

CHURCH PLANTING PROGRAMS OF  
SIMILAR-SIZED DENOMINATIONS  
IN THE UNITED STATES

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by  
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## CHAPTER 1

### Overview of the Study

General Baptists emerged as a response to the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening (Shull 12). Consequently, much of their early history revolved around evangelistic meetings. They also emerged in the early nineteenth century in the Midwest which was the frontier in that day and was sparsely populated.

Elder Benoni Stinson founded General Baptists in the United States. Much of his ministry involved traveling on horseback to the number of emerging new communities to preach the gospel. On many preaching tours, Stinson preached two or three times a day for seven to fourteen days at a time. His preaching was always about reaching men and women with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Stinson's sermons "were always about saving lost men." (Williams 147) He had a burden to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

These revival meetings sometimes resulted in beginning new congregations. In 1824, Stinson's travels resulted in beginning three new congregations. These new churches joined Stinson's home church, Liberty, to organize the first association of General Baptist congregations. Stinson never gave up his habit of taking preaching tours.

The first denominational agency developed by the new General Association of General Baptists in 1871 was the Central Board which was responsible for planting new congregations in the United States. Local associations also had their own committees or boards which oversaw the collection of funds and the appointment of ministers for starting new congregations. History shows that planting new congregations has been a priority for General Baptists.

The modern General Baptist church planting program in the United States, although active, is not producing the desired numbers of self-supporting new congregations within the time usually allotted. It is possible to characterize the current church planting program as anemic. In people, anemia is characterized by pale skin, tiredness, dizziness, and shortness of breath (Bruckheim). This condition is not normally life threatening; it results in the

person not being up to full physical strength. Anemic persons are not healthy and cannot perform in life with the vim and vigor they should. They are weak, tired, and cannot function at a normal level of energy.

The General Baptist church planting ministry in the United States is not starting a sufficient number of congregations. Bob Logan stated that a denomination which wants an aggressive church planting program should start by beginning new congregations each year equal to one percent of their existing churches. General Baptists, with 790 congregations, have operated at one-half of a percent in their most productive years. When this is factored into the statistics showing General Baptists seeing fifteen to twenty existing churches closing each year, the result is an ever decreasing number of congregations in the United States.

A second symptom of an anemic church planting program is the slow growth of new churches. The most common complaint among General Baptists by persons opposed to an active church planting ministry is that it takes too long for new congregations to develop into self-supporting congregations which contribute to the life of the denomination. In this complaint, the critics are correct. In the 1970s and 80s, General Baptists and other denominations anticipated taking five years for a church to fully mature. Today many denominational church planting leaders state that they expect new congregations to be free of subsidies and fully connected to the denomination within three years. New General Baptist congregations generally exceed the five-year threshold, and it is not uncommon for a church to take ten years to become an established congregation.

In my own ministry as a church planter I have often felt frustrated at my own inability to see new congregations grow and develop to the extent I envisioned. Although many persons within my denomination consider me to be an effective church planter, none of the congregations I have started have grown beyond sixty participants and an average worship attendance of forty. I have longed to learn more about planting churches effectively in order to plant new congregations which grow to become healthy and active in the work of the Kingdom of God.

Another concern of mine is to develop reasonable expectations for the General Baptist church planting program. It would not be a fair comparison for General Baptists with 70,000 members to attempt to attain numerical goals similar to the fifteen million member Southern Baptist Convention. General Baptists do not have anywhere near the resources of such a large denomination. Also, it is my opinion that it would be unreasonable to expect every church planter to start a church which grows beyond 1000 participants within a few years. Yet the super-successful model is the one most often taught about at church planting seminars. By doing this study I hoped to discover a reasonable success level for the denominational church planting program.

In short, General Baptists can start new churches; they cannot grow new churches quickly. The ministry is not dying. In fact, this ministry could continue for many more years producing several new congregations. The ministry needs to be analyzed and adapted to increase its potency for producing a larger number of new congregations which mature within a reasonable amount of time. Many opportunities for ministry are passing by General Baptists because of their inability to extend further. This ministry needs to develop a healthy lifestyle which produces children in the form of new, growing, and vital congregations. This denomination needs to be cared for in such a way that the anemia is cured, health returns, and growth can occur.

#### The Problem and Its Context

From 1994-96, General Baptists were involved in a major evaluation of their national structure. At one point in the process a list of questions emerged relative to the national church planting program. These questions were researched; but due to changes in the process no data were ever gathered. These questions resemble the type of information this study sought to gather.

Issues related to Home Missions:

- 1) What is the average cost of planting a congregation?
- 2) What is the experience and educational level of church planters?
- 3) What are the five-year growth patterns of new starts?

- 4) What happens to church planters after five years?
- 5) How are existing churches involved, hands on, in church planting (direct funding, buildings, core group, etc.)?
- 6) What support do church planters and new congregations get from Home Missions (marketing material, planning, consultation, demography)?<sup>1</sup> (Comer 102).

At a meeting of General Baptist Church Planting Coordinators in the Fall of 1997, four criteria were established to identify a successful church plant.

1. Self-supporting financially
2. Continued numerical growth
3. Connected to the denomination
4. Involved in missions (Forum)

The coordinators agreed that all these components were necessary for a church to achieve its potential long after it leaves mission status. These four characteristics represent the goal of each church planter for the church being started.

At one time, many congregations were added to the General Baptist fold each year. This growth sometimes came as a result of aggressive evangelistic church planting while at other times churches were added through adoption of existing congregations. Benoni Stinson, considered the founder of the modern American General Baptists, spent time every year traveling the frontier doing evangelistic preaching in homes, schools, and government buildings with the hope of beginning new congregations. In one year Liberty Association targeted twelve communities in Southern Indiana for new churches to be started. At the end of the year, eleven of the communities had new General Baptist churches (Hinkle 8).

Today's national missions program for General Baptists is anemic in that it does not live up to its potential. Many new churches are started but new congregations usually grow slowly and do not achieve all that is hoped for by the church planter, the congregation, the National Missions staff, or the denomination overall. Other denominations call for churches

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<sup>1</sup>This information is similar to that produced by Norm Shawshuck and Gustave Rath, consultants for the General Baptist restructuring process.

to grow and become self-sufficient within three to five years. New General Baptist congregations normally take seven to ten years to reach this point of maturity. Often they reach this level by gradually reducing the pastor's salary rather than increasing their income.

The National Missions program does offer many bright spots. On average four new General Baptist congregations are started each year. New congregations experience more conversions than the typical existing church and they report more baptisms. Many who participate in new congregations are persons with no church affiliation and who would have continued without any Christian fellowship had not the church been started. Hundreds of persons are ministered to annually through new General Baptist congregations around the United States.

New congregations also generate new church growth ideas which are often shared with existing churches. These new ideas are tested by new congregations and can be shared with the supporting churches with appropriate documentation. The church planters published a book called Entry Events: A Doorway For The Unchurched, which was sold at cost to churches and key leaders. This book sold out in a year's time and became the outline for a seminar on the subject which has been presented at conferences for the benefit of pastors and key leaders (Gregory).

Another positive effect of church planting ministry is the enthusiasm generated among existing churches for doing ministry and supporting missions. At times, growth in new churches has become the impetus for existing churches to explore the possibilities for their church to reach out with the gospel. In terms of missions, General Baptists recently completed a five-year Kingdom Building campaign which generated over one million new dollars for both national and international missions. This campaign doubled the amount of money churches pledged for national objectives in one year.

The anemic areas for National Missions are largely related to the slow growth of congregations. Church planters are regularly criticized for continuing to receive subsidies year after year. Church planters often lament the inadequate flow of funds for their work.

New congregations tend to increase their offerings slowly, thus lengthening the number of years it takes to develop thriving ministries which attract large numbers of newcomers. Outreach is stated as a high priority, yet in terms of budgeting it is a low priority. In fact, although studies show that growing churches spend 10 percent or more of their budget on outreach, new General Baptist congregations spend approximately 4 percent. Consequently, new General Baptist congregations spend years receiving subsidies from the sponsoring agency.

Slow growth of one church may not seem like a major crisis, yet when that slow growth is multiplied by several congregations it keeps the church planting movement from generating significant momentum. The denomination is closing fifteen to twenty existing congregations per year, thus the four new congregations started do not come close to replacing losses. Since General Baptists have a 50 percent success rate, only two new churches are started to replace fifteen in any given year. If new congregations could become self-supporting more quickly, many more new congregations could be started, staunching the hemorrhage of congregations.

Several factors need to be examined to determine what changes need to be implemented in a National Missions program to increase the efficiency of the church planting progress. The National Missions program generally assists in four areas related to beginning a new church. Funding formulas affect the budgetary priorities to be established within the new congregation. Budgeting needs to reflect appropriate priorities for the new congregation which will give it the best opportunity to grow. Determining the models to be used will have a great impact on the initial core group of the congregations. Some models are inherently faster at producing a large group. General Baptists need to identify ones they can use effectively. Demographics of the community can determine the style of ministry the congregation should pursue as well as identifying the growth potential of the new start. Many communities are growing rapidly and are within the sphere of influence of General

Baptists. Finally, the assessment and continuing training of the church planter will largely determine the eventual success or failure of the congregation in becoming self-supporting.

### Theological Considerations

Jesus commanded his apostles to "go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:18). He also stated, "And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). These passages teach believers their responsibility to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others. The presupposition of these texts is the banding together of these new believers into groups for mutual worship, ministry, fellowship, and edification. In short, these commands presuppose beginning new congregations.

How could the disciples of the early church witness in such far reaching areas if not through beginning new churches? To have converted people to Christ without bringing them together as a body would have been counterproductive. These new believers needed to be banded together for the benefit of their faith and the further spreading of the gospel. New churches are the natural outgrowth of sharing the good news in new places.

A second consideration is the statement of Paul that he had become all things to all people that he might win some (1 Corinthians 9:22). Paul's comment provides a reason for continuing to begin new churches even in areas where there are already several congregations. Paul stated he was willing to adapt to a variety of situations and people in order to convince them of their need of Christ. The church as a whole provides the same type of adaptation through various and diverse congregations. Some people will prefer to worship God in a formal setting, such as in the Episcopal or Presbyterian traditions. Others prefer a more charismatic service such as that found in the Assembly of God churches. This variety of worship and ministry styles provides many more opportunities for people to connect to the family of God than one congregation could possibly accommodate.

New churches are needed for the gospel to encompass the neighborhood and the world. Thus, this study attempts to assist church planters and supporters of church planting to be enabled for quality ministry. For those who seek to obey Christ's command to make

disciples and thus begin new congregations, this study will provide opportunities to make this ministry productive and vital to the growth and expansion of the church.

#### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe elements of successful church plants in similar-sized denominations in order to develop an approach to church planting for the National Missions program of General Baptists. By examining the ministries of similar-sized denominations, it is hoped some realistic expectations for successful church plants will emerge. Additionally, the study provided a guide for improving the national approach to beginning new congregation.

#### Research Questions

Research Question #1: What impact do the assessment and selection, education, and training of a church planter exert on the development of a new church?

Research Question #2: What constitutes sufficient budget spending percentages for a new church plant during the first five years?

Research Question #3: Which church planting models provide the best opportunity for growth of a new church?

Research Question #4: What effect does the location of a church plant appear to have on the growth of the new church during the first five years?

Research Question #5: What are the primary support mechanisms provided by national missions offices which produce self-supporting congregations?

#### Definitions of Terms

"Self-supporting congregation" describes a fully matured congregation and is a term used extensively in this study. General Baptist church planters define this term using four criteria. First, the congregation must be financially self-supporting. Second, the congregation must continue to grow numerically. Third, the congregation must be connected to the General Baptist denomination through affiliation with a local association. Fourth, the congregation must be supportive of mission work in both national and international spheres.

Another term which needs definition is "church planting models." This refers to the organization of the new start and the method of obtaining the initial core group. The most commonly used model for General Baptists is that of the catalytic church planter where the planter is sent alone to a community with limited financial support. No other families are committed to the project at the outset. The most commonly used model among other church bodies is the mother-daughter model, sometimes called by the name "hive." In this model, a church or churches will seek out several families to commission and send out to become the core of the new congregation. Thus, the church planter can begin with a small core of dedicated leaders and tithers.

"Church Planter" is a term widely used among different denominations. Among General Baptists it is used to describe the ordained leader of a new church plant. This term is never used to identify supporters or supervisors of church plants who are not personally leading the new congregation.

"Church Planting" refers to the ministry of attempting to bring together a body of persons committed to becoming a fellowship of worshipping and ministering believers connected to the mother denomination. It does not refer to extensions of existing churches which intend to remain so connected, nor does it refer to ministries started for the sole purpose of providing social services. The group must have as its goal to organize as an accepted self-supporting congregation within the sphere of the sponsoring denomination.

Many church bodies utilize regional groups of churches to support new church plants. These groups are referred to among Baptists as local associations. Other groups use terms such as judicatory, districts, presbyteries, and regions. In this study "regional group" refers to all such groups of churches which band together to support church planting.

"Assessment" is the practice of having prospective church planters undergo a rigorous two to four-day evaluation of their fitness or ability to begin a new church. This assessment includes evaluation of the candidate's ministry skills, emotional and physical health, family strength, and spiritual commitment.

### Methodology of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe elements of successful church plants in similar-sized denominations in order to develop an approach to church planting for the National Missions program of General Baptists. Church plants in four denominations were studied along with those from General Baptists for a total of five denominations. Each group selected was similar in size based on the number of existing congregations and in total membership. Each group selected also had an active national church planting ministry. Finally, the national executive leaders of this ministry were willing to cooperate in sharing information about their work.

The study followed a multiple case study model. In the first case study, each national missions office was asked to submit documents, brochures, and manuals related to their ministry. These materials provided an overview of the denomination along with information about how the program is promoted and effected. This information provided a basis for further study as information about each program was learned. Interviews were needed complete the quantity of information needed about the particular denominations and their respective church planting programs.

