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Pentecostal Catechism: Observing the Effectiveness of Short-Term Missions Trips to Initiate Spiritual Growth in the Lives of Teenagers

Project Adviser: Dr. Joe Castleberry

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Joe Castleberry

Churches in the United States invest a substantial amount of time, effort, and money into short-term missions trips. Detractors of these trips state that these trips do not provide a lasting impact in the communities they visit. On the other hand, supporters of such trips often posit that participants experience a positive change as a result of the missions trip. This study sought to confirm or negate the existence of change in upper-middle class high school who participated in a short-term missions trip.

This study partnered with Cedar Park Christian School, a ministry of Cedar Park Assembly of God, as they launched a missions week for high school students. The primary model used to compare change in participants was Cheryl Bridges Johns' Pentecostal catechism in conjunction with Paulo Freire's conscientization through praxis and Juan Luis Segundo's hermeneutical circle. Each participant received a one-week Devotional Booklet to encourage biblical reflection in the area of personal spiritual growth and to present scriptural instructions regarding caring for the poor. The Devotional Booklet incorporated a Pre- and Post-trip Assessment whereby to ascertain the participants' level of change as a result of participating in the missions trip.

The qualitative and quantitative data both indicated the following: (1) participants experience a deepening faith and commitment to the Lord, (2) participants acquired a greater awareness of the social situations in the locations they visited; and (3) participants exhibited an increase in the biblically-based desire to provide help to people in poverty.



STANLEY CHARLES COOK

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Nurturing Disciples on their Journeys Toward Spiritual Formation and Personal Wholeness

Project Adviser: Dr. Charlie Self

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

Jesus called the disciples, and they left everything to follow Him. He taught them, trained them, and showed them how to be His disciples and how to make new disciples. His final command to them was to make disciples wherever they went. Today, however, the command to become disciples and make new disciples appears to have a watered-down meaning. Yet the call to becoming a disciple has a clear, biblical path for believers to follow, and following that call is a must.

This project explored how disciples should mature throughout their spiritual journey. The project involved teachings developed from the sixteen outcomes identified by the dimensions of spiritual formation and personal wholeness in the Discipleship Dynamics Assessment. From the biblical-theological research, lessons were developed into a weekly classroom structure to benefit Trinity Chapel Assembly of God members. The weekly sessions underscored the assessment and brought to light the need for whole-life, discipleship practices.



JESÚS TEODORE GALINDO III

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Creating an Online Platform for Christian Education through Wilson College for Spanish-speaking Apostolic Pentecostals

Project Adviser: Dr. Nathaniel Wilson
Biblical Adviser: Dr. James Hernando

The issue of immigration continues to hover at the forefront of society. Whether in politics, society, or faith groups, the topic provides a challenge to every strata of American society. Immigrants from Spanish-speaking nations are pouring into the United States, and with them come new tests straining at the fabric of this country. Many immigrants come with strong cultural moorings and minimal, if any, education. This lack of education is trapping immigrants into an economic malaise that inhibits their ability to advance in American society.

This project examined how Wilson College created a department within their academic structure where Spanish-speaking only individuals can pursue educational opportunities. The project included the participation of Wilson College administration, faculty, and staff, newly enrolled students, pastors and ministers, professional translators, and many other bilingual individuals to bring it to fruition. Results saw the genesis of a program that ultimately will be offering degrees in time that are completely in the Spanish language, 100 percent online, and with affordable tuition.

The empowering aspects of the Holy Spirit coupled with education create a new dynamic in a people whose cultural value system has minimized education. Based upon responses in the surveys completed by the first group of students that completed the initial phase of implementation, their confidence has increased after successfully completing the first phase of classes. Many have embraced the process and overcome preconceived notions about education that were placed on them by their Hispanic culture.



KELLEY S. GOINS

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Spirit Empowerment in the Twenty-First Century: Exploring Biblical Spirit Baptism in the Context of a Spiritual Community

Project Adviser: Dr. Charlie Self

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Mike Rakes

Many pastors and churches today have a fear of the Holy Spirit, feeling unsure of how to present the Holy Spirit in a context that is biblical and not sensational. Due to a lack of biblical exegesis and education, many simply relegate the Holy Spirit's power to salvation and neglect the baptism in the Holy Spirit altogether.

This project uses biblical-theological research along with a contemporary literature review to present a biblical approach to receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. By looking at the episodes of Holy Spirit involvement throughout Scripture, this research shows that the Holy Spirit has been present and active since Creation. Furthermore, modern literature and empirical data show how people best receive the Holy Spirit when atmosphere, expectation, and proximity are encouraged.

