (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1967), 36–37.

Though addressing separate contexts and specific historical churches, the standard structure of the seven letters to the seven churches also bolsters the intent that they are read collectively and applied to all churches.[19] Jean-Pierre Prevost notes that each letter contains six shared structural elements: "the address or the recipient, the introduction of Christ, a word of judgment (positive and negative), a call for conversion or perseverance, an invitation to listen to the Spirit, and a promise."[20] These elements inform the reader how to understand and apply the text. The repetition of "Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says declares to the churches" throughout each letter highlights the unity of the separate and differing seven messages. These seven letters are intended to be one unified message to refine all local churches throughout time. Each has a distinct emphasis based on the addressed church's challenges and context, allowing the unified message to speak to various contexts and challenges future churches might face.[21] The universal nature and timelessness of these charges from Jesus are the ideal starting place to construct a transferable and versatile diagnostic to serve diverse churches in TXB life.

Callously Convictional

The first church mentioned is the church in Ephesus. Like many introductions, this letter may be positioned to set the foundational principle, or the issue of primary importance. Following the common structure of the seven letters, Jesus addresses the messenger of this local church and introduces aspects of himself as the one who holds the seven stars in his hands and walks among the seven golden lampstands. He judges the positive aspects of this church, including their conviction for doctrinal fidelity. He then critiques the callousness of their hearts, tells them to repent twice, calls for the reader to

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[19] Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 84.

[20] Prévost, *How to Read the Apocalypse*, 72.

[21] Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 18.

hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, and provides a promise of eating from the tree of life (Rev 2:1–7).[22]

The attributes of Jesus stand in contrast to the maladies of the given church. The church at Ephesus, a callously convictional church, needed to wrestle with certain aspects of Jesus's identity and how these truths were relevant and essential to its existence. In referring to himself as the one who holds the seven stars, Jesus has reminded this church that he is the ultimate authority over all churches (Rev 2:1). The formulaic use of the phrase, "These things says the Lord," is used over a hundred times in the Old Testament prophets. Jesus uses the same structure but places himself in the place of the Lord.[23] This phrasing reminds the reader of Jesus's divinity and frames the following letters as prophetic revelations coming from Jesus.

Jesus also points out that he is the one who walks among the lampstands, underlining the reality that Jesus dwells and walks with all his churches. He sees the churches as they indeed are and how they function as lamps in the dark world. This imagery directly connects with the church's state of leaving its first love because the lampstand is a form of witness on the earth throughout Revelation. The church is also to witness the good news of Jesus to the world. This church lost its first love and, in doing so, quit the practices they did at first. Likely, what is in view here is that they abandoned their outward witness.[24]

Of all the churches, the church in Ephesus seems to receive the most flattering commendation.[25] This church was hard-working, persevering, intolerant of evil-doing, and faithful to call out false teaching (Rev 2:2). They possessed the right kind of

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[22] Fanning, *Revelation*, 113.

[23] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 229.

[24] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 230–31.

[25] Ray Summers, *Worthy Is the Lamb* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1951), 110.

conviction and remained faithful to these convictions despite outward pressure (Rev 2:3). These commendations provide an example of what the churches later addressed needed to do. Jesus's later rebuke is startling, considering the initial commendation. Jesus's warning that the church return to its first love comes with the threat of dissolution of the church, outweighing the commendable attributes exhibited (Rev 4:4). The church's first love is foundational to orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Instead, this church had become callously convictional. Vince Havner states, "They were to become once again a vital organism, not merely a busy organization."[26] If Jesus is not the primary love behind a church's practice, it cannot be faithful in its mission.

"The first love" calls to mind the greatest commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37). Flowing from this commandment is the second greatest commandment: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39). The love of the Lord and then the love of others is essential for the life of a church. The correction from Jesus begins with the love of Jesus.

Jesus demands that this church repent and return to its first love and the works they originally carried out, equating the two and connecting them in an inseparable manner (Rev 2:5). The work mentioned here is not specific. Considering this church's condition, however, these works likely reflect their heart's condition. When connected with the earlier imagery of the letter likening the church to lampstands, the church's gospel witness is likely the works in view. This church should have lived out works of love. The importance of being a loving congregation is consistent with other texts in Scripture. The loving nature of a congregation is supposed to be so evident that it can be recognized and affirmed by a watching world, marking a community of faith as genuine

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[26] Vance Havner, *Repent or Else! The Seven Churches of Revelation* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1958), 25.

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followers of Jesus and helping them fulfill their role as faithful witnesses (John 13:24–25).[27] A particular species of love is the metric for measuring a church's loving nature.

Jesus defines love as the willingness to lay down one's life for his friend, which Jesus demonstrated most fully in his substitutionary, atoning sacrifice (John 15:12–13). While Christians do not atone through sacrifices for others, they do lay down their lives for the lives of others. Sometimes they do so literally, but more often, Christians should be willing to lay down their preferences, comforts, security, and egos to invest in the lives of those around them. Biblical love's defining feature is self-sacrifice.[28] Jesus's love for his people brings about their love of him. When considering its need for revitalization, the heart of a church must be examined. A church wanting to replant and rejuvenate needs to be most passionate about Jesus and others. A replanting church must love Jesus so much that they love others more than themselves.

Shame or guilt is sometimes leveraged to motivate a church to make the changes needed to replant. Jesus does provide a warning, but he also provides hope. Jesus's promise to this church intends to motivate them to rekindle their love for him (Rev 2:7). The promise is a promise to return to the garden. It promises eternal sustenance, remittance to humanity's perfect life in God's presence, and the complete restoration of all things. This promise hinges on the ability of the church to overcome. What they must overcome is not the tribulation of life and the world but their sin of not proclaiming Christ to the outside world.[29] The call to overcome is to return to Jesus as their greatest love and to share him with others. This promise is only beautiful and precious if Jesus is the heart's greatest desire. This promise is a powerful motivation to place before a church struggling and looking for hope. What they may be clinging to

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[27] Thomas, *Revelation 1–7*, 139–40.

[28] Stott, *What Christ Thinks of the Church*, 31.

[29] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 234.

might be the things holding their church back from making the changes necessary for reaching their community. Jesus is better than anything or anyone else. He alone is the greatest source of hope for a replanting church.

Concerning replanting, this text places a primacy on a church getting its heart right. Correct doctrine, though commendable and necessary, is not enough. The rational cannot be a substitute for a relationship with Jesus. The TXB replant process begins with addressing the heart of a church, not as an authority over the local church but as a servant to the local church. The approach to this task is a self-diagnostic, biblically reflective questionnaire that also serves as the application for Texas Baptists Replanting (see appendix 10). A church is asked to reflect on Revelation 2 and 3 and provided self-reflective questions about the current state of their church as it relates to the text addressing each of the seven churches. This questionnaire also walks a church's leadership through Revelation 2–3 and provides reflective questions connected to the issues raised in each letter.

This self-diagnostic, combined with some objective evaluations, might be the best manner to assess the church's level of Christian love. The works of love in this passage refer to measurable demonstrations of a church's heart condition. Areas that might indicate a congregation's passion for Jesus and others would include the culture of evangelism in the church's life, the level of hospitality demonstrated in public services, and how well they assimilate new Christians and new members into their community. Another way to ascertain what is most important for a church is to see where they spend most of their time, energy, and resources. These areas are evaluated by observing the church's calendar of events, the weekly schedule of ministries, and the annual budget. What churches spend their time looking forward to and promoting will reveal some of their greatest passions. The church's allocation of volunteers and staffing to support ministries reveals its passion. Where a church spends its money also shows what they treasure most. An evaluation that examines both the subjective self-diagnostic and

objective metrics mentioned above would hopefully display the stated and actual values of the church, revealing the condition of its heart.

Fearlessly Faithful

The structure of the letter to the church in Smyrna begins with Jesus's address to the messenger of this local church. Christ then introduces himself as the first and the last and the one who died and came to life. Jesus judges the positive aspects of this church, commending their perseverance and spiritual wealth though they were materially impoverished. He encourages them to remain faithful, he calls for the reader to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, and lastly, he provides a promise of a crown and deliverance from the second death (Rev 2:8–11).[30]

The church in Smyrna is not corrected but encouraged to be fearless and faithful in the face of external opposition. Unlike the church in Ephesus, this church had a genuine love demonstrated in their willingness to sacrifice for Jesus, showing him to be most valuable to them.[31] The church's poverty was most likely due to the loss of income congregants experienced because of their unwavering commitment to Jesus.[32] Jesus remarked that while they may be poor monetarily, they were rich. This church considered the person and work of Jesus more valuable than anything else. There must have been a willingness to sacrifice much to follow Jesus and bear witness to him. Their commitment to the gospel is necessary for this church to persevere despite imprisonment and death.

This church would risk everything for Jesus, and Jesus has only words of comfort and encouragement for them and later readers who may find themselves in similar circumstances. This church faced opposition from Jewish individuals who viewed the worship of Jesus as blasphemy and would have accused these Christians of false

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[30] Fanning, *Revelation*, 125–26.

[31] Stott, *What Christ Thinks of the Church*, 35.

[32] Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, 161.

worship. Jesus identified these Jews as false Jews and their activities in league with the ultimate accuser, Satan.[33] The adversarial nature of this church's context is very high. Alan Johnson notes that Jesus has a threefold acknowledgment of their circumstances, using the terms "their afflictions," "their poverty," and "the slander."[34] Interestingly, Jesus provides them with at least three sources of comfort and hope.[35]

One source of encouragement is seen in the original language of verse 10. In this verse, Jesus warns the church of the persecution awaiting them. The phrase ἵνα πειρασθῆτε is translated "that you may be tested" or "in order that you may be tested" and indicates that the trials they will endure are purposed by God and will accomplish his will.[36] This phrase reminds the church and the reader of the sovereignty of God over the enemies of the church. God will use the Jewish opposition and even the works of the devil to further his plan, despite their evil intent. Their intentions are trumped by his own.[37] This church can take comfort in the reality that even in the trials and troubles Christians face, God is still in control, and his purposes cannot be thwarted. The "ten days" referenced indicate that Jesus is connecting the church's time of proving with the narrative of Daniel and his friends in Daniel 1:12–15.[38] They were tested and proved faithful and were mightily used by the Lord. As an example of faithful exiles in a hostile environment, this connection may be intended to encourage the struggling church in the face of adversity.

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[33] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 241.

[34] Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 13, *Hebrews-Revelation*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2017), 613.

[35] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 244–45.

[36] Albert L. Lukaszewski, Mark Dubis, and J. Ted Blakley, *The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), s.v. "Rev 2:10."

[37] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 242–43.

[38] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 242.

A struggling church finds many comforts in the Lord, specifically in Jesus. Jesus declares that he is the beginning and end of all things, he has conquered death itself, and though his followers may conclude their life under the sun, death does not have the last word. The Lord uses the title "the first and the last" to describe himself in Isaiah (41:4; 44:6; 48:12) as he tells Israel not to fear. Smyrna's context parallels that of Israel, as Jesus says he is "the first and the last."[39] Jesus's statement would have been considered blasphemous by the Jewish opposition in Smyrna, but it encourages the Christians to have the fearlessness needed to remain faithful.[40] Fear is the enemy of the truth, and Jesus is the most excellent source of comfort. Fear feeds doubts concerning Jesus's identity, work, and authority, causing a congregation to cling to lesser comforts and undermining their faithfulness.

The third source of solace in these verses is in the letter's introduction and conclusion. Jesus opens the letter to the Smyrnaean church by reminding them that he is the one who conquered death; having died, he came back to life (Rev 2:8). He concludes with the related promise that the one who conquers will be protected from the second death (Rev 2:10). Jesus is contrasting the power of this church's opposition with his own. The Jewish opposition and the devil may have the power to arrest these Christians and put them to death, but Jesus has conquered death itself and will protect them from a fate worse than physical death.[41] Jesus is their ultimate hope because of who he is, his authority, and the work he has accomplished for his people. The three-fold duress this church faced was met with the three-fold attributes of Jesus.

The TXB replanting process offers encouragement and comfort by reminding a church of who Jesus is and what he has done for them. The self-diagnostic questionnaire

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[39] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 242.

[40] Craig R. Koester, *Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries, vol. 38A (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 279.

[41] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 245.

encourages churches to identify alternative comforts they may be embracing over the Comforter. With Jesus as their ultimate comfort, a church is empowered to be sacrificial in its faithfulness. The TXB process includes as part of the self-diagnostic questionnaire an open-ended question asking what a congregation is willing and not willing to sacrifice to move forward. This question may provide significant insight into a local church's mindset and convictions. Early in the process of consulting with a church exploring replating, a chart, such as one created by Mark Hallock in *Replant Roadmap*, can also be used to better delve into what are the non-negotiables and negotiables for a congregation.[42] This chart is designed to help the congregation clarify what the church is willing to change and what they are committed to keeping. The willingness of a congregation to embrace change is one of the main characteristics the CSS monitors to assess the readiness of a prospective replanting congregation to enter the replanting process. A congregation that is unwilling to change is unwilling to sacrifice.

A final application of this text is that not every church struggling and facing dissolution is unfaithful. This application should be a cautionary consideration for all DEs that serve multiple local churches. There is a way in which a church can faithfully come to its end. Processes and systems that help declining churches must have a category for churches facing external opposition threatening their existence. What matters most for a church in this scenario is that it is fearless and faithful to Jesus until its race is finished. This category informs the Texas Baptists replant process to ensure that the staff does not assume unfaithfulness in a church's struggle. This truth positions TXB staff to allow each church's context to shape the congregation's assessment and advise the possible paths forward. However, perseverance in the face of exterior opposition is not enough, and the church in Pergamum provides an essential qualification.

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[42] Mark Hallock, *Replant Roadmap: How Your Church Can Help Revitalize Dying Churches* (Littleton, CO: Acoma Press, 2017), 266–69. This chart provides various example categories to consider when exploring replanting. There are also examples in each category to demonstrate what to look for at each of the three rating levels.

Passively Permissive

The letter to Pergamum is structured more towards correction and is evidence that persecution in and of itself does not automatically produce faithfulness. Jesus addresses the messenger of this local church and introduces aspects of himself as the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. He judges the positive aspects of this church, commending endurance in the face of persecution, but condemns their passivity in permitting or following false teachers. Christ tells them to repent, calls for the reader to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, and provides a promise of the hidden manna and a white stone with a new name (Rev 2:12–17).[43]

Jesus presents himself as on the offensive and poised to come against this congregation. He reminds this church that his words are authoritative and truthful Word of God. The imagery in the introduction demonstrates Jesus's judicial authority over the church and the kingdom of darkness.[44] Because Jesus is the ultimate judge, his evaluations and assessments are perfect. It is worth noting that within this context, Jesus does commend this church for their faithfulness despite external persecution when Antipas was martyred. The greatest challenge for this congregation was not the external hostile culture; it was within their fellowship, and it threatened their exclusive faithfulness to Christ.

Jesus gives both a threat and promises to move this church towards faithfulness. As judge, Jesus threatens to personally oppose those who follow the Nicolaitans but also promises them true sustenance and a new, purified identity. Some early church fathers identified Nicolas as one of the deacons established in Acts 9 who became apostate and led Christians into sexual immorality and idolatry.[45] The imagery of

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[43] Fanning, *Revelation*, 134–35.

[44] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 245–46.

[45] John F. MacArthur, *Revelation 1–11*, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 89.

Jesus coming against false teachers and their adherents with the sword underscores the severity of this congregation's situation. They probably have yet to recognize or have recognized but minimized the seriousness of the erroneous teachings. The passivity within this church has caused it to compromise with the surrounding culture's values, beliefs, and practices. The text does not define in detail what the false teaching of the Nicolaitans, but it categorically connects their teaching to that of Balaam. Balaam's advised King Balak in the book of Numbers. Following Balaam's advice, Balak convinced the people of Israel to intermarry with his people. In so doing, they compromised their religious faithfulness to the Lord, placing them at odds with the Lord (Num 31:16). Similarly, Pergamum must have permitted compromising relationships and syncretistic beliefs to develop in their midst, encouraged and taught by the Nicolaitans.[46]

The church in Pergamum is called to address these issues and turn away from them, requiring discipline within the church and better discipleship that produces in church members orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Faithful action must replace passivity. The church cannot be more tolerant than Jesus. He alone is just and true. He is the most loving and compassionate. Jesus and his Word, the whole of Scripture, must measure what is good and what is not. This text diametrically situates the words of Jesus in opposition to the words of the Nicolaitans. To stand with the false teachers is to take up arms against Jesus, but Jesus also graciously calls them to repentance with promises.

Jesus contrasts his provision to that of the false saviors and gods of the Nicolaitans. The Nicolaitans had led people to fellowship at pagan feasts in the city. Jesus promises them a better feast and uses the term manna to communicate the weightiness of what he alone can provide. Just as Israel received sustenance from the Father for forty years in the wilderness, Jesus, who is one and equal with the Father, can provide the sustenance that his church desperately needs. The other provisions and protections that

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[46] Koester, *Revelation*, 293.

the Lord provided Israel in the wilderness seem implied since the letter carries several parallels to the wilderness narrative of Israel.[47] Jesus also promises them a new name, representing a new identity, on a white stone, which was likely the white stone representing acquittal from judgment.[48] Combined, they communicate a promise that all who repent and turn to Christ alone will find no judgment or retribution but instead, forgiveness and a new beginning for their lives.

The correlation with replanting is that churches seeking to replant must reclaim their distinctive and uncompromised faith and practice. There must be recognition of compromises, actively or passively, permitted within the congregation and a willingness to repent. Repentance itself is a change of mind that informs action and aim. The aim is to reflect on Jesus as the sole source of provision and identity rather than whatever may have supplanted Christ as their central focus. The action is a change of behavior aligned with a focus on Christ. The questionnaire for replanting churches asks self-reflective questions that help a church evaluate its practices, teachings, and policies. To move forward, a recommitment and love for the Bible must be present within the congregation. Also, there must be a commitment to holding the membership and leadership accountable. Sometimes there are people holding influence in a church that should not have influence. A congregation needs to recognize unbiblical leadership and be willing to stand up to such leaders. Members must be willing to confess to areas of compromise and repent, holding each other accountable to look to Jesus alone for provision, solace, and identity. If members cannot hold each other accountable, it is unlikely that a replanting pastor will be able to hold the members accountable.

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[47] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 252–53.

[48] Patterson, *Revelation*, 110–11.

Profane and Pagan

Jesus addresses the messenger of this local church in Thyatira as the one has eyes like flames of fire and feet like burnished bronze. He judges the positive aspects of this church, commending endurance in the face of persecution, but condemns their unfaithfulness in tolerating or following false teachers. Christ tells them to repent, calls for the reader to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, and promises the power over the nations and the morning star to Thyatira (Rev 2:18–29). Like Pergamum, Jesus is unsatisfied with this church's behavior and teaching. The imagery highlights an even higher level of opposition towards the church in Thyatira.[49]

To Thyatira, Jesus comes as the rightful and true judge who has already passed judgment and will carry out the just penalty. The imagery Jesus uses connects with descriptions later in Revelation, when Christ is described as coming on a white horse and exercising final judgment on his enemies (Rev 19:12). The imagery is also very similar to that used to describe the Lord in Daniel 10:6, 16.[50] This imagery communicates a more heightened and weightier role in the judgment and authority of Jesus. Jesus acknowledges and commends this church's works of love. While they were a loving church and commended as such, they were not uncompromised. The church in Thyatira has moved beyond compromised beliefs and behaviors, as had the church in Pergamum, and had people within the church abandoning the way of Jesus for pagan practices and beliefs.

Jezebel, referenced in this text and perhaps referring to an individual or individuals, is leading people to follow other gods, as Jezebel in the Old Testament encouraged and promoted Baal worship in opposition to the worship of the Lord.[51] In this text, Jesus indicates that he has already offered repentance to this Jezebel, but it was rejected. Now Jesus is coming to carry out his judgment on Jezebel and those carried

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[49] Fanning, *Revelation*, 147.

[50] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 259–60.

[51] Patterson, *Revelation*, 114–16.

away by the teachings and practices of Jezebel. Church members who have not fallen under the pagan movement are told to steadfastly hold to the beliefs and practices they have been doing.[52] The promise for those holding on is that they will reign with Jesus over the nations of the earth, and they will possess Jesus himself.

The TXB replanting process encourages churches to renew their commitment to the Bible as their highest authority and work with the congregation and its leadership to develop a doctrinal statement that communicates this commitment to God's Word and is compatible with the *Baptist Faith and Message*.[53] Additionally, this process must lead the congregation and leadership to reevaluate its faith and practice in the church's history through the lens of this doctrinal statement. This reevaluation can assist a church in reframing events, teachings, situations, and actions within the church that may need to be worked through for the church to move forward. The questionnaire asks a congregation to examine its beliefs, practices, and teachings.

Deficient and Dormant

Jesus addresses the messenger of this local church in Sardis and introduces aspects of himself as the one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. His judgment is that this church appears alive, but it is actually dead, and its works are deficient. Christ tells them to repent and to wake up; he calls for the reader to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches; and he provides a white garment and name written in the book of life (Rev 3:1–6).[54]

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[52] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 261–63.

[53] Texas Baptists' messengers at their annual meeting have adopted the *Baptist Faith and Message 1963*, but many Texas Baptists churches hold to the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*. All three editions of the *Baptist Faith and Message* (1925, 1963, 2000) are recognized and accepted by Texas Baptists, and adherence to a single *Baptist Faith and Message* is not required to be considered in cooperation with Texas Baptists.

[54] Fanning, *Revelation*, 160–61.

Jesus reveals himself to the Sardinian church in a Trinitarian fashion. Jesus's use of the seven spirits of God may indicate that this church requires the Spirit of God to be at work within and through their congregation to bring them back to life (Rev 3:1).[55] The Spirit brings life and demonstrates the power of God. Jesus also highlights his authority over whoever may be an authority over a given church. Jesus points out that this church is deficient in its work, although it appears outwardly to be vibrant and active (Rev 3:2). Jesus's introduction of himself is like his introduction to the Ephesian church, which lost its passion for Jesus and its practice of outwardly witnessing the gospel.[56] There was a stark difference between what this church thought it should be about and Jesus's expectations. The use of ὄνομα, which is often translated as "reputation," carries with it the idea of identity.[57] Jesus is not just calling their activities into question but their very identity. Though it seemed productive and accomplished much, it was not accomplishing Jesus's vision for the church's future. They may have had a great vision and agenda, but it was not Jesus's. This congregation was deluded. There was a disconnect between this church's grasp of reality and the actual situation. Jesus is setting the church straight and calling them to awareness of their actual state.[58]

From Jesus's perspective, it was dead. It needed the breath of new life to awaken to its greater ordained purposes. The way they were to awaken required them to return what they first received, much like the Ephesian church. They were to return to the message they had heard, the very words of God that revealed Jesus's person and work (Rev 3:3). With this call to return, Jesus again motivates another church with a warning and promise. He warns that he would come against them. The conditional nature of this

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[55] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 274.

[56] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 272.

[57] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 273.

[58] Patterson, *Revelation*, 121.

warning indicates that this is historical and not eschatological.[59] This church was told that it would cease to be a church if it did not awaken.

If the church awakened, there were sweet promises to be enjoyed, not only a threat avoided. Jesus encourages them to repent and return with a promise that they become worthy and approved workers before God. They would begin to enjoy this reality now and more fully forever because they have the assurance of their salvation and their names written in the Book of Life. The image of white robes carries with it the idea of being a faithful witness and being worthy to walk with the Lord (Rev 3:4).[60] The statement that Jesus makes about not erasing their names from the Book of Life is not intended to be a threat but intended to carry with it the idea of assurance (Rev 3:5).[61]

This warning to the church in Sardis indicates that many dying and struggling churches are often unaware of the severity of their circumstances and their threat of closing.[62] The TXB replant process must be framed with the humble posture of dependency on the Holy Spirit to act, give life, and revive a congregation. The Spirit alone can open their eyes to their actual circumstances and the ability to see Jesus as better than whatever they are clinging to for hope and security. Human activity alone cannot accomplish the mission of God. Michael Horton points, "Instead of the gospel giving us new thoughts, experiences, and a motivation for grateful obedience, we lodge the power of God in our piety and programs."[63] A renewed focus and dependency on Jesus's person and work, applied by the Spirit, will need to be emphasized and practiced by both the local congregation and those involved in consulting the congregation. A

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[59] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 275.

[60] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 276–77.

