Relational Leadership & Church Health: An Inquiry into the Perceptions of the

Congregants of Eastwood Church, Lake Charles, Louisiana.

A Capstone

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With sincerest gratitude,

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Executive Summary

Eastwood Church, in Lake Charles, Louisiana, is an evangelical church rooted in the community for over 70 years. The church has a very stable history, is well considered in the community, has over 400 active members, and a history of consistent leadership. Pastor and Mrs. Lopez are currently leading the assembly, and they are only the 3rd Pastoral leaders in the church's 71 years. Within the context of this history, and the stability of the congregation, Pastor Lopez recognized that he inherited disciplined congregants who were committed to both attendance and financial support of the church. However, Pastor Lopez also has aggressive short- and long- term goals for growth in both church activity and community presence, and desired to better understand congregants' perceptions of church leadership and church health beyond the metrics of attendance and financial donations.

This study sought to provide insight to the leadership of Eastwood church by ascertaining congregant perceptions of leadership and church health. The literature provided several different bases from which to conceptualize and explore the problem. It is important note that churches are inherently different than other nonprofit organizations (NPOs) in that they are motivated by faith and their constituency is broader than humanitarian concerns (Ferris 2005). This is important in that it establishes the need for a multi-dimensional understanding of congregant perceptions, as they are rooted in faith and not singly focused. Additionally, the literature included an understanding that mission-driven organizations require consistent feedback to maintain an appropriate relationship between function and mission (Schuyler 2004). There is also broad literature in church health, particularly correlational with regard to church growth. Church health literature aims to explore various characteristics of thriving church organizations. This study approached the problem of practice from the perspective of the culmination of

dimensions of church health as defined in Schwarz (2000) and developed in relation to church growth, as measured by the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire, a 54 question, Likert Scale survey that assesses the following eight dimensions of church health: Authentic Community, Empowering Leadership, Engaging Worship, Functional Structures, Intentional Evangelism, Mobilized Laity, Passionate Spirituality, and Transforming Discipleship. The study of the dimensions of church health provided a context for which an assessment of leadership could be considered.

Relational Leadership Theory (RLT) consists of more than one school of thought, but the cornerstone understanding in this case is defined by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011). They define RLT as embedded within everyday relationally-dialogical practices, and recognized the inherently polyphonic and heteroglossic nature of life. When sharing perceptions on the dimensions of church health, congregants are also communicating perceptions of various relationships across the multi-dimensional, polyphonic space of the activities and leadership of the church.

The organizational context and a review of the literature informed a three-part research inquiry:

Based on responses to the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire, what are congregants' perceptions of Eastwood Church across the dimensions of church health?

1. *What critical strengths do congregants see across the dimensions of church health?*

2. *What critical challenges do congregants see across the dimensions of church health?*

The project utilized quantitative measures and descriptive statistics based on data collected from a modified version of the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire (BCHQ) (see

Appendix 4). The data were analyzed within the context of the eight aforementioned dimensions of church health:

1. Authentic Community

2. Empowering Leadership

3. Engaging Worship

4. Functional Structures

5. Intentional Evangelism

6. Mobilized Laity

7. Passionate Spirituality

8. Transforming Discipleship (see Appendix 1)

The data were quantitatively analyzed using descriptive statistics to generate summary and frequency tables of responses within the context of each of the eight dimensions of church health. Analysis of the data provided insight to the research questions.

Research Finding 1:

Critical strengths were found in the *Engaging Worship* and *Passionate Spirituality* dimensions. According to a one-way ANOVA analysis, the results within these dimensions were significantly higher than the other six dimensions. This suggests that congregants' perceptions within the context of spiritual relationships were very strong.

Research Finding 2:

Critical challenges were discovered in the dimensions of *Empowering Leadership* and *Mobilized Laity*. According to a one-way ANOVA analysis, these dimensions scored significantly lower

than the other six dimensions. This suggests that congregants' perceptions of the relationship between leadership and laity could use additional support.

Based on these findings, support from the literature, and the mechanism of improvement science, the researcher made several recommendations:

Recommendation 1*: Be intentional with training opportunities and pastoral connectedness.*

Akinlade and Shalack (2017) note that volunteers in mission driven organizations are often accepted regardless of skill or utility. The data feedback from the congregation of Eastwood Church mirrored this idea. Volunteers were motivated by values but not always feeling skilled enough or supportive to pursue mission defined goals. Thus, there may be a large pool of volunteers but there would be no knowledge of skill set or utility of the collective body.

 Secondly, an intentional increase in pastoral connectedness is necessary. This recommendation is situated within the ideas of Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) regarding the "…knowing-from-within and practical wisdom…" of relational leadership (p. 1441). This recommendation also specifically addresses the weaknesses highlighted by congregant responses in the *Mobilized Laity* dimension, such as feeling actively involved in ministry, feeling affirmed in ministry, feeling important in church roles, and feeling encouraged in church and ministry involvement (See Appendix 1).

Recommendation 2*: Encourage and facilitate self-knowledge and self-motivated participation of congregants.*

The second recommendation more directly addresses the *Mobilized Laity* construct. First, the concern that individual roles within the context of the entire organization be noticed and encouraged. Warren (1995) suggests engaging the uniqueness of the individual and the role of servanthood as the structure for building healthy churches. This idea can be carried into

active involvement and intentional teaching on the subject of individual uniqueness, and the idea

of the body of Christ (a metaphor often used for the purpose of understanding that different body

parts may be responsible for different things, i.e., have different roles, yet the body works in

unity for broad scope purpose). This recommendation provides congregants and leadership the

ability to further fill and expand the relational structure chart, as explained in Breedt and

Niemandt (2013) (see Appendix 5).

Additionally, Bidee et al. (2012) found that volunteers that are more autonomous, or self-

determined, will dedicate more effort to volunteer work (pp. 41-42). Based on the data from this

study, a concerted effort to provide autonomy and increase determination, especially around a

shared value system, should be pursued. Within the context of feedback from the collected data,

and in light of Warren (1995) and Bidee et al. (2012), this recommendation seeks to support

understanding of churches within the context of Ferris (2005). That context situates churches as

unique with regard to multi-dimensional pursuits and faith. Encouraging and facilitating self-

knowledge is possible in a congregation if congregants are supported and connected to the

leadership and each other.

Recommendation 3*: Measure Church Health on a regular basis with the intent of continuous*

    improvement.

The final recommendation includes a continual diagnostic relative to church health. Bryk

et al. (2015) argue that organizations cannot improve at a scale that cannot be measured (p. 90).

Based on the conclusions of Jones (2104) and the aforementioned recommendations, it is

suggested that the modified BCQH used in this study (see Appendix 4), should be employed at

regular intervals in order to receive continous feedback data from the congregation of Eastwood

Church. The purpose of this measure is twofold. First, data from the original study will be

maintained and utilized as a baseline, thus there will be comparative data within the constructs to determine the quality of the improvement efforts based on the first two recommendations. This provides for a measurable scale, as suggested by Bryk et al. (2015). Secondly, leadership should consider integrating further diagnostics to understand the perspectives of new members of the organization on a regular basis. This would assure that recommendations are being scrutinized for quality and that more senior members are not monopolizing the data of congregational perceptions.

Introduction and Context

Partner Organization

Eastwood Pentecostal Church is an evangelical church in Lake Charles, Louisiana, that is associated with the *United Pentecostal Church, International* (UPCi). The church was founded in 1949 by Thomas Edward (T.E.) Ewing. The founding of the church actually began as a tent revival in 1949. The growth of membership from that revival steadily became a church. In 1965, a building project began on Opelousas Street in Lake Charles, LA. That project dragged on, and due to T.E. Ewing suffering a stroke in 1968, church leadership was passed to Murrell L. Ewing, T.E.'s son. Under the leadership of Murrell Ewing, the church continued to grow and succeed with increased membership. Due to this growth, in 1983, a large piece of property less than one mile west of the current church on Opelousas Street was purchased. This property was prime location with frontage on Interstate 10, and access from U.S. Highway 171. T.E. Ewing passed away in 1986 before the building on the new property was completed in 1987. On this property, the church currently operates and has expanded. In December 2010, Pastor Murrell Ewing suddenly and unexpectedly passed away. His son-in-law, Aaron Lopez, who was serving as an assistant to the pastor and music director of the church, was elected pastor. The UPCi oversaw the election process and chose Mr. Lopez as the initial candidate based on the will of Pastor Ewing. During that process, there was a contingent of very vocal and active dissenters to the election process, the validity of the will, and quality of the candidate. These members wrote letters, made phone calls to members, and appealed to the UPCi in order to block the election and disqualify the candidate. Even with the active politicking of this contingent, the election was held in February 2011, and Aaron Lopez was elected pastor by a super majority. Over 85% of the membership voted in favor of Pastor Lopez (Lopez, et al, 2019).

During the subsequent 10 years, Pastor Lopez has expanded several aspects of the church. Based on an analysis of the church books, there was a long-standing savings set up by Pastor Ewing, which was intended to build a life center that included a gym, a kitchen, and an open place to gather. Pastor Ewing was against debt, so the savings had been building for over 10 years and nothing had been done with the money. Pastor Lopez thought an investment in that project would be a good support in the leadership transition; however, it required achieving a loan. The church was fiscally sound, so the loan process was not difficult. The building project achieved the desired outcome, in that it solidified member participation with both financial support and participatory activities. Furthermore, Pastor Lopez began a private school associated with the church in August 2012. Although this activity was met with more criticism from the membership, it has not cost the church additional funds and it continues to operate, guided by the Pastor's son, A.J. Lopez. Finally, there was an electrical fire in May 2015, which burned the educational facility and rendered the main sanctuary and other parts of the building unusable. The fire began a process of reconstruction that is still ongoing. The new facility and remodeled old facility were completed in the Spring of 2020. During the reconstruction process, Pastor Lopez committed to the membership that he would not borrow money for the purpose of reconstruction. The church had a substantial insurance policy, so the possibility of approaching the project debt free was realistic, but given the insurance adjustors, etc. it was still difficult. Throughout the process, the membership gave several offerings, and with that income and the insurance payout, the project stands to be completed debt free (Lopez et al., 2019).

Within the scope of the new facility the Pastor and staff of the church have endured several challenging circumstances. Within two months of the completion of the newly remodeled facility, the COVID-19 pandemic halted participation in regular church activities. The

leadership responded to this challenge by investing in an FM transmitter, achieving transmission rights locally, and broadcasting live services to congregants who gathered in their vehicles on the church parking lot and lawn. This allowed for a feeling of community without the danger of transmitting the disease. Even now, with the state of Louisiana in stage 3 of COVID-19 response, those who still desire to remain in their vehicles due to concern about the spread of the disease, are able to sit and listen from the church parking lot. Finally, during fall 2020, the city of Lake Charles suffered direct hits from two hurricanes within 45 days of one another. In response to these storms, the church leadership organized supply deliveries, turned the facility into a supply distribution center, and housed outside workers for the sake of community service. The function of the church as a participant in the local community has been shown and the support for congregants and community members has been substantial.

Problem of Practice

Eastwood's history and consistency within the local community has been long supported by the financial and time investment of congregants. It is clear, even within the context of a somewhat dramatic transition of leadership, that a substantial portion of congregants will continue to support the church through giving and regular church attendance. Given this understanding, Pastor Lopez is realistic in his assessment of the current support from congregants. Lopez et al. (2019) articulated that the discipline of the congregation in giving and attendance is likely the result of consistency of leadership over more than half and century, and "…we can't pretend to take credit for those disciplines."