The second case study involved a statistical survey of all congregations started by all five denominations in 1993 and 1994. By including churches started in 1993 and 1994, a five-year period of time had elapsed allowing churches to move toward becoming self-supporting. The review was done in two parts. The monthly and/or annual reports of the church planters received by the national missions office were reviewed to determine the actual growth and development of each congregation. An interview was then be conducted by phone with each church planter to collect the balance of information needed about each church plant specifically related to the support provided by the national missions office.

In the third case study, a select number of additional interviews were conducted with national missions office staff, successful church planters, and church planting consultants. These interviews provided two significant portions of information. First, they provided

firsthand input into how the national missions agenda for church planting assisted or detracted from the success of new congregational growth. Second, these interviews provided insight into new directions being tried by the denominational programs to improve their church planting ministries.

### Subjects

The subjects of this study included every church started under the auspices of the national missions programs of the respective denominations during 1993 and 1994. An effort was made to gather complete information on every church started regardless of outcome. It was anticipated that complete information would not be available for every church plant. Some information was not available, while in other cases planters were reluctant to participate in the study.

Intercultural congregations were included despite the fact that intercultural church starts differ greatly in methodology from those targeting Anglo-Americans. Since the purpose of this study is to suggest an outline for a complete national church planting ministry, intercultural congregations cannot be left out.

### Variables

The dependent variables were the growth or decline of new congregations along with the determination of whether or not they became self-supporting within the five-year period. The independent variables were those factors of national support which appeared to have assisted churches in maturing within the period.

The variables were examined in order to determine the effect each had on the outcome of church planting projects. Comparisons and contrasts were made between churches which became self-supporting during the period, those remaining under subsidy, and closing. I anticipated that specific types of support conditions and preparation would be more likely produce growing, healthy congregations.

### Delimitations and Generalizability

This study was limited, first of all, to denominations similar in size to General Baptists. Although many denominations of various sizes have active and productive national missions programs, the resources of those denominations do not compare to General Baptists. Thus it was unrealistic for General Baptists with a 70,000 membership to be compared with Southern Baptists having the resources of 15 million members.

This study was also limited to those denominations which have national agencies responsible for planting new churches in the United States. Some groups of churches are involved in starting new congregations but lack any national structure to provide leadership. Thus they do not maintain records of all church starts in one office. The absence of such a collection of records precluded utilizing those groups in this study.

This study only dealt with those external issues related to the national support provided to new church starts. Such issues as the evangelistic style of a particular church usually depend on the abilities and interests of the church planter and do not necessarily form part of the national strategy. This study was limited to examining those criteria where national agencies provide technical and financial assistance to new congregations.

The results of this study will be shared with each participating denomination since the conclusions will be generalizable to those bodies. Groups with larger constituencies or with dramatically differing polities will likely find the conclusions less applicable to their situations. This study centered on the needs for enhancing the General Baptist church planting ministry and were tailored as such. However, much that has been discovered will be transferable to other church bodies to varying degrees.

### Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 provides an overview of related studies and literature. Such an overview shows how this study adds to the information available to the practitioner of church planting and to supporters on both the national and regional levels. Chapter 3 provides details into how the study proceeded. Issues of design and methodology are presented in definite terms.

Chapter 4 reports the results of the study giving particular attention to areas of national activity which appear to give the greatest aid to new churches. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusions of the study. It also includes specific recommendations to strengthen and perhaps overhaul the approach to church planting which General Baptists have taken in the past. These recommendations constitute the heart of this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### Precedents In The Literature

This study is about methodology as it relates to the types of support and models for church planting which can be provided by the national missions office of a denomination. Many church planting resources speak about the work of the church planter and how the methodology of church leadership and evangelism lead to growth and development. This chapter focuses on information and studies which contribute to the understanding of supporting new churches from without the local organism.

#### Biblical and Theological Considerations

Matthew 10 is one Scripture passage which provides instructions to the apostles about how to go about spreading the gospel message. This text is unique in that Jesus instructs them about methodology. A discussion of this passage is relevant for church planting

Jesus is not speaking in a parable which needs to be explained, nor is he speaking in word pictures which have to be interpreted. His intent is to give specific, simple instructions to his chosen twelve so they can go out on a successful preaching tour. He wanted them to understand every command and Matthew relates it to us in the same format.

As Jesus begins he tells them where not to go. Jesus is not unwilling for others to hear the gospel, but he wants his chosen to start within a limited area as they hone their skills at preaching and at a caring ministry. Other passages in Matthew and the other gospels make it plain Jesus was not prejudiced against Samaritans and Gentiles. In fact, Jesus took pains to ensure that his followers understand the gospel is not to be hoarded up by the Jews, but is to be spread to "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

By traveling to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" the apostles were going to minister to people they understood both culturally and spiritually. The twelve could speak the language, they knew the customs, they understood the religious context of the masses. It would have been ridiculous to send them to a foreign group for their first time out preaching.

This situation was primarily a learning experience for them as they began to do the things Jesus had modeled for them and proclaimed to them for some time.

The apostles were to go to the lost sheep as opposed to those who did not think they needed any religious instruction. Jesus did not spend a great deal of time with Pharisees and other religious leaders. He sought out the less fortunate. He sought out social and religious outcasts. He looked for those who needed restoration to faith in God.

"The kingdom of heaven has come near," was the cry of John the Baptist, but these twelve preachers could proclaim it with even stronger vigor because they were with the one who represents the kingdom. Their message was one of hope. God is near. God has not left us alone. Not only that, but the kingdom has already come upon us and is continuing to come upon us even as we speak. The people needed to hear that God was involved in their lives even if they had not yet noticed. It may be that the towns the twelve visited were later visited by Jesus himself, and his preaching built on that early proclamation so people might see the kingdom in the life of Christ.

The apostles were told, "As you travel, announce," but they were told in a matter-of-fact manner to "care for the weak, raise the dead." Stronger emphasis was placed on their caring ministry than on their preaching opportunity. It is always easier to proclaim a positive message. It becomes more difficult when that message must be translated into specific actions. It was one thing to proclaim the nearness of the kingdom, it was quite another for the apostles to "cleanse the leper." Jesus wanted them to know that words without the fruit of action were just words, empty and useless. In Luke's account of this event, the apostles return rejoicing not at their eloquence or the mastery of their speech, but because demons fled from the possessed when they gave the command (Luke 10:17).

Genuine preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ are not to allow worldly possessions and concerns to get in the way of the integrity of the word of God. The apostles were not to ask a fee for service; they were to provide the ministry at no cost. They could accept honest hospitality, but could not require anyone to provide them anything. To have charged people

for the good news of the nearness of the kingdom of God would have cheapened the gospel. Jesus knew Israel's people were "lost as sheep without a shepherd" and it would have been counterproductive to offer help only to those who could afford it. Neither were they to give anyone reason to criticize their work because of financial issues.

Yet, the "worker is worth his keep" (Matthew 10:10). This verse speaks specifically of food, not wages or payment. Certainly it is a great opportunity for people to show gratitude for someone who has assisted them. In fact, it would have been rude of the apostles to reject genuine hospitality. Human nature wants to say "thank you" to one who has helped. There is a big difference between expectation of payment for specific services and being willing to accept the gratitude of one who received from you.

In our modern culture, guests who have traveled far for a visit are often expected to search out a motel for their lodging. These twelve apostles were told to search out a worthy place to stay during their visit. Hospitality for the traveler receives a higher regard in Oriental cultures than in the west. However, the apostles were not told to accept the first offer given, which would be the Western way. They were instructed to search out a worthy place to stay. Maybe Jesus meant they were to stay with someone of good reputation so as not to besmirch their character, yet Jesus often spent time with people whose character was less than positive. Could Jesus have meant they were to stay away from the prostitutes, tax collectors, drunkards, and other sinners when he himself sought them out? It is doubtful. Jesus instructed his apostles regarding how they should behave on their mission, yet he did not define for them what "worthy" meant. Why would he not be specific about this issue? He left it open for the apostles to use their own judgment about who was worthy.

Jesus showed his example when he spent time with people of ill repute who genuinely wanted to know more about God. He did not spend much time with those of poor character who were content to stay that way. At this point, Jesus did not define "worthy," but throughout the gospels he modeled that search. Jesus found many worthy people such as

Zaccheus, Mary Magdalene, and the demoniac of Gadara. They wanted to know God, and that made them worthy.

When the apostles were told to greet the house, it was a gift they could bestow upon host and household. The apostles were not to require payment for services, nor were they to seek out a room for rent. They were told by Christ to pronounce upon the worthy home a blessing which would carry much meaning to the householders. By doing so they proclaimed to people that the kingdom of God was at hand, and anyone who was willing to listen and share in it was worthy of God's blessing.

To this point, all the instruction assumed people would be present to listen to the sermons, people who needed the attention of a caring ministry would come near to them and someone would provide lodging and a warm meal. Jesus answered the unasked question when he instructed the twelve what to do if no one present was worthy of the gospel message or the messenger. They were told to reject that community in the most insulting way a Jew could insult another Jew, by treating the unworthy people as if they were Gentiles. Their actions were to pronounce them unclean.

Jesus taught his disciples that they should not waste time preaching or ministering to those who want nothing to do with their ministry. The opposite of what Jesus instructed would have been to keep preaching even when no one was listening. Often a preacher proclaims the word and no one responds. Jesus instructed the twelve to ignore them and go on to another village or town where the message will be received, which is consistent with Jesus' statement, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick" (Matthew 9:12). If the people in one place are not worthy and do not want to hear the message, move on.

Several principles useful in the ministry of planting new congregations arise out of this passage. First, there is the principle of targeting the audience. Jesus limited his apostles to the towns and communities of Israel. Much later in the Great Commission he expanded the areas he expected the apostles and other disciples' influence to eventually include the entire world. However, Jesus recognized in his instructions that one person can only do so

much. When a preaching tour begins, or in this case a church planting project, the preacher must determine who the new ministry can effectively reach and stick to those folks. If or when the preacher becomes skilled at reaching other groups, perhaps other ethnic groups, then a new ministry can be started to target them for the gospel. However, determining whom to try to reach and working to reach only them is a principle which Jesus endorsed in this passage.

Second, preaching and ministering must go hand in hand. When starting a new congregation it is easy to limit the work to proclaiming the gospel alone by utilizing marketing and personal evangelism. However, Jesus put preaching and ministry together. To begin to plant a church without doing the deeds represented by words spoken would be self-defeating. People will recognize the power of the gospel as they see ministry to the needs of individuals. No amount of eloquent speech will make up for the actions which prove the words. New churches need to discover not just the gospel message, but also caring ministries which act out the love and power of God. Sharing the gospel is a priority, but not at the expense of other priorities.

Finances are to be above reproach in any ministry activity, as is true today as in Jesus' day. People use money as an excuse to stay away from the church. Many modern surveys report that money issues are some of the principal reasons given by unchurched people for avoiding worship services. New churches need to pay attention to this issue and not signal that money is more important than people. Since the apostles were not to charge for their services, they either had to depend on hospitality for their sustenance or they needed other people to provide for their needs. One way planters of new churches can avoid the negatives of money issues is to provide their services gratis and allow sponsoring associations, churches, and believers to provide for their needs and for the start-up costs of the new church. The apostles survived their preaching tour by relying upon the hospitality of worthy people. Today such hospitality is not the norm, so the graciousness of sponsors becomes necessary.

Find someone worthy. Another principle present here is that church planters should find in a community someone worthy of their time. Planters need not look for someone to lodge with as much as they need to seek out someone who sincerely wants to know more about God. They could begin their ministry by spending a great deal of time with such a person. Next, planters could find among their friends and family others worthy of the gospel. Through this process, a core group could be formed which could then grow into a new congregation as the gospel was preached more and more and ministry opportunities increased. Another way of looking at this principle would be to find a Christian who is convicted of the need for a new church in a community. This person might become the first of a new "hive" from an existing church to become the nucleus of a new congregation.

Finally, planters should stop working in a community if the people will not listen. A major obstacle to planting new congregations is the continued use of resources in an unresponsive area. To a church planter, it may be difficult to discontinue a work when the minister has worked to learn about the community and the sponsors have invested much in volunteers and money. But we must recognize that sometimes people will not listen even to the best of good news. God is breaking into history, but some in our world want to ignore this. Some hope that it will go away and not bother them. In planting new congregations, when no one is found who is worthy, the work must move on.

#### Philosophy of Ministry

The church planting philosophy of the supporters of new congregations directly affects the methodologies used. Basic questions which need answers include, but are not necessarily limited to: Who is responsible for starting new churches? Should staff be full-time, bi-vocational, or volunteer? Are subsidies to be used and, if so, for what purposes?

Concerning who is responsible for starting new churches, it is interesting to note that texts offering divergent philosophies on church planting use Acts 13 to prove their philosophy of ministry is the correct one (Chaney 70, Thomas 53). The most commonly identified answer to this question is for churches to be primarily responsible for new starts

(Barkley 44-53, Slider 66-67, Cochran 247, Crouse 190). Some state the possibility of churches being sponsored by a regional body (association, district, judicatory), or by a national missions office (Schaller 169-171, King 73-76, Shull 2). The belief concerning who is responsible for new congregations affects the methodologies and strategies utilized. Logan outlines a model for a regional church planting strategy which seems to ignore this question. His model could just as easily be used in a setting where the local church or the national office is responsible (Implement).

Many books presuppose either the exclusive use of full-time or of bi-vocational ministers. Mannoia includes as part of his budget samples salary packages exclusively for full-time staff (140-2). He discusses the possibility of using bi-vocational staff, but the budget samples do not include this option. King provides twenty-seven models utilized by the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and these models utilize a variety of staff situations. Ingersoll assumes as part of his approach the use of a full-time church planter (44-53). Compton agrees with this assumption (86). On the other hand, Crouse states a commitment to the use of bi-vocational church planters (190). Some authors call for neither a full or part-time staff, rather another option is a team approach in which the leaders can be either full or part-time (Shreckhise 186, Kettering 211). In short, no consensus exists on the effectiveness of staff in various situations.