[61] Patterson, *Revelation*, 122–23.

[62] Patterson, *Revelation*, 122.

[63] Michael Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 26–27.

church replanting is not merely restarting religious activities or resurrecting a religious organization or social club. Church replanting is an awakening accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit, rekindling Christians' love and commitment to Jesus and creating new Christians as the message of Jesus is shared, all to the glory of the Father. There is no simple formula or process to produce a spiritual awakening. There can only be broken, humble petitions made in desperation to the Lord. This humility is the tone and tenor of replanting a church and attempting to walk through a process. Through the TXB replanting process, all partners must be reminded of these truths and act considering these truths. The questionnaire calls for the congregation to examine its dependency on the Lord and the church's prayer life.

Abiding Assurance

Like the other letters, Jesus addresses the messenger of this local church, introduces aspects of himself as the one who has the key of David, and opens the door that no one can shut and shuts the door that no one can open. He judges the positive aspects of this church, commending their faithfulness to the Word and the name of Christ. He encourages them to hold fast, calls for the reader to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, and promises that they will be a pillar in God's temple in the new Jerusalem and be given a new name (Rev 3:7–13).[64]

The Philadelphian church is not corrected but encouraged by Jesus, who portrays himself as the true King and the unique means to access God and his presence.[65] Jesus uses a divine title for himself as "He who is holy, who is true" (Rev 3:7). This statement is probably referring to Isaiah 22:22, which Jesus uses to declare himself as the threefold fulfillment of the text. He is the greater Eliakim, having the key of David, the

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[64] Fanning, *Revelation*, 170–71.

[65] Patterson, *Revelation*, 127.

throne of David, and being appointed by God.[66] He is emphasizing his deity to this church and his actual and greater claim over the people of Israel. Jesus's declarations would have stood in contrast to the views of the Jewish opposition this congregation may have faced. This would have encouraged this church in its conviction and teaching concerning Jesus, marking the congregation as the true people of God. This contrast would have also clearly identified the Jewish opposition as wrong, demonstrating they were not God's people. It is Christ, not self-professed followers of God, who declares who is in and out of fellowship with the Lord. This authoritative reality is intensified when Jesus says that these Jews will have to bow before these Christians and acknowledge their actual status, realizing that Jesus is who he says he is (Rev 3:9).[67]

Jesus acknowledges this church's hardships and commends their faithfulness, despite the opposition. Jesus will rescue the church from the judgment that everyone else will endure. His protection is a spiritual one. The trials and trouble of life will harden the unbelieving, but the believing will be strengthened through these tribulations. Considering what is coming for this church, Jesus, by his Spirit, will see them through (Rev 3:11).[68] The identity of this church rests not in what other people think of them or how others treat them. The identity of this church is given by the true King, Jesus, guaranteeing their place before the Lord as his beloved and approved people.

A critical aspect of the TXB replanting process will be assisting a replanting congregation in rediscovering its identity in Jesus and helping them to express this truth in their own words. A church must know its Jesus-given identity and be able to express who they are to the people around them. Knowing who Jesus has made them be will better equip a church to rightly orient itself to its circumstances and mission to make

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[66] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 283.

[67] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 285–87.

[68] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 289–93.

disciples of the nations. The questionnaire asks for the local congregation to define its purpose historically and presently so that a congregation can think critically about what they should be defined by and what currently defines their church.

Deluded and Destitute

In the last letter, Jesus addresses the messenger of the local church in Laodicea. He introduces himself as the true and faithful witness and the beginning of creation. He judges the negative aspects of being lukewarm, naked, poor, and blind. Christ tells them to repent, calls for the reader to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, and provides a promise of eating with Christ and sitting with him on his throne (Rev 3:14–22).[69]

Christ's final message to the church in Laodicea highlights the significance of prioritizing values in the proper order, similar to his earlier address to the Ephesian church. The message provides further explanation and emphasizes the importance of this concept. Jesus presented himself as the source and revealer of truth and the Creator of all things. The use of the title, "the Amen," in Revelation 3:14 is a divine title used by Isaiah in reference to the Lord (Isa 65:16).[70] This not only equates Jesus with the Lord but also identifies Christ as the fulfillment of Isaiah 65, as through his person and work he is able to bring about a new heaven and new earth.[71] Jesus reminded them that he is the true and faithful witness, meaning he alone is qualified to define reality and distinguish what is good, true, and worthy.[72] His evaluation of this church and its situation is not good, contrary to their perception.

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[69] Fanning, *Revelation*, 182–83.

[70] Patterson, *Revelation*, 137.

[71] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 296–302.

[72] Patterson, *Revelation*, 138.

The analogy that Jesus uses to illustrate the church's current state is likely based on the city of Laodicea's water supply (Rev 3:15–16).[73] The spiritual state of this church is as worthless as water that is not fit to drink. Jesus further clarifies the spiritual condition of the Laodicean church by contrasting their self-assessment with his evaluation (Rev 3:17). Jesus uses the words "rich" and "wealthy" when describing how the church saw itself. In the book of Revelation, these terms often connote paganism and idolatry; they are adjectives typically used to represent an ungodly, worldly system and the unbelieving (Rev 6:15; 13:16; 18:3, 15, 19).[74] Keeping these connections in mind, Jesus is not calling into question their circumstances or behavior but the reality of their salvation. In contrast, he calls them blind, poor, and naked. He is their greatest need and their only hope.

The Laodicean church needed Jesus as its greatest passion, transforming their perspective and their existence. Jesus uses images of gold, salve, and white garments to articulate that he is the sole source of provision (Rev 3:18). He alone is sufficient. They could depend on him alone. Instead, they were deluded and unable to distinguish what truly mattered most. This contributed to their valuing what was worthless, leaving them spiritually destitute. Their self-sufficiency stood in opposition to faith in Jesus.[75] They cherished the temporal comforts of life under the sun that they could acquire by their efforts and resources rather than Jesus and the riches he provided in his person and work. Despite their dire situation, Jesus still pursues them in their rebellion. Jesus calls them to return to him, and he stands at their door and knocks, asking to enter into their communion once again (Rev 3:19–20). Jesus promised them that if they repented, they would discover the provision and riches beyond their comprehension. They would give

[73] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 303.

[74] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 304–5.

[75] Patterson, *Revelation*, 141.

up that which they could lose to gain that which they could never lose, a share in the kingdom of God (Rev 3:21).[76]

Jesus and his work for his people is the lens through which churches find meaning, purpose, and value. The church's perspective is shaped by making Christ preeminent in its affections and identity. The supremacy of Christ must be paramount for a church to be utilized by Christ in carrying out the mission of making a people for himself. The TXB replanting process strives to help a congregation identify the false comforts it might be cherishing so that it may turn away from these lesser things and find the treasures only Jesus can provide. Treasuring Christ equips a congregation to embrace change that is uncomfortable and challenging but necessary to see people follow Jesus in their community. The questionnaire helps a congregation to begin thinking of Jesus in this manner and asks them to assess their current priorities.

Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from these seven letters. First, a church's context does not necessarily determine its faithfulness. The persecuted church may be faithful, as in the contexts of the Smyrnaean and Philadelphian churches, but it may also compromise and become syncretistic, as in the context of the Pergamene church. Persecution may be more conducive to faithfulness to Jesus, but these letters demonstrate that refinement must happen for churches in every context. Regardless of context, the hope for every church is found in Christ alone. Jesus is the greatest solace to the suffering church. He is the greatest treasure to the flourishing church. Without Jesus, a church ceases to be a church. With Christ, a church can accomplish all the Lord has set before them.

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[76] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 307–9.

The varied approach of each letter in tone, emphasis, and application highlights the need for contextual and multifaceted approaches in working with local congregations. These seven letters collectively reveal how the various aspects of Jesus's person and work are relevant to a church's challenges and struggles. The person and work of Jesus have inexhaustible characteristics and perspectives to explore, having countless implications for the life of a Christian community as it grows spiritually to meet these challenges and struggles. These truths remind us that Jesus is supremely sufficient for his church and that his person and work are not just the message of every church but the animative wellspring of life for the local church. The TXB replanting process is based on the sufficiency of Christ and his Word to revive a congregation. An awakening must take place for a church to replant. Since only Jesus has conquered death and risen to life, Jesus is the church's only hope for new life. A church must fix its eyes on him and abide in him to bear the fruit of gospel ministry. They must rest their hope in Jesus's promise to build his church.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND
PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED
TO THE PROJECT

If church replanting were a home renovation, it would not be a simple remodel but a complete rebuild. Using this same analogy, a replant would also be different from a new church plant, and a rebuild would be different from a new build. Some of the original structure and materials may be reclaimed in a rebuild.[1] A thorough reexamination of the foundation, framing, and all other aspects of a housing structure must occur before a rebuild begins. A completed rebuild may look radically different from what it did initially, or it may look very similar but brought up to current building codes that make it safer, stronger, and more efficient. A church replant can vary from or be very similar to its original form, having a different name, identity, and location. The critical difference is that a replanted church should effectively reach its community and make disciples. The Texas Baptists replanting process is designed to walk with struggling churches and help them discover the unique path the Lord has for them to walk so they can fulfill their part of the Great Commission. The process is designed to be comprehensive in its approach to replanting, transferable between various contexts and cultures represented within TXB life, and collaborative because a more significant gospel impact can be made through churches, denominational entities, and networks working together.

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[1] Bill Henard, *ReClaimed Church: How Churches Grow, Decline, and Experience Revitalization* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2018), 1–4.

A Comprehensive Process

The TXB replanting process is designed to be comprehensive in scope, engaging both the replanting pastor and the congregation for the duration, wholistically supporting the church throughout the replanting effort. The ultimate goal of the process is to see dying churches replanted to become cooperative congregations that are self-sustaining, self-governing, and self-replicating.

One common framework for understanding the health and decline of a local church is Robert Dale's bell curve.[2] It charts the birth of a church, its growth stage, maturity stage, decline stage, and death. This bell curve can also be understood as a vision cycle for a congregation, moving from the dream stage to the dropout and death stage.[3] This framework helps evaluate the organizational health of a church and determine where the congregation stands currently relative to its inception. The goal of replanting a congregation is to see it again return to a stage of growth at the beginning of the bell curve.[4]

In church replanting, it is essential to operate from a clear understanding of what defines a church. A church is not a building, a denominational term, or a gathering of avatars in a virtual space. The term comes from the Greek word ἐκκλησία, which means an assembly of people.[5] Jesus uses this terminology in Matthew 16:18, upon Peter's confession that Jesus is Christ. When teaching the disciples how his followers resolve conflict among themselves, Jesus refers to this group of believers as "the church"

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[2] Robert D. Dale, *To Dream Again: How to Help Your Church Come Alive* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), 14–20.

[3] Bill Henard, *Can These Bones Live? A Practical Guide to Church Revitalization* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2015), 163–66.

[4] Henard, *ReClaimed Church*, 163–66.

[5] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 509.

(Matt 18:17). This term is associated in Scripture with the gathering of God's new covenant people.[6]

Replanting a church in the context of the TXB replanting process means that a local community of Christians is renewed. This renewal may or may not include conserving the property. In specific communities, there is a great need to keep properties owned by congregations to continue ministering to that community. Texas is seeing explosive growth in its metro areas, and there is less and less property available for development. Though conservation and replanting are closely related and necessary efforts, distinguishing between the two will better inform the methodologies taken to serve a struggling local church. Replanting a church should be clearly understood as the renewal of a local community of Christians so that it may return to its created purpose.

God's intended purpose for the collective and local church measures a congregation's faithfulness. This purpose of the church is found in fulfilling the Great Commission, the metric that matters most in replanting.[7] Each church exists to reproduce followers of Jesus that create new followers of Jesus.[8] Replanting a church is a renewal of a community created by Jesus's person and work. This reality requires a strong spiritual emphasis rooted in the Bible, dependent on the Spirit, driven by prayer and a focus on Jesus, and living out Christ's mission to gather for himself a ransomed people.[9] A spiritual approach will point a congregation to Scripture as their source of truth and

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[6] Gregg R. Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church*, Foundations in Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012). 30.

[7] Mark Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory: Revitalizing Dying Churches* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2016), 112–13.

[8] Paul D. Borden, *Make or Break Your Church in 365 Days: A Daily Guide to Leading Effective Change* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), 38–39.

[9] Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2007), 10–16.

authority. Only through God's Word by the Spirit can life be breathed into a dying church.[10]

TXB replanting starts a congregation's exploration period with Scripture, beginning with the questionnaire that walks a church through chapters 2 and 5 of Revelation. The questions are designed for a designated group within the congregation to take time for self-examination. The questionnaire aims for this group to align themselves with Scripture, recognize the authority of Jesus, and encourage the congregation to do the same.

A significant factor identified in the literature review is the issue of authority in a dying local church. Mark Hallock identifies leadership with a replanting strategy as the first among five areas that must be considered when replanting. He clarifies that this is everything related to the replanting pastor and other partnering pastors.[11] The assumption is that the pastor can lead and has some decision-making authority over a congregation. Brian Croft presses in even deeper, explaining that a congregation must acknowledge a framework of authority beginning with God, then to Jesus as the Head of the Church, to God's Word, which reveals God and Jesus's will for his people, the pastor or pastors, and then the congregation.[12] A submission to God's will, and specifically to the person of Jesus Christ, is the practical outworking of this framework. Mark Clifton identifies that the opposite characteristic signifies a dying church. This characteristic is a congregation valuing their preference as an ultimate guiding motivation.[13] This issue of authority is an intersection of spiritual, organizational, and behavioral renewal necessary for replanting. A replanting process cannot create or generate this kind of renewal. God accomplishes

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[10] Brian Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization: Solutions for Dying and Divided Churches* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016), 23–31.

[11] Mark Hallock, *Replant Roadmap: How Your Church Can Help Revitalize Dying Churches* (Littleton, CO: Acoma Press, 2017), 225.

[12] Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization*, 63–67.

[13] Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 23–24.

this renewal as the congregation looks to Jesus, relies on the Lord in prayer, and is informed and enlightened by Scripture.[14] It is only the Spirit who can revive a dying church.[15]

Duration

The TXB replanting process is designed to be comprehensive in duration. Three phases of the TXB replanting process outline the comprehensive duration: the pre-support phase, the support phase, and the cooperative partnership phase. The initial pre-support phase of the TXB process focuses on developing three components that combine to create a church replanting plan or prospectus. The church profile, community profile, and strategic bridge all examine the governance, structures, identity, systems, ministries, priorities, and programs of a prospective replanting church with the immediate goal of meeting the TXB funding criteria with a fully formed plan.

The pre-support phase helps a church considering replanting develop a church profile and community profile. The church profile helps a church clearly and accurately perceive its current condition with the accompanying challenges and opportunities. The community profile helps the church reexamine its current context to better understand its community's spiritual, economic, social, and physical needs. Also, the community profile can assist in identifying any cultural divides that may need to be addressed so that their immediate community can understand the gospel. The final piece of the onboarding process is the strategic bridge, which spans the gulf between the church and community profiles. The strategic bridge is constituted by the means and methods for the church to join Jesus in his mission to redeem for himself a people. Together, the church profile,

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[14] Harry L. Reeder III and David Swavely, *From Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church*, rev. and exp. ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 57–115.

[15] Henard, *Can These Bones Live?*, 16.

community profile, and strategic bridge combine to prompt a church replanting prospectus with the church's vision, values, strategy, timeline, and budget.

One foundational criterion and preliminary exploration of replanting a local church are the assessments for replanting. The assessment of a congregation helps inform the replanting pastor and potential partners what may be required of them for the congregation to be renewed.[16] The assessment of the replanting pastor is critical, as the congregation and partners need to know whether or not the pastor is ready for and capable to accomplish the task of leading a church through a replanting effort.[17] The pastor assessment also benefits the replanting pastor because it helps him become more self-aware and understand his strengths, weakness, and how God has uniquely gifted him.[18] These assessments occur in the pre-support phase.

Three assessments are given: the church self-assessment, the replanting pastor assessment, and the TXB strategist's assessment of the replanting endeavor. Each assessment helps all involved partners develop an agreed-upon strategy for replanting a local church. The partners—typically the replanting pastor, partner church pastor, local Baptist associational representative, and the representative for TXB—will review the assessments and come to an agreed-upon strategy for replanting. Then the partners agree upon a budget that is informed by the replanting strategy. When these objectives are all met, the replanting church is ready to be presented for the support phase of the replanting process by signing a covenant together to be approved by the Missions Funding Council.[19]

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[16] Henard, *Can These Bones Live?*, 23–24.

[17] Hallock, *Replant Roadmap*, 93–94.

[18] Henard, *ReClaimed Church*, 128–31.

[19] This covenant is presented in appendix 13.

The support phase of the replanting process provides a structure for regular strategic planning, monthly funding, church consulting, access to sponsored Christian counseling for the replanting pastor and his immediate family, and designated funding for special projects and various support services over a 36 to 60-month period. During this time, a replanting church does have covenant expectations of reporting monthly, monthly cooperative program giving, and quarterly meetings with all strategic partners supporting the replanting efforts.

The final phase is the cooperative partnership, which begins when the replanted church can sustain and govern itself. On reaching this phase, the replanted church would continue its partnership with TXB efforts through cooperative program giving and collaborate with TXB to see people reached with the gospel, new churches planted, and struggling churches thrive again. The church would have access to the services and service opportunities available to all cooperative TXB churches.

Congregation

The TXB replanting process is also comprehensive in scope, fully engaging both the replanting pastor and the replanting congregation. Sometimes, the process may begin with a replanting congregation before they find a replanting pastor. One of the significant factors in working with an existing congregation is how they make decisions. The congregation's decision-making processes, governance structures, and practices must be examined, edited, and adapted to the church's current and future realities. Interpersonal relationships, power dynamics, and leadership structures impact the church's ability to carry out its mission in a unified, timely, and faithful manner.[20] Generally, local Baptist churches are congregational in their polity, which means that the church membership makes most of the governing decisions for their local church.

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[20] Hallock, *Replant Roadmap*, 225–37.

Congregationalism is built on three underlying principles: autonomy, democratic processes, and the priesthood of the believer.[21] These characteristics can pose significant complications to replanting.

One of the unique challenges faced when dealing with declining churches is that Southern Baptists hold that each church is autonomous, as stated in both the 1963 and 2000 versions of the *Baptist Faith and Message*.[22] The congregation alone has the authority to make significant decisions for itself. The changes needed for a church to move forward are often what the congregation has resisted for years. Many processes would seek to short-circuit the local church's autonomy and resistance to making the necessary changes by having the congregation deed over the property to another local church or association as leverage. These assisting partners guarantee their ability to move forward with the physical property for ministry purposes regardless of the local congregation's ability to adapt to the new path for the church. This approach can end up becoming property conservation rather than replanting. This consideration is a legitimate and perhaps necessary tactic for church replanting because it better guarantees that gospel ministry and presence continue within a particular community that would suffer if that presence were lost. However, the TXB process, while able to accommodate the aforementioned approach, is designed to work with an existing congregation and see it replanted by embracing a new path forward without leveraging property.

The church is characterized in Scripture as the bride of Christ (Rev 19:7; 21:2, 9–11). A local community of Christians is precious to Jesus and must be respected and valued by any replanting process. Any outside entity attempting to serve a local congregation should do so humbly and out of love for Jesus and his people. Mark Hallock suggests that evaluating a church's readiness for replanting is to be approached with

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[21] Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 277.

[22] Jonathan Howe, "Comparison Chart: The Baptist Faith and Message," https://bfm.sbc.net/, Southern Baptist Convention, accessed March 30, 2023, https://bfm.sbc.net/comparison-chart/.

humility and grace, honest about the current reality but hopeful about the potential future, and prayerfully seeking wisdom.[23] This respect and honor, paired with the local church autonomy that Baptists affirm, demand that a church's self-determination not be violated. The TXB replanting process uses several coaching principles that require the congregation to discover and diagnose its problems and develop solutions. The church starting strategists (CSS) are better positioned to serve a congregation by allowing the congregation to direct the coaching. Each congregation is unique, and nuances and contexts should be considered when working with a replanting church.[24]

The democratic process of most Baptist churches can be challenging to manage. Each church member within a local church has the right to vote on matters specified in the governing documents. This methodology is often a contributing factor to its decline. The issue is not necessarily the democratic process but the membership's level of spiritual maturity. Self-interested people can use the democratic process to serve themselves.[25] Since Jesus is the head of the church, mature believers should use the democratic process to make decisions as Jesus leads. The TXB replanting process begins with its initial questionnaire to help a congregation reflect on Jesus and the church's relationship with him as the head of their church, starting the pre-support phase.

After the initial questionnaire, the CSS takes an adaptive leadership approach when meeting with a struggling congregation. Adaptive leadership is a constant learning process that equips leaders to help people resolve their stated and actual values.[26] Often, churches state that evangelism and discipleship are highly valued, but they may not effectively practice these functions of church life. The decline of Southern Baptist

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[23] Hallock, *Replant Roadmap*, 117–19.

[24] Will Mancini and Max Lucado, *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 5–8.

[25] Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 286.

[26] Tod Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*, exp. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2018), 88.

membership over the last several years may correlate to the gap many churches have between their stated and actual values.[27] What is stated is aspirational, while the congregation's behavior demonstrates the actual value. Changes are required to resolve the gap between these values.[28]

The CSS enters any consultation with a prospective replanting church by asking questions and gathering information to discover gaps in the church's aspirational and actual values. Several tools are at the CSS's disposal to provide the relevant information to best serve the congregation in exploring replanting. Assessments are essential tactics that produce much of the needed information. There are two formal assessments in addition to the constant informal assessment by the CSS throughout the pre-support phase. The formal assessment of the church, the assessment of the replanting pastor, and the informal assessment by the evaluating CSS combine to determine whether the replanting church meets the TXB funding criteria.

The formal church assessment occurs through a 6 to 12-hour retreat in which 6 to 12 leaders from a local congregation meet with the CSS and explore replanting. This is called the Replant Exploration (see appendix 11). From this process, a foundation is laid that informs the replanting strategy and the partnerships needed to replant and provides the CSS an observational assessment of the congregation. The CSS attempts to read the culture of a congregation while facilitating the Replant Exploration. Aubrey Malphurs says that to read the culture is to identify the three key areas characterizing a church's culture: the behaviors of the church, the values of the church, and the beliefs of the church.[29] These characteristics will become more apparent as the CSS has the

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[27] Aaron Earls, "Southern Baptists Face Largest Membership Decline in 100 Years," Lifeway Research, June 4, 2020, https://research.lifeway.com/2020/06/04/southern-baptists-face-largest-membership-decline-in-100-years/.

[28] Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*, 89.

[29] Aubrey Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 83–94.

congregation examine their ultimate purpose as a church and whether they are living out the purpose by examining their stated values and beliefs measured against their behavior.[30]

The Replant Exploration asks the church's leadership to walk through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the church and its context. This analysis allows the congregation to define the reality in which it currently exists, better ensuring that it will support the solutions they work to develop. Gary McIntosh describes this as removing the fog, which allows them to see the urgency for changing significantly and quickly.[31] In preparation for the Replant Exploration, those involved would be provided with a 10-year Annual Church Profile (if the church has been submitting these annually to TXB) as well as demographic and psychographic reports for their immediate community. The CSS is primarily in a facilitation role rather than a consulting role, allowing the strategist to take notes on the congregation's self-awareness and ability to navigate its situation. The SWOT analysis concludes with connecting strengths to overcome threats and capitalize on ministry opportunities in the community. The SWOT analysis provides the congregation with the opportunity to reframe their perspective on what is needed to be done to accomplish their mission as a church.[32]

The information produced by the SWOT analysis will need to be recorded by individuals in the church, as it will help them build a church profile and community profile. It may reveal areas for further exploration. Afterward, the retreat transitions to a brainstorming session of possible opportunities to pursue. These ministry ideas lead to an inter-relational diagram that helps the congregation determine the most disruptive innovation that will provide high impact. Disruptive innovation is the concept that a

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[30] Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*, 94–95.

[31] Gary L. McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 47–51.

[32] Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains*, 96.

smaller organization with fewer resources can meet a need in a target group that other organizations overlook, impacting those with the need and the larger community beyond.[33] This concept applies well to replanting churches, though churches are not looking for profitability, but to see people saved and developed into mature followers of Jesus who can replicate themselves. The results from this diagram lay the foundation for creating the strategic bridge. The process concludes with a next steps action plan to be developed for these leaders to navigate and decide whether to move forward in the TXB church replanting process.