To address this problem, I created and presented a series of teachings at Faith Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, over the course of four weeks. This series included teaching in the Sunday morning worship service, a Holy Spirit Lab was offered in the evening so participants could pray and wait on the Holy Spirit. I also distributed a survey on the Holy Spirit to strengthen this teaching series with over 1,600 participants.

The results of the survey showed an increase in the participants' understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and a strong increase on four questions. As a result, many people experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit during the teaching series and in the months that followed.



ELEANORE RANILDE KUE

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Healing Churches: Empowering Pastors to use Prevention of Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases as a Tool to Heal the Sick and Plant Churches

Project Adviser: Dr. Johan Mostert
Biblical Adviser: Dr. Roger Cotton

Communicable and non-communicable diseases are a global concern, especially in Africa. This project designed a seminar to teach pastors and lay leaders about the biblical foundation regarding the role of the Church in the area of health promotion and healing. It provided education regarding disease prevention and health promotion by addressing the burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, and physical injuries, such as intimate partner violence. The project focused on the health concerns most applicable to the Sub-Saharan context.

The seminar took place in Malawi, Africa, on September 9-11, 2019. Twelve pastors and church leaders completed the seminar. All participants completed a pretest and posttest to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. A comparison of data acquired in the pretest and posttest indicated a statistically significant change ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that the seminar significantly increased the knowledge of the participants. The participants evaluated both the seminar content and the speaker as excellent and recommended that this training be incorporated into their pastoral preparation curriculum. Pastoral leaders who participated in the seminar grasped how implementing this information in their churches and local communities could help church growth as well as serve as a means of church planting. Future partnership with Africa's Hope and Global University will provide additional venues for offering this seminar in other Bible Schools across Sub-Saharan Africa.



PETER THOMAS LANDERS

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Tapping into Human Design: A Chaplain's Biblical Approach to Restoring Identity in the Lives of Distressed Airmen and Inmates

Project Adviser: Dr. Manuel Cordero

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Jim Hernando

A war wages for the identity of future Americans. Countless distressed individuals flood into institutions like the prison and the military seeking help. People have painstakingly constructed identity with faulty crafted images. Chaplains and the Church are not without blame in this epidemic and have given insufficient attention to identity creation and development. This project seeks to restore identity in the lives of airmen and inmates to the biblical model in addition to reestablishing it as the centerpiece of effective discipleship.

As a prospective remedy, the project developed a biblical-theological blueprint for identity. Society and self-crafted images often contradict with God's biblical design for humanity. The imbalance in identity causes distress and leads people to divergent, distorted, and destructive identities. Additionally, the general literature review explored current views and theories on the development of identity, including issues related to birth family, genetic elements and environment, and societal influences.

As a result, participants experienced a dramatic shift in perspective concerning faith and identity. This shift brought with it a renewed commitment to exploring self and God's plan for identity.

Ministers of God must partner with people in restoring biblical identity. When believers develop sound biblical identities unmasking faulty definitions and designs of self, family, and society, imbalance and distress are alleviated.



KRISTI ANN LEMLEY

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Ablaze: Preparing the Heart for Personal and Corporate Revival Utilizing the Actions in 2 Chronicles 7:14

Project Adviser: Dr. Carolyn Tennant
Biblical Adviser: Dr. Roger Cotton

Out of the heart flows life (Prov 4:23). If life is not flowing in a believer of Christ, then God is not at the center. Revival is the means God uses to renew life to His people. There are multiple reasons why peoples' hearts are not prepared for revival, preventing them from possessing a willing and surrendered heart before the Lord. These reasons include wanting control of their own life, lack of focus, complacency, and love of the world. The purpose of this project was to prepare people's hearts for personal and corporate revival in order to walk in the power and purpose resembling the Book of Acts.

The method of this project was a six-hour conference presenting the pattern of believers turning their hearts from the Lord and God then responding with revival, characteristics of biblical and contemporary revival, and laying out the actions called for in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

When given this information and time for personal reflection and prayer, hearts changed. The results revealed three people rededicating their hearts to the Lord, deliverance from the enemy and his lies, repentance, physical healing, new life and energy to seek after God, and witnessing the transforming power of the Spirit. This project has the potential to prepare the hearts of God's people to experience revival, provide biblical teaching on revival, and stir the Church to the purpose of completing the command of Jesus in the Great Commission.



