A Study of the Traits and Characteristics of Pastors Open to Collaborating in Mission in the
Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

A Proposal for the Professional Project

Doctor of Ministry

Submitted by

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Introduction

Rationale and Root Problem

According to the California, Nevada, Hawaii District President, Rev. Dr. Robert Newton, at the 2018 Lutheran Society for Missiology keynote address, "Our church body (the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS)) is right at a fork in the road where she chooses to walk with the mission of God, faithfully, or she chooses not just to ignore it, but, I would say, to reject it." Newton contends that the LCMS is proposing a "church-protected" Gospel, rather than the church being gathered only where the Gospel is proclaimed. Currently the LCMS is largely "defensive" rather than "offensive" for the sake of those who do not know Jesus. [1]

Rev. Michael Newman shares the same concern. Newman is the former Executive Director of Missions in the Texas District of the LCMS and was elected in 2018 to be the Texas District President. At the 2015 Lutheran Society of Missions banquet at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Newman gave a presentation titled "The Real LCMS: Strands of DNA from the Movement called 'Missouri.'" [2] In this presentation Rev Newman outlined five lost strands of LCMS DNA. 1. People: a passion for the souls of people. As in many struggling organizations, structure and control become more important than the people within and outside of the organization, in this case, LCMS churches.

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1. Robert Newton, "Recovering the Heart of Mission," Keynote Address, Lutheran Society for Mission, St. Louis, February 2018.

2. Michael Newman, "The Real LCMS: Strands of DNA from the Movement called 'Missouri,'" Presentation, Lutheran Society of Missions Banquet at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, April 22, 2015.

2. Self-Sacrifice: pastors and lay leaders who were willing to go above and beyond so that people would know Jesus. Unfortunately, an overemphasis on the office of Holy Ministry can often lead denominations to protect the pastoral office at the expense of reaching those who do not know Jesus.

3. Multiplication: the LCMS was engaged in a church planting movement in the late 19th into the mid-20th century. One new church was planted every other day in the late 19th century, and these churches were inclusive of more than simply German immigrants. The statement has been made by some LCMS leaders that the church body is shrinking because LCMS female members are simply not having as many babies as they once did. [3] While birthrates have declined, the LCMS must focus on how to improve on the current reality that "35% of LCMS adults today came in as adult converts." Current LCMS president Harrison acknowledges, "Outreach is vital. We would lose our Lutheran soul if we failed to be concerned with the church's primary mission." [4] Yet, few discernible changes to the current LCMS systems have been made to change denominational decline.

4. Truth: The LCMS has always championed the truth of the Gospel. This part of LCMS DNA will come under fiercer attack in the years to come as the prevailing cultural current becomes more opposed to the truths of God's Law. [5]

5. Creativity: The LCMS was intentional about training and empowering both ordained clergy and evangelists in its early years. Seminary education was actually shorter than the current

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3. Matthew C. Harrison, *Joy:Fully Lutheran: A Message to the Church about the challenges we face and how to face them,* LCMS document produced for participants attending the 35 LCMS District Conventions in 2018, 20-21.

4. Harrison, *Joy:Fully Lutheran,* 22.

5. Newman, "The Real LCMS".

4-year path because the need was so great for pastors in the field. There is a current debate in the LCMS about how much education is "enough" before a man is ordained and called to the pastoral office.[6]

This thesis project attempted to play a role in highlighting and re-kindling this lost LCMS DNA, specifically relating to inter-church collaboration in mission, with the goal that creative church multiplication occurred, and those who did not know Jesus came to faith. This thesis also displayed how Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest District in the LCMS attempted to identify the pastoral traits and characteristics for collaboration in mission, in the hopes that other LCMS circuits would do the same.

The LCMS Handbook: The Role of the Circuit

Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest District is a part of the LCMS. The LCMS handbook provides strong encouragement to see circuit meetings as gatherings for strategizing for the expansion of God's kingdom. "The circuit is a network of congregations that 'walk together' for mutual care, support, advice, study, ecclesiastical encouragement, service, coordination, resources, and counsel all for the sake of greater congregational participation in God's mission."[7]

The synodical handbook offers two strategies for empowering inter-church circuit collaboration for mission endeavors. The first strategy is through a biannual gathering of pastors

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6. The Pacific Southwest District had a wonderful ministry program called, "The Lay Leadership Training Program." It took 2 years and allowed the church to produce theologically trained "deacons" who serve under the pastoral office, while allowing the man to remain in his home congregation context. Many deacons have no desire to be ordained. They simply want to provide spiritual care for their congregation through teaching and visitation and worship assistance. At the 2016 LCMS Convention the Licensed Lay Leadership program was voted against maintaining. This was a controversial vote. Current licensed lay deacons serving as the sole "pastoral" leader in their congregation were given individualized paths toward ordination. Licensed lay deacons serving under an ordained pastor will no longer be trained and licensed, though many congregations are continuing to use the services of licensed lay deacons (including the congregation of the researcher).

7. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Handbook, section 5.1.1.

with their key lay leaders in a "circuit forum." "The circuit forum is the group which aids the process of keeping congregations, particularly the lay leaders, commissioned ministers, and pastors, supportive of one another in their common confession and mutually active in developing programs for the good of member congregations, in considering and recommending new work, and in suggesting improvements for services and programming at the national and district levels and is encouraged to meet at least twice a year." Circuit forums are also encouraged to develop and adopt within existing policies of the respective regional district, in this case the Pacific Southwest District, complementary and sometimes joint plans for mission outreach in the circuit area. [8]

The synodical handbook also encourages a second strategy for collaboration through the tri-annual "circuit convocation". The goal is to invite leaders from every circuit congregation to hear the collaborative missional strategy that developed in the monthly pastoral circuit meetings and the twice-a-year circuit forums. "The circuit convocation provides the setting in which congregational members may know of and celebrate the ministry pursued by each congregation, may review and discuss the work of the circuit forum, may discuss and evaluate mission potential within the circuit, and may receive information on various phases of the work pursued through districts and the Synod." [9]

The synodical handbook clearly desires the gathering of circuit pastors to be consistent, strategic and kingdom expanding. Here lies the problem – based on interviews with LCMS District Presidents few circuits function this way. As this thesis demonstrates, Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest District began to function in this way. To fill the missional void within the

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8. LCMS Handbook, section 5.3.1.

9. LCMS Handbook, section 5.3.4.

wider LCMS, mission agencies have been developed. Two intentional mission para-church networks are the FiveTwo and LINC. [10] FiveTwo develops and deploys kingdom-expanding entrepreneurs (church planters and non-profit starters) for the sake of those who do not know Jesus. LINC starts new churches in urban areas (Houston, Minneapolis, Los Angeles) using indigenous leaders to reach people groups underserved by the local church. Both of these para-church organizations seek to start new churches and kingdom minded non-profits to reach the lost. This project sought to incorporate missional ideas found in para-church organizations through inclusion in monthly pastoral circuit meetings.

Project Problem

The project problems are twofold. One, the LCMS is a numerically declining church body. The Lutheran Witness says, "After more than two decades of slow but persistent decline, our numbers admittedly aren't what they used to be — but they still show the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to be a large and vibrant body of believers." The LCMS has declined from 2.7 million baptized members in 1966 to just under 2.0 million baptized members in 2019. [11]

Two, pastoral collaboration in mission is inconsistent among our individual pastors and their churches. As discussed in chapter 3, pastors can be divided into "camps" using words such as "evangelical" and "confessional." Robert Newton says the present moniker so popular among many – "confessional" Lutherans – has replaced our historic name of "evangelical" Lutherans. [12] No research has been done in the LCMS to assess the extent to which pastors and churches are

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10. www.fivetwo.com; www.linchouston.org

11. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "LCMS Official Roster and Statistics", https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=0P6YfWqhIvpvei9cTSh0dBsbgoWy78VV (accessed January 7, 2019).

12. Newton, "Recovering the Heart of Mission".

collaborating in mission in the local circuit. Therefore, this project was needed and will be offered to the LCMS and wider church.

Research Question

This thesis project included aspects of both quantitative and qualitative research seeking to understand one fundamental research question: what are the personal traits and characteristics of a pastor that make him receptive to collaborating in mission? The researcher will then detail an effective intervention that promotes the development of collaborative pastors and missional churches.

While considering this research question, it is important to note that the researcher recognized that there is an additional challenge to be studied that is beyond the scope of this research project. The researcher left as a follow up study how to assist and motivate pastors that demonstrate traits and characteristics that are not conducive to collaboration in mission.

The research was two-fold. In partnership with LCMS Department of Rosters and Statistics, the researcher randomly and anonymously surveyed approximately three hundred LCMS pastors to establish benchmark data for current LCMS pastors who collaborate in mission in their circuit. The researcher then determined the traits and characteristics of pastors willing to collaborate in mission by inviting the three hundred pastors who took the anonymous survey to take the Harrison Assessment (HA) tool to build a profile of the traits and characteristics of pastors who collaborate in mission. Finally, the researcher finished by laying the groundwork for possible interventions and strategies that invite present and future LCMS pastors into a ministry life that includes collaboration in mission.

Chapter Two Summary

Chapter two sought to accomplish two things. It provides a brief theological context and overview for the importance of collaboration in mission as well as provides a sketch of the biblical and theological basis rooted in both the Old and New Testament.

The Biblical justification for this thesis is rooted in the missional hermeneutic of the entirety of Scripture. Chapter two explored much of Christopher Wright's book, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*, where he writes, "My major concern has been to develop an approach to biblical hermeneutics that sees the mission of God (and the participation in it of God's people) as a framework within which we can read the whole Bible."[13] Chapter two explored Old Testament stories such as God's pursuit of His people since the fall and Yahweh's mission to deliver his people through the Exodus story. God not only goes on mission to save his fallen people, but he actually collaborates with them in his redemptive mission. Chapter two unpacked how God consistently collaborates with his fallen creation through leaders such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the prophets.

The Scriptures are God's mission document to make disciples of Jesus for the sake of those who do not worship and follow the one true God.[14] Darrell Guder's book, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology,* highlights the urgent need for a missional hermeneutic that enables the church to "encounter Scripture as the testimony God uses to form his people for their missional calling."[15]

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13. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2006), 12.

14. Matt. 28:19-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

15. Darrell L. Guder, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 56.

The embodiment of collaboration in mission is found throughout the Scriptures, especially in the Trinity itself. In the New Testament, Jesus makes statements about His collaboration with the Father.[16] John the Baptist asserts that to see Jesus is to experience the reign and mission of God (the Father) in all its fullness (Matthew 3:2). Chapter two highlighted how the Triune God is the epitome of collaboration in mission.

Chapter two also unpacked the story of Jesus in the Gospels as an example of God's collaborative mission. The sending of the 72 disciples in Luke 10 is a fantastic example of Jesus' collaboration in mission through sending them out "two by two". Matthew's words from 16:18 and Matthew 28:19-20 will also be used to dynamically demonstrate Jesus' heart for collaboration in mission.

Further, chapter two exhibited St. Paul as a collaborative missionary. Paul told stories of churches in need, especially in Jerusalem, and led surrounding churches to collaborate to meet the church's missional need. First Corinthians 8:1-7 displays how the church is called to collaboratively care for fellow churches in moments of need. Paul believed that the early churches were united in mission, and therefore responsible for one another. If Paul led the early church in this manner even across countries and continents, how much more necessary is it for pastors and churches in the same synodical fellowship to collaborate in mission? This is the primary mission of this project.

Finally, chapter two explored how the local church was created by God for mission to its local community and world. The consistent numerical decline, not just of the LCMS, but of mainline Christian churches in the United States is informing this project. The newest survey by

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16. John 14-17 offers many examples of collaboration between the Father and the Son.

Pew Research highlights the trend. "Between 2007 and 2014, the Christian share of the population fell from 78.6% to 70.4%, driven mainly by declines in mainline Protestants and Catholics."[17] Reversing declining statistics of the LCMS (or the wider church) is not a primary focus of this thesis project but is a likely outcome from its findings. At the heart of this thesis was a strong desire for believers, starting with collaborative pastors, to intentionally disciple Jesus followers to bring the life-saving Gospel of the risen Jesus to those who do not believe. As current LCMS President, Matthew Harrison, says, "The information (LCMS numerical decline) which follows is no excuse for lack of evangelism zeal, laziness, poor practice, weak preaching, lack of visitation, etc."[18] Yet, synodical leaders have struggled to innovate and execute systemically to address denominational decline.

Why a collaborative missional theology and practice is necessary was addressed. Darrell L. Guder's book titled, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology*, was referenced throughout this project. John R. Franke states in the forward that part of our modern-day problems with mission stem from the fact that "courses in missiology are generally taught only in the practical theology department of seminaries and are often primarily for those heading overseas…missiology and systematic theology have generally evidenced little significant overlap or interaction." [19] Guder and the authors of *Missional Church* portray one of two paths which the 21st century church can take: "Either we are defined by mission, or we reduce the scope of the gospel and the mandate of the church. Thus, our challenge today is to move from church with

17. Michael Lipka, "5 Key Findings About the Changing U.S. Religious Landscape," *Pew Research Center,* 12 May 2015, http://pewrsr.ch/1F4nubm.

18. Harrison, *Joy:Fully Lutheran,* 18.

19. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 6.

mission to missional church."[20] Missional disciple making, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is central to what it means to be the local church.[21]

Chapter two demonstrated how it is necessary for the local church to view their theology of mission as not just global, but also local. Mission is carried out "right here" in the name of the Triune God for the sake of people in our communities who do not know and follow Jesus. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that the local congregation see herself and act as those who are filled with the Holy Spirit. The church then gets the privilege of collaborating with the Holy Spirit, and each other as members of Christ's church, in our varying contexts in mission for the sake of unbelievers.

Chapter Three Summary

Chapter three began by identifying mission multiplication movements outside the LCMS, led by groups such as Exponential.[22] Exponential is a network of church plants that imbed in their church "DNA" the necessity to start churches that start churches. The para-church organization Leadership Network has also written several books about missional multiplication, many of them authored by Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird. One of their best-known titles is *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers*.[23] Numerous other inter-denominational movements are mentioned, some of which encourage collaboration in mission.

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20. Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church: A Theological Vision for the Sending Church of North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 6.

21. Matt. 28:19-20.

22. Exponential, www.exponential.org (accessed July 1, 2019).

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

The researcher also reviewed the literature relating to the major factors which lead to LCMS church growth, investigated historical LCMS attempts at repairing church conflict that impaired church growth, and researched current attempts at collaborating in mission both within and outside of the LCMS. The researcher also explored the current LCMS structure and organization, the challenges of individual congregational autonomy, and documents a current study of collaboration in mission within the Pacific Southwest District of the LCMS. The researcher shared insights from interviews with a former LCMS president, Jerry Kieschnick, current LCMS 1st Vice-President Herbert Mueller, and recorded the current congregational collaborative practices found in many LCMS districts. Finally, the researcher documented the current grass-roots efforts of the LCMS and reviewed applicable literature around collaboration in mission outside of the LCMS.

In chapter three the researcher explored a major challenge in the LCMS today. He quoted L. Meyer who stated in 1937 that the problem of the LCMS is not that it disregards the veracity of the Gospel, but instead "the church ceases to evangelize."[24] The most recent LCMS congregational report notes a troublesome trend: Between 2013 and 2014 average church attendance throughout the synod declined 14 percent from 154 to 132 per service.[25] Chapter three summarized how efforts such as *Ablaze*! and *The Koinonia Project* were initiated by synodical leadership were intended to stop the declining numerical trend in the LCMS, and unite pastors and their congregations.

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24. L. Meyer, *Torch Bearers,* (St. Louis: General Centennial Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, 1937), 19.

25. Isenhower, Joe Jr, "LCMS Congregations Report Statistics for 2014," The Reporter Online, https://blogs.lcms.org/2015/statistics-for-2014 (accessed October 27, 2015).

Chapter three also explored how significant challenges emerge when congregations view themselves as distinct and autonomous of other congregations within the synod, district, and circuit. As the LCMS Handbook states, congregations are called to "walk together" in mission. The requisites to become an individual congregation of the LCMS is an approved constitution and bylaws by the respective district's constitution committee. The constitution committee examines the constitution and bylaws to "ascertain that they are in harmony with Holy Scripture, the Confessions, and the teachings and practices of the synod."[26] It could be assumed by some that the "practices" of the synod include collaboration in mission with circuit congregations. Yet, this could be a wrong assumption given the current lack of circuit collaboration in mission connected to circuit forums and convocations documented herein.

The researcher also attempted to show in chapter three how each congregation arrived at viewing themselves as autonomous and distinct from one another. Congregations are considered a part of the LCMS as long as they have an approved constitution and bylaws. It is the responsibility of the district president to respond to any complaints directed at congregations or members of synod. Chapter three highlighted how missional accountability is lacking in the LCMS. To date there is no documentation existing that indicates a congregation has been disciplined, or removed from synod, because of their failure to collaborate in mission. The LCMS Handbook does not state clearly that LCMS churches must collaborate in mission. The only accountability mechanism currently in place is the process for congregations to write their constitution and bylaws and submit them for approval.[27] In other words, collaborative missional

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26. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "LCMS 2016 Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation as amended by the 2016 LCMS Convention" (10-14 July 2016), 2.2.1(b), 53.

27. "LCMS 2016 Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation", 52-54.

expectations are not clearly spelled out in LCMS documents or enforced in LCMS congregations by the synodical president, district presidents, or circuit visitors.

Discipleship multiplication has had a large impact upon mission-minded leaders within the LCMS. Chapter three discussed how Circuit 30 of the Pacific SW District (the researcher's home circuit), and all circuits of the LCMS, will be well served to utilize the discipleship and church multiplying teachers from organizations such as Exponential and Leadership Network. Multiplication could have a positive impact on Circuit 30's effort to collaborate in mission based on the collaborative efforts of other non-LCMS churches.

Chapter three concluded by focusing on Michael Newman's findings in *Gospel DNA*. Newman summarizes the potential roadblock of the LCMS educational system for missional multiplication within the LCMS and within Circuit 30. Leaders and pastors are needed for new churches. Theological and leadership training is needed for future church leaders. Newman asserts that the rigorous educational process for pastors in the LCMS is rooted in the European university system. While the system has wonderful strengths, it is "complex, expensive and rigorous." Newman recommends that the current system be adapted to include multiple levels of Gospel workers using technology and mentoring. Some of these servants may become pastors. Some of them will simply be "evangelists" or "missionaries." Newman recommends adapting a system for raising up Lutheran leaders that is "faster, less costly, more inclusive, and more locally focused."[28] The researcher is hopeful that Circuit 30 could play a role in adapting such a church leadership training system as a byproduct of this project.

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28. Michael Newman, *Gospel DNA: Five Markers of a Flourishing Church* (San Antonio: Ursa Publishing, 2016), 164.

Chapter Four Summary

In chapter four, the methodology used in this thesis was described. The researcher provided a sense of how this study was undertaken as well as the rationale for certain decisions regarding its design and implementation. A full description of the method of inquiry, definitions, the setting and participants, the method of data collection and analysis are presented. In short, chapter four explained the principles and techniques that the researcher used to create and study the traits and characteristics of pastors who collaborate in mission at the circuit level.

Method of Data Collection

First in the quantitative aspect of the research, the researcher surveyed approximately 300 randomly selected LCMS pastors regarding circuit meeting frequency and circuit intentionality in collaborative mission. This was done to provide a representation of how typical LCMS pastors currently view collaborative mission.

Second, the researcher used the Harrison Assessment (HA) tool to survey the same 300 LCMS pastors to determine the conducive and non-conducive traits and characteristics associated with their willingness to collaborate in mission. The researcher hoped to have at least 50 of the 300 active LCMS pastors complete the Harrison Assessment tool to statistically validate the data profile set.

According to the Breckenridge Institute the Harrison Assessments (HA), developed by Dr. Dan Harrison, is a "state-of-the-art assessment tool that enables employers to predict the job success of candidates with 80%-90% accuracy, compared to most personality tests that only produce about 55% accuracy. The HA integrates six key behavioral assessments into one

comprehensive assessment. Thus, it achieves a much greater ability to accurately predict behavior and job success."[29]

Using a bank of questions provided by the Harrison Behavioral Assessment, the researcher identified the variables that appear to assist in enhancing collaboration in mission, as well as those variables that seem to hinder efforts. The researcher also offered suggestions for intervention that can move pastors from not collaborating to collaborating in mission.

Finally, the researcher gave the survey and Harrison Assessment to the pastors of Circuit 30 in the hopes of working more toward collaboration in mission as a model for other circuit congregations across the LCMS.

Hypothesis

The researcher's hypothesis was that there were a distinct set of traits and characteristics that pastors exhibit leading to being more willing to collaborate in mission with other pastors and churches. Participants were hoped to see that pastors and churches are better working together and that many of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) churches can be too autonomous and often are divided and working in competition. This fact, as outlined in chapter three, hinders mission work for the sake of unbelievers.

Definitions

A *trait* or *characteristic* is a distinguishing quality which typically belongs to one person in comparison to another person.

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29. Breckenridge Institute, *Harrison Assessments,* 2016, http://www.breckenridgeinstitute.com/harrison.htm#:~:text=Harrison%20Assessments&text=Dan%20Harrison%2C%20is%20a%20state,assessments%20into%20one%20comprehensive%20assessment (accessed July 24, 2020).

Effect is defined as the level to which a pastor does, or does not, change his behavior toward collaboration in mission.

Collaboration is defined as the action of working alongside other pastors and churches to produce or create something of missional value.

Mission is defined as "the entirety of all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole of creation and all that he calls us to do in cooperation with that purpose."[30]

Circuit 30 is one of 30 regional circuits within the Pacific Southwest District of the LCMS. Circuits are regionally based and consist of five to eight individual congregations of various sizes.

The *Pacific Southwest District* is one of thirty-three geographic districts within the LCMS. Two of the districts in the LCMS are non-geographic (The English District, The Slovak District). These two non-geographic districts display how German was the predominant language of the early LCMS, so much so that the English and Slovak speaking churches needed their own non-geographic districts. Even though all thirty-five districts have been English speaking for fifty years, these two districts still exist. This is one point of evidence to show how slowly the LCMS changes.

The *LCMS* is the abbreviation for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It was founded in 1846, largely consisting of German immigrants who settled mainly in the state of Missouri and surrounding mid-western states.

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30. Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 25.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the LCMS pastors and Circuit 30 pastors would answer the interview questions in an honest and candid manner.

An assumption is that the inclusion criteria of LCMS wide pastoral study are appropriate and, therefore, assure that the participants have all experienced the same or similar experiences during the course of the study.

All participants were assumed to have a sincere interest in participating in the research and did not have any other motives for participation, such as compensation, or impressing fellow pastors or supervisors.

A final assumption was that the random selection of survey participants accurately represented the population of LCMS pastors throughout the synod.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study extended to participating LCMS pastors and Circuit 30 pastors. The beneficiaries of this study were intended to be all LCMS pastors, commissioned ministers,[31] lay leaders, members, and congregations of the entire LCMS community. Other beneficiaries include any Christian pastor in any denomination who yearns to collaborate with other pastors and churches for the sake of those who do not know Jesus.

This research study may have unknown conditions or factors by the participants (pastors, lay leaders, etc.) that could bias their responses. It is also possible that some of their recollections of events, situations, and feelings could be inaccurate with the passing of time. The number of pastors surveyed in the LCMS, and pastoral participants from Circuit 30, provided enough

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31. This includes LCMS theologically trained and commissioned vocational church workers such as Directors of Christian Education, teachers, and school administrators.

information from which to adequately draw conclusions and make recommendations. The

LCMS-wide survey included approximately three-hundred respondents. The Harrison

Assessment documented at least thirty active LCMS pastors. From both of these sources of data

the researcher made synod-wide observations and recommendations.

Chapter 2

Biblical and Theological Foundation

The theological issue this project aspired to address is the inward and isolated nature of many local churches in the United States. The final project thesis specifically looked at the isolated nature of pastors and churches within the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS). The thesis studied the current landscape of collaboration in mission through a survey anonymously given to 300 active LCMS pastors. The project also studied the traits and characteristics of approximately 50 LCMS pastors using the Harrison Behavioral Assessment tool. Finally, the Harrison Behavioral Assessment tool was given to the pastors of Circuit 30 to determine the nature of their collaboration with other Circuit 30 pastors and congregations in mission to expand God's kingdom.

Chapter 2 sought to accomplish three things. It defined mission according to Scripture, provided a sketch of the biblical and theological bases for collaboration in mission rooted in both the Old and New Testament, and provided a brief theological context and overview for collaboration in mission in the local church.

Biblical Foundations

The Biblical justification for this project was rooted in the missional hermeneutic of the entirety of Scripture. Christopher Wright, in *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative,* writes, "My major concern has been to develop an approach to biblical hermeneutics that sees the mission of God (and the participation in it of God's people) as a framework within

which we can read the whole Bible."[1] Wright also seeks to biblically answer this question in his book *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission,* "What does the Bible as a whole in both testaments have to tell us about why the people of God exist and what it is they are supposed to be and do in the world?" Asked simply – what is the mission of God's people?[2] How should pastors and the local church collaborate together in God's mission? It is a fantastically challenging invitation from the Triune God, especially for a fallen humankind. King David's words from Psalm 8:4 are so true: "What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?"

What is Mission?

What is mission? *Missio* is a Latin word that has the notion of "being sent" or "sending out." Down through the ages mission has always meant some sort of sending. A history of the usage of the word *mission* reveals multiple uses. *Mission* can mean cross-cultural missionary work. The church sends out "missionaries" or "mission teams" on "mission trips." There are mission societies and global networks like the Lausanne Movement.[3] Within formal seminary programs there may be a "mission track" where young theologians can learn about "missions" if they have an evangelistic spirit. A "missionary" is oftentimes seen as one who is especially gifted to go "on mission". "Missions" is one of many theological disciplines within many seminary programs. Yet Wright boldly declares, "No theology without missional impact; no mission without theological foundations."[4] If the word "mission" is used as such described it can

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1. Wright, *The Mission of God,* 12.

2. Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 17.

3. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 23.

4. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 20.

be seen as for "them," "over there," "for the select few," or "during that time." This project will use Wright's *The Mission of God's People* as a key reference text to display how "mission" is core to God's work in collaboration with God's collaborative people.

Mission is defined in this project as "the entirety of all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole of creation and all that he calls us to do in cooperation with that purpose."[5] Mission flows from God to His people and from His people to the world. Many missiologists, including Guder, reference the *missio Dei.* Guder's definition of the *missio Dei* is the "radical centering on the entire work of salvation in the missional purpose and action of God, which necessarily unfolds in the missional calling and sending of God's people."[6] The *missio Dei* is all about God's work, centered in the person of Jesus, to "seek and save the lost."[7] The *missio Dei* then sends out God's found people to be "fishers of men."[8] The saving of found souls should motivate found disciples to make more disciples.[9] This project sought to identify the *missio Dei* traits and characteristics of mission-minded, collaborative pastors.

Mission Within the Godhead

Mission is located within the Triune God. The Trinity is the ultimate example of collaboration in mission. The Trinity is three Persons, yet one God on one mission to make right everything that is wrong. While modalism[10] must be guarded against, there is still much we can

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5. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 25.

6. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 47.

7. Luke 10:19

8. Matt. 4:19

9. Matt. 28:19-20, 2 Tim. 2:2

10. Modalism is the doctrine that the persons of the Trinity represent only three modes or aspects of the divine revelation, not distinct and coexisting persons in the divine nature.

say about the collaborative mission of the Trinity. Within the historic Christian creeds (Apostles and Nicene) it is easy to see the missional movement of the Trinity. The Father creates all that we see and do not see, and then sends the Son to redeem the Father's fallen creation. John 3:16: "For God so loved that world that He *sent* His one and only Son…" The Father and the Son collaborate to send the Holy Spirit to enliven the mission of Christ's church to connect a fallen creation back to the Father through faith in the perfect life, death, and resurrection of the Son.

Wright beautifully summarizes the mission of "the sending God." The Father is the only "unsent sender." Jesus did not simply arrive on the scene some 2000 years ago. Jesus was sent. Wright states that over forty times in John's gospel we read about Jesus being sent – whether from the evangelist or from Jesus' own lips. The author of Hebrews even calls Jesus "our apostle," emphasizing that Jesus was the "sent one" appointed by God like Moses, only greater.[11] First Peter 1:20 says, "He (Jesus) was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you." The Father's plan before the foundations of the world was to send His Son to redeem all of fallen creation back to the Father.

Karl Barth states that the very concept of "mission" was used in the ancient church to describe the interrelations of the Trinity as a process of sending: The Father sending the Son, the Father and the Son sending the Spirit. For Barth, mission was a matter of obedience to the "command of the Lord sounding here and now."[12]

Subsequently, Jesus goes on mission to send both the Holy Spirit and the Apostles. There is great collaboration and interdependence between the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is never quite

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11. Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 210.

12. Karl Barth, "Das Evangelium in der Gegenwart," *Theologische Existenz heute,* no. 25 (Munchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1935), 33.

expressed that the Spirit sent Jesus, but Jesus is sent in the power and authority of the Spirit. Jesus is "filled with the Spirit" (Luke 4:18-19). Wright summarizes the collaborative mission of God in this way: "God the Son is sent by God the Father and God the Spirit. God the Spirit is sent by God the Son and God the Father. The apostles are sent by God the Son and God the Spirit. Only God the Father is the unsent sender."[13]

The Mission of God to the World

The Scriptures are God's mission document, yet not every Christian views the Scriptures in this way. Guder says, "To interrogate mission fruitfully, we must give attention to the urgent need for a missional hermeneutic that will enable the church to encounter Scripture as the testimony God uses to form his people for their missional calling."[14] The embodiment of collaboration in mission is found throughout the Scriptures, especially in the Trinity itself. In the New Testament, Jesus makes audacious statements about His collaboration with the Father. John the Baptist asserts that to see Jesus is to experience the reign and mission of God (the Father) in all of its fullness (Matthew 3:2). Jesus says in Matthew 10:32-33, "So everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is in heaven." The Triune God is the epitome of collaboration in mission.

Lesslie Newbigin in his book, *The Open Secret,* says, "Once again (in Matthew 10:32-33) the reality of the reign of God is effectively present in Jesus in its double character of blessing and judgment. And those who are sent in Jesus' name are also the bearers of the presence, for 'he

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13. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 211.

14. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 56.

who receives You receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.'"[15] The collaboration of the Triune Godhead extends to both claim and empower God's people for collaboration in that same mission to make the Triune God known. This collaboration of the Triune God to send His people in mission is seen extensively in the Scriptures.

The reign of God is also all inclusive. The Father sent His Son, and the Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit in order to carry out God's reign on the earth. That reign includes making everything that is wrong right. This reign and mission transformation includes amending everything that is broken physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound." Jesus came to make humankind fully human once again. Humankind experiences that fullness in part now, but on that Day when Jesus returns all humankind found in faith in Jesus, and creation itself, will experience the mission and reign of God in all of its fullness (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Newbigin says, "The reign of God is over all things." Isaiah 9:7 states that, "Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end." His reign extends from the beginning into forever. Our Triune God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning, and the end.[16] From the fall, the Triune God has collaborated on a mission to draw God's people, and all of creation subject to futility and groaning, back to Himself. Genesis 9 recounts the story of Noah and the seventy nations that would flow from God's command to Noah to "be fruitful and

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15. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1995), 42-43.

16. Rev. 22:13 (English Standard Version).

multiply."[17] Newbigin says, "These 'nations' will be the background of the story that follows, but at the outset we are reminded that their existence is the fruit of God's primal blessing. There follows the sad story of the effort of the nations to create their own unity."[18] The Genesis mandate to be fruitful and multiply is intimately connected with the New Testament's Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." The Great Commission displays the collaborative Triune God sending His church out to multiply the mission of the risen Jesus. The Triune God has always been on mission to draw wayward people and nations back to Himself.

Lutheran churches consistently pray The Lord's Prayer in weekly worship. One of the petitions says, "Thy kingdom come." This petition displays the collaborative nature between the Son and The Father. Jesus is yearning for the kingdom of God to reign in all of its fullness here and now through the hearing of God's Word, reception of the Sacraments (namely, baptism and The Lord's Supper), and through the sending of Jesus' church to be "salt and light"[19] in a dark and dying world.

It is once again helpful to return to an emphasis on the *missio Dei.* Many authors have highlighted how the mission of the Triune God is central to God's work. Guder says, "The strength and the difficulty of the *missio Dei* consensus are its radical centering of the entire work of salvation in the missional purpose and action of God, which necessarily unfolds in the

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17. Gen. 9:18 (English Standard Version).

18. Newbigin, *The Open Secret,* 31.

19. Matt. 5:13-16, [13] "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. [14] "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. [15] Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. [16] In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (English Standard Version)

missional calling and sending of God's people."[20] Guder writes extensively about the necessity for a "missional hermeneutic," which is "the interpretation of the Scriptures in terms of the fundamentally missional vocation of the church of Jesus Christ."[21] The *missio Dei* leads naturally to a "missional hermeneutic."

This "missional hermeneutic" must be rooted in the Old Testament story of mission, though it is easily missed. Newbigin states that the mission "narrows" rather than widens. "Not all of Abraham's children are chosen to be bearers of the blessing; Isaac is chosen, Ishmael is not. Among Isaac's sons Jacob, not Esau, is chosen. As the story goes on the narrowing continues…but the rest never disappear wholly from the picture." The "narrowing" of the mission of God is for the intent purpose of blessing the nations. Newbigin states that those who are chosen are the "bearers – not exclusive beneficiaries."[22] It is clear that God's "mission" to the nations in the Old Testament included a small clan of Israelites, God's chosen people, called to make Yahweh known to the nations. Israel fails to fully embody the "mission" of God. Therefore, because of their idolatry and immorality Yahweh narrows the scope of His work even further by enlisting the prophets.

The Old Testament Prophets as Missional Leaders

The prophets were the primary mouthpiece of God sent to lead God's chosen people back to Himself. Repentance was encouraged by the prophets for the sake of the Israelites themselves, but just as importantly for the sake of the nations and the witness of God's people in the world.

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20. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 47.

21. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 116.

22. Newbigin, *The Open Secret,* 32.

God's unconditional pursuit and love of His chosen people in the Old Testament is always for the purpose of sharing that same unconditional love of God with others.

One of the primary missionary prophets of the Old Testament is Jonah. God narrows on Jonah as His mouthpiece to the Gentile Assyrians in Ninevah. Jonah instead flees from Joppa to Tarshish. R. Reed Lessing states in his Jonah commentary that Tarshish was a land of luxury. [23] Jonah refuses the hard call of God to bring repentance to a Gentile nation in order to pursue the comforts of Tarshish. Jonah thinks he has escaped God's call. A storm rages outside and pagan mariners must awaken Jonah to summon his prayers to the Lord. Newbigin says, "But Jonah must be thrown into the sea. The grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die. The elect must suffer. The church must lose its life. But out of death there is resurrection." Jonah is turned by God to speak God's word at Ninevah. By God's grace universal repentance comes to the Ninevites. Jonah is upset at God's mercy for the pagan Ninevites. He knew God was gracious and merciful, "slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster." [24] Jonah wonders how the mercy and mission of God are so absurdly generous? Newbigin summarizes Jonah by saying, "God is so tenderly pleading for the pagan world and Jonah is so sullenly wrapped up in his own self-pity." [25] The book of Jonah is the epitome of a prophet rejecting the call of God to go on mission to make God known to a community different from his own. Would Jonah's posture toward God's call been different if he had gone on mission in collaboration with other prophets?

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23. R. Reed Lessing, *Jonah: Concordia Commentary – A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 50.

24. Jon. 4:1-2

25. Newbigin, *The Open Secret,* 33.

The Church in "Exile"

Many Christian sociologists, missiologists, and researchers are comparing the Christian church, and many within the Christian church, as being in a season of "exile." The mission of God must narrow from churches to individual leaders who will prophetically proclaim God's love for all.

A prominent Christian social commentator of our day is David Kinnaman with the Barna Group. Kinnaman writes in his 2011 book, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving the Church and Re-Thinking Faith,* "Young adults describe their faith journey with startlingly similar language. Most of their stories include significant disengagement from the church – and sometimes from Christianity all-together."[26] Kinnaman describes how young people feel like they are "exiles" in their personal faith experience. Many older adults feel the same way as they interact with young people and the changing culture. The church's mission in the 21st century is comparable to God's chosen Old Testament people in exile. Prophets like Jeremiah are needed.

Wright digs deeply into Jeremiah 29:7a as a guide for Christian response in the midst of exile. "Seek the *shalom* of the city which I have carried you." Jeremiah clarifies the posture of the exile as one who seeks *shalom,* normally referred to as *"peace."* Wright says, "*Shalom,* as is well known, is a wonderfully broad word. It goes beyond peace as the absence of conflict or war, to all around welfare or well-being. It speaks of wholeness of life and the kind of prospering that the Old Testament included in the blessing of God as the fruit of covenant faithfulness. It is remarkable that Jeremiah urges the exiles to seek such blessing for their Babylonian

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26. David Kinnaman. *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving the Church and Re-Thinking Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 9.

neighbors."[27] Instead of solely lamenting being in a state of exile God's people are invited by God to seek a different approach. God's people should be neither lazy nor lamenting. Instead, like Jeremiah, God's pastors and people should intentionally collaborate in mission to bless their surrounding community.

Isaiah 9:6-7 gives us a snapshot of the coming reality when the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace is on the throne. There will be peace, justice, and righteousness forever. The kingdom of God will come and *has come* in all its fullness in Jesus. Therefore, we pray earnestly with Jesus in the Lord's Prayer for God's kingdom to come now while in exile, as it comes in heaven. When God's people pray this expectant prayer, they realize that God's Word narrowing to them will immediately move them to widen God's missional call by including others in witnessing the kingdom of God breaking into the present. Collaboration in mission is essential.

Wright also describes the missional posture of the Old Testament leader Daniel. Daniel and his friends had the freedom to "settle down in Babylon and accept jobs in its government service." Daniel gives us a picture of how the "common man" goes on mission in a place of exile. Daniel and his friends were "first class students, model citizens and hard-working civil servants, and they were distinguished for trustworthiness and integrity. The king recognized that his own interests were being served by such people."[28] In the midst of what may feel like exile, God's people are still sent on mission to make the one true God known in word and deed, just like Jeremiah, Isaiah and Daniel.

The mission of God in both the Old and New Testament can be stated as God's pursuit to

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27. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 232.

28. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 233.

choose individuals, place them in communities, and commission them to seek and share the love of the one true God with all. Said differently, the mission of God always moves from me, to us, to all. God's mission narrowed all the way down to one person. From that one Perfect Person the mission of God has widened to all.

The Mission of God Centered in Jesus – The Collaborative Leader

The mission of God narrows until God takes the mission into His own hands by sending His one and only Son, Jesus. The mission of God through Jesus is witnessed through Jesus perfectly fulfilling the Law of the Father, dying humankind's death on the cross, victoriously defeating death through His bodily resurrection, ascending into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father, and then sending the Holy Spirit to indwell and move the Apostles and all believers on mission to declare what God has done through Jesus. [29] The mission of God is centered in the person and work of Jesus, and the sending of Jesus' followers to declare what Jesus has done. Jesus' apostles are "sent ones" who both share the Gospel message of Jesus and invite those who receive the message by faith to do the same. The Gospel message of Jesus requires disciples to make more disciples who make more disciples. [30] The multiplying mission of Jesus is powerfully portrayed in the rapid spread of the message of Jesus over the past 2,000 years. God's mission narrows in Jesus and then widens to all.

Robert C. Crosby in his book, *The Teaming Church: Ministry in the Age of Collaboration,* says, "Jesus never sent anyone out to do anything alone; at least, I cannot find an instance in the Gospels in which He did so. He started His ministry by simply building a

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29. This is a summary of the Apostle's Creed.

30. 2 Tim. 2:2

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community of net fishermen. When He sent those disciples out to towns and villages, He sent them out two by two…Jesus' primary strategy to accomplish this purpose was to raise up a team."[31] This project will seek to identify the conducive traits and characteristics leading to collaboration of two pastors, other church leaders who surround them, and subsequent individual churches that collaborate in mission as the united body of Christ is sent into the community as one church.

