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Ministry Self-care: Equipping Ministry Leaders to Live Life to the Fullest by Consistently Living the Two Greatest Commandments

Project Adviser: Dr. Randy Walls

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Carolyn Tennant

Individuals encounter the impact of day-to-day rapid pace and hectic lifestyles, and everyone experiences demanding schedules which evoke personal challenges and difficulties. Ministry leaders pose no exception. They may do well following and serving God in one or more parts of life yet lack in other areas. However, purposeful attention to living out the aspects of Jesus's two greatest commandments will prove a catalyst of perpetual transformation in the life of the minister and lead to the kind of abundant life Jesus promised.

This project examines the mandates of loving God heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving one's neighbor as oneself. The crux of the project is a training module utilized as a tool for self-care to encourage and equip ministry leaders. Important insights developed as a result of over one hundred ministry leaders' responses to a personal assessment. Their answers reflect a lack of regular participation in a Sabbath's rest. They also struggle to live out the mandates related to loving God with one's strength such as maintaining desirable weight and physical condition, as well as maintaining consistent exercise routines.

Ideally, those who participate in this training will improve their spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health. The end result will be less stress and burnout with an increase in longevity of ministry and a greater sense of daily living out the abundant life.



GUY R. CALEY

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Passing the Torch: A Basic Preaching Workshop in Two Missouri Churches

Project Adviser: Dr. Charlie Self

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Jim Railey

The predominant method for ministry formation in the contemporary church consists of a course of study in a Bible college or seminary. While this has been and will continue to be an effective method for theological education, it does not work for everyone called to ministry. Some people for financial or practical reasons cannot follow this path. Others exploring a call to ministry may benefit from ministry experience but need some basic instruction to minister well as they seek to discern their vocation. Even those who are pursuing or have completed a formal theological education may benefit from developing ministry skills in a local church environment. This project was designed to explore one method to give ministry candidates basic instruction in one ministry skill (preaching) and then allow them to do ministry, get feedback, and improve.

The project research includes a biblical theology of ministry formation focusing on ministry leaders preparing the next generation of leadership. The project is also informed by research into adult education theory, church-based models of ministry formation, and pedagogy of preaching.

The project consisted of a preaching workshop in two Missouri churches with a six-hour classroom seminar and a preaching assignment for each participant which was critiqued by the instructor and peer-learners. Although the workshop content was specific to preaching, it could be adapted to develop many other ministry skills such as children's ministry or leading worship.



LISA COLLINS CLEMENTS

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Leading North Dallas Assembly to Become a Conversion Community

Project Adviser: Dr. Mark Hausfeld
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Congregants frequently harbor dated images of what it means to evangelize, such as holding tent crusades, knocking on doors, and handing out tracts. While these methods worked in the past, society has changed significantly. What now works best is what worked two thousand years ago: building relationships with others and having organic conversations about faith and life. As this project demonstrates, believers at North Dallas Assembly possess a desire to share the good news. They simply needed some guidance about how to approach it; they needed to learn how to become a conversion community.

Through a two-part workshop and four-part sermon series, that gave an overview of the Biblical reason for Evangelization and practical tools to aid in the endeavor. These tools included the Outreach Temperature Card, which allows the person to evaluate where they are in their missional journey. The four-part sermon series presented Jesus's example of choosing leadership, eating with sinners, and seeing those who are marginalized and disabled. Even though many on the team have had a relationship with Jesus for a long time, the project has reignited their passion to tell others the good news. They have once again embraced the edict to go and tell others. Not only are the mature believers excited to share their faith, but the new believers are also embracing this call. They now understand the biblical truth that their faith is not a personal issue to be kept to themselves; they must share it with others. As a result of this project, North Dallas Assembly is well on its way to becoming a conversion community.



SUSAN ELIZABETH COMISKEY

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Helping Missionaries Build Effective Ministry Marriage Practice: A Video Series Designed to Equip Victory Family Centre Missionaries Worldwide

Project Adviser: Dr. Cheryl Taylor
Biblical Adviser: Dr. Byron Klaus

Throughout the history of the Church, intrepid missionaries have gone to disciple the nations. Victory Family Centre (VFC) Singapore takes the mandate of Matthew 28:19 seriously, and for over forty years has sent her people to live out a call to missions.

This project aims to provide a fresh and more comprehensive targeted training approach as to how VFC Singapore prepares its married missionaries for ministry overseas, giving specific attention to how married couples will manage the intersection of married life and ministry while living and serving in a culture profoundly different to home. The project training material draws from a critical investigation of the biblical-theological understanding of marriage coupled with a comprehensive review of general literature available on living and working abroad, either as a missionary or secular expatriate.

A six-session training seminar was devised consisting of lecture material, discussion questions, and reflection exercises—all designed to educate, inform, and prepare married couples for successful missionary service. The married missionary seminar was tested with both pre-field and on-field VFC missionaries, and findings show that significant learning took place. Targeted thoughtful training serves as a key to flourishing missionary service; this project provides an important tool as VFC Singapore continues to go into all the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.