Conventional wisdom concerning subsidies is that less is better. Boan states that churches receiving the smallest subsidies tend to have the greatest chance of developing into a self-supporting congregation (83). Yet most churches do receive some type of subsidy from their sponsor. Boan does not compare this observation with the type of model utilized. Models which provide a core of committed believers at the start will undoubtedly need less subsidy. In using a model in which no "seed families" were provided, Slider calls for a \$40,000 subsidy during the first year (67).

Most authors assume some type of subsidy will be received by the new church. To begin to plant a church without providing adequate funding by some means "is unbiblical"

(Klunder 219). Further, Klunder suggests a \$180,000 budget for the first five years of a new church (222). Cochran assumes a subsidy from the sponsoring church, local association, and the denomination (247).

### Church Planter Assessment and Training

The church planter has more to do with the success or failure of a new church than any other factor. This statement represents the current belief about new churches. Yet it is unproved. If it is true, then the amount of time and resources invested in the church planter by the new church sponsor is of paramount importance. If it is not true, the planter is still a factor in whether a new church grows or dies.

Assessment of church planters is a relatively new concept. Much of the work on this has been done by Charles Ridley of Indiana University. His workbook, How To Select Church Planters, is the most commonly used resource for assessment. He bases his work on studies of church planters across North America in 1984. He provides thirteen characteristics of successful church planters.

1. Visionizing Capacity
2. Intrinsically Motivated
3. Creates Ownership of Ministry
4. Relates to the Unchurched
5. Spousal Cooperation
6. Effectively Builds Relationships
7. Committed to Church Growth
8. Responsive to Community
9. Utilizes Giftedness of Others
10. Flexible and Adaptable
11. Builds Group Cohesiveness
12. Resilience
13. Exercises Faith (7-11)

Other authors on the subject of assessment base their comments on Ridley's work.

Another list of characteristics of church planters can be found in Wagner's book, Church Planting for a Greater Harvest (51-56). In this text he lists nine characteristics similar to Ridley's but perhaps not as exhaustive. Page uses Wagner as a source for his

description but makes significant changes in Wagner's list to come up with his nine characteristics (5-10). Page's list tends to emphasize spiritual gifts more than Wagner's.

One of the items missing from any discussion of the assessment and qualifications of a church planter is training. Although most authors and researchers in the field presuppose some type of training, either from a formal seminary or a mentoring relationship, no one addresses it specifically. Seminary training does not seem to be a factor in predicting the success of a new church plant. Some graduates make good church planters while others do not (Ridley 26). The Eastern Mennonites agree with this assessment. They further state that training appears to have limited usefulness as well. "We have observed that exposure to church planting principles does not assure the ability to actually implement them (Discernment 2:2). This issue is included in this study to attempt to discern whether the type of education and training received has significant impact on the success or failure of the new venture.

#### Funding Formulas

One of the anticipated results of this study was to produce an approach to funding and budgeting which can provide guidance concerning adequate amounts of subsidy and budgeting percentages. Most texts do not deal with this subject except on the philosophical level. Mission boards regularly struggle with an appropriate amount to provide for a new church start, however, and planters struggle with budgeting adequate funds for outreach and evangelism.

"New churches require adequate financial bases" (Chaney 185). The model used determines where the funding comes from in the early days of the new congregation. The more unchurched people in the core group, the smaller the financial base. When addressing the question of how much subsidy is needed by a new congregation, Page states, "As much as you can get!" (82).

Mannion offers the most detailed descriptions of how church planting projects can be funded (138-144). He provides sample spreadsheets showing how Free Methodist church

planting projects are funded. His formulas assume specific funding amounts and percentages from a missions board, a sponsoring church, and the planter. This formula places part of the responsibility for funding on the planter through a deputation process.

Thomas provides a sample budget for a first-year congregation (111). His monthly budget amounts can be translated into percentages which may represent suggested thresholds. The suggested budget allocates 36 percent of funds for outreach, while 13 percent is set for salary. Bob Orr states existing churches which are growing regularly use 10 percent of their budget on outreach. Page suggests the congregation allocate 50 percent of their offerings for salary while the other 50 percent should come from a subsidy (82).

Eastern Mennonite Missions provide grants of up to \$60,000 for the first eighteen months of a new plant, followed by a grant of up to \$65,000 for the next two to three years. Evaluation is built in the system for accountability (Discernment 8:np). In identifying common pitfalls in church planting, Becker states that insufficient funding is often a problem. "Above and beyond the pastor's salary, start-up funds for a new church should be at least \$15,000 to \$20,000" (30). He further states that a budget of \$10,000 to market the birth of a new church is minimal (31). On the other end of the spectrum are Southern Baptists whose philosophy is to provide as small an amount of financial assistance as possible (Chaney 70). The accepted Southern Baptist model utilizes a core of committed Christians from the sponsoring church so the new congregation has an ample supply of leaders and tithes.

Schaller provides additional direction concerning funding issues when he provides information about various funding models which can be utilized (137-140). These models range all the way from an adventuresome person embarking totally on faith to models where the planter is guaranteed a full salary and benefits package along with a sizable start-up subsidy. Schaller offers three principles to follow in setting up the budget. He discourages long term subsidies since they can deter growth. Many other leaders in church planting agree with this sentiment. "We have observed that there is no correlation between the amount of

money spent and the success of the church planting" (Discernment 2:2). He also advises using the lowest amount of subsidy possible since the most earnest and committed planters will be the only likely candidates. Schaller claims churches tend to give more generously if they are contributing to a particular congregation or to a particular person.

Other authors, such as Redford, describe how a planter should go about developing a budget by analyzing the needs and then matching the needs with potential sources of income (81-87). This type of advice is the most common in church planting texts. However, since most planters are not accountants this advice is not as helpful as it should be to a planter who is more concerned with winning people to Christ than to reconciling a bank statement.

In establishing budget priorities, the percentage given to outreach can be instructive. Various suggestions call for spending from 7 to 36 percent on outreach. This study sought to identify suggested funding percentages for salary, rent, operations, and outreach.

#### Church Planting Models

Information on various models appears to be one of the most commonly discussed issues in church planting ministry. Many texts presuppose a specific model, such as Redford's work (87). Others, however, go into great detail in outlining the various potential models and the pros and cons of using each one. The difference between many of the lists of potential models is their idea as to what constitutes a model. King defines twenty-seven models which attempt to define every possible situation in which a church can be planted. Becker only gives six since his assumption is the difference in models has to do with the source of financial support (15-24). Other lists of models focus on whether or not a core group exists up front and on the type of leader used. Most of these lists cover the same ground; they simply view the opportunities from varied perspectives.

Wide variety exists in the names given to various models. What once was referred to as the mother-daughter model, where one congregation sends out several key families to become the core group for a new church, today has many names. This model is called

spawning (Klunder 219), brethren church (Crouse 182-183), hive (Wagner 60), or clone (Schaller 81). Other models have similar variety in names.

Wagner provides one of the best descriptions of church planting models (51-56). He provides a well-outlined description of twelve models which can be used. Seven of the models are described as "sodalities," meaning they result from some type of regional, national, or parachurch sponsorship. The remaining five are described as "modalities," meaning they arise out of a church sponsoring a new work. Wagner's descriptions are more precise than King's and provide a much better overview for the practitioner, yet they could be more complete.

Wagner's list could be improved if he included the "seeding" model and a "revitalizing" model. In seeding lay people move to a new community, usually due to job changes, and they desire a new church. One or more lay persons then initiate a new church plant or are contacted by a church planter about beginning a new congregation. Revitalization involves taking a plateaued or dying congregation which exists in an area where a church is needed and redeveloping the congregation into a thriving church.

The following list and descriptions identify specific models for comparison. All but the last two are taken from Wagner.

**Hive** -- "members of a local congregation are challenged to become a nucleus . . . these people will . . . become the charter members of a new congregation" (60). This church is usually within driving distance of the mother congregation.

**Colonization** -- "the new church is planted in a different geographical area, meaning that the nucleus members will make a move . . . in the target community" (62). This model can start a new congregation in another state.

**Adoption** -- "like human adoption, means that someone else gives birth but the child becomes part of your family" (64). Many times churches started independently are adopted into a denomination.

**Accidental Parenthood** -- "sometimes the nucleus for a new church will break off from the parent church for reasons better described as carnal than as spiritual" (65). This involves redeeming a church split for something positive.

**Satellite** -- "the new congregation is only semi-autonomous" (66). In this model one church starts a satellite congregation which maintains an organic tie to the mother congregation.

**Multicongregational** -- "multicongregational churches minister to several different ethnic groups" (67). Several ethnic congregations use the same facility and are organically tied to the mother congregation.

**Multiple Campus** -- "one congregation, led by the same staff, . . . occupies two or more church properties" (69). This model utilizes one staff and church membership, while the satellite model utilizes a separate staff and membership roll for each congregation.

**Mission Team** -- "a church planting agency to recruit, finance, and sponsor a team of workers to plant a new church" (70). Sometimes the leader of the team is full-time, while the remainder are bi-vocational, or all staff members are bi-vocational.

**Catalytic Church Planter** -- "go into a new area, develop a nucleus for a new church, and then move on and do it again" (70). This approach does not usually produce a quick start.

**Founding Pastor** -- "sent out by the agency . . . to pastor the new church for an indefinite period of time" (71). This is perhaps the most commonly used model and is often used in conjunction with the hive model.

**Independent Church Planter** -- "go out on their own to start new churches" (73). Many times these leaders begin a church with little or no support.

**Apostolic Church Planter** -- "they use their church as a base for church planting operations" (73). These persons do not start the church themselves, rather they supervise others who are sent out by their congregation to start the new church.

**Seeding** -- "A key lay leader moves to a new area and initiates relationships" (Discernment 2:6). In this model churches are often started as people migrate due to job changes.

**Revitalization** -- "Restarting a plateaued or dying congregation with a remnant core" (Discernment 2:6). Although this does not appear at first glance to be church planting, it often involves closing the old church and restarting under a new pastor and identity. The assets of the closed church and perhaps the building are the only things remaining for the new church to use.

### Demographic Considerations

How does one determine the will of God or develop a vision for a new church? This is no easy discovery. It is up to all believers to determine what God desires of them either in lifelong vocations or in dealing with everyday issues. How does God speak? How can I be sure? What if I am wrong or misunderstand? All of these questions are part of the struggle of discerning the will of God and they are also important to the church planter trying to discover in which community God wants a new church started.

What need is there in a given community for a new congregation? Demographics and other statistical information can give an idea of the need for a new church in a community and what type of church it may need to be. Nearly every text on church planting today encourages the use of this type of information in the early stages of developing a vision for church planting in a given community. A well prepared community profile can give an overall view of the community with a composite of the typical citizen of the area, a la, Saddleback Sam, (Brown 13-4) or it can point out a specific niche within the community that has not been adequately reached for Christ, such as an ethnic or socio-economic group.

To some the use of demographics and marketing tools constitutes abandonment of the direction of the Holy Spirit in favor of methods God cannot and will not bless. Can God bless a ministry which uses surveys, statistics, and marketing to reach people with the gospel, or does God call the church to use only methods specifically mentioned in the Bible or that succeeded in the past?

Many authors and practitioners in the field of church planting contribute to the discussion of this topic. Authors often discuss the use of demographics in community selection and how they can point to the need for a new church. Authors also provide insight as they deal with discernment of the will of God and the components of that search. Church planting practitioners give much to this discussion as they share how they were personally directed by God to a particular community and how God moved as they were obedient to his direction. Of course, the biblical record, especially in the book of Acts, gives insight into how God directed the apostles as they worked in spreading the gospel beyond the bounds of Israel to a variety of communities in a variety of countries, and to both Jews and Gentiles.

Younger tells how he moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana and shortly began work on his vision to plant fifteen new churches in the area due to the rapid growth he saw taking place all around him. They successfully started twelve churches in a seventeen-year period (Younger 151).

Demographics is one issue which nearly every book on church planting addresses in some detail. Redford gives the best overview of demographics because he couches all of his questions about the demographics of a community in terms of God's leadership and the need for ministry, rather than simply trying to determine if the community is growing and if there are many churches present. Redford states, "It is God's spirit which brings together the planter and those wanting or needing a new church" (9). He continues to describe some of the factors which need to be explored in doing research. Each has to do with looking at the community then looking at existing congregations to determine if they are strong enough, diverse enough, and active enough to reach the community for Christ. Each of his questions for research can be answered through the use of demographics and statistical research, yet each question points to the importance of spreading the gospel to those who need Christ (Redford 37-41).

Another way of looking at demographics and statistics is through what George Barna calls marketing the church. Marketing involves using a variety of tools such as community

surveys, focus groups, and other information gathering instruments to measure such things as people's openness to a new church and what type of ministries a new church should provide in order to meet the spiritual needs of people in the community. Barna states that the purpose for these methods is to

explore how people think, why they have drawn certain conclusions, the breadth of the conclusions that have been drawn, the intensity of people's feelings, new ideas that people offered or the potential for motivating people to respond in desired ways. (Barna 75)

Using demographics to determine the location for a new church helps the church planter make wise decisions. The planter can take into consideration the attitudes of the people, what their perceived needs are, and whether or not a new church could meet those needs with the resources at hand and the abilities of the planter. Is this unspiritual? To some it appears so, but Christians are admonished to measure the cost before constructing a building or fighting a battle so it would seem only natural that we use the tools at hand, such as demographics, surveys, and focus groups to measure the cost of planting a new church.

A question of concern in this study is whether demographics can be used to predict future growth for a new church. Nearly all texts on this subject identify a greater need for new churches where the population is growing. A second consideration is a location where a particular segment of society is not being reached for Christ.

Growing areas are the prime locations for attempting a church plant. The General Baptist REAP Manual includes the Church Planter Index which is useful in comparing the demographic statistics for particular communities. The greatest scores are almost always for those communities which are growing (Shull 16-19). In speaking about growing communities, Chaney encourages new church plants to "get in early" while the growth is just beginning (187).

Studies also show that for new Southern Baptist churches, growing communities are more likely to produce growing churches. "The location of a church was the major

influencing factor in its growth or decline" (Jones 63). "Almost two-thirds (61.6%) of the constituted churches in this study were in communities growing in population. By contrast, only one-fourth (24.6%) of disbanded missions were in growing communities" (Boan 126-8). According to past studies, the demographic profile of a community is a definite indicator of potential growth of the new congregation.