Nevertheless, the leadership of Eastwood Church desires to expand organizational services with aggressive short- and long-term goals, and, as a result, seeks congregant feedback from which to ascertain support. This study employed the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire as a survey

instrument from which congregant feedback can be obtained. The data generated from this study can be used to ascertain congregant support and create interventions for the purpose of enhancing support in order to pursue the short-term and long-term goals of leadership. The study also provides a foundational baseline of quantitative data from which congregant support may be measured over time.

Key Terms

- Relational Leadership

- Improvement Science

- Organizational Health

- Mission Driven Business

- Mission Drift

- Church Growth

- Church Health

Literature Review

Organizational Context

In the review of the literature it was first necessary to understand the context of the partner organization. Churches are intentionally non-governmental, as mandated by the U.S. constitution, and are often classified as 501(c)(3) organizations by the IRS, meaning they are not-for-profit entities; however, they are more unique and complicated in some ways than general non-government (NGO) or non-profit organizations (NPO). As Ferris (2005) argues, faith-based organizations are set apart from other NGO or NPO organizations by two characteristics: "…they are motivated by their faith and they have a constituency which is broader than humanitarian concerns" (p. 316). This understanding situates the identified partner within the context of NPOs/NGOs while also providing space for the independent motivations of congregants relative to organizational participation and faith. Within that context it is important to look at leadership characteristics and tools for addressing improvement within faith-based organizations.

Improvement Science

Situating the organization in context supports understanding the uniqueness of churches within the broader NGO/NPO scope, while maintaining goals of improvement that are present across all forms of organizations. Improvement science posits general aspects of approaches to improvement that apply across specific organizational contexts. Bryk et al. (2015) argue that organizations are systems and understanding systems is key in improvement efforts. They posit, "…the performance of any social system…is the product of interactions among the people engaged with it, the tools and materials they have at their disposal, and the processes through which these people and resources come together to do work" (p. 58). It is essential, then, to

understand that complex systems may have behaviors that have not been intentionally designed, and there may be inherent difficulty in predicting the outcomes of attempts to change those behaviors (Bryk et al. 2015). Thus, improvement efforts require a deep understanding of the people and structures that make up any system, as well as what Bryk et al. (2015) call a "design-development orientation," or an intentional approach to improvement that includes trying change ideas, analyzing what happens, modifying ideas based on perceived learning, retrying with new or adjusted ideas, and continuing the cycle toward system improvement (p. 58). As such, any design-development orientation will require forms of scalable measurement disciplined inquiry, which are both principles of improvement as described by Bryk et al. (2015). Thus, the uniqueness of churches as systems should frame the goals and measurements of improvement interventions. An appropriate approach to the improvement of church organizations, then, must look at the system within the broader context as well as within the characteristics of its various unique qualities.

Mission-driven Organizations

Within the broader context of churches, it is reasonable to draw comparisons to other forms of organizations that are missional by design. Maretich, Emerson, and Nicholls (2016) define *Mission-driven businesses* "…as businesses that are managed to produce financial returns alongside intended social or environmental benefits" (p. 4). They argue that mission-driven businesses occupy a space that produces blended value based on financial returns and impact. This frames the idea that there is a relationship between the inputs and outputs of the business as well as the participants (both employees and customers) of the business. All factors contribute to one or the other of the blended values, and the presence of the blended value suggests the quality of the *Mission-driven business*. Maretich, Emerson, and Nichols (2016) build on this idea by

analyzing *mission drift*, a term "…identified as a problem for blended value businesses" (p. 4), as suggested in Alnoor, Battilana and Mair (2014). Mission drift is the explanation of a loss of focus on the impacts sought outside of financial gain. Thus, it can be concluded that mission-driven businesses can be financially solvent, i.e. making money, but failing to create the social, environmental, or other impacts outside of financial success. Maretich, Emerson and Nicholls (2016) suggest that the potential to prioritize finance over impact (mission) "…may consistently be at play in the management of blended value businesses. Yet it is as companies seek to grow—attain greater scale—that they appear to be particularly vulnerable to mission drift" (p. 5). The suggestion of the relationship between financial and impact driven goals points to the *Reciprocal Nourishment* idea as defined by Schuyler (2004).   Organizations that seek to accomplish more than "bottom line" profit margins, have variations of relationships within and without the organizational structure that must be intact (healthy) in order to avoid mission drift. Thus, healthy organizations will be structured in such a way that pursuit of additional scale and a "larger footprint" in a given market will not be prioritized over the original and expanding mission of the organization. Maretich, Emerson and Nicholls (2016) argue that "Good governance is key to the health of all businesses. For companies with a mission component to their strategy … governance is even more important because it helps them keep a grip on mission" (p. 6). Furthermore, they suggest that this governance is also substantially important in how investors respond to the potential value of *Mission-driven Organizations*.

These ideas have not been lost on non-profit organizations that lean more heavily to the impact side of *Mission-driven Organizations*. Churches may be one of the most diverse forms of this sort of organization. The goal is not necessarily to make money whatsoever, yet the mission is coded in some theological framework that is usually very specific. Whereas churches are

fundamentally unique across various religious perspectives, theoretically churches are similar in desire for social and environmental impact. Further, churches would not be considered 'healthy' in the least if they had merely profits and income to speak of without any mention of social services or impacts. Thus, churches follow the ideas of Maretich, Emerson and Nicholls (2016) in that they must govern mission drift else their entire purpose can be undercut.

Church Health

The idea of 'church health and vitality' has simultaneously been approached by literature mainly developed from ideas of church growth. As a *Mission-driven Organization*, any given church is only as impactful as its ability to maintain financial solvency, thus growing a church is one of the most essential goals in maintaining the mission. From strictly Bible based theory (Gangel, 2001), to mathematical assessments of church health and growth (Ochoche & Gweryina, 2013), the literature is broadly informed. The ideas of church growth and church health have been intertwined in much of the literature. Day (2002) quotes Stedman (1972):

> …no athlete spends all of his time running races or playing the game for which he is trained; he must also spend many hours keeping himself in shape and developing his skills to high degree. So, it is with the body of Christ. The work of the ministry will never be properly done by a weak and unhealthy church, torn with internal pains, and wracked by spiritual diseases (p. 106) …a healthy body is necessary to do effective work. (p. 114)

The argument articulated by Stedman (1972) stands as the foundation for the construct of church health. The need for a healthy body is fundamental for appropriate growth. Within the context of Maretich, Emerson and Nicholls (2016), health within an organization is achievable through governance and the perception of good governance.

Positive and healthy relations within organizations is not a new idea. Miles (1969) defined the idea of a healthy organization as one that "…not only survives in its environment, but continues to cope adequately over the long haul, and continuously develops and expands it coping abilities" (p. 378). It was not until Hoy and Feldman (1987), though, that the concept of organizational health was framed and measured. Whereas Hoy and Feldman (1987) and additional research by Hoy et al. measured health in academic organizations, Schuyler (2004) sought to focus on general organizational health "…because people spend most of their lives in them" (p. 58). According to Schuyler (2004), the concept of organizational effectiveness far outweighs that of organizational health. Researchers appear to be more focused on noting exceptional organizational performance but without an "…underlying notion of creating healthy organizations" (p. 60).

Schuyler (2004) borrowed a definition of organizational health from Bruhn (2001). According to an exploration of the topic by the World Health Organization (WHO), health is a state of physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease. Bruhn (2001) metaphorically applies that definition of health to organizations. The body refers to the structure, organization design, uses of power, communication processes, and the distribution of work. The mind refers to how underlying beliefs, goals, policies, and procedures are implemented, "…how conflict is handled, how change is managed, how members are related, and how the organization learns." The spirit is "…the core or heart of an organization as determined by what makes it vibrant and what gives it vigor. These are measurable by observation" (p. 147).

Schuyler (2004) expands on this definition and argues that increases and decreases of health can be observed and thus "…monitored via the behavior of the people within the organization: it resides primarily in the state of relationships among them" (p. 60). Health, then,

should not only be monitored from physical, mental, and social perspectives; it should also be monitored by a framework of social connectivity and mutuality.

Finally, Schuyler (2004) offers three frameworks from widely different bodies of thought, from which to derive concepts of organizational health. The first framework is actually renamed from Bennet's (1987) concept of reciprocal maintenance. Schuyler (2004) calls it "reciprocal nourishment" and explains "-Reciprocal nourishment is a systems concept that states that a system is only healthy if the parts are nourishing one another: that the system as a whole thrives when its components seek to benefit one another and the whole" (p. 61). Further, the second framework as explained by Schuyler (2004) is the Tibetan Buddhist concept of universal responsibility:

> Tibetan Buddhist literature has similar concepts [to that of reciprocal nourishment] which offer a thoroughly-developed theoretical body of work in which Western notions of individualism, competition, and even "self" are profoundly challenged. The extensive literature … provides a well-developed conceptual system for reframing human motivation and behavior. (p. 61)

Schuyler (2004) also views Sorokin's studies of altruism, as cited in Weinstein (2000) as a third framework of organizational health.

> Students of human behavior would do well to revisit both Sorokin's research and more recent research on altruism in order to reframe basic notions of what is core in human motivation and functioning. From Sorokin's perspective (quoted in Weinstein, 2000: 87), 'The natural man as a purely egoistic person is a fiction invented by modern pseudo-science. It confuses egoism due to the specific traits of sensate culture with man's inherent nature…'. (Schuyler 2004)

The frameworks as explained by Schuyler (2004) actually define similar ideas present in the literature of business and non-profits, yet these frameworks are particularly poignant within the context of the uniqueness of churches as systems to be analyzed.

Breedt and Niemandt (2013) argue that church leadership is a mechanism for the appropriately functioning body, and "Interdependence reflects the unity of the body of Christ in the midst of diversity" (p. 5). The metaphor presents the church as the 'body of Christ', and this connects the ideas of health, growth, and relationship with regards to leadership in churches. Day (2002) explicitly pointed out the dissension of the ideas of church growth and health throughout the late 20th and early 21st century:

> In 1973 Donald McGavran and Win Arn addressed the subject of church health in their book *How to Grow a Church: Conversation About Church Growth*. Three years later, C. Peter Wagner proposed seven vital signs as a gauge of a healthy church in his book, *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital signs of a Healthy Church*. However, while Wagner mentioned church health in his book, his primary emphasis was church growth not church health. Over the next two decades, numerous books and articles continue to be written on church growth. Church health became a forgotten subject. (p. 2)

Day (2002) begins his argument with the premise that, in the absence of a unified set of ideas, church health has been neglected and gone undefined (p. 2). He highlights the renewed emphasis on the subject, citing book publications by Spader and Mayes (1991), Anderson (1992), Warren (1995), Schwarz (1996), Dever (1998), and Macchia (1999). However, even with all of these publications, there has been little effort to interact ideas, develop a comprehensive definition of church health, or create rigorous research to pursue testable hypotheses (Day, 2002, pp. 2-3).

Moreover, Day (2002) identifies several approaches to church that considered various metaphorical diseases which could impact church health and therefore inhibit church growth. However, Anderson (1992) notes, "…if we insist on defining health in terms of illness, we will be malady-centered rather than health centered" (cited in Day, 2002, p. 6). Similarly, Richardson (1996) uses family systems theory and connects scriptural substance to support an idea of how family ideals operate within a church. Even the language of the church, i.e., 'church family' supports this idea, and family systems theory can benefit the church through resolving conflict, understanding the dynamics of church life, setting achievable goals, and fostering healthy communication.