RAFAEL MACHUCA

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Recognizing Signs of Spiritual Distress: Equipping Healthcare Providers and Caregivers to Assess and Make Referrals for Holistic Care in the Northwest Arkansas Community

Project Adviser: Dr. Peggy Wobbema

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Roger Cotton

It is not uncommon for a person to experience visiting a friend or family member in a medical facility or nursing home, or to take care of someone facing an illness at home. Regardless of where a patient is receiving care, it is normal to see them trying to handle their physical situation along with every other aspect of their well-being: spiritual, emotional, and mental. Those who choose to work in a medical profession are likely to regularly witness patients struggling with all these personal aspects. This project addresses the spiritual distress patients can experience which, although not physical, can cause real pain. This project clears up the vagueness and mystery surrounding the application of spiritual care within a medical setting by providing information and tangible skills that can be utilized to best support a patient spiritually struggling.

This project supports a holistic approach to healthcare, specifically focusing on spirituality. The educational model utilized helps individuals learn several signs of spiritual distress that may be displayed by patients. It also provides information regarding spiritual distress from the viewpoints of a variety of belief systems. Additionally, options are provided to help support patients, including how to refer them to a chaplain and make contact with a spiritual leader who can provide a holistic approach to care.

Addressing the spirituality of patients helps those who are spiritually struggling and provides hope and strength for them to cope with their present medical situation. Moreover, holistic care provides an extra layer of support that will help in the overall well-being of patients.



PAUL R. MCDONALD

Northern Missouri District Treasurer & Business Administrator; Columbia, MO

The Implementation of Effective Internal Controls in the District Affiliated Churches of the Northern Missouri District Council of the Assemblies of God

Project Adviser: Dr. Don Detrick

Biblical Adviser: Dr. David Clark

Under the oversight of the Northern Missouri District Council of the Assemblies of God, all dependent District Affiliated Churches (DAC) are required to submit quarterly financial reports. However, financial accountability and reporting to the District Office is often inconsistent, inaccurate, and unsubstantiated. District Affiliated Churches with poor financial internal controls are vulnerable to fraud and at risk of permanent damage to the reputation of the pastor and congregation. In response to the inadequate financial reporting to the district and the concern over weak internal controls, the District Council in session passed a resolution requiring all District Affiliated Churches to secure and maintain a software accounting system through the district's authorized provider.

This project provided two identical eight-hour weekend seminars designed specifically for District Affiliated Church pastors and spouses, and their treasurers (or other church leaders). Analysis of the pretest and posttest questionnaire data indicated that the seminar enabled participants to more adequately define biblical stewardship. Furthermore, they grew in their understanding of the importance of financial internal control systems and learned how to use a software accounting system to ensure consistent fiscal reporting to the district, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability. This project can serve as a resource for other Assemblies of God pastors, districts, and other denominations as it affirms the importance of efficient and effective internal control systems in the local church.



JAMES TIMOTHY MERRITT

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Pastor, Midway Pentecostal Church; Jena, LA
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Redemptive Lift: A Workshop to Equip Apostolic Believers to Experience and Share the Message of Redemption

Project Adviser: Dr. Nathan Wilson
Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

Many congregants suffer in numerous ways from life's baggage and the oppressive struggles of life, including having little to no concept of stability, whether in their finances, faith, families, and/or occupations. They need to understand and experience the qualities and characteristics of redemptive lift so they can more fully embrace the positive benefits of their redemptive relationship with Christ.

Life Tabernacle in Baton Rouge, Louisiana provided an example of holistic redemptive leadership that creates redemptive lift in the lives of believers. The data gathered from Life Tabernacle was used to prepare the workshop at Truthway Church. From field research conducted at Life Tabernacle in March 2019 through a survey instrument and interviews, a Redemptive Lift workshop was developed for and conducted at Truthway Church in Pineville, Louisiana on September 28, 2019. The purpose of the workshop was to educate and equip apostolic believers to experience and share the message of redemption.

The redemptive lift workshop showed the need for Pentecostal believers to understand the process of historical redemptive theology, the concept of redemptive leadership, and the resulting redemptive lift experience. Workshop participants exhibited a significant increase in their knowledge and understanding of redemptive leadership and the resulting redemptive lift experience, which resulted in their ability to better minister to and serve their communities.



HERSCHEL HINTON ROSSER

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Prioritizing Spiritual Formation to Grow Disciple-Making Communities: A Seminar for Vineyard Church Planters and Leaders

Project Adviser: Dr. Gary Allen

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

Much of the American Church praxis fails to give discipleship the primacy accorded in Scripture and instead advocates culturized concepts of success. Church leaders influenced by these practices find themselves pressured by unhealthy definitions of pastoring. The methods derived from such success strategies often result in disappointing outcomes. Alternatively, embracing spiritual formation practices honors biblical principles and offers the best path to churches for healthy numerical and spiritual growth.