### Emerging Trends

Emerging trends in the church planting field have more to do with leadership than anything else. More denominations are moving to coaching as a supervisory method today. In fact, for many groups coaching in a one-on-one situation is the primary source of encouragement as well as instruction. Seminars are still utilized, but to a lesser degree. Seminars on church planting are more likely to be used to prepare a church planter than to provide continuing education (Mannoia 91-94).

A second emerging trend is the use of the Church Planting Bootcamp which is being pioneered by the Church Multiplication Training Center (Multiplication). This event is usually an intensive one-week training and preparation seminar giving potential church planters as much training as can be given before they start a new church.

Another trend is the movement to raise up new church planters out of new churches. Many groups now have as a primary goal raising up persons in new congregations who will lead a future church plant. The present church planter becomes a mentor of the new prospect and little or no formal education is pursued. This is most common where a new church planter is a second career person.

This emphasis on innovation for the church planter is illustrated by a statement from Eastern Mennonite Missions. "We have observed that church planters who are successful first learn leadership principles" (Discernment 2:2).

This area of emerging trends offered an interesting aspect to this study as it directed some light on those issues at the forefront of church planting ministry. These new

innovations can perhaps be implemented quickly into a new General Baptist National Missions program if they appear to be theologically and pragmatically sound.

### Interview & Survey Methods

The majority of the information gathered in this study was statistical in nature and was collected from monthly or annual reports of church planters. However, some data was not regularly reported and required personal contact with those who have planted congregations. Additionally, the third component involved interviewing various persons connected with the respective denominational church planting ministry.

Speaking of interviews where quantitative research is being conducted, McCracken suggests the use of a "long qualitative interview" in order to situate the statistics "in their fuller social and cultural context" (9). In such a setting, the use of a questionnaire should be used to make sure all the terrain is covered. McCracken further encourages the use of "general and non-directive" questions to allow the respondent freedom to expound on the questions (34). On the contrary, Millar states that a highly structured interview should be used when you need reliable measures and replicability (119). It seems that a synthesis of these two views would be to use a highly structured interview to uncover the facts and numbers necessary to the study while allowing for the use of "floating prompts" to pursue issues which were not anticipated.

Nearly all books on the topic suggest that live interviews work the best for research projects. "Live interviews reduce the number of 'Don't know' and blank answers" (Babbie 264). The only issue in using live interviews is the question of the reliability of the answers given. The interviewer needs to be aware of where the interviewee is getting the information being shared. Highly structured interviews do tend to limit the discussion to facts by discouraging the respondent from giving opinions

In collecting information and recording it for later study, the interviewer faces some difficulties to overcome. Writing answers while the respondent is talking can be distracting to the respondent. Thus, the interviewer needs to give full attention to the respondent. However, the interviewer is then left to write the answer from memory after the respondent has finished. This short lapse can allow for the interviewer to use shorthand and perhaps

record the answer incorrectly. Full transcripts are helpful for complete analysis of the interview after its completion (McCracken 43). Taping interviews can be very helpful in creating a full transcript, but taping a conversation can be intimidating to the respondent (Weller 178). The more open-ended the question, the more important becomes recording the answer exactly as given (Babbie 266).

The interviewer needs to pay attention to accurately recording interview answers. The temptation exists for the interviewer to record judgments and summaries rather than the exact answers given by the respondent (Weller 177). Such judgments and summaries distort answers and make any conclusions less reliable. A second trap to avoid is applying qualitative standards to quantitative research. "In qualitative research, categories take shape as the research progresses. In quantitative research, categories are identified from the start" (McCracken 49).

#### Anticipated Findings

A person anticipating starting a new church will find much useful information on the subject in the texts. However, some conventional wisdom may be incomplete in its understanding of methodology. This study attempted to fill in some of the blank spots or to more completely analyze the methodologies commonly used to start new congregations.

This study focuses on four areas of methodology: assessment and training, funding levels, models utilized, and demographics. The current conventional wisdom is that education level and funding levels are not factors of a successful church plant. Coaching, models, and demographics are believed to be factors in producing successful new churches.

I disagree with some of current thinking. Education levels may not be a large factor in whether or not a person can plant a new church, but it may be an important one. Most seminaries do not provide a large dose of classes on domestic church planting. Consequently, most seminary graduates will likely be ill-equipped to begin a new church. However, seminary graduates may be better able to grow larger congregations than those with less education.

Funding levels may not be a factor in whether a new church plant succeeds in the broad scope of things, but funding may well be a factor when the types of models used are considered. Churches planted with a hive model do not need outside sources of income since the core group will likely be persons who tithe consistently. Churches started with no internal or external source of start-up funds will likely be slow starts at best.

Again, funding levels may not be a factor overall in church planting, but how those funds are allocated in an annual budget may prove to be an important issue. Should new church plants place greater emphasis on meeting salary, paying for operations, renting facilities, or conducting outreach? I believe those who prioritize outreach first, operations second, and salary third will be the successful church plants.

Coaching, models, and demographics are important factors in determining the success of a new plant. I believed they would prove to be greater indicators of the rapidity of that growth. It was interesting to discover whether the use of an assessment center prior to a start or the use of coaching during the plant is more important to the success of the plant. Different models did emerge as producing more rapid growth than others.

In the area of demographics, I believed this study would find that a growing new congregation will more likely occur in a growing community. However, I do not believe a growing community will automatically produce a growing new congregation. I believed that adequately resourcing the new church plant would be a greater factor than demographics.

Based on information in the church planting literature, I believe if a planter hopes to start a church which becomes self-supporting in three to five years and does so with a full time pastor, one of four situations must be present.

1. The plant must utilize a hive with several families to provide tithes for start-up funding and a large amount of lay leadership.
2. The plant must utilize a ministry team whose tithes provide funding and whose members complement one another in developing ministry and outreach.

3. The plant must utilize a catalytic church planter with an ample budget so a large start-up can be achieved utilizing church growth techniques.
4. The plant must utilize an especially gifted planter in a unique environment for church growth.

## CHAPTER 3

### Design of the Study

Planting new congregations has been important to General Baptists from their beginning in the 1800s. The General Baptist church planting program in the United States can be described as anemic due to a low number of church plants and slow growth among new starts. The National Missions program has started many churches over time, but those churches do not grow rapidly. More often than not, they plateau at forty to fifty in average Sunday morning worship attendance. Something is needed to energize the church planting ministry to make more effective use of funds, to see churches started, and to see them grow to self-sufficiency in three to five years.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe elements of successful church plants in similar-sized denominations in order to develop an approach to church planting for the National Missions program of General Baptists. By examining the ministries of similar sized denominations, some elements common to successful church plants have emerged. Once these common elements were identified, they suggested improvements for the General Baptist church planting ministry.

#### Research and Operational Questions.

Research Question #1. What impact does the assessment and selection, education, and training of a church planter have on the development of a new church?

Operational Question #1. Does the assessment of potential church planters increase the rate of successful church plants in a national missions program?

Operational Question #2. How does formal theological education from a seminary or graduate school affect the success or failure of a planter to start a new congregation?

Operational Question #3. What forms should a continuing education system take to adequately assist a church planter in the development of a new congregation?

Research Question #2: What constitutes adequate budget spending percentages for a new church plant during the first five years?

Operational Question #1. How much subsidy is adequate for specific church planting models?

Operational Question #2. What level of funding should be dedicated toward outreach and marketing for a new church plant?

Operational Question #3. What expectations should be placed on the new congregation in regard to funding to promote a healthy attitude toward funding and budgeting?

Research Question #3: Which church planting models provide the best opportunity for growth of a new church?

Operational Question #1. How does the General Baptist model of catalytic church planting compare to other commonly used models?

Operational Question #2. Which models produce new congregations for the least amount of subsidy?

Research Question #4: What impact does the location of a church plant appear to have on the growth of the new church during the first five years?

Operational Question #1. To what degree, if any, is decadal population growth of an area needed for a new church to have the potential of growing to self-sufficiency in three to five years?

Operational Question #2. What demographic factors other than growth rate contribute to the successful start-up of a new congregation?

Research Question #5: What are the primary support mechanisms provided by national missions offices which produce self-supporting congregations?

Operational Question #1. What programs and practices currently exist which produce new church planters for denominational church planting ministries?

Operational Questions #2. What research needs to be conducted to further develop new opportunities for beginning new congregations in the United States?

### Methodology

This study utilized a multiple case study approach to this topic. The first case study was an analysis of the promotional, educational, and recruiting materials produced by each of the selected denominational church planting programs targeting communities in the United States. The purpose of this collection process was to learn as much about each church planting program as possible. This material was descriptive in nature and helped identify the key factors of each program. Subsequent phases of this study were enhanced by the analysis of this information.

The second case study included two parts. The first part included the collection of monthly and/or annual statistical reports of all congregations begun by selected groups in 1993 and 1994. These reports provided primary documentation concerning the progress made in each new congregation over five years. This analysis took a longitudinal look at each church plant (Wiersma 172).

The second part included a telephone interview with every church planter whose statistical reports were available. This interview collected additional statistical information not available from the annual/monthly reports. This was ex post facto survey research in which the reports of what had already taken place was used to draw conclusions about usefulness of various approaches to church planting (Wiersma 15). The phone conversations were preceded by a letter to each church planter explaining the importance of the study and the type of information asked for. By doing this, each church planter had time to gather information and have it at hand when called. Telephone interviews are faster than mail surveys and can result in a high percentage of responses (Weirsma 201).

The third case study utilized follow-up interviews with selected denominational leaders, successful church planters from each denomination, and church planting consultants. The questions used for these interviews were drawn from an examination of the previously

collected descriptive and statistical information. These conversations were the only phase of the study which involved an examination of opinions as opposed to quantitative information.

### Population

This study attempted to include every new church plant attempted by all four denominations in 1993 and 1994. Every effort was made to include all churches. However, churches for which records did not exist or for which the original church planters could not be located were by necessity not included.

Denominations included in this study were those mostly closely matching the size of the General Association of General Baptists. In 1996, General Baptists reported 790 congregations with a total membership of 70,562 in the United States. Denominations included are similar to General Baptists in either number of churches or total membership. With some room for variation, those denominations have between 500 and 1000 congregations. The selected denominations also have between 50,000 and 100,000 members or adherents. The Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches was the main source of information for this part of the selection process.

The second criterion for a denomination's inclusion in this study was an active national church planting program. Some groups have no national coordination and thus have few if any records of their church plants. Other groups may be similar in size yet fail to make church planting a priority. Inclusion according to this criterion necessitated the group having attempted to start in 1993 or 1994 a number of churches equal to .5 percent of the number of existing churches in their denomination.

Thirdly, the denominational leader responsible for church planting needed to be willing to assist in the collection of reports and other information necessary to complete this study. Without such cooperation from a sufficient number of denominational leaders this study could not have been completed with its present objectives.

A fourth consideration was the similarity of doctrine and polity to General Baptists. Groups with a different theological perspective may not practice church planting in a way

which would be transferable to the General Baptist contextual situation. This issue was of less importance than the first three; however, it was part of the mix.

The denominations in addition to General Baptists which were included in this study were Free Methodists, Baptist General Conference, Evangelical Covenant, and Cumberland Presbyterian. These groups met or exceeded the criteria stated above.

### Instrumentation

In the first case study, an instrument was designed to describe the national missions program of each denomination. This instrument did not attempt to analyze the adequacy of the program, but attempted to record information about the denomination and the way the program is structured. The information gathered provided insight into the usual methods of beginning new congregations related to funding, models, training, and demographics.

In the second case study, one instrument was used to record information gleaned from the monthly/annual reports and information from the telephone interviews. The information was almost entirely statistical in nature. Few opinion questions were included and open-ended questions were avoided. Once information was gleaned from the reports, all church planters were contacted by phone to complete the record. Respondents were asked to be as specific and as accurate as possible in reporting information about their church plant. In order to keep accuracy in the forefront, as much information as possible was gathered from the reports on file with the national or regional offices.

The third case study was the only phase to include observation and opinions of the respondents. These follow-up interviews explored the future direction of church planting as seen by those involved in leading the church planting ministry and those who have served as church planters. An instrument consisting of open-ended questions was developed in order to gather information based on the experience of church planting leaders. These questions also asked about current trends and their anticipated effectiveness in assisting in church planting.

### Validity and Reliability

The validity of the study related to the thoroughness and accuracy of the data collected from the reports and interviews. Assuming the church planters were all accountable to a supervisor either on a regional or national level and that reports were reviewed through an accountability process, the statistical information gathered was highly reliable. The information asked for was specific and statistical in nature.

Information gleaned from preliminary materials outlining each denomination's program and the phase three interviews allowed much more room for interpretation. The initial materials only sought to describe the program of each denomination, thus the only limitation on reliability was the effectiveness of their communication pieces. The phase three interviews were subjective in nature. Their analysis of the direction of the church planting ministry of the future can be open to debate and discussion of those reading this study.

### Variables

The dependent variables for this study were the outcomes experienced by each new church plant. Churches either had become self-supporting, continued under subsidy, or closed within the five-year period. "Of SBC churches started in 1979, 52% were still missions five years later. Only 33% had constituted" (Boan 115). Having half or more of new church starts to become self-supporting is an adequate track record. Free Methodists hope to have 85 percent of their new church starts become self-supporting within five years by the year 2000 (Olver).

The independent variables for this study were the factors under which the new church was started. These variables included, but were not limited to, funding levels, budget priorities, demographics, church planter assessment, church planter training, church planter education, and model used.

### Data Analysis

Correlations emerged from the statistical information gathered. Comparisons and contrasts were drawn among churches that became self-supporting, remained under subsidy, or closed within the five-year period of 1993-1998. Also, among those churches which became self-supporting over the period, comparisons and contrasts were examined in relation to models used, funding formulas, demographics, and church planter assessment and training.

Correlations were also drawn from among the various independent variables. For example, the cost of subsidies of the various models utilized was compared. This examination provided information relative to the effectiveness of each situation and how each model may require differing approaches to other aspects of the ministry.