These definition discussions were occurring alongside other literature that identified characteristics of a healthy church. In 1992, Anderson developed six signs of a healthy church. First, a healthy church would glorify God. Next, a healthy church will produce disciples who seriously sought to obey the commandments of God. Thirdly, a healthy church would consist of members involved in ministry based on spiritual gifts. Finally, signs four through six stated that a healthy church would be incarnational, involved in evangelism, and open to change through trust in God. However, there was no explanation of how these signs were developed, and there was no meaningful way to study these abstract signs (pp. 125-42).

In 1999, Macchia developed the following ten characteristics: God's empowering presence, God-exalting worship, spiritual disciplines, learning and growing community, commitment to loving and caring relationship, servant-leadership development, outward focus, wise administration and accountability, networking with the body of Christ, and stewardship/generosity. These characteristics were developed based on observations, visits, and surveys over the course of 100 church visits and surveying 1,899 'highly-committed Christians.

Although Macchia did use survey instruments and scriptural references for his characteristics, according to May (2002), "…no information regarding the development of the instruments was provided" (p. 10).

Whereas there are other books written in this regard, there were major flaws in these resources. The principles were too abstract and there were no valid instruments from which to measure the characteristics. Eventually, these efforts were built upon under the auspices Schwarz (2000), who extended the work and focused on church development that addressed both health and growth as steps in an overall process of organic development (p. 7). Schwarz (2000) argues that the construct of church growth is not lost on most Christians, but the church growth movement of the 1980's-90s "…seems to present simplistic rules and principles 'that don't work in the real world anyway'" (p. 6). In response to this model of over-simplistic growth ideas, Schwarz (2000) developed an empirical study of churches by collecting data from "…over 1000 churches on all continents…" (p. 28). From that research, Schwarz (2000) developed eight quality characteristics "…which are more developed in growing churches than in those that are not growing" (p. 15). The research argues that those characteristics are the "… 'key to success' in growing churches…" (p. 15) and are part of their natural development.

Mills (2016) points out that, "Volumes of literature have been written over the past years extolling the virtues of various health principles and their relationship to church growth (p. 69). He argues that that Natural Church Development (NCD) concepts as defined by Schwarz (2000) are fundamental in the current understanding and practice of measuring church growth. He explains, "This focus on health is important for congregations of all sizes…it is imperative that all congregations look closely at their health before attempting to grow (Mills, 2016, p. 69).

The difficulty within the context of clear literature connections related to church health has been the severe internal criticism with regard to the methods. Law (2002) cites Schwarz, himself, (2000) with regard to this criticism. In 2000, Schwarz expressed a concern that it was as if human efforts were being used to produce spiritual results. The argument was that church growth should not be the result of any plan or program, rather an outcome of right relationship with God. As Law (2002) posits, there were several points of resistance in the growth movement relative to any method that would replace or misunderstand the necessity of divine intervention (pp. 33-34). With this in mind, it is not surprising that there are few, if any, literal and direct connections between organizational health such as those defined by Schyluer (2004) and church health. However, that is not to say that the methods are not substantially similar, and there are some fundamental connections worth noting.

Like Richardson (1996), Steinke (1996) suggested that only living systems could be seen as healthy or unhealthy, thus the conversation around church health should be noted from an organic perspective. Health suggests more than the absence of illness, metaphorically speaking. To be healthy is to have all parts working together to maintain appropriate balance of the living system (pp. vii-viii). As Law (2002) notes, "The mark of an organism is balance among the different systems. When the balance fails, the organism gets sick and, without treatment, eventually dies. When a church functions as a system or a whole, consideration of the interactions of the different parts of this system much be considered. Church health characteristics cannot stand on their own, there must be interaction to have a healthy system" (p. 36). Steinke (1996) suggests that the 'living' aspect of churches is their defined purpose (p. 26). In essence, these ideas are fundamentally aligned with the ideas of organizational health as defined by Schyuler (2004) and Maretich, Emerson and Nicholls (2016).

Thus, the argument stands that church health is not developed based on size or growth rate, rather on dimensional characteristics related to impact. This is directly in line with the mission-driven organization perspective as defined in Maretich, Emerson and Nicholls (2016). Hence, there is a fairly robust history of the development of church health dimensional characteristics in the literature (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Church health dimensions

CHURCH HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS COMPARED								
HEMPHILL	MACCHIA	SCHWARZ	LEADERSHIP NETWORK	ANDERSON	SINGLETARY	WAGNER	GALLOWAY	BEESON
Servant Leaders	Servant-Leadership Development	Gift-Oriented Ministry	Lay Mobilization	Glorifying God	Strong Emphasis On Prayer	A Well Mobilized Laity	Clear Cut Vision	Mobilized Laity
Christ-Exalting Worship	God-Exalting Worship	Inspiring Worship Service		Producing Disciples	Obvious Ministry of the Holy Spirit		Passion for the Lost	Engaging Worship
Passion for the Lost	Outward Focus	Need-Oriented Evangelism	Responsible Evangelism	Exercising Spiritual Gifts	Biblical Balance	Effective Evangelistic Methods	Shared Ministry Together	Intentional Evangelism
Kingdom Family Relationships	Loving and Caring Relationships	Loving Relationships	Authentic Community	Reproducing Through Evangelism	Individual and Organic Reproduction	Meeting Member's Needs	Empowering Leadership	Authentic Community
Maturation of Believers	Learning and Growing in Community	Holisitic Small Groups		Incorporating Newcomers	High Level of Lay Mobilization	A Common Homogeneous Denominator	Fervent Spirituality	Transforming Discipleship
God-Connecting Prayer	Spiritual Disciplines	Passionate Spirituality		Open to Change	Qualitative & Quantitative Growth		Flexible and Functional Structures	Passionate Spirituality
God-Sized Vision	Wise Administration & Accountability	Empowering Leadership	Effective Leadership	Trusting God	Healthy Body Life	A Positive Pastor	Celebrative Worship	Empowering Leadership
Supernatural Power	God's Empowering Presence			Looking Good on the Outside			Connecting Small Groups	Functional Structures
	Stewardship & Generosity					Celebration, Congregation & Cell	Seeker friendly Evangelism	
	Networking with the Body of Christ		Cultural Connectedness			Biblical Priorities	Loving Relationships	

The progress of the development of church health dimensions/characteristics culminated with the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire (BCHQ) (see Appendix 1). The BCHQ instrument was designed to provide feedback based on the dimensions of church health, as defined by Schwarz (2000) and Law (2002).

An understanding of the dimensions of church health, as defined in the literature, provides the context in which church organizations thrive: relationship. It could easily be stated that the dimensions of church health each define some form of relationship, thus the BCHQ attempts to measure the quality of relationship within the eight dimensions of church health:

1. *Authentic Community:* seeks to understand the relationship amongst congregants both within and outside of church activities.

2. *Empowering Leadership:* seeks to understand the relationship between leadership and congregants directly.

3. *Engaging Worship*: seeks to understand the connectedness and support amongst congregants relative to their relationship with God.

4. *Functional Structures*: seeks to understand the relationship between the system and the mission of the church.

5. *Intentional Evangelism*: seeks to understand the relationship between the mission of the church and the external community.

6. *Mobilized Laity:* seeks to understand the relationship between leadership and the agency of congregants.

7. *Passionate Spirituality*: seeks to understand the relationship between the congregation and God.

8. *Transforming Discipleship:* seeks to understand the relationship between individual congregants and spiritual practice.

Thus, relationships are essential to the systems of churches, and in consideration of the church as a system, as argued by Bryk et al. (2015), is necessary to measure and be intentional in improvement efforts (pp. 171-72). As a result, leadership from the context of churches should measure itself within the context of relationships.

Relational Leadership Theory & Pastoral Leadership

The effort to frame leadership from the perspective of relationships within and organization is represented in the literature of Relational Leadership Theory (RLT). RLT, as defined by Clarke (2018), describes the relational process of people integrating and working together in order to accomplish meaningful change and common good. Clarke (2018) clarifies that the changing social and economic landscapes have made usual approaches to understanding and practicing leadership impractical. Further, he argues that many consider relational leadership "…a far more effective way to organize and implement leadership to respond to the challenges facing twenty-first century organizations" (p. 22). Clarke (2018) continues by defining relational leadership and differentiating relational leadership from traditional theories. He posits that, [relational leadership] "at its core lies the idea that leaders and follower exist in a reciprocal relationship, and it is the relationship itself that constitutes what we refer to as leadership" (p. 2). As compared to traditional theories, where it is the primary focus of leaders to achieve the goals of the organization(s), relational leadership rejects the idea that leadership is the "…property of single individuals…", and thinks about leadership "…as a process; a consequence of the interactions between organizational actors that is influenced by the context in which these interactions take place" (pp. 2-3). The consequences of relational leadership,

according to Clarke (2018) are three-fold: 1) leadership is a social process that occurs between people; 2) leadership is about the nature of relationship between leaders; and, 3) those that follow or are influenced by them. Moreover, the nature of leadership and its effectiveness is based on the dynamic and evolving processes of relationships and the contexts in which they exist. Based on this understanding, Clarke (2018) states, "…relational leadership shifts the emphasis away from understanding leadership as just about individual actors, towards viewing leadership as a much broader social phenomenon…it is the relationship between actors that constitutes what we refer to as leadership" (p. 3).

Arguing for the necessary adjustment to leadership theory, Clarke (2018) notes that "…many suggest that the traditional leadership model that sees the heroic leader as able to control and predict the future and charged with moral character, is now a flawed representation of leadership" (p. 11). Instead, relational leadership shifts attention from considering leaders as a chief influence on ethical behavior within organizations, and thinks about ethical behavior as something that arises out of the relationships that exist between leaders and followers. Clarke (2018) also asserts that relational leadership is more like an umbrella that covers many different leadership theories and practices that all share three common assumptions. First, many individuals may be required to practice leadership regardless of formal leadership roles. Next, leadership is more of a potential capacity rather than "…the sum of recognized leaders" (p. 12). Third, leadership takes place through the relationships and the networks of relationship within the context of the organization.

A further understanding of the fundamentals of relational leadership can be found in leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. According to Clarke (2018), LMX places followers and their perceptions of leaders as the key to determining the effects of leaders. Additionally,

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) suggest that effective leadership occurs "…when leaders and followers are able to develop mature leadership relationship (partnerships) and thus gain access to the many benefits these relationships bring" (p. 225). Fundamentally, LMX provides some explanation as to why and how relational bonds develop between leaders and followers as it points to transformational leadership behaviors that elevate the interests of employee by generating the interests of followers and awareness of the purpose or mission of the organization (p. 238).

Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) expand the ideas of leadership by identifying three themes that situate relationships within the context of 'good' governance. First, they argue, "By drawing attention to the relations between network element and infrastructures…network theirs emphasize the need for leaders to consider and manage relational mechanisms and processes…" (p. 1429). Thus, good governance requires the practice and management of relationships. Next, they argue in contrast, that leaders "…socially construct identities, culture, strategy, etc… (p. 1430). But, they suggest, this process should focus on more than how leadership is done and more on decision making in precise moments.

Accordingly, they argue for post-heroic leadership, or leadership that is distributed across stakeholders in a collaborative, empathetic, trustworthy, and empowered environment (p. 1430). They conclude by suggesting that relational leadership should go "…back to the fundamental philosophical issue of understanding social experience as intersubjective and leadership as a way of being-in-relation-to-others" (p. 1430). Finally, they conclude by suggesting that "…relational leadership is a way of being-in-the-world that embraces an intersubjective and relationally-responsive way of thinking and acting" (p. 1445).