Replanting Pastor

The scope of the replanting process focuses on the local congregation and the replanting pastor. The replanting pastor assessment is considered alongside the TXB church planter's assessment. There are distinctive building blocks that overlap between a church planter and a replanting pastor, but a few are unique for a replanting pastor. TXB utilizes the building blocks developed by NAMB's Replant Team.[34] There are three outcomes for the TXB replanter assessment: (1) a "Pursue" is an encouragement to pursue church replanting with recommendations; (2) a "Pause" is an outcome asking a candidate to pause before church replanting and meet specified conditions; (3) a "Pivot" advises pivoting away from replanting a church toward other ministry opportunities.

The TXB assessment requires each replanting candidate to present a launch sermon, share their call to ministry, and provide their philosophy of ministry, plan for replanting, and discipleship strategy. The spouses must share five adjectives describing each other. After the presentations, there is a time for question and answer so that

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[33] Clayton M. Christensen, Michael E. Raynor, and Rory McDonald, "What Is Disruptive Innovation?," *Harvard Business Review*, December 1, 2015, https://hbr.org/2015/12/what-is-disruptive-innovation.

[34] Jimbo Stewart, "13 Essential Characteristics of Effective Replanters," North American Mission Board, March 16, 2022, https://www.namb.net/church-replanting/resource/13-essential-characteristics-of-effective-replanters/.

assessment center staff can gain better clarity and have the information needed to evaluate the building blocks for each candidate. There are group projects in which each candidate and spouse must participate. There is also a confidential counseling interview for the candidate and spouse to evaluate their emotional, mental, and marital health. Finally, having observed the candidate and spouse throughout the multi-day assessment, an assessor interview allows the assessment staff to gain clarity and follow up with each candidate and spouse to verify that the building blocks are evident in their behavior. After candidates and spouses are sent home, the observations made through each part of the assessment are shared among the staff. The assessment staff of fourteen to twenty people must reach a consensus concerning the outcome for each candidate and spouse. Though arduous, the assessment staff's size and the length of the process can better prevent a strong personality with biases outside the scope of the building blocks from influencing an outcome; this is more challenging to prevent with a smaller assessment staff of two to four people and a shorter time frame.

The TXB church starting strategist's informal assessment is ongoing as the candidate and church move through the pre-support phase. The TXB CSS observes the congregation and pastor and considers the commitment to move forward in a new direction and the capability to accomplish the replanting strategy. The funding criteria evaluated before bringing a congregation before the MFC include: (1) the core group's size and leadership potential, (2) the budget for the replanting strategy, (3) the demographic and psychographic profile of the church's immediate community, (4), the strategy for outreach and evangelism, (5) the supporting partners involved, and (6) the sustainability of the congregation's long-term goal.

These criteria are combined with the congregation and pastor assessment to determine if a prospective church is likely to replant successfully. These criteria aim to produce a self-sustaining, self-replicating, and self-governed church. These three assessments are uniformly used but are transferable across various contexts and cultures.

The Transferability of the Process

In an article on leadership in the twenty-first century, Dale Moore states, "The strategic environment of the 21st century has been characterized as volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (V.U.C.A) as new technologies, developments, disruptions, change and transformation continue to accelerate. These trends profoundly impact the ability of any organization to remain relevant and competitive."[35] An environment characterized by a high degree of change and unpredictability can make it difficult for organizations to plan and make decisions. Explosive population growth in Texas has led to an increasingly diverse population, both culturally and spiritually, that needs to hear the gospel. A globally-networked society undergoing constant cultural and political upheaval generates an ever-changing context for ministry.[36] In some ways, TXB is well-positioned to reach the state's growing population through replanting.

Currently, TXB has a diverse group of churches within its convention. This incredible diversity better situates TXB to minister to more diverse demographics. This contextual adaptability will be necessary for the future of gospel ministry within the state. Houston is now considered an international city, and Dallas-Fort Worth is quickly becoming one.[37] TXB's cultural diversity can be seen in its cooperating churches. There are over 1,000 African American churches, over 1,300 Hispanic churches, and over 300 international churches out of the 5,300 churches in the TXB state convention. Replanting existing TXB churches necessitates a transferable process that can serve the many cultures and contexts across the Lone Star State.

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[35] Dale L. Moore, "Leadership in the 21st Century Environment—A Proposed Framework," *CHIPS*, April/June 2015, https://www.doncio.navy.mil/CHIPS/ArticleDetails.aspx?ID=6397.

[36] Mark Sayers, *A Non-Anxious Presence: How a Changing and Complex World Will Create a Remnant of Renewed Christian Leaders* (Chicago: Moody, 2022), 68–78.

[37] "What Makes Houston the Most International City in the World," *International Focus Magazine*, March 25, 2021, https://ifmagazine.net/what-makes-houston-the-most-international-city-in-the-world/.

Considerations and Characteristics

The local church finds its mission in Christ, the Missio Christi. The Missio Christi is to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).[38] As Christ's body, the church carries out Christ's commission to declare his person and work to the nations (Matt 28:18–20). The local church's purpose is to make mature followers of Jesus from all nations. In taking the message of Christ to a particular community or culture, the messenger must make sure that his audience decodes the encoded message. The messenger must be able to contextualize the content of the message without compromising the message itself so that the truth is objectively communicated in a manner comprehended by the listener.[39] Jesus condescended to humanity through his incarnation so that people might know him and be redeemed. Jesus contextualized Himself. Likewise, the church must enter the surrounding community's context for gospel ministry. So, each church in a particular community will have a different manner of contextualizing its ministry based on its local context. The TXB replanting process must be able to serve these contextualized ministries and help a replanting church better contextualize its ministry models and methods.

Outcome Based

Like the church planting process at TXB, the replanting process is designed to be outcome-based. Jennifer Robison, senior editor at Gallup, provides an excellent definition of an outcome-based approach:

> Time and talent are precious resources. Leaders who adopt an outcome-based approach ensure that neither of these is wasted. This approach focuses people and teams on a concrete result, not the process required to achieve it. Leaders define outcomes and, along with managers, set parameters and guidelines. Employees,

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[38] Masanori Kurasawa, "An Evangelical Understanding of *missio Dei* in Contemporary Japan" (paper presented at the ATA/K&J Theological Consultation, Tokyo, Japan, October 11–12, 2002).

[39] Terry Coy, *Facing the Change: Challenges and Opportunities for an American Missiology* (Mustang, OK: Tate, 2014), 305–9.

then, have a high degree of autonomy to use their own unique talents to reach goals their own way.[40]

Clear outcomes and guidelines are helpful when preparing a church to replant in each context. The CSS in the field is not required to work a specific plan or system for every church they meet with, but they are equipped with the tools and the freedom to take various approaches as the context demands. This outcome-based strategy allows each CSS to examine a specific situation and utilize various tools or tactics depending on the outcomes or needs.

The outcomes needed for the TXB replanting process are uniform to meet the funding criteria for the support phase and the eligibility criteria defining a replant. Every church must meet the eligibility criteria for the TXB replanting process to be considered a replanting church. A church must agree to three of five possible changes: a change in location, a name change, a change in leadership, a change in the target group, and a change in ministry strategy and vision. These outcomes serve the TXB replanting process to help a church become self-sustaining, self-replicating, and self-governing.

Goals

The goal of a church to become self-sustaining means they can fulfill the mission of a local church with their resources and people. This goal is qualified by the next goal: the church will be self-replicating. TXB defines self-replicating as a church investing in other churches that will be planted and replanted locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Healthy churches are churches that multiply themselves.[41] The aim is that these churches would be positioned to invest directly in other churches and continue to support the work of TXB through cooperative giving. The final goal is

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[40] Jennifer Robison, "Focus on Outcomes to Maximize Your Time and Talent Resources," Gallup, June 6, 2018, https://www.gallup.com/workplace/237371/focus-outcomes-maximize-time-talent-resources.aspx.

[41] Jamus Edwards, "What Healthy Church Multiplication Looks Like," Radical, November 27, 2018, https://radical.net/article/what-healthy-church-multiplication-looks-like/.

that the church will be self-governing. TXB operates on the premise that independent and autonomous congregations are best situated to serve their local community. The CSS evaluates the factors in support of these three goals. These factors include the core group, the demographic study of the immediate community, the ministry strategy, the partnerships, and the sponsoring church.

Factors

The replanting church's core group is one factor that a CSS evaluates as he assesses the congregation and pastor and the development of the plan for replanting. The core group can be the existing congregation, but new church members are usually included in this group. Since TXB is working with an autonomous congregation, the replanting congregation must agree on any final decisions made.[42] While often tedious to discover, the ability of a congregation to willingly move in new directions is a crucial indicator of whether the congregation has the capability, the skills necessary, and the capacity, energy, and manpower needed to be the replanting core group. If not, then a new core group must be developed, or new people must be introduced into a core group that can provide the capability and capacity to replant. The core group's size is an obvious factor to consider and will influence the energy, volunteer base, and internal financial support available. Another significant component of a core group's capability and capacity is the leadership potential within the core group. Ideally, the replanting pastor would not be the only leader in the replanting effort, but he would have a few leaders working alongside him as a team. Additionally, the capability and capacity of the core group extend to its ability to relate to its immediate community, requiring a demographic and psychographic analysis of the neighborhood or region of the replanting church.

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[42] Hallock, *Replant Roadmap*, 156–57.

The demographic and psychographic information about a community helps inform the CSS's evaluating of a core group and assists in helping the replanting pastor and core group develop strategies for ministry. The demographics describe the statistical information about area households' population numbers, income levels, education levels, languages spoken, and the ethnic makeup of the community.[43] Psychographics describe the cultural values, beliefs, and lifestyles of the population in the target community.[44] Together, these reports paint a picture of the present makeup of a community. The core group must be able to relate to and adequately represent the community or quickly integrate people from the community it is trying to reach. This data not only helps a CSS assess a replanting core group but also helps the CSS and other partners evaluate the ministry strategy and tactics of the replanting effort. Much of the evaluation begins during the Replant Exploration process.

The ministry strategy of a replanting church should be tailored to build relationships through community service, effectively share the good news of Jesus to the community through these relationships, and contain specific tactics for developing the new believers into mature followers of Jesus. The ministry strategy is expected to have a 36-month plan that will be adapted or clarified quarterly with the replanting church's partners. The tactics are (a) the specific steps taken within three months and (b) the concrete goals that can be measured that move the replanting church along its strategy. While the ministry strategy will remain constant, the tactics can be adjusted or changed more frequently. The demographics, psychographics, and capacity and capability of the replanting pastor and the core group will shape the ministry strategy. The replanting church will not continue ministry and programming as it has historically done.

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[43] *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2020), s.v. "demography."

[44] *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v. "psychographics."

Rather than the historical expenditure a replanting church might have had, the new ministry strategy helps develop the budget. From a zero-based budgeting strategy, the replanting church and partners involved would determine what is needed to replant a congregation, prioritizing necessity over organizational history or memory. Ideally, congregational resources are matched by partners to meet the needed budget. If the total financial support is insufficient to meet the budget needs, the ministry strategy must be adjusted to meet the available financial support. By policy, TXB cannot represent over 50 percent of any church plant or replant's financial support. This policy is intended to guard a planting or replanting congregation from developing a dependency mindset. Every church plant and replant's goal is to be self-sustaining within five years. According to TXB's internal 7-year study in 2018, the church planting process has facilitated the ability of 482 churches to reach self-sustaining status out of 569 churches that entered the church starting process, or 84 percent. The replanting process will continue to operate with this same policy in place and is initially seeing similar trajectories for replanting churches over the last three years, as 84 percent of replanting churches moving toward self-sustaining status.[45] The viability of a replanting church is determined by examining the likelihood of the church becoming self-sustaining once its ministry strategy, core group, and target community are factored in.

Another significant factor for funding by the CSS is the strategic partnerships involved with the prospective replanting congregation. The sponsoring churches serve as a steward on behalf of TXB to ensure that funding is appropriately managed and distributed. It is essential to TXB that the sponsoring church is supportive of and participatory in TXB convention life. The church replant often mirrors the sponsoring

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[45] This internal study was performed by independent contractor and information analyst, Clay Price, for the Baptist General Convention of Texas (Texas Baptists). Clay Price, "An Analysis of BGCT-Funded Church Starts, 2010 to 2017," July 2018.

church's relationship with TXB. This modeling means that the identity of the sponsoring church and its relationship with TXB is vital from a TXB perspective and informs TXB of the likelihood of the sponsoring church's long-term relationship with a replanting church once the funding process concludes. TXB desires to replant TXB churches that will serve other TXB churches in replanting and planting. The CSS is responsible for evaluating the strength of the sponsoring church's relationship with TXB to mitigate the chances of establishing a purely transactional relationship with the replanting church. The relationship between the sponsoring church and the replanting church may be equally or more important from the replanting church's perspective.

The sponsoring church is often the first point of contact for the replanting pastor, providing support, encouragement, and mission teams to aid the ministry strategy. The sponsoring church is ideally local or in the region and can provide contextual feedback to the strategic partners and the replanting pastor. The sponsoring church is often best situated to speak into outreach strategies that effectively connect with the community. Also, the sponsoring church can often help the replanting pastor build a local relational network to work with their municipality, school district, and other community organizations. The CSS also examines the support level the replanting church receives from its sponsoring church to determine if it has what is needed to accomplish its replanting strategy. When the sponsoring church is not in the region of the replanting church, the support of a local Baptist association can be more valuable. With these outcomes, goals, and factors in mind, the following three examples illustrate the process variation.

Application

One congregation in the TXB replanting process was in a county-seat town of over 40,000. The surrounding community had changed, and the church struggled to maintain an aging property too large for its dwindling congregation. The pastor had been

with the church for just a few years. The pastor and congregation decided that the Lord was leading them to rename and relocate to another part of the city. The consulting process was straightforward because there were effective leadership and functional decision-making processes. This church needed to know its options and understand what supporting resources were available to navigate a new path forward. The pre-support phase was relatively quick, lasting around four months. This church has since successfully relocated and established a new identity; it is growing along with its community and entering the cooperative phase of the replanting process.

Another congregation is situated in a metropolitan municipality of around 40,000 people, in a county of 2.6 million people. They began the pre-support phase with an interim pastor and no effective decision-making processes. Membership had declined by seventy over a decade, and the church needed to reach its immediate community more effectively. The congregation needed to know its options. TXB was able to advise the church in its decision-making, leadership structures, and replanting pastor search. The congregation kept its original name and location but changed leadership, target group, and ministry strategies. The pre-support process took almost eighteen months before the church met its outcomes. Three months into its relaunch using the TXB process, the church observed 25 percent growth in its regular attendance, had one baptism, and engaged over three hundred people in its community through its outreach events.

A third congregation in a rural town of around 600 was the only remaining Baptist church in town and in a period of decline. There were no viable churches left in this town. The Lutheran and Methodist churches combined had only a dozen people in attendance. Most townspeople drove thirty to forty minutes to attend churches in neighboring towns. The First Baptist Church had closed, but the facility and parsonage were available to this congregation to use in this effort. Both properties had advantages and disadvantages. Together, they provided several possibilities. The church had an interim pastor and a prospective replanting pastor. The prospective replanting pastor and

congregation went through a Replant Exploration weekend and were presented with the next steps to proceed in replanting. The effort attracted townsfolk who desired to see a thriving church in their community. As the prospective pastor committed to pursuing the replanting process, joined by a few families in the community, the congregation chose not to continue the process but to continue business as usual. Since the replanting and planting processes are connected, this effort quickly became a church plant in a closed facility, or a "reclamation." Reclamation is the effort to use closed church properties to minister to a community by planting one or more congregations in the property to ensure continued gospel ministry in the facility. Whereas a replant is the revival of an original congregation, a reclamation has no original congregation but has a previous church's facility. Since the deliverables of the replanting and planting processes are similar, this allowed for a change in approach, and the effort quickly pivoted to a church plant in a closed facility rather than a replant. This adaptability allowed the work to continue to move forward to see a gospel witness established in a community that needed it. The pre-support phase for this effort lasted around twelve months before entering the TXB support phase as a reclamation effort.

The contexts for each of these three churches were significantly different. The situation of each congregation also varied. The time needed in the pre-support phase was determined by completing the needed outcomes for replanting and allowing for self-determination by the congregation. This process allowed for a high degree of collaboration with local associations and churches alongside the replanting church. This approach to a replanting process allowed for adaption and flexibility in methods and tactics to better serve the diversity of TXB churches in the rapidly changing landscape of Texas.

Collaborative Partnerships

The effort of replanting requires long-haul support from a sponsoring church and other partnering churches.[46] A replanting effort needs financial support, coaching, mentoring, member support, and support from other churches.[47] Denominational entities and associations often do not have all of the resources necessary to assist a church needing revitalization.[48] By partnering together, local churches and denominational entities can provide more robust support throughout a replanting effort. Together, Baptists can do more than they can as isolated, individual entities and churches. This conviction has led to the development of the Cooperative Program, which supports some of the most extensive missionary endeavors in the history of Baptist life.[49]

The TXB replanting process is designed with the same conviction and embraces an evolution of cooperation and collaboration. Laboring side-by-side with local churches and associations, TXB complements the strength and weaknesses of each partner so that resources are better stewarded and a more significant gospel impact can be made in the local community. Local partners are best positioned to navigate their unique contexts and have a deeper relational network in the community than at the state convention level.

Considerations and Characteristics

There is a historical Christian doctrine that is often applied to government politics but would serve Baptists well in application to its institutions and denominational life. The Catholic doctrine of subsidiarity is the belief that social and political

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[46] Hallock, *Replant Roadmap*, 205–10.

[47] Henard, *ReClaimed Church*, 122–25.

[48] Sam Rainer, *The Church Revitalization Checklist: A Hopeful and Practical Guide for Leading Your Congregation to a Brighter Tomorrow* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2022), 39–41.

[49] Todd Starnes, "A Godly Heritage: The History of the Cooperative Program," Baptist2Baptist (blog), June 2000, http://www.baptist2baptist.net/b2barticle.asp?ID=240.

organizations, such as the state, are responsible for promoting the common good but should do so in a way that respects the autonomy and dignity of individuals and smaller communities.[50] This doctrine is based on the belief that individuals and smaller communities, such as families and churches, are the fundamental building blocks of society and that the role of the state and other larger organizations is to support and serve these smaller communities rather than to dominate or control them.[51] This idea shaped the political thought of the US founding fathers.[52] Subsidiarity profoundly influenced the development of American democracy, which shaped many religious bodies that developed in the US.[53] In the context of Baptist life, this doctrine is often connected to discussions of political thought in America. Another valuable application of this principle might be to the interrelationship between Baptist institutional organizations and local churches. The democratic process and the organization of many Baptist institutions are designed with an assumption of the underlying doctrine of subsidiarity. This foundational concept is vital to recognize for any Baptist denomination or convention so that the centralization of power, often the power of the purse, does not undermine the institution's foundation of authority resting in the local church.

Two critical aspects of subsidiarity correlate well with Baptist thought and doctrine. One key aspect of the doctrine of subsidiarity is the recognition of the inherent dignity and value of the individual.[54] This concept is rooted in the biblical concept of humanity created in the image of God (Gen 1:26). Baptists also hold to the priesthood of

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[50] *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v. "subsidiarity."

[51] R. Albert Mohler Jr., "The Briefing 09–22–14," September 22, 2014, in *The Briefing*, produced by the The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, podcast, MP3 audio, 19:09, https://albertmohler.com/2014/09/22/the-briefing-09-22-14.

[52] David A. Bosnich, "The Principle of Subsidiarity," *Acton Institute*, *Religion and Liberty* 6, no. 4 (July 2010): 9–10.

[53] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 9–12.

[54] Mohler, "The Briefing 09–22–14."

believers, affirming all Christians' equal access to God.[55] These truths affirm the dignity of every person, regardless of their social or economic status, and emphasize the importance of respecting the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Connected to this aspect is the related principle that small communities and churches have inherent value and are best situated to meet the needs of their communities.[56] This aspect complements the Baptist distinctive of the local church's autonomy. The individual and local aspects of subsidiarity also have implications for denominational entities. Larger organizations should not seek to dominate or control individual congregations but instead support and enable them to exercise their purpose to fulfill the Great Commission in their community and beyond. The TXB replanting process is designed to support and enable local congregations to make disciples of all nations, beginning with their backyard neighbors.

The doctrine of subsidiarity bolsters the Baptist value of cooperation, especially local cooperation. Partnerships with local Baptist associations, regional church networks, and local churches best position DEs to serve their local churches in a manner consistent with Baptist theology and practice. Once this concept is understood, the importance of a local sponsoring church and Baptist association or network of churches is apparent. TXB highly emphasizes having a local sponsoring church and partnering with the local Baptist association for replanting. The replanting process is intended to be directed by the local church. The process requires that a partnering TXB church, in good standing, sponsors a replanting effort. The partnering church has the responsibility to direct all funding coming from TXB. They also become the final word on what methodologies and theological differences will be supported beyond the *Baptist Faith and Message* as they come alongside a replanting church.

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[55] Robert G. Torbet, *History of the Baptists*, 3rd ed. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1973), 517–18.

[56] Mohler, "The Briefing 09–22–14."

Collaboration between these local partners better positions the TXB replanting process to navigate the complexities and challenges of a church's various contexts. This navigation is accomplished through the decentralized nature of the decision-making through collaboration and the application of subsidiarity.[57] One of the main advantages of decentralized decision-making is that it is quick and flexible, making it easier for organizations to adapt to new developments and changing circumstances.[58] Additionally, it allows all partners to contribute to the replanting strategy, unlike centralized decision-making, which often relies on a single individual or small group of individuals to make crucial decisions and can create a power imbalance leading to excessive use of influence.[59] Baptist institutions are often well-designed to employ this style of organizational operation because many Baptist institutions operate from a philosophy of autonomy, voluntary association, and cooperation.[60]

Collaboration should be one of Baptists' greatest and easiest tasks unless an entity or institution desires to maintain self-interest above the shared mission of the Great Commission.[61] The greater purpose is kingdom expansion over brand expansion. When working with a replanting church, all partners partner with a local expression of the body of Christ to see this congregation thrive again. The TXB replanting process can collaborate with local partners, valuing their unique contributions and insights as co-

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[57] Herman Vantrappen and Frederic Wirtz, "When to Decentralize Decision Making, and When Not To," *Harvard Business Review*, December 26, 2017, https://hbr.org/2017/12/when-to-decentralize-decision-making-and-when-not-to.

[58] Nick van der Meulen, "Decision Rights Guardrails to Empower Teams and Drive Company Performance," MIT Center for Information Systems Research Briefing, vol. 20, no. 8, August 20, 2020, https://cisr.mit.edu/publication/2020_0801_DecisionRights_Meulen.

[59] Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (London: Portfolio, 2006), 15–26.

[60] Mark Terry, "Baptist Faith and Message, Article 14: Cooperation," *Baptist Press*, September 4, 2002, https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/baptist-faith-and-message-article-14-cooperation/.

[61] Jeff Christopherson, *Kingdom Matrix: Designing a Church for the Kingdom of God* (Boise, ID: Russell Media, 2012), 214.

laborers for the gospel. The financial weight of a particular partner does not equate to the weight of its voice. The local churches involved are prioritized because local churches replant local churches.[62] The local association or network and the state convention serve these churches in their work, not the other way around. This manner of collaboration can often be messy and seemingly inefficient, but it best positions DEs in the uncertain and volatile current context to adapt, stay flexible, and more effectively advance a lasting gospel impact.

Conclusion

The TXB replanting process is designed to be comprehensive so that it engages both the replanting pastor and the congregation, ensuring that the local church has the support it needs during the time it takes to replant. This process is transferable, so TXB can serve its wide array of church contexts and cultures. Finally, the process is collaborative, deepening the relationship of TXB with local churches and associations while strengthening the support network for the replanting church. The TXB replanting process utilized across the state has already proved promising, but evaluating the replanting process has helped identify areas of improvement enabled TXB to better serve struggling churches across Texas.

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[62] Hallock, *Replant Roadmap*, 26–46.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

This project endeavored to evaluate a comprehensive, transferable, and collaborative process for replanting TXB churches. The research materials specific to convention processes and strategies for helping churches replant are scarce. There is no formal consensus in Southern Baptist life between the denominational entities, academia, and practitioners on what may be needed to best assist churches in replanting. TXB is already implementing a replanting process but needed a consensus on the critical areas for assisting replanting churches and an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of its replanting approach. This project utilized the Delphi method to create a rubric for evaluating the TXB replanting process. Guided by the four goals of this project, this chapter documents how the data was gathered, offers a summary of its findings, and concludes with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the project methodology. Four project goals guided the project.