A list was developed to identify specific actions which describe elements of a national church planting program which will likely provide new church plants which start and grow to maturity. It is hoped this list will indicate certain predictor variables which will verify which characteristics result in rapid church growth in new congregations (Weirisma 348).

## CHAPTER 4

### Data Gathering and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to glean information from similar sized denominations regarding their church planting ministry in hopes of developing parameters to use in the General Baptist church planting ministry to improve its ability to start and grow new churches. It has been assumed that if a church reaches financial self-support status and information about the church is available through denominational offices that the new church has experienced numerical growth and is connected with the sponsoring denomination.

#### Case Study One - Overview of the Denominations

The first case study involved gathering information about each denomination included in the study. Such information focused primarily on the respective church planting ministries. However, general information about each denomination's polity and history was also collected. By gaining a better understanding of each group, I hoped to be better able to understand the transferability of specific policies to the General Baptist church planting ministry. Five denominations have been included in this study: General Association of General Baptists, Cumberland Presbyterians, Free Methodist Church of North America, Baptist General Conference, and Evangelical Covenant.

#### Size and Growth

General Baptists are included in this study since it is the group to which I belong. The other four groups were selected for their similarity in size to the General Baptist denomination. Each of the four are more regional in the United States rather than national. That is, these group have high concentrations of congregations in few states.

In 1990, General Baptists had 820 churches in the United States with 72,388 members (Proceedings, 1991 20). In 1997, General Baptists had 775 churches in the United States with 72,326 members (Proceedings, 1998 18). This reduction in both number of churches and in membership is an important reason for the increased emphasis on new

church planting. For this study the numbers in Table 1 were used for comparison with other denominations.

Table 1. Membership and Churches in 1990 and 1997

Denomination	1990 Churches	1990 Membership	1997 Churches	1997 Membership	Average Plants Per Year
General Baptist	820	72,388	775	72,326	4
Baptist General Conference	821	134,658	879	134,795	15
Cumberland Presbyterian	796	91,857	771	88,068	3
Evangelical Covenant	597	90,926	650	91,458	16
Free Methodist	1,003	76,118	921	73,781	6

The sources for this information include the Proceedings of the General Association of General Baptists, Baptist General Conference Annuals, George Estes, Gary Walter, Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, and Gerald Bates.

Based on the number of churches, all of these denominations are similar. When considering the number of members, the Baptist General Conference is the most dissimilar to General Baptists. The high for the Evangelical Covenant Church was twenty-four church starts in 1995. One point of note is the fact that three of the five declined in membership and churches over the seven-year period in spite of their church planting programs.

A second point of note is the wide disparity in number of new churches started. The denominations which recorded numerical growth over the period had the largest number of new churches on average. It should be noted that the Baptist General Conference started a record of sixty new congregations in 1992. Their 1998 goal is forty new church starts. This suggests that the three declining denominations need to increase their rate of new church plants to increase their potential for growth.

Origins, History, and Polity

Each denomination arose out of different doctrinal and historical contexts. Each arose out of particular issues relating to doctrine, practice, or social concerns. Some trace their roots back to the Second Great Awakening and its revivalistic emphasis. Others have developed more out of the doctrinal controversies which have provided the United States with such a diverse group of separate church organizations.

The Cumberland Presbyterians are the oldest group in this study. The Cane River Revival in 1800 is a historical landmark in their history. Although they did not formally split from others Presbyterians until 1814 and were not recognized by other Presbyterians as a separate denomination until 1825, they look to this revival as the point at which their uniqueness began to emerge. Cumberland Presbyterians began in Kentucky and still are mostly located in the mid-South (Cumberland).

Early General Baptists trace their spiritual and doctrinal history back to the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening. They mark their beginning as 1823 when Elder Benoni Stinson started Liberty General Baptist Church near Evansville, Indiana. Stinson led this church to break away from the United Baptists who would not allow him to preach the Arminian view of the freewill of man. In that day, most Baptists in the mid-west were predestinarians. Stinson's work over the next several years produced many new churches. In 1824, four churches organized Liberty Association of General Baptists. In 1870, the first General Association of General Baptists met in Junction, Illinois. Today, 80 percent of General Baptist churches are located in seven Midwestern states.

The Free Methodist Church arose out of the holiness movement (Free Methodist). The first General Conference of the Free Methodists was held in 1862 in St. Charles, Illinois. The reason for the split from the Methodist Episcopal Church had to do with multiple issues related to entire sanctification, slavery, renting of pews, and lay ministry. Those who became Free Methodists were abolitionists while the Methodist Episcopal Church remained neutral on the issue of slavery. The group began through meetings in New York and Illinois, and continues to be strongest in the Northeast and in North Central United States.

The Baptist General Conference emerged out of the evangelical pietism movement (Magnuson 2-4). The Baptist General Conference traces its heritage back to Sweden in the early 1800's. In the mid-1800's, Swedish Baptists began to emigrate to the United States in order to escape persecution in Sweden. The first Swedish Baptist church in the United States began in 1852 under the pastoral care of Gustaf Palmquist. The group began to grow from that point until they organized the first meeting of the Baptist General Conference in 1856 in the same town as the first Swedish Baptist church was started, Rock Island, Illinois. From this beginning the church spread over large parts of the United States, although they are still strongest in the North Central States.

The Evangelical Covenant Church is the youngest of the denominations having been started in 1885 by Swedish immigrants. Their roots lie in the Protestant Reformation and the Lutheran State Church of Sweden. This group states that they are "Evangelical, but not exclusive. Biblical, but not doctrinaire. Traditional, but not rigid. Congregational, but not independent." This body began in Northern areas of the United States but over the years have moved steadily westward in planting new churches (Evangelical).

In terms of polity, these organizations represent a variety of styles. General Baptists are based largely on the autonomy of the local church. Each church may voluntarily choose to join a local association of churches and with the national body called the General Association. All participation is based in the willingness and interest of the local church to participate in any particular ministry of the local association or the larger national body. The Baptist General Conference has a similar polity in that local churches participate in national and international objectives on a voluntary basis. The Baptist General Conference is organized into regional districts of churches. (Baptist)

Voluntary cooperation is also the basis of the Evangelical Covenant, but they appear to allow greater freedom to local churches than either of the Baptist groups. The Evangelical Covenant Church allows freedom in the area of doctrine as well as cooperation. This group is one of the more diverse I have heard of in that they allow for various forms of baptism,

churches can be charismatic or not, and they have freedom in their worship styles and ministry activities (Evangelical).

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church is organized largely around the presbytery system where the regional presbytery appoints pastors to local churches and owns all properties. Nationally, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church has an annual national meeting referred to as the General Assembly. Regional presbyteries are the central decision making bodies (Cumberland). The Free Methodist Church utilizes a connectional system. Like the Cumberland Presbyterians, the regional conference owns all properties and appoints all pastors. They do, however, appear to allow more flexibility to local congregations (Free).

#### National Church Planting Ministries

Each of the offices responsible for church planting see their role as supporting the local churches and regional bodies which plant churches. Each office provides technical support, training opportunities, and resourcing. However, not all offices provide significant financial support. The Cumberland Presbyterians provide small amounts of support (Estes), while the General Baptists will provide 50-100 percent of the cost of a new church plant. General Baptists National Missions does provide direct supervision to some congregations without regional involvement. In terms of record keeping, all bodies require church planters to submit periodic reports, but only the General Baptists and Cumberland Presbyterians keep such reports on file. Regional groups usually do not keep copies of reports either.

All of the groups depend on regional groups to initiate and/or lead in development of new church plants. The Evangelical Covenant developed a national approach to church planting which is then run through the regional conferences. Three groups - General Baptist, Cumberland Presbyterian, and Evangelical Covenant - provide all funding support through regional and national offices (Estes, Koker, Walter). The Free Methodist and Baptist General Conference regularly require church planters to serve bi-vocationally or to raise a portion of their financial support (Bates, Maxton).

The infrastructure for the church planting ministry varies to some degree. Although all work with regional groups, the size of those groups and the level of involvement of those groups appear to vary. General Baptists have seven regional groups with which to work, but those groups do not represent all their churches. Over half of General Baptist congregations are not involved in church planting through a regional group. The Baptist General Conference has thirteen conferences in the United States. The average number of churches per conference is sixty-seven. On the other end of the scale is the Free Methodist Church which has twenty-four conferences with an average of thirty-eight churches. The other denominations fall somewhere in between.

The number of churches in a regional group has a direct bearing on that group's ability to plant new churches. The amount of financial, volunteer, and prayer support provided by the sponsoring churches can determine how well the new congregation begins. The greater the number of support churches and the larger those support churches, the more they can provide help to the new plant begin. The question could be asked, "What is the ratio of support churches to new church plants?" And a follow-up question could be, "What should be the ratio of support churches to new church plants?" This study was not designed to answer these questions, but this analysis does raise the issue.

The most commonly used models vary from group to group. The Cumberland Presbyterians utilize a full-time new church developer hired by the judicatory and rapidly growing communities are targeted (Handbook 62, Appendix 61). The models most used could be described as catalytic church planter or a founding pastor with no core group provided (Estes).

General Baptists utilize about half full-time church planters and half bi-vocational planters. Most of the bi-vocational planters are involved in inter-cultural church plants targeting specific racial, ethnic, or language groups. Funding comes from national and regional budgets. General Baptists utilize the catalytic church planter and the founding pastor models with no core group provided.

In the Free Methodist system, the planter is usually responsible for raising a considerable portion of the needed financial support or being bi-vocational. Usually, fast growing communities are targeted. However, the planters do not immediately begin work on the field. They will spend six to twelve months recruiting a core group to help with the start. This core group can come from existing churches or from new believers in the target community. Free Methodists usually utilize the founding pastor model or the mother-daughter model (Ellis 33-78).

The Baptist General Conference provides a set amount of money up front for start-up along with an agreed-upon budget for the new church. They tend to utilize what some call the "California model" where mass outreach projects such as telemarketing or large mass mailings are used to gather a large crowd for the first public worship service. The Baptist General Conference most commonly utilizes the founding pastor model with or without a core group (Baptist).

The Evangelical Covenant has the widest range of models to use in church planting. They commonly use the adoption model by recruiting existing independent churches to join their group. The emphasis on local church freedom assists in their ability to accomplish this. They also commonly use the mother-daughter model where funding, coaching, and a core group are provided for the new church plant (Walter).

In terms of support for church planters, again there was a wide variety among the various ministries. All the denominations provided some type of training or coaching situations for church planters. However, some have a set program of training and continuing education, while others expect the planter to take the lead in identifying the training opportunities they would like to participate in.

Cumberland Presbyterians and General Baptists do not utilize a formal assessment center and they identify themselves as having a 50 percent success rate in terms of seeing new plants become self-supporting (Estes, Koker). The Free Methodist Church and Baptist General Conference both use assessment centers and identify a 60 percent success rate

(Bates, Maxton). The Evangelical Covenant Church also utilizes an assessment center and claims a 90 percent success rate currently (Walter).

All of the groups have some type of oversight system in place. Some of the oversight is done in more of a reporting and supervising mode. In this setting, the church planter is responsible to report to a regional worker on the progress of the mission and the activity of the congregation. Others have more of a coaching model where, although the same information is gathered via reports, the emphasis is more on providing spiritual, emotional, and some technical support to the planter. The three denominations which plant the most churches per year also utilize a formal assessment center prior to hiring a person as a church planter. A higher success rate occurs for those denominations utilizing both assessment centers and coaching.

One confusing aspect of this case study was the attempt to discover the amount of budget each national office of church planting had and the amount budgeted for new church subsidies. For three of the groups total budget figures were available, but not the amount designated for subsidies. It was impossible to make any comparison of the denominations. Since I am a General Baptist, I was able to get the information from our offices and found that 60 percent of the National Missions budget goes to regional groups for church planting projects. Cumberland Presbyterians had a 1998 budget for the Board of Missions of \$1,133,135, yet only \$85,000 (7.5 percent) was designated for subsidies for new church development in the United States. The budget for global missions was only \$143,226, or 12.6 percent of the total Board of Missions budget. This may reflect a dependence on local judicatories to provide the majority of funding needed (Cumberland).

One question raised by the study was whether the role of a national church planting office should be primarily funding or technical support. All the groups offer technical support, while some provide a significant portion of any subsidies. The Baptist General Conference focuses on providing technical support while also making available "seed money" which is commonly used as start-up (non-salary) funds for a new church plant.

General Baptists have historically utilized the National Missions office as the primary funding agency for new churches. The emphasis on regional groups in the last twenty years has attempted to place the funding burden closer to local churches, but with limited success.

Table 2. Overall Denominational Comparison

	General Baptist	Baptist General Conference	Cumberland Presbyterian	Evangelical Covenant	Free Methodist
1997 Churches	790	879	771	650	921
1997 Members	70,562	134,795	88,068	91,458	73,781
Origin Date	1823	1852	1814	1885	1860
Polity	Congregational	Congregational	Presbytery	Autonomy	Connectional
Movement	Revivalism	Evangelical Pietism			Holiness
Role of National Missions	Technical Support & Funding	Develop & Equip Planters	Supervision, Technical Support & Funding	Support churches & Conferences, Planting churches	Resourcing & Networking
Geographic Focus	Regional	Regional	Regional	Regional	Regional
Common Models	Catalytic & Founding Pastor	Founding Pastor	Founding Pastor	Mother - Daughter	Mother - Daughter
Selection		Assessment		Assessment	Assessment
Oversight	Supervisor	Coach	Supervisor	Coach	Coach
Training Events	Coordinator's Forum, TEE & Mentoring	Church Planters Conference	Pastor Retreat, Scholarships	Various	Planter's Strategy mtg, Scholarships

These five denominations hold much in common. They all plant churches and appear to desire to conduct this ministry in a way which will produce new congregations. Though they each began for differing reasons, they started as regional church bodies and remain

primarily so today. They are working to become nationwide in terms of the locations of churches.

In terms of their specific church planting ministries they also have much in common. They all utilize regional groups for actual church starts while the national office provides program and technical support. Each group provides the means for some type of on-going training to church planters either through events or scholarships to be used for continuing education.