KENNETH W. DRAUGHON

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Church Priorities Reset: Resetting Alabama Assembly of God Churches to the New Testament Paradigm of Engaging Culture

Project Adviser: Dr. Mel Ming

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

The health of the North American church is at stake. In the Assemblies of God (AG), 80 percent of churches are either plateaued or declining. Likewise, in Alabama, 30 percent of the Fellowship's churches are plateaued and slightly more than 50 percent are declining. Pastors of these churches feel frustrated and discouraged, as they struggle to determine what they need to do to reverse this downward spiral. These churches have an identity crisis in that they no longer identify with the New Testament model of community impact and engagement with the gospel.

This project, the Church Priorities Reset Seminar, provides a model for leading pastors and their teams in resetting their churches to the New Testament paradigm of engaging culture with the gospel. Seven churches and their reset teams participated in the seminar, which successfully helped teams understand the urgency for change, the missio Dei and the Church's mandate to carry out the Great Commission, the problem of mission drift and the steps needed to correct it, the role of church growth tools, including core values, mission, vision, and strategy development and how to use them, and tools for discovering the church's missional target and plan to impact the community with the gospel. The project created urgency in the local church to embrace the New Testament paradigm of effectively carrying out the Great Commission. Pastors and their teams gained needed confidence to be a catalyst for change as they reset their churches to engage their community's culture and reach others for Christ.



DEREK M. HENSON

Chaplain, United States Navy, 2D Marine Division; Camp Lejeune, NC

The Value of Rest and Rejuvenation: A Workshop and Sabbatical Proposal for Navy Chaplains

Project Adviser: Dr. Scott McChrystal

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Daniel I. Morrison

Chaplains hold considerable responsibilities in hearing people's problems, addressing needs, and advising commanders, but often they neglect self-care. Because of operational commitments, they typically do not take long periods of leave unless they are moving. Chaplains suffer from a critical lack of rest and frequently experience issues such as compassion fatigue, burnout, or traumatic stress. However, due to the proximity of retirement benefits, they often remain unwilling to leave chaplaincy. A time of rejuvenation remains imperative to serving healthily and in the image of God.

I created a workshop on the effects of stressors chaplains face and used pre- and post-workshop surveys to gauge understanding and awareness of these issues. Survey results indicated the need for a sabbatical program due to the prevalence of issues among chaplains surveyed. Results also showed the benefit of the workshop for chaplains who begin to utilize self-care and implement rest periods into their work-life schedule.

Based on the survey results, I proposed a sabbatical program into a point paper submitted to a Pastoral Care Community of Interest. The point paper will take months, if not years, to receive official feedback; however, as chaplains apply the workshop material to their lives, they will receive immediate spiritual, physical, and emotional dividends. Such effects can provide immediate positive effects across the Department of Defense.



BRIAN ALLAN JENKINS

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Using Simple Credal Statements to Disciple Adults for Worldview Transformation

Project Adviser: Dr. Byron Klaus

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

The American church faces a confluence of concerning trends, including fewer people identifying with Protestant Christianity, a decline in theological and biblical literacy, and the deconstruction of Christian orthodoxy. These issues create a need for a style of discipleship that speaks cross-culturally, assumes little to no theological background, and honors the orthodox doctrines and dogmas of the historic church.

This project sought to provide a discipleship framework that goes beyond crisis experience, behavioral modification, or information exchange into deep worldview transformation. Utilizing a simplified process based on credal models, the project led people through a simple “seed” of Christian belief, with the goal that it would take root in the context and demonstrate authentic fruit. The project was executed at New Life Church in Renton, Washington in July of 2021.

The project event successfully presented the curriculum with measurable outcomes such as increased confidence in sharing faith and better understanding of basic orthodox teachings. The project impacts several areas of church life. First, it provides a discipling model that affects people across the discipleship spectrum. Second, it presents an alternative to deconstruction, instead focusing the seeker on the essential core of Christian faith. Finally, it offers a framework for churches to introduce theological reflection at any demographic stage. The simple seed model allows for the development of culturally authentic and orthodox rooted faith.



RAY MICHAEL NOAH

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The Missionary Mandate and the Missio Dei: A Strategy for Sending Indigenous Missionaries to Plant Reproducing Churches in Ethiopia's Unreached Arsi Zone

Project Adviser: Dr. Carl Gibbs

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Charlie Self

Redemptive history in Scripture demonstrates that the missio Dei is the restoration of God's glorious rule over a redeemed creation. Therefore, God's mission must be the Church's missionary mandate. In the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20), the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24:14), and the promise of the Spirit (Acts 1:8), Jesus commands that every people group on earth must hear the gospel. While historically the Church's adaptive missiology and methodology has made great strides in taking the gospel to the whole world, in today's unprecedented ability to spread the gospel, 42 percent of the world remains unreached, an unacceptable reality to the missionary God.

This field project unfolds the Petros Network's missiology and methodology for addressing this problem. Its indigenous missiology unleashes the potential of the Ethiopian Church to reach an unreached people group in the Arsi zone. Partnering with national denominations, they recruited, trained, and sent seventy-four indigenous missionaries to plant churches in unreached villages. Their methodology equipped them to plant churches that will be self-sustaining and self-propagating in three to five years.