Within the context of relational leadership and mission-driven organizations, Breedt and Niemandt (2013) argue that it is necessary for churches to strongly consider relationships in order to succeed at achieving the goals set for the church by Jesus Christ. They posit, "If leadership is about anything, it is about relationships" (p. 4). Further, they quote Dyer (2001):

> Regardless of the rules, structure or roles and irrespective of tasks, strategic plans, political alliances, programs, contracts, lawsuits, etc., relational leadership is about people and their perceptions (which in essence, are their realities) of how they are being treated and valued. (n.p.)

Breedt and Niemandt (2013) also discuss Saccone (2009) with regard to the process for becoming a relational leader. Relational leadership begins with relational intelligence, and successful leaders create relational health because healthy relationships maximize influence (p. 4). Saccone (2009) defines relational intelligence as the ability to learn, understand, and comprehend knowledge as it relates to interpersonal dynamics (p. 20). Breedt and Niemandt (2013) note, "Pursuing RI is a process of discovery that requires attention, focus and intentionality if leaders desire to grow in it" (p. 4). Thus, relational leadership requires the presence and practice of relational intelligence and the willingness of leaders to pay attention to the health of organizational relationships. Centering leadership on relationships allows for the followership to act on trust and respect as compared to power and privilege. Relational leadership, then, organizes itself differently than traditional leadership (see Figures 2 & 3).

Figure 2

Traditional Leadership
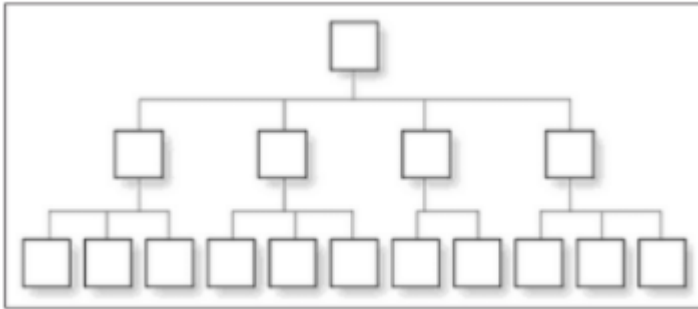
The relational leadership model as exemplified in Figure 3 follows from the conceptualization of

leadership by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011):

> Relational leadership requires a way of engaging with the world in which the leader holds
>
> herself/himself as always in relation with, and therefore morally accountable to other;
>
> recognizes the inherently polyphonic and heteroglossic nature of life; and engages in
>
> relational dialogue. (p. 1425)

Figure 3

Relational Leadership
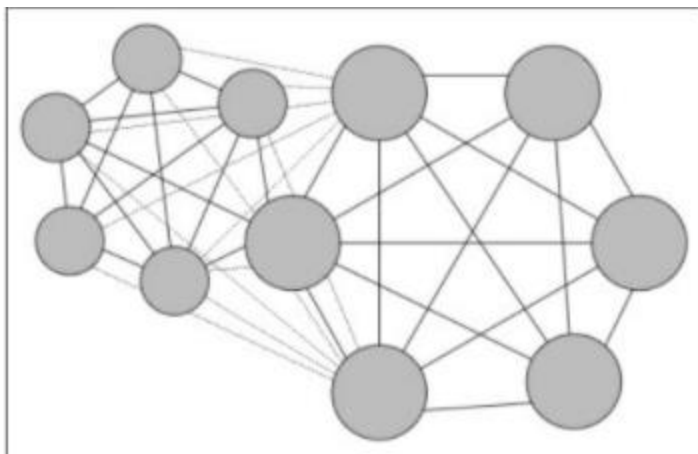
This practice of leadership supports accelerating learning within the context of improvement science as well, in that the natural design of the model promotes the networking of communities (Bryk et al., 2015). As Akinlade and Shalack (2017) conclude, "organizations need to be able to leverage their strengths and be aware of their weaknesses…" (137). This awareness is made possible by the "dialogic polyphony" described by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011), and, at the very least, encourages the pursuit of continual feedback from stakeholders in order to maintain consistent focus on organizational improvement.

Figure 4

Integrated Frameworks

Finally, Young and Firmin (2014) posit that pastoral leadership only works with relational strengths as compared to executive power. Successful pastoral leadership is built on personal integrity and interpersonal skills within the context of a trusting relationship between congregants and leadership. The posit, "…developing a meaningful relatedness with congregants is not a matter to be left to chance or that somehow haphazardly will occur…it is a dynamic that pastors need to identify, generate a plan, and cultivate" (Young & Firmin 2014).

The goal then is to integrate relationships into the regular thinking about leadership and connectedness with congregants. Thus, it is easy to conceptualize the literature of this study as relating with one another within the context of Relational Leadership Theory (see Figure 4).

Research Questions

Based on responses to the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire, what are congregants' perceptions of Eastwood Church across the dimensions of church health?

1. *What critical strengths do congregants see across the dimensions of church health?*

2. *What critical challenges do congregants see across the dimension of church health?*

Conceptual Framework

Bain (2006) and Jackson (2005) employ the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire (BCHQ) to cross examine various relational aspects of congregants relative to growth and vitality. Using 54 Likert scale measured statements, the BCQH categorically measures eight dimensions of church health developed from the progress of the literature (see Figure 1). Each of these dimensions directly address the themes and practices of relational leadership as noted by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011), Clarke (2018), and Breedt and Niemandt (2013).

1. Authentic Community

This construct developed from the idea of loving relationships in Schwarz (2000). Schwarz notes, "People do not want to hear us talk about love, they want to experience how Christian love really works" (p. 36). Authentic community as a

construct seeks to determine the quality of relationships amongst the community

of congregants by measuring how often members interact with other members

outside of organizationally sanctioned events, and how meaningful those

relationships are within the context of personal trust and confidence in church

leadership. This characteristic addresses the idea of nurturing relationships in

Breedt and Niemandt (2013) and the idea of relational integrity in Cunliffe and

Eriksen (2011). Feedback provided from these questions can inform leadership of

the quality of relationships among congregants and accountability of those

relationships within the context of congregants' perceptions.

2. Empowering Leadership

This construct developed directly from Schwarz (2000) who explains, "…that

while pastors of growing churches are usually not "people-persons" who lose

themselves in interaction with individuals…they are somewhat more relationship-

, person-, and partnership-oriented…" (p. 22). This is echoed throughout the

mission driven organizational literature as well. As previously stated, Maretich,

Emerson and Nicholls (2016) argue that "Good governance is key to the health of

all businesses. For companies with a mission component to their strategy …

governance is even more important because it helps them keep a grip on mission"

(p. 6). The idea governing toward the mission is supported by leadership being

"…both goal and relationship oriented" (Schwarz, 2000, p. 22). The empowering

leadership construct seeks to discover the quality of relationship between leader,

congregant, and mission by measuring congregants' trust of leadership with

regards to training, articulation of vision (mission), and openness to new ideas and

participation; as well as to measure the congregants' perception of leadership defensiveness and achievements. This characteristic provides feedback on what Clarke (2018) calls the "…shared context in which trust develops" (p. 57). Scores will reveal congregants' perceptions of leadership in this context.

3. Engaging Worship

This construct developed from a consensus of the religious literature (see Table 1). Schwarz (2000) called it inspiring worship service, Singletary (1986) called it obvious ministry of the Holy Spirit, Hemphill (1994) called it Christ-exalting worship, and Holland (2007) called it lifting & inspirational worship. Regardless of the variation of specific titles, each of these researchers pointed to the fact that the importance of worship was to be both engaging and inspiring. Thus, this construct determines congregants' attitudes regarding worship service by measuring participation, connection, inspiration, encouragement, and support with regards to music and preaching. This characteristic encapsulates the Breedt and Niemandt (2013) idea that "The church does what it is and then organizes what it does" (p. 4). Feedback provided here will reveal congregants' perceptions of the church being what it does.

4. Functional Structures

This construct is also almost universal throughout the religious literature, and it is also specifically defined within the context of organizational health literature. As previously stated, Bruhn (2001) argues based on a metaphor of body and spirit with regards to organizations. The researcher states, the body is "…how conflict

is handled, how change is managed, how members are related, and how the organization learns." The spirit is "…the core or heart of an organization as determined by what makes it vibrant and what gives it vigor. These are measurable by observation" (p. 147). This construct seeks to determine quality of structures by measuring congregants' faith in financial health and decision making within the context of organizational leadership, as well as measuring attitudes relative to values, decision making, and communication. Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) posit, "Relational leaders see communication not as an expression of something pre-conceived, but as emerging and open, as a way of working out what is meaningful and possible" (p. 1434). This characteristic provides feedback on this larger idea of emerging communication.

5. Intentional Evangelism

Whereas Schwarz (2000) discussed need-oriented evangelism, this construct is a collaboration of the ideas in the religious literature (see Table 1), and it is supported by mission driven organization literature. Maretich, Emerson and Nicholls (2016) warn of mission drift, or the tendency to place income at a higher priority than mission (p. 6). The construct of intentional evangelism seeks to measure the relationship between the organization (church) and its mission. The quality of this relationship is determined by measuring the congregations' attitude regarding the religious mission of the church, which includes Christ teaching, love of Christ, and appealing to non-Christians. Breedt and Niemand (2013) argue that "Mission cannot be successful without building relationship with those who are not living in relations with Christ or are even opposing belief in Christ"

(p. 2). This characteristic provides a measure of congregants' perceptions regarding those mission-driven relationships.

6. Mobilized Laity

This construct is broader than the quality characteristic of holistic small groups as defined by Schwarz (2000). The idea of organizational members participating in the mission of the organization is echoed throughout the religious, organizational health, and mission driven organizational literature (see Figure 1) and refer to the literature review on pages. 7-16. This construct seeks to determine the participation of congregants with the mission of the organization by measuring congregants' involvement, self-knowledge, satisfaction, belonging, and sense of affirmation. Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) suggest "…that relational leadership is a way of viewing the world as intersubjective, emerging in our relationship with other, and about understanding the importance of the nature of our conversations" (p. 1438). Relational leaders, thus, understand the creative nature of dialogue. The measure of this characteristic actually provides feedback on leadership's willingness and/or ability "…to be sensitive, attuned, and responsive to moments of difference…" (p. 1438).

7. Passionate Spirituality

This construct is universal throughout the religious literature, and BCHQ uses the specific Schwarz (2000) definition of the construct. Schwarz (2000) notes, "The nature of this quality characteristic becomes evident by examining the prayer life of the Christians surveyed…whether prayer is viewed as an "inspiring

experience" or not has a significant relationship to the quality and quantity of the church. Similar results were found with respect to personal use of the Bible and other factors affecting personal spirituality" (p. 26). This construct seeks to determine the personal relationship congregants' have with the mission of the church by measuring prayer, expectation, spiritual experience, and personal intimacy with God. Breedt and Niemandt (2013) echo Blanchard (2010) and Maxwell (1995) by arguing, "if leaders can create a motivating environment for their people [missional success] are the applause they get for a job well done…success is both results and relationships…good leaders know where they are going and are able to persuade others to follow" (p. 6). This is an excellent explanation of the church worship service, the place where leadership emphasize where they are going and seek follower-ship. This health characteristic provides feedback to leadership regarding the quality of worship.

8.Transforming Discipleship

This construct was developed out of several different attitudes regarding discipleship. Hemphill (1994) suggested that servant leaders were those who engage in ministry tasks, whereas Macchia (1999) considers a quality characteristic as servant-leadership development. Schwarz (2000) compounded these ideas into the characteristic of gift-oriented ministries and measured it by relating the ideas of "…my personal ministry involvements match my gifts" and "I consider myself to be a happy, contented person" (p. 24). According to Schwarz (2000), "None of the eight quality characteristics showed nearly as much influence on both personal and church life as 'gift-oriented ministry'" (24). This

construct was further developed in the religious literature and the BCHQ

measures it by assessing congregants' personal involvement in prayer, giving,

personal development, growth, and dependency on the Word of God for guidance.