Wright states, "Being sent was the essence of apostleship, though the sending was conceived more as commissioning or authorizing for a task than as *necessarily* involving geographic travel."[32] Therefore, in the everyday "going" of the apostle he or she was to view their mission as one who was always sent to declare the person and work of Jesus. Jesus strategically chose twelve apostles reflecting the twelve tribes of Israel. The narrowing of God's Old Testament mission culminated in the sending of God's Son and then began to expand through the twelve apostles. Wright says the twelve apostles were called to "replicate and extend the ministry of Jesus Himself. He sent them out. He gave them authority. And with that authority they were to do what He was doing – preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, driving out demons and healing the sick. What the apostles said and did, Jesus was saying and doing through them."[33] Again, it is worth noting that the 72 disciples in Luke 10 were sent out by Jesus in collaboration, two-by-two. The mission of God narrows on Jesus and then widened to His disciples who collaborated to share what Jesus had done.

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31. Robert C. Crosby, *The Teaming Church: Ministry in the Age of Collaboration* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), 36.

32. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 211-212.

33. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 212.

A critique of a "missional hermeneutic" may be that discipleship and instruction of the new and mature believer takes a "back seat" to mission. Therefore, Guder compliments Wright by saying, "The necessary consequence of evangelization with its response was the gathering of these converts into a community for the continuation of that witness. Thus their [early church apostles and leaders] evangelization inexorably moved into catechesis, into the instruction of the newly formed community so that it could be about its obedient and faithful witness in its particular setting."[34] Discipleship always leads to mission, and those who believe on account of the mission are always discipled to then continue the mission.

The mission of God narrows to Jesus, widens to His pastors, and then moves out to cities and nations utilizing the gifts of every disciple of Jesus. The titles to the Apostle Paul's letters are instructive. Paul wrote letters to churches in specific cities (Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, etc.). Therefore, for example, the Roman church saw reaching Rome with the message of Jesus as their collective responsibility. Obviously, the church had not begun to include specifically named churches such as "St. John's" or "St. Paul's." Nonetheless, if there were numerous distinct churches it would have been interesting if Paul would have still written one letter to all the churches in Rome. As time passed, and pastoral leaders were developed, Paul's title may have united their collaborative spirit as one church in Rome sent to tell everyone in Rome about Jesus.

Guder laments, "It is frequently observed that there are virtually no evangelistic or missional imperatives in the New Testament. Even the celebrated Great Commission describes what Christians are to be doing all the time, wherever they may be, as they are going about in the world – the text is really summary of the entire gospel message of this book, and the apostolic

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34. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 116.

ministry it summarizes is the comprehensive definition of the entire life of the witnessing community. Matthew 28:16-20 does not intend to generate a narrow, individualistic, benefits-centered evangelism." *πορευθέντες* is often translated as "Go!" in English texts. This word is not a command, but actually a participle. "In your going…make disciples" is a better translation. Collaboration for mission is not an occasional invitation. It is what Christians do daily "in our going" out into the world as Jesus followers. The mission of God narrows in Jesus and then widens through us to all.

It appears that mission and "being sent" are rooted in the very beginning of Jesus' ministry in the calling of His first disciples. Guder highlights how Jesus' disciple calling biblical texts "document this continuity from the calling of Israel through Abraham to the formation of the church: 'And He appointed twelve, *whom also He named apostles,* to be with Him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.' For the disciples who went to school with the Rabbi Jesus, graduation would mean apostolate. And the apostolate, initiated by the Twelve who are the core of the people of God sent into the world, was equipped and commissioned to form witnessing communities."[35] "Witnessing communities," not consumeristic dispensaries for religious services, were the core definition of the early church, and should be the core definition of the 21st century church as well.

What was the primary work of the apostles? They multiplied the mission of God centered in Jesus in both word and deed. Guder says, "All of them, living in the light of Easter and mobilized by the confidence that Jesus Christ had truly been raised, were shaped by the dominical claim, 'As My Father has sent Me, so I send[36] you' (John 20:21…the New Testament

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35. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 155-156.

36. ἀπέσταλκέν. Root word is "apostle."

functions as the 'warrant' for the missional vocation that defined every first Christian congregation." Guder continues by saying, "Like the first disciples, every Christian community is to learn from Jesus and with Jesus both His message and how it is to be communicated."

Finally, Guder highlights how the witness summarized in the Great Commission led toward collaboration with the Triune God and with those who were filled by the Triune God. Those who were baptized "were to implement the definition Jesus gave to the church on the Mount of the Ascension: 'You shall be My witnesses' – and they would be enabled to do this by the empowering work of the Holy Spirit: 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you' (Acts 1:8). They were to be 'a letter from Christ delivered by [the apostolic missionaries], written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on the tablets of human hearts'" (2 Cor. 3:3). [37]

Newbigin and Guder's missional hermeneutic are complementary. They both focus on the narrowing of the mission of God in Jesus and the widening of the mission to all. Newbigin adds heightened urgency for collaboration in mission in his book, *The Household of God*.

> His (Jesus) coming again will be the end itself, wherein the faith will at last be taken up into sight and hope into fruition. The time that is given is finite, because the victory that we hope for is real. Now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed – salvation, the final making whole of all things in Christ. The time is finite and therefore precious. It is given precisely that all men may have the opportunity to repent and believe, to awake out of sleep, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light. [38]

Collaboration in mission is necessary because the days are short. Jesus is coming soon. Pastors and churches should be like the five wise virgins from Matthew 25. They should have ample oil in their lamps as they await the return of the Bridegroom, Jesus. Pastors and churches should be like the Master's servants in Matthew 25 who doubled the investment the Master

37. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 155-157.

38. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God* (New York: Friendship Press, 1953), 120.

entrusted to them. The Master is soon to return. Pastors and churches should collaborate and thus ensure, by the Holy Spirit's power, that each church has oil in their lamps, and is investing the Master's talents.

Missional Vocation in the Early Church

How did "missional vocation" look within the early church? The story of Acts 6 deserves special attention. The apostles are feeling stretched thin in ministry. They needed help. Acts 6:2 says, "So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect [the ministry of] the word of God in order to wait on tables.'" This may leave the impression that preaching the word of God is more important than serving. Wright says, "However, the serving or ministering term (*diakonia, diakonein)* is used *both* for what was being done in the provision of food for the needy (in Acts 6:2) *and* for the preaching of the word ("ministry of the word" in Acts 6:4). They *both* are ministries of the church, and they *both* are important enough to need to be done by people filled with the Holy Spirit."[39]

Acts 6 helps the church see that both word *and* deed ministry is necessary. One does not supersede the other. They are not mutually exclusive priorities. They are not a different type of Gospel. Word and deed are expressions of the *same* Gospel. Jesus came to make right everything that was wrong, and this included ministry in both word and deed.

Wright notes how little theological attention is given to Paul's collection for the poor in Jerusalem in the standard commentaries on Paul's life and mission.[40] Jason Hood in his book *Theology in Action: Paul and Christian Social Care,* speaks of Paul's great passion for the poor.

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39. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 214.

40. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 215.

Hood says, "Paul's collection and other teaching on possessions and generosity occupy more space in his letters than his teaching on justification by faith. Yet, Pauline scholars and contemporary church leaders often fail to give the collection the attention it deserves."[41]

<p style="text-align:center">The Collaborative Missional Model of Jesus</p>

As will be shown below, Jesus, and subsequently Paul and the Apostles, were not focused initially on the addition of new churches. Jesus, Paul, and the Apostles were missionaries who were intensely focused on multiplying leaders who would lead churches. Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird in their book, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers,* highlights the power of multiplication in mission rooted in Scripture.

Jesus was the quintessential missional leader. This makes sense--Jesus *is* God. Yet, it also does not make sense. Jesus could have carried out the mission by Himself. Yet, as seen throughout the Old Testament, God always uses means to support His movement of grace. Jesus, the very Word made flesh, operated in the same way. Jesus makes amazing statements in John's Gospel. He tells His disciples that they will do "even greater things" (John 14:12). He tells the disciples that it will actually be "better for them" if He goes away. If He leaves, He will then send the promised Holy Spirit to live within them to remind them of all that Jesus has said (John 16:7).

Stetzer and Bird highlight the fact that Jesus invested in "not one but three, then a circle of twelve around them, and then the circle of seventy around that." Stetzer and Bird propose a "multiple apprentice mode" for missional pastors. Based on the model of Jesus, missional pastors should raise up multiple groups of pastors to do "even greater things" than they have seen in the

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41. Jason Hood, "Theology in Action: Paul and Christian Social Care", *Transforming the World: The Gospel and Social Responsibility* (eds. Jamie A. Grant and Dewi A. Hughes, Nottingham: Apollos, 2009), 129-146.

ministry of those who train them.[42] This project will seek to encourage pastors to collaborate and apprentice future pastors to start new ministries to reach those who do not know Jesus.

Luke 10:6 speaks of Jesus sending His disciples out in pairs to heal the sick and preach about the kingdom of God. Yet, they were also to find the "son of peace" in each town who could not only take care of the disciple's earthly needs but could also sustain the mission after the disciples returned to Jesus. We can presume that this "son of peace" was then left in charge of the kingdom expanding ministry in that area after Jesus' disciples moved on.

It appears as if Paul and the disciples started new missional churches in like manner as Jesus. Stetzer and Bird make the point that it is "easy to overlook Paul's interaction with his apprentice Timothy: 'Paul wanted Timothy to go with him' (Acts 16:3). Stetzer and Bird quote Jon Fergeson as saying that Paul's apprentice model to reproduce himself through Timothy may have looked like this.

> I do. You watch. We talk.
> I do. You help. We talk.
> You do. I help. We talk.
> You do. I watch. We talk.
> You do. Someone else watches.

The cycle now repeats for both Paul and Timothy.[43] This movement is best seen in 1st and 2nd Timothy.

I do. You watch. We talk. is seen in 1 Timothy 1:16 where Paul notes that "Christ's perfect patience" was shown as an "example to those who were to believe in Him (Jesus) for eternal life." Timothy was able to watch Paul's example.

I do. You help. We talk. is seen in I Timothy 3 where Paul gives the qualifications for

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42. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches,* 42.

43. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches,* 42.

leaders within the church. Paul is expecting Timothy to help set and maintain high expectations for church leaders.

You do. I watch. We talk. is displayed in Paul urging Timothy to "let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy 4:12). Paul is watching Timothy, knows he is considered a young leader, yet encourages Timothy to set an "example," just as Timothy had seen in Paul.

You do. I watch. We talk. and *You do. Someone else watches.* is seen in 2 Timothy 2:2. This text helps further see this pattern established when Paul writes to Timothy, "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Stetzer and Bird state, "A good measure of success is when your church has grandchildren." [44]

Why should churches multiply? This answer can be found in the Greek word for church, *ekklesia. Ekklesia* means "called out ones." Christians have been "called out" from their sin through the crucified Jesus, [45] but the church is also "called out" and "sent out" (*apostello)* for the sake of making disciples who make disciples. [46] Simply put, Jesus yearns to draw more and more disciples to Himself. How does Jesus accomplish this mission of disciple making? He sends out more and more disciples, namely His church, to disciple others so that all people and nations would be drawn toward Him. Jesus' mechanism for drawing people to Himself is a group of people who live together centered on Jesus. This people group, called the church, does not exist

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44. Stetzer & Bird, *Viral Churches,* 113.

45. Matt. 26:28; Acts 2:38; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14

46. Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2

solely for itself.[47] It is not a social club, though it is social. It is not a community, though it is communal. It is a group of people on mission to proclaim Jesus to the world. The book of Acts and all of Paul's letters are examples and exhortations for the church on mission. Why does the church have such intensity and focus on mission? The days are short, the end is near, and "the Son of Man will come at an hour you do not expect."[48]

Newbigin states in *The Open Secret,* "The popular opinion that the existence of the church as an institution continuing through history is a contradiction of Jesus' vision of the immediacy of the end rests upon a failure to grasp the central point of the Christian view of 'last things.'" Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:11 that Christians are those "upon whom the end of the ages has come."[49] Said simply, the church over the last 2000 years is not an institution living to preserve itself. The church does not exist for herself. Instead the church is a group of people intensely and intentionally on mission working to bring the message of Jesus to all people before the Last Day comes.

<div align="center">Paul as Collaborative Missionary</div>

Paul was a collaborative missionary. He told stories of churches in need, especially in Jerusalem, and led surrounding churches to collaborate to meet the church's missional need. First Corinthians 8:1-7 displays Paul's exhortation to be generous to the Corinthian church to the needs of the church in Jerusalem based on the generous response of the Macedonian churches. Paul believes that the early churches were united in mission. *All churches* were responsible for

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47. Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 13:1-17

48. Matt. 24:44

49. Newbigin, *The Open Secret,* 45.

churches that were struggling. *All churches* were responsible to generously support the missional

movement of God. *All churches* trusted Paul to help know where funds were most needed within

the early churches. If Paul led the early church in this manner even across countries and

continents, how much more necessary is it for pastors and churches in the same synodical

fellowship to collaborate in mission? This end is the primary mission of this project.

Wright aids greatly in understanding the marks of the early missional churches. Wright

defines Jerusalem as the "mother church." Jerusalem was the center of the apostle's preaching

combined with "spiritual fellowship, social community and economic compassion of the first

believers." This aided the growth of the early church. The church of Antioch also became the

hub for mission to the north and west. It was well-taught and led by Paul and Barnabas. The

church in Antioch was also "well-led by people who were themselves open to the Holy Spirit and

exercising gifts of prophecy, teaching and discernment" (Acts 11:19-26). The church in Philippi

served as a center for Paul's missionary work further to the south. Paul speaks glowingly about

the collaboration of Philippi in I Thessalonians 1:7-8. Paul praises Philippi for their partnership

(koinonia) in Paul's spreading of the Gospel. [50] Many early churches collaborated in mission to

make Jesus known in word and deed.

<center>The Sacraments as a Catalyst for Collaboration in Mission</center>

Newbigin states that the church's sacramental life, centered on the Lord's Supper, gives

the church its missional focus. Paul concludes the restatement of Jesus' words of institution over

the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:26, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,

you proclaim the Lord's death *until He comes*." Even the Lord's Supper is meant to remind the

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50. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 217.

church to be urgent in mission because Jesus is coming back soon. Newbigin says, "Their [the churches] repeated sharing in this common meal will be a continually renewed participation in His (Jesus) dying and, therefore, in his victorious life…will not only be a story to be proclaimed, recorded, studied: it will be a story to be lived. The disciples will thus themselves become part of the revealed secret of the presence of the kingdom."[51]

John 13-17 gives a sketch of how these disciples, unified to Christ and one another through the Lord's Supper, will be mobilized for mission. They are to be servants of one another just as Jesus has served them (13:1-20). They are to show they belong to God by the way that they love one another (13:34-35). They will find abiding places that the Father provides for them on the way, and they know the way – Jesus Himself (13:36-14:11). Through mutual abiding they will bring forth fruit (15:1-17). The world will hate them, but the hatred of the world will be an opportunity for Holy Spirit led witness (15:18-27). The Holy Spirit will go before them to lead others to the fullness of the truth (16:8-15). They will have peace and be guarded from evil by the Father who will then "launch them into life in the world as a continuance of His mission and in the power of his consecration." [52] In fact, the glory of God, the glory that tabernacled in the midst of Israel in the wilderness, that dwelt with Jesus (John 1:14), will dwell with the disciples so that the world may recognize in them the sign of the divine mission of Jesus (17:20-23).

The Mission of the Local Church

The local church was created by God for mission to its local community and world. As mentioned above, mission is defined as expanding the kingdom of God through words and deeds,

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51. Newbigin, *The Open Secret,* 46.

52. Newbigin, *The Open Secret*.

most especially for the sake of those who do not believe in Jesus. The consistent numerical decline, not just of the LCMS, but of mainline Christian churches in the United States, is informing this project. The newest survey by Pew Research highlights the trend. "Between 2007 and 2014, the Christian share of the population fell from 78.6% to 70.4%, driven mainly by declines in mainline Protestants and Catholics."

Another trend informing this project is found in the 2017 study by Barna Research titled, "*Faith Leaders on Religious Liberty.*" Barna discovered that "Only 17% of Christians who consider their faith important and attend church regularly actually have a biblical worldview."[53] These trends are alarming. Nonetheless, this thesis will focus on how trends can be reversed by collaborating with church leaders in mission in the south east Phoenix valley in Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest District of the LCMS.

Why is a collaborative missional theology and practice necessary? Darrell L. Guder's 2015 book titled, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology*, is referenced throughout this project. John R. Franke states in the forward of Guder's book that part of our modern-day problems with mission stem from the fact that "courses in missiology are generally taught only in the practical theology department of seminaries and are often primarily for those heading overseas…missiology and systematic theology have generally evidenced little significant overlap or interaction."[54] This can lead to a false dichotomy between theology and mission, which will be discussed below. Guder and the authors of *Missional Church* portray one of two paths which the 21st century church can take: "Either we are defined by mission, or we reduce the scope of

53. Barna Group, "Competing Worldviews Influence Today's Christians," May 9, 2017, www.barna.com/research/competing-worldviews-influence-today.

54. Guder. *Called to Witness,* 6.

the gospel and the mandate of the church. Thus, our challenge today is to move from church with mission to missional church."[55] Mission is central to what it means to be the local church, the "called out ones." Mission must not be viewed as a "program" or "ministry" of the local congregation. The challenge of this thesis was to show what traits and characteristics pastors exhibit that view mission as central to their church leadership life as well as the traits and characteristics of congregations that collaborate. These findings are hoped to be used by the LCMS, circuits, and local congregations to better support, encourage, and grow even more missional leaders.

A False Dichotomy

How did the 21st century church arrive at the dichotomy between theology and mission referenced above? Consequently, how has this dichotomy impacted the way the local church collaborates in mission? These are complex questions with many possible answers. David Bosch in his book, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission,* identifies the difference of "mission in the wake of the Enlightenment" in comparison to mission before the Enlightenment.[56]

Guder summarizes the difference in this way: "It was the enlightened obligation of the Western church to take the gospel, along with the benefits of Western civilization, to the rest of the unevangelized world, confident that the evident superiority of both the Christian faith and its accompanying culture would overcome all resistance and carry the day."[57] Guder identifies the

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55. Guder, *Missional Church,* 6.

56. David Bosch. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011), 268-353.

57. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 17.

problem with this strategy in this way: "We reduced salvation to individual savedness, the separation of the message of the kingdom of God from the proclamation of the gospel of salvation, the reduction of the church's mission to the maintenance of individual's salvation, the reduction of general vocation to clericalism, the reduction of the sacraments to individual salvific rites."[58]

Guder displays numerous problems in the local "enlightened" and "Western" church. Guder goes so far as to say, "Traditional Western theology has really had little or no interest in missions, except in terms to describe the internal dynamics of the triune Godhead."[59] Over time the church has become isolated from mission, preaching an isolated message to save isolated individuals. The mission of God must move Christ's church away from isolation and into collaborative community experiences. Collaboration in mission between pastors and local congregations has the potential to change the activity of the isolated individual believer.

Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile help to map the missional trends and shape the missional conversation in their book, *The Missional Church in Perspective.* Gelder and Zscheile studied diverse literature on missions in North America which led them to identify four themes that appear regularly in missional writing to help understand the "why" of missions.

1. *God is a missionary God who sends the church into the world.*

2. *God's mission in the world is related to the reign (kingdom) of God.*

3. *The missional church is an incarnational (versus attractional) ministry sent to engage a postmodern, post-Christendom, globalized context.* This understanding requires every congregation to take on a missionary posture for engaging its local context,

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58. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 27.

59. Guder, *Called to Witness,* 36.

with this missionary engagement shaping everything a congregation does.[60]

4. *The internal life of the missional church focuses on every believer living as a disciple engaging in mission.*[61]

These trends have largely been shaped because of the interplay, or lack thereof, between ecclesiology and missiology. Ecclesiology is "the theological discipline that seeks to understand and define the church." Gelder and Zscheile state that ecclesiology is primarily defined through "historical creeds and confessions that were formulated in the past twenty centuries."[62] Ecclesiology establishes how the church functions as a community. The problem began when the "Protestant version of the modern missions movement emerged largely outside the established, institutional church."[63] Missiology establishes how the local church functions as an "army" to expand the righteous reign of God through love and good deeds in a fallen creation. Gelder and Zscheile highlight how one of the primary goals of missional theologians down through the centuries can be summarized in that the church must "bring into an integrated conversation the disciplines of missiology and ecclesiology to construct a missiological ecclesiology." They also highlight the necessity of sacramental (including Lutheran) theologians answering the question, "How does Word and sacrament ecclesiology (usually referred to as the two marks of the church) relate to missional church?"[64] This project thesis attempted to build a bridge between

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60. The finished project thesis will attempt to show the value in collaboration in mission to engage a "local context."

61. Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2011), 3-4.

62. Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 22.

63. Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective,* 24.

64. Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 62-63.

collegial pastoral ecclesiology and collaborative mission in the local context.

The Local (not just Global) Mission

In order to collaborate in mission, it is necessary for the local church to see that the theology of mission is not just global, it is also local. It is not simply carried out "over there," it is present in God's people "right here." How is mission present "right here"? It is only through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Guder says, "What have the old churches of the West perhaps lost with regard to the power and work of the Holy Spirit, which was present in early Christianity and is being reclaimed in the contemporary flourishing of Pentecostal churches?"[65] Craig Van Gelder agrees and developed a biblical approach to the Holy Spirit in light of a missional ecclesiology in *The Essence of the Church* and *The Ministry of the Missional Church.* Gelder "argues that being aware of the role of the Spirit is the key to understanding the active participation of the church in God's world."[66] Therefore, it is absolutely essential that the local congregation see herself and act as those who are filled with the Holy Spirit. The church then gets the privilege of collaborating with the Holy Spirit and each other in our varying contexts in mission. Guder says missional theology is the "critical interaction with a particular strand of the Christian tradition in a particular cultural context."[67]

Conclusion

Chapter 2 has sought to do three things. It has provided a brief sketch of the biblical, and thus theological, bases for collaboration in mission rooted in both the Old and New Testament

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65. Guder, *Called to Witness*, 29.

66. Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective,* 118.

67. Guder, *Called to Witness*, 26.

and given a brief theological context and overview for church collaboration in mission.

Finally, this chapter has given the biblical rationale for pastors and churches collaborating in mission. Many of the traits and characteristics of mission-minded pastoral leaders have been shared in this chapter connected to Scripture. It is remarkably evident that the Old Testament leaders, Jesus, and New Testament leaders such as Paul, modeled a collaborative missional approach. It is also quite clear that the church ("the called-out ones") has as a primary goal to seek out and help redeem those who do not know Jesus. The mission of God is underway, and this project seeks to play a part in expanding the mission of God connected to the church according to Ephesians 3:10-11. *[10] so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. [11] This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord...*

Chapter 3

Literature Review

The researcher was unable to find ample scholarly writing on the topic of collaboration in mission in the American church and within the LCMS. The LCMS office of Roster and Statistics[1], and former LCMS Vice-President, Herb Mueller, shared with the researcher that no study of circuit collaboration in mission had occurred in LCMS history. There was also little scholarly writing outside of the LCMS on the researcher's topic of study. The researcher believes this is due to the fact that collaboration in mission movements are typically led by ministry practitioners, rather than scholarly researchers. This does not mean that collaboration in mission is not happening in the American church. This simply displays the fact that most literature is written by practitioners, rather than scholarly researchers.

In this chapter the researcher presents a review of the literature in the wider Christian church in America around the theme of collaboration in mission. He identifies some grassroots collaborative missional movements in the wider American church. The researcher then identifies the factors which led to LCMS church growth, investigates historical LCMS attempts at repairing church conflict that impaired church growth, and researches current attempts at collaborating in mission within the LCMS. More directly, the researcher looks at the current LCMS structure and organization, the challenges of individual congregational autonomy, and a current study of collaboration in mission within the Pacific Southwest District of the LCMS. The researcher also shares insights from interviews with former LCMS president, Jerry Kieschnick, former (now deceased) LCMS 1st Vice-President Herbert Mueller, as well as document the

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1. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "LCMS Official Roster and Statistics," 2017, http://remarksurvey.lcms.org/cgi-bin/rws5.pl?FORM=congstatform

current congregational collaborative practices found in many LCMS districts. Finally, the researcher shares some current grass-roots collaborative efforts of the LCMS.

Current Trends and New Models

Starting churches in a post-Christian context requires new models. Many denominational church leaders are not looking to start new churches with an old model. For years in North America, denominational groups would send small groups of people into a locale, set up a worship service, and provide a list of support services for families. They would market their arrival in the community and gather as many people as possible for their "launch." Church planter David Fitch says in the foreword to the book, *Starting Missional Churches*, that the failure rate for this model is over 90 perfect in 21st century America.[2]

As noted by Michael Newman, the LCMS experienced some success with this model over the late 19th and mid-20th centuries. Fitch notes that the church has grown through the centuries by being connected to various movements: the monastic movement, the reformation movement, the pietist movements, or frontier revivals. Each one of those movements called the church to repentance and a renewed commitment to live the fullness of the Gospel. Fitch believes that the "missional church" movement could be "one such renewal movement" in our time.[3]

The statistics regarding church attendance and growth are quite astonishing. David Olson, in his 2008 book, The American Church in Crisis, pointed out that in 2005 on any given weekend, 17.5 percent of people in America attend a church service. This percentage was down

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2. Mark Lau Branson and Nicholas Warnes, *Starting Missional Churches: Life With God in the Neighborhood* (Downer's Grove, InterVarsity Press, 2014), 9.

3. Branson and Warnes, *Starting Missional Churches*.

from 20.4 percent in 1990.[4] This trend away from Christianity has only grown worse in recent times. According to 2016 Barna Research, 73 percent of Americans identify as Christians. That sounds promising. Yet, only 31 percent of Americans label themselves as "practicing Christians," while 41 percent of Americans label themselves as "non-practicing Christians."[5]

As will be discussed more below, the LCMS is in a prolonged "pause,", which could also be called a "free fall." All LCMS congregations reported demographic statistics in 2014 in preparation for the 201 synodical convention. Through this report, it was discovered that between 2013 and 2014, average weekly church attendance declined by 14 percent, from 154 to 132. This was partially due to an increase in the number of congregations reporting in 2014 prior to the LCMS convention. Yet, this statistic is still alarming.[6]

The statistics confirm across denominations that a growing proportion of the American population is not connected to a local church. Branson and Warnes in their book, Starting Missional Churches, predict that 3,700 churches will close every year. It is estimated that 4,000 churches will be planted in any given year. At first, this increase sounds encouraging, but considering that according to the 2010 census, the population of America grows by three million people every year, the American church is actually losing ground.[7]

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4. David Olson, *The American Church in* Crisis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 36.

5. Barna Research, "The State of the Church 2016," https://www.barna.com/research/state-church-2016/ (accessed July 1, 2018).

6. Isenhower, "LCMS Congregations Report Statistics for 2014".

7. United States Census 2010, www.census.gov (accessed July 1, 2018).

The Hartford Institute for Religious Research[8] says there are approximately 322,000 churches in America. Therefore, to keep up with population growth, the American church will have to plant 6,440, rather than 4,000, churches every year.[9]

Barnes and Warnes summarize four different models for planting new churches in America. One is through suburban sprawl. Many denominations today try to replicate the success they experienced in the mid-20th century. Barnes and Warnes note that mostly "mainline and white" denominations, including Lutherans, experienced success with this approach in the mid-20th century. This approach primarily included buying a strategic piece of property in a growing suburban area and providing a pastor. This approach worked well for two institutionally minded generations: the silent and boomer. This approach will not be as successful in a post-Christian context, which is decreasing in denominational brand loyalty.[10] A circuit collaborating in mission would counter this model by looking at a variety of different types and rationales for starting new ministries or church plants. Geography should not be the sole determinant for a new church start.

The second most common approach for starting churches is Protestant Splitting: the DNA of the Reformation, also known as "church splitting." Branson and Warnes report that there were 33,000 different Protestant church denominations in the year 2000. Individual churches and denominations often do not get along with one another. The most common reason is "heresy," non-biblical teaching. 21st century American consumerism may also play a role in churches

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8. Hartford Institute for Religion Research, "Fast Facts About American Religion," http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html (accessed March 28, 2016).

9. Branson and Warnes, *Starting Missional Churches,* 195.

10. Branson and Warnes, *Starting Missional Churches*, 14-15. This approach was used to start Christ's Greenfield Lutheran Church and School, and every other church in Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest District.

competing to provide better ministries.[11] The divide between Christian brothers and sisters is another reason why this research project is necessary. The answer is not birthing another denomination. Rather the divide between competing needs, desires, and passions among "confessional" and "missional" leaders must be reconciled within the LCMS before a potential denominational split occurs. A circuit collaborative in mission would start new ministries and church plants through a healthy, united effort rather than in a divisive, competitive manner.

A third common approach to starting new churches is Expert Strategies: Modernity and its Consequences. These are "top-down" approaches to starting churches either through experts within denominations or mega-churches. The strength of this model is an ability to understand the complexities of church planting, the value of constant assessment and a built-in network of mentors and connections. The weakness is that leaders often make too many generalizations from their experiences, and manage new efforts based on their previous systems. Often the newly hired pastor is placed in a certain area ready to execute a specific model of church planting without having been "on the ground" to understand the culture and context of their planting location.[12] A circuit collaborative in mission would differ from this approach because the pastors and leaders would agree on their next ministry or church plant, and would collectively know the surrounding culture and context.

The final approach for planting new churches is Charismatic Figures: Big Personalities. This kind of church leader has a gift for gathering people through strong preaching and innovation. The benefit of this model is that the church is agile. They can make quick decisions based on the "vision" of the charismatic leader. The problems obviously come when this

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11. Branson and Warnes, *Starting Missional Churches,* 17.

12. Branson and Warnes, *Starting Missional Churches,* 20-21.

charismatic figure leaves or dies (which inevitably happens). The charismatic leader often does not develop deep relationships with those within or outside their congregation. Empowerment of lay leaders and decentralized leadership need to be developed in these congregations, or they may suffer a significant decline when the charismatic leader is gone.[13] A circuit collaborative in mission will differ from this strategy because the group, rather than a charismatic figure, will agree on the new starts.

Instead, Branson and Warnes encourage starting mission-minded churches. They are students of Leslie Newbigin who encouraged listening, observing, participating, and discerning where God is already moving in a particular context. An effective circuit collaborative in mission will seek to identify where God is already at work in a region, and then pray about how they can use their gifts and talents to further God's will.[14] A circuit collaborating in mission will be different than any of the four common approaches listed above.

Multiplication of Disciples and Churches

Multiplication has become quite the missional buzzword the past few years. The multiplication frenzy has been led by a cross-denominational group called Exponential.[15] It is a network of church plants that immediately imbed in their church "DNA" the necessity to start churches that start churches. The para-church organization Leadership Network has also written a number of books about missional multiplication, many of them authored by Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird. One of their best-known titles is *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become*

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13. Branson and Warnes, *Starting Missional Churches,* 25-26.

14. Branson and Warnes, 28.

15. Exponential, www.exponential.org (accessed July 1, 2018).

Movement Makers.[16] In the forward to *Viral Churches* Rick Warren says, "There is simply no better way to reach, teach, train and send disciples out into the world than through churches that are planted with the intention of planting others."[17]

Therefore, it is necessary to disclose the tremendous effect discipleship multiplication has had upon mission-minded leaders within the LCMS. While the circuit will certainly decide the model for starting new ministries and churches, it will likely have some component of multiplication connected to it. Multiplication could have a positive impact on Circuit 30's effort to collaborate in mission based on the collaborative efforts of other non-LCMS churches and non-LCMS church planting movements listed below.

American Church Multiplication Movements

Michael Newman in *Gospel DNA* summarizes a potential roadblock for missional multiplication within the LCMS and within Circuit 30 as the LCMS educational system. Leaders and pastors are needed for new churches. Newman asserts that the rigorous educational process for pastors in the LCMS is rooted in the European university system. While the system has wonderful strengths, it is "complex, expensive and rigorous." Newman recommends that the current system be adapted to include multiple levels of Gospel workers using technology and mentoring. Some of these servants may become pastors. Some of them will simply be "evangelists" or "missionaries." Newman recommends adapting a system for raising up Lutheran

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16. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches,* xi.

17. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*.

leaders that is "faster, less costly, more inclusive, and more locally focused." [18] Circuit 30 could play a role in adapting such a church leadership training system.

Stetzer and Bird observe that today's church planting networks display a "heart of cooperation and a sharing of resources." Many of them have a "kingdom-mentality" that extends beyond their denomination or sending agency. [19] Stetzer and Bird recount how well-known pastor, Tim Keller, and his church in New York City, Redeemer Presbyterian, have become a multiplication center for churches within and outside their denomination. Their church plants extend from New York City to Toronto, Budapest, and Tokyo. Keller says, "New churches best reach new generations, new residents, and new people groups." [20]

<p align="center">Redeemer Church Planting Center</p>

In 2000, Redeemer Presbyterian started the Redeemer Church Planting Center. It was a collaborative effort by other churches, from multiple Christian denominations, around the world. The center helped provide financing, mentoring, leadership, and ministers for church plants both by Redeemer, and by many other churches and denominations. Each church plant was to be "indigenous and contextualized to its city and culture within the framework of Redeemer's values of Gospel-centered and city-affirming ministry." [21]

The Redeemer Church Planting Center measures its effectiveness by determining if the churches are reproducing. If ten percent of new churches reproduce in a given year, the network of churches will double in seven years. Another characteristic of success is that the church needs

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18. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 164.

19. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 67.

20. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches,* 69.

21. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 70.

to have a Gospel DNA. There must be a balance of word and deed. Finally, a determination is made as to whether the city around where the churches are planted is thriving. Do the people sense that the church plant is a blessing to their community?[22] Collaboration in mission through Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest District could provide such a network of like-minded church starts with tangible metrics for success, beginning in the Phoenix Valley.

New York City has been a significant center for church planting in the past twenty years. An interdenominational movement was started there by Tim Keller in partnership with church planter, Mac Pier. Together they have planned and implemented inter-denominational community prayer walks, and inter-denominational collaborative church planting efforts. These have resulted in large numbers of conversions. Mac Pier's book, *A Disruptive Gospel*, highlights how Christianity grew by 500 percent from 1989 to 2014 in Manhattan, the murder rate dropped by 86 percent in twenty years, and NYC has one of the most united and diverse inter-denominational church movements in history.[23]

Movement Day

In November of 2016 Mac Pier hosted "Movement Day" in New York City. Over 14,000 church, business, seminary and university leaders from around the world have gathered yearly in NYC to be challenged, inspired, and catalyzed in the advancement of gospel movement.[24] Movement Day came to Phoenix, Arizona on September 16, 2017 to inspire churches and businesses to collaborate to bless their cities in the name of Jesus.[25] Phoenix, which in a 2017

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22. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches,* 71.

23. Mac Pier, *A Disruptive Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 37.

24. Movement Day, www.movementday.com (accessed July 1, 2018).

25. Movement Day Arizona, www.movementdayarizona.com (accessed July 1, 2018).

Barna Group survey, ranked 92 out of the 100 largest U.S. metropolitan areas for "Bible-mindedness,"[26] is hoping to experience the same type of kingdom-expansion experienced in NYC.

Circuit 30's collaboration in mission is directly in line with what God is doing in greater Phoenix. While this project will document Circuit 30 staying within its LCMS denomination boundaries, in the future it may provide the foundation needed to be a part of a wider Gospel movement within the Phoenix valley.

Stetzer and Bird document how collaborating in mission is nothing new. Not only is it found throughout Scripture, it can be documented back to the 19th century in America. In 1888 in Herman, Massachusetts, two hundred fifty college students from eighty-seven different colleges formed the Student Volunteer Movement. Their rallying cry was, "The evangelization of the world in this generation!" Over the years it grew to tens of thousands of students and was a strong force in sending out hundreds of missionaries for several decades. Stetzer and Bird say, "It was one of the first cooperative efforts among denominations on a national level, and it proved to be successful in most ways."[27]

Converge

"Converge is a movement of churches working to help people meet, know and follow Jesus. We do this by starting and strengthening churches together worldwide."[28] Converge is formally connected to the Baptist General Conference (BGC). Yet, this denominational tie is

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26. Barna Research, "2017 Bible-Minded Cities," June 22, 2017, www.barna.com/research/2017-bible-minded-cities/.

27. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches,* 73.

28. Converge, https://converge.org/about (accessed September 15, 2020).

nowhere present on their website, outside of the fact they have been planting churches for 165 years. It appears as if Converge collaborates as a network with churches in a variety of denominational and non-denominational settings. Collaboration in mission is a core value.

> *"The church is not a building you sit in, it is a movement you choose to be part of. When you join Converge, you become part of a movement of like-minded, Bible-believing churches focused on the mission of Jesus. We are spiritually dynamic, relationally devoted, missionally driven and culturally diverse. As partners on the same mission, we're more effective working together to reach more people with the gospel."[29]*

Acts 29

Acts 29 is an inter-denominational church planting network. Acts 29 describes itself as a "diverse, global family of church-planting churches characterized by theological clarity, cultural engagement and missional innovation." The Acts 29 core theological values are "Gospel centrality in all of life, the sovereignty of God in saving sinners, the work of the Holy Spirit for life and ministry, the equality of male and female and the principle of male servant leadership, and the local church as God's primary mission strategy." They show love and charity toward other "doctrines of second importance."[30] Acts 29's main metric of success is starting and sustaining a church planting movement. No denomination is immediately evident on Acts 29's website. Yet, Acts 29's overview on GotQuestions displays they have "a heavy focus on

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29. Converge, https://converge.org/about/join (accessed September 15, 2020).

30. Acts 29, https://www.acts29.com/about/ (accessed September 15, 2020).

evangelical systemic theology and Calvinism."[31] In 2019, Acts 29 claimed to have 740 churches on six continents in their network. Their current Board President is Pastor Matt Chandler.[32]

<p style="text-align:center">The Kairos Project</p>

The Kairos Project began in 2014 at Sioux Falls Seminary as an experiment for training church leaders through Competency Based Theological Education (CBTE). The Kairos Project builds mentor teams for students to customize their learning journey to their respective denominational and local contexts. "The Kairos Project track within the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Christian Leadership, Master of Arts (Bible and Theology), and Doctor of Ministry programs facilitates flexible learning through contextually integrated educational moments and adaptable assignments. It is designed specifically for individuals who are actively engaged in ministry and/or desire to integrate their faith and work. Students accepted into the Kairos Project move toward outcome based Christian maturity under the supervision of a mentor team, by the direction of faculty, and through participation in a cohort-based community of learning."[33] The researcher believes the Kairos project offers an affordable and theologically faithful framework for collaborative LCMS pastors to use in order to start a church multiplication movement.

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31. GotQuestions, "What is the Acts 29 Network?", https://www.gotquestions.org/Acts-29-Network.html (accessed on September 15, 2020).

32. Acts 29, https://www.acts29.com/about/ (accessed September 15, 2020).

33. The Kairos Project, https://sfseminary.edu/prospective-students/programs/kairos/ (accessed September 15, 2020).

NoPlaceLeft

NoPlaceLeft is an international church planting movement that is clearly orthodox and evangelical though not restricted to any one denomination or church. Its leadership structures are loose, with a desire to reach as many as possible with the Gospel through mostly house churches. They describe themselves as a "Spirit-led church planting movements as the avenue for reaching a whole area—emphasizing 1) finding God prepared people (entry), 2) reproducing evangelism, 3) reproducing disciples, 4) reproducing churches and 5) reproducing leaders."[34] They respect biblical leadership structures, but also identify themselves as an "open-membership open-source volunteer movement (or coalition) built around the Matthew 24:14/Romans 15:23 vision. Anyone aspiring to the vision and ethos can enter the movement as a free-will offering (Psalm 110:3) and we are open-handed in our interactions (Prov. 11:24-25)."[35] Their desire is to multiply disciples and churches until there is truly "no place left" where the Gospel has not been heard.

Surge School in Phoenix

Surge School is a 9-month, intensive leadership development program churches use for discipleship and missional training of leaders for their churches, workplaces, and all areas of our city. Over 1000 leaders in Arizona have graduated from Surge School and now several other cities across the nation are also participating.[36] Surge School has developed curriculum that utilizes the missional writing of Michael Goheen, Christopher Wright, and Timothy Keller.

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34. NoPlaceLeft, " Church Planting Movement Based," https://noplaceleft.net/#toggle-id-3 (accessed September 15, 2020).

35. NoPlaceLeft, "Volunteer Movement," https://noplaceleft.net/#toggle-id-14 (accessed September 15, 2020).

36. Surge Network, "What is Surge School," http://surgenetwork.com/surge-school (accessed September 15, 2020).

Surge school focuses on training lay leaders to become more comfortable and competent in sharing the master narrative of Scripture. Therefore, the Surge School offers a collaborative learning experience for leaders from various denominations.