1. The first goal was to utilize a qualitative Delphi study to elicit feedback from content experts and determine the criteria for a rubric (the Church Replanting Process Evaluation, or CRPE) evaluating the TXB church replanting process.

2. The second goal was to have a panel of content experts evaluate the TXB church replanting process using the CRPE developed from the Delphi study.

3. The third goal was to determine what adjustments needed to be made to the TXB church starting process based on an analysis of the CRPE results.

4. The fourth goal was to refine the TXB church replanting process based on any weakness potentially identified by the analysis of the CRPE.

Selection of Qualified Context Experts

Fifteen content experts were selected from three different contexts of Baptist life: academic, denominational, and local church contexts. Content experts are

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individuals with relevant academic and research knowledge of church revitalization and practical experience in revitalization.[1] A Delphi study requires the selection of highly trained and competent subjects within a specialized field of knowledge.[2] The content experts in the academic and denominational context also had practical experience in church revitalization. Each context was represented in the Delphi study. Fifteen experts were invited to participate in the project. Eleven panelists participated in rounds 1 and 2 of the Delphi study, and ten participated in round 3 of the Delphi study. The content experts contributed anonymously to minimize personality influences in reaching a final consensus.[3]

Implementing the Delphi Study

The Delphi surveys were administered online in three rounds. Each round had two stages: a survey stage and a data analysis stage. The surveys were created using a web-based survey system, Google Forms. Each content expert received an email with instructions for accessing the survey via a hyperlink, affirming consent to participate in the research, and completing the survey. Experts were given one week to complete the survey. In round 1, eleven content experts consented to participate, and anonymity was maintained throughout both stages. Before dissemination, a pilot study addressed formatting issues and improved survey comprehension.[4] The pilot study was beneficial in gaining specificity for better communicating the intention and meaning of transferability for a replanting process. After the pilot was complete, a free-form round 1 survey was finalized.

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[1] Chia-Chien Hsu and Brian A. Sandford, "The Delphi Technique: Making Sense of Consensus," *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation* 12, no. 1 (2007): 3.

[2] Tenley Sablatzky, "The Delphi Method," *Hypothesis: Research Journal for Health Information Professionals* 34, no. 1 (August 2022): 1–6.

[3] Sablatzky, "The Delphi Method," 3.

[4] Gregory J. Skulmoski, Francis Hartman, and Jennifer Krahn, "The Delphi Method for Graduate Research," *Journal of Information Technology* 6, no. 1 (January 2007): 4.

Delphi Study Round 1, Stage 1

The survey in round 1 consisted of two parts.[5] The first part included two questions concerning the background of each content expert. Each expert was asked to provide their years of experience in revitalization and replanting. The eleven experts who responded to the question had 219 years of combined experience, with an average of 19.9 years of experience with a standard deviation of 6.9 years of experience. Table 1 displays how the experts quantified their experience in number of years.

Table 1. Experts' years of experience in replanting and revitalization

Panelist	Written Response with Number of Years
Panelist 1	20
Panelist 2	20
Panelist 3	23
Panelist 4	20
Panelist 5	5
Panelist 6	19
Panelist 7	26
Panelist 8	12
Panelist 9	>20
Panelist 10	32
Panelist 11	22

The second question asked the content experts to identify qualifying parameters required for participation on the expert panel. Table 2 displays how each

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[5] See appendix 1 and tables 1 and 2.

participant identified their qualification to participate in the expert panel. All the experts

identified four or more of the desired qualifiers.

Table 2. Expert panel qualifications

Experts' Experience in Replanting/Revitalization		
Specific Qualifications for Expert Panel Inclusion	**Participants Identifying with Qualification**	**Percentage of Experts Identifying with Qualification (%)**
An expert in church revitalization and replanting	5	45.5
Have successfully replanted or revitalized a church	10	90.0
Written on church replanting and revitalization	6	54.5
Been a denominational leader with experience in assisting churches in replanting and revitalization	9	81.8
Have taught church replanting and revitalization in a university or seminary	5	45.5
Have experience working with a denominational church replanting or revitalization process at a local, state, or nation level	11	100.0
Have specialized training or education in the area of church revitalization	6	54.5
Successfully assisted a church replant or revitalization as a supporting partner	7	63.6
Have trained or equipped replanting and revitalizing pastors	10	90.0

The second part of the survey featured the eight open-ended questions that

formed the basis of the surveys administered in rounds 2 and 3. The eight questions were

developed from themes from current literature regarding revitalization and replanting and

from the underlying objectives of the TXB replanting process currently being piloted.

Question 1 focused on what Baptist theological commitments, if any, should inform the

replanting process of a Baptist denominational entity. Questions 2 through 5 were

focused on traits that made a replanting process comprehensive. Question 2 focused on

identifying the challenges of replanting a church that a replanting process should address. Question 3 was designed to specify the critical ministries, church systems, and ministry strategies that a replanting process should help a church replant develop. Questions 4 and 5 were intended to identify assistance that a replanting pastor needed from a replanting process that was distinct from what a replanting congregation might need. Questions 6 and 7 focused on the characteristics needed for a process to be transferable across various contexts and cultures while collaborating with local churches, associations, and church networks. Question 8 allowed the content expert to give additional input. Content experts were not limited in the number of characteristics they could offer because the purpose of this survey was to develop a comprehensive list of all possible criteria to assess a replanting process.

Delphi Study Round 1, Stage 2

Of the fifteen participants who agreed to participate in the project, eleven experts answered the qualification questions and responded to the open-ended survey questions. After consolidating duplicate answers, I determined that the experts gave 177 unique characteristics of a replanting process. These characteristics were divided into five categories. Question 1 focused on the Baptist theological distinctives that should inform a Baptist convention's replanting process, producing fifteen theological distinctives. Questions 2 through 5 were designed to identify characteristics of a comprehensive replanting process by addressing the most common challenges (question 2), helping the replanting church develop critical ministries, church systems, and strategies (question 3), and providing necessary support to the replanting pastor (question 4) and congregation (question 5). These questions produced 101 characteristics for a comprehensive replanting process. Question 6 identified 28 characteristics for a replanting process to be transferable across various contexts and cultures. Question 7 produced 24 characteristics needed for a convention's replanting process to collaborate well with local churches,

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associations, and networks. Question 8 requested additional input on any other characteristics that should be a part of a convention's replanting process.

Delphi Study Round 2, Stage 1

Once I gathered and analyzed the round 1 survey responses from the content experts, I developed a survey based on the 177 characteristics a replanting process should possess.[6] The experts were asked to evaluate each characteristic based on the importance of the characteristic to the church replanting process and the likelihood of their using the characteristic in a replanting process. Each characteristic was measured on a five-point Likert scale, with "1" representing "not very important," "2" representing "not important," "3" representing "neutral," "4" representing "important," and "5" representing "very important." Again, each content expert received an email with instructions to participate, a hyperlink to the survey, and a request to consent to participate in the research. Each expert consented to the survey, and anonymity was maintained throughout round 2. One week was given for completion of the survey.

Delphi Study Round 2, Stage 2

Developing the Church Replanting Process Evaluation required setting a minimum level of "consensus" between the experts. Only statements with 90 percent agreement would be used to develop the CRPE, so the consensus level for the round 2 survey was set at a mean of 4.5 out of 5 on the Likert scale. Of the 177 characteristics surveyed in the round 2 survey, 114 received an average rating of 4.5 or higher. These characteristics were then analyzed to combine similar and related concepts to produce 18 statements on the necessary characteristics for a convention's replanting process. These 18 statements formed the basis of the round 3 survey.[7]

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[6] See appendix 5.

[7] See appendix 6.

Delphi Study Round 3, Stage 1

Round 3 provided the expert panel with a survey containing eighteen statements on the necessary characteristics for a convention's replanting process. One week was given for completion of the survey. Ten of the eleven original panelists completed this round. One panelist communicated an inability to complete this round because of family obligations. The experts were asked to "Agree" or "Disagree," and if they disagreed, they were asked to explain further. Only statements with 90 percent agreement were used to develop the CRPE.

Delphi Study Round 3, Stage 2

The following table lists each value statement and its corresponding level of content expert agreement or disagreement. Seventeen of the eighteen statements had 90 percent or more agreement from the expert panel. These seventeen statements were used to create the Church Replanting Process Evaluation.[8]

Table 3. Consensus responses on the replanting process statements

	Expert responses to the statements		
#	Statements	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
1	The Baptist distinctives in a Baptist Statement of Faith should inform a Baptist state convention's church replanting process.	100	—
2	A replant process should assist a church in addressing its reputation in its community.	100	—
3	A replant process should help a replanting church develop a prayer ministry and strategy that supports the replant effort, as well as resources for spiritual preparation geared toward changed hearts and minds.	100	—
4	A replant process should be transparent with the congregation and brief them on the likely changes they may need to implement and the reasoning behind the need to change.	100	—
5	A state convention's replant process should address the congregation's and leadership's willingness to change and embrace a new identity with a new vision, new ministry strategies, and a new decision-making process with follow-through on implementing these changes.	90	10

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[8] See appendix 8.

#	Expert responses to the statements		
	Statements	**Agree (%)**	**Disagree (%)**
6	A replant process should help a replanting church develop evangelism and discipleship ministries contextualized to their immediate community while maintaining biblical fidelity.	100	—
7	A replant process should help a replanting church develop an assimilation strategy.	90	10
8	A replant process should provide a replanting pastor with coaching, consulting, mentoring, pastoral care for the replanter and family, prayer support, and encouragement.	100	—
9	A cohort for replanting pastors should be provided for in a replant process.	70	30
10	The replanting process should train the replanting pastor and the local congregation in evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, strategic thinking and planning, community exegesis, and cross-cultural ministry awareness.	100	—
11	The replanting congregation and pastor need an assessment to inform how they will be supported in replanting if it is evident that they are good candidates for the replanting process.	100	—
12	The replanting congregation and pastor need local strategic partners (churches and associations) that can support and guide a church throughout the entire replanting effort with regular visits.	100	—
13	The framework of the replanting process needs to be adaptive enough for various contexts (urban, rural, suburban, etc.) and multiple cultures while maintaining consistency in the process and support across these varying churches.	100	—
14	A replanting process should help a replanting church understand its immediate cultural context and help it better relate, reach, and reflect its community.	100	—
15	A convention's replanting process should be collaborative in how it relates to its local associations and churches by being committed to cooperation, providing clear, concise, and timely communication, education on the process, and being flexible when working with these partners to foster trust.	100	—
16	A convention's replanting process should hold these collaborative values: integrity in the process, availability to the pastor, a commitment to walk with a church to the completion of the process, and prioritizing kingdom building over building its brand.	100	—
17	A convention's replanting process should be local partner-oriented (local churches and associations) in its approach, looking for ways to complement the strengths and weaknesses of the local partners while they speak into the process.	90	10
18	A replanting process should have a system for identifying, recruiting, and equipping replanting pastors.	100	—

The conclusion of the Delphi study and the development of the CRPE based on the results of the Delphi study completed the first goal of the project, as ten content experts participated in all three rounds of the Delphi Study and produced a set of seventeen criteria for a rubric to evaluate the TXB church replanting process.

Expert Panel Response to the Church Replanting Process Evaluation

I emailed a link to the CRPE to the expert panel with a document that provided an overview of the piloted replant process and instructions for completing the evaluation.[9] The CRPE was created using Google Forms. I utilized a four-point Likert scale to measure the panel's response to each statement. Statement 1 was measured by the following rubric: "1" was "Uninformed," "2" was "Somewhat Uninformed," "3" was "Somewhat Informed," and "4" was "Informed." Statements 2 to 17 stated various characteristics that should be present in a replanting process. These statements were measured on a scale ranging from "Does not appear to address" to "Appears to address well." Seven members of the expert panel completed the CRPE during the two weeks provided for this stage. Upon closing the CRPE response stage, I emailed a summary of the evaluations to the expert panel and thanked them for their time and participation.

Table 4. Expert panel response to the CRPE

Expert panel response to the Church Replanting Process Evaluation (CRPE)							
#	Question	Level Informed (%)				MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4		
1	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to be informed by a Baptist Faith and Message?	—	—	28.6	71.4	3.75	0.518
2	To what degree does the TXB replanting process help a church address its reputation in the community?	—	14.3	14.3	71.4	3.50	0.744

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[9] See appendixes 7, 8, and 12.

	Expert panel response to the Church Replanting Process Evaluation (CRPE)						
#	**Question**	**Level Informed (%)**				**MEAN**	**STD**
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**		
3	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to help a replanting church develop a prayer ministry and strategy that supports the replant effort, as well as providing resources for spiritual preparation geared toward changed hearts and minds.	14.3	14.3	14.3	57.1	2.75	1.126
4	To what degree is the TXB replanting process appearing to be transparent with the congregation and briefing them on the likely changes they may need to implement and the reasoning behind the need to change.	—	14.3	—	85.7	3.50	0.707
5	To what degree does the TXB replanting process address the congregation's and leadership's willingness to change and embrace a new identity with a new vision, new ministry strategies, and a new decision-making process with follow-through on implementing these changes.	—	14.3	—	85.7	3.50	0.744
6	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to help a replanting church develop evangelism and discipleship ministries contextualized to their immediate community while maintaining biblical fidelity.	14.3	—	14.3	71.4	3.25	1.069
7	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to help a replanting church develop an assimilation strategy.	14.3	14.3	14.3	57.1	3.00	1.165
8	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to provide a replanting pastor with coaching, consulting, mentoring, pastoral care for the replanter and family, prayer support, and encouragement.	—	14.3	—	85.7	3.50	0.707
9	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to train the replanting pastor and the local congregation in evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, strategic thinking and planning, community exegesis, and cross-cultural ministry awareness.	14.3	—	14.3	71.4	3.25	1.069

	Expert panel response to the Church Replanting Process Evaluation (CRPE)						
#	Question	Level Informed (%)				MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4		
10	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to provide an assessment for the replanting congregation and pastor to inform how they will be supported in replanting if it is evident that they are good candidates for the replanting process.	—	14.3	14.3	71.4	3.50	0.744
11	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to be designed so that the replanting congregation and pastor have local strategic partners (churches and associations) that can support and guide a church throughout the entire replanting effort with regular visits.	—	—	14.3	85.7	3.75	0.354
12	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to have framework adaptive enough for various contexts (urban, rural, suburban, etc.) and multiple cultures while maintaining consistency in the process and support across these varying churches.	—	14.3	28.6	57.1	3.25	0.756
13	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to help a replanting church understand its immediate cultural context and help it better relate, reach, and reflect its community.	—	14.3	14.3	71.4	3.50	0.744
14	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to be collaborative in how it relates to its local associations and churches by being committed to cooperation, providing clear, concise, and timely communication, education on the process, and being flexible when working with these partners to foster trust.	—	14.3	—	85.7	3.50	0.707
15	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to hold these collaborative values: integrity in the process, availability to the pastor, a commitment to walk with a church to the completion of the process, and prioritizing kingdom building over building its brand.	14.3	—	—	85.7	3.25	1.061

Expert panel response to the Church Replanting Process Evaluation (CRPE)							
#	Question	Level Informed (%)				MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4		
16	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to be local partner-oriented (local churches and associations) in its approach, looking for ways to complement the strengths and weaknesses of the local partners while they speak into the process.	—	14.3	—	85.7	3.50	0.707
17	To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to have a system for identifying, recruiting, and equipping replanting pastors.	14.3	14.3	14.3	57.1	3.00	1.165

The areas of weaknesses identified were as follows: statement 3, concerning the development of prayer support and spiritual preparation; statement 7, concerning the development of an assimilation strategy; and statement 17, concerning the recruitment and equipping of replanting pastors.

Recommendations Based on Project Results

The Delphi study and the evaluation of the TXB replanting process with the CRPE have produced insights that will help improve this process and the churches it serves. The Delphi study and evaluation completed the three research goals, leaving the final research goal to develop recommendations for refining the piloted replanting process. The following three recommendations will be submitted to the director responsible for TXB church planting and replanting: improving the prayer support and spiritual preparation of a church, developing assimilation processes, and recruiting and equipping replanting pastors. These three areas fell below the 76 percent threshold in the evaluation by the expert panel. The following sections include recommendations that address these areas of weakness.

Improving Prayer Support and
Spiritual Preparation

The first recommendation is that Texas Baptists consider local partners, including local churches and associations, as sources of equipment and exhortation. When exploring a replanting possibility, the state convention should identify critical areas of need in the replanting effort that can be supported by local churches or the local association. TXB does not have to provide all aspects for replanting but can invite local partners to actively participate in a replanting effort, especially in the areas of prayer support and spiritual preparation.

Prayer support can begin with local partners having a call to prayer and establishing designated times to pray specifically for the effort. These prayer partners can contend on their knees for the Lord to breathe new life into a struggling church. These partners may be more accessible to the replanting pastor and congregation for immediate prayer requests or concerns than the state convention. Prayer is a practice for which every church is equipped, whether they realize it or not. A local church or association can champion the development of prayer support around the church as the replanting congregation builds prayer support within. Spiritual preparation is another area in which local partners can assist a replanting pastor and congregation. Local partners tend to be more accessible and able to address the immediate needs of the congregation than the state convention.

Pressing into the local partnerships does not excuse the state convention from providing some resources for building prayer support and spiritual preparation. Resources can be provided in various ways that efficiently use time of money. Local partners and the state convention should first consider existing tools to meet the needs of a replanting pastor or congregation. For example, many pastors have an affinity for books. Providing books on prayer and spiritual renewal with practical applications would be a simple way to support a pastor. Local partners and the convention can also recommend partnerships

with existing organizations or ministries that strongly emphasize prayer and spiritual renewal.

TXB will also need to create its own tools, a process that, over time, may save money and equipment costs. For example, TXB has a publishing arm with GC2 Press. TXB could identify contributors from across the state and country to write resources specific to church replanting customized for the TXB replanting process. Contributors with experience and excellent communication skills can be leveraged to serve struggling churches. These publications are another form of collaboration with local churches and associations that could have a broader impact across space and time.

The last recommendation for strengthening the replanting process' spiritual support is to provide specialized training for replanting pastors. The process should focus on the understanding that a replanting pastor should lead the church by example and equip the congregation to pray and pursue spiritual renewal. Materials, workshops, and cohorts can be used as delivery methods for this content. Delivering these resources to the congregation should be part of the local church and association partnerships, as this further strengthens the community support for a replanting pastor and church.

Developing Assimilation Processes

The primary ministry emphasis of the TXB replanting process is evangelism and discipleship, and rightfully so. These are the essence of the Great Commission. Assimilation is a system that aids in bridging the gap often between evangelism and discipleship, especially for those who are already Christians and looking for a church home. The assimilation process begins with a person's first visit to a church and ends when that person becomes connected to and engaged with people and ministries that fulfill the church's mission.[10] As such, assimilation is a handmaiden of the Great

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[10] Dave Bair and Steve Caton, "The Assimilation Engine: Four Processes That Drive How People Connect with Your Church," Church Community Builder, last modified December 2018, 3, https://tcsba.com/hp_wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ebook-assimilationengine.pdf.

Commission.[11] The current pilot of the replanting process needs to provide more information or emphasis on assimilation.

Similar to developing prayer support and preparing spiritually, the recommendations for improving the assimilation process begin with the local partners. Finding local churches that effectively assimilate visitors and new members can be an equipping resource for replanting churches. Local associations may also provide counsel in this area. As these partners have already contextualized and built relationships in the community, they are well-positioned to help a replanting pastor and congregation develop or improve their assimilation processes. Beginning with local partners also fosters collaboration and cooperation in the replanting process and encourages the effort's success.

Next, TXB should identify consultants already proficient in church assimilation and find ways to partner with those individuals to share content or provide consulting to the replanting pastor and church.[12] TXB already has a church revitalization process, PAVE, that provides training and coaching in assimilation.[13] Partnering with PAVE in this area would be beneficial and save time and resources.

Finally, Texas Baptists should explore how to better equip replanting pastors in assimilation by considering the development of quarterly or semi-annually cohorts to train or at least expose pastors to this and other concepts. Even if pastors do not have an immediate need for assimilation processes, it would be helpful for them to know where to go and how to access this knowledge when they do realize a need.

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[11] Rick Warren, "How to Assimilate People into Church Membership," Pastors.com (blog), March 21, 2016, https://pastors.com/assimilate-people-church-membership/.

[12] Kevin M. Stone, "Assimilation Process Implementation: The Details of Developing and Implementing an Assimilation Process," Executive Pastor Online (blog), May 25, 2023, https://www.executivepastoronline.com/assimilation-process-implementation/.

[13] PAVE is not an acronym. The name of this revitalization process is produced in all capitals by the Texas Baptists' Center for Church Health for branding purposes.

Recruiting and Equipping
Replanting Pastors

The most significant challenge for state-wide efforts to revitalize and replant Texas Baptists churches is the insufficient number of available pastors. More men are needed for ministry. The average age of the pastors in ministry has increased to 57 years old.[14] The percentage of pastors in their 20s and 30s has decreased from 43 percent to 35 percent over the last thirty years.[15] Fewer students are pursuing degrees in ministry.[16] Pastors trained, willing, and able to revitalize and replant churches are desperately needed. Texas Baptists has several options that can be pursued in the short-term and long-term.

Short-Term Recommendations

In the short term, TXB should work with local associations, church networks, and schools of higher education to raise awareness of the needs and opportunities for revitalizing and replanting pastors across Texas. These relationships can be leveraged to cast a vision for calling out, equipping, and sending out ministers. These institutions are positioned to receive men called to ministry. At the same time, TXB must encourage and assist local churches in extending the call to ministry to their members. Calling men to the pastorate must primarily occur in the local church, as it is where the Great Commission is immediately and ultimately fulfilled. The TXB Church Starting and Restarting department and the PAVE department would do well to share efforts toward this end.

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[14] Aaron Earls, "Average U.S. Pastor and Churchgoer Grow Older," LifeWay Research, November 1, 2021, https://research.lifeway.com/2021/11/01/americas-pastors-and-churchgoers-are-getting-older/.

[15] Barna Group, "The Aging of America's Pastors," last modified March 1, 2017, https://www.barna.com/research/aging-americas-pastors/.

[16] Kathryn Post, "Theological Schools Adapt to Meet Changing Demands," *Baptist Press*, December 7, 2022, https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/theological-schools-adapt-to-meet-changing-demands/.

PAVE already has regional cohort training for a phased church revitalization process and coaching throughout the year. The replanting process may need to consider partnering with or mirroring this approach and modifying the content for replanting. This training style would better serve replanting pastors because it would provide them with the content, relationships, and soul care needed in replanting a church. This regional training for replanting could be promoted within workshops and presentations already provided by TXB on the trends of local churches and the trajectory of the growth in Texas.

Another recommendation would be to create a database to record and detail individuals who are assessed, trained, and willing church replanters. The TXB currently hosts a resume service; collaborating with this existing service may be a good starting point. This collaboration could allow for replanting pastors and replanting churches to connect. It would be helpful for TXB to have the ability to periodically generate from the database lists of replanting churches and pastors. TXB could potentially offer a certification for ministers equipped for replanting, and this could be attached to or recorded in this database.

The process of recruiting and training replanting pastors has primarily been the responsibility of a handful of individuals within TXB life. This effort must be expanded beyond these individuals to meet the greater need across Texas. Organizational and institutional strength and willpower must also be dedicated to promoting, recruiting, and equipping replanting pastors. This significant commitment will be necessary for the short-term but even more so for the future of Baptist life in Texas.

Long-Term Recommendations

A long-term plan that can scale to meet the needs of future Texas Baptists is also needed. For example, TXB is well-positioned to construct a pastoral development pipeline. Organizationally, TXB works with and influences the children's, student, and

collegiate ministries of local churches. Rather than consider children and students as waiting to serve the church until a future time, TXB can encourage churches to put missions and ministry before young people and equip them to become involved in their youth. This has the potential to significantly impact generations of believers and the future of the church, as these young people should begin to consider how they can be a part of the church's ministry. Family mission trips, student mission trips, and children's and student camps are all activities that can connect these young generations to a vision of their part in obeying the Great Commission. Texas Baptists can help local churches equip their kids in the present and prepare them for a future of reaching Texas for Christ. This impact would require greater collaboration under a shared vision across the Texas Baptists organization, partnering institutions, and local churches.