Utilizing a review of biblical theology, contemporary literature, and pastoral experience, this project provided a one-day seminar for twelve ministers. It stressed growing disciple-making communities through formation practices and addressed biblical understanding, motivation, unhealthy pressures, and resources. An interview preceded the seminar, and two coaching sessions with ten participants followed it.

Pretest and posttest measurements, an evaluation instrument, and the post-seminar sessions indicated appreciation for the seminar and growth of the participants in motivation for enhancing spiritual formation and discipleship in their ministries and lives. The responses also provided suggestions for future training and continued discussions.

Churches that adopt the goal of effective disciple-making transcend unproductive practices and attain the ability to significantly affect the wider community. With this in mind, further research should include creating a clearer understanding of various discipleship strategies to recommend to pastors and church planters.



SHANE GLEN SCHLESMAN

Lead Pastor, West End Assembly of God; Richmond, VA

The Passing Zone: Building an Intergenerational Leadership Team

Project Adviser: Dr. Byron Klaus

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Wally Kowalski

West End Assembly of God (WEAG) in Richmond, Virginia, has a rich history spanning fifty years. WEAG is characterized by an increasingly diverse body of multiple generations, cultures, and ethnicities. However, since 2004, WEAG has been in plateau and has experienced subsequent decline. The church of 1,600 needed an intergenerational leadership team to effectively lead a five-generation church into the next phase of growth and change. Through a thorough study of intergenerational leadership teams, this project revealed that healthy and scriptural churches remain intergenerational while aging churches that refuse to empower young people to lead will lose younger generations and speed decline.

Because churches like WEAG struggle with cultural change, this project also addresses the roadblocks to retaining and developing younger generations into leaders ready to propel the church into the future. Through three events—Collide, an intergenerational symposium; a pastoral retreat; and a Lost Generation Forum—this project dissects issues regarding generational preferences, conflicts, and leadership decisions, while affirming that intergenerational churches are built through mentorship and shared leadership responsibilities. Through intentional relationships, teaching, and re-organization, WEAG has changed its leadership structure to elevate young leaders and establish lasting transformation. This project models for churches everywhere the importance of elder leaders creating a culture of intergenerational, servant leadership while providing a pathway to reach future generations.



CHAD ARIC SLOTTA

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Addressing Conflict Successfully: A Conflict Skills Training Program to Equip Pastors and Congregational Leaders

Project Adviser: Dr. Earl Creps
Biblical Adviser: Dr. Roger Cotton

Although pastors and congregational leaders will encounter interpersonal conflict in the course of their lives and ministries, most receive little or no conflict engagement training prior to assuming their respective ministry roles. Whereas ill-equipped church leaders endure the negative consequences of poorly handled destructive conflict, those who develop relative mastery of biblical conflict engagement skills effectively leverage the positive potential of constructive conflict and advance God's Kingdom.

This project traces the motif of conflict through Scripture and then passes business-related, church-related, and scholarly literature through the filter of God's Word to yield an educational and skills development training program to equip pastors and congregational leaders to more successfully address conflict. When church leaders possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to conflict engagement, they more readily choose to address, not avoid interpersonal conflict when it arises.

The training program produced by this project's research proved effective with statistical significance. Survey results received from leaders in two international church networks confirmed the inadequacy of current conflict engagement training within the church and offered anecdotal insights into common causes of conflict in the local church. An evaluation of the results of the training suggests that church leaders at all levels should ensure and, when practical, require their fellow ministers to develop biblical conflict engagement skills.



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Cultivating Leadership Opportunities for African-Americans in the Assemblies Of God

Project Adviser: Dr. Carolyn Tennant
Biblical Adviser: Dr. Jim Hernando

The United States Assemblies of God has been celebrated as one of the most diverse Christian organizations in America, nearly mirroring the nation's ethnic population demographically. This diversity has emerged from the growth and development of multiethnic congregations, as well as the expansion of black, Spanish-speaking, Asian, and various immigrant congregations. Despite the healthy diversity within the constituency of the Assemblies of God, however, an overall lack of diversity within district leadership prevails. While the sixty-seven districts of the Fellowship may have African Americans serving at various levels of leadership, only two black individuals serve as duly-elected district executives

At the district leadership level, ordained credential holders are elected into positions of leadership. In response to the lack of diversity at this level, this project seeks to cultivate pathways to recognize, appoint, promote, and ultimately elect African Americans into such positions of leadership through a set of interviews with innovative leaders and two appreciative inquiry (AI) workshops with the Great Lakes Regional Superintendents Cohort of the Assemblies of God. Further, this project examines the biblical principles behind placing minority leaders into positions of influence as well as examines the contemporary literature to gain insights into successfully cultivating leaders of color, various ethnic backgrounds, and both genders.