Collaborating Across Denominations

Stetzer and Bird share the cautionary tale of collaborating in mission across denominational lines. In 1910 church leaders came together in Edinburgh, Scotland from across the globe with the same rallying cry as the Student Volunteer Movement, "The evangelization of the world in this generation." They were called The International Missions Council. The church leaders intentionally set aside differences of doctrine, structure, and polity in the hopes of sending out collaboratively as many missionaries as possible.

Sadly, the International Missions Council gathered together again in 1928 to recap what God had done. Some of the church leaders began to question the need for personal witness, with an increasing preference toward service. In 1938 they met again and there were questions regarding "the need for conversions among devout followers of other faiths." Stetzer and Bird shared the historic lesson that "missions without a doctrinal framework tends to lose the Gospel's transformational power." A learning from history is that a strong doctrinal position is needed by any group collaborating in mission.[37]

Five Types of Collaborative Missional Partnerships

Stetzer and Bird document five different types of collaborative missional partnerships. The most common is the "same denomination" partnership. This is the type of partnership

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37. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 73-74.

looking to be formed through this project. Stetzer and Bird correctly analyze that the national

agency (i.e. The International Center in St. Louis for the LCMS) is good for providing

demographic information and "high level" training (i.e. seminary). They then analyze that "state

conventions" (i.e. districts) are set up to provide "in-depth training on the mechanics of planting

a church in a particular state." Finally, the "local association" (i.e. the circuit) provides a

"network for planters to gain encouragement and constant accountability."[38] This "local

association" is exactly what this project is attempting to formalize in Circuit 30, and hopefully in

the wider LCMS.

The other types of partnerships for church planting are intradenominational,

interdenominational, local church and apostolic. Intradenominational gathers church planters

from various denominations and allows them to maintain their distinctive doctrines while

agreeing to a baseline orthodoxy. Intradenominational networks form around a common

paradigm or purpose. Redeemer Church Planting Network is an excellent example. Local church

planting networks often take the lead from a lead pastor with a strong personality to help frame

and every emerging leader as a "potential person to be sent to start a new church." Apostolic

partnerships are robustly multiplication and kingdom focused.[39]

Some networks of church plants are "eye-opening." The Antioch Movement in Ukraine is

one such network. When communism fell in the 1980's Ukrainian church leaders collaborated

across Baptist, Pentecostal and independent church lines. They collectively realized that Ukraine

was their country and they had a "God-given responsibility to bring the Gospel to each man,

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38. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 74.

39. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 75-76.

woman, and child and plant churches." The Antioch Movement leaders signed a document declaring they would start 28,000 churches across Ukraine in their lifetime. [40]

Stetzer and Bird identify cooperation and collaboration as key to starting movements of church plants. They strongly recommend that church planters start a church with the next one to two planters already on their team. They are strong advocates for collaborating across denominational lines. Gary Irby is the founder of the Seattle Church Planting Network. Irby is a Southern Baptist and yet says, "We must be intentional about initiating relationships and even partnerships with tribes other than our own." Their church planting network crosses all denominational lines because twenty-seven languages are spoken in the Seattle region. No one denomination can mobilize church planters into each one of these ethnic groups. Irby says, "What can we do together that we can't do apart if we don't care who gets the credit – other than God?"[41]

Finally, Stetzer and Bird include *cooperation* as one of their four key steps to starting a church planting network. "If you begin to see cooperation as a joyful opportunity to cause someone else to succeed, then giving away all you have for the sake of a new or established network is worth the effort."[42] Many people who do not know Jesus would be found if Circuit 30 started to live out collaboration in mission.

Stetzer and Bird, along with many other leaders within the wider Christian church, champion partnerships across denominational lines. There are ample best practices to be learned from those who are outside of the LCMS. Reverend David Benke's prayer at Yankee Stadium to

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40. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches,* 77.

41. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 79-80.

42. Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches,* 81.

commemorate the attack on September 11, 2001 was labeled by many "confessional" LCMS

Lutherans as unionistic and syncretistic. Unionism is a "nonbiblical term applied to various

degrees of co-organization, joint worship, and/or cooperation between groups of various creeds

and/or spiritual convictions."[43] Syncretism is the "combining of different beliefs, while blending

practices of various schools of thought."[44] These terms are often bandied about anytime

Christians begin to work together, as a way to squelch the effort to reach out to others.

This project may include Circuit 30 collaborating with various mission organizations

within, and outside of the LCMS (i.e. Exponential). This collaboration in mission is in no way

intended to be unionistic or syncretistic. The goal of the collaborative effort was simply to have

Christians collaborating using best practices to reach the lost in the 21st century.

A synonym for collaboration is teamwork. In 2012 Robert C. Crosby wrote a book called,

The Teaming Church: Ministry in the Age of Collaboration. Crosby says, "Teaming is the best

strategy for building an organization in such a time of great cultural diversity and complexity as

the twenty-first century."[45] Each leader possesses creative potential within our minds and hearts

that can only be "stirred up by our friends, coworkers, and *collaborative communities."*[46]

The LCMS needs stories of a group of churches and church leaders trusting and

collaborating with one another. As of 2014 the average size of an LCMS congregation is one

hundred thirty-two members. These congregations are regularly served by a sole pastor. Sole

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43. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "Christian Cyclopedia," www.cyclopedia.lcms.org (accessed July 1, 2018).

44. Encyclopedia Britannica Online, s.v. "Syncretism", August 30, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/religious-syncretism.

45. Crosby, *The Teaming Church,* 42.

46. Crosby, *The Teaming Church,* 53.

pastors can often feel isolated and without a collaborative team of support. As previously noted, the local circuit was intended to be the collaborative community for all sizes of LCMS congregations.

Crosby assesses that most teams have "fuzzy goals." Crosby strongly recommends that collaborative teams strive to use SMART goals: *specific, measurable, attainable, realistic,* and *timely* goals. "Fuzzy" goals are too long, forgettable, and unexciting. SMART goals are concise, memorable, and compelling.[47] Circuit 30 will strive to have SMART rather than "fuzzy" goals that will necessitate the circuit visitor becoming the "circuit leader," or empowering another pastor or lay leader to occupy this role.

Crosby also analyzes two things that will need to occur at all Circuit 30's monthly meetings: "community building and goal tending."[48] It took a concerted effort to change the expectations of what it means to be a part of Circuit 30, even though the circuit is united and mission-minded. As will be noted in chapter four, the expectation for circuit meetings to date has solely focused on "community building," prayerful support and time in God's Word. John Maxwell says, "People change when they hurt enough that they *have* to, learn enough that they *want* to, or receive enough that they are *able* to."[49] Circuit 30 is hurting collectively as a group of churches. Half of the congregations are plateaued or declining. The goal of this project was to learn and receive enough through collaborating in mission that the circuit could not help but change. Church (*ekklesia*) literally means "the called-out ones." Circuit 30 has an opportunity to be just that.

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47. Crosby, *The Teaming Church,* 67-68.

48. Crosby, *The Teaming Church,* 71.

49. John Maxwell, *Leadership Gold* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 66 (italics added).

The Missional DNA of the LCMS

Michael Newman is the director of missions in the Texas District of the LCMS. Reverend Newman is also the author of "Gospel DNA: Five Markers of a Flourishing Church: Learning from a Movement Called 'Missouri,'" in which he lists people, multiplication, truth, adaptability, and self-sacrifice as markers for measuring church growth. In authoring his book, Newman used the LCMS as a "case study," and determined that the LCMS is on "pause" but displays hope for rekindling pride in the LCMS as a missional church body. According to Newman the history of the LCMS displays two different "seasons" over the past 150 years where church planting was the norm, rather than the exception. Previously, there was a collaborative missional fervor largely unknown in the current LCMS.

A review of history shows that the LCMS had a tumultuous beginning. In 1817, the Prussian Union forced the German Lutheran church to sacrifice some of its distinct teachings and beliefs in order to unite with the Reformed Church in Germany. Frustrated with this compromise, Pastor Martin Stephan led a group of frustrated German Lutherans away from Saxony in 1838 in hopes of gaining religious freedom. Shortly after leaving Germany and arriving in America, the community discovered that Stephen had been having inappropriate relationships with women. Consequently, he was "exiled" across the Mississippi River to Southern Illinois, and young C.F.W. Walther reluctantly took over pastoral leadership in Perry County, Missouri.

In November 1839, Walther called for a day of penance as a wake-up call to the true nature of what comprises the church, and the Saxon immigrants eventually realized that they were still the true church. The focus returned to Word and Sacrament ministry even though they did not have a formal bishop like the German Lutheran church. The immigrants had initially

come to America seeking only to preserve the truth of their confession, but God was calling them to expand their vision and care about those who did not know Jesus.

Walther recounted in a sermon 30 years later, "What zeal there was to bring others also to God's Word, and what joy if only one soul was won, even though it were a poor wood cutter." He ended his sermon with the convicting question: "Has not the zeal to win souls practically died out among us?"[50]

Many today view C.F.W. Walther as the "father of confessional Lutheranism in the United States." Yet, Walther's zeal for reaching the lost was the foundation of his confessional Lutheran identity all his days. In an 1842 sermon titled, "Bringing Souls to Christ: Every Christian's Desire and Duty," Walther said, "Whoever has no desire to bring someone else to the knowledge of the saving Gospel has certainly not yet come to know the heavenly power himself…The Christian Church is a great mission-house. Each Christian in it is a missionary sent out by God into his own circle to convert others to Christ."[51] Clearly, according to Walther, mission on behalf of the lost was at the center of what it meant to be part of the LCMS.

Walther would serve as president of the denomination, professor at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, pastor of a multi-site church in St. Louis, and loved training future pastors. In Walther's Pastoral Theology textbook, he said, "Pastoral theology is practical in general because its purpose, as that of all theology, consists of leading the sinner to salvation through faith."[52]

Walther's passion for reaching the lost never waned. When he died in 1887 his concern for the lost was communicated through the multiple churches he helped to start. Throughout his

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50. Newman, *Gospel DNA*, 27-29.

51. Newman, *Gospel DNA*, 31-32.

52. Newman, *Gospel DNA*, 33.

life Walther did not minister alone. He intentionally collaborated on mission with other leaders, such as Friedrich Wyneken. Walther complemented Wyneken calling him, "A spiritual father to thousands, to whole regions of America an apostle." Wyneken wrote to Germany on many occasions pleading for German missionaries to be sent to America. Wilhelm Loehe, a pastor in Germany, responded to the need and sent "hundreds" of missionaries to help reach both the growing number of immigrants and Native Americans.[53]

In 1947 the Concordia Publishing House (CPH) wrote a booklet titled, "How the Missouri Synod was Born." One chapter told Wyneken's story and asked the question, "What qualities made Wyneken a successful missionary?" Rev. Walter Fisher, answered, "True Christian fervor. Love of souls."[54]

As has been shown, the early history of the LCMS was driven by a passion to love all people, especially the lost. The LCMS had a missionary mindset and grew significantly. In 1947 Walter Baepler wrote a book titled, *A Century of Grace*, in which he noted that the purpose of the LCMS in the 20th century was to reach unchurched Americans. Between the years of 1918 and 1947, LCMS churches grew by 189,945 adults who now confessed their faith in Jesus. Eighteen new adult converts were made in the LCMS every day for almost 30 years.[55]

Michael Newman, in his book *Gospel DNA*, emphasizes how multiplication has historically been at the heart of LCMS growth. He notes, however, that now many churches believe the lie that if they multiply ministries and share resources and people, somehow the

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53. Newman, *Gospel DNA*, 37.

54. Newman, *Gospel DNA*. Rev. Fischer was Michael Newman's pastor growing up. Newman is the current mission executive for the Texas District of the LCMS and author of *Gospel DNA.*

55. Newman, *Gospel DNA*, 39.

missional well will run dry. Yet, Scripture makes clear that God's love for all is limitless and naturally leads to multiplication.[56] Churches which collaborate in mission must wholeheartedly believe this truth. For the first one hundred years (1838-1938) of LCMS history, one new church was started every week and congregations used collaboration to multiply leaders.[57]

A recent study on church planting by LifeWay Research discovered that churches focused on intentional multiplication exhibited stronger growth than churches that did not do so. The research suggests that a focus on church planting leads to growth and vibrancy.[58] Churches in the early years of the LCMS acknowledged and embraced this fact. In 1900 there were twenty-eight churches of all denominations for every ten thousand Americans.[59] In 2014 that number had decreased to only eleven churches for every ten thousand Americans.[60]

Furthermore, the LCMS grew over the period 1847-1947 from twelve congregations to 5,240 congregations, and from 4,000 souls in 1847 to 1.5 million by the end of 1947. The casual observer may be tempted to believe that the LCMS grew proportionally to population growth in America. Yet, LCMS growth vastly exceeded population growth in the late 19th century. In 1880, the U.S. population grew by 23%, but the LCMS grew by 41.2%. In 1890, the U.S. population grew by 20.3%, but the LCMS grew by 77%. This is what Newman in *Gospel DNA* calls "the first of two waves" of significant growth in the LCMS.[61]

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56. Newman, *Gospel DNA*, 58.

57. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 60.

58. Ed Stetzer, Micah Fries and Daniel Im, "The State of Church Planting in the U.S." (Nashville: LifeWay Research and NewChurches.com, 2015), 10-11.

59. Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 8.

60. Hartford Institute for Religion Research, "Fast Facts About American Religion", http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html (accessed March 28, 2016).

61. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 75.

Another claim that may be made is that the LCMS grew because German immigration grew. That would be partly true. The LCMS was a synod in the "right place at the right time," yet, they were also positioned strategically to welcome all German immigrants, many of whom were certainly not Lutheran. Lutheran growth in the 19th century even surpassed that of the Methodist church, which was known as one of the most vibrant church planting movements of the century.[62]

The LCMS went through a "pause" from 1917-1937, where church growth matched population growth. Much of this appears to be due to anti-German sentiment exploding in America.[63] During this time the LCMS began to understand that English, not German, would be the native tongue of the church in the future. Strong leadership by Dr. Walter A. Maier in the 1920's and 1930's helped breathe life into a "paused" synod through starting *The Walther League* for young people and *The Lutheran Hour,* which brought the Gospel to many via the radio. Maier taught for a time at Concordia Seminary and said, "This mission (of the LCMS) would grow through converts, not Lutheran transferees."[64] Strong missional leadership through Maier and others helped pull the LCMS out of its twenty year-long "pause."

Post-World War II's baby-boom started the "second wave" of significant growth in the LCMS. Its multiplication landed the LCMS on the April 7, 1958 cover of *Time Magazine.* The article noted that Lutheran congregations were springing up at a rate of one every 54 hours. *The Lutheran Hour* was noted as the most widely radio broadcast sermon hour in the world. "Preaching stations" were established in new communities to reach lost people. Many pastors

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62. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 78-79.

63. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 79.

64. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 90.

were traveling evangelists and church planters. Newman states that, "Multiplication of believers, disciples, leaders and churches was normal activity."[65]

There are additional factors that contributed to LCMS growth. David Kim, a missional leader in the Houston area, defines how the LCMS prioritized relationships. In summary he says, "it is *good* to make a difference by meeting felt needs. It is *better* to make lasting relationships with those you serve. It is *best* to make disciples through the transforming grace of God."[66] In the *Time Magazine* article from 1958 the LCMS is described as maintaining a good balance between being "confessional" and "missional."

Robust dependence upon the truth of God's Word is necessary for collaboration in mission. From its early years in the LCMS, educating God's people in biblical truth and biblical mission was foundational. The LCMS established a large network of schools – early learning, elementary, high schools, colleges, and seminaries. These schools were not started for "indoctrination" or preservation of German Lutheran culture. Instead, they were centers for missionary training and sending.

Factors of Growth

Newman says that "adaptability," rather than mere "creativity," was part of what allowed the LCMS to rapidly grow. To Newman "creativity" means abandoning enduring truth. As a distinctive trait to Newman "adaptability" means "keeping original material (the pure Gospel) and bringing it to bear in a new context."[67] Steve Addison in his book, *Movements that Change*

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65. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 81.

66. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 100.

67. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 148.

the World said, "Christianity's stubborn intransigence combined with flexibility in methods was a key to its success."[68] God's truth could never be adapted, but the methods used to reach others certainly could and would. Addison also said, "Movements that drift away from their core beliefs are always at risk, but so are movements that regard the way they currently function as sacred."[69]

Missiologist Ed Stetzer recently spoke to LCMS leaders and said, "If you want to plant more churches, you need more lanes for ministry."[70] The Ethiopian Church Mekane Yesus, General Secretary, Dr. Berhanu Ofgaa, noted several categories of trained and deployed workers within their booming 21st century church body: ordained pastors, full time evangelists, lay evangelists, lay ministers, volunteers for specific ministries, people with extraordinary spiritual gifts, and committed members.[71] Each of these leaders is offered robust training for their calling. The results have been extraordinary. Mekane Yesus has 10,000 congregations and only 3,500 ordained pastors. They have 6,000 full-time evangelists combining their efforts with 55,000 trained volunteers to share the Gospel. Their 7.8-million-member church body has a goal to share the Gospel with 30 million people, win 10 million converts, and plant 8,000 congregations with 5,000 mission posts in the next five years.[72]

The LCMS once had similar goals and provided the structure and training to make the goals become reality. The LCMS struck the balance between change and changelessness well in

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68. Steve Addison, *Movements that Change the World: Five Keys to Spreading the Gospel* (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2011), 114.

69. Addison, *Movements that Change the World*, 108.

70. Ed Stetzer, Keynote Lecture, The Great Commission Summit at Concordia University, Irvine, CA, June 1, 2015.

71. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 168.

72. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 168.

the 1800s and 1900s. Newman tells the story of Reverend A.W. Kraft graduating from Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois in June of 1900. Because he was not yet 21 years of age, he had to find other work before being "called" into the ministry at that age. [73] He served a rural church in South Dakota and was given permission to start "preaching stations." He learned English and Spanish to reach out to more than German speaking people. This was the norm for pastors on the American frontiers. He and the LCMS adapted to unique cultures and contexts for the sake of Gospel expansion. [74]

During the Great Depression of the 1930s many churches could not afford full time pastors due to the difficult economic times. C.D. Uetzmann was a candidate for the pastoral ministry during this time yet did not receive a call to a congregation. Therefore, he took a job at Concordia Publishing House, the publishing arm of the LCMS. After several months, Uetzmann was asked to serve as pastor at a church in North Dakota not affiliated with the LCMS. Uetzmann accepted the call. Through Uetzmann's adaptive leadership and instruction the members chose to become an LCMS congregation. [75]

Since its inception, the LCMS educational system has had to adapt. In America, pastoral training was initially modeled after those that existed back in Europe. Those programs of study took nine years of post-secondary education in order to be ordained by the church. Early in its history the LCMS received hundreds of ordained pastors from Germany. Leaders of the synod, such as Wilhelm Loehe, knew the European pastoral training model was not a long-term or

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73. The researcher has no idea why 21 was the earliest age a man could be ordained. It is speculated because 21 was the legal drinking age.

74. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 171.

75. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 173.

sustainable model for pastoral training and church growth. Therefore, in 1846 Reverend Loehe and other leaders opened "the practical seminary" in Fort Wayne, Indiana. LCMS historian, Carl Meyer, noted in his 1964 book, *Moving Frontiers,* "More than half of those who graduated from the seminary in Fort Wayne during the first nine years of the school's existence attended from one to two years and about a third of them, two to three years. The aim was to provide men with the most practical instruction, so they could enter the work as early as possible."[76] Through this program and seeing the need for getting pastors into the field more quickly, the LCMS became known for its adaptive educational system.

Another one of the numerous "lanes" that the LCMS had for men to enter the ministry was started in the year 1856. At the Western District conference, Rev. Carl Selle wrote with great passion about the need for the "so-called office of evangelist" in an ever-expanding United States frontier. He wrote, "Those that hold this office (evangelist) should not bind themselves to this or that congregation or congregations, but they shall make their only task to plant a church…where it does not yet exist…"[77] The LCMS also had the observed offices of "Book Agents" (door-to-door evangelists checking to see if people had a church connection), "Traveling Preachers" (searched communities for entry points for the Gospel for preaching and teaching), and "visitors" (went community to community trying to initiate the beginnings of churches).[78]

The LCMS has also traditionally been known for its adaptive liturgical forms. In 1919 Rev. John H.C. Fritz wrote *The Practical Missionary.* In it he discussed how adjustments need to

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76. Carl Meyer, *Moving Frontiers* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 217.

77. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 179-180.

78. Newman, *Gospel DNA*, 180.

be made in the worship service for the sake of the new believer. The simple order of service should include: "a hymn, Scripture lesson, hymn, sermon, hymn, collect, benediction, doxology."[79] He believed that the full liturgy found in the hymnal could be taught later to new converts and incorporated over time.

Speaking the Gospel in ethnically diverse communities is another innovative and adaptive measure the LCMS implemented successfully in the past. In the early days of the Missouri Synod when Lutheran churches were solely German speaking, churches began reaching out by entering and engaging English speaking communities. More recently recognizing the need to be able to speak the Gospel to all people, the church faces unique challenges when seeking to grow its numbers through converting the lost. Two factors often contribute to church bodies "pausing" as mentioned by Lawrence Meyer in his 1937 book, *Torch Bearers.* One, the church "grows lax, then worldly." Meyer defined "worldly" as intentionally surrendering the truths of Scripture, primarily the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as the Gospel able to save all people.

The challenge facing the LCMS today is certainly not that it disregards the veracity of the Gospel but is rather centered on Meyer's second factor: "the church ceases to evangelize." [80] The most recent LCMS congregational report notes a troublesome trend: Between 2013 and 2014 average church attendance throughout the synod declined 14 percent from 154 to 132 per service. [81]

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79. Newman*, Gospel DNA,* 175.

80. Meyer, *Torch Bearers,* 19.

81. Joe Isenhower Jr, "LCMS Congregations Report Statistics for 2014", *The Reporter Online,* https://blogs.lcms/2015/statistics-for-2014 (accessed October 27, 2015).

In an effort to reverse this trend, the LCMS World Mission launched "Ablaze!" with the intention of involving every member of the LCMS, its partner church bodies, and partner mission agencies in a focused and concentrated effort to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those who do not know Him. The goal in 2007 was to document 100 million "faith conversations" by 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. By joining together in this effort, not only would recipients of the Gospel be personally transformed, but mission organizations and congregations would be strengthened as members grew in discipleship through missional involvement. [82]

This organized evangelical effort lost momentum when President Gerald Kieschnick was defeated by Rev. Matthew Harrison in 2010 in the LCMS synodical election. President Harrison quickly changed the organizing language of the LCMS to "Witness, Mercy and Life Together." "Ablaze!" was not included in President Harrison's new initiatives. Despite the disruption in leadership, some districts continued with the effort, but many did not. Organizational leadership for "Ablaze!" from the LCMS International Center ceased. It is not known whether "Ablaze!" reached the 100 million goal established in 2007. Tracking methods for "Ablaze!" faith conversations were inconsistent, therefore measurable results are unknown. [83]

LCMS Structure and Organization

The 2016 LCMS Handbook documents and describes how the synod through districts and circuits is to be organized and function. Article III lists the first two objectives of the synod as "conserve and promote unity of the true faith" and "strengthen congregations and their members

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82. Summary statement of Ablaze! by the Southeastern District of the LCMS on January 2, 2014. Selc.lcms.org/ablaze.htm. The Michigan District also tangibly supported the effort. www.michigandistrict.org/missions-ministries/outreach/ablaze.

83. There is no current "tally" on the LCMS website documenting Ablaze! www.lcms.org The most recent blog on the LCMS website tallying the total was most recently updated on May 5, 2009.

in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love and work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and extend the Gospel witness into all the world."[84]

In order to strive for these objectives, the LCMS is comprised of thirty-three geographic districts and two non-geographic districts. Each district is led by a district president elected every three years. Christ Greenfield Lutheran Church is in the Pacific Southwest District. According to the 2016 LCMS Handbook, district presidents are to "embrace the mission and ministry emphases adopted by the national convention for the triennium." District presidents are also to conduct a personal visit to each congregation over the course of their three-year term. As part of his role, the district president shall discuss the "participation by the congregation in missions and the work of the church at large."[85]

To provide more ongoing and consistent support, the LCMS is divided into geographic circuits. A circuit is a network of congregations that "walk together with resources, and counsel – all for the sake of greater congregational participation in God's mission."[86] Each circuit has a "Circuit Visitor," a pastor from within that respective circuit elected once every three years. The circuit visitor assists the district president within each circuit and are to "remind and encourage members of the circuit of their responsibilities as God's people and the privilege they have in being about His mission." The circuit visitor seeks to "strengthen the spirit of cooperation among pastors, commissioned ministers, and congregations."[87] He is also tasked with keeping the district president updated with respect to the happenings in the circuit. Based on the

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84. LCMS Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, 11.

85. LCMS Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, Bylaw 4.4.2b and 4.4.4e, 180-181.

86. LCMS Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, Bylaw 5.1.1.

87. LCMS Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, Bylaw 5.2.3c and 5.2.3f, 187.

encouragement given to circuit visitors by the LCMS handbook, and the biblical mandate for mission in the church referenced in chapter two, it may be appropriate to refer to the circuit visitor as a "circuit leader in mission."

There are two unique gatherings encouraged by the LCMS handbook: circuit forums and circuit convocations. Circuit forums consist of one pastor and one lay leader from each congregation. They are to meet at least once every three years to elect the next circuit visitor and pastoral and lay delegates to the LCMS convention. Yet they are also encouraged to "develop and adopt within existing policies of the respective district complementary and sometimes joint plans for mission outreach in the circuit area." Circuit forums should facilitate the development of programs and services relevant to the needs of the circuit. The circuit forum is intended to be a consistent gathering of pastoral and lay leaders for collaboration in mission.[88] Despite the encouragement to spawn collaboration, the circuit forum is most often convened every three years solely for synodical election purposes, as will be evidenced by the survey below.

While the circuit forum is gathering for the sake of mission, the circuit convocation is the means by which the circuit forum shares their missional objectives with individual congregations of the circuit. Circuit convocations are to occur every three years during the year in which there is no national or district convention. The circuit convocation allows for each congregation to become aware of and celebrate the ministry pursued by each congregation, share the missional objectives of the circuit forum, and "evaluate mission potential within the circuit." The circuit visitor is the chairman and responsible for preparing the agenda for the circuit Convocation.[89]

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88. LCMS Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, Bylaw 5.3.1(2), 189.

89. LCMS Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, Bylaw 5.4.2, 189.

Circuit visitors are to serve as leaders within the circuit for the above objectives focused on mission work to be accomplished. Unfortunately, the Pacific Southwest District, of which Circuit 30 is a part, provides no formal training for circuit visitors who are not currently instructed on their leadership role for circuit forums and circuit convocations.

The Challenges of Autonomy

Significant challenges to collaborative missions emerge when congregations view themselves as autonomous of other congregations within the synod, district, and circuit. As the LCMS Handbook states, congregations are called to "walk together" in mission. The requisites to become an individual congregation of the LCMS are an approved constitution and bylaws by the respective district's constitution committee. The constitution committee examines the constitution and bylaws to "ascertain that they are in harmony with Holy Scripture, the Confessions, and the teachings and practices of the synod."[90] It could be assumed by some that the "practices" of the synod include collaboration in mission with circuit congregations. Yet, this would be a wrong assumption given the current lack of circuit collaboration in mission connected to circuit forums and convocations.

With loose connections, it is easy to see how each congregation would view themselves as autonomous and distinct from one another. Congregations are considered a part of the LCMS as long as they have an approved constitution and bylaws. It is the responsibility of the district president to respond to any complaints directed at congregations or members of synod. To date, the researcher has found no documentation which indicates a congregation has been removed from synod because of their failure to collaborate in mission. The LCMS Handbook does not

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90. LCMS Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, Bylaw 2.2.1(b), 53.

state clearly that LCMS churches must collaborate in mission. The only accountability

mechanism currently in place is the process for congregations to write their constitution and

bylaws and submit them for approval.[91] In other words, collaborative missional expectations are

not clearly spelled out in LCMS documents or enforced in LCMS congregations.

LCMS formal individual membership solely includes ordained pastors, commissioned

ministers, missionaries of the LCMS, and executive directors of LCMS institutions.[92] Individual

lay leaders within the congregation are not formal members of the LCMS. For those individuals

who are members of synod, the LCMS handbook outlines a lengthy process toward expulsion.

Generally, expulsion occurs for sexual misconduct, criminal behavior, or false teaching.[93] There

is no documented case of a formal charge being brought against a member of synod (church or

individual member) because of the lack of desire to collaborate in mission.[94]

Late First Vice President, Herbert Mueller, was interviewed extensively for this project

due to his vast historical knowledge of the LCMS. Mueller is best known for his work in *The

Koinonia Project*. Mueller acknowledged that "most district presidents encourage their circuit

visitors to hold circuit forums and convocations." He acknowledged that the primary reason

circuit forums are conducted is for electing delegates to synodical conventions. He conveyed that

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91. LCMS Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, Bylaw 2.2.1(b), 52-54.

92. LCMS Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, 58.

93. LCMS Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation, 66-76.

94. Herbert Mueller, e-mail message to researcher, July 3, 2017: "The only time in 23 years on the council of Presidents that I have heard of a formal charge being brought against a church was in the case of Trinity Lutheran Church, New Haven, MO. They were formally charged for refusing to discipline their pastor, Herman Otten. Eventually the charge was resolved by Otten retiring from the pastorate of Trinity."

circuit convocations are sporadic at best, though in his years as district president he encouraged his circuit to hold them, but "no more than half actually did."[95]

The LCMS adopted two kingdom-expanding resolutions at the 2013 LCMS Convention which speak directly to the theme of this research project. Resolution 1-04A, titled "To Encourage Church Multiplication as a Means of Making New Disciples," resolved that "congregations and their leaders be encouraged to work in cooperation with other congregations and their circuits to determine opportunities to multiply churches locally."[96] The resolution also encouraged congregations to support district and wider synodical efforts through the LCMS Board for National Mission. However, according to Mueller there has been little observable coordination within districts and circuits to support this resolution.

The second resolution at the 2013 LCMS convention was Resolution 1-05A, "To Encourage Congregations and People of the LCMS in the Joy of Evangelization and the Making of New Disciples." One of the resolutions in the overture stated: "Resolved, that all LCMS districts, circuits, congregations, and their baptized members be encouraged to work collaboratively at every level; to sponsor any of the following: a missionary, a church plant, a specialized ministry, or a mission; and to give due time and support to their chosen initiative(s)."[97] The overture enthusiastically encouraged pastors, circuits and other ministries to seek "opportunities for joint ventures to carry out the initiative(s) they choose." Regrettably, no

95. Mueller, email, July 3, 2017.

96. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "Resolution 1-04A: To Encourage Church Multiplication as Means of Making New Disciples," in *Baptized For This Moment: Convention Proceedings, Sixty-Fifth Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, St. Louis, MO, July 20-25, 2013* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2013), 135.

97. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "Resolution 1-05A: To Encourage the Congregations and People of the LCMS in the Joy of Evangelization and the Making of New Disciples," in *Baptized For This Moment: Convention Proceedings, Sixty-Fifth Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, St. Louis, MO, July 20-25, 2013* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2013), 135.

observable systems were established at the LCMS convention, or subsequent meetings, to aid in holding districts and circuit visitors accountable for collaborating in mission at the local level. Clearly, the challenge of congregational, wide-scale missional collaboration remains difficult.

The Pacific Southwest District of the LCMS

The Pacific Southwest District of the LCMS is known as a region focused on missions and new church starts. Nonetheless, collaboration for mission work in this district is still difficult to coordinate. Twelve-year district president, Larry Stoterau, acknowledged that during his tenure he knew of only two circuits in the Las Vegas area establishing a "mission society" that worked to support mission starts in the Las Vegas area. There was no other circuit in the Pacific Southwest District which had established a consistent rhythm of initiating new ministries to reach those who do not know Jesus.

President Stoterau was also not aware of any circuits having a "Circuit Convocation" during the off year between the district and synodical conventions. He recognized that the district does not train circuit visitors to be leaders in collaborative mission. Stoterau said that the Minnesota South, Northwest, and Southeastern districts of the LCMS had a history of training their circuit visitors to lead mission efforts.[98]

In summary, there is little accountability for churches or individual members of the LCMS to collaborate in mission. Reflecting on a thorough review of the literature, no formal study has been found that determines the traits and characteristics of pastors within the LCMS open to collaborating in mission. This research project documented the traits and characteristics of pastors with respect to collaboration in mission from within Circuit 30 of the Pacific

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98. Larry Stoterau, e-mail message to researcher, July 3, 2017.

Southwest District, including a sampling of random, anonymous pastors across the LCMS. Since there are no other studies to support or refute the finding of the Harrison Assessment among pastors in the LCMS, it is necessary to now explore more of the current missional realities within the LCMS and explore formal studies within other denominations. Thus, it has been important to understand the current missional realities of the LCMS as described above.

The Koinonia Project

First Vice President, Herbert Mueller, was commissioned by the Office of the Synodical President to start *The Koinonia Project* in June 2013. "Koinonia" is a Greek word which means "fellowship." The *Koinonia Project* was intended to provide greater unity to a divided church body. As in many denominations, there were and are divisions along the "confessional and missional" continuum. This division was accelerated when President Jerry Kieschnick was unexpectedly defeated by Matthew Harrison on July 13, 2010 at the LCMS Convention. Based on the June 2013 introduction to the *Koinonia Project* by Mueller, the project was intended to "foster theological conversation under the word of God which we pray will strengthen our joint witness to the saving doctrine and bring greater unity to our practice of the same for the sake of God's people." The paper defined and encouraged unity, concord, and harmony to be seen among the churches and pastors and declared that unity is found through faith in Christ. Concord focused on the unity of the LCMS in doctrine and practice and harmony focused on treating one another in a Christ-like manner. These efforts were encouraged for the sake of being a "witness to the world."[99]

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99. Herbert Mueller, "The 'Koinonia' Project," Concept Paper, June 2013, 6.

Mueller acknowledged that the LCMS had unresolved problems around the topics of "worship forms, communion practice, fellowship, mission strategies and church and ministry issues." Mueller encouraged a robust conversation on doctrine and practice, as well as acknowledging "adiaphora"[100] in our walk together as the church.[101] Mueller was largely responding to the work of the *Task Force for Synodical Harmony* who reported to the 2010 LCMS convention. They listed an "inability to deal with diversity" as one of the primary contributors to disunity within the synod. They also found that disunity was due to a "politicized culture" and it was "primarily a pastor problem."[102] Hence, the *Koinonia Project* sought to bring politically polarized groups into proximity with one another so Christian unity could be restored.[103]

The LCMS has consistently stood by the Augsburg Confession article VII which states that true unity is found when the Word of God is purely preached, and the sacraments are administered according to God's Word. Yet, the LCMS' "walk together" is certainly not this simple. The *Koinonia Project* sought to bring eight to twelve pastors together for theological study and discussion with one chaplain/facilitator for the conversation. The *Koinonia Project* sought to name the issue, find common ground, and then agree on how to walk together into the future.

The heart of the *Koinonia Project* is that unity, concord, and harmony are primary to the mission of the church. However, two challenges stand out. One, the initiative was administered

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100. "Adiaphora" is a Greek word that indicates actions that morality neither commands nor forbids.

101. Mueller, "The 'Koinonia' Project."

102. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "LCMS Harmony Task Force – Final Report", 3-4.

103. LCMS Harmony Task Force, 7.

out of the president's office under the leadership of First Vice President, Herbert Mueller.

Therefore, if in a polarized LCMS environment, a church leader had any distrust of Synodical leadership, *The Koinonia Project* was probably dismissed. The effort did not intentionally engage circuit visitors. Reflecting on his experience, Mueller believes that working with districts and circuits would need to be prioritized in the future through pilot groups. He sought to "work with the willing" and prayed that others would join the effort. *The Koinonia Project* was a synod-led initiative that Mueller prayed would impact the local church.

The second challenge in *The Koinonia Project* may have been that the motivation for implementation of the plan was not clear enough. Unity in ministry is necessary but only in so far as it enhances the Church's witness to the world. Unity is not an end in itself.[104] Unity and love is a witness to the world that should propel the church into the world to seek and save the lost.[105] Mueller's project well-defines "synod." According to Mueller the synod is essentially a "fellowship" (koinonia*)* of congregations, pastors and commissioned ministers who share the same confession of faith. "The synod is the sum total of all of its members, seeking to work collectively under the Word of God, to confess Christ before the world." Mueller goes on to say, "Each district is the synod itself in that area. Each circuit is the synod itself in that area. Each congregation, as a member of synod, is the synod in that place." Finally, Mueller encouraged each member of synod to "advise one another in brotherly fashion to hear God's Word, *confess*

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104. John 17:23, "I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you love me." (English Standard Version)

105. John 17:21, "That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (English Standard Version)

Christ boldly and live together in brotherly love."[106] When unity and trust are lacking, however, it limits our capacity to confess Christ boldly.

Outcomes of The Koinonia Project

In May 2017, Mueller offered the researcher an update on *The Koinonia Project.* Mueller wrote in a concept paper that the principles outlined for *The Koinonia Project* have been largely implemented and sustained over time and that a greater level of unity of purpose and mission has been experienced. Mueller suggests that the primary examples include the Minnesota South District, the Northern Illinois District, and the Topeka Circuit of the Kansas District.

In 2012, the Minnesota South District was deeply divided and experienced a contentious district convention. Mueller was in attendance, and new leadership was elected to replace a retiring district president. After a *Koinonia* presentation to the pastoral conference by Mueller, the district president and vice presidents designed an approach unique to Minnesota South using the principles outlined in the *Koinonia* concept paper. In essence, they paired divided circuits with each other and asked them to meet regionally. They are now in their second phase of their process. It is thought that, as an outcome of that decision, the 2015 District Convention was calm, peaceful, and more focused on the mission of the district.

The Northern Illinois District began with a retreat involving twelve hand-picked pastors from around the district and across the theological spectrum. This group met regularly for two years, had a second retreat, and then invited forty more pastors into four more groups. Mueller mentioned that he has not been as directly involved with this district and that their strategy was unique to their district. The fifty-two pastors presented statements on wedding practices and on

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106. LCMS Harmony Task Force, 12.

admission to communion. The uniting theological statements which were generated brought greater unity to the district on these issues. It is unclear how this collaboration has or has not affected mission work.

The Topeka Circuit of the Kansas District heard Mueller's *Koinonia* presentation in 2011. Unknown to Mueller, the Kansas District discussed it for about eighteen months and subsequently decided to follow through and implement the plan. They committed themselves to each other and to the *Koinonia* process. They even demonstrated at the Kansas District Pastoral Conference how they go about meeting together. One of the pastors involved in that circuit, Peter Lange, is now the Kansas District President.

Overall, Mueller was hesitant to make a direct correlation between *The Koinonia Project* and increased collaboration in mission. He said, "There are a number of groups still getting together, though it is difficult to tell how many are getting together as a result of the *Koinonia Project*. I am certain that in a general way, increased cooperation in mission is a byproduct of increased unity. However, it is exceedingly difficult to prove a direct effect. I do know that the two districts (Minnesota South and Northern Illinois) that were serious about implementing the principles and following through on the process have experienced both greater unity and more effective collaboration in mission."

Mueller added that he was aware of "anecdotes of circuits that are collaborating in mission" but he personally did not have specifics. Mueller referenced how the Toledo Circuit of the Ohio District and the Brownsville Circuit of the Texas District are collaborating with their respective districts and with the Synod's Office of National Mission to support urban and ethnic

missionaries in those two places. He also identified collaboration across circuit and district lines in the Philadelphia area with the Philadelphia Lutheran Mission. [107]

The Koinonia Project even extended its reach to the LCMS Council of Presidents (COP). The COP is made up of the thirty-five district presidents. They meet quarterly at the International Center for the LCMS in St. Louis, MO. The 2013 Synod Convention directed the Council of Presidents to meet in smaller groups to discuss theological issues. The groups were formed in the fall of 2013 and began work when Mueller led a retreat in February of 2014. The basic result is that the COP is having more open discussion of difficult issues, though greater unity on several contested issues has been more elusive. Differences of opinion in the COP are sometimes exacerbated by the different political perspectives within the LCMS.