TXB currently supports 110 Baptist Student Ministries (BSM) across Texas. BSM is one of the most robustly supported ministries within Texas and has an incredible impact on the lives of young people. The BSM ministry has historically developed ministry leaders and has excellent potential to continue in this vein. BSM should intentionally emphasize TXB's revitalization and replanting efforts so that these opportunities are on the radar of young men considering a call to ministry. In addition to BSM, Texas Baptists has eight partnering university systems that could work together to bolster ministry student enrollment, pastoral and theological education, and residencies designed explicitly for church revitalization and replanting. These areas of calling, training, and mentoring college students are a much-needed ministry pipeline.

At present, TXB operates eleven Church Planting Centers (CPC) across Texas, some in English and some in Spanish, that serve as finishing schools for church planters. These CPCs are local church and local association based. TXB could add a revitalization/replanting track to the current CPCs or coordinate similar finishing schools for revitalization and replanting efforts, connecting college and graduate students to training that further emphasizes practical ministry and experience. Existing pastors who

are considered church replanting or are currently pursuing a replanting opportunity could also gain additional training through this finishing school format.

Conclusion

The qualitative data gathered from the eleven pastoral, academic, and denominational experts identified 114 characteristics that should be present in a convention's replanting process. These characteristics were utilized to develop eighteen statements summarizing the replanting process's essential components. The expert panel reached 90 percent consensus or higher on seventeen of these statements, which created a rubric to evaluate the Texas Baptists church replanting process. To my knowledge, this research represents the first evaluation tool (the CRPE) for a replanting process developed with the cooperation of a local church, local association, state convention, and national convention.

There is a considerable need for revitalizing and replanting pastors, let alone ministry leaders. The recommendations generated by the Church Replanting Process Evaluation are a few possible methods or means of recruiting and training replanting pastors. Perhaps TXB was organized, developed, positioned, and resourced for such a time as this. If not TXB, the Lord can raise up another for his glory and for his church.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Insights gained from the Delphi study and evaluation of Texas Baptists'
replanting process with the CRPE have the potential to enhance the effectiveness of this
process for the churches TXB serves. The evaluation results affirm the viability of the
Texas Baptists' replanting process and identify some areas of weaknesses to be
addressed. The knowledge gained from this project can be a valuable resource for
churches in Texas and beyond that require replanting. Other state conventions can learn
from the experiences of Texas Baptists and develop comprehensive and transferable
processes to provide the necessary support and resources for church revitalization.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to evaluate a comprehensive, transferable, and
collaborative process for replanting TXB churches. To support the project's purpose, I
used the Delphi study research method, in which a panel of experts participated in a
series of surveys that identified the characteristics deemed "important" or "very
important" to the replanting process. By the final round of the study, the panel reached a
consensus on seventeen statements describing the replanting process and then evaluated
the current TXB replanting process according to those statements.

The panel agreed that the current replanting process was sufficiently
addressing 14 out of 17 of the characteristics important or very important to the
replanting process, suggesting that the state convention should continue supporting and

improving the process.[1] The project also identified three areas for improvement. Chapter 4 provides recommendations to address those areas of weakness. While additional research will be beneficial to verify the refinements to the replanting process, this project has benefited the TXB's approach to facilitating local strategic partnerships with churches and associations to help guide a church and its pastor through the replanting process.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

Four goals measured the success of this project. The first goal was to utilize a qualitative Delphi study to elicit feedback from content experts and determine the criteria for a rubric (CRPE) evaluating the TXB church replanting process. The first goal was considered successfully met when ten content experts participated in all three rounds of the Delphi Study and produced a set of seventeen criteria for a rubric to evaluate the TXB church replanting process.

The second goal was to have a panel of content experts evaluate the TXB church replanting process using the CRPE developed from the Delphi study. The same panel of content experts completed the Delphi study and the CRPE; this minimized confusion concerning common definitions of the seventeen criteria identified in the first goal. This goal was considered successfully met when the content experts used the CRPE to evaluate the TXB church replanting process and identified fourteen areas of strength and three areas of weakness.

The third goal was to determine what adjustments needed to be made to the TXB church starting process based on an analysis of the CRPE results. This goal was measured using a relative frequency table to evaluate the context expert responses. This

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[1] Each panel member was asked to "Agree" or "Disagree" that the current TXB replanting process sufficiently addressed each characteristic. To be considered a strength in the TXB replanting process required agreement by a supermajority (76 percent) of the panel members. Any result less than 76 percent was considered a weakness of the TXB replanting process.

goal was considered successfully met when the relative frequency table demonstrated a supermajority agreement (a minimum of 76 percent agreement) on areas of weakness and strength in the church replanting process.

The fourth goal was to recommend refinement to the TXB church replanting process based on any weakness identified by the analysis of the CRPE. This goal was considered successfully met when recommendations for refinement were developed presenting the possible options for addressing each weakness identified by the CRPE. These recommendations for refinement will be presented to the Director of Church Starting at TXB for consideration and approval.

Strengths of the Project

There are several strengths inherent to the Delphi research design that made it a particularly useful method for evaluating the TXB replanting process. First, a Delphi study requires a panel of experts. This study asked qualified participants to identify their experience pastorally, academically, and institutionally. Broad representation from individuals with denominational entities and local church experience in revitalization benefited the project. Second, since the Delphi research design requires several rounds of content expert participation, the application of the Delphi study electronically allowed for multiple interactions through technology that did not require travel.[2] Submitting the surveys electronically to the expert panelists also allowed for rapid completion of each survey.[3] Third, the anonymity of the Delphi study safeguarded the consensus from any individual's undue influence.[4]

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[2] Sharon Colton and Tim Hatcher, "The Web-Based Delphi Research Technique as a Method for Content Validation in HRD and Adult Education Research" (paper presented at the Academy of Human Resource Development International Conference, Austin, Texas, March 3–7, 2004), 2.

[3] Colton and Hatcher, "The Web-Based Delphi Research," 6.

[4] Tenley Sablatzky, "The Delphi Method," *Hypothesis: Research Journal for Health Information Professionals* 34, no. 1 (August 2022): 4.

The results of the Delphi study could be used to develop replanting support processes and systems that complement resources already provided by the North American Mission Board. As the project drew from content experts with pastoral, denominational, and local church perspectives, their significant experience in revitalization and replanting should encourage other Baptist DEs, state conventions, and local associations to consider the project's possible applications. By collaborating, each partner could have distinctive and valuable contributions to their local churches, developing complementary support processes that would strengthen replanting efforts and better steward organizational resources.

The project uncovered an opportunity for Texas Baptists to develop future church revitalizing, replanting, and planting pastors. The Baptist Student Ministries (BSM) supported by Texas Baptists cover an extensive portion of the state of Texas and most places of higher education. Approximately 110 out of 170 college campuses in Texas have a BSM.[5] The BSM can be a platform for raising awareness of the pastor shortage. Students could be equipped for bi-vocational or full-time vocational ministry if they feel called to vocational ministry. They could also be provided with the categories and training paths available to serve in roles like replanting pastors.

Additionally, TXB currently has eleven partnering schools that provide a variety of ministry and theological training programs.[6] These institutions can position themselves with TXB and utilize a multi-faceted approach to equipping future ministers. Non-accredited programs, certifications, and accredited degree programs are already offered at these institutions. TXB can collaborate with these institutions to create more customized pathways for training and educating future pastors for Texas. This project

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[5] Texas BSM State Office, "About Us," accessed July 1, 2023, https://www.txbsm.org/about-us.

[6] Texas Baptists Theological Education Council, "Financial Assistance for Ministry Students," accessed July 1, 2023, http://s3.amazonaws.com/texasbaptists.org/resource/financial-assistance-for-ministry-students-final-web.pdf.

highlighted the need and opportunity for specialized pipelines within Texas Baptists'
institutional relationships that must be more fully leveraged. This opportunity benefits
local churches needing pastors, supports the state convention with healthier churches, and
assists schools of higher education with higher enrollment.

Weaknesses of the Project

Most of the weaknesses of the project were related to using the Delphi research
method. I identified four challenges in the design that could easily be mitigated in future
iterations of the project.

The electronic Delphi study provided a convenient method for involving
various participants. However, as the study progressed, the number of experts who
participated in rounds 1 and 2 decreased in round 3. As a result, there was less evaluative
feedback on the TXB replanting process. One possible reason for this might be the
general busyness of the participants. Another possibility may have been the overall length
of the project. The project could have had a narrower scope, which would have reduced
the overall length of the project. The Delphi study could have been its own project, and
the evaluation with the CRPE could have been a separate project. This would have
reduced the amount of time required from the participants.

The unexpected number of statements from the experts (n=177) in the initial
round created a challenge when considering how to develop the survey for the second
round. The initial round asked each panel member to list the characteristics important to
the replanting process and did not limit the number of responses. The expert panel gave
copious feedback and expressed such strong agreement on so many of the characteristics
that the level of consensus had to be increased to reduce the number of characteristics
(n=114) used to provide statements for the CRPE. The responses from round 1 could
have been edited further. While duplicate statements were removed, closely related
statements could have also been combined, reducing the number of responses.

Another potential area of improvement would be clarifying how the survey questions were worded. The open-ended nature of Delphi's design could have allowed for various interpretations among the panel. To minimize ambiguity, the survey was pilot tested for clarity. However, two panel members still expressed confusion and needed additional help understanding the intent of several statements.

The challenge of evaluating Texas Baptists' replanting process from a single document could have been better addressed by phone or in-person interviews with the expert panel. These interviews would have allowed for more explanation for the written representation of the process, as well as the opportunity to expand on aspects not included in the document. The electronic method better served the participants and the researcher's time constraints.

What I Would Do Differently

One of the main challenges of the project implementation was the time constraints, which would have been better served by having the Delphi study run over a more extended period. This longer period would have allowed participants to ask more clarifying questions and further refine their contributions to each round. Another area for improvement was how the Delphi study was administered. Using specialized software would have decreased the hours required to process responses and provided a more refined end-user experience. With increased time and better software, it would have been possible to have a larger expert panel with representation from additional state conventions, local associations, and pastors.

Beyond addressing the weaknesses of the project by increasing the timeframe and improving the administration of the Delphi study, I would also consider the limitations of the research and determine if there were better ways to mitigate these limitations. For example, the panel of content experts had some representation from outside of a white Southern Baptist church context, however I would attempt to broaden

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the content expert pool to ensure that content experts from more diverse Southern Baptist contexts were part of the study.

Additionally, the TXB replanting process assumes that a process should be comprehensive, transferable, and collaborative. These three values framed the research project and informed the focus of the research. These values could have created biases influencing questions asked in the study and how they were asked. Given more time, comparative analysis with other replanting approaches may have uncovered additional insights into what may or may not benefit a church or TXB's replanting process.

Given additional time, it would have been beneficial to survey the five churches currently in the pilot process. As of the completion of this project, none of the five churches have yet completed the replanting process, but each has at least a two-year history in the process. Insights from the pilot churches may have confirmed, challenged, or provided new information compared to the expert panel's responses.

Areas for Further Research

To validate the findings of this research, comparative studies would need to be done across diverse Southern Baptist contexts and with larger sample sizes. To that end, I would recommend the following:

1. Continue strengthening the predictive characteristics needed for a church replanting process by replicating the study with additional experts.

2. Use the same research methodology in various cultures of Southern Baptist life in specific contexts such as the African American context, Hispanic context, and non-English speaking immigrant context.

3. Apply the current findings of this research to case studies of church replanting efforts that have been successful and unsuccessful, thereby strengthening the validity of this study.

4. Use research methodology to survey churches that have walked through the Texas Baptists replanting process and compare the results with the findings of this project.

Theological Reflections

The research for this project highlighted several theological truths related to a state convention's process for replanting. The concept of Missio Dei, the mission of God, has been foundational in arguing for a missional movement for local churches.[7] Though many churches still need to adopt a missional mindset, many available resources can be utilized to educate and equip Christians to be missional. A related but distinct theological concept that seems less well-researched or written on in Western evangelicalism is the Missio Christi, the mission of Christ. More resources seem to be available in the Roman Catholic tradition. The Missio Christi appears to be a rich area of study for further theological reflection and application to church revitalization and replanting. With the contributions already made from the literature on the Missio Dei, impactful resources could be developed.

Research on Baptist theological distinctives was abundant. The current literature on applying these Baptist distinctives in ecclesiology was helpful when examining how to provide resources to Baptist churches in need of replanting. The literature could have been more beneficial when applying Baptist distinctives to denominational systems, processes, and decision-making. How support is provided to local churches is a manner of governance. Though most Baptists would acknowledge that each congregation is autonomous and would not seek to violate local church autonomy, power and influence are exercised over a church when a denominational entity provides necessary funding and support services. How this power and influence are exercised when relating to churches and other autonomous entities should be informed by Baptist distinctives instead of pragmatism. More research and writing are needed in applying Baptist theological distinctives for the governance of Baptist institutions. This need is especially true in an era when the Southern Baptist Convention and state conventions

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[7] Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches: Planting a Church That's Biblically Sound and Reaching People in Culture* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 20.

possess resources unimaginable by the earliest Baptist theologians. "With great power comes great responsibility."[8] Or, as Jesus said in Luke 12:48, "Everyone to whom much has been given, of him much will be required."

Personal Reflections

Beyond the impact on the churches and Baptist entities served, this project has benefitted me personally and professionally. This project gave me a deeper understanding of the complex relationships in Southern Baptist life between local churches, local associations, and the state conventions in Texas. This knowledge may prove valuable as I continue contributing to church revitalization studies and seek to collaborate with Baptist entities in Texas replanting efforts. Following the project's conclusion, I could also use the insights gained to develop recommendations for local associations and conventions that may help them better serve churches that need to be replanted.

Through the Delphi method, I was able to enhance my research methodology and effectively study a complex issue. This approach allowed me to refine the process' predictive characteristics and provide targeted recommendations to improve weaknesses. This experience has equipped me with valuable knowledge to apply in future projects and contribute to the innovative research practices of church revitalization and replanting.

Moreover, this project has significantly impacted my personal faith journey. Working as a researcher from a denominational perspective has given me a unique perspective on the challenges Baptist organizations face in serving local churches and the dedication of those working to address them. This experience has allowed me to consider my ministry role in assisting pastors as they strive to revitalize the churches in their communities. I have found affirmation in the work and motivation to better serve our Texas Baptists pastors. There is always a pull to return to local church ministry, but this

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[8] Stan Lee, "Introducing Spiderman," *Amazing Fantasy* #15, September 1962, 11. The original quote was "With great power there must also come—great responsibility."

project has helped me see the amount of work needed and the opportunities yet to be realized in denominational work. This project has given me valuable opportunities to refine my research methodology, gain deeper insights and perspectives, and reflect on my own calling to ministry.

Conclusion

Based on the evaluation results, the church replanting process piloted by Texas Baptists has demonstrated several strengths and weaknesses. Its comprehensive and collaborative approach seems beneficial in providing resources and support for churches needing replanting. There are areas, however, where improvement could be made to further enhance the effectiveness of the process. Nevertheless, the insights learned from this project can be a valuable resource for current and future churches that need replanting in Texas and beyond. As other state conventions seek to implement similar initiatives, they can draw upon the experiences of Texas Baptists to develop comprehensive and transferable processes that can provide the necessary support and resources for churches needing revitalization. Overall, the church replanting process piloted by the Texas Baptists state convention has the potential to significantly impact churches across Texas and beyond. Its evaluation results may provide important insights for ongoing improvement and refinement of current and future replanting processes.

APPENDIX 1

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN DELPHI STUDY

This letter invited the members of the content expert panel to participate in the Delphi Study and opportunity to evaluate the Texas Baptists replanting process.

Hi {Participant},

I would like to invite you to anonymously participate in a Delphi Study and the opportunity to evaluate the Texas Baptists replanting process that I helped develop and that we have been piloting the last 3 years. I have anonymous participants from national, state-level, local church, local association, and academic spheres of Southern Baptist life.

If you would like to participate, here is an overview of the participation:

- **Delphi Study Round 1 (~30 minutes) 7 day window**
  - Consent
  - Two quick questions establishing expertise
  - Open-ended questions looking for important characteristics of a convention's church replanting process

- **Delphi Study Round 2 (~30 minutes) 7 day window**
  - Consent
  - Using a Likert scale to rate the characteristics gathered from Round 1

- **Delphi Study Round 3 (~30 minutes) 7 day window**
  - Consent
  - See the highest rated characteristics
  - Select Agree or Disagree (with explanation)
  - Hope to reach consensus

- **Evaluation (~30 minutes to an hour) 7 day window**
  - Consent
  - Use the rubric provided (developed from the Delphi study) to grade the Texas Baptists' process

I would really appreciate your participation as a practitioner and expert in church revitalization. I believe the rubric developed here could serve many other local associations and conventions in Southern Baptist life. If you agree to participate, I hope to send out Round 1 next week. Please let me know. Either way, thank you for your time.

In Christ,
Clay Jacobson

APPENDIX 2

ROUND 1 INTRODUCTORY LETTER AND SURVEY

This research instrument thanked the context experts for agreeing to participate in round 1 of the Delphi Study and provided a link to the round 1 survey, which is reproduced in full in this appendix.

ROUND 1 INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Good Morning,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey for my DMin project with The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Please feel free to email me with any questions you may have.

Round 2 will start next Monday, Feb. 13, with the results that you and others on the expert panel have contributed. Again, thank you so much for participating and for your time:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMObN3Ypn6pWfX_sjd7UY7eH92XyNzI6Ed-4J9llHO3U5A_A/viewform?usp=sf_link

In Christ,
Clay Jacobson

DELPHI STUDY ROUND 1 SURVEY

Agreement to Participate in Round 1 Survey
The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the essential characteristics of a comprehensive, transferable, and collaborative church replanting process. This research is being conducted by Clay Jacobson for purposes of doctoral project research at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will be asked to participate in an expert panel that will take part in a three round Delphi study. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. By your completion of this participant qualifications survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Mark only one oval.

- o Yes, I consent.
- o No, I do not.

Experience in Church Replanting and Revitalization
Church replanting is a narrower category of church revitalization. For the purposes of this research revitalization experience and replanting experience will be synonymous. The questions below will establish the participants' expertise in the field of church revitalization and replanting, while remaining anonymous.

Relevant Experience
How many years of pastoral, consultant, and/or academic experience in Church Revitalization and Replanting do you have?

Please select all the statements below that best describe your experience with church replanting and revitalization.
  Check all that apply.
  - o An expert in church revitalization and replanting
  - o Have successfully replanted or revitalized a church
  - o Written on church replanting and revitalization
  - o Been a denominational leader with experience in assisting churches in replanting and revitalization
  - o Have taught church replanting and revitalization in a university or seminary
  - o Have experience working with a denominational church replanting or revitalization process at a local, state, or national level
  - o Have specialized training or education in the area of church revitalization and replanting Successfully assisted a church replant or revitalization as a supporting partner
  - o Have trained or equipped replanting and revitalizing pastors
  - o Other:

Important Characteristics of a Church Replanting Process

1. Are there Baptist theological distinctives that should inform a Baptist convention's church replanting process? If so, what are they? If more than one, please number your response.

2. What are the biggest challenges that a replanting process will need to address when assisting a church replanting? Please number your responses.

3. What are the most important ministries, systems, and/or strategies that a replanting process should be able to help a church develop and implement? Please number your responses.

4. What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting pastor? Please number your responses.

5. What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting congregation? Please number your responses.

6. Are there attributes or strategies necessary for a replanting process to serve a variety of church cultures and contexts? If so, what are they? Please number your responses.

7. What characteristics or principles are needed for a convention's replanting process to collaborate well with local churches, local associations and networks? Please number your responses.

8. Are there any characteristics or principles not covered by the above questions that you feel need to be considered for a replanting process? If so, what are they?

APPENDIX 3

ROUND 1 SURVEY RESPONSES

The responses to the Delphi Study round 1 survey are detailed on the following

pages.

Table A1. Responses to round 1, question 1, on the Baptist theological distinctives
that should inform the replanting process

Expert	Questions and Responses
Question 1: Are there Baptist theological distinctives that should inform a Baptist convention's church replanting process? If so, what are they? If more than one, please number your response.	
1	1. Basic orthodox Christian beliefs 2. Bible is authoritative 3. Practices of evangelism and discipleship 4. Autonomy of local church 5. Priesthood of believes 6. Soul competency 7. Sola gratis/sola fide (salvation by grace alone and faith alone not by works) 8. Baptism is symbolic, an outward expression of an inward act, but the first act of obedience of a new believer.
2	1. Autonomy of the local church; replants and revitalized churches are both geared toward independence or autonomy. The goal would be healthy churches with healthy, long-term leadership where God's work could become sustainable for many years. Some (non-Baptist) models call for an unhealthy dependence on organizations outside of the local church for support.
3	1. Cooperative spirit in missions 2. Priesthood of the believer (to allow for individual church replanters to hear and respond to God) 3. Emphasis on evangelism 4. The autonomy of the local congregation (places a high degree of importance on the local, individual church)
4	Yes. 1. The local autonomy of the church 2. The fundamentals of the faith (salvation by grace through faith, believer's baptism, etc.) should be adhered to by the church.
5	1. I believe doctrine is [of] the utmost importance when revitalizing or replacing. 2. Security of the believer 3. Autonomy of the church 4. Priesthood of the believer
6	1. Yes. While some are more applicable and important than others, I believe biblical authority and regenerate church member[ship] to be critically important.
7	All of them in general but more specifically: 1. Biblical authority 2. Saved, baptized membership 3. The priesthood of the believer
8	1. Southern *Baptist Faith and Message* 2002 2. Congregational polity 3. Cooperative Program

Question 1: Are there Baptist theological distinctives that should inform a Baptist convention's church replanting process? If so, what are they? If more than one, please number your response.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
9	1. Local church autonomy 2. Salvation is by faith alone 3. Baptism by immersion
10	1. Autonomy of the church and the supremacy of Scripture
11	1. Autonomy 2. Church governance 3. Cooperation

Table A2. Responses to round 1, question 2, on replanting's biggest challenges

Question 2: What are the biggest challenges that a replanting process will need to address when assisting a church replanting? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
1	1. Heart change. Obviously just changing the name of the church and then relaunching with the same leadership and ongoing conflicts within the church, this is not a healthy way to replant a church. Replanting gives the opportunity to begin again, fresh and new. However, this does not happen by chance; real heart level work needs to be done. 2. The church's reputation with its community. Again, if the replant is not done well, it could come across to the community that they have simply dressed up an otherwise ugly situation. 3. Logistical issues. If the church has been struggling for a long time, they could find themselves with few members and little money. This will also be a challenge to the process. In addition, the church will most likely lack the training necessarily to move forward in the process.
2	1. Follow through. The process must have a well-defined and developed plan for not only launching the process (which was well done) but also for implementation and follow through (which was somewhat lacking in our experience). 2. Assistance on the ground: leadership development, assistance with program development/implementation, availability for strategy sessions and "what if" scenarios.
3	1. Changing old patterns 2. Accepting change 3. Developing effective outreach 4. Develop new healthy ecclesiological habits 5. Becoming relevant to its community again 6. Overcoming negative stigmas 7. Financial realities

Question 2: What are the biggest challenges that a replanting process will need to address when assisting a church replanting? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
4	1. Unwillingness of old church to accept change 2. Lack of understanding of what needs to happen 3. Lack of cooperation or selfishness of partners 4. Inability of replant team or leaders to establish and cast vision
5	1. Church autonomy. If a church wants to remain autonomous completely then it is going to be much more difficult to find the outside help necessary.
6	1. The willingness of the people 2. The energy of/in the leader 3. The willingness of the people to learn and change 4. See and embrace the need
7	1. A willingness to concede to the new replanter 2. Openness to new methodology, but not changing the message 3. Revisiting of bylaws
8	1. Congregational buy-in. 2. Congregational willingness to see the process through. 3. The right pastor and staff
9	1. New leadership 2. New vision 3. New target group 4. New strategy 5. Community perceptions
10	1. Replant church opposition 2. Replant pastor opposition 3. Community bias from churches past
11	1. Myriad possibilities, but key, ingrained lay leadership who may resist or thwart change.