By implementing this project, Petros has created the template for indigenous denominations to plant reproducing churches in their own context and thereby unleash exceptional Kingdom growth throughout the world. Their strategy creates a unique path to reach the unreached, create transformed communities, evangelize a nation, and exalt God's glory among all the people groups of the world.



THERESA AVOSUAHI ODUN-AYO

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Assessing and Equipping a Suburban Immigrant Church in Missional Discipleship

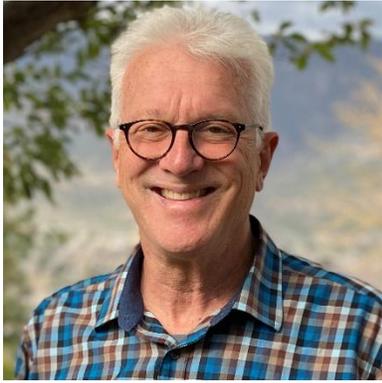
Project Adviser: Dr. Johan Mostert

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

Most churches today could use a deeper understanding of the call to missional discipleship. This need is exacerbated in the context of missional engagement for an immigrant church such as Redeemed Christian Church of God, Covenant House (RCCG-CH) in Springfield, Missouri. The local church must remain missional by reflecting on God's missional nature and establishing a pipeline of transformational discipleship.

This project explored what it takes to answer the call to make disciples in a multicultural church of mostly immigrants. This project used the five discipleship dimensions of the Discipleship Dynamic Assessment (DDA) as a pretest to assess the current understanding, priority, and personal practices of congregants at RCCG-CH. It offered a descriptive evaluation of the participant's level of Christian discipleship. A tailored intervention was then created consisting of a four-week sermon series and a six-hour seminar to address the discipleship deficit revealed by the thirty-five outcomes analyzed by the DDA. The tool was used as a posttest as well for comparison. It assessed growth within individuals as well as the whole church.

The results showed a steady positive trend by comparing the DDA taken initially with those taken after the intervention. The church improved in spiritual and personal growth, maturity, stability, wholeness, and with a sense of purpose. The project brought a sense of purpose and vision to the church with many expressing a gratitude for the Holy Spirit's work in raising them and infusing in them the zeal to be witnesses for Christ.



STEPHEN B. PECOTA

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The Unity Project: Assisting Local Church Leaders in Navigating Extreme Partisanship in the Body of Christ

Project Adviser: Dr. Earl Creps

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Blaine Charette

Jesus prayed that those who believe in the testimony of the apostles may all be one “so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21). The partisanship evidenced in the contemporary era presents an exceptional hurdle to the fulfillment of Christ’s prayer.

Polarization over politics, race, and the COVID pandemic have forced pastors to navigate a minefield they have not previously faced. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit provides spiritual leaders with insight and character qualities to assist them in resisting this divisive spirit so they may pursue unity with believers.

The Unity Project, a seminar for pastors that identified causes of disunity and encouraged activities that maintain the unity of the Spirit, examined the root causes of polarization through the lens of cognitive distortions, using three metaphors for how humans form human judgment: System 1 and System 2 (Daniel Kahneman), the scout and soldier (Julia Galef), and the rider and the elephant (Jonathan Haidt).

The Unity Project challenged participants to apply the metaphors to their ministry context and provided them a vocabulary for speaking constructively about polarized issues with their congregations. It also called attention to the reality that in-groups not only solidify self-identity but they also blind their members to the value and complexity of those outside the group. By examining relevant cultural artifacts and applying biblical principles for promoting unity in a partisan environment, the project equipped participants to more effectively maintain the unity of the Spirit in their ministry contexts.



BEN STERCIUC

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Covocational Church Planting

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Biblical Adviser: Dr. Waldemar Kowalski

Church planting in the twenty-first century requires a return to biblical principles of the Early Church as well as an updated methodology. Denominations and networks search for innovative ways to plant more churches to reach people with the gospel of Jesus. Covocational church planting may offer a creative revolutionary method for the current season. Church planters need a fresh understanding of the Bible regarding work, calling, and the purpose of the church in the world.

This project developed a church planting model based on covocational principles. Covocational church planting empowers ministers to simultaneously respond to their vocational calling in the marketplace while continuing in pastoral ministry. Likewise, it opens the door to many believers currently practicing their vocation in the marketplace to respond to God's call to pastoral ministry without abandoning their vocational presence in the marketplace. This biblical and innovative approach helps churches develop teams to share responsibilities, dramatically helps with finances, and empowers more church plants to reach people for Christ.

The project produced a Covocational Church Planting Handbook outlining principles to revolutionize church planting. A diverse group of readers studied the handbook and evaluated the quality, clarity, and persuasiveness of its content. Responses were positive, and evaluators attested to the strength of the covocational church planting method. The handbook contributes to church planting literature, fills a gap in covocational method, and potentially equips more covocational church planters.