Momentum on the *Koinonia Project* has stalled in recent years. This is due in part to the leadership Mueller has provided for the colloquy program of the LCMS. [108] The 2016 Convention gave the responsibility for the *Koinonia Project* to the Synod Praesidium [109] as a whole. Mueller admits that only time will tell whether the earlier momentum of the *Koinonia Project* will be renewed, and that the Council of Presidents will be key to this process. [110]

The common denominator for the two districts and the one circuit Mueller highlighted who went "above and beyond" to put the *Koinonia Project* into effect was collaborative leadership, under the guidance of one key leader, often the district president. Every district

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107. Herbert Mueller, e-mail message to researcher, June 30, 2017.

108. Colloquy is a path toward ordination in the LCMS for those who have served as pastors of other denominations. Colloquy is also being utilized to ordain previous "licensed lay deacons" of the LCMS who are serving in a sole pastor role.

109. The LCMS Praesidium is made up of the LCMS President, Vice President, five regional vice presidents and the secretary. All these positions are elected at the triennial LCMS convention.

110. Mueller, email, June 30, 2017.

president and various circuit leaders were willing to address obvious theological and practical divisions, and then strategize collaboratively on a plan to change the culture. As the *Koinonia Project* continues to spread in the LCMS, it will be necessary for the same collaborative leadership to be evident from district presidents and circuit visitors. Mueller admits that the current number of districts and circuits intentionally collaborating in mission is not acceptable if the culture of the LCMS is going to change. (See all of Mueller's comments below. [111]) The

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111. Following is a list of those districts and circuits where Mueller is aware of efforts to establish the Koinonia Project in various ways. It is the unedited emailed comments from Mueller on June 30, 2017:

Oregon and South Idaho Pastoral Conferences: I presented the concepts of the Koinonia Project to these two pastoral conferences in the Northwest District (in 2012 and 2013), but I am not aware of any efforts on the part of those groups to continue or to apply the principles.

North Dakota District: I led a three-day retreat for the pastoral conference of the district in which I trained the circuit visitors to lead their circuits in the principles and processes of the Koinonia Project (2015). There has been a change in district presidents since then, so I am not sure of the lasting effects.

Nebraska District: A hand-picked group of 12 pastors (chosen by the district praesidium) met for about 2 ½ years (2012-2014) but were unable to develop any real consensus. Reasons for the lack of long-term effects here include the personalities of the participants, plus the fact that we did not begin with a retreat. It seems that for the Koinonia principles to take hold, they must be presented and then lived over the course of at least two full days by the participants. A retreat setting is the best means of doing so.

Oklahoma/Mid-South Districts: I conducted a three-day retreat in 2013 for the circuit visitors and vice presidents of these two districts. The intent was that they take these principles back to their circuits. The district presidents report, in general, that this has had a positive effect on how the circuits work together. However, I am not aware of any mission efforts that arose as a result.

Wyoming/Atlantic Districts: I have led two joint pastoral conferences of these two districts, plus meetings of smaller groups, to discuss differences in mission and ministry. The two districts are still exchanging representatives at the pastoral conferences, working on the issues that have divided them, but have not yet come to any positive conclusions – though they are still meeting and working towards that end.

Topeka Circuit of the Kansas District: This was a circuit divided over worship issues and communion practice issues. When they decided to address those issues in a brotherly manner, recognizing that how they treated one another was also a theological issue, they were able to come to greater understanding of each other and greater acceptance of each other's ministries.

Texas District, Houston Area Circuit: I led two retreats for this circuit over the course of a couple of years. They have been drawn closer together and have celebrated Holy Communion together for the first time in a number of years. I have not heard recently how things are going.

Minnesota North District: I have presented the Koinonia Project to the circuit visitors of the district. They have sought to implement the process in their circuit winkle meetings.

Minnesota South District: This district went "all in" with the Koinonia Project. I made a lengthy presentation to their district pastoral conference. The then new district president, Dean Nadasdy and his four district vice presidents,

Koinonia Project seeks to play a small role in changing the culture of the LCMS to be more

unified, collaborative and mission minded. Nonetheless, because of the current politically

polarized nature of the LCMS, ample time must be given toward building relationships of trust

and respect, mostly among pastors, before they will be willing to collaborate in mission together.

An Interview with Two District Presidents about The Koinonia Project

President Dean Nadasdy—Minnesota South District

1) *Please share specific outcomes of The Koinonia Project. Did any circuits start to*

   collaborate in mission in tangible ways (new starts, etc.)?

   "*The Koinonia Project* in MN South was designed to build communication and trust

among our pastors especially regarding issues of doctrine and practice. Our first round included

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decided to formulate their own version of the Koinonia Project. As mentioned, they have experienced a much greater level of unity and a spirit of cooperation. I have attached to this email their description of what they call Koinonia 2.0, their second round of discussions.

North Wisconsin and South Wisconsin Districts: The Koinonia Project has twice been presented to a joint meeting of the circuit visitors of these two districts. I will be discussing with them in February 2018 more of what could be done in their midst.

South Wisconsin District: Two groups, each led by a district vice president, have been organized and have met in retreat. One worked on communion practice, the other on worship. Some progress has been made, but I have not heard much since. Dan Torkelson, a district vice president, would be a great contact person.

Northern Illinois District: We began in 2012 with a Koinonia Retreat including the district president and 12 pastors. This group met monthly for a year and then had a second retreat. They worked on wedding issues, preparing a statement of agreement for their district pastoral conference. In 2014 they had a third retreat, drawing in more pastors so that there were at least three groups of 10 each meeting. Out of this process they developed a broader agreement on communion practice which was presented to the pastoral conference. I have not received any recent reports, but I believe the district has been calmer and more united.

Ohio District, Dayton Circuit: This circuit asked me to come a do a retreat to help them get started. They have since been engaged in extended discussions of communion practice which have benefited those brothers who participated. The difficulty is that not all of the brothers participated.

Southeastern District: South Carolina Circuit: This circuit also asked me to do a three-day retreat with them in January 2016. The retreat was tense as there were relationships that had been "rubbed raw" by some difficult issues. As a result of the retreat, several of the brothers met *after* the retreat to work on personal issues. This has helped, and we are presently engaged in finding a date for a second retreat to work on more substantive issues.

all pastors in the district, and we feel we achieved those goals, especially in and between circuits where there was a wide divergence in doctrine and practice. One circuit has looked at a possible merger of three churches for the sake of mission. Our circuit visits by district staff encourage collaboration among churches, especially those in rural settings. Several have responded by sharing confirmation and youth ministry among a cluster of churches. These circuit visits become opportunities for talking about collaborative efforts. Our second round of *Koinonia* involved clergy, commissioned workers, and lay people. Again, building trust among them, we hope, is a first step to collaborative mission."

2) *What are your ongoing efforts to encourage collaboration in mission in the district?*

"We are encouraging clusters of churches to come together for collaboration especially in education and youth ministry. Many of our smaller, struggling churches will have to collaborate with neighboring churches or they will not make it. Our mission formation process (Dr. Phil Johnson) goes into congregations one-at-a-time and inevitably collaboration comes up, often resulting in helping to make connections among neighboring parishes. Increasingly with over ¼ of our churches worshiping less than fifty, it is a challenge to get them thinking missionally when they are in a desperate survival mode. We have developed a list of thirteen alternatives to closing, one of which emphasizes collaboration in mission."

3) *Do any circuits in your district gather for strategic circuit forums and convocations, as encouraged in the LCMS Handbook?*

"Out of twenty-four circuits we probably have two that actually address the topic of shared outreach ministries in their convocations. Convocations are usually more topical/educational with speakers and perhaps a worship service."[112]

President Paul Linneman—Northwest District

1) *Did your District take part in the Koinonia Project led by Herb Mueller? If so, could you share any specific outcomes? Did any circuits start to collaborate in mission in tangible ways (new starts, etc.)?*

"We did not initiate any activity in Koinonia *Project* efforts. Herb (1st LCMS Vice President) did come to our district to share the process with a couple of our five pastoral conferences, but no one pushed it. I find the *Koinonia* effort to be a bit disingenuous as the synod leadership has made little effort to listen to the 'voices around the table' in dealing with issues of controversy in the church, such as Licensed Lay Deacons and Ecclesiastical Supervision."

2) *What are your ongoing efforts to encourage collaboration in mission in the district?*

"The NOW district has established collaborative efforts with the California/Nevada/Hawaii and Pacific Southwest Districts in our Ministerial Applied Practice West Coast training for first call pastors. It is our answer to the PALS (Post-Seminary Applied Learning and Support for new pastors and their families) program of the Midwest. In addition, we have joined forces in sponsoring a Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI) cohort in their Discipleship to Missional Communities track. On our own, we have sponsored leaders in our district in attending the annual FiveTwo conference. At the high water mark we had 60 leaders from the NOW District attend. We are also promoting a missional leadership track entitled GPS-

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112. Dean Nadasdy, email interview by researcher, July 5, 2017.

-Grow, Prepare, Serve. This initiative includes coaching and monthly online gatherings for training and encouragement. Periodically, we gather a president's leadership group on an invitation basis for the purpose of group planning and encouragement. For the past nine months or so, my office has produced a leadership podcast made available online. Our district website serves as the hub of our leadership communication effort. Leadership interest groups are formed there and are self-moderated."

3) *Do any circuits in your district gather for strategic circuit forums and convocations, as encouraged in the LCMS Handbook?*

"We have not pushed this effort. New ministries have begun in our district, and our efforts are more organic in nature. When there is a spark, we seek to help it to grow into a fire."[113]

An Interview with President Emeritus, Gerald Kieschnick

Gerald Kieschnick was the president of the LCMS from 2001-2010. He was defeated by Rev. Matthew Harrison on July 13, 2010 at the LCMS triennial convention. Kieschnick's first three years as synod president were difficult. Four of the five region vice-presidents were more "conservative." Kieschnick was criticized by many for supporting Atlantic District President, David Behnke, for offering a Trinitarian prayer at the interfaith prayer gathering post-September 11, 2001. Many said Behnke's prayer was "syncretistic."[114] Kieschnick simply believed that Behnke had provided a Christian message of hope in a time of crisis. He also argued that the event was not a worship service.

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113. Paul Linnemann, email interview by researcher, July 10, 2017. Nowlcms.org.

114. "Syncretism" is the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions.

Kieshnick believes that much of our current polarized political climate in the LCMS goes back to the Seminex controversy of the 1970s.[115] Kieshnick was criticized for standing up for Atlantic District President Behnke and for the cancellation of the conservative Lutheran radio program, *Issues, Etc.* in 2008.[116] He was also known for his efforts in the evangelical effort within the LCMS titled, "Ablaze!" In a recent interview, it was evident that Kieschnick laments the current trajectory of the LCMS.

1) *What was your greatest story of collaboration in mission during your time as a church leader?*

"While district president in Texas we sought to encourage local churches to 'own' their missionary. I coordinated an effort with Glenn O'Shelley, the LCMS International Missions Executive Director. O'Shelley did not want to 'look over our shoulder.' He simply wanted to know what we were doing so he could advise and support us at the National level. I also remember becoming frustrated with pastors getting connected to ministries that the LCMS was not in altar-pulpit fellowship with. I wanted there to be a connection with the Synod's International Missions department. We wanted to help local congregations know more and be smarter with where the help was needed the most."

2) *What do people in the LCMS hear when you say the word, "Mission"?*

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115. Seminex was an "exiled seminary" that existed from 1974-1983. It was for Lutheran seminary professors and students who were sympathetic to the "higher critical" method of interpreting Scripture. Many of the professors and students left Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Many of these seminary graduates ended up pastoring in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA).

116. Rev. Marcus Zill, an LCMS pastor in Wyoming, produced in April 2004 a document titled, "The Crisis in the LCMS Resource Guide." Zill strongly speaks against Kieschnick's handling of the "Benke/Yankee Stadium" crisis, as well as the sudden firing of then Lutheran Hour Speaker, Dr. Wallace Schulz. Though one-sided, this document summarizes the struggles that President Kieschnick led through. www.crisisinthelcms.org

"Mission has wide use. Most people in the LCMS hear 'mission' as 'foreign mission.' 'Evangelism' is often used for reaching the lost locally. I hope that 'mission' is in wider use to include both local, national, and international ministry. 'Missional' began to be widely used after I reached the office in 2001."

3) *What were the greatest stumbling blocks to collaboration in mission while Synodical President?*

*"*That is easy--pride. Some pastors in the LCMS do not want to admit that they cannot be all things to all people. While district president in Texas I remember the power of three churches working together. Some prideful pastors may believe that working together is a sign that an insecure pastor does not have it all together. The second stumbling block for collaboration is a lack of vision by our pastors. Our model for pastoral ministry is a shepherd taking care of the sheep. This implies a finite group of people that are kept from being attacked by wolves and bears. It is often hard for pastors to see 'beyond their borders.' Navel gazing ensues. Finally, many pastors are unaware of the resources, interest, and capacity of their congregation to do mission work beyond their church borders.

I am amazed by so many lay leaders in all types of churches. They have time, talent and treasure and are eager to *go*! I have experienced this lay urge to go on mission numerous times. It is so necessary that the pastor gets a mission-minded vision and then equips the saints to take the 'bull by the horn and run' with it (Ephesians 4:12). I believe our pastors need to trust one another. We need to work hard to not 'steal sheep' from one another's congregations. Some may sadly believe that there are 'only so many Lutherans to go around.' Finally, going on mission together is untidy and edgy. Some will be uncomfortable, yet the discomfort is worth it for the sake of the lost."

4) *What is your opinion of "The Koinonia Project"? Did it connect to "Ablaze" in any specific way?*

"I did not know about the *Koinonia Project* before I left office.[117] I have heard of the three-pronged vision of the LCMS: Witness, Mercy and Life-Together. I assume *Koinonia* was about deepening our 'Life-Together.' I believe First Vice-President Mueller has a large task ahead of him. We are so divided. *Koinonia* appears to be an attempt to unite. I am suspicious. It may be an attempt by some of our 'confessional' brothers to get our 'evangelical' brothers to 'come home.' 'Confessional' leaders will not budge an inch. Attempts to collaborate will work if 'missional' guys will 'come back home.' I do not know if *The Koinonia Project* was successful in any way."

5) *Finally, have you ever heard of local pastors being held accountable for "missional zeal" and collaboration in mission?*

"This sort of accountability does not happen from the district or synod. Occasionally, congregations remove men who are not helping with missional zeal. District presidents enter in when the congregation is struggling with their pastor. The synod has little power to hold mission lazy churches accountable. I have never heard of a circuit visitor or district president holding pastors responsible for baptisms and reaching the lost. Sometimes I feel sorry for the LCMS in the United States. Historically, we have not needed missions to grow our church. We are a mostly immigrant church body."

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117. *The Koinonia Project* did not start until after Kieschnick left office.

6) *Why should churches collaborate in mission?*

"It is more efficient. We don't need to reinvent the wheel. Various auxiliary LCMS ministries can help in this effort. Also, if churches collaborate, we will help one another with marketing, human resources, and mission trips. Various economies of scale can be developed through collaboration in mission."[118]

"Grass roots" Efforts to Change the Culture of the LCMS

It is difficult to change the culture of any organization. The *Koinonia Project* and LCMS Handbook are two attempts to change the current polarized culture of the LCMS. Former LCMS president, Gerald Kieschnick, as well, sought to change the culture of the LCMS from the "top-down." These efforts seem to have born some observable kingdom-expanding fruit. Nonetheless, every church body is filled with kingdom-minded entrepreneurs who are not satisfied with the slow process of changing the often mission-resistant culture in the local church. The LCMS is no different. Over the course of the last six years numerous grass-roots efforts have been made by many pastors and lay leaders to change the culture of the LCMS from the "bottom-up."

This, of course, is rooted in the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther read God's Word and concluded that the Roman Catholic view of ecclesiastical authority was not always helpful to the mission of the church. Jesus Christ taught, Luther believed, that the hierarchical structure should be turned upside down. Lutherans believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the church, and He chooses to present Himself in the local congregation through Word and Sacrament. Trevor

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118. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, phone interview by the researcher, May 8, 2017.

Sutton writes in *Being Lutheran*, "Not only is the local congregation the place where Christ comes to us, but it is also the nexus of church authority."[119]

Michael Newman, the Mission Executive in the Texas District, says that church multiplication networks have been a key development in the Texas District over the past decade. "Network organizers gather new leaders together for learning, accountability, discipleship and sharpening."[120] Newman encourages churches and leaders to gather together to contemplate new starts. Collaborating with others can start a movement of the Gospel. Newman also believes that the LCMS has much to learn today from Christian immigrants coming to America from persecuted and war-torn areas of the world. They arrive with urgency, gratitude, and self-sacrifice, rather than "complacency and self-satisfaction" often experienced in America today.[121]

Peter Meier, executive director of the Center for U.S. Missions, says that he is not aware of any circuits currently collaborating to start new churches. Meier is curious as to why more circuits do not collaborate in mission. Meier consistently promotes a "collaborative model" – church planters planting with partners, yet these partnerships often extend far beyond a local circuit.

Twenty-five years ago, Meier was a "Circuit Counselor" (now called "Circuit Visitor" since the 2010 LCMS convention) in the Minnesota District. He led his circuit congregations to plant a congregation that now worships four hundred fifty people. Meier is a member of this congregation. They named their collaborative church planting effort "The Victoria Plan," after

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119. Trevor A. Sutton, *Being Lutheran* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2016), 237.

120. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 98.

121. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 217.

the community where the church was planted. They sought to collaboratively start five new churches in their community based on community needs. [122]

In the midst of synodical division, entrepreneurs have started new ministries, developed networks of mission-minded churches, written books, and provided mission minded consultation for pastors and local churches. LCMS President J.W. Behnken said at the 1950 convention, "We must train our people ever better to do personal mission work." [123] There are "mission-minded" ministries within the LCMS that have been developed to fill the missional vacuum left by synodical division.

Mission-Minded LCMS Groups

FiveTwo

FiveTwo was started by Pastor Bill Woolsey in 2010. He was a pastor at Crosspoint Church in Katy, Texas. Woolsey became the full-time CEO of FiveTwo in 2015. He observed that the local church was not a place that developed kingdom-minded entrepreneurs. Woolsey recognized that church planters, non-profit business owners and for-profit business owners needed help starting anything new that intentionally engaged those who did not know Jesus. Woolsey observed that people who do not believe in Jesus often believe in Jesus through new starts. Therefore, FiveTwo formed a national network of kingdom-minded entrepreneurs looking to start "new" to reach the lost. FiveTwo currently has like-minded leaders meeting in "huddles" across the LCMS. FiveTwo hosts an entrepreneurs' conference every October, and they have

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122. Peter Meier, email interview by the researcher, July 5, 2017.

123. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Proceedings of the Forty-first Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 5.

recently developed a partnership with Thrivent Financial aimed at providing start-up wisdom for leaders "starting new."[124]

Woolsey shared, however, that he does not know of anyone in the LCMS attempting to formally study the traits and characteristics of pastors that lend themselves to collaborating in mission.

Dwelling 1:14

Dwelling 1:14 is a consulting ministry started by Pastor Greg Finke in 2010. Finke had been the pastor at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Katy, Texas. Finke left the ministry in 2010 to start Dwelling 1:14. Finke is a consultant and trainer for congregations and leaders who are looking to become "neighborhood missionaries." Finke's two books, *Joining Jesus on His Mission* and *Joining Jesus: Show Me How,* have been the foundation for Finke's consulting work. They strive to come alongside Christians who are ready to gain clarity and simplicity around two things: how to join Jesus in His mission as part of their everyday lives and how to disciple more people to do the same.

Finke teaches Christians to ask "The 5 Questions" within their missional communities: 1. How did you see God at work in your life this week? 2. What has God been teaching you in His Word? 3. What kind of conversations are you having with pre-Christians? 4. What good can we do around here? 5. How can we help you in prayer? [125]

Finke has consulted numerous circuits, primarily training pastors to become everyday missionaries-and to invite their people to follow their example. Finke has worked with circuits in

124. FiveTwo Foundation, www.fivetwo.org (accessed July 1, 2018).

125. Dwelling 1:14, www.dwelling114.org (accessed July 1, 2018).

the northwest, northeast, northern Illinois, northern Wisconsin, Iowa west, Michigan, and Texas. Finke stated that many circuits are not starting new congregations. Some congregations are collaborating as they seek to be more intentional and consistent in fostering a missional culture among their people. Because Finke cares about discipleship multiplication, he is excited about the number of new things happening in the community through lay people on mission. Finke says, "The number of stories of everyday missionaries is skyrocketing across the LCMS."[126]

Finke does not know of anyone in the LCMS attempting to formally determine the traits and characteristics of pastors that are willing to collaborate in mission.

Acts Network of Church Plants in Austin, Texas

Acts network of churches started as a single church plant through the Texas District. This single church had not gained traction and the first pastor-planter left. A small core group within the church was not ready to give up. Pastor Peter Mueller was suggested for a re-launch. Mueller moved to Austin in March of 2009. With support from the Texas District they started ACTS Church Lakeway with a new mission-vision-values. By God's power the new church grew. ACTS Church Lakeway was not content with one church. Within the first year they started the ACTS Church Network, with the intention of planting a church that plants churches.

Church planters know other church planters. Mueller admitted that every church planter or network has a different approach as determined by their ministry context. He does not know of anyone doing things quite the same way as the Acts Network. Mueller shared that a church by the name of Water's Edge in the Dallas area started a few churches through their network of church plants. They have not done as much lately, but they did have a strong string of starts

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126. Greg Finke, email to the researcher, June 30, 2017.

about five years ago. Finally, Mueller confirmed that the Minnesota South District has a strategy to find "sponsoring congregations" for new starts. They have one new start in the past year. Mueller admitted that their approach to church plants has been mostly shaped by leaders and writers outside of the LCMS. [127]

Mueller does not know of anyone in the LCMS attempting to formally determine the traits and characteristics of pastors that are willing to collaborate in mission.

LINC International

LINC International is a Recognized Service Organization within the LCMS. LINC focuses on starting new churches in Houston, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles to reach specific people groups/nationalities with the Gospel. LINC primarily uses many bi-vocational pastors to start small Lutheran faith communities. Peter Meier considers LINC one of the best examples of a collaborative ministry, as it depends upon local churches working together to start urban congregations. [128]

The Center for U.S. Missions

Peter Meier is the executive director of the Center for U.S. Missions which provides "research, training, coaching, consultation and resources for accelerating church multiplication in the United States of America." The Center was started by LCMS leaders, but today they serve interdenominationally. Their website states that most intentional new starts are "daughter church plants or multisite plants or new Gospel outreach ministries, sponsored by local congregations

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127. Mueller, email, June 30, 2017.

128. Peter Meier, email interview by the researcher, July 5, 2017.

and/or circuits."[129] Yet, as noted above, Meier is unaware of any circuit intentionally collaborating in mission in the LCMS. This is simply an aspirational dream which hopefully this project can help inspire.

Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI)

PLI started in the late 1990's in the hopes of bringing LCMS pastors together to learn leadership principles in cohorts. It was a two-year learning curriculum that included wives and "learning tours" to different congregations. In the last few years PLI has gone international to teach their leadership principles. They have also started different "tracks" such as "missional leader" and "senior pastor leadership."

Best Practices for Ministry Conference (BPM)

BPM is a yearly three-day conference in February in Phoenix, AZ. It is a conference "for the willing" and "by the willing." No speaker gets paid. The entire conference is free, including three meals a day. It is led by Pastor Jeff Schrank and his congregation, Christ Church Lutheran. Over the past six years the conference has grown to over 2,000 yearly attendees. While it is primarily attended by LCMS leaders, leaders from outside the LCMS are beginning to attend. [130]

J2E3 (Jesus to Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday)

J2E3 is a missional movement led by Pastor Bill Tucker from Concordia Lutheran Church, San Antonio, Texas. J2E3 seeks to build a network of mission-minded churches looking

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129. Center for United States Missions, www.centerforusmissions.com (accessed July 1, 2018).

130. Christ Church Lutheran, "BPM 2019 Information," www.cclphoenix.org/bpm-resources (accessed on July 1, 2018).

to collaborate to reach the lost. Video and on-line sermons, Bible studies and missional strategies are shared with those participating in the network.[131]

Mega Church Conference

Mega Church Conference is a yearly gathering of senior pastors whose congregations' worship over 1000 a weekend. They have been meeting for over twenty years. They gather for mutual encouragement and support for those leading larger and more complex ministries. Speakers are most often mega-church pastors of note from other Christian denominations. Wives are encouraged to attend.

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

Concordia Seminary is understood by most pastors within the LCMS as the "missional" seminary.[132] Despite strong financial support, enrollment continues to decline. Currently, Concordia Seminary is a strong supporter of alternate routes toward ordination.[133]

The Lutheran Society for Missiology (LSFM)

LSFM is a society of mission-minded LCMS leaders began in 1991. They desire to promote biblical attitudes for missions for missiological research from a Lutheran perspective, publish books, articles and case studies on mission work, serve as a portal for connecting

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131. Jesus to Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday, www.j2e3.com (accessed on July 1, 2018).

132. The researcher has heard this sentiment from numerous LCMS pastors.

133. Concordia Seminary St. Louis, www.csl.edu (accessed July 1, 2018). Alternate routes include the Specific Ministry Program. SMP aims to raise up pastors within existing congregations and educate them via technology and congregational mentoring. Another alternate route is the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT). This program certifies immigrants for ordination using technology.

Lutherans to other mission societies, and offer cutting edge approaches to missions. [134] Parts of

this project will seek to be published in the quarterly edition *Missio Apostolica.*

Mission-Minded LCMS Authors

In addition to organizations that are mission minded, there are also Lutheran authors who

are contributing to the collaboration in mission conversation.

Jacob Youmans

Youmans is the director of the Director of Christian Education program at Concordia

University, Texas. Youmans has written two books on missional living, *Missional U: Life as a*

Mission Trip (2013) and *Missional Too: The Trip of a Lifetime* (2013). Youmans shares the

power of mission trips. He is a self-proclaimed "mission trip junkie." These trips have always

left him coming home and having participants say, "Now what?" Youmans wrote two primers

for everyday missionaries. Like Finke with *Dwelling 1:14,* Youmans desires to teach God's

people how to have missionary eyes and ears everyday of their journey with Jesus, regardless of

where they are.

Jeff Cloeter

Cloeter is the Senior Pastor at Christ Memorial Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

He has been a camp and youth leader, church planter, and now senior pastor of a large Lutheran

church. In 2016 he wrote his first book, *Loved and Sent.* This book shares the vision of his

congregation, which has become a model for other LCMS congregations. Cloeter tells us that the

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134. Lutheran Society for Missiology, www.lsfm.global/about.html (accessed on July 1, 2018).

identity of Christians can be simply stated: We are *loved* in Christ. To this he adds a simple statement of mission: We are *sent* into the world to share the Gospel[135]

Michael W. Newman

In *Gospel DNA* Newman shares the often-forgotten history of LCMS seasons of growth. Newman encourages a balance of confessional truth and mission for the sake of those who do not believe in Jesus. Maintaining this balance is a large part of what allowed the LCMS to grow. Newman encourages change in seven areas: various church expressions, churches with an intentional community presence, varied educational systems, modern communication methods, greater ethnic diversity, various funding models and multiple ministry "lanes."[136]

<div align="center">Confession-Minded LCMS Groups</div>

Brothers of St. John the Steadfast

Brothers of St. John the Steadfast is an online community of "confessional" pastors within the LCMS. They strive to maintain the truth and purity of the LCMS. Articles are written around topics such as worship style, catechesis, and Lutheran confessional documents. Many of the pastors have a strong blog and social media presence and serve in small, rural LCMS congregations.[137]

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135. Cloeter, Jeff, *Loved and Sent: How Two Words Define Who You Are and Why You Matter* (Tenth Power Publishing, 2016).

136. Newman, *Gospel DNA,* 161-169.

137. Steadfast Lutherans, www.steadfastlutherans.org (accessed July 1, 2018).

Higher Things

Higher Things is a LCMS youth conference that is focused on theological training for those in high school. It is a youth conference designed to offer an alternative to the well-attended National Youth Gathering. It occurs every three years during the same summer as the National Youth Gathering.[138]

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS) is understood by most pastors within the LCMS as the "confessional" seminary.[139] Presidents Larry Rast (CTS) and Dale Meyer (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis) are working together to build bridges of trust and respect between the two institutions. Both seminary presidents must deal with the crisis of declining enrollment in both seminaries.[140]

Another challenge for the LCMS is that none of the auxiliary ministry groups as noted above, or institutions of higher learning, are labeled either "missional" or "confessional" on any official LCMS website. (A definition of "confessional" culture and "missional" culture will be given below.) All these ministries are led by individuals who feel there is a respective "gap" on one end of the "confessional" and "missional" theological spectrum, and they are working with those like-minded to fill it. Currently there is no concerted effort to bring "confessional" and "missional" leaders together in order to collaborate. As a result, the gap only widens between the two groups.

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138. Higher Things, www.higherthings.org (accessed July 1, 2018).

139. The researcher has heard this sentiment from numerous LCMS pastors. "Confessional" and "missional" will be defined below.

140. Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne, www.ctsfw.edu (accessed July 1, 2018).

It should be noted that, within the LCMS, there are many more "mission-minded" organizations than "confessional-minded" organizations. Two of the possible reasons for this are, first, that "mission-minded" leaders may have a stronger tendency to start new communities and, therefore, may be generally less trusting of institutional leadership. Secondly, "confession-minded" leaders tend to be less inclined to create new vehicles for growth because they generally support current synodical programs and leadership.

While fine work has been done by all these organizations, they may be unintentionally contributing to the divide between the "missional" and "confessional" due to the lack of collaboration between these two Lutheran cultures. Pastors and church leaders have a variety of interests and passions and therefore tend to engage in different types of reading and learning along the "theological/confessional" and "practical/missional" spectrum. [141]

Many of the ministries, described above, fall closer to the practical end of the spectrum. Others fall closer to the "confessional" end of the spectrum. The general consensus by many "missional" pastors and church leaders may be summed up by this statement: "I learned theology in seminary, but now I need help learning how to disciple others to make more disciples. I need help leading the church. My seminary education provided me with an excellent theological foundation, but I have practical ministry, administration and leadership questions for which I need instruction and coaching—all for the sake of those who do not believe in Christ."

On the other hand, a "confessional" pastor may say, "God's Word is so rich. I love mining it for more and more knowledge. I fear that our theological mind is being watered down.

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141. This statement builds a faulty understanding. A Jesus follower, and leader of the church, is called to be both "theological" and "practical," "confessional" and "missional." The author uses these terms because they receive widespread use within the LCMS. Unfortunately, this distinction divides rather than unites.

I also do not like being looked down upon because my church attendance is flat or declining. I am trying to be a good shepherd of the sheep that Jesus has entrusted to me."

Certainly, if a pastor with this perspective does not with equal passion pursue "practical/missional" knowledge, this does not make him "wrong" or "incomplete." Also, if a pastor loves to pursue "practical/missional" skills with greater fervor than reading Lutheran theological documents, this does not make him "anti-confessional" or "anti-Lutheran." Different pastors and churches will have various focuses to reach different types of people. This project will seek to promote different types of pastors celebrating their differences, collaborating through their differences, and mutually identifying and developing the characteristics and traits needed for the sake of reaching those who do not believe in Jesus.

A District President's Plea

Robert Newton is the president of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District. Previously, he served as a missionary in the Philippines, a professor of missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, and senior pastor of First Immanuel Lutheran Church, San Jose, CA. In his article, *Truly Confessional: Responding to the Collapse of Christendom,* for the *Missio Apostolica Journal* in 2015, Newton is striving to unite "confessional" and "missional" leaders in a common mission to reach the lost.

The abstract reads:

> Postmodernism has pushed many Christian churches in America to a state of cultural, theological, and ecclesiastical crisis, marked by profound questions of identity. "What's our purpose as Christ's church in America?" "How do we remain faithful to Christ and His Word?" Its confessional moorings enable Lutheran churches to avoid two pitfalls prevalent among other Christian churches: Compromise of biblical truth and/or shallow discipleship. In their desire to remain faithful, however, Lutherans are tempted to circle their confessional wagons in defense of the Gospel, thereby diminishing their missionary vocation in the world.

Newton writes, "These two words—Evangelical and Confessional—form the essential building blocks of Lutheran DNA and well position Lutheran Christians for engaging the post-Christendom world with the Gospel. In short, they call Lutherans to their missionary vocation, faithfully following their missionary Lord into the world (Mt 28:18–20)."[142]

Newton laments that in "post-Christian" America the culture is "neutral" at best, and possibly "antagonistic," to the local church.[143] Newton affirms that the "confessional documents" of the Lutheran Church were primarily written to disciple "the found" around the pure Gospel, in the evangelical hope that "the found" would share their confession with "the lost."[144]

Newton boldly addresses the "confessional" and "missional" divide.

> The confessional subscription required of all LCMS congregations and rostered workers helps guard us against theological compromise or shallow discipleship. In fact, the LCMS has responded to the postmodern crisis with an increased emphasis on the confessional fidelity of its pastors and teachers and thorough catechesis of its members. In our zeal to remain faithful to the Lord and His church, however, LCMS churches and leaders may fall prey to a trap equally dangerous — losing our evangelical center and purpose.

John Kromminga observed in his book, regarding the evangelical function of confessions:

> The element of witness to the world usually seems to enjoy its greatest prominence when a confession is first written and adopted. This is because a confession is ordinarily produced in response to some crisis on which the church must take a stand. But as time goes by and the particular crisis fades into the past, the accent tends to fall more and more on the second and third functions of a confession. A confession, thus, is a living document whose role in the church varies with the passage of time and with changing circumstances. It may retain its full value as a teaching and testing device, but its freshness and spontaneity are in direct proportion to the imminence of the crisis to which it is addressed.

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142. Robert Newton, "Truly Confessional: Responding to the Collapse of Christendom*," Missio Apostolica Journal,* 2015, 12.

143. Newton, *Truly Confessional,* 13.

144. Newton, *Truly Confessional,* 7.

Newton responds by writing,

> Kromminga's observation alerts us to a grave concern. When the evangelical purpose is no longer the driving force of a church's confession, the teaching and norming functions of the confessions become twisted, curved in on themselves. 'Confessional' displaces 'evangelical' as the primary descriptor of Lutheran churches as the priority shifts from proclaiming the true Gospel before the world to preserving the true Gospel for its own members.[145]

Current LCMS Reality

The April 2018 edition of The Lutheran Witness shared that 78 percent of the over 4,500 congregations in the LCMS are plateaued or declining. Synod leadership is currently launching two different initiatives: Re:Vitality and Every One His Witness. Re:Vitality is a one-day workshop presented by synod leadership for congregations attempting to become more intentional about outreach.[146] This may be a worthy work, though no training has been given to circuit visitors.

The other synod-led initiative is called Every One His Witness. This one-day workshop seeks to "equip Lutherans to engage non-churched people in real-world contexts."[147] At this time no personal request has been made of Circuit 30 to have this workshop given in the Phoenix area. Both attempts at church revitalization and lay evangelism are much needed within the LCMS. Yet, as has been described, the LCMS is a divided church body and trust in leadership is low. Therefore, initiatives borne out of the synod headquarters are often discounted by many LCMS pastors. This project sought to offer another way for pastors and churches to work

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145. Newton, *Truly Confessional,* 8.

146. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "Re:Vitality Lutheran Revitalization, www.lcms.org/church-revitalization (accessed July 1, 2018).

147. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "Witness & Outreach Ministry," www.lcms.org/witness-outreach (accessed July 1, 2018).

collaboratively in their city or region to seek the lost. Synod leadership can certainly help in this endeavor, but intentional collaboration between circuit churches needs to be prioritized for trust to be regained.

LCMS leadership has also started a missionary funding program called Together in Mission (TIM). The program aims to get individual congregations to adopt one international or domestic missionary. The missionary then develops a mutually beneficial relationship with the sponsoring congregation. Stories and financial support will be shared. [148] No data is available to monitor the success of TIM. This can be a worthy effort, yet no mention was made about having congregations raise up local and international leaders. Inviting and expecting all congregations and circuits to be actively raising up and sending their own domestic and international missionaries will breed more trust.

As background for this project and its implementation, it is necessary to describe some of the reasons why there is distrust within the LCMS. District presidents are the regional arm of the synod. Yet, the current LCMS President, Matthew Harrison, would like to allow those with ecclesiastical supervision concerns to appeal their concern directly to the office of the President. At the 2016 LCMS Convention this topic was tabled because it was hotly debated. [149] Yet, at the first LCMS Board meeting this is what transpired according to *The Reporter*: the monthly newspaper of the LCMS:

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148. Kevin Armbrust, "A Global Perspective: Linking Congregations and Missionaries in God's Mission," *The Reporter, July/August 2017,* 3.

149. The researcher was at the respective 2016 and 2019 LCMS conventions as the pastoral delegate for Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest District.

Heeding Resolution 12-14

The Board of Directors adopted bylaw changes prepared by Synod Secretary Rev. Dr. John Sias under "the express direction of [the 2016 LCMS] convention" in its Resolution 12-14. These bylaw changes," Sias explained, "specify the mechanism for an accuser to appeal [to the higher] ecclesiastical supervisor when a district president either doesn't rule to the accuser's satisfaction or decides not to rule."

Sias pointed out that the convention, following intense discussion, directed this feature to be included in the bylaws "to implement the president of the synod's constitutional right and duty to act, in such a case, to preserve the synod's unity in doctrine and practice."

Applying Bylaw 7.1.2, the convention left considerable details to be determined by the secretary, in consultation with the LCMS Council of Presidents, under the review of the Commissions on Constitutional Matters and Handbook, and with the final approval of a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. With that process complete, Sias said the updated 2016 *Handbook* is being prepared for electronic and print distribution. This topic was not debated at the 2019 Synodical Convention.[150]

The "ecclesiastical supervision" issue has dramatically divided the LCMS. District Presidents Robert Newton and Larry Stoterau feel like their leadership role is being undermined by authoritarian leadership from the synodical office.[151] Consequently, trust among district presidents is low. The time is now for the local church, through the circuit, to collaborate in mission for the sake of those who do not believe in Jesus.

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150. Paula Schlueter Ross, "'Boards and Business' – LCMS Board of Directors," *The Reporter Online.* May 20, 2017. https://blogs.lcms.org/2017/boards-business-lcms-board-of-directors. The Board Meeting took place in St. Louis, MO on May 21-22, 2017.

151. The above-mentioned interviews with both district presidents conveyed this struggle.

Conclusion

Despite numerous LCMS attempts to establish collaboration in mission, there is little evidence to suggest that circuits have become significantly more effective toward this end. Past missional efforts, while well intended, have struggled to create the urgency and accountability needed for collaboratively reaching the lost. This project aimed to reignite the local circuit as the missional arm of the LCMS.

This project sought to show the traits and characteristics of pastors who collaborate in mission within the LCMS and within Circuit 30. The LCMS is a declining church body in terms of church membership numbers. It is the hope of the researcher to offer a narrative to the wider LCMS of different types of pastors and churches collaborating in mission for the sake of those who do not know Jesus.

While mainline denominations continue to numerically decline, the LCMS has the potential to press "play" after a prolonged missional "pause." The LCMS must re-tell its missional story from the first one hundred years. Congregational autonomy must be honored but added emphasis should be placed on collaborative communities of trust centered in God's Word. The circuit is the best place in the current LCMS structure for this to occur.

Discipleship multiplication needs to become a priority for the LCMS because current "leadership pipelines" are running dry. It is hoped that an outcome of this project will be more leaders mentored and sent out to reach the unbeliever.

The goal of this study was ultimately to reach those who do not believe in Jesus without losing unity within the LCMS, nor compromising the Word of God. Attempts have been made to lead the LCMS to become more "missional." In response, counter moves have been made by "confessional" leaders to make sure the truth and purity of God's Word is not lost. Both groups

have failed to establish consistent communities of love and support, as well as communities for respectful sharing of challenges and concerns. Innovative missional ministries have been started (FiveTwo, LINC, etc.), but they have quickly been labeled and dismissed by "confessional" leaders. Unity continues to suffer. This project aimed to re-establish the circuit as the primary unifying community for collaboration in mission and a coalescing force in the LCMS at large.

Chapter 4

Research Question and Design

In this chapter, the methodology used in this thesis was described. The researcher provided the reader with a sense of how this study was undertaken as well as the rationale for certain decisions regarding its design and implementation. A full description of the method of inquiry, definitions, the setting and participants, the method of data collection and analysis are presented. In short, this chapter explains the principles and techniques that the researcher used to ascertain the common traits and behaviors that lead toward collaboration in mission in pastors within Circuit 30.

Method of Inquiry

The thesis project included aspects of both quantitative and qualitative research seeking to understand one fundamental research question: what are the personal traits and characteristics of a pastor that make him receptive to collaborating in mission? The researcher detailed an effective implementation strategy that promotes the development of collaborative pastors and missional churches.