The differences in the five denominations of most concern in this study were those having to do with the church planting ministry. Polity differences were only considered in order to better understand each group. A comparison of Tables 1 and 2 show that the denominations utilizing coaching and assessment centers are the ones which grow in number of churches and in membership. The information also shows that denominations planting the most number of churches are growing overall.

The information gathered in this case study does not reveal anything about differences in types of models used or issues related to funding. Each group attempts to start churches in growing areas, so no conclusions can be reached yet regarding the issue of demographics.

One significant difficulty in this portion of the study was the effort to gain accurate data. Occasionally information given verbally had to be corroborated with another published source to determine its accuracy. Other information needed was simply not available.

The next two case studies may shed more light on the issues which are the focus of this study. They will also provide greater detail in regard to the questions being asked.

#### Case Study Two - Statistical Evaluation of Church Plants in 1993 and 1994

This second case study involved an examination of the church plants started in 1993 and 1994 by all the denominations. This information was first of all gleaned from the monthly reports available from national or regional offices of church planting.

Unfortunately, though regular reports are required, most national and regional offices do not

keep such reports on file for future reference. For those church plants where monthly reports were not available, a survey form was mailed to the church planter with a cover letter requesting the needed information. (See Appendix E)

In all, twenty-five churches were included in this case study. Though at first glance this number appears small, it does represent a significant number of the total churches planted. A total of fifty-seven churches are accounted for being started in 1993 or 1994. However, nine regional groups in two denominations did not respond to repeated phone calls and letters requesting information about church plants. The total number of churches started is likely somewhat higher. In this study, the churches included represent 44 percent of the accounted for total.

Table 3. Churches Included in the Study

Denomination	Churches Planted	Churches Responding	Regions Not Responding
General Baptist	6	6	0
Baptist General Conference	15	9	4
Cumberland Presbyterian	3	3	0
Evangelical Covenant	21	3	0
Free Methodist	12	4	5
Totals	57	25	9

Once the data was collected, correlations were drawn based on the status of the congregation in 1998: closed, still a mission, or self-supporting. This chapter contains several tables showing the frequency distribution of the variables being examined. Next, observations were made based on variables such as the assessment and training, funding issues, models used, and demographics. Several conclusions can be shared as a result of

these correlations and observations. The database form and the survey form used are attached in the appendix.

#### Observations Based on 1998 Status

The purpose of this second case study was to be able to track new church plants over a five-year period in order to see how the churches progressed in comparison to the independent variables. This allowed for common descriptions to be developed of those churches which had closed, remained under subsidy, or became self-supporting by 1998. These descriptions add much to an understanding of these variables.

Churches Closed. A total of five churches in this study closed. Three of the churches are identified as having used the founding pastor model. These churches did not have a core group gathered prior to the start of the work. One plant was identified as a mother-daughter model. The fifth plant was an independent church planter model, but a core group was present. None of the churches ever achieved an average worship attendance above thirty-four.

In terms of finances, two of the churches received virtually no subsidy other than salary. The average first-year income from all sources - including subsidy, offerings, and other gifts - was \$6,895.70. Based on the information provided, none of the planters was engaged in full-time ministry.

The educational level of the planters varied from a high school diploma to a Ph.D. Three of the planters were coached but none went through an assessment center prior to placement. Only two of the planters attended any seminars during their work on their respective church plants.

The demographics showed an unusual lack of correlation. The median age of the communities was not significantly higher or lower than the national median age of 1990. Conventional wisdom is that churches should be started in growing communities in order to be successful. Three of these church plants were in areas experiencing growth of 27 percent or more over a five-year period (Census).

In comparison with all the church plants in the study, few differences emerged. The only significant difference between those churches that closed and all the others was the level of funding available and the average worship attendance achieved. The models used resembled the others. The training and assessment processes were similar to the others. And the demographics were not different from other church plants.

Churches Still Receiving Subsidies. A total of six churches were found to be in this category. Two of the churches were identified as using the catalytic church planter model while the other four were founding pastor models. One of the founding pastor models had a core group gathered prior to the start. Two of the planters were bi-vocational.

Three of the churches were targeting specific cultural groups while the remaining three were reaching out to Anglo households. The highest average worship attendance achieved by any of the churches was fifty-two. The lowest average worship attendance in 1998 was twenty-eight. Four of the churches plateaued in attendance in their first five years.

Funding levels for these churches was disturbing. Although all the churches experienced some growth over the five-year period, there was not a corresponding decrease in subsidy. In fact, four of the churches had higher subsidy levels in 1998 than in their first year. Apparently the supporting mission agencies did not hold these churches accountable for taking responsibility for their own finances. Rather than taking responsibility for their own finances, these churches continued to rely on significant subsidies for their existence.

Education and training of the planters was not significantly different from the larger group of churches. Five of the six planters had master's degrees. Half of the planters received regular coaching. None of the planters had gone through an assessment center prior to placement. Continuing education was evidenced by each planter having attended at least one seminar per year.

Again, the demographics researched did not appear to be different from the total group. The ministry area median age was below the national median age in three of the six communities. In one of the areas the median age was ten years above the national median

age. Three of the churches were planted in high population growth areas exceeding 10 percent over a five-year period.

Self-Supporting Churches. These churches provided a wider variety of situations than the previous two groups. This represented the largest of the three status groups and there were a greater variety of models used. Several insights emerge from an examination of these congregations.

Two of the congregations were the result of adoptions. Although this does not represent a completely new church, it is identified as one method of church planting for a denomination (Wagner 64). Adoptions are by definition the most cost effective means of adding congregations since the churches usually are already in existence and self-supporting. Thus no coaching or assessment is needed nor is any other type of support required. For most of the comparisons, the adopted congregations were not included since they completed no monthly reports and received no subsidies.

The remaining twelve churches utilized three different models. Five of the congregations were the result of restarts or the revitalization model. Each of these churches had the advantage of a previous core group to start with and some degree of congregational offerings. Of the remaining seven churches, six were identified as using the founding pastor model, while the seventh used the mother-daughter model. It needs to be noted that one of the founding pastor model churches did have a core group provided as well. Ten of the twelve planters were full-time.

The average first-year worship attendance among all the churches was eighty-two (n=12). The median was sixty. By 1998, the average worship attendance among all the churches had risen to 168 with a median of seventy-eight. One congregation was outside the mean as they registered an average worship attendance in their first year of 350 and by 1998 had reached 889.

All of the churches experienced increases in offerings over the five-year period with nine of the congregations more than doubling their total income between their first year and

1998. This occurred despite the fact that the subsidy level decreased until the churches were self-supporting. The subsidy only increased in one of the twelve congregations when comparing their first year subsidy with 1998 subsidy. Seven of the twelve congregations received their subsidy for two years or less. One additional financial statistic of note is that these churches exhibited very strong missions giving when compared to those churches not reaching self-support status.

Education and training support provided by regional or national offices did not appear to make a difference in churches becoming self-supporting. Six of the pastors had bachelors degrees, five had earned masters degrees, and one had a high school diploma. Six out of twelve received regular coaching, while four went through an assessment center. Five of the twelve attended an average of one seminar per year.

Demographics did not appear to make a difference in this setting. Only six churches were in communities where the median age was below the national median. Eleven of the twelve were located in communities where the growth rate from 1990 to 1995 was above 3 percent. Six of those were in areas with 10 percent or greater growth over the same period.

#### Examination of Independent Variables

Although a comparison of churches by status in 1998 revealed helpful information, when making comparisons and drawing correlations among the independent variables more useful information was gathered. Some of the independent variables were found to have little if any bearing on a church becoming self-supporting. Other independent variables showed a strong correlation with achieving self-support.

Models Used. Five different models of church planting were represented in this case study. Overall, 52 percent (n=25) of the churches became self-supporting within five years. When looking at the various models utilized, only revitalization, adoption and founding pastor models show strength in reaching self-support status.

Table 4. Models and Status of Church Plants in 1998

Model	Closed	Still Receiving Subsidy	Self-Supporting	Totals
Catalytic	0	2	0	2
Founding Pastor	3	4	6	13
Mother-Daughter	1	1	0	2
Independent	1	0	0	1
Revitalization	0	0	5	5
Adoption	0	0	2	2
Totals	5	7	13	25

A further observation is that 70 percent (n=10) of all churches beginning with a committed core group became self-supporting by 1998. Those churches started without a committed core group had a 38 percent (n=13) success rate. Starting with a committed core group of believers has a significant effect on the church's ability to become self-supporting over time.

Planters were not asked whether they were bi-vocational or full time in their ministry although six persons received salaries of less than \$12,000 per year. It could be assumed these were bi-vocational. Of those, only two led churches to become self-supporting. Thirteen churches were assumed to have used full-time planters with salaries in excess of \$18,000, and of those nine became self-supporting. Other churches did not report salary amounts.

Funding Levels. Churches did not keep records itemizing expenses in a way which was compatible with this study. For example, in this study planters were asked to report the amount spent on outreach each year. Most planters could not provide this information. The data received can best be analyzed by looking at the total amount of money available to be

spent on the ministry of the new church rather than percentages spent on various categories. The same is true of income. Although offerings appeared to be reported with some degree of accuracy, other categories of income were confusing.

A correlation was found in the area of total budget available for a new church. By looking at total income available the first three years of a new church, those with total income above \$30,000, including offerings, gifts, and subsidies, had a significant advantage. Those below \$30,000 in total income each year became self-supporting at a rate of 23 percent. Those above the \$30,000 threshold had a 77 percent rate of becoming self-supporting. The correlation coefficient was .65.

Looking at it from a different perspective, churches with less than \$9,000 in offerings per year (n=11) in their first three years did not become self-supporting by 1998. This suggests that those churches simply did not reach enough people to get off to a rapid start or to supply necessary offerings to make up for decreasing subsidies. Those with the highest income of subsidies and other gifts in years one and two tended to become self-supporting. Of those with outside income under \$9,000 per year (n=12), 42 percent became self-supporting, while 63 percent of those above that amount (n=11) became self-supporting.

Looking at the finances from a different perspective provides another insight. When comparing the non-salary portions of expenses, churches with higher amounts tended to do better. Those with \$10,000 per year or more in non-salary expenses (n=9) became self-supporting at an 89 percent rate. Those under \$5,000 per year in non-salary expenses (n=14) became self-supporting 29 percent of the time. The correlation coefficient was .613. None of the churches fell between these two annual amounts.

One final observation to make is the amount of giving to missions. The question can be asked if giving outside of one's church ministry has an impact on becoming self-supporting. Of those churches giving 3 percent or more of their income to missions (n=11), 91 percent became self-supporting. Of those giving less than 3 percent (n=11), 18 percent became self-supporting. The ratio of 91 percent indicates this is the most important factor in

reaching self-support although the correlation coefficient was below other financial factors at .48.

Assessment and Training. Current conventional wisdom is that the level of education of a planter is not a factor in determining eventual success, but the use of an assessment center and coaching increases chances of a church becoming self-supporting. This study addresses these issues. Based on the data in Table 5, it does not appear that greater education means a better chance of becoming self-supporting. This supports conventional wisdom on this issue.

Table 5. Education Level and Status in 1998

Model	Closed	Still Receiving Subsidy	Self-Supporting	Totals
High School	2	1	1	4
Bachelors Degree	0	0	6	6
Masters degree	5	1	5	11
Doctorate	1	0	0	1
Unknown	1	0	0	1
Totals	9	2	12	23

Coaching is considered one of the recent innovations in church planting that greatly assists in the church planting process. However, this study found that coaching did not improve the chances of becoming self-supporting. Six of twelve churches where the planter had regular coaching sessions became self-supporting. This represents only a 50 percent success rate which is considered the norm in church planting.

Prior to beginning a church plant, many denominations now require a potential planter to attend an assessment center. The objective is to be able to state whether a person

has the gifts and abilities to accomplish the church planting task. Unfortunately, the use of assessment centers was not common in 1993 and 1994. Only four persons in this study went through assessment centers. All four started churches which became self-supporting. This data supports the use of assessment centers but is still inconclusive.

Most church planters attend seminars each year in pursuing continuing education. This study showed that there was a slight advantage given to those who attended at least one seminar per year. Those attending a minimum of one per year (n=10) had a success rate of 50 percent which is the norm for all church planting. Those attending less than one per year (n=7) had a 38 percent rate of leading a church to be self-supporting. Eight of the planters did not report this information.

Demographics. Every book on church planting encourages the planter to study demographics before starting a church. This study examined three demographic statistics to determine whether they factored into the success of a church: total population, median age, and growth rate.

When examining the total population of the ministry area, the planter identified the geographic parameters. That is, although the church may have been located in a town, the planter stated whether the ministry area was to the town, the township, or a county. When examining the total population, those churches reaching out to areas over 30,000 in population had a distinct advantage over those reaching out to smaller populations. Those church plants which targeted populations of less than 30,000 (n=7) had a 38 percent success rate, while those targeting larger populations (n=16) had a 60 percent success rate.

Median age is an indicator of whether a community has a younger or older population than the nation as a whole. Usually a lower median age means a community has a larger percentage of young families with children who are considered to be easier to reach with the gospel. However, in this study churches were started and led to become self-supporting in areas where the median age was both high and low. Using the 1990 median age as the break point, those churches in areas where the median age was below the national median had a

success rate of 47 percent. Median age of a community was not a factor in predicting eventual self-sufficiency.

Table 6. Median Age and Status in 1998

Deviation From 1990 US Median	Closed	Mission	Self-support	Totals
Above Median Age	0	2	0	2
Median Age	0	0	4	4
1 less	4	0	1	5
2 less	1	0	2	3
3 less	0	1	1	2
4 less	0	3	4	7
Totals	5	6	12	23

Most church planting programs target growing communities. The idea is that growing communities mean people in transition who are open to additional changes like attending a church. This study found no difference between churches started in growing or declining communities.

Table 7. Population Growth and Status in 1998

Growth Rate	Closed	Still Receiving Subsidy	Self- Supporting	Totals
Less than 4%	0	3	3	6
4-10%	2	0	3	5
Above 10%	3	3	6	12
Totals	5	6	12	23

As can be seen in Table 7, each category has approximately a 50 percent rate of becoming self-supporting.