Breedt and Niemandt (2013) conclude, "The church's commission and

missionality is not a project or even a response to a command, it is an ongoing

relationship with Christ…" (p. 8). This characteristic provides feedback on the

growth and development of that relationship. This is further modeled in Cunliffe

and Eriksen (2011) as open dialogue, or "…conversations in which pre-

judgements are not made but opportunities are created for knowing 'who you are

and …who we are'" (p. 1444).

The BCHQ is the culmination of constructs developed in over five decades of writing and

thinking about the ideas of church health and vitality (see Table 1). The BCHQ has been used in

several contexts. Particularly, Asbury Theological Seminary used four dissertations projects to

validate the instrument relative to health constructs and growth indices. In those four

dissertation studies, Mckee (2003), Law (2002), Kinder (2002), and Taylor (2003) concluded

that a positive correlation exists between the quality characteristics, and church health and

church growth.

The purpose of this project was to collect feedback from the congregants of Eastwood

Pentecostal Church based on the eight constructs in the BCHQ for the intent of identifying and

understanding congregants' perceptions within the framework of relational leadership theory.

The current research will use a modified version of the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire

(BCHQ) to garner this feedback. The modification changed the verbiage of one question in

order to satisfy a doctrinal concern of the church pastor. Question #39 of the BCQH states, "Our

church emphasizes the person and presence of the Holy Spirit" (see Appendix 1). This statement

identifies a key difference in what is called Trinitarian theology from that of oneness theology.

Pastor Lopez was uncomfortable with the verbiage of the question, thus we modified it to match

the spirit/intent of the question with verbiage doctrinally satisfactory for the pastor. The

modified version of question #39 stated: "Our church emphasizes Baptism in Jesus' Name and

the infilling of the Holy Ghost" (see Appendix 4).

This capstone project sought to explore the ideas and concepts identified in Schwarz

(2000), embedding that exploration within the framework of Relational Leadership Theory and

collecting feedback from the congregants through the integration of the BCHQ. Leadership at

Eastwood Pentecostal sought to ascertain the health of the church and garner feedback from

congregants as the Church moves forward to pursue organizational growth.

Research Design

This capstone project utilized quantitative measures and descriptive statistics based on

data collected from a modified version of the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire (BCHQ) (see

Appendix 4). The data were analyzed using the eight aforementioned dimensions of church

health:

1. Authentic Community

2. Empowering Leadership

3. Engaging Worship

4. Functional Structures

5. Intentional Evangelism

6. Mobilized Laity

7. Passionate Spirituality

8. Transforming Discipleship (see Appendix 1)

Sampling

The current regular attendance at Eastwood Pentecostal Church is between 360-400. This study collected data from 118 participants, roughly 25-30% of the total attendance. The sampling was completed Wednesday, February 26, 2020.

Ethical Concerns and Validity

The Beeson Church Health Questionnaire does not contain identifying information, which supports anonymity. To decrease bias, all attendees and staff were invited to participate in the study.

Findings and Analysis

Based on simple mean calculations, Eastwood Pentecostal Church scored well across all characteristic dimensions (see Figures 2 & 3). The Likert scale responses span from 1-5. As evidenced by Table 3, the aggregate scores did not have a mean below 3 across 54 responses by 118 participants. According to Law (2002), Kinder (2002), Taylor (2003), and Mckee (2003), the aggregate data suggest generally positive perceptions of congregants. Thus, aggregate data across all eight dimensions of the BCHQ suggest congregants of Eastwood Church have generally healthy perceptions of the church and leadership (see Tables 1 & 2).

Table 1

Data by Dimension

Construct	n (sample size)	# of survey items	Min	Max	M	SD
Authentic Community	118	6	1	5	4.22	0.25
Empowering Leadership	118	7	1	5	3.91	0.56
Engaging Worship	118	7	1	5	4.57	0.26
Functional Structures	118	7	1	5	4.16	0.31
Intentional Evangelism	118	7	1	5	4.22	0.57
Mobilized Laity	118	6	1	5	4	0.25
Passionate Spirituality	118	7	1	5	4.54	0.35
Transforming Discipleship	118	7	1	5	4.11	0.45

Table 2

Aggregate of all Dimensions
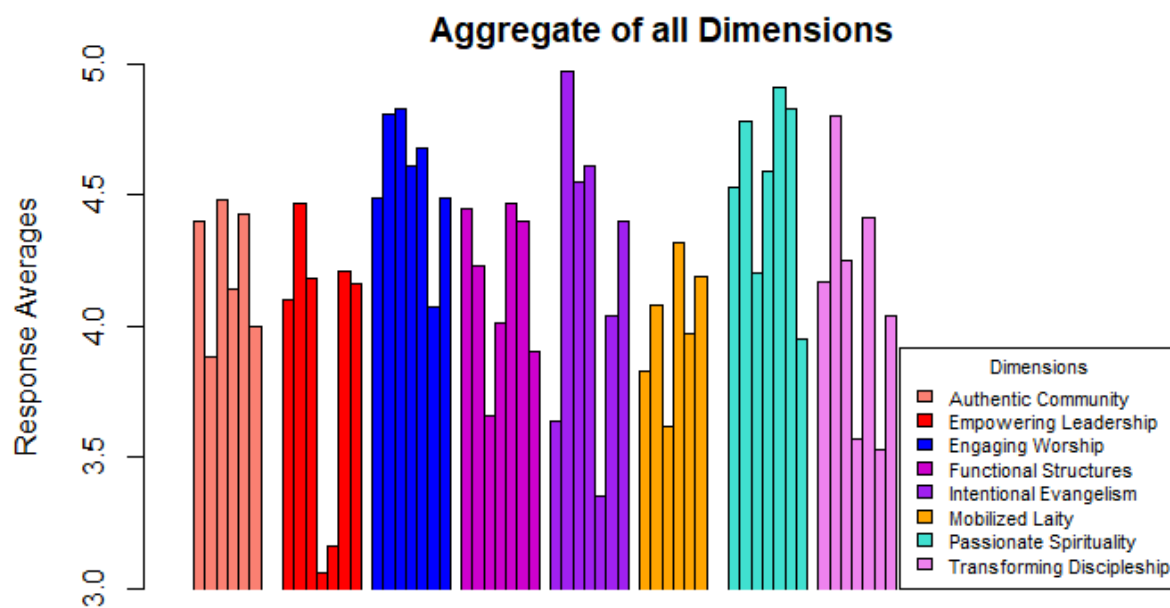
The most coherent way to discuss data for the purpose of making appropriate recommendations to the leadership is to frame the outcomes via dimension and discuss areas of concern. Frist, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the means of the 8 dimensions of the BCHQ. There was a significant difference between dimension means at the p.<.05 level for eight conditions [$F(7,46)=2.35$, $p=.038$] (see Table 3).

Table 3

ANOVA: Comparing All Constructs

SUMMARY

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Authentic Community	6	25.33	4.221666667	0.062896667
Empowering Leadership	7	27.34	3.905714286	0.309995238
Engaging Worship	7	31.98	4.568571429	0.066947619
Functional Structures	7	29.12	4.16	0.097133333
Intentional Evangelism	7	29.56	4.222857143	0.330257143
Mobilized Laity	6	24.01	4.001666667	0.063816667
Passionate Spirituality	7	31.79	4.541428571	0.124147619
Transforming Discipleship	7	28.77	4.11	0.2037

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	2.66114021	7	0.380162887	2.354693868	0.038352685	2.21641745
Within Groups	7.42665238	46	0.161448965			
Total	10.0877926	53				

The ANOVA revealed that there was a significant difference between the means of the eight characteristic dimensions. The researcher assessed the means and determined the highest and lowest response means among the characteristic dimensions. The highest mean dimension was *Engaging Worship* and the lowest mean dimension was *Empowering Leadership*. A *t-test: Paired Two Sample for Means* was conducted to compare the two dimensions. Participants scored *Engaging Worship* (M=4.57, SD=0.25) significantly higher than *Empowering Leadership* (M=3.91, SD=0.56), t(13)=3.9, p<.001 (see Table 4).

Table 4

Engaging Worship/Empowering Leadership		
t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Variable 1	*Variable 2*
Mean	4.555	3.953690476
Variance	.088396154	0.170098367
Observations	14	14
Pearson Correlation	-0.302530825	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	13	
t Stat	3.900708171	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.000911863	
t Critical one-tail	1.770933396	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.001823726	
t Critical two-tail	2.160368656	

Additionally, the researcher assessed the highest mean dimension, *Engaging Worship* and a lower mean dimension, *Intentional Evangelism*. A *t-test: Paired Two Sample for Means* was conducted to compare the two dimensions. Participants scored *Engaging Worship* (M=4.57, SD=0.25) significantly higher than *Intentional Evangelism (*M=4.22, SD=0.57), t(13)=2.24, p=.023 (see Table 5).

Table 5

Engaging Worship/Intentional Evangelism t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Variable 1	*Variable 2*
Mean	4.555	4.222142857
Variance	0.088396154	0.176618132
Observations	14	14
Pearson Correlation	-0.175978867	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	13	
t Stat	2.240520063	

P(T<=t) one-tail	0.021577932
t Critical one-tail	1.770933396
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.043155864
t Critical two-tail	2.160368656

Engaging Worship & Passionate Spirituality

Based on the aforementioned analyses, the dimensions of *Engaging Worship &*
Passionate Spirituality scored significantly higher than the other six constructs. These
dimensions are highly supported by the population. In fact, of the 14 questions that make up the
two dimensions, only one averaged below 4 (3.8) on a 5-point Likert scale (see Table 3).

This score shows that research participants have overwhelmingly high perceptions of
worship and spirituality at Eastwood. Response statements in these dimensions are organized via
construct in Appendix 1. For Engaging Worship, 2 of 7 responses (#10, 15) averaged above 4.8
out of 5. This suggests extreme confidence in both worship services and musical offerings as
support for participation in worship. The quality of these two dimensions is evidenced in Table
6.