The hypothesis is that there will be a distinct set of traits and characteristics that pastors exhibit leading to being more willing to collaborate in mission with other pastors and churches. The researcher hoped participants would come to see that pastors and churches are better together and that the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) churches are too autonomous and often divided. As outlined in chapter three, divisiveness hinders mission work for the sake of unbelievers. Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest District of the LCMS is beginning to work together. The researcher used two different means to assess these traits and characteristics in the

current LCMS. First, an anonymous survey to over three hundred active LCMS pastors will determine the current reality of pastors collaborating in mission at the circuit level. Second, the same group of pastors were then asked to take the Harrison Behavioral Assessment to determine the current level of collaborative and mission-minded traits that our current LCMS pastors possess. The researcher hoped to have at least thirty, and ideally fifty, pastors take the Harrison Behavioral Assessment to provide a statistically significant sample size. The researcher ended up securing 33 pastors to take the HA.

Definitions

A *trait* or *characteristic* is a distinguishing quality which typically belongs to one person in comparison to another person.

Effect is defined as the level to which a pastor does, or does not, change his attitude toward collaboration in mission.

Collaboration is defined as the action of working with LCMS pastors and Circuit 30 churches to produce or create something of missional value.

Mission is defined as "the entirety of all that God is doing in his great purpose for the whole of creation and all that he calls us to do in cooperation with that purpose."[1]

Circuit 30 is one of 30 regional circuits within the Pacific Southwest District of the LCMS. Circuits are regionally based and consist of five to eight individual congregations of various sizes.

The *Pacific Southwest District* is one of thirty-three geographic districts within the LCMS. Two of the districts in the LCMS are non-geographic (The English District, The Slovak

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1. Wright, *The Mission of God's People,* 25.

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District). These two non-geographic districts display how German was the predominant language of the early LCMS, so much so that the English and Slovak speaking churches needed their own non-geographic districts. Even though all thirty-five districts have been English speaking for fifty years, these two districts still exist. This is one point of evidence to show how slowly the LCMS changes.

The *LCMS* is the abbreviation for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It was founded in 1846, largely consisting of German immigrants who settled mainly in the state of Missouri, and surrounding mid-western states.

Setting

Research Team

The researcher also served as the main facilitator for exploring the attitudinal changes of collaboration in mission. The researcher is a pastor with twelve years' experience. The researcher's first five years were spent as an associate pastor at a large LCMS church and school in Lakewood, Colorado. The researcher started and led a ministry called "The Table," a Thursday night meal and worship service inclusive of the working poor and homeless in Lakewood.[2] Circuit congregations in the Denver, Colorado area are collaborating through serving the weekly meal and establishing mutually beneficial relationships with the working poor and homeless.

During the researcher's first year of ministry in Lakewood, he attended all the northwest Denver circuit pastors' meetings. The group of pastors met for two hours once a month for time in the Bible and prayer. The pastors did not know one another well on a personal level. After a

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2. Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School, "The Table," tablebethlehem.org (accessed July 1, 2018).

year, the researcher recommended to the circuit visitor that the monthly gatherings should begin to include worship time, sharing of the Lord's Supper, a chance to share what is occurring in their lives and ministries, and time to share a meal together.

Over time, pastoral friendship and trust began to develop. In 2011, the northwest Denver circuit began to dream about collaborating in mission for the sake of those who do not know Jesus. In 2014, shortly after the researcher left to become Senior Pastor at Christ's Greenfield Lutheran Church, the northwest Circuit came together under the leadership of an associate pastor at a local circuit congregation, to form "Salt of the Earth Communities." Members from northwest Denver circuit congregations formed the board to oversee doctrine, mission, and finances. "Salt of the Earth Communities" are missional communities in the Denver area focused on intentional mission for the sake of those who do not know Jesus.[3] The researcher was amazed and thankful for what God had done in the Northwest Denver circuit and in 2013, was eager to see what God could do in Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest District.

To prepare to take part in the research project, the researcher spoke at district conferences in the Rocky Mountain District and the Pacific Southwest District regarding the need for churches to collaborate in mission. In his presentations, he has provided theological and historical perspectives to support the need for churches to collaborate in mission for the sake of believers and unbelievers. Through the researcher's doctoral studies, begun in 2011, he has witnessed the power of learning from leaders and communities that are different from his own.

In addition to the facilitator/researcher, an observer/facilitator took part in initiating and analyzing the research instrument. He has an extensive background in this area, as his doctoral

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3. Salt of the Earth Communities, http://www.wearesalt.church/about/story/ (accessed July 1, 2018).

dissertation was a qualitative and quantitative case study and he has a solid background in statistics.

Preliminary Communication and Observations in Circuit 30

This section summarized the observations about Circuit 30 in 2013 from the vantage point of highlighting two current circuit pastors (pseudonyms Pastor Matt and Pastor Logan) and the researcher in order to share the narrative of how collaboration in Circuit 30 was or was not occurring. The specifics of these three individual pastors is included to provide qualitative data of two "typical" pastors from Circuit 30. It is believed that their personal details are helpful as conclusions in this report are made allowing a fuller picture to be painted.

Pastor Matt recounted the agenda of circuit meetings when he became pastor at Valley Lutheran Church (pseudonym) in 2005 through five years ago, "We have always tried to do lunch. When I first came here, we just met at a restaurant and then left. Not much happened back then. Then we went to having it in the churches with communion and bible study and a few (pastors) went out to eat. Then we went to a study of sermon texts and another study or topic and now we do what we do. I think in the past we tried to meet for about 2.5 hours and then do lunch, but many did not like that large of an amount of time commitment."[4]

Pastor Logan also recounted his first Circuit 30 meeting in 2011 saying,

> The meeting was at Christ's Greenfield (the researcher's current congregation), but awkwardly, the pastor at Christ Greenfield wasn't in attendance. He was soon to take a call or something like that. I walked away from that experience somewhat discouraged. There was not a lot that attracted me to the group. One of the vacancy pastors was the most outspoken person at that meeting, and if I recall, maybe the most lucent voice (which says something about the state of the group, and which just led to a somewhat dis-engaged observance from me). I think the whole situation at Christ's Greenfield (founding pastor leaving) kind of loomed over that first meeting. I will say that I don't

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4. Pastor Matt (pseudonym), email to the researcher titled "Evolving Agendas of Circuit Meetings over the past 5 years", May 30, 2018.

recall real laughter, or sense of camaraderie between everyone there. I don't recall the agendas for the meetings – maybe we were using the synodical stuff back then already, and then discussing our ministries together. I don't recall those early meetings being more than a group of 6 or so, including some of the retired pastors. I walked away from those early meetings quite frustrated. As I said, it was not a group that I was inclined to spend a lot of time with. That is maybe just the normal way first impressions go, but I think it was also a reflection of the make-up of the group and the type of conversations we were having (and not having).

The researcher became a pastor at Christ's Greenfield Lutheran Church and School in August 2013. He then attended his first circuit meeting in September 2013, led by circuit visitor, Pastor Matt. Circuit meetings occurred monthly. No formal meeting agenda was provided to the participants. The gathering was cordial, but it was evident that the pastors did not know one another deeply. The pastors (currently serving and retired) enjoyed one another's company, but the researcher sensed they were unsure as to how he would fit into their group. His pastoral predecessor at Christ's Greenfield did not have a good relationship with the circuit pastors.

At the researcher's first circuit meeting, there were ten pastors in attendance. The meeting lasted two hours, starting at 10 a.m. and finishing at 12 p.m. Pastor Matt opened the meeting in prayer and then distributed a handout produced by synodical leadership of the LCMS. The topic was on baptism, which was discussed for approximately forty-five minutes. The Bible was opened and referred to by all in attendance. Each pastor then shared items of note from his personal and professional life. This lasted around an hour. Pastor Matt then prayed, and the meeting was adjourned.

Over the next two years, the congregations took turns hosting monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of the month. The host pastor would normally lead the theological discussion, often utilizing a synodical theological document provided by Pastor Matt. The basic outline listed above was followed. Attendance was consistent by all but one active pastor in the circuit who excused himself because he taught a Bible study at the same time as our monthly gatherings.

Two-thirds of the active pastors attended monthly, and two or three retired pastors also joined the group. The monthly meetings averaged ten to twelve active and retired pastors.

Many of the pastors noted how thankful they were for the trust, unity and kindness expressed between the pastors. They recounted how this had not always been the case noting that for the five years prior to my arrival in 2013 the circuit pastors had not gotten along well.

Participants

This study administered the Harrison Behavioral Assessment tool to every active pastor within Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest District. The researcher chose two active pastors below and gave their church and community demographic information to help understand the cultural context of Circuit 30.

The two pastors were chosen for the following reasons: one pastor is in the early years of pastoral ministry and the other is toward the end of his pastoral ministry; one church is growing slowly over the past five years, and the other church is decreasing in worship attendance over the past five years;[5] one church is in a densely populated community, and the other church is in a sparsely populated suburb. Finally, the two individual pastors were chosen because they represent two more broad populations of pastors in the LCMS as determined by the Harrison assessment – those that are more reticent to embrace change and those that appear to exhibit traits and characteristics leading to a willingness to be early adopters of collaboration in mission.

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5. Both pastors described their churches in this way.

Pastor Logan—Son of God Lutheran Church, Mesa, Arizona

Pastor Logan is a sole pastor at Son of God Lutheran Church in Mesa, Arizona. Logan is married and has three young children. Pastor Logan graduated with a Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri in May 2007. He was ordained in June 2007. Pastor Logan was called to a church in Anthem, Arizona as a church planter. He attempted to start a church between 2007-2010. The recession hit, and the church plant was never established. Pastor Logan spent one year working at the Musical Instrument Museum in 2010 as he waited for his next pastoral position. Pastor Logan was called to Son of God Lutheran Church in Mesa, Arizona in 2011. He has served since as sole pastor.

Son of God was founded in Mesa, Arizona on December 31, 1960. They are one of three LCMS churches in Circuit 30 from Mesa, Arizona. Son of God's website shares their story in this way: "In 1961 a handful of visionary Lutherans formed a mission congregation to reach the Mesa community with the good news about Jesus. Today we still exist for the same purpose! We are a community of people of all ages who come together for mutual learning, support, service, and worship as we share the love of Jesus." Son of God believes "the greatest event in history was when Jesus lovingly gave up His life for us on the cross. In our brokenness, we celebrate that God shows us mercy (not judgment!) because of the cross. All of our beliefs as a Lutheran (LCMS) church flow from this foundation of God's grace." Finally, Son of God's vision is, "Embracing our neighbors with unexpected love, Son of God exists to bring the hope and healing of Jesus to everyday life."[6]

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6. St. Luke Lutheran Church, http://stlukemesa.com/hello/story (accessed July 1, 2018).

Son of God has an average weekly worship attendance of 366 and a baptized membership of 446.[7] It experiences a twenty percent increase in seasonal worship attendance in the winter months due to winter visitors. Son of God is a multi-generational congregation and the average worshipper is fifty years old. Son of God has been slowly growing since Pastor Logan arrived. Son of God offers traditional and contemporary worship services.

With a population of nearly 500,000, Mesa, Arizona is the 36th largest city in the United States and second largest in the Phoenix-Mesa metro area and is larger than Miami, Minneapolis, Atlanta, and St. Louis. Mesa encompasses 138 square miles (357 square kilometers) inside a 21-city region that has a population of 4.7 million people and is projected to grow to 6 million by 2030.

Mesa is 71.7 percent non-Hispanic and 28.3 percent Hispanic. The median yearly household income is $51,084.[8] Son of God is in one of the older and more established parts of Mesa.

Pastor Logan agreed to be a part of the study and is aware that the researcher will be studying his traits and characteristics that lead toward collaboration in mission.

Pastor Matt—Valley Lutheran Church, Apache Junction, Arizona

Pastor Matt is the sole pastor at Valley Lutheran Church in Apache Junction, Arizona. Pastor Matt is married. This is a second marriage Pastor Matt and his wife as both of their spouses died twenty years ago. As a blended family, they have five adult children from their

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7. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "St. Luke Lutheran Church," http://locator.lcms.org/nchurches_frm/c_detail.asp?C576219 (accessed July 1, 2018).

8. Demographics, Mesa AZ, http://www.mesaaz.gov/business/economic-development/business-environment/demographics (accessed on July 1, 2018).

previous marriages. Pastor Matt is a third generation LCMS pastor. Pastor Matt graduated with a

Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri in 1986. After ordination,

Pastor Matt served three different LCMS congregations--one in Texas and the other two in

Wisconsin. The first two pastorates lasted five years. The one prior to Valley lasted ten years.

Pastor Matt came to Valley in 2005. Pastor Matt has served as the circuit visitor since 2009.

Valley Lutheran Church was founded in Apache Junction, Arizona in 1980. They are one

of two churches in Apache Junction according to the LCMS website. Valley's mission statement

is, "As disciples of the Triune God, the mission of Valley Lutheran Church is to proclaim the

Gospel of Jesus Christ through words, sacraments and deeds, bringing Christ to the community

and world."[9] Valley's website shares nothing else regarding the history of the congregation.

According to the LCMS website, Valley Lutheran has an average weekly attendance of

536 and a baptized membership of 327.[10] This is unusual. In most LCMS congregations these

two numbers would be switched. The worship attendance of Valley increases greatly in the

winter months with "snowbirds" from other parts of the United States. Their summer weekly

attendance is close to 200 but between January and March their weekly attendance swells to over

700. Pastor Matt said that winter weekly attendance has been declining the past few years.

Valley Lutheran worshiped over 900 a week from January through March five years ago. Pastor

Matt does not know the reason for this decline. The average age of weekly worshippers is 68.

Don is the full time DCE (Director of Christian Education) at Valley. He is the only other

rostered LCMS worker at Valley. He is in his late twenties. Because Valley has so few young

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9. Mountain View Lutheran Church, http://mountainviewlutheran.org/about-us.html (accessed on July 1, 2018).

10. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "Mountain View Lutheran Church,", http://locator.lcms.org/nchurches_frm/c_detail.asp?C28850 (accessed on July 1, 2018).

families with youth, Don, and the youth at Valley partner with Young Life.[11] This is significant in that it shows that Valley is open to collaborative missional partnerships.

Apache Junction, Arizona has almost 41,000 residents as of 2017. Apache Junction has grown by 5,000 residents since 2010. Apache Junction is not growing nearly as fast as other East Valley suburban communities such as Mesa, Gilbert, or Queen Creek, Arizona. Apache Junction is 14.6 percent Hispanic and 85.4 percent non-Hispanic. The median yearly household income between 2012-2016 was $38,000. Valley is in a minimally populated eastern edge of Apache Junction.

Pastor Matt agreed to be a part of the study and is aware that the researcher will be studying the traits and characteristics that lead toward collaboration in mission.

Method of Data Collection

First, the researcher surveyed approximately 300 LCMS pastors from a random sample[12] of 1000 active LCMS pastors as provided by the LCMS Rosters and Statistics office. The research surveyed pastor's behaviors regarding circuit meeting frequency and intentionality in collaborative mission. This was done to provide a representation of how typical LCMS pastors currently view collaborative mission.

Second, the researcher used the Harrison Behavioral Assessment tool to survey the same 300 LCMS pastors who responded to the random sample survey to determine the conducive and non-conducive traits and behaviors associated with their willingness to collaborate in mission.

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11. Apache Junction Young Life, http://ajyounglife.weebly.com/ (accessed July 1, 2018).

12. A method of selecting a sample (random sample) from a statistical population in such a way that every possible sample that could be selected has a predetermined probability of being selected. https://www.dictionary.com/browse/random-sampling

The Harrison Behavioral Assessment takes roughly 20 minutes to complete. Therefore, because of the time commitment, the researcher hoped to get at least 50 active LCMS pastors to complete the Harrison Assessment to make the findings statistically valid.

The Harrison Assessments are reliable and valid. Reliability is the extent to which a test can be duplicated multiple times and yield consistently similar scores. The test-retest coefficients expected of behavioral assessments are between .65 and .95. The test-retest coefficient results of the 74 primary trait scales in the Harrison Suitability Assessment are between .80 and .94. These results indicate that the degree of reliability is within the moderately high to extremely high range as measured against expected industry standards.

The Harrison Suitability Assessment has a high degree of content validity because it measures a wide range of factors (156 traits) including motivations, personality traits, interests, work values, and work preferences. Consequently, there are 30-40 factors that have a relationship to job performance for any specific profession. This range of items is much broader than any other assessment the researcher has encountered.

Third, the survey and Harrison Assessment tool was administered to all the Circuit 30 pastors in the hopes of using the assessment to tell the story of a circuit seeking to collaborate in mission.

Analysis was done of the survey and Harrison Assessments to make comparisons of the two sets of pastors in terms of their traits and characteristics. It was the hypothesis of this researcher, that the two populations--all LCMS pastors and those in Circuit 30--had similar outcomes showing that the Circuit 30 pastors are, in fact, a representative subset of LCMS pastors.

Qualitative research was conducted on the Circuit 30 pastors, offering strategic suggestions in moving LCMS pastors into collaborative mission. Using a bank of questions provided by the Harrison Behavioral Assessment, the researcher identified the variables that appear to assist in enhancing collaboration in mission as well as those variables that seem to hinder efforts. The researcher also offered research-backed suggestions for intervention that can move pastors from not collaborating to collaborating in mission.

Finally, the researcher compared and contrasted the pastors from Circuit 30 attitudes and behaviors toward collaboration in mission to a wider population of LCMS pastors. The researcher used the above-mentioned survey of approximately 300 active LCMS pastors to secure this data in the hopes of having at least 50 active pastors complete the Harrison Assessment. The researcher determined the similarities and differences between the wider pool of LCMS pastors and Circuit 30 pastors.

A Detailed Description of Past Attempts to Change the Attitude and Behaviors Toward

Collaboration in Mission in Circuit 30

Below is a summary of the cumulative, five-year approaches, strategies, and efforts that the researcher intentionally used to effect positive change in pastoral attitudes toward collaboration in mission.

When the researcher arrived at Christ's Greenfield Lutheran Church seven years ago, he attended all circuit pastors' meetings with his team of pastors and student pastors. He also set the expectation that the pastoral staff (pastors and student pastors) attend and actively engage in the monthly circuit meetings.

The researcher purposely developed relationships with the pastors outside of the circuit meetings. They became more than colleagues--they became friends. The researcher also

encouraged all pastors to attend the post-meeting lunch at the monthly circuit meetings to help build camaraderie and trust.

The researcher consistently brought up ways that pastors and churches could partner with one another. The congregation he shepherds started to offer consulting, communication strategy, marketing and discipleship help to any church that needed help, within, and outside of our circuit. He has formally coached two pastors in organizational leadership in the past seven years.

Finally, the researcher was given permission by his circuit visitor to lead a circuit retreat to explore the unique gifts and opportunities for growth and collaboration present in each congregation. Christ's Greenfield Lutheran Church hosted this day-long retreat with twelve pastors attending. The pastors concluded the retreat agreeing to three things. One, each pastor would identify one leader from their congregation who would keep circuit collaboration consistently "on the radar" of each church. Two, the researcher recommended one of his church's gifted lay leaders serve as the "circuit administrator" to provide accountability between meetings. Three, the "circuit administrator" agreed to organize a once a week meeting to make sure collaborative circuit initiatives were making significant progress. The researcher and Christ's Greenfield's leadership are hopeful that this level of intentionality will help bring many collaborative mission-minded dreams into reality.

Behavioral Variables to be Assessed

In this section, the researcher identifies traits and characteristics that were anticipated to be important in determining the willingness of individual pastors to engage in missional collaboration. The variables below were the initial focus of the analysis, but the researcher

remained open to adding or adapting those listed.[13]

One of the traits and characteristics that was anticipated would affect pastoral collaboration would be captured by demographic data including: the length of pastoral tenure, the size of the congregation being served, and the size and location of the respective surrounding community. This data was necessary to assess whether proximity to other pastors and congregations, and the size of their surrounding community, makes a difference for pastoral collaboration in mission. The researcher anticipated that pastors in suburban and urban communities were more likely to collaborate in mission than those who were in rural and small-town contexts.

The researcher also expected that the characteristic of consistency of pastoral attendance at circuit meetings would be important. This factor would include the percentage of circuit pastors who, on average, attend circuit meetings. Attendance at circuit meetings is one of the primary ways pastors maintain the balance between "confessionalism" and "mission" as outlined by Robert Newton in his article, *Truly Confessional: Responding to the Collapse of Christendom,* where he writes, "To remain truly confessional, Lutherans must keep first and foremost their evangelical identity and purpose."[14] The researcher believed that circuit attendance would help determine the level of connectedness by pastors to the wider LCMS community.

Camaraderie, friendship, and trust were believed to further traits affecting collaboration in mission. These relational features can be demonstrated by the frequency of pastoral interaction outside of the monthly circuit meetings. The researcher believes friendship and trust between

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13. The specific questions are listed in Appendix A.

14. Newton, "Truly Confessional," 1.

pastors would be a key indicator of effective collaboration in mission and would be investigated.

The structure and content of the monthly circuit meetings could be a primary factor determining the level of collaboration in ministry. The researcher determined the frequency, content and outcomes of circuit retreats, forums and convocations mentioned in the earlier chapters. He anticipated that circuit meetings would average out to be one meeting every four to six weeks throughout the year. Few circuits hold retreats for the purpose of pastoral team-building and strategic collaboration in mission. He predicted that most circuits will only hold circuit forums for the sake of electing officials for synodical conventions.

The researcher expected most circuits to have never conducted a circuit convocation in the summer after the tri-annual synodical convention. As stated in chapters one and three, circuit forums are meant to occur twice a year, include one lay leader per congregation, and include strategy toward the end of collaboration in mission. Circuit convocations are intended to share the collaborative story of all that God is doing within the circuit to reach those who do not know Jesus, but rarely focus on this key missional goal.

Another trait the researcher foresaw being important is the consistency of circuit pastors and congregations worshiping together. It seemed likely that when pastors and congregations periodically worship together, both at monthly meetings and yearly for high festival services such as a Reformation service, they would also be more apt to collaborate in mission.

Another key trait was believed to be the consistency and the content for training circuit visitors. The researcher believed that the consistency and content will vary greatly between LCMS districts.[15] There is currently no documented consistency between the districts for

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15. There are currently thirty-five districts in the LCMS. Thirty-three of them are regional. Two of the districts are non-regional (The English District and the Slovak District).

training circuit visitors. The *Koinonia Project* referenced in chapter three is the most recent LCMS example of a standardized strategy for the sake of greater unity among divided pastors and churches. [16] Yet, the *Koinonia Project* did not attempt to train circuit visitors to foster unity for the sake of collaboration in mission.

The final outcome the researcher expected to emerge is the number of new churches started within respective circuits in the last ten years. He identified the stories of kingdom expanding ventures due to circuit collaboration in mission. He anticipated that his findings would be consistent with the number of new starts currently identified by the LCMS in *The Lutheran Witness*.

In conclusion, the emergent traits and behaviors discovered in this research study helped synodical leaders, district presidents, circuit visitors, pastors and lay leaders of the LCMS determine the current level of collaboration in mission. To date, no research around collaboration in mission at the circuit level has been conducted. The researcher was certainly open to adjusting these factors as the study began and during the analysis phase. The specific survey questions given to active LCMS pastors and to active Circuit 30 pastors helped draw out the aforementioned traits and characteristics found in the appendixes.

Survey Procedures

This study surveyed and gave the Harrison Behavior Assessment to all active pastors from Circuit 30 of the Pacific Southwest district. The researcher hoped to establish a baseline model for the types of traits and behaviors that should be found in active LCMS pastors who desire to collaborate in mission. The same survey was administered to the 300 anonymous and

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16. Mueller, "The 'Koinonia' Project," 1.

random LCMS pastors, and 50 of the surveyed pastors also took the Harrison Behavioral Assessment. This data was used to give a snapshot of the traits and characteristics of active LCMS pastors as it relates to collaboration in mission.

Anticipated Results and Ministry Benefits

This study attempted to display the outcomes associated with pastors and churches collaborating in mission. Anticipated results are expected to include the following aspects.

One, churches realize the financial efficiencies associated with working together. Some of these efficiencies could be in the areas of human resources, marketing, branding, communications, and lay leadership development. Circuit churches could start to see themselves as "one church with multiple locations," rather than independent and autonomous churches. This will require financial trust and transparency. Trust and transparency will be possible as circuit pastors get to know one another more deeply.

Two, the circuit churches were encouraged to develop a wider pool of leaders to start different types of churches to reach different community demographics. Pastors started to establish leadership development pathways for future church planters and kingdom-minded lay leaders with entrepreneurial dreams. Ultimately, new churches and kingdom-minded non-profits are started.

Three, circuit visitors began to see themselves as circuit leaders in kingdom-expanding mission. Therefore, they organized monthly meetings to provide support and accountability for the mission endeavors of the circuit. Circuit visitor training was recommended by the researcher for LCMS district presidents.

Four, pastors discovered that different is "good" and not "bad" or something to be feared. Every church has gifts to give and gifts to receive. Individual churches and pastors started

to see how spiritual gifts (Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12) can be utilized between churches. Not every pastor has every leadership gift. Pastors need one another to lead in their spiritual gifting. Recommendations for training were made to LCMS seminary leadership, and, if allowed, created by the researcher.

Five, this study displayed that some pastors and churches would not collaborate in mission. Churches that decided to be "lone rangers" were discovered, and possible reasons for their isolation were unveiled, shared, and hopefully addressed by circuit visitors.

Six, a circuit-based model for church collaboration in mission was shared with LCMS synodical leadership. The researcher made recommendations and established means for the circuit-based collaboration in mission model to be shared in the LCMS.

Finally, and most importantly, if churches collaborated in mission, people who do not believe in Jesus will start to believe and follow Him. This study aimed to help pastors and churches establish rhythms for starting new churches that could only be started through circuit collaboration. Imagine if circuit pastors and lay leaders collaborated to identify non-reached communities and people groups. Imagine if they then identified, trained, and deployed leaders from the community to start new ministries to reach nonbelievers. May imagination lead to kingdom-expanding execution.

Chapter 5

Results and Summary

This chapter will share the results and summarize the findings of the research proposal. This thesis project identifies the traits and characteristics of pastors who collaborate in mission to expand God's kingdom. Pastors and churches are called to be united in mission (John 17), while recognizing their unique contexts. There is great power in pastors and churches working together to reach their varying contexts within the Gospel. This thesis aims to tell the story, and share the behavioral characteristics of pastors who collaborate in mission.

First, in this chapter, the researcher will share the survey findings of 1000 randomly selected active LCMS pastors surveyed to discover their self-assessed behaviors regarding circuit meeting frequency and intentionality in collaborative mission. Over one-third of the pastors solicited (340 of the 1000) responded to the survey. The survey was "open" for two weeks.

Second, the researcher will share the results of the Harrison Assessment tool from the same 340 LCMS pastors and will determine the conducive and non-conducive traits and behaviors associated with their willingness to collaborate in mission.

Third, the researcher shares the findings of the circuit collaboration in mission survey from the 340 LCMS pastors who completed the survey.

Fourth, the researcher has developed a "Collaboration/Mission Expansion" customized report for Harrison Assessments. Two reports were created. The first report documented the "current state" for pastors who currently collaborate in mission. The second report documented the "future state" for pastors who will collaborate in mission in the future. These customized reports were created by the researcher interviewing 10 pastors who took the Harrison Assessment. These interviewed pastors helped create a profile of current Harrison behavioral

characteristics. These characteristics were broken up into two categories: the *present-day traits* most necessary for pastors who collaborate in mission, and the *future traits*[1] most necessary for pastors who aspire to collaborate in mission.

Finally, the 340 pastors who completed the survey were asked to take the Harrison Assessment. Their Harrison Assessment scores were then added to the "Collaboration/Mission Expansion" customized reports (current and future) to build a picture of the current behavioral traits of active pastors in the LCMS. 33 active LCMS pastors completed the Harrison Assessment. All Circuit 30 pastors were asked to complete the Harrison Assessment in order to give a picture of the collaborative and missional nature of one individual LCMS circuit. 11 of a possible 13 pastors in Circuit 30 completed the Harrison Assessment.

Survey Results

Out of the 1000 randomly selected active LCMS pastors 340 responded to the circuit collaboration survey. Below is a summary of the results:

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1. The interviewed pastors were asked to envision the aspirational future traits of pastors who collaborate in mission in the next five years.

How many years have you served as an LCMS pastor?

Category	Percentage
40+ years	22.65%
30-40 years	72.06%
20-30 years	4.41%
10-20 years	
5-10 years	0.29%
0-5 years	0.59%

Describe the context of your congregation:

Category	Percentage
Rural	14.41%
Small Town (1,000+)	27.94%
Large Town (10,000+)	19.12%
Surburban	29.12%
Urban	9.41%