Controlling for Denomination.

When looking at churches according to their denominational sponsorship, several observations can be made.

Table 8. Denomination and Status in 1998

Denomination	Closed	Still Receiving Subsidy	Self-Supporting	Totals
General Baptist	2	4	0	6
Baptist General Conference	2	1	6	9
Cumberland Presbyterian	0	0	3	3
Evangelical Covenant	0	0	3	3
Free Methodist	1	0	3	4
Totals	5	5	15	25

General Baptists have the poorest record of moving churches to self-support. They utilize models which do not provide for a committed core group up front. In funding, their churches have the lowest average non-salary budget in the first three years at less than \$4,000 per year. The average non-salary budget for all other churches is over \$20,000. They also do not utilize assessment centers. General Baptists do have an oversight system in place but it is more of a supervision model than a coaching model.

The Baptist General Conference has a good record of planting successful churches. They require all church planters to do deputation. Plus, church planters typically received \$10,000 from the regional group and national office to use for outreach and ministry their first two years. They were also active in raising additional funds from a variety of sources.

Today, Baptist General Conference requires all church planters to go through an assessment center and have an ongoing coaching relationship. They also require new congregations to contribute to missions.

The Free Methodist program is a positive one with many similarities to the Baptist General Conference. Although they do not necessarily require deputation by planters, they do tend to fund their church plants at above average levels. They require a positive assessment and a quality coaching relationship.

Cumberland Presbyterians look good at 100 percent success; however, all three starts were revitalization projects with a strong core group. This church body starts a relatively small number of churches per year. Also, the churches received heavy subsidies. The Evangelical Covenant is good at creating adoption situations. None of the other groups reported any adoptions in 1993 and 1994. In new church plants, the Evangelical Covenant program is similar to that of the Baptist General Conference and the Free Methodist Church. They utilize coaching and assessment centers. They also require missions giving. In recent years, the Evangelical Covenant Church and the Baptist General Conference have worked closely together in the church planting ministry. They share a common heritage.

#### Case Study Three - Interviews With Church Planters, Leaders, and Consultants

The third case study involved contacting the directors of church planting of each denomination, one successful church planter from each denomination, and two parachurch church planting consultants. A total of twelve persons were interviewed. Attempts were made to contact additional consultants, but others were not available during the time period the interviews were conducted. The denominational leaders recommended the planters who were interviewed. All of the planters had planted mono-cultural Anglo congregations. The consultants interviewed were selected due to their regular involvement with church planters in a variety of denominations. Jim Griffith is heavily involved in training and coaching church planters through the ministry of the Church Multiplication Training Center. Bill Easum also provides consultations with organizations wishing to plant new churches and he

moderates an e-mail discussion list for church planters. Easum is the Executive Director of 21st Century Strategies.

Each person was interviewed using a list of eleven questions which arose out of the previous two case studies. The interviews lasted anywhere from fifteen to thirty minutes each. Responses were recorded on a database for comparison. The following is a list of each question and a summary of the responses given.

*1. This study found that churches started with a committed core from an existing church had a 70 percent success rate, while those without such a core had a 38 percent success rate. How do you respond to this finding?*

All of the church planters agreed with this conclusion. Each one agreed this was a stronger way to start out. One planter stated his wish to have had a core group when starting because he believed the church would have grown more rapidly. Another planter stated his belief that the standards for those starting churches without a core group ought to be different from those who start with one.

Denominational leaders also strongly agreed with this conclusion. Gary Walter stated that the Evangelical Covenant church plants which start with a committed core have a 100 percent success rate. Others commented that the percentage should likely be higher than what was found in this study. Gene Koker stated his belief that a church started with a committed core group has a two- to three-year advantage over those started without one.

The consultants interviewed held a different perspective on this question. They felt the question was irrelevant. Churches started with a core group are replicating the mother congregation and not being creative in finding new ways to minister to the unchurched. One consultant stated his belief that reaching self-supporting status is not the point, winning disciples to Jesus Christ should be paramount.

The general agreement among the planters and denominational leaders provides strong support for this conclusion. Churches started without a committed core group grow

more slowly and do not typically reach a status of self-support within five years. In short, those without a core group do not mature as quickly.

2. *What models of church planting do you believe will be the most effective at starting and growing new churches in the future?*

The most commonly mentioned model was a mother-daughter church plant. Five of the church planters mentioned this model along with three of the denominational leaders. The second most commonly mentioned model was the Team model. Several stated that this model was not used much but that interest in this model is growing.

One planter stated that the most effective models for church planting are yet to be discovered. Another stated an interest in returning to more relational types where the planter or team spends much time building individual relationships with the unchurched. One surprising item was the lack of note given to cultural church plants targeting specific ethnic, racial, or language groups.

The consultants interviewed again took a different perspective. Griffith stated the Apostolic model will work most effectively among Hispanics, Gen-Xers, and in the post-modern culture. Easum stated his belief that non-denominational church plants where a planter recruits a core group from various churches will be most effective.

Table 9. Future Models for Church Planting

	Mother-Daughter	Team	Catalytic	Ethnic	Apostolic	Non-Denom with a Core	Other
Church Planters	5	3	2	0	0	0	0
Denominational Leaders	3	1	0	1	0	0	1
Consultants	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Totals	8	4	2	1	1	1	1

\* Respondents usually gave more than one response.

There seems to be much interest in pursuing church starts where a core group is used, such as in the mother-daughter model. The answers to this question may have been influenced by the previous question which dealt with the use of a committed core group. It would be interesting to know if the answers would have been different had the order of the questions been changed.

The responses also showed a strong interest in the utilization of the team approach. My personal observation from the interviews was that many of the respondents felt a great interest in pursuing this model to see if it will be effective at starting and growing a new congregation.

*3. What is an appropriate first-year budget for a new church plant with a full-time church planter?*

Several of the interviewees balked at answering this question due to their belief that every church planting situation is unique. One single amount could not be given. Others felt that a full-time church planter should not be assumed.

The answers to this question ranged from a low of \$50,000 to a high of \$175,000. The mean amount stated by church planters was \$69,000. The median answer was \$60,000. Among the denominational leaders the mean was \$75,600. The median answer was \$63,000. The consultants gave the highest average of \$112,500.

It is interesting to note that church planters tended to give the lowest amounts while consultants gave the highest. Consultants also were more interested in using non-denominational church plants. Church planters and denominational leaders were fairly close together in their answers.

Coupling these responses with those of the previous case study provides an interesting insight. It was previously noted that churches with \$10,000 or more of non-salary expenses had a high rate of becoming self-supporting within five years. If one were to assume a full-time salary of \$40,000 then add \$10,000 in start-up funds, one would end up with a \$50,000 first-year budget. This was the lowest amount stated that was needed.

*4. Do you believe church planters should be required to raise a portion of the funds needed for their project? Explain your answer.*

Two out of three church planters believe this should be required. The two stated that this type of fundraising among support churches raises prayer support. One planter stated that fundraising is a mark of an entrepreneurial person capable of planting a church. Denominational leaders favored this type of fundraising by a three-to-two margin. Again, the commonly stated reason was to build up prayer support among the supporting churches. Also, one leader stated that an inability to raise funds is a negative for a person being able to plant a church.

Both consultants agreed that planters should raise a portion of their funding. "Yes, if they cannot raise money they are in deep weeds (Griffith)." Persons capable of planting a church need to be entrepreneurial and fundraising helps identify these gifted persons.

One observation I made during the interview was that the answers depended on where the individuals began their thinking. If they began by talking about money, they generally responded in the negative. But if they began by considering the missiological perspective, they tended to answer in the positive. Again, the order of the questions may have influenced the answers. Question three asked about budgeting, so respondents were already thinking from the perspective of money.

*5. This study showed that 91 percent of new churches giving over 3 percent of their income to missions became self-supporting. Which do you believe occurred? Did growth occur allowing churches to give to missions, or did missions giving create an atmosphere where growth could occur?*

This question evoked near unanimity among those interviewed. Eleven of twelve persons stated a belief that mission giving creates an atmosphere where growth could occur. The twelfth person stated a belief that mission giving actually stifles the growth of a new congregation.

Interviewees agreed that when a congregation makes the decision to give to other ministries outside of their own local situation, God honors that sacrifice. Koker's response was, "There is a Christian principle that the more you give the more you receive. We live by dying to self." Refusing to give to other ministries shows an attitude of selfishness and self-centeredness that is not attractive to the unchurched. Hammer stated, "People will identify with a church that is active in the community and the world. They are more apt to get involved."

This belief has led two groups to make missions giving mandatory. The Baptist General Conference requires all new church plants to contribute 10 percent of their offerings back to the denomination or to missions. The Evangelical Covenant requires all new congregations to give 15 percent to missions. I have personally felt for many years there should be a minimum requirement for new churches to contribute to the denominational budget for other mission work, but this is the first evidence provided which supports that claim.

*6. This study found that the use of a coach did not improve the chances of a church becoming self-supporting. What role do you believe coaching plays in the church planting process?*

This was a surprising conclusion arising out of the second case study. Conventional wisdom has stated that the use of a coach by a church planter increases the success of a new church plant. This question was worded in such a way as to allow interviewees to disagree with the conclusion or provide an explanation as to why this conclusion could be true. Responses were varied.

Church planters spoke favorably about the use of a coach. All stated that coaching is important in the church planting process. However, three of the planters stated that the purpose of coaching has to do with providing spiritual and emotional support for the planter. Groeschel stated his belief that the coach helps a church grow faster. "Coaching helps a new church to grow faster by removing roadblocks and showing opportunities the church planter

does not see. It is not a matter of survivability but of reaching the next level." The fifth planter was "shocked" at this conclusion. He felt that coaching played a vital role in his avoiding several potential mistakes.

Denominational leaders gave similar responses to those of planters. Four of the five stated that the primary focus of coaching was to be a "cheerleader" for the planter by providing encouragement and advice. One leader stated his belief that coaching has helped his denomination increase their success rate to 90 percent. However, three of the leaders stated that the success of a new church plant has more to do with the gifts, experience, and calling of the planter than with coaching. If a planter is not qualified up front, then coaching will not make the planter successful. Estes stated, "If the right church planter is selected, then the church planter needs only a bit of guidance." According to Walter, "Coaching will maximize the giftedness of a qualified church planter, but it will not replace it. Coaching can take a bubble project over the top."

The two consultants disagreed strongly with this conclusion. One stated that the issue of a new church attaining self-sufficiency was related to the congregation, not the planter. Therefore, this question was irrelevant. The second consultant felt that there is likely some confusion over what a coach is. His view was that people participating in this study may be considering persons as coaches who are merely providing supervision or accountability. This is a valid concern.

Among General Baptists, we have attempted various forms of supervision ranging from that by a regional board of directors to an immediate supervisor to an educational mentor. None of these has adequately assisted church planters. Based on my review of the literature and the three case studies, I am not sure General Baptists have a proper understanding of a coach. Others may have the same confusion.

Coaching does appear to be important to the church planting process. However, this study shows that it is not a factor in the congregation becoming self-supporting. It is an indirect factor in that the health, both spiritually and emotionally, of the planter is important

to the overall growth, numerically and spiritually, of the new congregation. Coaching assists in the process but does not make the process a success.

*7. How important do you believe it is for a planter to be assessed prior to beginning a church plant?*

This question evoked near unanimity. Eleven of the twelve interviewees stated it was essential at least in certain circumstances. Those qualifying their answer stated it should be used for Anglo church plants only or for full-time church planters only. Where churches are being started to reach a specific cultural group or where there is a small investment of funds, as in a bi-vocational planter, an assessment should not be required. The one person to disagree with an assessment stated that the planter's past experience in ministry was a more important indicator of future success.

Given the strong support in church planting literature and the strong support for the use of assessment centers in these interviews, it would appear to be important for a church planting ministry to make use of such a tool. One planter stated that his positive assessment gave him the confidence he needed to plant a church. One denominational leader shared his regret that prior to the use of an assessment center their denomination had sent out many unqualified persons to plant churches.

Hoyer desires that assessment centers go further in their evaluation. Question one asked about the use of core groups in new church plants while question seven asked about the use of assessment centers. Hoyer believes that the church planting skills for plants with a core group are different from those started catalytically. Assessment centers would do well to attempt to identify what models a potential church planter would be gifted in using.

*8. What is the minimum level of education needed to successfully plant a new church?*

Once again wide agreement emerged in response to this question. Basically, all agreed that there is no correlation between education level and one's ability to plant a new church. The second case study showed that everyone with a bachelor's degree planted a

church which became self-supporting while only half of those with master's degrees did so. One interviewee quipped, "They ought to at least be able to read and write." Many denominations have a minimum level of education required to become ordained, but the denominational leaders in this study stated that for church planting their requirement is excessive. Hoyer went so far as to imply that formal education unfairly "weeds out" those who do not do well with papers and books. Some of the best church planters are second career persons with no formal biblical education.

Three persons stated that although they felt there was no need for setting a minimum level of education for becoming a church planter, the location of a church plant may dictate otherwise. Some communities have high educational standards and for a minister not to meet those standards may be a negative in terms of reaching people in the community. The planter needs to be comparable to those whom the church will attempt to reach for Christ.

*9. Do you believe continuing education should be required for all church planters? Explain your answer.*

The consensus answer to this question was a qualified "yes." Six of the respondents stated it should be required as long as the educational opportunities were related to the church planting ministry and allowed for interaction with other church planters. The Baptist General Conference does not require continuing education since they consider church planters to be inherently avid learners. It has been their experience that church planters will naturally seek out opportunities on their own. Easum stated that our present culture and the constant changes in our society require all involved in ministry to be constantly "retooling" in order to stay current. In short, society expects it.

Hoyer remarked that he believes it is necessary to give a church planter a three-month sabbatical four years into the plant to give the planter the opportunity for refreshing, retooling, and re-energizing. This may focus more on the health of the planter than on continuing education, but is a point well taken. Planting churches is a demanding vocation. Opportunities for learning and interaction with colleagues are needed.