Table 6

Engaging Worship & Passionate Spirituality
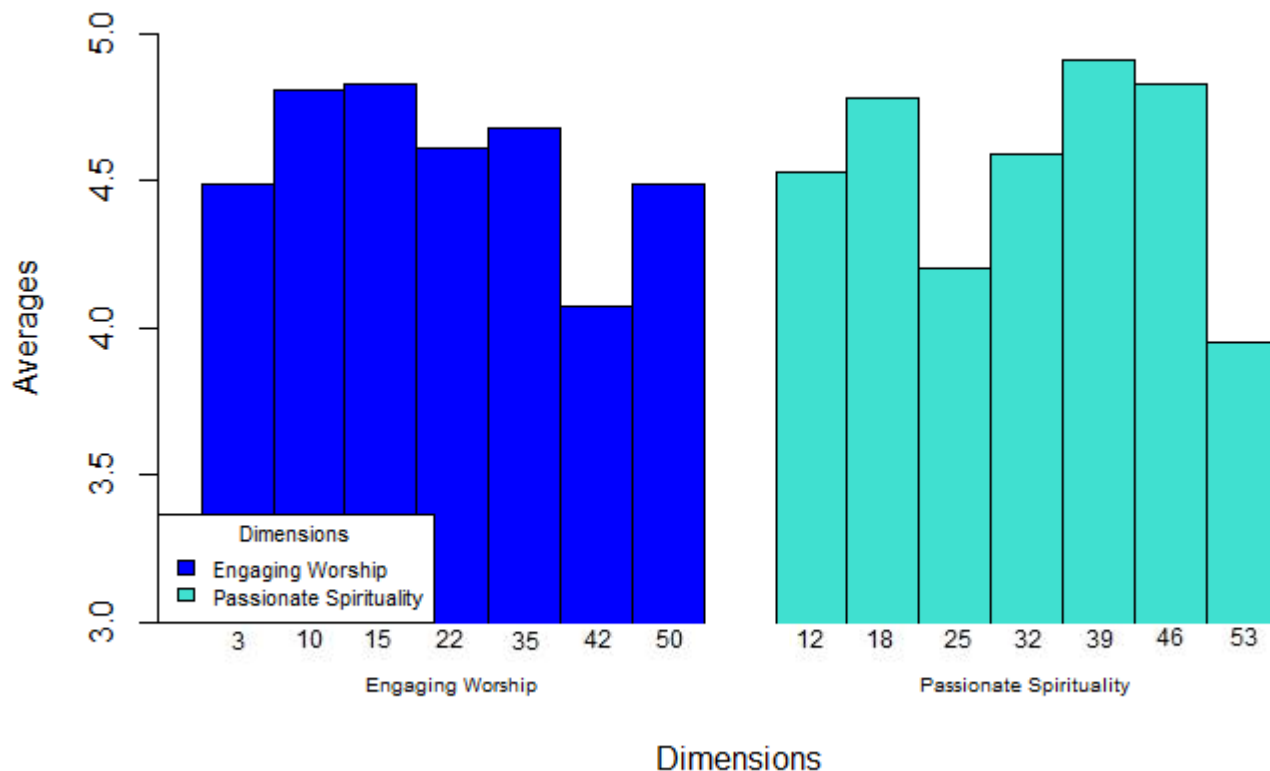
Next, the researcher assessed the four dimensions with central means. *Transforming Discipleship, Intentional Evangelism, Functional Structures, & Authentic Community*. Paired sample *t-tests* were conducted to compare the four dimensions. There was no significant difference between the means of *Transforming Discipleship* (M=4.11, SD=0.45), *Intentional Evangelism (*M=4.22, SD=0.57), *Functional Structures* (M=4.16, SD=0.31), & *Authentic Community* (M=4.22, SD=0.25), t(13)=0.59, p=.283 (see Table 7).

Table 7

Evangelism/Discipleship/Structures/Community t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Variable 1	*Variable 2*
Mean	4.135	4.222142857
Variance	0.139519231	0.176618132
Observations	14	14
Pearson Correlation	0.03506159	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	13	
t Stat	-0.590273917	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.282563616	
t Critical one-tail	1.770933396	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.565127232	
t Critical two-tail	2.160368656	

Transforming Discipleship, Intentional Evangelism, Functional Structures, & Authentic Community

Based on the aforementioned analyses, *Transforming Discipleship, Intentional Evangelism, Functional Structures, & Authentic Community* were stable and supported by the attitudes of the congregation. According to the data analyses, these dimensions are robustly supported by participants. The qualities of these constructs are evidenced in Table 8.

Table 8

Transforming Discipleship, Intentional Evangelism, Functional Structures, & Authentic Community
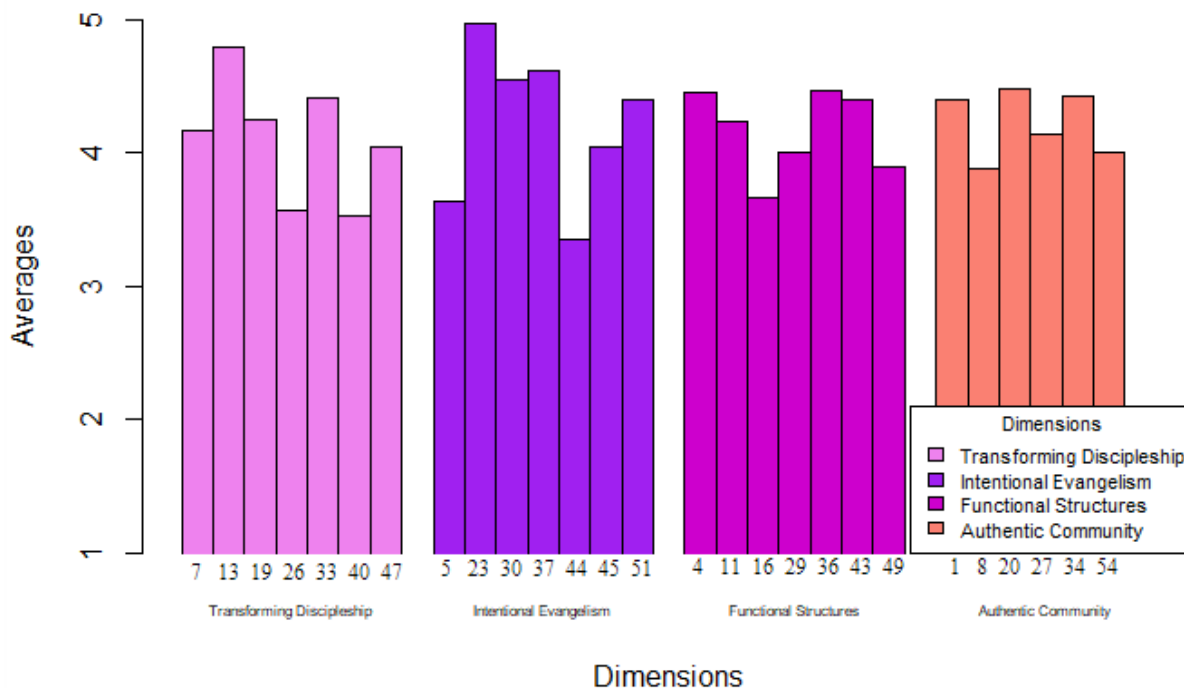
Finally, the researcher assessed dimensions with central means and with the lowest means. *Empowering Leadership & Mobilized Laity* were compared with the four 'central mean dimensions. A paired sample *t-test* was conducted to compare the dimensions. There was a significant difference between the means of *Empowering Leadership* (M=3.91, SD=0.56) &

*Mobilized Laity (*M=4, SD=0.25), *AND* the central mean dimensions (see Table 9). t (13)=-1.92,

p=.038 (see Table 9).

Table 9

Discipleship/Evangelism/Structures/Community Empowering Leadership/Mobilized Laity t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means		
	Variable 1	*Variable 2*
Mean	3.953690476	4.222142857
Variance	0.170098367	0.176618132
Observations	14	14
Pearson Correlation	0.213108807	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	13	
t Stat	-1.92298671	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.038331879	
t Critical one-tail	1.770933396	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.076663757	
t Critical two-tail	2.160368656	

Based on the aforementioned analyses, *Empowering Leadership & Mobilized Laity* present critical challenges for the leadership of Eastwood. According to the data analyses, these dimensions are least supported by the population. In fact, two of the lowest scoring questions in the entire data set reside in Empowering Leadership (see Table 3). The struggles of these constructs are evidenced in Table 10.

Table 10

Empowering Leadership & Mobilized Laity
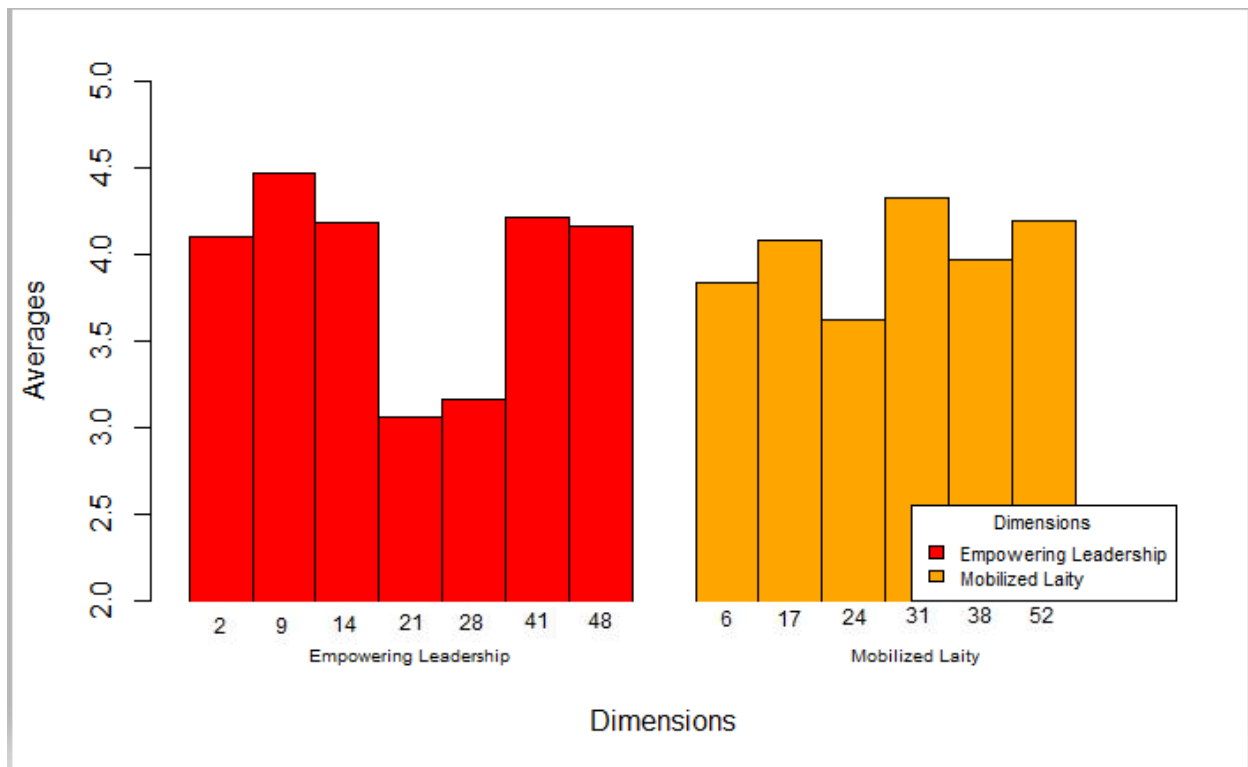
Discussion & Implications

The scores determined by the questionnaire provided feedback on congregants' perceptions of leadership at Eastwood Church. Based on the data and analyses, the dimensions are organized into three blocks: Highest scores, median scores, and lower scores. The blocks are organized based on t-test output (see Table 4, Table 5, Table 7, & Table 9). The discussion of each block helped identify further goals of this project.

The highest scores block, including *Engaging Worship & Passionate Spirituality,* represent critical strengths from the perspective of the congregants. These dimensions had means significantly higher than the means of all of the dimensions. This is not surprising given the church considers itself 'evangelical' and 'evangelical' assemblies are known to practice and engage in highly spiritual practices. This block can be thematically understood by thinking about relationships between people and God (or spiritual relationships). Additionally, Pastor Lopez and his wife, as well as his son, niece, and nephew are all professional musicians or singers and have all worked in studios across the United States and abroad. Additionally, Pastor Lopez is a music producer and the church facility includes a recording studio along with professional sound and lighting. Given the penchant for music and performance, the feedback received from the BCQH supports that worship and worship support were highly perceived by the congregants of Eastwood Church.

The median scores block included the dimensions of *Authentic Community, Functional Structures, Intentional Evangelism, & Transforming Discipleship*. The means of these dimensions were very similar. Each of the means for the four dimensions scored over 4 out of 5 (see Table 1). According to data and analyses, these four dimensions were well perceived by the congregation. This block can be thematically understood by thinking about relationships

between people. Each of the dimensions in this block represented various different relationships between people within the congregation and amongst the community. High scores in this block suggested a strong perception of community amongst congregants and a strongly perceived interaction between the congregation and the community.