Table A3. Responses to round 1, question 3, on the most important
ministries, systems, and/or strategies for a replanting process

Question 3: What are the most important ministries, systems, and/or strategies that a replanting process should be able to help a church develop and implement? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
1	1. Leadership. The process should guide the church in what healthy leadership looks like—including paid staff and lay leaders. 2. Discipleship. From their very beginning, churches should have a known discipleship pathway or plan. Many churches focus on attracting more members and that is understandable. However, more of the focus needs to be on how to grow those members to look more like Christ. 3. Community Outreach—the biggest issue churches that are struggling seem to have is an inward focus. So, from the very beginning, the replant needs to start with an outward focus.
2	Funding is critically important. 1. However, developing and launching an effective outreach ministry is by far the biggest hurdle for any replanting church. 2. Assistance with administrative matters such as: new website design, new name submission to the state, and registering the new church name for tax exemption with the government are all matters that very few replants have ample opportunity to thoroughly consider in the moment.
3	1. Possible to change to elder leadership 2. Becoming a community church reaching those in the direct shadow of the church 3. Make sure to know what the needs are to proceed in a healthy process forward of the congregation. 4. To handle the burial of the old system with the utmost respect
4	1. Engaging its local community 2. Providing relevant, biblical ministry 3. Participation in corporate prayer 4. Developing effective evangelistic initiatives 5. Craft meaningful discipleship & leadership training 6. Reaching young families 7. Improving dilapidated facilities
5	1. A variety of assessment tools, training, and demographics 2. Discipleship process 3. Intentional leadership development, 4. A system that measures the spiritual vitality of the church life transformation vs. behavioral modification 5. Evangelism
6	1. A clear and compelling vision 2. A clearly defined overall strategy for achieving that vision 3. A robust and workable membership process grounded in a solid ecclesiology 4. Really good communication that is thorough but not complex

Question 3: What are the most important ministries, systems, and/or strategies that a replanting process should be able to help a church develop and implement? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
7	1. Solid leadership culture, structure, and aligned behavior 2. Functional system of effective discipleship and evangelism 3. Clear vision and target group 4. A solid plan to get the vision done (strategy)
8	1. Bible study 2. Assimilation strategy 3. Evangelism/outreach 4. Discipleship 5. Community engagement
9	1. Prayer 2. Outreach 3. Reading the community. These 3 areas will be key as a church moves forward.
10	1. Community engagement 2. Evangelism 3. Discipleship 4. Leadership development
11	1. Prayer 2. Family ministries 3. Music

Table A4. Responses to round 1, question 4, on support for a replanting pastor

Question 4: What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting pastor? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
1	1. I believe this work is already happening within Texas Baptist life, but there should be help at the beginning for pastors who might be considering a calling to this ministry. 2. They need to be shown what this work is really all about so they can determine if this is really God's plan for their life. 3. Additionally, having a mentor/coach or even a cohort of other pastors who could mutually encourage one another would be ideal!
2	1. Encouragement, encouragement, encouragement (too many die on the vine because of isolation) 2. Emotional intelligence training 3. Strategic thinking training (esp. adaptive leadership) 4. Community exegesis training 5. Evangelism training 6. Disciple-making training 7. Financial resources as needed 8. Counseling as needed

Question 4: What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting pastor? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
3	1. Financial support that enables him to be invested fully in the work 2. Capable and hands-on mentor(s) 3. A thorough assessment to determine his gifting and abilities 4. Coaching throughout the process 5. Help with those areas where he is weakest
4	1. A coach 2. A mentor 3. Continual church replanting training 4. Conferences 5. Replanting cohort 6. Replanting strategist consultant 7. A variety of assessments (spiritual vitality, emotional health, DISC, others)
5	1. Convention financial support 2. Associational financial support 3. Church sponsorship financial support 4. Theological support. Training in new ways to share the faith with the new generations
6	1. Prayer 2. Counsel from fellow pastors who have "been there and done that" 3. Boots on the ground to assist with outreach 4. A commitment to follow through on commitments made to the pastor
7	1. Fellow pastor cohort (iron sharpens iron concept) 2. Pastoral care and support for the pastor's family 3. Evangelism and discipleship training. 4. Financial support
8	1. National denomination 2. State convention 3. Local association 4. NAMB church replanting coaching or some other 5. Monetary 6. Strategic planning
9	1. Mentoring 2. Coaching 3. Educational insights
10	1. Peer group 2. Friendship 3. Financial
11	1. Financial 2. Coaching 3. Prayer

Table A5. Responses to round 1, question 5, on support
for a replanting congregation

Question 5: What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting congregation? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
1	1. Training on what changes they should expect 2. Vision casting for where the congregation can head 3. Celebration of the heritage they bring 4. Financial support through significant changes not limited to personnel or facility's needs 5. Nearby congregations supporting the efforts 6. Training for cross-cultural ministry awareness (especially if congregation is in a changing neighborhood)
2	1. Encouragement, encouragement, encouragement (too many die on the vine because of isolation) 2. Emotional intelligence training 3. Strategic thinking training (esp. how to let the pastor lead) 4. Community exegesis training 5. Evangelism training 6. Disciple-making training 7. Financial resources 8. Demographic understanding
3	1. Briefings at the beginning of the process as to what can be expected and why certain programs are being implemented 2. A program focused on equipping the congregation to conduct outreach 3. An occasional visit to the church as a show of support
4	1. I believe it's the same answer in some ways—helping to provide healthy leadership for the church would be a great first step. 2. In addition, having experienced, strategic partners who could help guide the church would also be helpful.
5	1. Prayer 2. A real sense of partnership from all partners involved. They need to see their partners actually coming alongside them in tangible ways (money, ministry projects, work projects, people who join and buy in).
6	1. Assessment of congregation 2. Demographic information 3. Church replanting consultant 4. Books on replanting (especially leaders) 5. Training (especially leaders)
7	1. National denomination 2. State convention 3. Local association 4. Local churches 5. Strategic planning 6. Partner churches 7. Replant team for ongoing guidance

Question 5: What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting congregation? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
8	1. Allowing them to remain intact and as is can be a way to help a church release their resources to a new plant 2. Love and understanding
9	1. An assurance that this process will be the way the light of Christ continues in that community
10	1. Consultant support and encouragement 2. Leadership development 3. Team coaching
11	1. Financial 2. Consulting 3. Prayer

Table A6. Responses to round 1, question 6, on attributes
or strategies necessary for the replanting process

Question 6: Are there attributes or strategies necessary for a replanting process to serve a variety of church cultures and contexts? If so, what are they? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
1	If I understand the question, you are looking for those attributes and strategies that are translatable to any context, since each context will require some tailor-made strategies. So . . . 1. A lead pastor who is gifted for the task 2. A lead pastor who can persevere. It's going to be hard and involve occasional setbacks. 3. A clear and compelling vision 4. Congregational buy-in (I really think this is the biggest obstacle) 5. Partners who share the vision
2	1. Community engagement will be for all cultures/contexts though it may look different or even being defined in different ways. 2. Be intentional to include everyone from different backgrounds (as biblical standards allows). 3. Each culture still needs to develop evangelism, discipleship and leadership.
3	1. The replant should reflect the culture(s) of the local community. 2. Awareness of how the replant can address multi-generational concerns (music, aesthetics, lighting, decor) 3. The replant should honor its denominational heritage while embracing the modern context.
4	1. Having a framework that is based on previous successful implementation would be ideal. Regarding the variety of cultures and context, these things always can be/have to be adapted for local contexts.

Question 6: Are there attributes or strategies necessary for a replanting process to serve a variety of church cultures and contexts? If so, what are they? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
5	1. Leadership must reflect the congregation in both ethnicities and cultural contexts. 2. Conduct a community 5-mile radius survey to have knowledge of who is in the vicinity.
6	1. Cultural context 2. State location, North, South, East or West 3. Demographical data 4. Urban, suburbs, rural 5. Previous style of church government
7	1. Knowledge of the cultural context and traditions (values) 2. Awareness of bias 3. Proven strategy planning process and alignment
8	1. Consistency 2. Truthfulness 3. A commitment to walk with the church from the beginning to the end of the process
9	1. Prayer 2. Community outreach 3. Sense of urgency (seeing the need for *change*) 4. Assimilation strategy
10	1. Commitment to biblically faithful preaching, evangelism, and meeting genuine needs in the community
11	1. Prayer strategy 2. Outreach strategy, all of this coming from the local field

Table A7. Responses to round 1, question 7, on collaboration in replanting

Question 7: What characteristics or principles are needed for a convention's replanting process to collaborate well with local churches, local associations, and networks? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
1	1. Integrity—this goes without saying, but in today's world, we still have to say it. 2. Knowledge—local churches would be coming to you because they believe you can help them in some way. Having relatable, proven experts to help guide churches/pastors would be needed. 3. Broad scope. Replants are needed in both urban and rural settings and sometimes conventions do not provide as much support for smaller communities/churches.
2	1. Recognizing the convention is the furthest away from the local church. 2. And allowing local leaders when they are able take the lead in these situations while providing resources both financial and in expertise. 3. A state convention should do all they can not to step around a local association while recognizing limitations that exist in specific associations and networks.

Question 7: What characteristics or principles are needed for a convention's replanting process to collaborate well with local churches, local associations, and networks? Please number your responses.	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
3	1. An awareness of the conditions on the ground (What is the culture of the church? What are the needs of the church?) 2. A commitment to be available to the pastor (for counseling, questions, prayer, etc.) 3. Faithfulness (Don't desert the church midstream. Be consistent and committed to the church)
4	1. The convention should consider a local-led strategic focus. 2. There should be sufficient, regular, and clear communication with local entities. 3. Concerns about adequate supports (financial, relational, leadership) should be addressed.
5	1. A strong commitment to partnership 2. A willingness to replant churches that might be non-traditional or somehow methodologically different than the sponsor church or the prevalent associational models
6	1. Communication is a must. 2. Team development approach 3. Determine who is the lead party. 4. Know who is replanting: state or someone else. 5. Convention impact should be a "partner," not the driving force.
7	1. Sincere cooperation 2. Authentic trust and communication 3. Looking out for the kingdom benefit first and foremost, then also faithfulness to historical ties where they do not conflict with the former
8	1. Clear and concise communication 2. Clearly defined expectations 3. Educate on convention's replanting process. 4. Provide opportunities for training on process.
9	1. Selection of the best team for the intervention 2. Be highly relational, flexible and engaging. 3. Be bi-vocational if needed.
10	1. Calling 2. Training 3. Investment
11	1. Communication 2. Cooperation

Table A8. Responses to round 1, question 8, requesting
additional characteristics or principles

Question 8: Are there any characteristics or principles not covered by the above questions that you feel need to be considered for a replanting process? If so, what are they?	
Expert	**Questions and Responses**
1	I might just add that the more layers to the partnership, the better, in my opinion. I like to see a local church take the lead but also have the cooperation of association, state convention, and NAMB. I even like to see other church planting organizations in the mix.
2	Recruitment of quality replanters is crucial. These individuals need to have high emotional intelligence, patience, gentleness, teachability, entrepreneurial spirit, and it would be beneficial if they have had experienced pastors, planting or replanting.
3	Any resources available recovered through replanting should remain as close to the original intent as possible, whether that's remaining with a particular entity or serving a particular purpose.
4	1. Resistance to actually engaging in a replant effort, even though need is present 2. Resistance from members and staff is inevitable. 3. Replanting must be a process, not a program.
5	Get a consistent and clear definition of what a vision is and train across the effort.
6	A true sense of kingdom reign for the betterment of the advancement of the gospel
7	No, I believe that covered a lot of ground.
8	Willingness to stay for the long term
9	Glad for the process
10	No
11	None

APPENDIX 4

ROUND 2 INTRODUCTORY LETTER

The following letter thanked the content expert panel for participating in round 1 and provided an overview of answers the experts' experience in replanting and revitalization. The letter invited the content experts to participate in round 2 and provided a link to the Delphi Study round 2 survey.

ROUND 2 INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Good Morning,

Thank you again for your participation. Even if you did not participate in Round 1, you are welcome to participate in Round 2. You are on an expert panel that is attempting to reach a consensus on the characteristics that should be present within a Baptist state convention's replanting process. Your consensus will generate a rubric to grade a process being piloted by Texas Baptists.

This round you will be rating statements provided by the expert panel.

Feel free to email me with any questions. The link to Round 2 is under the table below.

Here is some feedback about the expert panel. The median and average years of experience in church revitalization and replanting among expert panel: 20 years

Experts' Experience in Replanting/Revitalization	
Statements	**% of Experts Identifying**
An expert in church revitalization and replanting	45.0
Have successfully replanted or revitalized a church	90.0
Written on church replanting and revitalization	54.5
Been a denominational leader with experience in assisting churches in replanting and revitalization	81.8
Have taught church replanting and revitalization in a University or Seminary	45.5
Have experience working with a denominational church replanting or revitalization process at a local, state, or national level	100.0
Have specialized training or education in the area of church revitalization	54.5
Successfully assisted a church replant or revitalization as a supporting partner	63.6
Have trained or equipped replanting and revitalizing pastors	90.9

Link to Round 2 Survey:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdmwtXvPmUL2IjdMsk4d0ev6Zb7BjqfI78uPDHQPcax4XZPPw/viewform?usp=sf_link

Thank you for your time!

In Christ,
Clay Jacobson

APPENDIX 5

ROUND 2 SURVEY AND RESPONSES

The responses to the Delphi Study round 1 survey are detailed on the following

pages.

Table A9. Analysis of round 2, question 1 responses

#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
Question 1: Are there Baptist theological distinctives that should inform a Baptist convention's church replanting process? If so, what are they?								
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Discipleship	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
2	Emphasis on evangelism	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
3	Salvation by grace through faith alone, sola gratis/sola fide	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
4	The security of the believer	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
5	Sound doctrine	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
6	Regenerate church membership	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.302
7	Soul competency	—	—	9.1	—	90.9	4.90	0.603
8	The supremacy and authority of Scripture	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.302
9	Baptism by immersion	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.406
10	A cooperative spirit in missions	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.406
11	The priesthood of the believer	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.406
12	The autonomy of the local church	—	—	9.1	18.2	72.7	4.64	0.674
13	Cooperative Program support	—	—	18.2	27.3	54.5	4.36	0.809
14	Congregational polity	—	—	45.5	27.3	27.3	3.82	0.874
15	Southern *Baptist Faith and Message* 2002	9.1	9.1	45.5	—	36.4	3.45	1.368

Table A10. Analysis of round 2, question 2 responses

Question 2: What are the biggest challenges that a replanting process will need to address when assisting a church replanting?								
#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Addressing heart change within the congregation and leadership	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.300
2	Addressing ingrained lay leadership that is resistant to change	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.300
3	The church's acceptance of change	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.302
4	The challenge of the inability of replant team or leaders to establish and cast vision	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
5	Addressing the willingness of the congregation and leadership to replant	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
6	The challenge of church autonomy. If a church wants to remain autonomous completely then it is going to be much more difficult to find the outside help necessary.	—	—	9.1	9.1	81.8	4.73	0.647
7	Developing an effective outreach strategy	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
8	The challenge of following the leadership of a replanting pastor	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
9	Addressing the church's reputation in the community	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
10	Addressing the health of the congregation with new ecclesiological habits	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
11	Addressing the need for new leadership	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
12	Addressing the need for new vision	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
13	The challenge of follow through. The process must have a well-defined and developed plan for not only launching the process but also for implementation and follow through	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505

	Question 2: What are the biggest challenges that a replanting process will need to address when assisting a church replanting?							
#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4	5		
14	Addressing the church's relevance to its community	—	—	9.1	27.3	63.6	4.55	0.688
15	Addressing the willingness of the current pastor to replant	—	—	9.1	27.3	63.6	4.55	0.688
16	The challenge of a lack of understanding of what needs to happen	—	—	9.1	27.3	63.6	4.55	0.688
17	Addressing the church's financial reality	—	—	—	54.5	45.5	4.45	0.522
18	Addressing the energy level of leadership	—	—	—	54.5	45.5	4.45	0.522
19	Addressing the need for new ministry strategies	—	—	—	45.5	54.5	4.45	0.522
20	The challenge of the lack of cooperation or selfishness of partners	—	—	—	45.5	54.5	4.45	0.522
21	The challenge of assistance on the ground: leadership development, assistance with program development/ implementation, availability for strategy sessions and "what if" scenarios.	—	—	9.1	45.5	45.5	4.36	0.674
22	Addressing logistical issues within the church	—	9.1	—	54.5	36.4	4.18	0.400
23	Addressing the need for new target group for outreach	—	—	18.2	63.6	18.2	4.00	0.632

Table A11. Analysis of round 2, question 3 responses

#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4	5		
	Question 3: What are the most important ministries, systems, and/or strategies that a replanting process should be able to help a church develop and implement?							
1	Developing effective systems of discipleship and evangelism	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
2	Developing effective evangelistic initiatives	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
3	Developing community outreach and engagement to become outward focused	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.300
4	Prayer ministry	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.300
5	Participation in corporate prayer	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.300
6	Help developing an assimilation strategy	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
7	Developing solid leadership culture, structure and aligned behavior	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
8	Developing clear vision and target group	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
9	Developing a solid strategy to accomplish the vision	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
10	Providing relevant, biblical ministry	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
11	Becoming a community church reaching those in the direct shadow of the church	—	—	9.1	18.2	72.7	4.64	0.674
12	Make sure to know what the needs are to proceed in a healthy process forward of the congregation	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
13	Developing a system that measures the Spiritual vitality of the church (life Transformation vs. behavioral modification)	—	—	—	54.5	45.5	4.45	0.522
14	Providing training and resources for Bible studies	—	—	9.1	36.4	54.5	4.45	0.688

#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**		

Question 3: What are the most important ministries, systems, and/or strategies that a replanting process should be able to help a church develop and implement?								
#	General Characteristics	1	2	3	4	5	MEAN	STD
15	Developing an intentional leadership development process	—	—	9.1	45.5	45.5	4.36	0.674
16	Improving dilapidated facilities	—	—		63.6	36.4	4.36	0.505
17	Assistance with administrative matters such as: new website design, new name submission to the state, and registering the new church name for tax exemption with the government are all matters that very few replants have ample opportunity to thoroughly consider in the moment.	—	—	9.1	54.5	36.4	4.27	0.647
18	To handle the burial of the old system with the utmost respect	—	—	18.2	36.4	45.5	4.27	0.786
19	Reaching young families	—	—	9.1	63.6	27.3	4.18	0.603
20	Provide a variety of assessment tools, training, and demographics towards developing a new identity and vision	—	—	9.1	63.6	27.3	4.18	0.603
21	Music ministries	—	—	18.2	54.5	27.3	4.09	0.701
22	Family ministries	—	9.1	18.2	45.5	27.3	3.91	0.944
23	Possible to change to elder leadership	27.3	9.1	18.2	27.3	18.2	3.00	0.550

Table A12. Analysis of round 2, question 4 responses

#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
	Question 4: What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting pastor?							
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**		
1	Prayer support for the replanting pastor	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
2	Coaching for the replanting pastor	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
3	Capable and hands-on mentor(s) provided for the replanting pastor	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
4	Replanting strategist consultant for the replanting pastor	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
5	Pastoral care and support for the pastor's family	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
6	Evangelism and discipleship training for the replanting pastor	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
7	Encouragement for the replanting pastor	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
8	Strategic thinking and planning training (esp. adaptive leadership) for the replanting pastor	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
9	Help at the beginning for pastors who might be considering a calling to this ministry	—	—	9.1	9.1	81.8	4.73	0.647
10	Replanting cohort for the replanting pastor	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
11	Help for the replanting pastor with those areas where he is weakest	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
12	Community exegesis training for the replanting pastor	—	—	9.1	27.3	63.6	4.55	0.688
13	Emotional intelligence training for the replanting pastor	—	—	—	54.5	45.5	4.45	0.522
14	Financial support for the replanting pastor	—	—	9.1	45.5	45.5	4.36	0.674
15	Educational training for the replanting pastor	—	—	9.1	54.5	36.4	4.27	0.647

Question 4: What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting pastor?								
#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4	5		
16	Continual church replanting training for the replanting pastor	—	—	9.1	54.5	36.4	4.27	0.647
17	Local association support for the replanting pastor	—	9.1	—	45.5	45.5	4.27	0.905
18	A variety of assessments for the replanting pastor to have a thorough evaluation (spiritual vitality, emotional health, DISC, others)	—	—	18.2	45.5	36.4	4.18	0.751
19	Conferences for the replanting pastor	—	—	18.2	72.7	9.1	3.91	0.539
20	State convention support for the replanting pastor	—	—	27.3	54.5	18.2	3.91	0.701

Table A13. Analysis of round 2, question 5 responses

#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
	Question 5: What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting congregation?	1	2	3	4	5		
1	Prayer support for the congregation	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.300
2	Helping to provide healthy leadership for the church	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
3	Briefings for the congregation at the beginning of the process as to what can be expected and why certain programs are being implemented.	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
4	Evangelism training for the congregation	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
5	Demographic information and training for the congregation	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
6	Disciple-making training for the congregation	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
7	Encouragement for the congregation	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
8	A real sense of partnership from all partners involved. They need to see their partners actually coming alongside them in tangible ways (money, ministry projects, work projects, people who join and buy in).	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
9	Replant team for on-going guidance for the congregation	—	—	45.5	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
10	Love and understanding for the congregation	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
11	Training for cross-cultural ministry awareness for the congregation (especially if congregation is in a changing neighborhood)	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
12	Training on what changes they should expect	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
13	Assessment of congregation	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
14	Leadership training and leadership development training for the congregation	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505

Question 5: What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting congregation?								
#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4	5		
15	Strategic partners who could help guide the church	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
16	An occasional visit to the church as a show of support for the congregation	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
17	Strategic thinking training and planning for the congregation (esp. how to let the pastor lead)	—	—	—	45.5	54.5	4.45	0.522
18	An assurance that this process will be the way the Light of Christ continues in that community	—	—	9.1	36.4	54.5	4.45	0.688
19	Vision casting for where the congregation can head	—	—	9.1	45.5	45.5	4.36	0.674
20	Consultant support and encouragement for the congregation	—	—	9.1	45.5	45.5	4.36	0.674
21	Celebration of the heritage they bring	—	—	18.2	36.4	45.5	4.27	0.786
22	Local association support for the congregation	—	9.1	—	45.5	45.5	4.27	0.905
23	Community exegesis training for the congregation	—	—	—	72.7	27.3	4.27	0.467
24	Teams Coaching for the congregation	—	—	18.2	54.5	27.3	4.09	0.701
25	Financial support through significant changes not limited to personnel or facilities needs	9.1	9.1	27.3	36.4	36.4	4.09	0.831
26	Emotional intelligence training for the congregation	—	9.1	18.2	38.4	36.4	4.00	1.000
27	Books on replanting (especially leaders) for the congregation	—	9.1	18.2	45.5	27.3	3.91	0.944
28	State convention support for the congregation	—	9.1	18.2	54.5	18.2	3.82	0.874
29	Nearby congregations supporting the efforts	—	9.1	18.2	54.5	18.2	3.82	0.874
30	Financial support for the church	9.1	—	27.3	36.4	27.3	3.73	1.191
31	NAMB support for the congregation	9.1	9.1	36.4	27.3	18.2	3.36	1.206

Question 5: What kinds of support should be provided for a replanting congregation?								
#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4	5		
32	Allowing the congregation to remain intact and as is, can be a way to help a church release their resources to a new plant.	9.1	18.2	45.5	9.1	18.2	3.09	1.221

Table A14. Analysis of round 2, question 6 responses

#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
Question 6: Are there attributes or strategies necessary for a replanting process to serve a variety of church cultures and contexts? If so, what are they?								
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	A lead pastor who is gifted for the task.	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
2	Congregational buy-in	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
3	Prayer strategy for the replanting church	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
4	A lead pastor who can persevere. It's going to be hard and involve occasional setbacks.	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
5	Commitment to biblically faithful preaching	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.300
6	Evangelism	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.300
7	Sense of urgency (seeing the need for change)	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
8	Outreach strategy that is contextualized to the community	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
9	Truthfulness in the replanting process	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
10	A commitment to walk with the church from the beginning to the end of the process	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
11	A clear and compelling vision.	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
12	Be intentional to include everyone from different backgrounds (as biblical standards allows)	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
13	The replant should reflect the culture(s) of the local community.	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
14	Knowledge of the cultural context and traditions (Values)	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
15	Awareness of bias	—	—	9.1	18.2	72.7	4.64	0.670
16	Proven strategy planning process and alignment	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505