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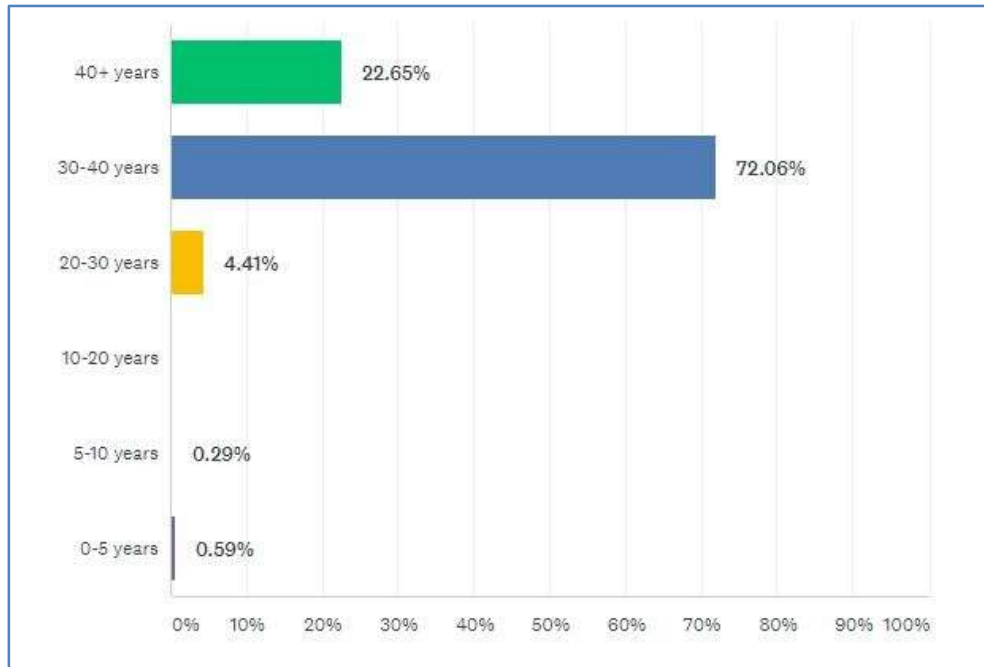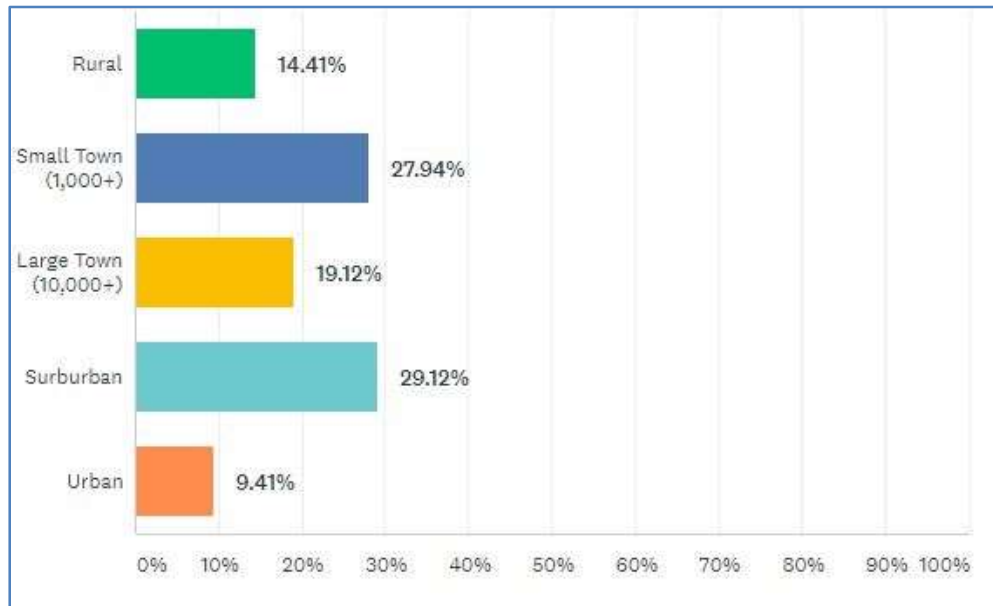
What is the size of your congregation?
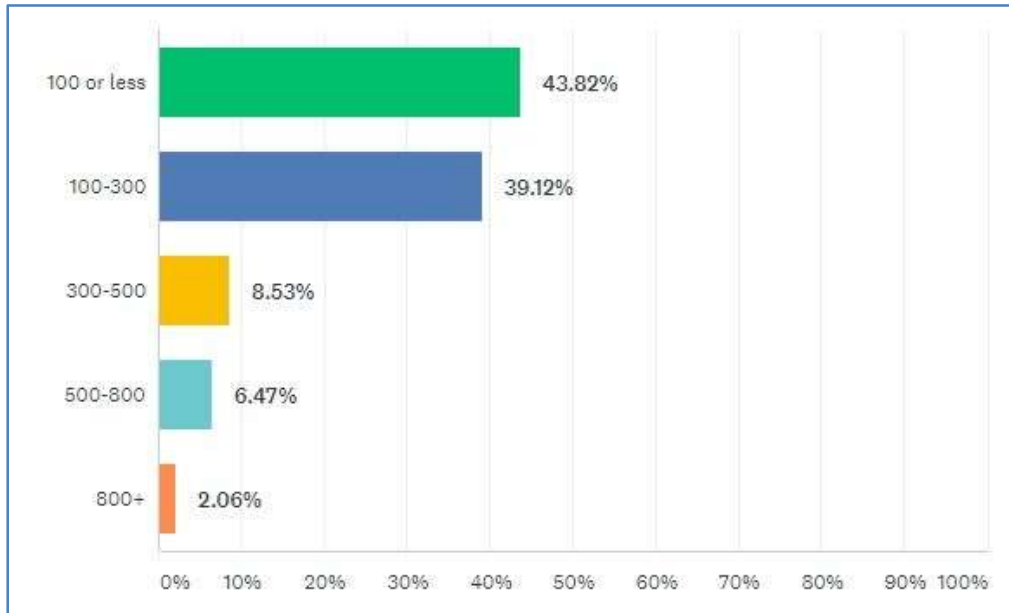
How often do you attend circuit pastor's meetings?
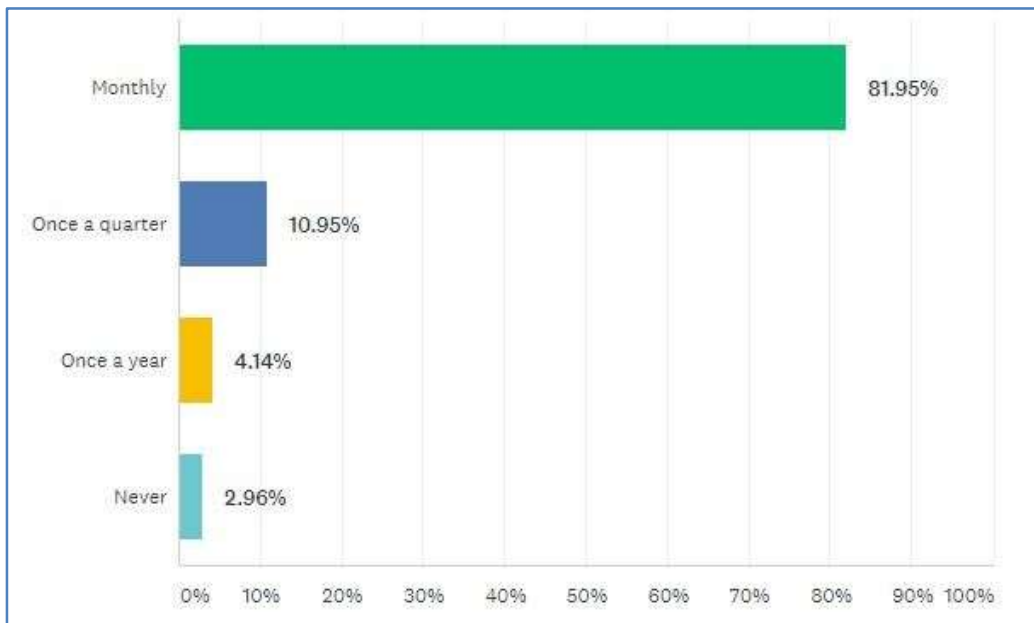
What percentage of circuit pastors normally attend circuit meetings?
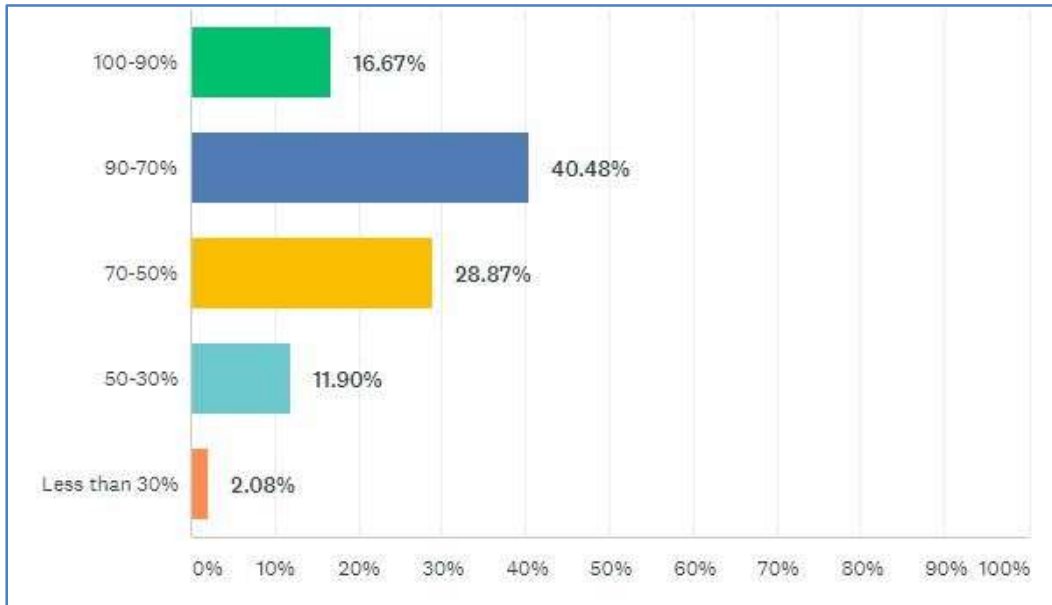
How often do you interact (text, email, phone, in person) with at least one other circuit pastor outside of monthly circuit meetings?
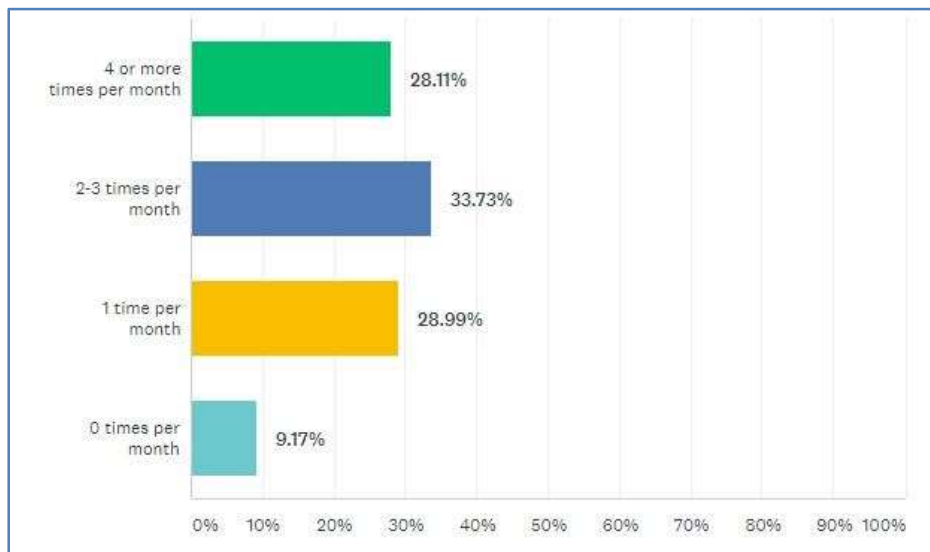
Do you trust the pastors in your circuit?
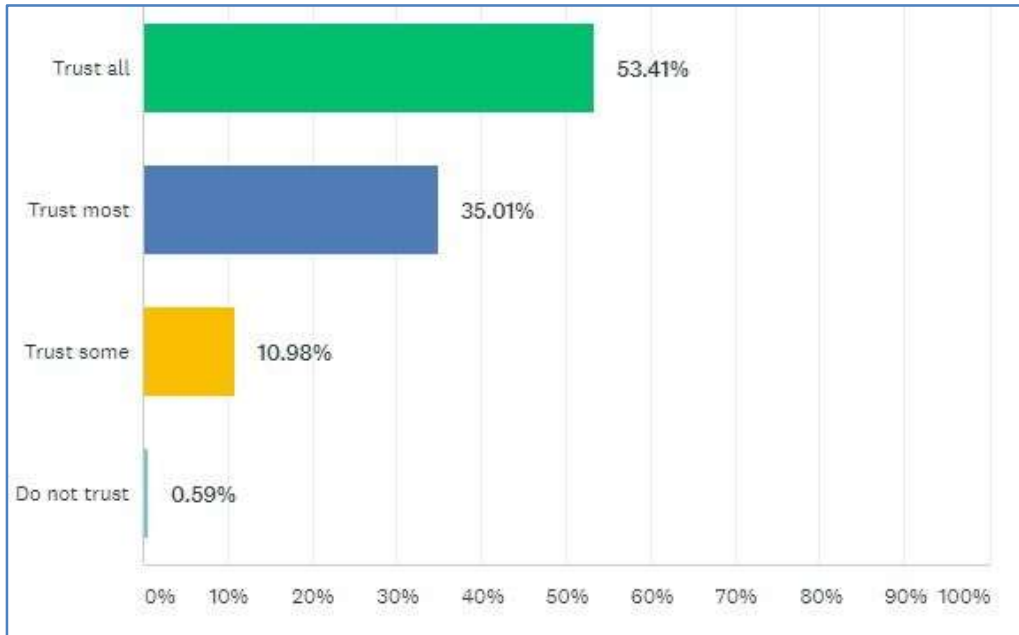
Has your circuit ever held a circuit forum for any reason other than electing delegates to respective conventions?
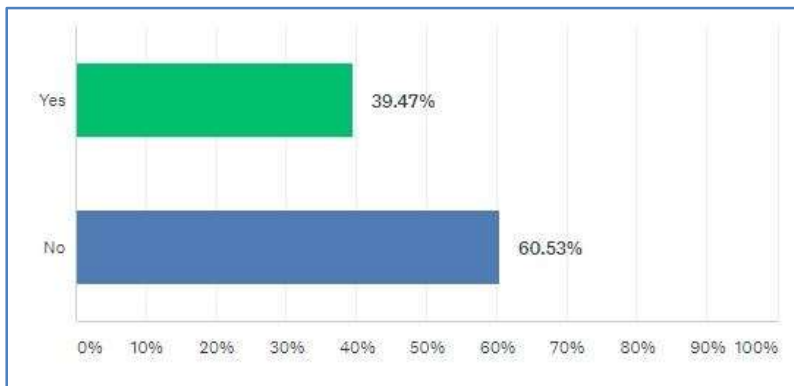
Has your circuit ever held a circuit convocation to discuss collaborative mission work in the circuit?
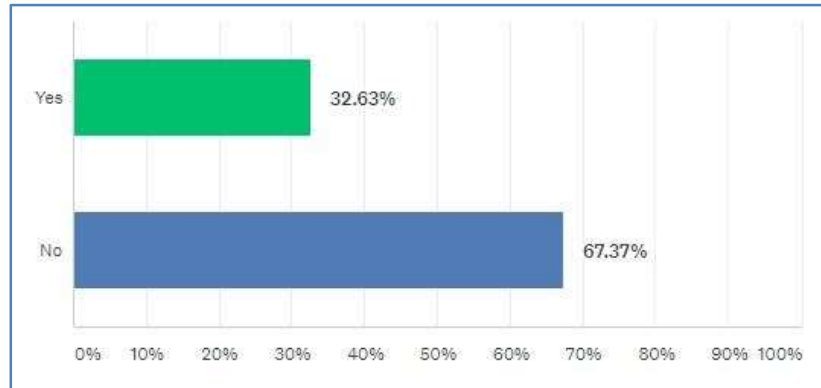
On average, what occurs at your normal circuit meetings (mark one)?
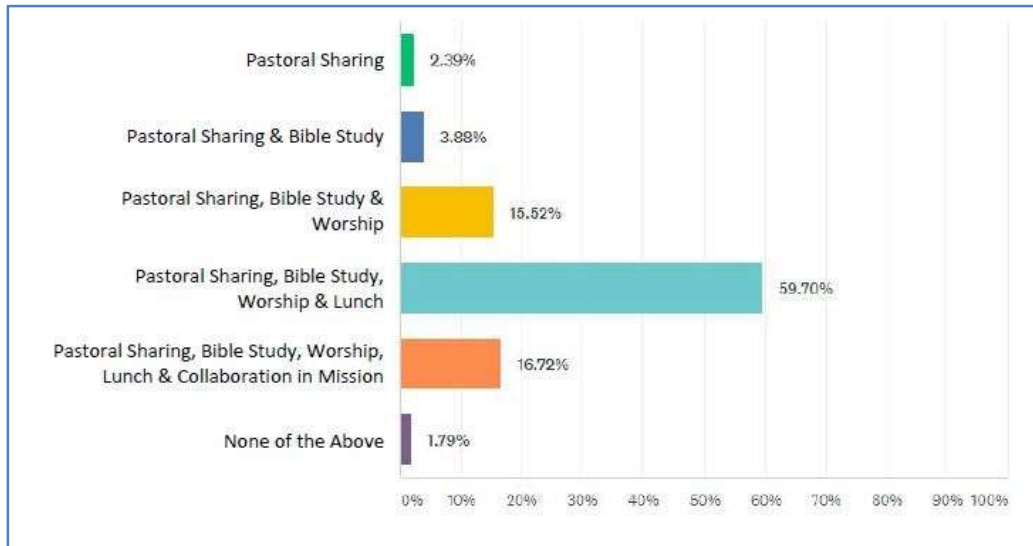
What percentage of your time in circuit meetings is spent discussing ways to collaborate in mission to reach those who do not know Jesus?
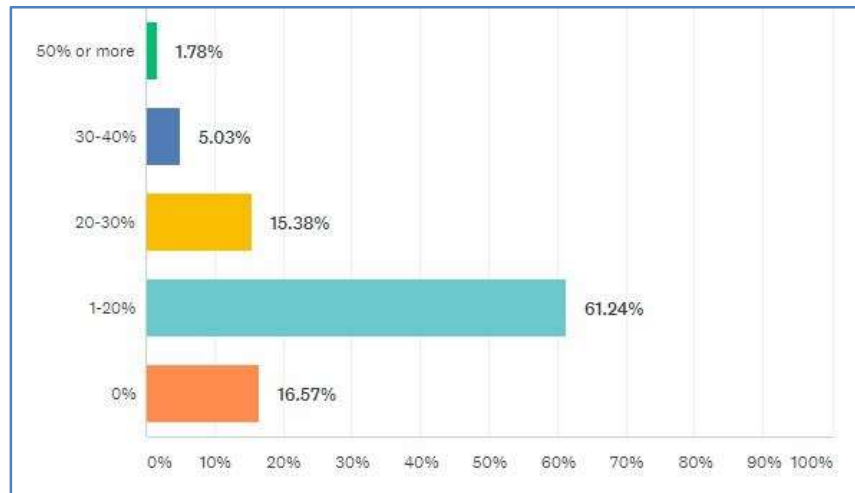
Has your circuit ever held a retreat to plan circuit collaboration in mission?
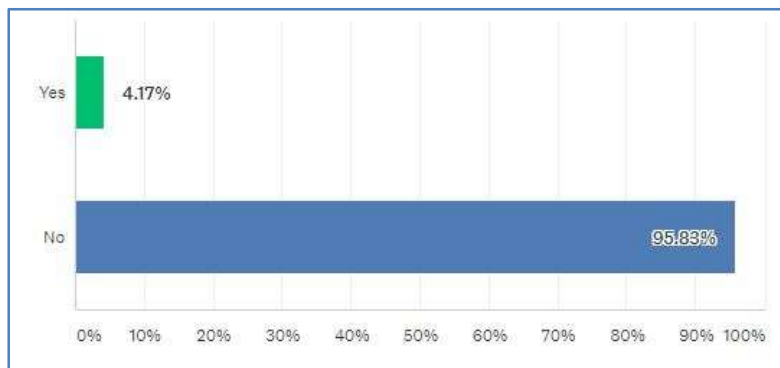
Does your circuit hold joint circuit worship services (i.e. Reformation service, festivals, etc.)?
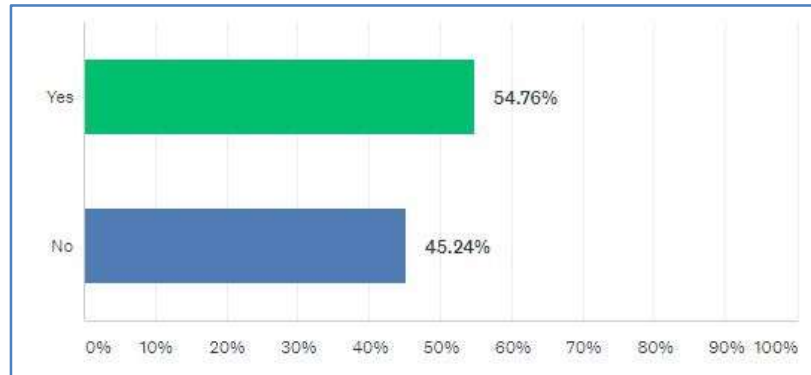
Are you (or have you ever been) a circuit visitor? If so, did you receive training for your role as circuit visitor?
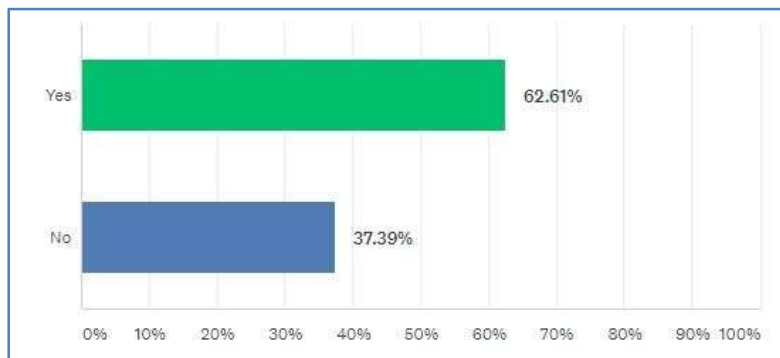
How many new churches has your circuit congregation planted in the last 10 years?
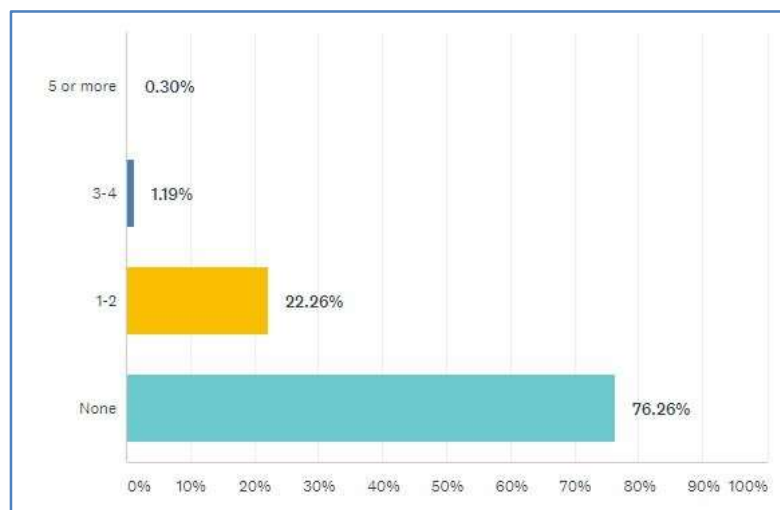
Observations of Survey

A total of 340 out of 1000 randomly chosen active LCMS pastors responded to the circuit collaboration survey. A response rate of over 30% of randomly selected respondents generally suffices in statistically capturing a representative sample. Therefore, this sample was used to make reasonable claims about the current state of LCMS pastors collaborating in mission at the circuit level.

It was interesting to note that 94.71% of respondents have served in active pastoral ministry in the LCMS for over thirty years. Less than 2% of the respondents have served for less than twenty years. Several conclusions can be made from this data. The random sample of active LCMS pastors just so happened to include a large percentage of pastors with greater than thirty years of service. This data was also reflective of the average pastoral age in the American Christian church being 55 according to a Barna study in 2017.[2] The researcher could not find existing data for the average age of LCMS pastors. Nonetheless, Pew Research conducted a demographic survey in 2017 and discovered that "Baby Boomers" and "The Silent Generation" made up 56% of the membership of the LCMS.[3] Therefore, it was not surprising to see such a strong survey response rate from pastors making up both of these generations.

The survey respondents serve in a variety of contexts, from rural to urban. The highest percentage of responding pastors were those in suburban areas (29.12%), with pastors serving in small towns (1,000 to 10,000 in population) being the next highest (27.94%). Small town pastors were likely not as close to fellow pastors and churches as those who live in urban and suburban

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2. Aaron Earls, "How old are America's pastors?" *Facts & Trends, 9 March 2017. https://factsandtrends.net/2017/03/09/how-old-are-americas-pastors/*

3. Pew Research Center, "Members of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod," 2017. https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-denomination/lutheran-church-missouri-synod/

contexts. Therefore, proximity may have played a role in a pastor's ability to collaborate in mission.

Overall, this contextual data seemed to mirror the wider LCMS. Over 50% of the congregations in the LCMS are in small town or rural settings. [4] 41% of pastoral respondents were from small town or rural settings. There is nothing unusual or unexpected based on the context of respondents. This boded well for this being a representative sample of ministers from the broader LCMS throughout the country.

What is the Current Pastoral Demographic and How Does it Compare to this Study?

When asked about the average worship attendance, 82.94% said they average 300 or less in weekly worship. Pastors who worship more than 500 in weekly attendance comprised 8.53% of the respondents. Therefore, it was deduced that the majority of pastors responding are in church contexts where the paid staff is most likely minimal. It seemed like pastors with smaller churches would be open to receiving help and wider community connection from other circuit pastors in order to fill in gaps in their ministries.

Over 80% of those surveyed said they attended circuit meetings on a monthly basis. Greater than 10% said they attended circuit meetings quarterly. This percentage was significant because it demonstrated that over 80% of those surveyed actually knew what takes place at the monthly meetings.

Slightly over 40% of pastors surveyed said that between 70%-90% of pastors attend circuit meetings. Over 25% of those surveyed said 50%-70% of circuit pastors attend the meetings on a monthly basis. This was significant because it highlighted that the majority of

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4. Megan K. Mertz, "Strengthening Ministry in Rural America," Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, https://files.lcms.org/wl/?id=Jjw3ZjkVCYxK8g63OxtnGVpdaVAOuAr8 (accessed August 28, 2020).

LCMS pastors were meeting together on a regular basis. Monthly circuit meetings are an ideal and consistent way for pastors and churches to collaborate in mission.

Over 90% of pastors surveyed interact with at least one other pastor in their circuit at least once a month. Slightly over 25% of those surveyed interact with another pastor four or more times in a month. Over 40% of pastors interacted two to three times per month. The importance of this revelation was that it displayed that a high percentage of pastors have supportive relationships with other circuit pastors.

This survey sought to gauge the level of trust among circuit pastors. Over 53% trust all of the pastors in their circuit. Over 35% trust most of the pastors in their circuit. Over 10% trust some of the pastors in their circuit. The majority of pastors claimed to trust all of the pastors in their circuit. This level of trust provided the foundation for pastoral collaboration in mission.

Over 60% of pastors surveyed said their circuit had never held a circuit forum for any purpose other than electing officers to District and Synod conventions. It was anticipated that this percentage would be higher. Therefore, it was encouraging to know that almost 40% of circuits are handling business other than nominations and elections at circuit forums. Nonetheless, this question did not display the nature of what the 40% of circuits accomplish in addition to nominations and elections at their circuit forums.

Over 67% of circuit pastors surveyed said their circuit did not conduct circuit convocations for collaboration in mission. However, over 30% of circuits gathered for collaborative mission-minded times together on the "off-years" where there is no District or Synod convention.

Over 15% of pastors said their monthly circuit meetings consisted of Pastoral Sharing, Bible Study and Worship. Almost 60% said their monthly gatherings also consisted of lunch, in

addition to what is listed above. Over 16% of pastors surveyed said, in addition to all listed above, that they also had conversations on how they could collaborate in mission. The majority of pastors spend significant time together rooted in God's Word, worshiping, and eating together.

Over 6% of those surveyed said that greater than 30% of their time was spent discussing collaboration in mission at monthly circuit meetings. Over 15% of pastors surveyed said that between 20%-30% of their monthly meetings was spent discussing collaboration in mission. Over 60% of pastors said less than 20% of circuit meetings were spent discussing collaboration in mission. Over 15% said that 0% of their monthly meetings were spent discussing collaboration in mission.

Over 95% of pastors surveyed said they had never held a retreat to strategize for collaboration in mission. This statistic may simply be an observation that individual congregations do not hold strategic retreats as a part of their leadership rhythm. If that were the case, it would be unusual to expect pastors and individual congregations that do not hold retreats to then think about the effectiveness of strategic circuit collaboration in mission retreats. This may also indicate that circuit visitors are not trained or expected to serve as the organizing leader in strategic, collaborative mission.

Almost 55% of those surveyed said their circuit congregations hold yearly joint worship services, such as Reformation or Festival services. These joint services are key times for pastors to show trust and friendship for one another, and to cast joint vision for reaching those who do not know Jesus in their circuit. Increasing the percentage of circuits who worship together could have the effect of improving collaboration in mission.

Over 62% of those surveyed said they had been a circuit visitor, and that they had received training for their leadership responsibility as a circuit visitor. Across the synod, leading circuit collaboration in mission initiatives is not universally expected of circuit visitors.

Summarizing Survey Comments

It was noted that distance may play a role in how likely pastors and churches are to collaborate in mission. If pastors and churches are separated by distance in rural or small towns, they may be less apt to collaborate in mission. This could be for one of two reasons. One, the sheer distance between congregations kept the pastors from seeing one another as consistently as they would desire between monthly circuit meetings. Two, pastors in rural and small-town congregations are also more likely to be solo pastors with a smaller team of paid or non-paid leaders to collaborate with on a daily basis. Therefore, collaboration with circuit pastors and churches was not something that comes naturally in day-to-day life as pastor.

Furthermore, the surveyed pastors are overall connected in a consistent relationship with at least one other pastor in the circuit. The vast majority of pastors trust most, if not all, the pastors in their circuit. The next step could be for pastoral relationships of trust to develop toward the end of congregations working together more closely to reach their respective communities with the Gospel.

Finally, the above percentage (62%) of trained circuit visitors combined with the fact that only 16% of circuit meetings consist of conversation regarding collaboration in mission signifies that there are significant gaps between what the Synod Handbook says about how circuits are supposed to function, and how, in fact, they actually function. Standardized circuit visitor training between LCMS districts could provide more consistent circuit visitor expectations. Districts could, and should, include training in the LCMS handbook as it pertains to the roles of

circuit visitors leading circuit forums and circuit convocations with the goal of collaboration in mission between pastors and churches.

Harrison Assessment Overview

The Harrison Assessments (HA) are reliable and valid. Reliability is the extent to which a test can be duplicated multiple times and yield consistently similar scores. The test-retest coefficients expected of behavioral assessments are between .65 and .95. The test-retest coefficient results of the 74 primary trait scales in the Harrison Suitability Assessment are between .80 and .94. These results indicate that the degree of reliability is within the moderately high to extremely high range as measured against expected industry standards.

The Harrison Suitability Assessment has a high degree of content validity because it measures a wide range of factors (156 traits) including motivations, personality traits, interests, work values, and work preferences. Consequently, there will be 30-40 factors that will have a relationship to job performance for any specific profession. This range of items is much broader than any other assessment the researcher has encountered.[5]

The HA Performance Enjoyment Theory

The HA employs the Performance Enjoyment Theory. This theory suggests that when people do what they like they will do it more often. When people engage in enjoyable tasks over and over again, they start to excel in those tasks. When they get better at what they enjoy it can have a positive "snowball effect." When people then experience the satisfaction of growth, and words of encouragement from others, this positive feedback loop increases the enjoyment even

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5. Harrison Assessments, "Summary of Reliability and Validity of Harrison Assessments," 2011, http://www.trustedcoach.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/HATS_Reliability_and_Validity.pdf.

further! This positive feedback loop can then set positive behavioral habits. The HA has found that if people do 75% of what they enjoy in their work life they become three times more effective.[6]

Nonetheless, this "snowball effect" can go in a negative direction for tasks and behaviors people do not enjoy. When people do not enjoy a certain task there may be a tendency to avoid or procrastinate on doing that task. By avoiding the task people decrease their improvement of the task, and the enjoyment of the task also decreases. The researcher is hopeful the HA collaboration in mission profile set will be a tool to help align pastors who enjoy collaborating in mission with churches who desire to go on mission to expand God's kingdom.

Therefore, the researcher set out to build a profile to identify the essential, desirable and traits to avoid for pastors who collaborate in mission. The researcher is hopeful that churches and seminaries will use this profile to help identify and train current and future pastors who desire to collaborate in mission to expand God's kingdom.

Harrison Assessment Scoring

The HA uses a 10-point scale. This scale is different than most in that measurements do not fall between the usual measurements of 1-10, but rather 2-10. A 2-10 scale makes 6 the midpoint. 6 represents a neutral score and, therefore, a neutral score for that respective trait. As the scale moves in either direction from the midpoint the preference and avoidance of a respective trait *accelerates* in both directions. Therefore, by the time the score nears 10 the person being assessed has an extremely strong preference toward that behavior. Conversely, by the time the score nears 2 the assessed individual has an extremely strong dislike or avoidance of

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6. This overview is taken from the researcher's debrief training notes on May 10, 2019.

that respective trait. A score above 8 quickly accelerates the respective trait toward 10. A score below 4 accelerates more quickly toward a dislike of that respective trait.

Scores between 9 and 10 display a strong tendency and enjoyment of individual traits. These traits "show up" every day. A person finds the most enjoyment when engaged in these behaviors or traits. Some people may experience these behaviors in their work and say, "I was hardwired and made for this!"

Scores of 2 and 3 are important for the opposite reason. If a trait is scored between 2 and 3, it is likely the individual finds little to no enjoyment in those activities or behaviors. The individual may actively avoid and procrastinate so as to not perform these tasks. It is easy to imagine the amount of dissatisfaction a person would have if they had to perform these tasks in their daily vocation.

As it relates to this study, it was necessary for the researcher to determine the essential, desirable and traits to avoid for pastors who collaborate in mission. In order to produce a collaboration in mission pastoral profile set using HA the researcher became a certified Harrison Assessment debriefer. This comprehensive training program took 3 months and provided the researcher with an in-depth view of what the HA can provide. There are many behavioral profile sets already established for various vocations. Yet, there was no profile set that directly studied the traits of pastors who collaborate in mission. The researcher and his team then put together a plan to develop their own collaboration in mission expansion pastoral profile.

Building the HA Collaboration in Mission Profile Set

After the researcher obtained certification and authorization[7] by HA to develop his own profile set, he then worked with his research team[8] to go through the 154 HA traits and determine 15-20 essential traits, 15-20 desirable traits, and 15-20 traits to avoid for pastors who collaborate in mission.

The team then developed a set of open ended and multiple-choice questions to use in interviews with active LCMS pastors who volunteered to be part of the study. The interview started out with the scenario and question, *"Picture in your mind a collaborative ministry start that leads to a new ministry start. What type of pastor is needed to lead this church?"* These three open-ended questions then followed: *What is the leader doing all of the time?* This question sought to identify essential traits. *What is the leader doing regularly?* This question sought to identify desirable traits. Finally, *what are they avoiding?* This question sought to identify the traits to avoid for pastors who collaborate in mission.

Next, the research team asked multiple choice questions which led the pastor being interviewed to narrow the essential, desirable, and traits to avoid already identified by the research team. 8 interviews were conducted.

Finally, the research team compiled the interview information and built *current* and *future* "Collaboration/Mission Expansion"[9] profile sets. They determined it would be helpful to determine baseline traits and behaviors that a pastor should *currently* display. They identified 5

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7. HA research staff read, validated, and authorized the researcher's "Collaborative/Mission Expansion—Current and Future" profile set.

8. Jonathan Reitz and Dr. Trey Cox.

9. This is the formal title of the HA profile set.

essential traits, 11 desirable traits, and 6 traits to avoid in a *current state* profile. The researcher will display the traits below when sharing what the research found. They also determined that it would be helpful to project 5 years ahead and build a profile set that was aspirational, with the hopes that the pastor could take the HA multiple times and see growth. [10] The *future state* profile set consisted of 7 essential traits, 12 desirable traits, and 6 traits to avoid. There was some overlap between the traits for the *current and future state* profile sets. This is disclosed below in the research.

<center>Reading the Harrison Assessment Report</center>

Essential traits were the traits that are essential to become a collaborative, mission-minded pastor. These traits have a maximum score. Essential traits will show up as more than 0 and most likely less than the maximum score. The more of a particular trait the respective pastor possesses determines the range of positive or negative impact in utilizing that trait in his pastoral work. The research team determined the frequency rate to be 70% to 80% of the time. This means that the pastor should display these traits 70%-80% of the time. HA research consultant, Jonathan Reitz, said, "There is no behavior at any level that is used 100% of the time, which would mean that every minute of every day one would be engaging the chosen behavior." He goes on to say, "With that in mind, any job or role that requires a behavior 70-80% of the time is defined by that behavior. The essential traits become essential by two factors: one, how important the behavior is on a scale of 1-10, and two, how much of the time a behavior is

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10. The HA is recommended to be taken every two years because human behavior can certainly change.

required in a particular role. Percentages are only applied to how much of the time a behavior is required in a job/role."[11]

Reliability is the extent to which a pastor is "truthful and open" while taking the twenty-minute HA. HA says that a reliability score of 80% or more means the test results are valid. Every active LCMS pastor's HA was demonstrated to be reliable. The lowest reliability score was 85.6%. Pastor #11 had the rare score of 100% reliability.

The research established a *"range of importance"* from "essential" to "very important" to "important" to "fairly important." Each of these levels of importance has an attached frequency percentage. These frequencies in the "essential" and "desirable" traits range from 80% (essential) to 40% (important), displaying the percentage frequency of which the respective traits are needed to be displayed.

Desirable traits were different than essential traits. They were scored with no positive impact for these traits. If the pastor met a certain threshold of competency with desirable traits, then there is no added value. Desirable traits could only predict potential negative impact toward pastoral collaboration in mission. Therefore, the range of scores started at 0, signifying no negative impact, and range to negative scores to display the level of potential negative impact.

Finally, *traits to avoid* could only have a negative impact on a collaborative mission-minded pastor's score. Therefore, it was best if pastors displayed a 0 score, which demonstrated the pastor did not have any tendencies for these traits.

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11. Jonathan Reitz, interview by the researcher, August 23, 2020. Jonathan was the researcher's Harrison Assessment debriefer trainer. He added this statement to help more deeply understand the science behind behavioral frequency: "Most of the time, *one* behavior is only used 20-40% of the time. It is one of the keys to behavioral research that often a short list of behaviors are the keys to success/effectiveness in any role, and then a longer list of behaviors forms the specifics of how different individuals apply that behavior. The essential behaviors list carries this out."

Two Groups of Pastors Studied

The researcher studied two different sets of current LCMS pastors--33 pastors from across the LCMS who volunteered to be a part of the study, and 11 pastors of Circuit 30. The 11 pastors from Circuit 30 were also a part of the larger group. Both sets of pastors were compared against the *current and future state* profile set. It was the hypothesis of this researcher that the two populations--all LCMS pastors and those in Circuit 30--will have similar outcomes showing that the Circuit 30 pastors are, in fact, a representative subset of LCMS pastors.

Rubric

Harrison Assessments did not have a rubric for drawing conclusions on custom group profile sets. Therefore, the research team used a conditional color formatting approach in order to draw conclusions based on the maximum range for respective traits. This approach allowed the researcher to easily identify trends and make observations based on the *essential traits, desirable traits,* and *traits to avoid.* Reading the HA interpretations of the respective traits, rather than interpreting them independently, provides a deeper understanding of each trait.

All Pastor Current State Essential Traits Observations

Collaborative Intention

Collaborative intention is one of the three highest and most essential traits for the Collaboration/Mission Expansion profile. *Collaborative Intention* is defined as "the aim to establish mutual benefits and long-term relationships by taking an interest in other points of view, welcoming feedback and responding non-defensively without shaming or blaming others." Of the essential traits needed, the "all pastor" group scored the highest on this trait with an average score of 170.42 out of a maximum score of 214. There were 11 scores that were 180 or

higher, with one participant scoring 203. This score aligned with the active LCMS pastor survey. Pastors have a strong intention to establish mutually beneficial relationships. Yet, there was a difference between intention and action, as future HA scores and the survey both displayed.

Influencing

Influencing was simply defined by HA as "the tendency to try to persuade others." The average score for this group was 139.21 out of a maximum score of 214. An interesting correlation is that many of the pastors who scored remarkably high in *collaborative intention* scored quite low in *influencing.* In fact, the pastor who scored 203 on *collaborative intention* only scored a 92 in *influencing.* There were only five pastors who had a 170 or above score in both *collaborative intention* and *influencing.* The combination of high scores for these two traits would be an excellent tool for identifying collaborative and action-oriented church planting pastors.

Nonetheless, the low *influencing* scores display LCMS pastor's *desire* for collaboration, though many of them lack the trait to *influence* the desire into action in a collaborative manner. It is also worth noting that the *influencing* trait is measured by HA in relation to the entire life of a pastor (home and work). For example, if the *influencing* trait is low, and the pastor was striving to influence his own congregation toward increased missions in the community, he probably has little capacity left to influence brother pastors in the circuit. [12]

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12. It is important to remember the HA is built around "the performance enjoyment theory." When people do not enjoy a certain task there may be a tendency to avoid or procrastinate doing that task. By avoiding the task, people decrease their improvement of the task, and the enjoyment of the task also decreases.

Truth Exploring

Truth exploring was the final essential trait with a maximum score of 214. *Truth exploring* was defined by HA as "the tendency to explore different viewpoints and formulate conclusions without becoming fixed in one's opinions." Said simply, this trait allowed a pastor to stand on the solid foundation of their truth in Christ, and their unique leadership values, while respecting the truths and values of others, and resisting appearing narrow-minded. The "all pastor" group average was 141.42. LCMS theology may contribute to this low score. LCMS pastors are proud of their LCMS systematic theology and the truths of how God reveals Himself through Word and Sacrament. Therefore, it may be difficult for some pastors to differentiate theological "truth" conversations from leadership adiaphora conversations.

Trends

What were the trends for all three top *essential traits?* Pastor #4[13] scored above 170 on all of the top three *essential traits* out of the thirty-three pastors who took the HA. In fact, there were only three pastors who scored above 150 in all three *essential traits.* The researcher interprets this fact to display how rare it is for one pastor to contain collaborative intention, influence toward missional action, and the ability to make decisive decisions while maintaining an open mind. Imagine if the LCMS used the HA to discover, develop and deploy that type of pastoral leader.

Pastor #10 was quite interesting. His *collaborative intention* and *influencing* were both above 180, but his *truth exploring* trait score was 87. This pastor could have the tendency to collaborate and lead toward missional action, but may lack the ability to adjust strategy as better

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13. This is how the researcher has determined to keep anonymity in referencing specific pastors. The numbers are taken from the spreadsheet of pastor scores.

ideas and new data are presented. It was also interesting to look at his low *self-acceptance* trait score (-16) in the *desirable trait* section. *Self-acceptance* was defined by HA as "the tendency to like oneself. (I'm O.K. the way I am.)" Therefore, this pastor may lack the ability for *truthful exploring* as a mask for his personal insecurities. An open mind to ideas counter to his own may be interpreted as an attack on his identity as a pastoral leader. The combination of these four traits would certainly be worth exploring more deeply with pastor #10.

The final two *essential traits* were rated at 7.5, signifying that they are slightly less important than the top three *essential traits. Mindful courage* was determined to be "essential" with a frequency rate of 70%. *Wants challenge* was determined to be "very important" but was set at a frequency rate of 80%. The research team determined that since their rating was 7.5, they both would still be titled under "essential traits."

Mindful Courage

Mindful courage was "the tendency to analyze the potential pitfalls of the plan or strategy while at the same time being able to take risks." The average "all pastor" group score was 105.24 out of a maximum score of 178. The highest score was pastor #15 with a score of 146. There were only three pastors scoring above 130. This trait is wonderful for pastoral self-discovering with an HA debriefer. A low score may indicate either a lack of planning and analyzing skills, or it may display a reluctance to take risks. This would only be disclosed through conversation and ministry application. The researcher interprets this low overall score in *mindful courage* to confirm a pastor's reluctance to collaborate in mission at the circuit level. "Analyzing pitfall" while also "taking risks" is absolutely necessary for collaboration in mission between pastors and churches.

Pastor #4 displayed an interesting combination score for the first 4 essential traits. He was over 180 for the first three *essential traits* listed above, yet he scored a 100 out of 178 in *mindful courage.* It would be quite interesting for a debriefer or pastoral coach to discuss with pastor #4 if he struggles more with planning, or with risk taking. Once this was determined, it would be helpful for pastor #4 to have a conversation and to take action, which he has no problem doing, in building out his leadership team with leaders who complement where he is weak. It would be helpful for pastors #16, #21 and #23 to have similar conversations with a debriefer or pastoral coach.

Wants Challenge

Wants challenge was the final essential trait in the "Collaborative/Mission Expansion— Current State" profile. *Wants challenge* was defined as "the willingness to attempt difficult tasks or goals." The average "all pastor" score was 120.69 out of 178. Three pastors scored a 170 or above. Six pastors scored a 150 or above. The researcher found it helpful to analyze one pastor with a high score and one pastor with a low score and make observations based on their other *essential trait* scores.

Pastor #23 had a score of 171 in *wants challenge* and a score of 67 in *mindful courage.* Combining the *wants challenge* score and *mindful courage* score gives a good picture for pastors to determine where pastoral coaching may be helpful. For example, it would be interesting to have a conversation with pastor #23 about how his strong desire for challenge has possibly been hurt by his lower tendency to analyze pitfalls. A high score in *wants challenge* displays a pastor's willingness to take risks, yet he has probably hurt his ability to gain trust by his lack of ability to analyze pitfalls, or to take instruction from those who can. Pastor #23 also has a quite

low score in the desirable trait of *systematic* (-34).[14] *Systematic* is defined by HA as "the enjoyment of tasks that require carefully or methodically thinking through steps." A debriefer or pastoral coach could help pastor #23 identify how building and trusting a ministry team that includes mindful and systematic leaders would be helpful.

Pastor #15 had completely opposite scores from pastor #23. His *mindful courage* score was 146 and his *wants challenge* score was 78. A debriefer or coach would be wise to discuss how his *mindful courage* may lean more toward analyzing pitfalls, and possibly how past pitfalls through ministry risk may have contributed to his low desire for challenge. Pastor #15 would be served well by adding more trusted risk takers with missional ideas to his ministry team.

Summary Essential Trait Observations

There were only two pastors[15] who scored above the average score for all five *essential traits.* This is not surprising. Scoring high in all five[16] of these HA combination traits would be quite rare to find, and was not found in the "all pastor" group. A coach or HA debriefer would be helpful in coming alongside these two pastors to discuss strategies for growing in the two essential traits of *truth exploring* and *mindful courage*. The coach or debriefer could also invite the pastor to give the HA to his ministry team and determine who is strong in these two essential traits. Once identified, that leader should be encouraged to use their gifts to *mindfully* and *courageously* expand God's kingdom. Finally, the coach or debriefer could encourage these two

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14. This was the lowest *systematic* score of the "all pastor" group.

15. Pastors #8 and #12 were above the average for all five *essential traits.* It should be noted that they were not above the average by much in any of the five traits.

16. A score of 170 or above in the first three *essential traits* and a score of 130 or above in the next two *essential traits.*

pastors to consider being circuit visitors, reminding them that pastors who are above average in the five essential traits for collaboration in mission expansion are quite rare.

The power of the *essential trait* observation was found not in individual scores, but in the application of the *essential trait* strengths delivered to individual pastors in respective circuits. Imagine if circuit pastors developed relationships of trust where they could start to identify strengths, and leverage those strengths for collaborative missional expansion. Identifying and using the "gifts" of the wider church could be modeled by circuit pastors as encouraged by the Apostle Paul in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. The HA "Collaboration/Mission Expansion—Current State" profile set is a tool to help them do just that.

Circuit 30 Current State Essential Traits Observations

Eleven pastors from Circuit 30 were studied using the same profile set as the "all pastor" group. Circuit 30 pastors were also included in the "all pastor" group. The hypothesis was that Circuit 30 would have similar scores to the "all pastors" group.

Collaborative Intention

Circuit 30 had the exact same average as the "all pastors" group. Their average score was 170 out of 214. Most pastors in Circuit 30 were near that average. The only variant was shown in pastor #13 who scored a 120. Pastor #13 serves in one of the largest churches in the circuit. This low score could be interpreted as he does not even have the desire to collaborate with other pastors. Or, that score could mean pastor #13 already has a great team in place in his local congregation that he collaborates with consistently. It would be worth a conversation with a debriefer, pastoral coach, or circuit visitor to determine whether pastor #13 could be convinced to collaborate with other pastors for their benefit.

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Influencing

Circuit 30 had a slightly higher average than the "all pastors" group. Their average score was 153 out of a maximum score of 214. The "all pastor" average score was 139. Again, most pastors hovered around the average. One markedly higher score was found in pastor #5. This would be a wonderful piece of information for the circuit visitor[17] to know. Pastor #5 would need to be bought in and influencing any new circuit missional efforts.

Truth Exploring

Circuit 30 scored only slightly below the average score of the "all pastors" group. There were no extraordinary observations.

Mindful Courage

Circuit 30 had the exact same average score as the "all pastor" group. They both scored an average of 105 out of a maximum score of 178. As stated above, this low score may give great clarity to one of Circuit 30's primary struggles. *Mindful courage* is "the tendency to analyze pitfalls of the plan or strategy while at the same time being willing to take risks." There are two components to this trait: analyzing, planning, and strategizing on the one hand, and willingness to take risks on the other. Which of these two components does Circuit 30 lack the most?

Once again, it was helpful to analyze the desirable trait of *systematic. Systematic* is defined by HA as, "the enjoyment of tasks that require carefully or methodically thinking through steps." This was significantly the lowest of Circuit 30's desirable trait scores with a -

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17. The researcher would love for the "circuit visitor" to be called" the circuit leader in mission."

8.36 score. It is also helpful to identify who had the lowest scores in Circuit 30. Two of the top three lowest *systematic* scores are found in the past and current circuit visitor.[18] They both also have two of the lowest *mindful courage* scores.

While every circuit visitor selection process was different, there could be two reasons why pastors with such traits become circuit visitors. One, the pastors, often subconsciously, may desire a circuit visitor who will not challenge them toward greater kingdom expansion. Missional passivity could be a welcome circuit visitor trait as many pastors already count themselves as overworked. Two, pastors who talk and execute a strategy for multiplying leaders via "data" and "systems" are so much in the minority that they will have a hard time being selected to circuit visitor by their peers who largely do not share the same behavioral traits. In response, pastors may even select the exact opposite type of circuit visitor, as demonstrated in Circuit 30.

The HA could be used strategically by LCMS districts and circuits to help pastors identify future circuit visitors through finding pastors who are on the higher range of the combination traits of *mindful courage* and *systematic.*

Wants Challenge

Circuit 30 had a slightly higher average score in comparison to the "all pastor" group. The "all pastor" group averaged 120 out of 178 and Circuit 30 averaged 131 out of 178. As listed above, Circuit 30 may have the tendency to intend, and actually attempt, difficult tasks to grow their ministries. Nonetheless, because their *mindful courage* and *systematic* scores are so low, they may have a problem sustaining their missional efforts through robust planning, use of data, and strategy.