The lower scores block, including *Empowering Leadership & Mobilized Laity*, represented critical challenges for the leadership. It is important to note at the outset that lower scores do not necessarily mean poor scores. In fact, not a single mean for a question in the entire data set across all eight dimensions was below 3, which qas the central number of the Likert scale (see Table 2). The data supported the fact that church leadership was highly perceived by the congregation, but it also showed that the other six dimensions were perceived significantly higher than scores in this block. Given that the overall feedback was positive, the data pointed at the lower scores block as the area most benefited by recommendations for improvement. This block could be thematically understood by thinking about relationships between leadership and individuals. Based on the aforementioned conceptual framework definitions, both dimensions within this block well explained by title. *Empowering Leadership* described how individuals felt about being empowered and enhanced by leadership. *Mobilized Laity* was best understood as the agency of individuals to be prepared for and engaged in the activities and purpose of the church and their own lives. Both of these engaged the relationship between leadership and laity for the purpose of agency in some form or another. The critical challenges presented by these dimensions were addressed in the recommendations.

Recommendations

Critical challenges were present in the two lowest dimensions, thus, the researcher recommended addressing specific areas within each dimension based on mean scores from the data set.

Recommendation 1: Be intentional with training opportunities and pastoral connectedness.

Questions 21 & 28 of the BCQH resided within the *Empowering Leadership* construct and both addressed the subject matter of training. Of the 13 questions in both dimensions, these two questions had the lowest means. It stands to reason that intentional, accessible training be made available to congregants. Based on pre-study interviews with the administrative staff and various conversations and interactions throughout the research process, it was known that there were many active ministries already in operation. Akinlade and Shalack (2017) note that volunteers in mission-driven organizations are often accepted regardless of skill or utility. Often there were no real efforts for recruitment, and only values are matched (130-131). The data feedback from the congregation of Eastwood Church mirrored this idea. Volunteers were motivated by values but not always feeling skilled enough or supportive to pursue mission defined goals. As Akinlade and Shalack (2017) state, "..for-profit organizations emphasize 'rigorous' selection practices to ensure that the right type of people with the right knowledge, skills and abilities are selected, [mission driven organization] had less stringent selection practices" (131). Thus, there may have been a large pool of volunteers but there might not be knowledge of skill set or utility of the collective body. With that consideration, this recommendation provides a direct course and opportunity to become "…more attended to sensing and responding in the present moment by looking, listening, and anticipating in the unfolding conversation" (Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011).

Secondly, based on the data and an understanding of mission-driven organizations within the framework of relational leadership theory, an intentional increase in pastoral connectedness is necessary. This recommendation is situated within the ideas of Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) regarding the "…knowing-from-within and practical wisdom…" of relational leadership (p. 1441). They argued that relational leaders go out and talk with people, as well as include many voices in "…dialogue, questioning, listening, coming to some kind of shared meanings" (p. 1441). This recommendation also specifically addresses the weaknesses highlighted by congregant responses in the mobilized laity dimension, such as feeling actively involved in ministry, feeling affirmed in ministry, feeling important in church roles, and feeling encouraged in church and ministry involvement (See Appendix 1). Intentional pastoral connectedness provides direct support for each of these dimensional aspects.

Recommendation 2*: Encourage and facilitate self-knowledge and self-motivated participation of congregants.*

Another recommendation more directly addressed the *Mobilized Laity* construct. Questions within this construct specifically addressed individuals' personal assessment of their spiritual gifts, involvement, role importance, and the enjoyment and encouragement of tasks in the church. Whereas many of these areas of concern might be supported by the first recommendation, more specific actions were appropriate to fully address the scope of this dimension. First, the concern that individual roles within the context of the entire organization be noticed and encouraged. Warren (1995) suggests engaging the uniqueness of the individual and the role of servanthood as the structure for building healthy churches. This idea can be carried into active involvement and intentional teaching on the subject of individual uniqueness, and the idea of the body of Christ (a metaphor oft used for the purpose of understanding that

different body parts may be responsible for different things, i.e., have different roles, yet the body works in unity for broad scope purpose). Whereas these ideas are often mentioned in regular Sunday sermons, Sunday School lessons, and even worship music, intentional themed teaching should be added to the regular curriculum of Eastwood. This recommendation is situated within the relational leadership framework by directly supporting the relational structure as defined by Breedt and Niemandt (2013):

> The structure showed leaders in primary and secondary leadership relations…and although there is accountability to each other, everyone in the relationship takes full responsibility for his or her own ministry. (p. 7)

This recommendation provides congregants and leadership the ability to further fill and expand the relational structure chart as explained in Breedt and Niemandt (2013) (see Appendix 5).

Additionally, Bidee et al. (2012) found that volunteers that are more autonomous, or self-determined, will dedicate more effort to volunteer work (pp. 41-42). Based on the data from this study, a concerted effort to provide autonomy and increase determination, especially around a shared value system, should be pursued. Further, Bidee et al. (2012) conclude "…that volunteers benefit from environment in which they are offed a good reason for doing their tasks…" (p. 43). Such climates, according to Bidee et al. (2012) consider and value personal needs of volunteers, create challenging tasks, offer sufficient choice and space for personal decisions, and encourage volunteers to take initiative with the provision of constructive feedback (p. 43).

Within the context of feedback from the collected data, and in light of Warren (1995) and Bidee et al. (2012), this recommendation seeks to support understanding of church within the context of Ferris (2005). That context situates churches as unique with regard to multi-dimensional pursuits and faith. Encouraging and facilitating self-knowledge is possible in a

congregation if congregants are supported and connected to the leadership and each other. The

congregation is likely replete with experts and professionals in various fields. Congregants

could, therefore, be employed, within the context of service and ministry, to share interests and

expertise dynamically. Human psychology, spirituality, education, business, and various other

perspectives could be used in order to benefit and engage broad ranges of interested individuals.

Finally, the encouragement of individual talents would support individuals seeking their own

unique attributes (spiritual giftings) for the purpose of finding and being involved in an important

role (Q 17,38, 52), understanding and developing unique talents (Q 24), enjoying tasks (Q 31),

and being affirmed within the active roles of engagement (Q 6) (see Appendix 4).

These two recommendations are broad in their scope, somewhat complex, and

intentionally interactive. Improvement science provides methodology by which to approach

recommendations and pursuit of change within organizations. These recommendations are

supported within that context by the pursuits of change being user-centered and supported by the

engagement of the people (leadership and congregants) whose activities are the subject of change

(Bryk et al., 2015).

Recommendation 3*: Measure Church Health on a regular basis with the intent of continuous*

improvement.

One final recommendation includes a continual diagnostic relative to church health. Bryk

et al. (2015) argue that organizations cannot improve at a scale that cannot be measured (p. 90).

Additionally, according to Jones (2014), successful high-performance measurement cultures

require the collection of data and the incorporation of that data "…into organizational

assumptions, values, communications, and actions that create impact and excellence" (p. 26).

She cautions further that organizations be careful to not create a mirage of excellence and

success by collecting data and not testing improvement measures (pp. 26-27). Finally, Jones (2014) argues, "Great organizations go beyond simply gathering data. They analyze it, interpret it, and use it in everyday decision making" (p. 29). Based on the conclusions of Jones (2104) and the aforementioned recommendations, it is recommended that the modified BCQH used in this study (see Appendix 4) should be employed at regular intervals in order to receive continuous feedback data from the congregation of Eastwood Church. The purpose of this measure is two-fold. First, data from the original study will be maintained and utilized as a baseline, thus there will be comparative data within the constructs to determine the quality of the improvement efforts based on the first two recommendations. This provides for a measurable scale as suggested by Bryk et al. (2015). Secondly, leadership may use further diagnostics to understand the perspective of new members of the organization on a regular basis. This assures that recommendations are being scrutinized for quality and that older members are not monopolizing the data of congregational perceptions.

Limitations

This study was limited in that only 25% of organizational members participated. Additionally, only active members were surveyed. Future studies could include less active members, former members, and those who are unable to physically attend church services and/or events.

Conclusion

This study continues research that support relationships as key in understanding the systems of an organization and how it is designed to produce its current outcomes. Churches, as uniquely designed organizations within the NPO designation, are particularly situated to benefit from special attention to relationships as both integral parts of the organizational system and tools to be used for the purpose of continual improvement (Young & Firmin 2014).

This study was born from the desire of Pastor Lopez to understand the congregants' perceptions beyond what could be deciphered from the hard data of attendance and financial support. That desire, in and of itself, suggests a move toward a more relational approach to leadership in practice. The Beeson Church Health Questionnaire (BCHQ) provided a quantitative measure of multiple dimensions of relationship that was broad both in scope and well supported in the literature. Leadership seeking feedback from an instrument such as the BCHQ is an example of what Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) call "knowing-from-within and practical wisdom" (p. 1441). This study represented a strong desire of the Pastor to involve congregant voices in "…dialogue, questioning, listening, coming to some kind of shared meaning" (p. 1441). The findings of the study seek to continue that effort.

The recommendations from this study were born from a desire to continue the development and maintenance of relationships across the dimensions of church health. The leadership of Eastwood Church now possess quantitative data that communicate areas of relationship that stand to benefit from intentional engagement. The efforts of this study have empowered leadership with broad opportunities and insight from data and offered a pathway to continual improvement. From the first recommendation, intentional training opportunities and

pastoral connectedness are broad enough that specific measures may be attempted and measured using the third recommendation. The second recommendation, the facilitation of self-knowledge and self-motivated participation, can be designed and measured in the same way.

Fundamentally, the benefit of the outcomes of this study were twofold:

1. Creating an understanding of the current perceptions of congregants.

2. Creating a baseline from which to measure future improvement efforts.

This baseline data can be used to process very broad interventions, such as the first two recommendations, or it could be narrowed to specific responses within the data, such as addressing the content of a single topic question within the questionnaire. Regardless of the future goals of leadership, the baseline and continual data will assist in providing measurable goals.

Finally, it is the hope of the researcher that this study will promote a continuation of relational leadership in practice for the life of Eastwood Church. It is evident that the church as an organization has staying power in that its rich history is long and consistent; however, the desire of leadership is to broaden the church's scope of impact. This desire is one that can expand the influence of the church and increase the richness of its history. By providing dialogue through data, the process of continual improvement supported by the findings and recommendations of this study empower the leadership to further the mission of Eastwood Church beyond mere examinations of attendance and income.

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Appendix 1

BEESON CHURCH HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

> **INSTRUCTIONS:** Listed below are 54 statements that describe characteristics of our church and your relationship to it followed by 13 personal questions. Please rate your perceptions of the strength of each characteristic by using the scale provided and writing the appropriate number in the box to the right of the statement. Your responses will be treated confidentially, and your participation will help our church leaders be better informed as we seek to discern future strategic initiatives for our church.

5	4	3	2	1
STRONGLY AGREE	**MODERATELY AGREE**	**NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE**	**MODERATELY DISAGREE**	**STRONGLY DISAGREE**

1. I enjoy getting together with other people from my church outside of church events..
2. The leaders of our church seem rather defensive.* ....
3. I find the sermons convicting, challenging, and encouraging to my walk with God. ....
4. Our church has a very clear purpose and well-defined values...
5. My local church actively reaches out to its neighborhood through spiritual and community service. ....
6. My church affirms me in my ministry tasks. ....
7. I regularly practice the spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible study, fasting, and meditation).
8. I have a close enough relationship with several people in my church that I can discuss my deepest concerns with them. ....
9. Our church is led by individual(s) who articulate vision and achieve results..
10. I find the worship services spiritually inspiring..
11. Our church clearly communicates our mission statement. ....
12. Prayer is a highlight of the worship service...
13. Tithing is a priority in my life.
14. New ministry ideas are normally appreciated and encouraged..