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Question 6: Are there attributes or strategies necessary for a replanting process to serve a variety of church cultures and contexts? If so, what are they?								
#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4	5		
17	Assimilation Strategy	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
18	A replanting framework that can be adapted for local contexts	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
19	Each culture still needs to develop evangelism, discipleship and leadership.	—	—	9.1	18.2	72.7	4.64	0.670
20	Partners who share the vision.	—	—	9.1	36.4	54.5	4.45	0.688
21	Consistency in the process across various context	—	—	—	45.5	54.5	4.45	0.522
22	Leadership must reflect the congregation in both ethnicities and cultural contexts	—	—	—	45.5	54.5	4.45	0.522
23	Awareness of how the replant can address multi-generational concerns (music, aesthetics, lighting, decor).	—	9.1	—	45.5	45.5	4.27	0.905
24	Having a framework that is based on previous successful implementation would be ideal	—	—	18.2	36.4	45.5	4.27	0.786
25	Conduct a community 5-mile radius survey to have knowledge of who is in the vicinity with a demographic study	—	—	9.1	63.6	27.3	4.18	0.603
26	The replant should honor its denominational heritage while embracing the modern context.	—	—	27.3	36.4	36.4	4.09	0.831
27	Location of the state's replanting process will inform their replanting process (Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, etc.)	—	—	18.2	63.6	18.2	4.00	0.632

Question 6: Are there attributes or strategies necessary for a replanting process to serve a variety of church cultures and contexts? If so, what are they?								
#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4	5		
28	A replant process must be able to support an urban, rural, and suburban context and be able to adapt to each	9.1	9.1	—	54.5	27.3	3.82	1.250
29	The previous style of a particular church's governance should inform a replant strategy	9.1	9.1	27.3	45.5	9.1	3.36	1.120

Table A15. Analysis of round 2, question 7 responses

#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
	Question 7: What characteristics or principles are needed for a convention's replanting process to collaborate well with local churches, local associations, and networks?							
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Integrity in the process and all involved partners	—	—	—	—	100.0	5.00	0.000
2	Authentic trust between partners	—	—		9.1	90.9	4.90	0.300
3	A commitment to be available to the pastor (for counseling, questions, prayer, etc..)	—	—	9.1	—	90.9	4.90	0.600
4	Cooperation between partners	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
5	A strong commitment to partnership.	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
6	A replant process must determine who is the lead party when partnering to support a replanting church	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
7	Clear, concise, and timely communication between partners	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
8	Be highly relational, flexible, and engaging	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
9	Clearly defined expectations	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
10	A state convention's replant process must have an awareness of the conditions on the ground (what is the culture of the church? What are the needs of the church?)	—	—	9.1	9.1	81.8	4.73	0.647
11	A replant process must clearly identify who is replanting State, or someone else when partnering to support a replanting church	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
12	Convention impact should be a "partner," not the driving force when partnering to support a replanting church	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
13	Looking out for the kingdom benefit first and foremost, then also faithfulness to historical ties where they do not conflict with the former	—	—	9.1	9.1	81.8	4.73	0.647

Question 7: What characteristics or principles are needed for a convention's replanting process to collaborate well with local churches, local associations, and networks?								
#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
		1	2	3	4	5		
14	Faithfulness (Don't desert the church midstream. Be consistent and committed to the church)	—	—	9.1	9.1	81.8	4.73	0.647
15	Selection of the best team for the intervention	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
16	Educate on Convention's replanting process	—	—	9.1	18.2	72.7	4.64	0.670
17	The convention should consider a local-led, strategic focus in a replant process	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
18	Recognizing the convention is the furthest away from the local church. And allowing local leaders when they are able take the lead in these situations while providing resources both financial and in expertise. A state convention should do all they can not to step around a local association while recognizing limitations that exist in specific associations and networks.	9.1	—	—	9.1	81.8	4.55	1.124
19	Broad scope. Replants are needed in both urban and rural settings and sometimes conventions do not provide as much support for smaller communities/churches.	—	—	9.1	27.3	63.6	4.55	0.688
20	A replant process must have a team development approach when partnering to support a replanting church	—	—	—	45.5	54.5	4.45	0.522
21	Concerns about adequate supports (financial, relational, leadership) should be addressed	—	—	—	54.5	45.5	4.45	0.522
22	Provide opportunities for training on process	—	—	—	54.5	45.5	4.45	0.522
23	A willingness to replant churches that might be non-traditional or somehow methodologically different than the sponsor church or the prevalent associational models.	—	—	18.2	36.4	45.5	4.27	0.786

Table A16. Analysis of round 2, question 8 responses

#	General Characteristics	Level of Relevance					MEAN	STD
	Question 8: Are there any characteristics or principles not covered by the above questions that you feel need to be considered for a replanting process? If so, what are they?	1	2	3	4	5		
1	Recruitment of quality replanters is crucial. These individuals need to have high emotional intelligence, patience, gentleness, teachability, entrepreneurial spirit, and it would be beneficial if they have had experience pastors, planting, or replanting.	—	—	—	9.1	90.9	4.90	0.300
2	Replanting has to be a process not a program	—	—	—	18.2	81.8	4.82	0.400
3	Willingness to stay for the long term.	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
4	A true sense of Kingdom reign for the betterment of the advancement of the Gospel.	—	—	—	27.3	72.7	4.73	0.467
5	A replant process should provide a consistent and clear definition of what a vision is and train across the effort.	—	—	—	36.4	63.6	4.64	0.505
6	There may be resistance from the church to engaging in a replant effort, even though the need to replant is obvious	—	—	—	54.5	45.5	4.45	0.522
7	Just add that the more layers to the partnership, the better. Ideally a local church takes the lead, but also has the cooperation of association, state convention, and NAMB. Also, possibly there would be other church planting organizations in the mix.	—	—	18.2	45.5	36.4	4.18	0.751
8	Any resources available recovered through replanting should remain as close to the original intent as possible, whether that's remaining with a particular entity or serving a particular purpose.	—	—	9.1	72.7	18.2	4.09	0.539
9	Resistance from members and staff is inevitable	—	18.2	18.2	18.2	45.5	3.91	1.221

APPENDIX 6

ROUND 3 INTRODUCTORY LETTER AND SURVEY

The following letter thanked the context experts who participated in round 2 and invited those who participated in round 2 to also participate in round 3. This letter provided a link to the Delphi Study round 3 survey, which is reproduced in full in the following pages.

ROUND 3 INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Gentlemen,

Thank you for your work on this study. These 18 statements are compiled from over 100 responses that this panel had 90 percent agreement on as necessary characteristics for a replanting process. If you did not participate in Round 1 or 2, I'd ask that you'd not participate in Round 3. You'll still be able to grade our process with the rubric developed from Round 3.

This is the last round of the Delphi Study. This final round is to confirm with you the panel that you agree with the compiled statements. You will have an opportunity to disagree also and provide feedback.

All of the statements that have 75% or higher agreement from Round 3 will constitute consensus and form the rubric for grading the replanting process that Texas Baptists is piloting. I will provide the rubric link for entering grades and the documents that detail our process, next Monday, Lord willing. I will share with you all the combined grades you have produced to conclude the project.

Thank you all again for your participation. This round should go much faster. Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Here is the link to the Round 3: https://forms.gle/Co1p9dFFccKyd6Dr9

In Christ,
Clay Jacobson

ROUND 3 SURVEY

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the essential characteristics of a comprehensive, transferable, and collaborative church replanting process. This research is being conducted by Clay Jacobson for purposes of doctoral project research at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will be asked to participate in an expert panel that will take part in a three-round Delphi study. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. By your completion of this participant qualifications survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Mark only one.

- o Yes, I consent
- o No, I do not

1. The Baptist distinctives in a Baptist Statement of Faith should inform a Baptist state convention's church replanting process. *The Baptist distinctives provided and having agreement above 90% are found in any of the Southern Baptist Statement of Faiths (1925, 1963, or 2000).*
   Select one
      - o Agree
      - o Disagree
   If you disagree, please explain why.

2. A replant process should assist a church in addressing its reputation in its community.
   Select one
      - o Agree
      - o Disagree
   If you disagree, please explain why.

3. A replant process should help a replanting church develop a prayer ministry and strategy that supports the replant effort, as well as resources for spiritual preparation geared toward changed hearts and minds.
   Select one
      - o Agree
      - o Disagree
   If you disagree, please explain why.

4. A replant process should be transparent with the congregation and brief them on the likely changes they may need to implement and the reasoning behind the need to change.
   Select one
   - o Agree
   - o Disagree
   If you disagree, please explain why.

5. A state convention's replant process should address the congregation's and leadership's willingness to change and embrace a new identity with a new vision, new ministry strategies, and a new decision-making process with follow-through on implementing these changes.
   Select one
   - o Agree
   - o Disagree
   If you disagree, please explain why.

6. A replant process should help a replanting church develop evangelism and * discipleship ministries contextualized to their immediate community while maintaining biblical fidelity.
   Select one
   - o Agree
   - o Disagree
   If you disagree, please explain why.

7. A replant process should help a replanting church develop an assimilation strategy.
   Select one
   - o Agree
   - o Disagree
   If you disagree, please explain why.

8. A replant process should provide a replanting pastor with coaching, consulting, mentoring, pastoral care for the replanter and family, prayer support, and encouragement.
   Select one
   - o Agree
   - o Disagree
   If you disagree, please explain why.

9. A cohort for replanting pastors should be provided for in a replant process.
   Select one
   - o Agree
   - o Disagree
   If you disagree, please explain why.

10. The replanting process should train the replanting pastor and the local congregation in evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, strategic thinking and planning, community exegesis, and cross-cultural ministry awareness.
    Select one
    - o Agree
    - o Disagree
    If you disagree, please explain why.

11. The replanting congregation and pastor need an assessment to inform how they will be supported in replanting if it is evident that they are good candidates for the replanting process.
    Select one
    - o Agree
    - o Disagree
    If you disagree, please explain why.

12. The replanting congregation and pastor need local strategic partners (churches and associations) that can support and guide a church throughout the entire replanting effort with regular visits.
    Select one
    - o Agree
    - o Disagree
    If you disagree, please explain why.

13. The framework of the replanting process needs to be adaptive enough for various contexts (urban, rural, suburban, etc.) and multiple cultures while maintaining consistency in the process and support across these varying churches.
    Select one
    - o Agree
    - o Disagree
    If you disagree, please explain why.

14. A replanting process should help a replanting church understand its immediate cultural context and help it better relate, reach, and reflect its community.
    Select one
    - o Agree
    - o Disagree
    If you disagree, please explain why.

15. A convention's replanting process should be collaborative in how it relates to its local associations and churches by being committed to cooperation, providing clear, concise, and timely communication, education on the process, and being flexible when working with these partners to foster trust.
    Select one
     o Agree
     o Disagree
    If you disagree, please explain why.

16. A convention's replanting process should hold these collaborative values: integrity in the process, availability to the pastor, a commitment to walk with a church to the completion of the process, and prioritizing kingdom building over building its brand.
    Select one
     o Agree
     o Disagree
    If you disagree, please explain why.

17. A convention's replanting process should be local partner-oriented (local churches and associations) in its approach, looking for ways to complement the strengths and weaknesses of the local partners while they speak into the process.
    Select one
     o Agree
     o Disagree
    If you disagree, please explain why.

18. A replanting process should have a system for identifying, recruiting, and equipping replanting pastors.
    Select one
     o Agree
     o Disagree
    If you disagree, please explain why.

APPENDIX 7

THANK YOU AND INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH
REPLANTING PROCESS EVALUATION

The following letter thanked the context experts for participating in the Delphi

Study and invited them to grade the Texas Baptists Replant Process according to the

newly created Church Replanting Process Evaluation (see appendix 8).

Thank You and Introduction to Church Replanting Process Evaluation

Gentlemen,

Thank you again for your participation. The last step for this doctoral project is to have you grade the Texas Baptists Replant Process in the attached document. Anyone receiving this email can participate, whether you have participated in the previous Delphi study or not. The characteristics used for grading are the consensus results from the Delphi study.

- Attached is a document providing an overview of the Texas Baptists Replant Process. Please read the document before clicking the link below to grade the process
- The overview is not exhaustive but is detailed. Answer the evaluation as honestly as you can based on the document provided.
- The evaluation is not based on your personal experience or perception but solely on the information provided in the attached document
- If a characteristic or attribute appears to be missing, please mark it as missing

The link for the evaluation is below. Thank you for your time. I will share with you all the results from this evaluation next week, completing the project. Thank you again. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWh6JbS4fmzcrBCBW1aE2KtQBq78nTae rbWkK-XOqp5IoWQQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

In Christ,
Clay Jacobson

APPENDIX 8

CHURCH REPLANTING PROCESS EVALUATION

The following evaluation was the output of the three rounds of Delphi Study administrated by Clay Jacobson. The context expert panel used this evaluation to grade the Texas Baptists Replanting Process.

CHURCH REPLANTING PROCESS EVALUATION

Please read the overview emailed to you, before completing this evaluation.

Agreement to Participate
The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the essential characteristics of a comprehensive, transferable, and collaborative church replanting process. This research is being conducted by Clay Jacobson for purposes of doctoral project research at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this research, you will be asked to participate in an expert panel that will take part in a three-round Delphi study and evaluate the piloted process. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

By your completion of this participant qualifications survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.
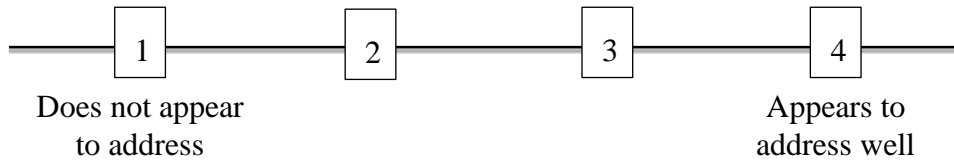
Mark only one.
   o   Yes
   o   No

1.   To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to be informed by a Baptist Faith and Message?
   o   Uninformed
   o   Somewhat uniformed
   o   Somewhat informed
   o   Informed
   Feedback or comments?

On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is "Does not appear to address well" and 4 is "Appears to address well," please rate each question.
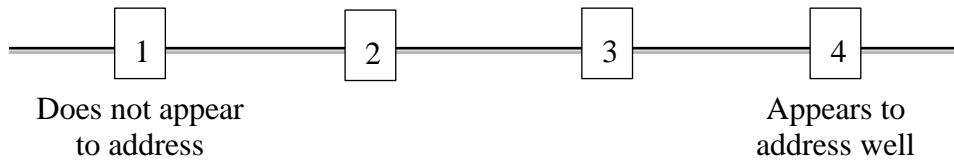
2.   To what degree does the TXB replanting process help a church address its reputation in the community?

Does not appear   Appears to
to address   address well

3. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to help a replanting church develop a prayer ministry and strategy that supports the replant effort, as well as providing resources for spiritual preparation geared toward changed hearts and minds?
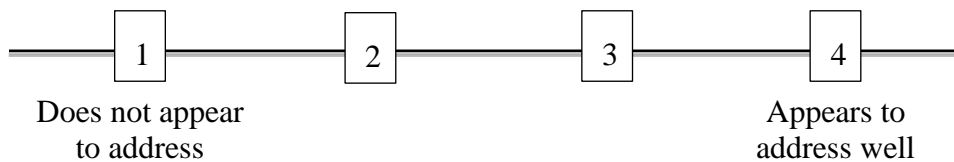
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear
to address

Appears to
address well

4. To what degree is the TXB replanting process appearing to be transparent with the congregation and briefing them on the likely changes they may need to implement and the reasoning behind the need to change?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

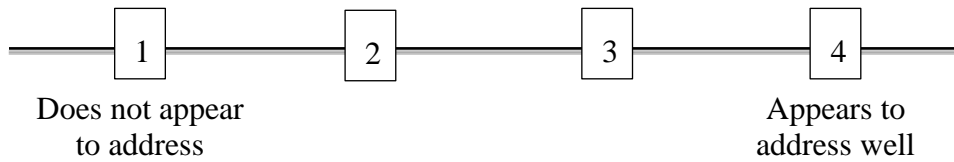Does not appear
to address

Appears to
address well

5. To what degree does the TXB replanting process address the congregation's and leadership's willingness to change and embrace a new identity with a new vision, new ministry strategies, and a new decision-making process with follow-through on implementing these changes?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear
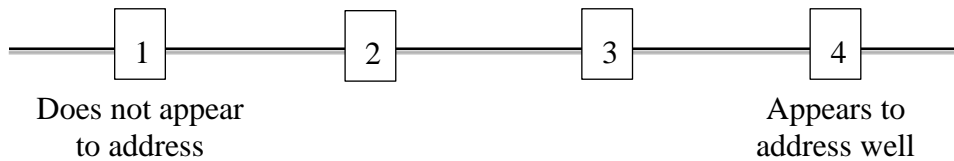to address

Appears to
address well

6. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to help a replanting church develop evangelism and discipleship ministries contextualized to their immediate community while maintaining biblical fidelity?
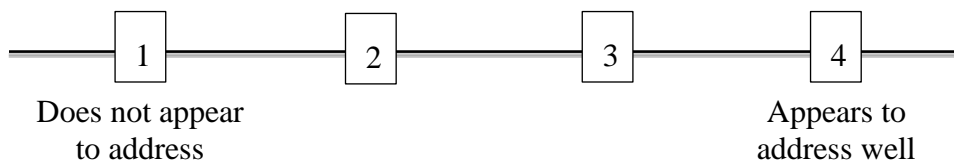
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear
to address

Appears to
address well

7. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to help a replanting church develop an assimilation strategy?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear
to address
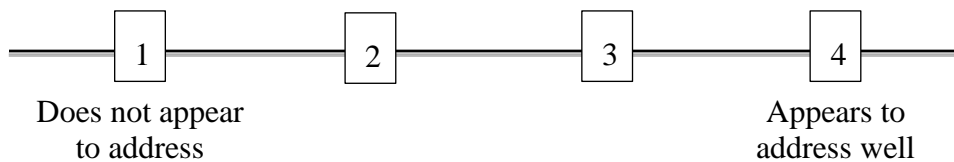　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Appears to
address well

8. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to provide a replanting pastor with coaching, consulting, mentoring, pastoral care for the replanter and family, prayer support, and encouragement?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear
to address
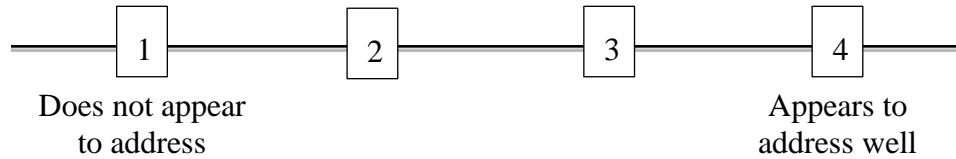　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Appears to
address well

9. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to train the replanting pastor and the local congregation in evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, strategic thinking and planning, community exegesis, and cross-cultural ministry awareness?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear
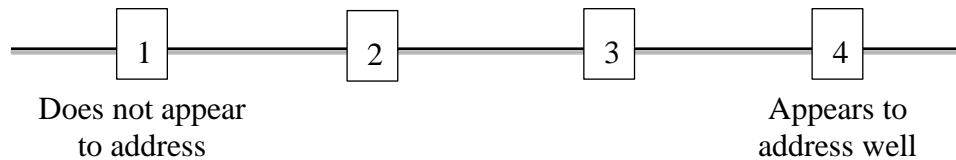to address
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Appears to
address well

10. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to provide an assessment for the replanting congregation and pastor to inform how they will be supported in replanting if it is evident that they are good candidates for the replanting process?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear
to address
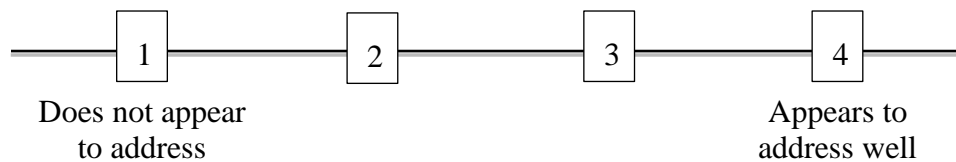　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Appears to
address well

11. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to be designed so that the replanting congregation and pastor have local strategic partners (churches and associations) that can support and guide a church throughout the entire replanting effort with regular visits?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear   Appears to
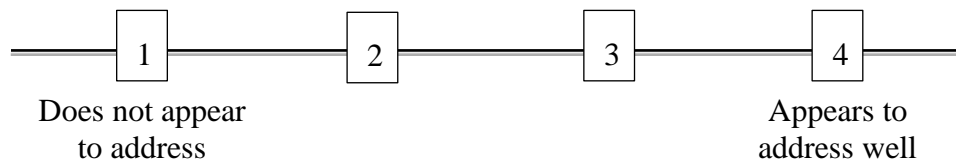to address   address well

12. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to have framework adaptive enough for various contexts (urban, rural, suburban, etc.) and multiple cultures while maintaining consistency in the process and support across these varying churches?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear   Appears to
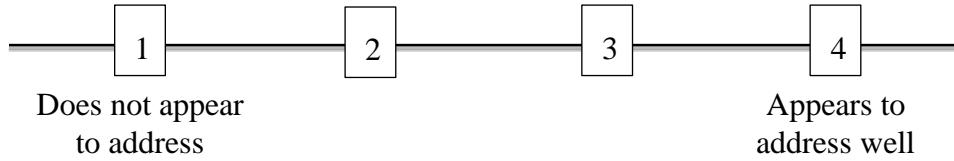to address   address well

13. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to help a replanting church understand its immediate cultural context and help it better relate, reach, and reflect its community?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear   Appears to
to address   address well

14. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to be collaborative in how it relates to its local associations and churches by being committed to cooperation, providing clear, concise, and timely communication, education on the process, and being flexible when working with these partners to foster trust?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear   Appears to
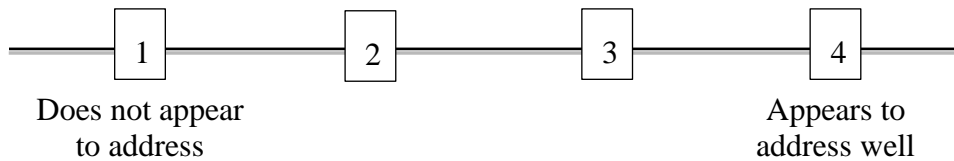to address   address well

15. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to hold these collaborative values: integrity in the process, availability to the pastor, a commitment to walk with a church to the completion of the process, and prioritizing kingdom building over building its brand?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear
to address

Appears to
address well

16. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to be local partner-oriented (local churches and associations) in its approach, looking for ways to complement the strengths and weaknesses of the local partners while they speak into the process?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear
to address

Appears to
address well

17. To what degree does the TXB replanting process appear to have a system for identifying, recruiting, and equipping replanting pastors?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Does not appear
to address

Appears to
address well

APPENDIX 9

THANK YOU AND RETURN OF
COMPILED RESULTS

Gentlemen,

Thank you all for your participation in this project. I have attached a PDF of the results of
the evaluation. I believe the Delphi Study's feedback will help us improve what we are
doing to help churches needing replanting. Most immediately, this allows me to wrap up
my doctoral work. Thank you all again. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions
or want more results from the work you've participated in. I have PDFs of each round
and am happy to share those.

In Christ,
Clay Jacobson

APPENDIX 10

TEXAS BAPTIST REPLANTING
APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

This appendix provides the Bible study questionnaire that is part of the Texas

Baptist replanting application.

Bible Study Questionnaire for Church Replanting

Please task 4-8 people nominated by the church to answer the questionnaire and submit these responses to the Texas Baptists Church Starting & Replanting office.

It is recommended that much prayer and thought be given to the Scriptures referenced and questions asked. This can be done over 7 weeks or several hours at the church's discretion.

Read Revelation 2:1-7

•　　What activities does this church do that increase membership's love for Jesus?
•　　In the church's history, was there a time when the church saw regular baptisms? If so, what has changed in the church and outside the church?
•　　What sacrifices are the membership willing to make to see people in their community know about Jesus?
•　　Who makes the big decisions in the church? Are they made with an attitude that is submissive to Jesus' authority over His church? If so, please give an example of submitting to Jesus' desire for the church.