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18. Pastor #10 is the current circuit visitor. Pastor #11 is the previous circuit visitor.

Pastor #11 displays where conflict may lie if placed in a circuit leadership position. Pastor #11 scored 171 out of 178 in *wants challenge.* Yet, he has quite low scores in the desirable traits of *experimenting* and *systematic. Experimenting* is defined by HA as "the tendency to try new things and new ways of doing things." Therefore, Pastor #11 may tend to try difficult things, but fail to sustain and grow his efforts because of his lack of strategic thinking, and his low score in *experimenting* may disclose a lack of trust in the ideas of others. A coach or HA debriefer could help pastor #11 develop a plan for growing in the traits of experimenting and systematic, most likely through inviting members who are high in both of these traits to join his ministry team.

Summary Essential Trait Observations for Circuit 30

The researcher was a pastor in Circuit 30. The HA assessment of Circuit 30 displayed much of what he had already experienced, but HA gave him greater language to express why Circuit 30 has struggled, like many LCMS circuits, to fulfill their collaborative missional calling.

Out of the eleven pastors who took the assessment from Circuit 30, there was no pastor who had an average or above score in all five *essential traits.* Once again, this necessitates pastors having self-awareness discussions around individual and group strengths and growth opportunities. Every pastor has unique gifts needed for the body of Christ to function well according to Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. The pastors could then explore hiring or securing a volunteer position (most likely non-ordained) to help lead them toward executing their collaborative missional dreams.

All Pastors and Circuit 30 Current State Desirable Traits Observations

As mentioned above, *desirable traits* were measured differently than *essential traits.*

These traits all have a baseline level of competency scored by zero. If the baseline level of

competency is hit there is no advantage for displaying the trait further. HA only marks potential

trait deficiencies with a negative score if the baseline trait score is not met. The researcher gave a

5.0 to 6.5 rating to all *desirable traits.* The *desirable trait* frequency ranged between 40% and

60% of the time.[19] The researcher listed 11 *desirable traits* including *enlists cooperation,*

experimenting, systematic, takes initiative, warmth/empathy, manages stress well, mutual help,

planning, self-acceptance, self-accountability, and self-improvement. The researcher did not

make observations on each desirable trait. Instead, he looked for trends and interesting insights

from three of the desirable traits.

First, seven of the thirty-three pastors did not have a deficiency in any of the desirable

traits. Almost twenty percent of active LCMS pastors had sufficient baseline proficiency in the

desirable traits as it relates to collaborative mission.

Systematic

Systematic had the lowest score of all desirable traits with a -4.72 for the "all pastors"

group and -8.36 for Circuit 30. As mentioned above, *systematic* is defined by HA as "the

enjoyment of tasks that require carefully or methodically thinking through steps." This low score

could be due to the many "hats" pastors must wear.[20] These "hats" may make "careful and

methodical thinking" difficult. This low score could also be due to the fact that pastors normally

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19. See above for an explanation on how frequency is measured.

20. The researcher speaks of his three pastoral leadership hats as "Shepherd/CEO/General."

become pastors because of their love for being around people. Methodically thinking through steps is most often done alone. Therefore, collaboration in mission should be a priority for these pastors.

Warmth/Empathy, Mutual Help, Planning

There were no negative effects displayed in *warmth/empathy* and *mutual help.* There was only one pastor who had any negative effect in the desirable trait of *planning.* Pastors frequently have an ability to express positive feelings toward others, and they pursue solutions to spiritual and emotional problems.

Planning was defined by HA as "the tendency to formulate ideas related to the steps and process of accomplishing an objective." At first glance this high score for *planning* may be surprising considering the low score in *systematic,* and in the essential trait of *mindful courage.* Once again, it was helpful to read the HA definition. *Planning* displays the tendency to "formulate ideas." This trait displays a pastor's desire to come up with ideas to reach their community with the Gospel, though a team will certainly be needed to systematically prioritize and execute tasks.

Enlists Cooperation

Enlists cooperation was the second lowest score for the "all pastors" group with a combined average of -4.42. HA defines *enlists cooperation* as "the tendency to invite others to participate in or join an effort." This low score details the need for seminaries and churches to continue to discover, develop and deploy pastors who actively build and maintain an aligned and functional leadership team. Circuit 30 did not score as low in *enlists cooperation,* with an

average score of -1.45. The HA debriefer would be able to encourage the district with this favorable score toward collaborative mission.

Self-Acceptance

Self-acceptance was the third lowest desirable trait score for the "all pastor" group with an average score of -2.30. *Self-acceptance* was the third lowest desirable trait score for Circuit 30 with an average score of 3.09. *Self-acceptance* is defined by HA as "the tendency to like oneself (I'm O.K. the way I am)." The researcher has two potential reasons for this low score. One, the LCMS culture may lean into the Law found in weekly liturgical confessions which say, "I, a poor miserable sinner…"[21] Pastors may have a hard time applying the Gospel that they boldly proclaim as "called and ordained servants of the Word" to themselves. Two, low scores in *self-acceptance* also invite active pastors to find a pastor or father-confessor to speak the Gospel to them.

Manages Stress Well

Manages stress well only had three pastors in the "all pastor" group and one pastor in Circuit 30 who had any negative impact on *desirable trait* score. If a pastor was unable to manage stress well, then many other traits will be negatively impacted. This was a trait that a trained HA debriefer will want to explore with each pastor. *Manages stress well* was an *essential trait* in the "future state" report yet to be analyzed.

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21. The Lutheran Service Book, Pew Edition, *Divine Service, Setting One* (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006) 151.

Traits to avoid are measured much like *desirable traits.* They each have a baseline level of competency scored by zero. If the baseline level of competency is hit, there was no advantage for displaying the trait further. HA only marks potential trait deficiencies with a negative score if the baseline trait score was not met. The researcher gave a rating of 9.0 ("avoid even the slightest tendency") to the traits of *defensive, dogmatic,* and *dominating.* The researcher gave the rating of 7.0 ("avoid even some tendency") to the traits of *harsh, impulsive,* and *insensitive.*

Harsh and Insensitive

There was no negative effect listed for the "all pastors" group nor Circuit 30 in the traits of *harsh* and *insensitive.* This displays the overall kind nature of most pastors in the LCMS.

Defensive

This was the lowest *traits to avoid* score with a -6.78 in the "all pastor" group. Yet, it should be noted that only four pastors had a negative score in *defensive,* though their scores were quite high. HA defines *defensive* as "the tendency to be self-accepting without sufficiently intending to improve." A low *defensive* trait score could lead a pastor in a circuit to view ideas counter to his own as a personal identity attack. Circuit 30 did not have one pastor who scored in the *defensive* trait.

Dogmatic

The second lowest *trait to avoid* was *dogmatic* with an average -3.87 score in the "all pastors" group. As with *defensive, dogmatic* only had five pastors with a negative score. Pastor #36 was an outlier with a -74 in *defensive* and -80 in *dogmatic.* His extra low score in these two traits certainly skewed the overall score for these two *traits to avoid. Dogmatic* is defined by HA

as "the tendency to be certain of opinions without sufficiently being open to different ideas." A negative score in both *defensive* and *dogmatic* is a strong red flag for a pastor struggling to collaborate in mission. Pastor #36 would most likely actively work against collaborative efforts.

Circuit 30 had only two of the 11 pastors with a negative *dogmatic* score. Yet, it is interesting to note that pastor #13 had a negative *dogmatic* score of -26. He is also the senior pastor at one of the circuit's largest congregations. This sort of pastor may passively disengage from circuit collaboration due to his lack of openness to different ideas.

<div align="center">HA Collaboration/Mission Expansion—Current State Suitability Score</div>

The HA *Suitability Score* assesses all *essential, desirable* and *traits to avoid* and comes up with a *suitability score* to identify competence based on the unique profile set being measured. The maximum score is 100. Any *suitability score* between 75-100 displays "probable competence" for the profile set being studied. A score between 60-74 displays "possible competence." A score of 59 or less indicates the candidate "probably lacks competence" around the respective profile set being measured.

All Pastors Suitability Score

The average *suitability score* for the "Collaboration/Mission Expansion—Current State" profile set for the "all pastors" group was 67.48. This puts the average active LCMS pastor in the "possible competence" category. It should again be noted that the HA assesses behavioral traits. Behavioral traits can change and improve.

Eight pastors scored in the "probably competence" range with the highest score being 82 by pastor #4. Only four pastors' suitability *score* was in the "probably lacks competence" range. This means that twenty-one pastors' *suitability scores* fell within the "possible competence"

range. This was encouraging. With intervention by an HA debriefer or a pastoral coach, the overall *suitability score* for the "Collaboration/Mission Expansion—Current State" profile could improve.

Collaboration/Mission Expansion—Future State Profile

As listed above, the researcher ran a second profile set in the hopes of identifying the traits needed (and traits to avoid) *five years into the future* for the collaborative kingdom-expanding pastoral leader. The researcher wanted to distinguish between baseline traits needed today *and five years into the future.* Based on the eight interviews, and the work of the research team, it was determined which traits would be more or less essential. Below the researcher highlights the diverse future traits needed and how the "all pastors" group and Circuit 30 displayed competency.

All Pastors and Circuit 30 Essential Traits Observations

The future state profile contains seven essential traits. The current state profile only contained five. The future state profile moved *collaborative intention* to a *desirable trait,* and added the three traits of *manages stress well, authoritative collaboration* and *takes initiative.* The rating ranged between 7.5 to 8.0 with a frequency range of 70% to 80%.

Manages Stress Well

Manages stress well was added to the essential traits future state profile because leading collaborative mission will inevitably add more stress to pastors and their churches. Many individual church leaders, and other pastors, may add stress to the collaborative leader. *Manages stress well* is defined by HA as "the tendency to deal effectively with strain and difficulty when it occurs."

The "all pastors" group averaged a 100.33 out of a possible maximum score of 157. Four pastors scored 140 or above with pastor #24 having a score of 156. Nonetheless, none of these pastors scored higher than 125 in the essential traits of *influencing* and *truth exploring.* This fact could display that some pastors manage their stress by distancing themselves from new experiences, even if they relate to expanding God's kingdom.

Pastor #17 gives a more complete picture of pastors distancing themselves from collaborative mission. Pastor #17 *manages stress well* with a high score of 144. Nonetheless, his desirable traits of *enlists cooperation* and *mutual help* were the quite low scores of -80 and -25 respectively.

Pastor #18 had a 145 in *manages stress well* and a 119 out of 131 score in the *authoritative collaboration* essential trait. More will be discussed below on *authoritative collaboration.* This combination of high trait scores could prove as a wonderful indicator of a healthy collaborative missional leader, and this pastor should be considered to be a circuit visitor.

There was no pastor who scored above 140 in *manages stress well* who also was above average in the other six essential traits.

Manages Stress Well in Circuit 30

The *manages stress well* average score was 108.1 out of a maximum score of 157. This is slightly higher than the "all pastors" group score of 100.33. Pastor #11 is especially interesting. He has a high *manages stress well* score of 156 out of 157, yet his *mindful courage and authoritative collaboration* scores were below average. This displays a consistent trend: *managing stress well* is not the only trait indicator needed for a collaborative missional leader.

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Authoritative Collaboration

Authoritative collaboration was added to the future state profile with the recognition that a collaborative leader must be able to make decisions and drive toward missional execution, but do so in a way that invites others into the kingdom-expanding journey. HA defines *authoritative collaboration* as "the tendency to take responsibility for decisions while at the same time allowing others to genuinely participate in the decision-making process."

The "all pastors" group had an average score of 101.42 out of a maximum score of 131. Six pastors scored 115 or above. Pastor #26 had a high score of 118 in *authoritative collaboration,* and yet his *wants challenge* score was 57 out of 131. This pastor most likely is a great leader, but his church may resist risk and attempt kingdom-expanding efforts that appear to him to be difficult. For example, if he were a circuit visitor, he may trend toward keeping the goals reasonable. Nonetheless, he would work toward consensus quite well, and would take responsibility if results did not go according to plan.

Circuit 30 Authoritative Collaboration Observations

The average score for Circuit 30 for *authoritative collaboration* was almost exactly the same as the "all pastors" group at 101.3. One of the same trends from above was noted in pastors #12 and #14. Both pastors had high *authoritative collaboration* scores, yet both had below average scores for *wants challenge.* Pastor #14 is interesting when you combine those two scores with his *takes initiative* score. He scored 130 out of a maximum score of 131 in *takes initiative.* Pastor #14 could serve as a marvelous collaborative missional leader for a circuit as long as what he attempts is framed as a task within his range of low discomfort. Pastor #14 would need other pastors, like pastor #5, who could help him see how the challenge will be fun. If this can happen, pastor #14 could be a highly successful circuit visitor.

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Takes Initiative

Takes initiative was added to the future state profile set because the interviews led the researcher to make sure that pastors, especially the circuit visitor, will take the initiative to move forward with whatever missional idea the circuit attempts. Takes initiative is defined by HA as "the tendency to perceive what is necessary to be accomplished and to proceed on one's own." This trait was especially needed for the circuit visitor. Pastors are busy. Circuit visitors must be willing to move projects forward on their own once the circuit has given permission to plan and implement their missional endeavors.

The researcher was pleasantly surprised that this trait was the highest in the "all pastors" group with a score of 106.23 out of 131. In fact, eight pastors had a score of 120 or higher. This trait had the highest number of pastors in the upper range of any essential trait. Why is this? One rationale could be that pastors are used to setting projects and accomplishing projects on their own. Pastor #12 in the "all pastors" group displays a high score in takes initiative and influencing. This combination could prove powerful for a circuit visitor in mission.

Pastor #21, who was also part of Circuit 30, displays why looking at the essential traits in combination with one another is a powerful tool. Pastor #21 has high scores (126 out of 131) in takes initiative and wants challenge. Yet, the red flag for this pastor serving in a circuit visitor role would be his well below average scores in mindful courage (49 out of 131) and authoritative collaboration (82). The researcher observed this pastor serving as a circuit visitor. The researcher witnessed a pastor who thrived on tasks and checking things off his pastoral "to do" list. He also witnessed a pastor who struggled to keep staff on his own team, and therefore could not consider mobilizing pastors across churches to work together. His low scores in the desirable traits of experimenting (-25) and systematic (-34) also hampered his circuit leadership.

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Circuit 30 *Initiative* Observations

Circuit 30 had an *initiative* average score slightly higher than the "all pastors" group of 111 out of 131. *Takes initiative* is also the highest of the seven future state essential traits. Pastor #8 is the current circuit visitor. He has a high *initiative* score of 122 out of 131. He manages stress well with a score of 131 out of 157. The researcher has experienced a lack of willingness, and possibly competence, to lead a collaborative missional movement in Circuit 30. This was why all of the future-focused essential traits should be analyzed. Pastor #8 is below average in *mindful courage* and *authoritative collaboration.*

It was not surprising that *takes initiative* was the highest score for the "all pastors" group and Circuit 30, simply because *takes initiative* identifies how pastors work *on their own* to accomplish tasks. While this was a needed trait, the combination of high scores for all of the essential traits was most desirable.

Trends of Future State Essential Trait Additions

One, the addition of *manages stress well, authoritative collaboration,* and *takes initiative* gives a deeper picture of the type of pastoral profile needed for collaboration in mission. Nonetheless, as with the current state analysis, there was not one pastor who was above average for all seven essential traits. This was easily discernible in looking at the colored conditional formatting as found in the appendixes. Therefore, the gifts of the wider pastorate were truly necessary.

Two, in identifying future circuit visitors, it would be helpful to look for high scores in the three added essential traits. Pastor #10, who was a current pastor in Circuit 30, was the only pastor who scored above average in *manages stress, authoritative collaboration,* and *takes initiative.* He would certainly be worth exploring to serve as a future circuit visitor.

Finally, the lack of a pool of healthy pastors in all three of these essential traits demonstrates a strong need to use the HA to help identity and train more pastors with these characteristics.

<div align="center">All Pastors and Circuit 30 Desirable Traits Observations</div>

The pastoral interviews helped the researcher see the need to move *takes initiative* and *manages stress well* from a desirable trait in the current state profile to an essential trait. *Collaborative intention* was moved from an essential trait in the current state profile to a desirable trait in the future state profile. The pastoral interviews helped the researcher to see that *collaborative intention* should essentially be assumed. Action orientation toward collaborative mission was what future pastoral leaders would need. The pastoral interviews also helped the researcher see the need to add the traits of *innovative, enlists cooperation* and *comfort with conflict* to the future state desirable traits. These traits combine to give a strong profile of an entrepreneurial pastor who is comfortable pushing the status quo both for his own church, and for the churches in his circuit.

Innovative

The "all pastors" group scored the maximum score of 0 for *innovative,* displaying that the pastors have sufficient innovative potential. This was wonderful to see. HA defines *innovative* as "the tendency to create new and more effective ways of doing things." This displays that most pastors are dreamers and possibly tinkerers. Nonetheless, executing the dreams with others may not be as much of a strength as seen in the next desirable trait.

Enlists Cooperation

Enlists cooperation is defined by HA as "the tendency to invite others to participate in or join an effort." This is the lowest score of any of the twelve desirable traits with an average score of -6.57 out of a maximum of -117. Nonetheless, there were only five pastors who had a negative score. Pastor #17 certainly weighted this data due to his -80 score. Overall, this indicates that most pastors have enough of the trait of enlisting cooperation. Only one pastor from Circuit 30 had a negative score (-8) in *enlists cooperation.*

Comfort with Conflict

Comfort with conflict is defined by HA as "the tendency to be comfortable with confrontation or strife." The average score was a -1.04 out of -106. There was only one pastor in the "all pastors" group who had a negative score. This pastor was not a member of Circuit 30. Every other pastor showed a sufficient amount of this trait to be competent as a collaborative leader. This is not surprising, as pastors must handle conflict within the church on a consistent basis.

Summary of Desirable Traits

Including these three desirable traits in a "future state" profile set is a way to notice "red flags" that could keep a projected pastoral leader from serving as a circuit visitor. Overall, there were no major "red flags" or desirable trait trends worth noting for the purposes of this study that had not already been documented in the current state desirable traits section.

Traits to Avoid Observations—Future State

Based on the interviews and conversation with the research team the researcher did not change any of the *Traits to Avoid* from the "Collaboration/Mission Expansion—Current State."

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Impulsive was given a slightly higher rating moving it from 6.0 to 7.0 in the "future state" profile set. The importance moved from "avoid a moderate tendency" to "avoid even some tendency." *Impulsive* is defined by HA as "the tendency to take risks without sufficient analysis of potential difficulties." This was given higher importance in the "future state" profile set to display that impulsive leaders will lose trust with pastors and churches with whom they collaborate in mission.

Only two pastors scored negatively in this "trait to avoid." Pastor #29 scored a -34 out of a potential -144. He also scored a -7 out of -106 in *planning* in the desirable trait section. For example, the combination of these two negative trait scores simply indicates pastor #29 would be most successful serving on a team where others display the traits of *truth exploring* and *mindful courage.*

<p style="text-align:center">Future State Suitability Score Observations</p>

The "future state" average suitability scores grew for both the "all pastors" group, as well as for Circuit 30.[22] The "all pastors" group had an average score of 67.48 in the "current state" profile set. The "all pastors" group increased their average to 69.23 in the "future state" profile set. This improved score was likely linked to the addition of the traits *takes initiative* and *manages stress well* in the desirable traits section. As stated above, the addition of these two traits gives a good picture of pastoral self-care, yet the low scores in collaborative traits such as *authoritative collaboration* and *mindful courage* display why the "all pastors" group stays in the "possible competence" suitability range.

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22. See the "current state" suitability observations above to more deeply understand how HA uses the suitability score.

Ten of the thirty-three pastors received a suitability score of 75 of higher, putting them in the "probable competence" range for the "Collaboration/Mission Expansion—Future State." This is the baseline suitability score a circuit would want to see for circuit visitors. The highest suitability score was pastor #10, who was also a pastor in Circuit 30. He has never served as a circuit visitor.

Circuit 30 improved their average suitability score from 69.90 in the "current state" profile set to 74.09. As listed above, improved suitability score was largely driven by higher scores in *takes initiative* and *manages stress well.* Pastor #7 certainly appears to be the most capable pastor to serve as circuit visitor with a suitability score of 83. Nonetheless, the next five pastors were in the lower "probable competence" range, and the next five were all in the "possible competence" range. Given this reality, Circuit 30 would be well served by an "executive director" lay leader who has a 90 or above suitability score.

Circuit 30 and All Pastors Observation

As the HA research has shown, the Circuit 30 makeup is very similar to every pastor and circuit. In summary, pastors love people. They love showing empathy, love, and care as shepherds of God's people. Nonetheless, the Circuit 30 profile displays the need for pastors to ask in order to display the necessary traits of *mindful courage, authoritative collaboration* and *systematic.* Therefore, the intervention methods listed below are applicable to Circuit 30 and any LCMS circuit.

Intervention Suggestions

One, every circuit should have all active pastors take the HA with the "Collaboration/ Mission Expansion—Current State" profile set. It was then recommended that the circuit visitor

invite a trained debriefer to identify trends. Those trends could be used to identify and possibly recommend pastors who have a *suitability score* of 75 or greater to serve as circuit visitors. This intentional step of utilizing HA allows a circuit to have the best possible chance to identify a circuit visitor who aims to accomplish all that is intended for LCMS churches according to the LCMS Handbook. The researcher will be asking the circuit visitor in Circuit 30 if he would like to see and apply the data with a trained debriefer.

Two, identify a circuit leader in mission who scores high in *mindful courage, authoritative collaboration* and *systematic.* If one does not exist, explore hiring or identifying a volunteer lay leader from one of the circuit churches. This leader would be tasked with strategizing and executing the collaborative missional circuit endeavors.

Three, if a circuit has HA scores similar to Circuit 30, it is recommended that they appoint a lay leader, possibly an executive director in a respective circuit church, whose suitability score is 90 or above when using either the "current state" or "future state" profile sets listed above. The pastors would be well served to invite a lay leader to come to their monthly meetings, hear the visions of the pastors to expand God's kingdom, and then help them systematically execute the vision. This lay leader should have high scores in *mindful courage, authoritative collaboration* and *systematic,* which would be likely if they had a suitability score of 90 or higher.

If LCMS circuit pastors used the HA to discover their collective gifts and growth opportunities, identified the best circuit visitors, organized themselves around their collective trait strengths, identified areas for outside help, *and* took the initiative to ask for help, then churches could establish a collaborative and missional movement to expand God's kingdom.

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Intervention for existing pastors and circuits is one of the aims of this tool. Another aim is using HA to identify future pastors (and other church leaders) with a collaborative and mission-minded heart. Finally, the researcher will be offering his "current" and "future state" "Collaboration/Mission Expansion" profile sets to pre-seminary programs in the Concordia University system.[23] In addition, the researcher will be offering the same to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO[24], and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN[25].

Finally, the researcher will be utilizing the "Collaboration/Mission Expansion" profile sets as a tool to develop leaders through the Unite Leadership Collective (ULC).[26] The ULC offers consulting services for existing pastors and churches, with the primary focus being creating a culture where theology and systems are beautifully intertwined. Next, the ULC gathers congregations into a year-long cohort experience where pastors and their leadership teams are invited to learn the "Lean Startup Model"[27] of building, measuring, and learning, all for the sake of kingdom expansion. The ULC will also certify leaders in one of three tracks: *evangelist*, *executive director,* and *shepherd*. The researcher would not have been a part of starting the ULC apart from his work on this thesis.

23. www.cus.edu. "The Concordia University System (CUS) is comprised of nine colleges and universities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Located across the United States, the colleges and universities offer over 160 undergraduate and 50 graduate programs. While each institution is unique, all ten campuses approach learning from a Lutheran context. The common goal is to develop Christian leaders for the church, community and world."

24. www.csl.edu.

25. www.ctsfw.edu.

26. www.uniteleadership.org.

27. www.theleanstartup.org.

Harrison Assessment Disclosures

Only willing pastors of the 340 active LCMS pastors took the HA. Their only "incentive" was spending one free hour with the researcher to apply their findings to their ministry context. Only three of the thirty-three participant pastors took advantage of this offer.

Findings and Recommendations

The researcher envisions five potential audiences that can benefit from this research project including: future LCMS pastors, current LCMS pastors, LCMS circuit visitors, LCMS President Matthew Harrison and District Presidents, and the wider Christian church. In this section, he brings a heartfelt prayer, kingdom-expanding challenges, and a hopeful invitation around five primary themes: the history and essence of the LCMS, the current shortage and demographic concerns regarding LCMS pastors, rediscovering a passion for the mission of the LCMS, the traits and behaviors of individual pastors who collaborate in mission, and an invitation into the Unite Leadership Collective (ULC).

Future LCMS Pastors

Based on the research that has been done in this thesis, it is clear that collaborative, mission-minded pastors are needed now more than ever. A clarion call must ring out from the local church and all LCMS institutions. Being a pastor is one of the greatest callings this side of eternity. Pastors are privileged to bring the Word and Sacrament, and empower the found to reach the lost. As has been reported herein, the LCMS story displays innovation in leadership roles and titles. From the very beginning of the Synod, new churches were started by riding evangelists who were supervised by ordained pastors. They oversaw Word and Sacrament for these small communities of faith, many of them in rural, burgeoning America.

We are living in a "post-Christian" and "pre-Christian" context that necessitates

reclaiming the urgency these ordained pastors had in raising up lay leaders to bring the Gospel to

as many people as possible. The current trajectory of pastoral leadership displays that many

churches will soon be without an ordained pastor. It is likely that many churches could close

unless more collaborative and mission-hearted pastors are identified and installed. The research

shows that these pastors should have a good combination of the passive traits of kindness and

humility, as well as the dynamic traits of courage and risk-taking for the sake of the Gospel.

Future pastors must be trained to see their main calling, through Word and Sacrament ministry,

as equipping the baptized to bring the Word to their communities and various vocations. It is

recommended that future pastors be trained to identify complementary traits in others within

their church and bring those individuals onto their leadership teams. The LCMS leadership could

use the Harrison Assessment Mission/Collaboration profile to help the pastor identify the types

of tasks he loves to do, coupled with what needs to get done to advance the kingdom, and then

build a balanced and diverse team of kingdom-expanding leaders to fill in the areas of need.

Finally, the newly launched Unite Leadership Collective[28] is a powerful tool that future

pastors can utilize to enhance their strengths, address areas of weakness, and network with other

mission-minded pastors and church workers. The ULC will help future pastor's teams develop a

leadership development culture, and then certify shepherds, evangelists, and executive directors

through a partnership with the Kairos Project.[29] Imagine if future pastors went into the ministry

ready to not just be a "doer" of the ministry, but an "equipper" of the saints to accomplish the

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28. www.uniteleadership.org.

29. The Kairos Project, https://sfseminary.edu/prospective-students/programs/kairos/ (accessed September 15, 2020).

works of ministry. The research and pastoral demographic challenges necessitate discovering, developing, and deploying such pastors.

Current LCMS Pastors

The researcher is an active third generation LCMS pastor. He loves LCMS doctrine, especially the focus on rightfully distinguishing Law and Gospel. He believes that the Word and Sacraments are desperately needed by those walking in the darkness apart from the free gift of faith in the crucified and risen Jesus. He is willing to do whatever it takes, while not compromising the LCMS teaching, to reach as many as possible with the Gospel.

He also knows the joys of collaborating in mission with lay leaders, professional church workers, and other churches. He experiences what it is like to have the weight of the ministry shared by a team of dedicated paid, and many more non-paid, disciples of Jesus. His desire is simply for that joy to be experienced by more active LCMS pastors.

Active LCMS pastors have an obligation to discover, develop and deploy disciples of Jesus to multiply his message to the masses. Active LCMS pastors are tasked with the responsibility of "equipping the saints for the work of ministry."[30] LCMS history displays that the 19th century ordained pastors viewed themselves as "bishops" and identified "men who were able to teach"[31] and commissioned them to start new churches to bring the Word and Sacrament to non-reached towns and people groups. LCMS purity of doctrine deeply mattered. Yet, the early LCMS story displays purity of doctrine married to discipleship multiplication, including pastors equipping other pastors.

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30. Eph. 4:12 (ESV).

31. 2 Tim. 2:2.

Over time, the LCMS developed a system of pastoral development through universities and seminaries. This system mostly "worked" to meet the needs of the local church. Yet, time passed, and the local church became quite dependent upon the system and Synod discovering, developing, and deploying professional church workers. In the process, academia "stole" commissioning and pastoral ordination from the local church. In turn, pastors mostly stopped viewing future pastoral development as a part of their work. Instead it was left to the "experts" (institutional faculty and staff). In some churches, pastoral ministry regressed to solely overseeing religious services. The researcher believes that this shift in the LCMS is a major part of the current denominational decline.

The demographic data of the current age of pastors should be quite alarming to active LCMS pastors who care about the ongoing viability and mission of LCMS congregations. 94.2% of the 330 current pastoral survey respondents have been a pastor for 30 years or more. Only 2% of the respondents have been pastors for 10 years or less. Pastoral shortage is only going to increase in the coming years and decades as the "Baby Boom" generation of pastors continues to retire. Pacific Southwest District President, Michael Gibson, said in an interview with the researcher that within the next fifteen years active LCMS pastors will decline from approximately six thousand to three thousand.[32] It is the researcher's hope that current pastors care and would like to be a part of a three-part solution.

One, current pastors need to identify men who have a passion for the purity of our doctrine coupled with a strong desire to go on mission to make Jesus known. These men, some of them older and willing to serve bivocationally, are currently in our churches waiting to be

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32. Michael Gibson, interview by the researcher, November 16, 2020. President Gibson shared data he received on November 16, 2020 with the LCMS task force focused on church worker recruitment.

trained to participate in Word and Sacrament ministry. In a post-Christian culture, many pre-Christians are going to be attracted to simple, small, relational communities of faith. The Harrison Assessment can be used to identify the traits needed for bivocational pastors of smaller faith communities. The Harrison Assessment is also available for active pastors looking to identify their strengths and then invite complimentary leaders with diverse behavioral sets onto their ministry team.

Two, the local church needs to come together to certify and commission future leaders. The current Concordia universities and two seminaries of the LCMS are a true gift to leadership development, and are still serving the church in a mighty way. Nonetheless, many bivocational leaders are unable to make the financial and relocation commitment to attend one of our institutions. Also, neither of the LCMS seminaries offer online fully accredited Master of Divinity classes leading toward ordination. An online MDIV program must be approved by Synod and Convention every three years. This is unlikely to occur in the near future.

The Unite Leadership Collective is aiming to fill this leadership development gap. In partnership with the Kairos Project,[33] the ULC is certifying shepherds, evangelists, and executive directors to help the local church accomplish her mission. The Kairos Project offers both a fully accredited Master of Missional Leadership, and a Master of Divinity degree. The Kairos Project curriculum is called "Competency Based Theological Education" (CBTE). Students are invited to show competency toward various outcomes (LCMS systematics, history of the church, etc.) in partnership with their mentor team.[34] The Kairos Project allows for LCMS doctrine to be

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33. The Kairos Project, https://sfseminary.edu/prospective-students/programs/kairos/ (accessed September 15, 2020).

34. Faculty mentor, ministry mentor and vocational mentor make up the student's mentor team for the duration of their learning.

maintained, while also immersing the student's learning in the context of their local congregation. Finally, the cost is roughly a fourth of tuition of LCMS seminaries.[35]

Finally, the ULC was also created for active pastors who feel isolated. Their circuit may be divided along the "confessional" and "missional" continuum, and consequently collaboration in mission is not occurring. ULC cohorts were created to bring congregations together to learn how to collaborate in mission for the sake of discipleship multiplication.

LCMS Circuit Visitors

Circuit visitors are in a place of influence that could have a ripple effect across the LCMS. The researcher is hopeful that circuit visitors will view themselves as circuit leaders in mission. Circuit visitors could be catalysts for the LCMS reimagining how congregations collaborate in mission. Circuit visitors could start to view themselves much like the early ordained pastors from Germany in the early history of the LCMS--as apostolic leaders focused on pastoral development and multiplication of leaders and churches.

Circuit visitors often "put out fires" on behalf of district presidents when a congregation is walking through pastoral transition, struggling to meet changing community needs, or walking through a variety of trials in a post-Christian America. Circuit visitors are quite valuable to the care of pastors and congregations. It is the researcher's hope that circuit visitors would start to implement the given functions of circuit forums and convocations as outlined in the current LCMS handbook, specifically around the topic of collaboration in mission.

It is recommended that circuit pastors and lay leaders use the Harrison Assessment to identify circuit visitors with above average scores in essential behavioral traits such as "Mindful

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35. Kairos project students pay $300 a month for the duration of their learning journey. MA degrees are typically finished in 18 months to 2 years. MDIV degrees are typically finished within 3 years.

Courage," "Authoritative Collaboration" and "Systematic." If such a pastor is not found, it is also recommended that the circuit visitor invites a lay leader with the needed traits to lead the monthly meetings, and assure circuit forums and convocations occur. Even if a circuit visitor has the needed traits, it is still recommended that a lay leader (or leaders) with a business background be added to the strategic monthly circuit pastor meetings.

Circuit visitors need humility to identify the growth opportunities for their monthly meetings. It is hoped that circuit visitors see the power of pastors and churches collaborating in mission. The researcher prays that circuit meetings set aside time for strategic leadership development conversations aimed toward exploring new ways to serve the community, and start new ministries as led by the Holy Spirit.

Finally, the researcher encourages circuit visitors to take a leadership role in viewing their circuit congregations as a ULC cohort eager to collaborate in mission to discover a leadership development culture.

LCMS President Matthew Harrison, Praesidium and District Presidents

The researcher is hopeful that the LCMS President, Praesidium and District Presidents will take full advantage of the opportunities that Jesus is placing in front of us. The challenges are many. The major challenges are: declining LCMS membership, aging pastorate, declining enrollment in our universities and seminaries, declining financial gifts to the synodical office, cultural divides between "confessional" and "missional" leaders, and, as this research has highlighted, pastors and churches for a variety of reasons hesitance to collaborate in mission for the sake of the lost.

It is the researcher's prayer that the Synod will reclaim the story of its founding. It is his hope that the mission of Jesus will be elevated through discovering, developing, and deploying

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individuals at various levels of leadership to help ordained pastors administer the Word and Sacraments. Certifying and commissioning more bivocational leaders for the mission of the church will create, by the Holy Spirit's power, an upward draft of leaders yearning to be a part of the mission of Jesus.

Imagine if the LCMS reclaimed its pioneering spirit that freed and trusted ordained pastors to serve as "bishops" over the lay leaders they deploy into unreached communities and people groups. This is what is needed in a post-Christian America. Imagine if the LCMS viewed the leadership development style of Jesus from Luke chapter 10 as descriptive of the type of freedom the post-Christian church should have today in training and sending God's people two-by-two. Jesus released and trusted the seventy-two to do exactly what He did--heal the sick, cast out demons and proclaim the kingdom of God. Jesus trusted, released, and debriefed evangelistic experiences with His disciples in His earthly ministry. It is recommended that the twenty-first century church do the same. The sending of the seventy-two and the book of Acts are the local church's "playbook" in a post-Christian culture.

Synodical leaders have the opportunity and responsibility to evaluate all LCMS systems for confessional and missional effectiveness for the sake of those who do not believe and follow Jesus. Now is the time to explore theologically faithful *and* missionally creative ways to raise up the next generation of LCMS leaders. As the research demonstrated, the LCMS needs pastors who have both passive and dynamic skill sets to both engage in collaboration and lead missional new ministry starts for the sake of those who do not know and follow Jesus. The researcher is hopeful that the Harrison Assessment can be used as a tool to help identify these types of pastors, and equip them with team members whose behavioral traits complement their own.

No one individual has all of the gifts needed to accomplish the wide variety of tasks and expectations placed on pastors serving today. There are many opportunities to identify current and former business leaders who understand how to shape culture and instill systems and best business practices to advance the Gospel. Synodical leaders are encouraged to help pastors find "executive directors" who can help move their vision to systematic execution. As the research detailed, most pastors lean toward passive and interpersonal traits. These traits are absolutely needed for pastoral ministry leaders. Nonetheless, both the survey and Harrison Assessment detailed how pastors have dynamic trait behavior gaps. The researcher has witnessed the joy of having many "executive director" leaders who have dynamic behavioral gifts that balance the ministry team. The researcher prays synodical leaders will recognize these executive leaders as ministers of the Gospel, encourage them to get theological training through the Unite Leadership Collective, and colloquize these leaders as needed.

As a thirteen-year parish pastor, who inherited a quite complex leadership challenge in his congregation of seven years, it was necessary to evaluate and change the culture and systems of the church and school. Only the Holy Spirit, and building and earning trust with lay leaders over time, could have led to the spiritual and numerical growth God has provided.

It is recommended that Synodical leaders honestly evaluate the current systems for discovering, developing, and deploying both confessional and missional pastors, teachers, DCEs, and lay leaders. The LCMS is one of the very few synods that has not developed an online MDIV program. The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program is a good step in the right direction in exploring distance education. However, gaps in the program exist and are threefold.

First, it is expensive for students and congregations.[36] SMP pastors are not able to receive the same grants and scholarships as residential MDIV students. Second, SMP students do not receive a degree and are not formally allowed to serve in senior pastor positions, nor receive calls to other LCMS churches. They are not seen as "general pastors." Rather, as the program title states, they are encouraged to have a "specific ministry" (discipleship, care ministry, etc.) focus and remain under a senior pastor for the duration of the pastorate. Third, Specific Ministry Pastors often view themselves as "less than" a full pastor, and MDIV graduating pastors view themselves as "more than" their brother SMP pastors. This has created a hierarchy of pastors within the LCMS that is counterproductive to its mission to reach the lost.

LCMS leaders are leading in a pivotal time to create pastoral equality regardless of pathway. Now is the time to explore an online MDIV program that addresses all of the gaps of the SMP program addressed above. Now is the time to learn from programs like the Unite Leadership Collective that are trying to create pathways (shepherd, evangelist, and executive director) to develop mostly bivocational leaders with confessional Lutheran theology robustly aligned with the needs of the local church in its community. Now is the time to explore partnering with inexpensive, contextual, and theologically faithful programs like The Kairos Project.[37]

Now is also the time to encourage standardized training for circuit visitors to help them fulfill collaboration in mission between their congregations as outlined in the LCMS Handbook. Circuit visitors have incredible potential to be used to not only "put out fires" when

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36. Tuition for the 4-year SMP program is approximately $40,000.

37. The Kairos Project, https://sfseminary.edu/prospective-students/programs/kairos/ (accessed September 15, 2020).

congregations are struggling, but to help lead circuit forums and convocations to invite congregational lay leaders to help churches explore ways to collaborate in mission for the sake of those who do not know Jesus in their community.

Finally, the researcher pastors a congregation in one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. They have dreams of starting twenty new churches of various sizes in the next twenty years. They believe future pastors are found currently within our churches. They have four men that are currently in training and seeking a degree, but are not willing to leave their home and community for four years. Nor do they desire to become full-time vocational pastors. They desire to remain bivocational and pastor a small local church. Even if these future pastors were sent to one of the LCMS Seminaries there is no guarantee that the researcher's congregation would be able to get them back upon completion of their studies.

It is troubling that the LCMS celebrates the advancement of the Gospel in places like the Lutheran Mekane Yesus Church in Ethiopia, yet they do little to explore the systems and structures in developing evangelists and pastors in their church body.[38] They could learn so much. Finally, six years ago the researcher started a ministry called La Mesa that serves meals and offers weekly worship to the working poor and homeless in our community.[39] They desire to raise up indigenous leaders to pastor future La Mesa communities. The SMP program is too expensive and the residential MDIV would take them away from the community they desire to serve. The researcher prays synodical leaders explore means to train and ordain such men. Now is the time to do more than just explore--now is the time to act on behalf of those who desire to bring the Gospel to as many as possible.

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38. http://eecmy.org/eecmy/en/.

39. www.lamesaministries.org.

Closing Plea to All Christian Pastors and Churches

The LCMS story is being experienced and told by many other mainline denominations. The researcher is hopeful that this research compels all denominations and churches to start a church planting movement. It is his prayer that they are inspired by the early story of the LCMS church and leader multiplication. All churches should analyze each of their cultural systems and hold them loosely. They must innovate for the sake of the lost and for the expansion of God's kingdom.