15. The music in the church services helps me worship God. ....

5	4	3	2	1
STRONGLY AGREE	MODERATELY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	MODERATELY DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

16. I do not know my church's plans and direction for the years ahead.*..

17. I am actively involved in a ministry of this church. ....

18. Our church relies upon the power and presence of God to accomplish ministry. ....

19. My prayer life reflects a deep dependence on God concerning the practical aspects of life.

20. I have experienced a lot of joy and laughter in our church..

21. There are few training opportunities in our church.* ....

22. The worship at this church is so inspiring that I would like to invite my friends. ....

23. This church teaches that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven..

24. I do not know my spiritual gift(s).*..

25. There is a sense of expectation surrounding our church...

26. Our church has a clear process that develops people's spiritual gift(s). ....

27. I experience deep, honest relationships with a few other people in my church......................................

28. The lay people of our church receive frequent training. ....

29. Excellence is an important value in how we accomplish ministry. ....

30. This church shows the love of Christ in practical ways..

31. I enjoy the tasks I do in the church. ....

32. There is an atmosphere of generosity within our church..

33. I would describe my personal spiritual life as growing.

34. The love and acceptance I have experienced inspires me to invite others to my church........................

35. I look forward to attending worship services at this church. ....

5	4	3	2	1
STRONGLY AGREE	**MODERATELY AGREE**	**NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE**	**MODERATELY DISAGREE**	**STRONGLY DISAGREE**

36. I have confidence in the management and spending of our church's financial resources. ....

37. In our church the importance of sharing Christ is often discussed. ....

38. I feel that my role in the church is very important...

39. Our church emphasizes the person and presence of the Holy Spirit...

40. My church needs to place more emphasis on the power of prayer.*

41. The leaders and members of our church enjoy and trust one another...

42. When I leave a worship service, I feel like I have "connected" with other worshippers.......................................

43. My church is open to changes that would increase our ability to reach and disciple people..................................

44. Our church has very few programs that appeal to non-Christians.* ....

45. I share my faith with non-believing family and friends...

46. This church operates through the power and presence of God...

47. I rarely consult God's word to find answers to life's issues.* ....

48. The leaders of our church seem to be available when needed. ....

49. We have an effective and efficient decision-making process in my church. ....

50. When I leave a worship service, I feel I have had a meaningful experience with God. ....

51. People rarely come to know Jesus Christ as their savior in our church.* ....

52. The teaching ministry of this church encourages me to be involved in ministry. ....

53. I currently enjoy a greater intimacy with God than at any other time in my life..

54. I believe that interpersonal conflict or misconduct is dealt with appropriately and in a biblical manner................

BEESON CHURCH HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS SCALES

AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

1. I enjoy getting together with other people from my church outside of church events

8. I have a close enough relationship with several people in my church that I can discuss my deepest concerns with them.

54. I believe that interpersonal conflict or misconduct is dealt with appropriately and in a biblical manner.

20. I have experienced a lot of joy and laughter in our church.

27. I experience deep, honest relationships with a few other people in my church.

34. The love and acceptance I have experienced inspires me to invite others to my church.

EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

41. The leaders and members of our church enjoy and trust one another.

48. The leaders of our church seem to be available when needed.

2. The leaders of our church seem rather defensive.

9. Our church is led by individual(s) who articulate vision and achieve results.

14. New ministry ideas are normally appreciated and encouraged.

21. There are few training opportunities in our church.

28. The lay people of our church receive frequent training.

ENGAGING WORSHIP

35. I look forward to attending worship services at this church.

42. When I leave a worship service, I feel like I have "connected" with other worshippers.

50. When I leave a worship service, I feel I have had a meaningful experience with God.

3. I find the sermons convicting, challenging, and encouraging to my walk with God.

10. I find the worship services spiritually inspiring.

15. The music in the church services helps me worship God.

22. The worship at this church is so inspiring that I would like to invite my friends.

FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURES

29. Excellence is an important value in how we accomplish ministry.

36. I have confidence in the management and spending of our church's financial resources.

43. My church is open to changes that would increase our ability to reach and disciple people.

49. We have an effective and efficient decision-making process in my church.

4. Our church has a very clear purpose and well-defined values.

11. Our church clearly communicates our mission statement.

16. I do not know my church's plans and direction for the years ahead.

INTENTIONAL EVANGELISM

23. This church teaches that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven.

30. This church shows the love of Christ in practical ways.

37. In our church the importance of sharing Christ is often discussed.

44. Our church has very few programs that appeal to non-Christians.

51. People rarely come to know Jesus Christ as their savior in our church.

5. My local church actively reaches out to its neighborhood through spiritual and community service.

45. I share my faith with non-believing family and friends.

MOBILIZED LAITY

17. I am actively involved in a ministry of this church.

24. I do not know my spiritual gift(s).

31. I enjoy the tasks I do in the church.

38. I feel that my role in the church is very important.

6. My church affirms me in my ministry tasks.

56. The teaching ministry of this church encourages me to be involved in ministry.

PASSIONATE SPIRITUALITY

12. Prayer is a highlight of the worship service.

18. Our church relies upon the power and presence of God to accomplish ministry.

25. There is a sense of expectation surrounding our church.

32. There is an atmosphere of generosity within our church.

39. Our church emphasizes the person and presence of the Holy Spirit.

46. This church operates through the power and presence of God.

53. I currently enjoy a greater intimacy with God than at any other time in my life.

TRANSFORMING DISCIPLESHIP

7. I regularly practice the spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible study, fasting, and meditation).

13. Tithing is a priority in my life.

19. My prayer life reflects a deep dependence on God concerning the practical aspects of life.

26. Our church has a clear process that develops people's spiritual gift(s).

33. I would describe my personal spiritual life as growing.

40. My church needs to place more emphasis on the power of prayer.

47. I rarely consult God's word to find answers to life's issues.

Appendix 2

Milton Lowe <milton.lowe@asburyseminary.edu>
Mon 11/4/2019 1:57 PM
Trahan, Jimmy F ⩔

> Church Health Questionnaire...
> 34 KB

Thanks for your request Jimmy. You have permission from the DMIN Office at Asbury Theological Seminary to use the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire. Our only request is that, once you have used it, you share your results with us so we can continue to validate the instrument.

Please be aware that using only part of the questionnaire or modifying some of the questions may negatively impact its reliability and validity.

Attached is a Word doc version of the instrument.

Blessings!
--
Milton Lowe, D.Min.
DMIN Associate Director and Academic Coach
Asbury Theological Seminary
204 N Lexington Ave
Wilmore, KY 40390-1199
milton.lowe@asburyseminary.edu
O (859) 858-2146
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Appendix 3

November 1, 2019

Jimmy F Trahan
PO Box 5381
Lake Charles, LA 70606
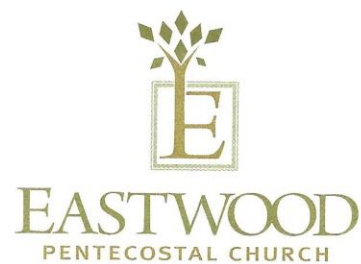
Dear Jimmy,

We are excited to authorize you to work with us at Eastwood Pentecostal Church for your doctoral capstone project.

We look forward to understanding more about where we are as an organization, and utilizing the information gleaned from your research to inform us on how to best approach our future goals.

We look forward to working together on this project.

Sincerely,

Rev. Aaron K. Lopez
Pastor, Eastwood Pentecostal Church

Appendix 4

BEESON CHURCH HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

EASTWOOD PENTECOSTAL CHURCH MODIFIED VERSION

> **INSTRUCTIONS:** Listed below are 54 statements that describe characteristics of our church and your relationship to it. Please rate your perceptions of the strength of each characteristic by using the scale provided and writing the appropriate number in the box to the right of the statement. Your responses will be treated confidentially, and your participation will help our church leaders be better informed as we seek to discern future strategic initiatives for our church.

5	4	3	2	1
STRONGLY AGREE	**MODERATELY AGREE**	**NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE**	**MODERATELY DISAGREE**	**STRONGLY DISAGREE**

1. I enjoy getting together with other people from my church outside of church events..

2. The leaders of our church seem rather defensive. ....

3. I find the sermons convicting, challenging, and encouraging to my walk with God. ....

4. Our church has a very clear purpose and well-defined values..

5. My local church actively reaches out to its neighborhood through spiritual and community service. ....

6. My church affirms me in my ministry tasks..

7. I regularly practice the spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible study, fasting, and meditation).

8. I have a close enough relationship with several people in my church with whom I can discuss deep concerns. ....

9. Our church is led by individual(s) who articulate vision and achieve results...

10. I find the worship services spiritually inspiring..

11. Our church clearly communicates our mission statement. ....

12. Prayer is a highlight of the worship service...

13. Tithing is a priority in my life.

14. New ministry ideas are normally appreciated and encouraged..

15. The music in the church services helps me worship God...

5	4	3	2	1
STRONGLY AGREE	**MODERATELY AGREE**	**NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE**	**MODERATELY DISAGREE**	**STRONGLY DISAGREE**

16. I do not know my church's plans and direction for the years ahead...

17. I am actively involved in a ministry of this church. ....

18. Our church relies upon the power and presence of God to accomplish ministry. ....

19. My prayer life reflects a deep dependence on God concerning the practical aspects of life.

20. I have experienced a lot of joy and laughter in our church..

21. There are few training opportunities in our church. ....

22. The worship at this church is so inspiring that I would like to invite my friends. ....

23. This church teaches that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven...

24. I do not know my spiritual gift(s). ....

25. There is a sense of expectation surrounding our church...

26. Our church has a clear process that develops people's spiritual gift(s). ....

27. I experience deep, honest relationships with a few other people in my church.......................................

28. The lay people of our church receive frequent training. ....

29. Excellence is an important value in how we accomplish ministry. ....

30. This church shows the love of Christ in practical ways..

31. I enjoy the tasks I do in the church. ....

32. There is an atmosphere of generosity within our church...

33. I would describe my personal spiritual life as growing.

34. The love and acceptance I have experienced inspires me to invite others to my church..........................

35. I look forward to attending worship services at this church. ....

5	4	3	2	1
STRONGLY AGREE	MODERATELY AGREE	NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE	MODERATELY DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE

36. I have confidence in the management and spending of our church's financial resources. ....

37. In our church the importance of sharing Christ is often discussed. ....

38. I feel that my role in the church is very important..

39. Our church emphasizes Baptism in Jesus' Name and the infilling of the Holy Ghost. ....

40. My church needs to place more emphasis on the power of prayer.

41. The leaders and members of our church enjoy and trust one another...

42. When I leave a worship service, I feel like I have "connected" with other worshippers.......................................

43. My church is open to changes that would increase our ability to reach and disciple people.................................

44. Our church has very few programs that appeal to non-Christians. ....

45. I share my faith with non-believing family and friends..

46. This church operates through the power and presence of God...

47. I rarely consult God's word to find answers to life's issues. ....

48. The leaders of our church seem to be available when needed...

49. We have an effective and efficient decision-making process in my church. ....

50. When I leave a worship service, I feel I have had a meaningful experience with God. ....

51. People rarely come to know Jesus Christ as their savior in our church..

52. The teaching ministry of this church encourages me to be involved in ministry. ....

53. I currently enjoy a greater intimacy with God than at any other time in my life...

54. I believe that interpersonal conflict or misconduct is dealt with appropriately and in a biblical manner................