Read Revelation 2:8-11

•　　Where does the membership turn for comfort when faced with hardship? Are there comforts that may rival Jesus? If so, what are they?
•　　Why is Jesus the best Comforter?
•　　What are the greatest concerns of the membership?
•　　In what ways has the church remained faithful?
•　　Are there ways in which the church has been unfaithful? If so, what are they?

Read Revelation 2:12-17

•　　Has the congregation passively allowed certain attitudes, behaviors, teaching, or actions that they should not have according to Scripture? If so, what were they?
•　　Are there currently activities, practices, or teachings being permitted in the church that are unbiblical? If so, what are they?
•　　Is the congregation willing to hold members accountable for compromising behaviors and teaching? Why or why not?

★ TEXAS BAPTISTS
Center for Missional Engagement

• Does the church have a process for holding membership and leadership accountable for faithful living and teaching? If so, what is this process? If not, why not?

Read Revelation 2:18-29

• Does the church have a statement of faith or a doctrinal statement? If so, how well does the congregation know it?
• In the church's history, were there unbiblical behaviors or teaching that damaged the church? If so, what are they?
• Is the church still needing to work through these issues to move forward? Which ones?
• Are there individuals in the church encouraging and/or practicing unbiblical behaviors or teaching? If so, what is church willing to do about it?

Read Revelation 3:1-7

• If things need to get done in the church, who does the congregation look toward?
• What does the church rely on most to keep going in this moment?
• Is there a dependency on the Holy Spirit to strengthen and accomplish the work of the church? If so, explain how the church demonstrates this dependency?
• How much prayer takes place in the life of the church? Please explain.

Read Revelation 3:7-13

• What words or phrases describe the church as it is now?
• Is there anything past or present that the church can point to that defines the identity of the church? If so, what?
• For what purpose does this church exist currently?
• What is the church holding on to now?

Read Revelation 3:14-22

• What does this church treasure?
• What, if lost or changed, would cause current members to not come back to this church?
• What is valued by this church, that may not be valued by Jesus?
• Is Jesus and the treasure He provides valued more at the church than other things and traditions treasured? Why or why not?
• What may the church be blind to seeing about its current condition?

APPENDIX 11

TEXAS BAPTIST REPLANTING
EXPLORATION

The Texas Baptists Replanting Exploration is a tool that is used to guide a congregation's leaders through considering whether replanting is the path they feel lead to pursue.

Replant
Exploration

TEXAS BAPTISTS

Replant Exploration

This process is designed to facilitate a church's exploration of and take the first steps towards replanting. It is only a process and cannot replace the need for the Lord to transform the minds and hearts of people, as well as, His Spirit to provide clarity and confirmation of His will for His people. This entire process must begin, be sustained, and end in prayer. *May the Spirit make the Father's will known to you as you seek to focus on, follow, celebrate, and proclaim the Christ Jesus, the Son.*

Overview:

- **Life only truly begins with Dying to self: Matt. 16:24-28**

- **Deliver S.W.O.T. Analysis**

- **Discuss S.W.O.T. Analysis Results**

- **Discover Potentials and Possibilities**

- **Dream of Opportunities**

- **Pray for Direction**

- **Enduring for Jesus: 2 Tim. 1:8-12**

- **Develop Direction**

- **Determine Plan of Action**

CHURCH

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Knowing Your Mission Field:

- **Religious Context:** Describe the community's religious state. What religions are represented? What denominations are represented? How open is the community to Christianity? What percentage of people are actively involved in church?

- **Church Context:** What are the specific characteristics of the churches in your area? Who are the main churches? Who is growing and who is in decline?

- **Trends:** How is the community changing? What are the generational and cultural shifts taking place? Is the community projected to grow, decline, stay about the same?

- **Community Stability:** What does the future look like for the local economy, school district, and industry?

Fulfilling the Mission:

- **Unreached and Unchurched in the Community:** What is the overall number of people within the church's community that have no relationship with Jesus and/or a local church?

- **Community Segments:** What are the main segments or groupings that could be defined from the overall population in the church's community? How do you categorize them: geography, ethnicity, age, type of family unit, language, nationality, etc.?

- **Target Group:** Now, after you identify various community segments, define your Target Group, specifically. Why are you choosing this target? Why do you think you will have success with this group? Why are you narrowing to only this group? Will you expand your Target Group in the future, why?

Community Services and Ministry: It is important that a congregation is aware of the current community services and ministries. Here are several things to consider when examining what is already being done in your area:

- **Partnership:** A church does not need to possess sole ownership of a ministry or service to its community. Often, there are opportunities to partner with existing services and ministries in the community. Is there a community service that the church could partner with that shares similar objectives as the church? What ministries or services is your membership already involved in that

CHURCH
S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

the church is not actively supporting? How might partnering maximize the church's resources and volunteers? How might partnering create opportunities to share the gospel?

- **Context:** Are you competing with the way people use their time and resources in the community? Do you have a *disruptive* product or service that will change minds/lives or does it blend in with other work being done in the community?
- **Missing Services:** By knowing what is being provided, you can examine the community's needs and see what is missing. What missing service(s) or ministry(ies) **are not present in your community?**
- **Uniqueness:** Why will your ministry or service stand out? Will you be engaging people other churches are missing? How will you do this?

S.W.O.T. Analysis: A S.W.O.T. (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats*) analysis assesses your church and your current environment in terms of strengths and weaknesses (internal) and opportunities and threats (external). This is a good exercise to go through on an annual basis. After completing your analysis, provide your thoughts on: how your strengths can help you to maximize opportunities and minimize threats; how your weaknesses can slow your ability to capitalize on the opportunities; and how could your weaknesses expose you to threats?

CHURCH
S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

- **Strengths (Inside the church):** What are your church's strengths currently? How do you see this changing in the future?
  Examples:
    - Advantages over other ministries/churches
    - Capabilities
    - People and Assets
    - Financial reserves & Giving
    - Ministries
    - Facilities
    - Staff
    - Systems of operation
    - Leadership development

- **Weaknesses (Inside the church):** In what ways would you say your church is struggling? What are the most important weaknesses to overcome first? Limitations?
  Examples:
    - Disadvantages compared to other ministries/churches
    - Gaps in stated values and practiced values
    - Finances
    - Volunteer base
    - Membership's capacity
    - Loss of members
    - Areas needing improvement in ministry
    - Facilities
    - Staff needs
    - Systems of operation/decision making
    - Clarity of vision for the future

5

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CHURCH

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Opportunities (In the community): With ministry improvements or new partnerships could your church pursue? What needs exist in the community that you could serve?

Examples:

- Areas to improve
- Changes in the community creating opportunities (Growth? Demographic shifts?)
- Community needs
- Openness to church participation
- Partner with ministries and community services
- The number of unchurched/unreached in the community
- The church's reputation in the community

- **Threats (In the community):** What external factors could put pressure on your church and challenge your attempts to reach people? Which of these threats can you control? Which ones can't you control?

Examples:

- Economic, demographic, cultural shifts in the community
- Competition for people's time
- The church's reputation in the community
- Local politics and/or policies
- Obstacles
- The Unknown
- Crises (pandemic, moral failure of key staff, natural disaster, financial downturns et al)

Replant Exploration

Top 3-5 Strengths	Top 3-5 Weaknesses
Top 3-5 Opportunities in the Community	Top 3-5 Challenges in the Community

Discovering & Dreaming

- What connections do you see between the strengths of the church and the opportunities in the community?
- What might it take to overcome the threats or challenges in the community?
- How might the church's weakness be addressed? Can they be addressed? DO they need to be addressed?
- What words or phrases have you heard today that are standing out to you?
- Pray and ask the Lord to open your eyes to the possibilities and needs of your community

Discovering & Dreaming

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If the church pursued some of these dreams, what would the church look like in 2-3 years?

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Developing Direction

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Determine Action Steps

- What steps must be taken in the next 3-6 months to accomplish our goals?
- What resources will be needed to accomplish these goals?
- What preparation or training is needed?
- Who will do what?
- Are there timelines or deadlines that need to be set?

Replant Preparation:

☐ Replant Team

☐ Spiritual Preparation

☐ Set Tentative Relaunch Date & Fallow/Preparation Period

☐ Replant Pastor
- o Replant Pastor Profile & Search
- o Assessment
- o Training

☐ New DNA:
- o Address Unresolved Issues
- o Develop Evangelism & Outreach Strategies and Habits
- o Develop Discipleship Plan and Paths
- o Name & Identity Statement
- o Develop & Equip Core/Launch Team

☐ Recruit Church Partners

☐ Adjusted Replant Budget

☐ Replant Prospectus Presented to Partners

APPENDIX 12

TEXAS BAPTIST REPLANTING
PROCESS

The Texas Baptist Replanting Process is an overview of how Texas Baptists would work with a church desiring to replant.

![Texas Baptists logo]

Church Replanting

Clay Jacobson, Church Starting Strategist
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Purpose

Texas Baptists Church Replanting Process is designed to provide consulting, coaching, strategic planning and resources to Texas Baptists churches as they embrace God's plan for their future. This manual outlines the local church criteria for replanting and the Replanting Process. The Replant Process is designed around four pillars:

Texas Baptists Values of Church Replanting

- **Local Church Autonomy:** Texas Baptists work with replanting congregations and replanting pastors that have partnered with another Texas Baptists congregation as a Partnering Church for the Replant Process. Replanting congregations (local church members) must empower replanting pastors to lead them in new directions.
- **Cooperation:** Texas Baptists partner with denominational entities, local associations, networks, and local congregations because we can do more together for the sake of the gospel than apart.
- **Accountability:** Texas Baptists have established practices that hold all partners, including Texas Baptists, accountable: board oversight of Texas Baptists Church Replanting, monthly reporting, and quarterly face-to-face meetings.
- **Sustainability:** Texas Baptists are committed to replanting sustainable Texas Baptists churches, so replant consultations, coaching, strategic planning, and resourcing are each designed to foster self-sustaining local churches.

Partners

Replanting Church a congregation that has realized, accepted, and agreed to enter into the Replanting Process, meeting all the criteria as outlined in the Replanting Criteria

Replanting Pastor the minister leading the Replanting Church through the Replanting Process.

Primary Partnering Church is a Texas Baptists church, regulary supporting the Cooperative Program and the state missions offering, that agrees to partner and support a replanting church.

Local Baptist Assocation or Network is a organization of cooperating like-minded churches working together to strengthen local churches and start new churches.

Regional Church Starting Strategist (CSS) An employee of Texas Baptists that works with Texas Baptists churches, networks, associations and potential church planters and replant to start new churches and replant existing churches.

Mission Funding Council approves all replanting funding and ensures funds are spent under the guidelines of Executive Board policy and procedures. The Mission Funding Council (MFC) expects the CSS to communicate convention policy and ensure all covenant obligations are met. The budgets and funding levels of each replanting church is approved and set by the MFC.

Church Replanting

Criteria

In order to be considered a Replanting Church, a church must meet 3 or more of the following requirements:

- **Change of Name** the name change should reflect the embrace of a new vision, new strategy, and new identity. Slight alterations to meet this requirement are not sufficient.
- **Change of Leadership** typically, a replanting church must change or adjust its decision making processes and this means the need for new leadership structures, new lay leaders, and/or new pastoral leadership.
- **Change of Location** if the church is no longer able to effectively minister to its immediate community and/or maintain its facility a relocation may be necessary
- **Change of Vision and Ministry Strategy** this doesn't mean simply "try new things," this is a change in the church's identity, values, and ministry strategies for worship, evangelism, and discipleship. A Replanting Church must adopt new DNA.
- **Change of Target Group for Outreach** the Replanting Church's Vision and Ministry Strategy is clearly focused on specific socio-economic and cultural people groups represented in their immediate community in order for the church to effectively reach people with the gospel and reflect its community.

Process

- Interest Meeting
- Replant Church Application
- Discovery Meeting
- Replanting Strategy Meeting
- Strategic Partnership Meeting
- Mission Funding Council Review
- Funding Process
- Growth Reviews

Interest Meeting may be held to explain the Church Replanting Process to a church, Missions Committee or potential replanting pastor. We suggest that early in the process, the Replanting Church contact the Director of Missions (DOM) for the local Baptist Association. They may be able to assist with potential Primary Partner Church, replanting pastoral candidates, feasibility studies and other strategic resources. A Primary Partner Church is needed to begin the Discovery Meeting, which is the next phase in the Church Replanting process after an online application.

Replanting Church Application Fill out an online application at
https://texasbaptists.org/ministries/missions/church-starting/application. Afterwards, a phone call from a Church Starting Ministry Assistant will confirm the application information. The ministry assistant will contact the Texas

Baptists Church Starting Strategist for follow up. The Replanting Pastor will receive a Ministry Safe background check to be completed.

Discovery Meeting the meeting between the Church Starting Strategist (CSS), the prospective Replanting Church, and other possible partners to discover a potential replanting pastor, the Replanting Church's strategy for replanting, and the resources available to support the Replanting Church's strategy. The methods of discovery used are the following and would be scheduled at this meeting:

- An assessment of the Replanting Church provided by the Church Starting Strategist and/or a staff member of the local association that detail strengths and weakness of the church and the challenges and opportunities that exist in the community of the Replanting Church that would inform the replanting strategy
- An assessment of the Replanting Pastor to determine the pastor's strengths and weakness that would inform the replanting strategy (see Appendix for Characteristics of a Replanting Pastor)
- A Replant Strategy Consultation is scheduled after both assessments for the pastor and church are completed.

Replanting Strategy Consultation this is an intensive 1-3 day consultation provided by the Church Starting Strategist to the leadership of the Replanting Church. These leaders are taken though a strategic process to develop a new vision for their church, clearly stated values of the church, and 3 year goals with a 3 months plan to move the church towards their 3 year goals. These outcomes will inform the Replanting Church in their development of a proposal for replanting and budget, creating the Replanting Strategy. Sample proposals can be provide by the Church Starting Strategist.

The Replanting Strategy from this consultation are to be voted on and approved by the Replanting Church's membership and will be the strategy presented to the Primary Partner Church and other partners at the Strategic Partnership Meeting. Items to bring to Strategic Partnership Meeting:

- Church Replanting Proposal
- Church Replanting Budget

Strategic Partnership Meeting discuss covenant expectations, accountability, partner support, Replanting Strategy and establish the Strategic Partners.

Strategic Partners (signatories to the covenant) will develop a final, agreed upon Church Replanting Budget for the Replanting Church based upon financial commitments from all partners. The Strategic Partners will update the Church Replanting Budget at every Growth Review, once a quarter. This finalized Church Replanting Budget with all partner resources included needs to be voted on and accepted by the members of the Replanting Church.

Replanting Church covenant expectations:

- Monthly Cooperative Program Giving
- Monthly Reports Submitted
- Quarterly Growth Reviews with Strategic Partners
- Within 5 years of the covenant agreement this Replant Church will be self-supporting, self-governing involved in supporting other replanting and/or church planting efforts.

- The Replanting Church start is asked to seek the counsel of all covenant partners before reworking its bylaws and constitution, if such is requested while under the covenant.

Primary Partner Church covenant expectations:

- Set a good example for the replanting church in Cooperative Program giving on a regular basis – preferably monthly. (This is how we replenish church starting and replanting funds for future new and replant churches.)
- Support the Replanting Church through prayer by providing: funding, people, mentoring, mission teams, administrative support, and/or other strategic needs

Texas Baptists Church Starting Strategist covenant expectations:

- Receive and be informed by the monthly report.
- Earnestly provide assistance to meet the needs to the Replanting Church.
- Encourage the congregation to start a new/replant a church.
- Meet regularly with the Replanting Church Pastor.
- Provide an approved Texas Baptists Mentor/Coach.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for the Replanting Church to participate in Texas Baptists life.

The Church Replanting Covenant is signed by all partners (addendums may be added by any partner to the basic covenant at the time of signing) after all issues and agreements are clarified and understood (see Appendix for Church Replanting Covenant).

Mission Funding Council Review the Church Starting Strategist will submit the covenant and any request for funding to the Mission Funding Counsel (MFC) using the Replanting Proposal and Budget developed by the Strategic Partners. MFC must approve the Replanting Church Budget for the funding process to begin. Depending on the time of month the Strategic Partnership Meeting is completed, it may take a month to a month and a half for approval.

Funding Process the funding process is 36 months, with the option to extend the process an additional 6 months and increase funding dependent on performance and MFC approval. Monthly support is sent out *after Monthly Reports are submitted* by the Replanting Church.

Growth Reviews once every 3 months, the strategic partners are to meet to:

- At each Growth Review, the Strategic Partners will assess the Replanting Strategy and Budget by analyzing statistics, growth and maturity; and will record accomplishments, concerns and future goals.
- The Replanting Church budget will be redesigned based on growth and development at each Growth Review.
- The Replanting Pastor is responsible for scheduling a sequential Growth Review is to be scheduled at the end of each Growth Review with the Strategic Partners.
- The Church Starting Strategist is responsible to keep the other Strategic Partners aware of additional Texas Baptists resources available to support the Replanting Strategy

Additional Resources

- Architecture Department Site Evaluation
- Coaching for Replanting Pastor
- E-Training resources
- Retirement with Guidestone
- Worship Catalyst (Worship Leader & Team Development)

- Christian Counseling for the Replanting Pastor and immediate family
- Training and Professional Development
- Special Funding request for sound equipment, web site, and conferences

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Characteristics of a Replanting Pastor

Visionary Shepherd has the ability to sense and see God's next steps for a congregation and the capacity to lead the church forward as a loving shepherd. He is patient, wise, strategic, and relational.

Gospel Orientation refers to aligning the culture and practice of the church in such a way that the core doctrine of the gospel drives its mission and practice in preaching, managing conflict, and leading organizational change.

Missional Focus is the priority to equip and mobilize the congregation to live their life on mission in their community and beyond for the sake of Christ and His gospel.

Organizational Awareness is the understanding how power dynamics work within the church, anticipating how changes would be received, recognizing where change may produce friction, and showing an awareness of how current practice and changes affected their position within the community in which they served.

Pastoral Grit is the ability to persevere through the inevitable difficulties of replanting and remain steadfast to shepherd the church forward as God uses the Replanting Pastor to turn a dying church around.

Spousal Perseverance the Replanting Pastor's wife possesses a love for Jesus and the church. She is emotionally and spiritually prepared for the challenges that come with replanting a dying church.

Resourceful Generalist the ability to speak into and lead in a variety of areas in order to lead the church well. There is no task beneath him.

Tactical Patience is the ability to skillfully implement change at a pace that is appropriate to a specific congregation's health and needs. It is about having the discernment of knowing when something must be changed and how it should be changed.

Initiative leading the church with a passion rooted in biblical convictions and demonstrated in a bias for action. The replanting pastor proactively works to avoid problems, as well as finding or creating new opportunities.

Emotional Intelligence is the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's own emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.

Affinity for Multi-Generational Ministry the ability to connect easily with both the young and old in the congregation so each group knows they are loved, valued, and heard, and so all ages are pastored well.

Respect for a Church's Legacy the knowledge of how to love and build off of a church's past without allowing people in the congregation to idolize it in an unhealthy way.

Willingness to Confront the ability to willingly (not eagerly) navigate conflict with directness, love, humility, patience, and wisdom – driven by a love for the church and her members.

Developed from the 14 Characteristics of A Replanter, adapted by JimBo Stewart with SEND Network's REPLANT

APPENDIX 13

CHURCH REPLANTING COVENANT

This appendix contains the church replanting covenant completed by the replanting church and the partner church.

Church Replanting Covenant

Name of Replanting Church:_____ Church ID #:_____

Address of Replanting Church:_____

Phone Number:_____ Email:_____

The undersigned Partners hereby enter into covenant relationship, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to develop this Replanting Church into a reproducing and contributing congregation that is uniquely aligned with Texas Baptists (BGCT). All parties involved agree that final authority and responsibility for actions and activities of the Replanting church rest with the Replant congregation and the Partner Church. The parties realize that major decisions ideally are made through consensus agreement among the signatories. Major decisions include matters relating to budget (salaries, outside support, missions giving and facilities costs); the calling of a pastor; meeting place (temporary space as well as planning and financing of permanent buildings); and non-budget items. Any party may withdraw from participation in the agreement should that party's policies and normal procedures be violated, but this will conclude the Replanting process.

Signing this Covenant indicates the parties have read and understand this Covenant.

The **Replanting Church** agrees to:
1. Complete a monthly report and send it to all Partners.
2. Give monthly to the Cooperative Program through the BGCT as indicated on page 2.
3. Lead congregation to participate in Texas Baptists Missions
4. Meet regularly with the Texas Baptists Church Starter.
5. Place the words **"this church is a Baptist church, cooperating with Texas Baptists"** in the founding documents of the replanting church.
6. Pastor will work with an approved Mentor/Coach.
7. Participate in Texas Baptists life, including but not limited to the convention's annual meetings and training events.
8. Inform the Texas Baptists Church Starter within twenty days if the church ceases to meet or disbands.

The **Partner Church** agrees to:
1. Remain in full cooperation with the BGCT as evidenced by ongoing (preferably monthly) Cooperative Program giving.
2. Support the Replanting Church through prayer by providing: funding, people, mentoring, mission teams, administrative support, and/or other strategic needs.

The Church receiving Texas Baptists Funding for Replanting Church:
   a. Manage, expend and account for any funds it receives on behalf of the Replanting Church and provide an itemized written report when requested.

     b. Spend funds provided by the Texas Baptists only for the designated Replanting Church.

     c. Forward to the Replanting Church any unspent dedicated funds when the Replanting Church constitutes as an autonomous congregation. Should the Replanting Church congregation cease to exist, all remaining Texas Baptist provided funds received and held by the Partner Church or held directly by the Replant Church are to be returned to the Texas Baptists. Upon dissolution of the Replanting Church, disposition of all assets of the Replanting Church will be set in writing and approved by all remaining Covenant Partners or as directed in the Replant Church's founding documents.

The **Texas Baptists Church Starting Strategist (CSS)** agrees to:
1. Receive and be informed by the monthly report.
2. Earnestly provide assistance to meet the needs to the Replanting Church.
3. Encourage the congregation to start a new/replant a church.
4. Meet regularly with the Replanting Church Pastor.
5. Provide an approved Texas Baptists Mentor/Coach.
6. Encourage and provide opportunities for the Replanting Church to participate in Texas Baptists life.

Agreed upon Cooperative Program and Affinity percentage giving:

_ 7% BGCT (Texas Baptists) Cooperative Program, 3% (local Association)

__ % BGCT (Texas Baptists) Cooperative Program __% (local Association), __ % _____

Texas Baptists Representative:
Texas Baptists CSS_____ Date: _____

Partner Church:
By agreement of the _____ Church in conference or by authorized representative:
Signature:_____ Print Name: _____ Date:_____

Replanting Church Representative: If out of development, this agreement should be signed by:
Replanting Church Representative/Pastor:_____
Print Name: _____ Title: _____

Partnering Association:
By agreement of the _____ Association on _____(Date).
Signed by authorized Associational Representative: _____
Print Name:_____ Title: _____

Missions Funding Group of the Texas Baptists Executive Board:
By agreement of the Missions Funding Council of the Texas Baptists Executive Board on:
(Date) _____
Signed by Missions Funding Council Chairperson: _____

A Partner may indicate their agreement with an addendum at the end of this form. Any resources proposed here by the Partners and in any subsequent meeting are subject to the written approval of the governing bodies represented by each Partner.

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ABSTRACT

EVALUATING A COMPREHENSIVE, TRANSFERABLE, AND
COLLABORATIVE CHURCH REPLANTING PROCESS
FOR TEXAS BAPTISTS

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2023
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The purpose of this project is to evaluate a comprehensive, transferable, and collaborative process for replanting Texas Baptists churches. Chapter 1 briefly presents the history of the TXB replanting process and introduces the project goals and research methodology. Chapter 2 describes the project's biblical basis, drawing inspiration for the replanting process from the seven letters to the churches (Rev 2–3) that emphasize Christ as the source of hope, renewal, comfort, identity, and purpose. Chapter 3 details the organizational and practical issues of replanting churches across different contexts and cultures. Chapter 4 reviews the project implementation, in which a panel of church revitalization experts agreed on the essential characteristics of the church replanting process. This consensus was used as a rubric to grade the current replanting process being piloted by Texas Baptists and recommend improvements. Chapter 5 evaluates the project based on completion of specified goals.

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