Deep theological formation of pastors, and all church leaders, matters more today than ever in a post-Christian culture. Yet, content has never been easier to access. Synodical leaders, movement leaders, and pastors should actively curate orthodox, biblical teaching, disciple their leaders, and release women and men into their various vocations to share the Gospel with all. Pastors must learn and model the deeply personal discipleship example of Jesus who developed a few to reach the many.

It is recommended that denominational leaders invite their current and future pastors to take the Harrison Assessment for collaboration and mission. The Harrison Assessment will help pastors identify their passive and dynamic leadership traits, and build complementary leadership teams that are collectively strong where the pastor is weak. Pastors of all Christian churches should be encouraged to identify ways area churches can unite in mission. This could include smaller churches sharing staff, collaborating in sermon writing, and sharing central operations functions such as marketing and human resources.

Imagine if the Christian church started to see themselves as one church on mission to make Jesus known in their community. Imagine if churches truly internalized and acted on Jesus' words in John:

"The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."[40]

Pastors of all denominations who collaborate in mission could unite to accomplish such a mission and heed the clarion call of Jesus to "go and make disciples of all nations."[41] Brothers and sisters in Christ, now is the time to take action together on behalf of the lost. The days are short. "He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon!' Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's holy people."[42]

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40. John 17:22-23.

41. Matt. 28:19.

42. Rev. 22:20-21.

Appendix A

Behavioral Variables Assessed through Survey of LCMS Pastors and Circuit 30 Pastors

1. How many years have you been ordained as an LCMS pastor?

    1. 40+ years   4. 10-20 years

    2. 30-40 years   5. 5-10 years

    3. 20-30 years   6. 0-5 years

2. How many years have you been a pastor in your current congregation?

    1. 40+ years   4. 5-10 years

    2. 20-40 years   5. 3-5 years

    3. 10-20 years   6. 0-3 years

3. Describe the context of your congregation.

    1. Rural

    2. Small Town (1,000 to 10,000   4. Suburban
        people)   5. Urban

    3. Large Town (10,000 to
        50,000 people)

4. What is the size of your congregation (in weekly attendance)?

    1. 100 or less weekly   4. 500-800 weekly

    2. 100-300 weekly   5. 800 or more weekly

    3. 300-500 weekly

5. How would you describe the weekly worship attendance trend since you have been pastor?

    1. Much growth   4. Some decline

    2. Some growth   5. Much decline

    3. Same size

6. How often do you attend circuit pastor's meetings?

    1. Monthly?   3. Once a Year?

    2. Once a Quarter?   4. Never

7. What percentage of circuit pastors normally attend circuit meetings?

    1. 100-90%   4. 50-30%
    2. 90-70%   5. Less than 30%
    3. 70-50%

8. How often do you interact (text, email, phone, in-person) with at least one other circuit pastor outside of monthly circuit meetings?

    1. 4 or more times per month   3. 1 time per month
    2. 2-3 times per month   4. 0 times per month

9. Do you trust the pastors in your circuit?

    1. I trust *all* of the pastors in my circuit
    3. I trust *a few* of the pastors in my circuit
    2. I trust *most* of the pastors in my circuit
    5. I do not trust *any* of the pastors in my circuit

10. Has your circuit ever held a circuit forum for any reason other than electing delegates to respective conventions?

    1. Yes

        • If yes, when did this last occur and what was the outcome?

    2. No

11. Has your circuit ever held a circuit convocation to discuss collaborative mission work in the circuit?

    1. Yes

        • If so, when did this last occur and what was the outcome?

    2. No

12. On average what occurs at your normal circuit meetings (mark one)?

1. Pastoral Sharing

2. Pastoral Sharing and Bible Study

3. Pastoral Sharing, Bible Study and Worship

4. Pastoral Sharing, Bible Study, Worship and Lunch

5. Pastoral Sharing, Bible Study, Worship, Lunch and Collaboration in mission

6. None of the above

13. What percentage of your time in circuit meetings is spent discussing ways to collaborate in mission to reach those who do not know Jesus?

1. 50% or more
2. 30-40%
3. 20-30%

4. 1-20%
5. 0%

14. Has your circuit ever held a retreat to plan circuit collaboration in mission?

1. Yes

- If so, when and what was the outcome?

2. No

Does your circuit hold joint circuit worship services (i.e. - Reformation service, festivals, etc.)?

1. Yes

- If so, when was the last joint worship service?

2. No

16. Are you a circuit visitor? If so, did you receive training for your role as circuit visitor?

    1. Yes

        • If so, what did the training consist of?

    2. No

    3. I am not a circuit visitor

17. How many new churches has your circuit congregations planted in the last 10 years?

    1. 5 or more   3. 1-2

    2. 3-4   4. None

18. What is the greatest kingdom expanding impact you have seen in your ministry that

    occurred due to circuit collaboration in mission?

        Get open ended responses and stories.

Appendix B

Interview with Pastor Ed Bruning

Pastor Ed Bruning of Our Savior's Lutheran in Henderson, Nevada, has been an LCMS Pastor for 26 years.

- What is giving you the most joy?

The Lord. His second career. He handles conflict well. The congregation was a split of a split...and some tried to defrock him in the first three weeks. Some of the women wanted to be a pastor. Brought charges against him. Out here he has a great circuit that works well together! Loves to feed people. Distributed 12 million pounds of food on their campus. Lots of partnerships...even with Mormons. Great relationships. Cares a lot of continuing education-- levels of pastors matched with different calls.

- Picture in your mind a collaborative ministry start that leads to new ministry start. What type of pastor is needed to lead this church?
    - *What is the leader doing all the time?* (Essential)
        - Collaboration
        - Fearless
        - Learner
        - Loves people and going deep in relationships
        - Curious of other ministries
        - Listener
        - Get better at job interviews
        - More routes to restore those out of the ministry
        - Life-long learner (wants ongoing educational pastoral requirements)

    - *What are they doing regularly?* (Desirable)
        - Servant leadership (not taught at the seminary)
        - Business/leadership skills
        - Personal Development
        - Art of critical thinking
        - Curious of difference in people (more training at district and circuit leader)
        - Cast vision
        - Celebrating

    - *What are they avoiding?* (Non-Desirable)
        - Insecure
        - Fearful
        - Prideful
        - Isolated

- Then give the same questions but with options from the essential traits:
  - What is the leader doing all the time? What are their personal characteristics that are essential for their work? (Essential)
1. *Collaborating*
2. *High Pressure Tolerance*
3. ***Enthusiastic***

    a.   *Persistent*
    b.   ***Collaborative***
    c.   *Takes Initiative*

    a.   *Influencing*
    b.   *Wanting Challenge*
    c.   ***Analyzing***

    a.   *Innovative*
    b.   *Inventive*
    c.   ***Negotiating***

  - What are they doing regularly? (Desirable)
1. *Diplomatic*
2. ***Self-Improving***
3. *Organized*

    a.   *Researcher/learner*
    b.   *Manages Stress well*
    c.   ***Writing/language skills***

    a.   ***Comfort with Conflict***
    b.   *Frank*
    c.   *Flexible*

  - What are they avoiding? (Non-Desirable)

    1.   ***Defensive***
    2.   *Blunt*
    3.   *Dogmatic*

    a.   ***Avoids Decisions***
    b.   *Dominating*
    c.   *Evasive*

    a.   *Harsh*
    b.   *Impulsive*
    c.   ***Scattered***

Appendix C

Interview with Pastor David Burge

Pastor David Burge is serving in a vacancy role in Raider, MO. He has been ordained for 40 years and has served in a variety of contexts, focusing on intentional interim roles since 2008. He believes that while pastors should be mission-minded, they must also remain faithful to the Scripture and confessions.

- Picture in your mind a collaborative ministry start that leads to new ministry start. What type of pastor is needed to lead this church?

  - *What is the leader doing all the time?* (Essential)
    - Keeping in touch with the core group – opinion leaders and stakeholders
    - Helpful & caring
    - Empowering
    - Under authority of the sending group, whether it be a circuit or district--Asks for help
    - A consensus builder--Keeps everyone up to speed.
    - Strong communication skills
    - Concerned about "entrepreneur" becoming isolated from the wider structure

  - *What are they doing regularly?* (Desirable)
    - Self-starter – takes initiative in the community
    - Certain degree of extroversion
    - Needs to love people and be comfortable with a variety of different types of people
    - Must present the Word in his own voice
    - Winsomely lives out his faith
    - Organized
    - Detailed
    - Casts clear vision and executes the vision
    - Strategic
    - Always open to the gifts of the Spirit that are unexpected
    - Adaptable
  - Authentically concerned for people

  - *What are they avoiding?* (Non-Desirable)
    - Isolated
    - Dictatorial
    - Rigid
    - Introverted
    - Disorganized

Then give the same questions but with options from the essential traits:

- What is the leader doing all the time? What are their personal characteristics that are essential for their work? (Essential)

1. ***Collaborating***
2. *High Pressure Tolerance*
3. *Enthusiastic*

   a. ***Persistent***
   b. *Collaborative*
   c. *Takes Initiative*

   a. *Influencing*
   b. *Wanting Challenge*
   c. ***Analyzing***

   a. *Innovative*
   b. ***Inventive***
   c. *Negotiating*

- What are they doing regularly? (Desirable)
  a. ***Diplomatic***
  b. *Self-Improving*
  c. *Organized*

  a. ***Researcher/learner***
  b. *Manages Stress well*
  c. *Writing/language skills*

  a. ***Comfort with Conflict***
  b. *Frank*
  c. *Flexible*

- What are they avoiding? (Non-Desirable)
  a. ***Defensive***
  b. *Blunt*
  c. *Dogmatic*

  a. *Avoids Decisions*
  b. *Dominating*
  c. ***Evasive***

  a. ***Harsh***
  b. *Impulsive*
  c. *Scattered*

Appendix D

Interview with Pastor Bob Gehrke

Pastor Bob Gehrke has been a pastor for 37 years and at his current church, South Shore Trinity, for 17 of those. South Shore Trinity is a 76-year-old congregation. He loves teaching. Loves VBS. Almost became District President of the Minnesota South District. Disclaimer: Their district did Koinonia. They sold the University chapel. Polarizing and political situation with Harrison. Koinonia did not work. Dean Nadasdy worked with the Praisidium. Chuck Mueller helped. They started to work it out in the circuit. Wanted to work with a hyper-conservative circuit. Two circuits tried to come together for three years (one conversation – other missional). They realized they can be friends and differ and listen and commune. Clement Preus would not let them commune because they were not in agreement about their communion practice. Bob Gehrke moderated the conversation. Everyone talked about family. They prayed for one another. Then went into doctrine. Then did lunch together. Relationship build bridges. They signed a covenant with one another not to bring charges against anyone in the group. Any pastor who did not sign was unable to participate.

- Picture in your mind a collaborative ministry start that leads to new ministry start. What type of pastor is needed to lead this church?

  - *What is the leader doing all the time?* (Essential)
    - Listener
    - Able to pray with those who are different
    - Adaptive
    - Strong relationship with those who are different – everyone is loved by God!
    - Handles division & difference well
    - Love your people – they will love you. Mutuality.
    - Desire to teach – passionately believes what they are teaching
    - Curious
    - Caring
    - Trust filled

  - *What are they doing regularly?* (Desirable)
    - Flexible
    - Makes community a priority

  - *What are they avoiding?* (Non-Desirable)
    - Rigid
    - Unwilling to listen
    - Harsh
    - Inflexible
    - Isolated
    - Don't see value in community
    - Prideful – they believe they are right

- Then give the same questions but with options from the essential traits:
  - What is the leader doing all the time? What are their personal characteristics that are essential for their work? (Essential)
  1. ***Collaborating***
  2. *High Pressure Tolerance*
  3. *Enthusiastic*

     a. ***Persistent***
     b. *Collaborative*
     c. *Takes Initiative*

     a. *Influencing*
     b. ***Wanting Challenge***
     c. *Analyzing*

     a. *Innovative*
     b. *Inventive*
     c. ***Negotiating***

  - What are they doing regularly? (Desirable)
     a. ***Diplomatic***
     b. *Self-Improving*
     c. *Organized*

     a. ***Researcher/learner***
     b. *Manages Stress well*
     c. *Writing/language skills*

     a. ***Comfort with Conflict***
     b. *Frank*
     c. *Flexible*

  - What are they avoiding? (Non-Desirable)
     a. *Defensive*
     b. *Blunt*
     c. ***Dogmatic***

     a. *Avoids Decisions*
     b. ***Dominating***
     c. *Evasive*

     a. ***Harsh***
     b. *Impulsive*
     c. *Scattered*

Appendix E

Interview with Pastor Robert Grimm

Pastor Robert Grimm has been the pastor of Saint John Lutheran Church in Alma, Kansas since 1997.

- Picture in your mind a collaborative ministry start that leads to new ministry start. What type of pastor is needed to lead this church?

  - *What is the leader doing all the time?* (Essential)

  - *What are they doing regularly?* (Desirable)

  - *What are they avoiding?* (Non-Desirable)

- Then give the same questions but with options from the essential traits:
  - What is the leader doing all the time? What are their personal characteristics that are essential for their work? (Essential)
  1. ***Collaborating***
  2. *High Pressure Tolerance*
  3. *Enthusiastic*

     a. *Persistent*
     b. *Collaborative*
     c. ***Takes Initiative***

     a. ***Influencing***
     b. *Wanting Challenge*
     c. *Analyzing*

     a. *Innovative*
     b. *Inventive*
     c. *Negotiating*

  - What are they doing regularly? (Desirable)
     a. *Diplomatic*
     b. *Self-Improving*
     c. *Organized*

     a. *Researcher/learner*
     b. *Manages Stress well*
     c. *Writing/language skills*

     a. *Comfort with Conflict*
     b. *Frank*
     c. *Flexible*

  - What are they avoiding? (Non-Desirable)
     a. *Defensive*
     b. *Blunt*
     c. *Dogmatic*

     a. *Avoids Decisions*
     b. *Dominating*
     c. *Evasive*

     a. *Harsh*
     b. *Impulsive*
     c. *Scattered*

Appendix F

Interview with Pastor Terry Grzybowski

Pastor Terry Grzybowski is the pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Zimmerman, MN, where he has served since 2006.

- Picture in your mind a collaborative ministry start that leads to new ministry start. What type of pastor is needed to lead this church?

  - *What is the leader doing all the time?* (Essential)
    - Flexible
    - Adaptive
    - Prepared
    - Community-focused
    - Circle builder
    - Changes communication style to varying audiences
    - Love of people who are different
    - Culturally sensitive
    - Love for Jesus and all people
    - Servant
    - Creative

  - *What are they doing regularly?* (Desirable)

  - *What are they avoiding?* (Non-Desirable)
    - Inflexible
    - Lacking new ideas
    - Naive
    - Prideful – no sacred cows

- Then give the same questions but with options from the essential traits:
  - What is the leader doing all the time? What are their personal characteristics that are essential for their work? (Essential)

1. ***Collaborating***
2. *High Pressure Tolerance*
3. *Enthusiastic*

    a.   Persistent
    b.   Collaborative
    c.   Takes Initiative

    a.   Influencing
    b.   Wanting Challenge
    c.   Analyzing

    a.   Innovative
    b.   Inventive
    c.   Negotiating

  - What are they doing regularly? (Desirable)
    - *a.   **Diplomatic***
    - *b.   **Self-Improving***
    - *c.   Organized*

    a.   Researcher/learner
    b.   Manages Stress well
    c.   Writing/language skills

    a.   Comfort with Conflict
    b.   Frank
    c.   Flexible

  - What are they avoiding? (Non-Desirable)
    - *a.   **Defensive***
    - *b.   Blunt*
    - *c.   Dogmatic*

    a.   Avoids Decisions
    b.   Dominating
    c.   Evasive

    a.   Harsh
    b.   Impulsive
    c.   Scattered

Appendix G

Interview with Pastor John Lehenbauer

Pastor Bob Lehenbauer has been the pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Perry, Georgia for 10 years. The congregation is 11 years old, and began as a mission congregation. There are an average of 100 in worship, with a broad age range that reflects the community as a whole. The church is located near an Air Force base. Pastor Lehenbauer has been in ministry for 33 years. This is his 3rd pastoral call.

- Picture in your mind a collaborative ministry start that leads to new ministry start. What type of pastor is needed to lead this church?

  - *What is the leader doing all the time?* (Essential)
    - Extrovert – loves meeting new people
    - Willing to work very hard to start
    - Strong "above and beyond" work ethic
    - Service to others without looking for permanent results
    - Relationally patient
    - Sacrifice & humility
    - Entrepreneurial – high risk tolerance. Willing to fail & learn

  - *What are they doing regularly?* (Desirable)
    - Adapting to using technology. Willing to learn and use it appropriately.
    - generationally
    - Willing to use adaptive models to reach different people groups

- Someone who can teach cross-
  - *What are they avoiding?* (Non-Desirable)
    - Isolated leader – victim mentality
    - Pride – not using the resources within the wider church

- Then give the same questions but with options from the essential traits:
  - What is the leader doing all the time? What are their personal characteristics that are essential for their work? (Essential)
  1. *Collaborating*
  2. *High Pressure Tolerance*
  3. ***Enthusiastic***

     a. *Persistent*
     b. ***Collaborative***
     c. *Takes Initiative*

     a. ***Influencing***
     b. *Wanting Challenge*
     c. *Analyzing*

     a. ***Innovative***
     b. *Inventive*
     c. *Negotiating*

  - What are they doing regularly? (Desirable)
     a. *Diplomatic*
     b. ***Self-Improving***
     c. *Organized*

     a. *Researcher/learner*
     b. ***Manages Stress well***
     c. *Writing/language skills*

     a. *Comfort with Conflict*
     b. *Frank*
     c. ***Flexible***

  - What are they avoiding? (Non-Desirable)
     a. ***Defensive***
     b. *Blunt*
     c. *Dogmatic*

     a. ***Avoids Decisions***
     b. *Dominating*
     c. *Evasive*

     a. ***Harsh***
     b. *Impulsive*
     c. *Scattered*

Appendix H

Interview with Pastor George Murdaugh

Pastor George Murdaugh is the Intentional Interim Pastor at Prince of Peace in Douglasville, GA, where he has served for 7 years. He has been a pastor for 40 years, serving in Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Georgia. He has participated in the Transforming Churches Network, and the FL-GA District Revitalization training.

- Picture in your mind a collaborative ministry start that leads to new ministry start. What type of pastor is needed to lead this church?
  - *What is the leader doing all the time?* (Essential)
    - Praying
    - Looking for opportunities
    - Praying for the next thing
    - Strategic
    - Visionary
    - Equipping
    - Empowering
    - Embracing opportunities

  - *What are they doing regularly?* (Desirable)
    - Engagement with lay leaders
    - Aligning ministries
    - Clarifying
    - Having ICNU conversations
    - Business savvy
    - Hospitable to the customer
    - Keeping them focused on the Great Commission and the Great Commandment

  - *What are they avoiding?* (Non-Desirable)
    - Don't drive their agenda
    - Isolated
    - Entitlement
    - Dictatorial
    - Internally focused

- Then give the same questions but with options from the essential traits:
  - What is the leader doing all the time? What are their personal characteristics that are essential for their work? (Essential)

1. ***Collaborating***
2. *High Pressure Tolerance*
3. *Enthusiastic*

    a.   *Persistent*
    b.   *Collaborative*
    c.   ***Takes Initiative***

    a.   ***Influencing***
    b.   *Wanting Challenge*
    c.   *Analyzing*

    a.   *Innovative*
    b.   *Inventive*
    c.   ***Negotiating***

  - What are they doing regularly? (Desirable)

    a.   ***Diplomatic***
    b.   *Self-Improving*
    c.   *Organized*

    a.   ***Researcher/learner***
    b.   *Manages Stress well*
    c.   *Writing/language skills*

    a.   ***Comfort with Conflict***
    b.   *Frank*
    c.   *Flexible*

  - What are they avoiding? (Non-Desirable)

    a.   *Defensive*
    b.   *Blunt*
    c.   ***Dogmatic***

    a.   ***Avoids Decisions***
    b.   *Dominating*
    c.   *Evasive*

    a.   ***Harsh***
    b.   *Impulsive*
    c.   *Scattered*

Appendix I

Interview with Pastor John Stennfeld

Pastor John Stennfeld is the pastor of Christ Lutheran in Downtown Austin, where he's served since 2000. The church is in an old downtown neighborhood. Gentrified. Liberal. Eclectic. Wants to draw more from the community – though they do not, currently. Have a fantastic pumpkin patch to attract the community. Art trail. Lots of art in the church. In the Lutheran community, they are known for having a country western band.

- Picture in your mind a collaborative ministry start that leads to new ministry start. What type of pastor is needed to lead this church?
  - *What is the leader doing all the time?* (Essential)
    - Prayerful
    - Studying the Word
    - Connecting with those outside the church

  - *What are they doing regularly?* (Desirable)
    - Must look outside the LCMS
    - Understand organizational leadership structure
    - Learner – constantly reading. Both sacred and secular.

  - *What are they avoiding?* (Non-Desirable)
    - Vices – porn, alcohol
    - Overly sensitive
    - Insecurity
    - Isolated
    - Prideful

- Then give the same questions but with options from the essential traits:
  - What is the leader doing all the time? What are their personal characteristics that are essential for their work? (Essential)
  1. *Collaborating*
  2. **High Pressure Tolerance**
  3. *Enthusiastic*

     a.   **Persistent**
     b.   *Collaborative*
     c.   *Takes Initiative*

     a.   *Influencing*
     b.   *Wanting Challenge*
     c.   **Analyzing**

     a.   *Innovative*
     b.   *Inventive*
     c.   **Negotiating**

  - What are they doing regularly? (Desirable)
     a.   *Diplomatic*
     b.   *Self-Improving*
     c.   **Organized**

     a.   **Researcher/learner**
     b.   *Manages Stress well*
     c.   *Writing/language skills*

     a.   **Comfort with Conflict**
     b.   *Frank*
     c.   *Flexible*

  - What are they avoiding? (Non-Desirable)
     a.   *Defensive*
     b.   *Blunt*
     c.   **Dogmatic**

     a.   *Avoids Decisions*
     b.   *Dominating*
     c.   **Evasive**

     a.   **Harsh**
     b.   *Impulsive*
     c.   *Scattered*

Appendix J

Current Traits Needed (and Not needed) Based on Interviews

(Italics means it is a new trait for the present….I did the future trait analysis first)

Essential Traits

Enlists Cooperation	Negotiating
Cause Motivated	Comfort with Conflict
Takes Initiative	Self-Sacrificing
Experimenting	Innovative
Analytical	Interpersonal Skills
Influencing	People Oriented
	Team

Desirable Traits

Organizational Capacity	Selling
Manages Stress Well	*Flexible Organizing*
Researcher/Learner	Diplomatic
Self-Improving	*Mutual Help*
Writing/Language Skills	*Mindful Courage*

Traits to Avoid

Evasive

Defensive

Scattered

Avoids Decisions

Non-Finishing

Dominating

Rigidly Disorganized

Dogmatic

Harsh

Cautious Inattention

Rebellious Autonomy

Appendix K

Traits Needed (and Not Needed) for Future (5 years) Collaborative Kingdom-Expanding Leader

Based on Pastoral Interviews in August, 2019

Essential Traits - 6-12

Authoritative Collaboration (combo
of collaborative and clarifying)

Interpersonal Skills

Manages Stress Well

People Oriented

Takes Initiative

Analytical

Influencing

Self-Sacrificing

Innovative

Inventive

Negotiating

Wants to Lead

Desirable Traits - 8-18

Researcher/learning

Self-Improvement

Writing / Language

Diplomatic

Helpful

Organizational Capacity

Comfort with Conflict

Flexible

Team

Selling

Analyzes Pitfalls

Defensive

Avoids Decisions

Harsh

Rigidly Disorganized

Dogmatic

Scattered

Non-Finishing

Evasive

Dominating

Appendix L

HARRISON assessments

Behavioral Competencies

Collaboration/Mission Expansion--Current State #TI047-C002 v09/26/2019

ORGANIZATION
Tim Ahlman Consulting

This report provides an overview of the behavioral factors related to success in this job

Suitability Criteria: Attitudes, motivations, task preferences, interests, and work environment preferences.

Essential Traits

Trait	Rating	Importance	Frequency
Collaborative Intention - The aim is to establish mutual benefits and long-term relationships by taking an interest in other points of view, welcoming feedback and responding non-defensively without shaming or blaming others.	8.0	8. Essential	80% of the time
Influencing - The tendency to try to persuade others	8.0	8. Essential	80% of the time
Truth Exploring - The tendency to explore different viewpoints and formulate conclusions without becoming fixed in one's opinions	8.0	8. Essential	80% of the time
Mindful Courage - The tendency to analyze the potential pitfalls of the plan or strategy while at the same time being willing to take risks	7.5	8. Essential	70% of the time
Wants Challenge - The willingness to attempt difficult tasks or goals	7.5	7. Very important	80% of the time

Desirable Traits

Trait	Rating	Importance	Frequency
Enlists Cooperation - The tendency to invite others to participate in or join an effort	6.5	7. Very important	60% of the time
Experimenting - The tendency to try new things and new ways of doing things	6.5	7. Very important	60% of the time
Systematic - The enjoyment of tasks that require carefully or methodically thinking through steps	6.5	7. Very important	60% of the time
Takes Initiative - The tendency to perceive what is necessary to be accomplished and to proceed on one's own	6.5	7. Very important	60% of the time
Warmth / empathy - The tendency to express positive feelings and affinity toward others	6.5	7. Very important	60% of the time
Manages Stress Well - The tendency to deal effectively with strain and difficulty when it occurs	6.0	6. Important	
Mutual Help - The tendency to pursue solutions that are beneficial to all parties concerned	6.0	6. Important	60% of the time
Planning - The tendency to formulate ideas related to the steps and process of accomplishing an objective	6.0	6. Important	60% of the time
Self-acceptance - The tendency to like oneself ("I'm O.K. the way I am")	5.0	5. Fairly important	

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HARRISON assessments

Suitability Criteria: Attitudes, motivations, task preferences, interests, and work environment preferences.

Desirable Traits

Trait	Rating	Importance	Frequency
Self-Accountability - The tendency to take responsibility to understand one's choices and then make conscious choices. This includes being accountable for the results of one's own actions or inactions rather than blaming others.	5.0	6. Important	40% of the time
Self-improvement - The tendency to attempt to develop or better oneself	5.0	5. Fairly important	

Traits to Avoid

Trait	Rating	Importance	Frequency
Defensive - The tendency to be self-accepting without sufficiently intending to improve	9.0	9. Avoid even a slight tendency	
Dogmatic - The tendency to be certain of opinions without sufficiently being open to different ideas	9.0	9. Avoid even a slight tendency	
Dominating - The tendency to be assertive of one's needs without sufficiently being helpful to others	9.0	9. Avoid even a slight tendency	
Harsh - The tendency to enforce rules without giving sufficient emphasis to building rapport or being empathetic	7.0	7. Avoid even some tendency	
Insensitive - The tendency to be assertive with one's own needs without being sufficiently warm and empathetic	7.0	7. Avoid even some tendency	
Impulsive - The tendency to take risks without sufficient analysis of the potential difficulties	6.0	6. Avoid a moderate tendency	

HARRISON assessments

Behavioral Competencies
Collaboration/Mission Expansion--Future State #TI047-C003 v09/26/2019

ORGANIZATION
Tim Ahlman Consulting

This report provides an overview of the behavioral factors related to success in this job

Suitability Criteria: Attitudes, motivations, task preferences, interests, and work environment preferences.

Essential Traits

Trait	Rating	Importance	Frequency
Influencing - The tendency to try to persuade others	8.0	8. Essential	80% of the time
Manages Stress Well - The tendency to deal effectively with strain and difficulty when it occurs	8.0	8. Essential	
Truth Exploring - The tendency to explore different viewpoints and formulate conclusions without becoming fixed in one's opinions	8.0	8. Essential	80% of the time
Authoritative Collaboration - The tendency to take responsibility for decisions while at the same time allowing others to genuinely participate in the decision-making process	7.5	8. Essential	70% of the time
Mindful Courage - The tendency to analyze the potential pitfalls of the plan or strategy while at the same time being willing to take risks	7.5	8. Essential	70% of the time
Takes Initiative - The tendency to perceive what is necessary to be accomplished and to proceed on one's own	7.5	8. Essential	70% of the time
Wants Challenge - The willingness to attempt difficult tasks or goals	7.5	7. Very important	80% of the time

Desirable Traits

Trait	Rating	Importance	Frequency
Innovative - The tendency to create new and more effective ways of doing things	7.0	7. Very important	70% of the time
Mutual Help - The tendency to pursue solutions that are beneficial to all parties concerned	7.0	7. Very important	70% of the time
Enlists Cooperation - The tendency to invite others to participate in or join an effort	6.5	7. Very important	60% of the time
Experimenting - The tendency to try new things and new ways of doing things	6.5	7. Very important	60% of the time
Systematic - The enjoyment of tasks that require carefully or methodically thinking through steps	6.5	7. Very important	60% of the time
Warmth / empathy - The tendency to express positive feelings and affinity toward others	6.5	7. Very important	60% of the time
Collaborative Intention - The aim is to establish mutual benefits and long-term relationships by taking an interest in other points of view, welcoming feedback and responding non-defensively without shaming or blaming others.	6.0	6. Important	60% of the time

Suitability Criteria: Attitudes, motivations, task preferences, interests, and work environment preferences.

Desirable Traits

Trait	Rating	Importance	Frequency
Comfort With Conflict - The tendency to be comfortable with confrontation or strife	6.0	7. Very important	50% of the time
Planning - The tendency to formulate ideas related to the steps and process of accomplishing an objective	6.0	6. Important	60% of the time
Self-acceptance - The tendency to like oneself ("I'm O.K. the way I am")	5.0	5. Fairly important	
Self-Accountability - The tendency to take responsibility to understand one's choices and then make conscious choices. This includes being accountable for the results of one's own actions or inactions rather than blaming others.	5.0	6. Important	40% of the time
Self-improvement - The tendency to attempt to develop or better oneself	5.0	5. Fairly important	

Traits to Avoid

Trait	Rating	Importance	Frequency
Defensive - The tendency to be self-accepting without sufficiently intending to improve	9.0	9. Avoid even a slight tendency	
Dogmatic - The tendency to be certain of opinions without sufficiently being open to different ideas	9.0	9. Avoid even a slight tendency	
Dominating - The tendency to be assertive of one's needs without sufficiently being helpful to others	9.0	9. Avoid even a slight tendency	
Harsh - The tendency to enforce rules without giving sufficient emphasis to building rapport or being empathetic	7.0	7. Avoid even some tendency	
Impulsive - The tendency to take risks without sufficient analysis of the potential difficulties	7.0	7. Avoid even some tendency	
Insensitive - The tendency to be assertive with one's own needs without being sufficiently warm and empathetic	7.0	7. Avoid even some tendency	

Collaborative/Mission Expansion—Current State—All Pastors

Attribute	Category	Mean	Total	Data (left → right)
Collaborative Intention	ESSENTIAL	170.4	214	68, 109, 173, 162, 153, 107, 128, 186, 184, 120, 188, 188, 164, 182, 184, 164, 190, 184, 192, 203, 199, 173, 169, 158, 196, 175, 182, 190, 199, 192, 184, 175, 203
Influencing	ESSENTIAL	139.2	214	70, 143, 160, 92, 162, 164, 132, 94, 72, 153, 145, 92, 143, 153, 103, 141, 145, 105, 94, 92, 151, 136, 156, 167, 139, 199, 186, 156, 145, 190, 190, 130, 194
Truth Exploring	ESSENTIAL	141.2	214	139, 120, 143, 115, 156, 162, 156, 124, 143, 151, 122, 128, 109, 124, 167, 149, 149, 136, 143, 141, 158, 160, 122, 120, 126, 134, 87, 149, 160, 164, 149, 171, 184
Mindful Courage	ESSENTIAL	105.2	178	71, 93, 62, 103, 100, 89, 105, 82, 80, 87, 109, 130, 121, 67, 120, 85, 130, 127, 116, 120, 82, 146, 105, 125, 128, 123, 118, 103, 120, 103, 120, 103, 100
Wants Challenge	ESSENTIAL	120.7	178	98, 85, 111, 98, 48, 132, 84, 118, 120, 153, 120, 91, 120, 171, 76, 135, 109, 134, 125, 130, 112, 78, 158, 160, 125, 91, 176, 151, 137, 130, 120, 173, 114
Enlists Cooperation	DESIRABLE	-4.4	-117	-12, -80, 0, 0, -38, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -8, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Experimenting	DESIRABLE	-1.4	-117	0, 0, 4, 0, -11, 0, -7, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -25, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Systematic	DESIRABLE	4.7	-117	0, -28, -18, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -1, 0, 0, 0, -7, -6, 0, -12, -44, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -4, 0, 0
Takes Initiative	DESIRABLE	-0.4	-117	0, 0, 0, 0, -10, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Warmth / empathy	DESIRABLE	-1.3	-117	0, 0, 0, 0, -5, 0, 0, -25, 0, 0, 0, -7, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -4, 0, 0, 0, 0, -1, 0
Manages Stress Well	DESIRABLE	-1.5	-106	0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -32, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -14, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -4, 0, 0, 0, 0
Mutual Help	DESIRABLE	0.0	-106	0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Planning	DESIRABLE	-0.2	-106	0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -7, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Self-acceptance	DESIRABLE	-2.3	-88	0, 0, 0, -6, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -28, 0, -10, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -16, -10, 0, 0, 4, 0, 0, 0
Self-Accountability	DESIRABLE	0.0	-88	0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Self-improvement	DESIRABLE	-1.6	-88	-20, -6, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -2, -6, 0, 0, 0, 0, -20, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Defensive	AVOID	-6.8	-192	-74, 0, -93, -31, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -26, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Dogmatic	AVOID	-3.9	-192	-80, 0, 0, 0, -11, 0, 0, 0, -26, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -4, 0, 0, -7, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Dominating	AVOID	0.0	-192	0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Harsh	AVOID	-0.2	-144	0, 0, 0, -7, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Insensitive	AVOID	0.0	-144	0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
Impulsive	AVOID	-0.8	-120	0, 0, 0, -7, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, -18, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0

Appendix O

Collaborative/Mission Expansion—Current State—Circuit 30

Category	Item													
ESSENTIAL	Collaborative Intention	170	153	120	188	182	164	190	169	158	196	175	175	214
	Influencing	153.6	162	153	145	153	141	145	156	167	139	199	130	214
	Truth Exploring	138.5	156	151	122	124	149	149	122	120	126	134	171	214
	Mindful Courage	105.6	100	87	109	67	85	130	105	125	128	123	103	178
	Wants Challenge	131.2	48	153	120	171	135	109	158	160	125	91	173	178
DESIRABLE	Enlists Cooperation	-1.5	0	0	0	0	0	-8	-8	0	0	0	0	-117
	Experimenting	-3.3	-11	0	0	-25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-117
	Systematic	-8.4	0	0	0	-34	-12	-44	-2	0	0	0	0	-117
	Takes Initiative	-0.9	-10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-117
	Warmth / empathy	-2.4	0	-25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	-117
	Manages Stress Well	-2.9	0	0	-32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-106
	Mutual Help	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-106
	Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-106
	Self-acceptance	-3.1	-6	0	-28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-88
	Self-Accountability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-88
	Self-improvement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-88
AVOID	Defensive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-192
	Dogmatic	-3	0	-26	0	0	0	-7	0	0	0	0	0	-192
	Dominating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-192
	Harsh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-144
	Insensitive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-144
	Impulsive	-2.3	-7	0	0	0	0	-18	0	0	0	0	0	-120

Collaborative/Mission Expansion—Future State—All Pastors

Category	Trait	Avg																																		Threshold
ESSENTIAL	Influencing	103.2	107	107	68	118	121	69	77	123	137	107	100	105	120	75	112	113	52	140	115	105	97	113	68	104	140	69	147	144	102	53	96	68	115	157
	Manages Stress Well	100.3	118	121	102	108	153	80	92	81	77	49	88	91	156	84	57	120	100	75	145	144	66	96	66	131	61	75	140	97	132	112	94	112	89	157
	Truth Exploring	103.3	118	110	104	105	120	91	100	88	65	89	118	80	115	123	116	91	102	121	110	88	115	112	84	110	110	105	99	136	92	105	126	94	89	157
	Authoritative Collaboration	101.4	118	112	93	102	73	114	117	104	99	114	118	118	96	81	110	82	74	97	119	85	104	97	75	99	88	95	110	121	85	110	105	117	108	131
	Mindful Courage	76.5	88	96	88	46	65	60	93	92	86	79	108	89	73	88	60	49	52	75	75	68	77	64	75	62	88	85	91	73	95	59	75	96	77	131
	Takes Initiative	106.2	102	130	117	101	100	118	106	109	130	126	105	128	55	62	118	126	121	73	84	114	118	114	73	122	130	102	118	100	109	119	95	121	117	131
	Wants Challenge	86.8	101	79	96	81	97	86	99	118	130	88	57	88	35	56	82	126	72	96	112	62	61	113	72	100	88	92	66	84	92	88	127	66	117	131
DESIRABLE	Innovative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-128
	Mutual Help	-2.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-25	-20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-128
	Enlists Cooperation	-6.6	-8	0	0	-38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-12	0	0	-80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-8	0	0	-117
	Experimenting	-2.2	0	0	0	-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-11	0	0	-25	0	0	-7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	-7	0	-2	-117
	Systematic	-6.4	-44	0	0	-18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-6	0	0	-34	0	-4	-28	0	-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	-7	0	-2	-117
	Warmth / empathy	-0.8	0	0	0	-5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-7	0	0	-25	0	-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	-117
	Collaborative Intention	-1.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-106
	Comfort With Conflict	-1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-106
	Planning	-0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	-7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-106
	Self-acceptance	-3.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-16	-28	0	0	0	0	-10	-6	0	-2	0	-10	0	0	0	0	0	-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-88
	Self-Accountability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-88
	Self-improvement	-2.6	-20	0	0	-6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-6	0	-2	0	0	-20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-88
AVOID	Defensive	-9.2	0	0	0	-93	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-74	-26	0	0	0	-31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-192
	Dogmatic	4.5	0	0	0	0	-11	0	-4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-80	0	0	0	0	0	-26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-7	0	0	-192
	Dominating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-192
	Harsh	-0.3	0	0	0	0	-7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-144
	Impulsive	-2.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-14	0	0	-34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-144
	Insensitive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-144
	Reliability (%)	93.03%	96.0%	95.4%	92.2%	91.2%	94.8%	94.8%	94.4%	95.2%	94.6%	95.0%	94.4%	97.0%	91.2%	98.4%	87.4%	95.2%	86.8%	95.8%	87.4%	90.8%	85.6%	98.0%	94.0%	91.8%	95.4%	94.6%	100.0%	93.2%	89.8%	85.6%	91.2%	93.2%	90.0%	100.0%

Collaborative/Mission Expansion—Future State—Circuit 30

	Avg										Threshold	Category
Influencing	114	107	123	120	113	113	104	147	102	96	115	157	ESSENTIAL
Manages Stress Well	114	121	81	156	120	96	131	140	132	94	69	157	
Truth Exploring	103.2	110	88	115	91	112	110	99	92	126	89	157	
Authoritative Collaboration	100	112	104	96	82	99	99	110	85	105	108	131	
Mindful Courage	77.4	96	92	73	49	64	62	91	95	75	77	131	
Takes Initiative	109.5	130	108	55	126	114	122	118	109	95	118	131	
Wants Challenge	97.3	79	118	35	126	113	100	66	92	127	117	131	
Innovative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-128	DESIRABLE
Mutual Help	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-128	
Enlists Cooperation	-1.6	-8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-8	-117	
Experimenting	-3.6	0	-11	-25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-117	
Systematic	-9.2	-44	0	0	-34	0	-12	0	0	0	-2	-117	
Warmth / empathy	-2.6	0	0	0	0	-25	0	0	0	-1	0	-117	
Collaborative Intention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-106	
Comfort With Conflict	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-106	
Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-106	
Self-acceptance	-0.6	0	0	-6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-88	
Self-Accountability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-88	
Self-improvement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-88	
Defensive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-192	AVOID
Dogmatic	-3.3	0	0	0	-26	0	0	0	0	0	-7	-192	
Dominating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-192	
Harsh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-144	
Impulsive	-4.8	0	-34	-14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-144	
Insensitive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-144	
Reliability (%)		95.4%	95.2%	91.2%	95.2%	98.0%	91.8%	100.0%	89.8%	91.2%	90.0%	100.0%	Scores

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