*10. What demographic numbers are most important in determining where to begin a new church?*

I began this study with a belief that demographics are a significant part of the community selection process. General Baptists have relied heavily on demographic profiles to identify the best places to begin new congregations. The second case study provided evidence that demographic profiles may not be as helpful as once thought in the selection process. The interviews added to that new understanding of demography.

Not surprisingly, six persons stated that the growth rate of the community was the most important number in a demographic profile. Three church planters and two leaders stated this as either their number one or number two answers. However, five others stated that it was more important that the demographic profile of the targeted ministry area match up well with the profile of the church planter. Three leaders and both consultants stated this belief. The balance of the interviewees gave a variety of answers.

In the Evangelical Covenant Church, "We are very undemographically driven. We find the right persons and place them where they are networked or can become networked. We find demographic advantages once the community is targeted. Growth is looked for first, but not absolute." This statement appears to reflect a new approach to demographic research. In the past, demographic profiles were used to identify potential communities for new church plants. Today they are more and more being used to ensure that the planter can effectively reach the unchurched in those communities. This represents a major change in the way church planting is done. Question eleven sheds further light on this new trend.

*11. Churches started which targeted areas with less than 30,000 total population typically did not become self-supporting. How do you respond to this finding?*

One person disagreed with this conclusion. Two persons were unsure how to respond. Seven persons agreed with this finding, while the remaining two gave qualified "yes" responses. Two of the respondents stated their belief that the model used may have a bearing on whether churches planted in smaller communities can succeed.

Walter responded, "In smaller communities, you have one shot to plant a church. Larger communities provide different populations to reach out to. In smaller communities, networks are tapped out quickly." There was a general feeling among the respondents that churches could be planted in smaller communities, but small community church plants are more difficult due to the law of large numbers, social structures, and limited opportunities. A planter has to be more intentional in attempting to begin a new church in a small population area. Hoyer feels that planters in small communities need to focus more on relationship methods of outreach rather than mass outreach techniques.

Based on the responses to both question ten and eleven and considering the statistics regarding demographics in the second case study, the role of demographics in church planting needs to change. Demographic profiles will likely continue to be useful in selecting communities where churches are needed, but they will be less useful in identifying where the next church should be started. Since conventional wisdom states that the planter is the most important single factor in the success of a new church plant, then demographic profiles become more helpful when used to identify where a particular planter needs to be sent.

#### Summary

The three case studies have served as checks and balances in understanding the issues addressed in this study. Each case study viewed much the same information from varying perspectives. When viewed individually, certain conclusions can be reached. By viewing the case studies together, those conclusions are modified, better understood, or completely changed.

The first case study shared information about how each denomination addresses the issue of church planting. That information did not deal with details of specific plants as much as it did with the practices and philosophy which drives each program. Looking at this case study alone would suggest certain modifications to the General Baptist program, but the reasons for such changes might not be readily apparent.

The second case study began to deal more with the specific details of the church planting process. Admittedly, it did not deal with issues such as the church planter's style of ministry or the approach to evangelism of individual churches. However, the information gathered did begin to share insights into how specific scenarios are helpful or not in developing a self-supporting congregation within five years.

The interviews proved helpful in verifying and analyzing - through the experiences of church planters, denominational leaders, and consultants - the information gathered in the previous two case studies. Some of my conclusions were modified through the insights of those interviewed. At other times, the information gathered was placed in a more complete frame of reference through the responses received.

The final chapter of this dissertation seeks to place all of this gathered information in a context which is both helpful and meaningful for church planting ministries of medium-sized denominations. Primarily this research project is designed to help modify the General Baptist National Missions program of church planting. Yet this information will undoubtedly be helpful to others seeking to be effective in beginning new congregations which will reach new people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER 5

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The church planting ministry offers no guarantees. Despite the best efforts of researchers in the area of church planting and the work of practitioners of this ministry, no one has developed a method and model of church planting which guarantees a church start which will grow to maturity in a set period of time. The best that can be hoped for is that the sponsoring group, the church planter, and the congregation work together to give the church the best opportunity for success.

This research project seeks to add to the body of knowledge relative to achieving the best possible situation for successful church planting; that is, starting new churches which grow to maturity. General Baptists identify a successful new church plant as one which has achieved four goals.

1. Self-supporting financially
2. Continued numerical growth
3. Connected to the denomination
4. Involved in missions (Forum)

This project focused primarily on the first criterion, that of becoming self-supporting. It was assumed that if the congregation reached self-supporting status, it had grown numerically. Also, if data was available from a national or regional office, then the congregation was properly connected with the denomination.

The issue of becoming self-supporting was explored within the context of four areas of interest to a national missions program.

1. Training and assessment of church planters.
2. Adequate funding
3. Church planting models
4. Demographics

Each of these areas of interest have an impact on a new congregation's opportunity to grow and become self-supporting within a reasonable period of time.

### Summary of Findings

An analysis of all three case studies allowed for an examination of the variables from various perspectives. Each case study added clarity and balance to the information gleaned. The examination of each denominational church planting ministry provided information about how each variable has been and is currently addressed. The statistical data from each church plant provided physical comparisons between the variables. The interviews with leaders, planters, and consultants helped to interpret the findings and compare them with conventional wisdom. All together they allow for a summary of the significant findings.

### Training and Assessment

The training and assessment of church planters has a limited, but important, part to play in successful church plants. The use of assessment centers began in the late 1980's and became increasingly important in many denominational church planting programs. Many authors, denominational leaders, and practitioners tout the significance of assessment centers in increasing the rate of successful church plants.

Based on the limited findings of this study, the use of assessment centers is warranted. The statistical evidence was not sufficient to conclude that assessment centers are necessary, but data does lean toward that conclusion. Strong agreement exists among those involved in church planting that assessment centers are useful. Assessment centers such as the ones used by the Presbyterian Church of America, Free Methodist Church of North America, and the Baptist General Conference should become more universally used in the church planting ministry.

Education is considered important to success in the United States today. College and university recruiters affirm the importance of a post-secondary education in today's culture. However, in the church planting ministry formal education does not necessarily translate into

ability to plant a new church. Certainly formal seminary education should not be abandoned, but its importance in the specific area of church planting is easily overstated.

Church planters are better described by their gifts, abilities, and experience than their educational qualifications. During an interview, one person stated that the best church planters are often those who enter the ministry as a second career. They use the skills which served them well in their previous vocation to successfully connect with persons in the area where they begin a new church. Denominations would do well to seek out such leaders and utilize their skills in this special ministry.

Although formal education does not appear to be a necessity in planting a new church, many feel that some form of continuing education is required. The person who desires to plant a new church may not have a seminary degree, but does need some sense of what it takes to begin a new congregation. Such people also need to understand how their new churches fit in with their particular denominational heritage and tradition.

Continuing education should be a part of any church planting ministry. Opportunities need to focus on equipping pastors who need to understand the church planting scenario. Also, planters need to interact regularly with those engaged in similar enterprises. Seminars on subjects outside the church planting sphere may not be as needed. Each planter's gifts and abilities need to be considered in developing a personal continuing education program.

Coaching is recognized by church planters, denominational leaders, and church planting consultants as a necessary addition to the process, even though it is not a factor in producing self-supporting congregations. It is helpful in assisting the church planter. Coaching provides both spiritual and emotional support. It also offers high quality advice which the planter can use to improve the effectiveness of the ministry.

#### Adequate Funding

Conventional wisdom says that subsidy levels have no correlation with the ability to begin a new congregation. Anecdotal evidence does exist that churches can be started "on a

shoestring," although that is not the norm. This study showed that funding is crucial to the ability of a church to get off to a good start.

The intent of the study was to discover a pattern of percentages of funds which should be spent on items such as salary, building, operations, outreach, and missions. Most church reports do not itemize expenditures in this way, so only limited information could be gleaned. What proved to be valuable was a look at the overall budget amount and the non-salary funds available.

The amount of the subsidy received by a new congregation is not as important as developing an adequate total budget for the church. Where the funds come from is irrelevant; having enough to cover necessary expenses is important. This study found that churches with the highest non-salary budget had a higher probability of becoming self-supporting. The threshold was identified at \$10,000 per year in 1993 dollars. A budget needs to be set which allows adequate funds for the needs of a new church plant. The budget should estimate an amount which can reasonably be expected in offerings from the congregation. Churches utilizing a committed core group will obviously have higher offerings than those started without such a group. The subsidy granted a new church should be set only after considering all other sources of income available for a new church. For a new church plant with a full-time pastor, a minimum budget of \$50,000 in 1993 dollars is indicated by the research. Future budgeting should reflect the changes in inflation since then.

### Models

The best opportunities for starting churches which become self-supporting in a reasonable amount of time come with the use of models where a church or a group of churches send out a committed core group to begin the new congregation. Such core groups are part of mother-daughter plants, founding pastor plants, and partnering plants. Committed core groups help provide funding through their regular offerings, a readily available source of leadership, and multiple opportunities for personal evangelism.

A model which is not yet commonly used but which shows much promise is the team approach model. None of the churches studied in the case studies utilized the team approach; however, it was considered a positive option by planters and denominational leaders. As this model is used more frequently, additional research could be conducted to measure its usefulness as a tool in the church planting arsenal.

The models used most commonly by General Baptists are the catalytic church planter and the founding pastor models. It is extremely rare for a General Baptist church plant to begin with a committed core group. Even churches started as a founding pastor model can be considered catalytic since the planter must recruit all participants from the community at large. While the mother-daughter model and highly financed founding pastor models are typically calling for subsidies for three years, the catalytic church planter model requires a longer time frame, such as seven to ten years.

These types of church plants are the slowest in terms of moving toward maturity as measured by self-support. This study found that the use of these models will increase the amount of time it takes for a church to mature. Additionally, the budgets for General Baptist church plants are the lowest among this group of five denominations. In short, General Baptist church plants are severely handicapped.

The most cost effective model of adding churches to a denomination is that of adoption. Though it can be argued that adoptions are not true church plants, they can add to a particular denomination and add much to the Kingdom of God. Non-aligned churches may not be involved in the greater worldwide outreach of the church, nor will they likely be involved in planting new churches in the United States. By inviting a non-aligned church to become a part of an existing denomination, their resources can be added to those already present to share the gospel more effectively in the United States and around the world.

Only the Evangelical Covenant church made use of adoption during the time period included in this study. Adoptions cost nothing other than the effort to convince an independent church body of the advantages of being part of a larger church family. With the

rising number of independent congregations in the United States, church planting agencies would do well to identify those independent congregations which could be approached about joining their denominational group. Certainly doctrine, polity, and values need to be compared to discover if a good match is possible. Theoretically this holds much promise for increasing the number of churches in a particular church group.

### Demographics

Conventional wisdom states that the demographic profile of an area is a good measure of the need for a new congregation and the ability to begin a new church in that area. This study found that although such a profile may identify where a church is needed, only one out of three demographic statistics were found to be significant in determining the potential for starting and maturing a new church.

The decadal population growth has been considered an important statistic in community selection for a new church plant. This study found that growth rate did not predict growth of a new church nor whether the church will mature quickly. Certainly a growing community can be said to need a new congregation. More people in an area translates into the need for more Christian ministry. However, community growth does not automatically mean people are receptive to attending a new church.

The only factor of demographics which proved important for a new church growing to self-sufficiency was the base population of the targeted ministry area. The law of large numbers is supported. Larger population groups to reach out to gives the church a greater opportunity to add new people to the congregation. Small communities are exhausted quickly in terms of outreach efforts. Large communities have greater numbers, thus more opportunities to reach new people for a new church.

It is important to note that the size of a particular community is not the issue, rather the population in the geographic area being targeted is. For example, a person may attempt to begin a new church in a small town of 11,000 persons. But the ability to grow the congregation to self-support status in five years is enhanced if the target ministry area was

increased beyond the limits of the town to encompass a minimum of 30,000 persons. For small town church plants, the planter will do well to target an entire township or county rather than limiting ministry to the town itself.

Demographic profiles may need to be placed in a different context in their usage for church planting. Conventional wisdom states, and I do not disagree, that the selection of the appropriate church planter is the greatest single factor in the success of a new church plant. Consequently, demographic profiles may be more productively used if they become a tool for determining whether a potential planter matches the community context. This issue warrants further study as to whether demographics are most helpful in selecting locations or in selecting planters. My personal suspicion that the latter is more important although this study did not make this determination.

Table 10. Summary of Findings

Issues Studied	Impact on attaining Self-Support
Assessment Center	Inconclusive, but supported by this study
Formal Education	No correlation
Continuing Education	A positive factor
Coaching	Not a factor, but helpful to planter
Non-Salary Budget	Needs to be \$10,000 per year or more
3% Giving to Missions	Definitely a factor, should be pursued
Committed Core Group	Increases maturity rate
Catalytic Model	Slow process
Mother-Daughter Model	Best model for reaching self-support
Population Growth	Not a significant factor
Median Age	Not a significant factor
Base Population	Target an area above 30,000 population

The most important factors in producing a new church that grows to maturity are listed below in order of importance based on the research gathered in this study. Items one through five are most highly recommended.

1. Missions giving should exceed 3 percent of all income including subsidies and gifts.
2. The total annual budget of a new church should be no less than \$30,000.
3. The non-salary portion of the budget should be no less than \$10,000 in 1993 dollars.
4. The model used should include the gathering of a committed core group from sponsoring churches.

5. The church planter should be fully assessed prior to beginning work on a new church plant. Further study may prove this item to be more important than the previous listed items.
6. Each church planter should target a geographic area which includes no less than 30,000 persons.
7. Every church planter should have a coach to provide encouragement, advice, and a sounding board.
8. Church planters should be given every opportunity to interact with others in the church planting ministry through appropriate seminars and other training events.

#### Limitations of the Study

The biggest obstacle in completing this study was data gathering for the second case study. The goal was to gather information on all churches started by the five denominations during 1993 and 94. I found that the less the national office was involved directly in planting new churches, the less likely the office had the needed data on file. Even regional offices did not keep the monthly reports of new church plants. Limited amounts of information came from these offices.

In about half the cases direct contact with the church planter had to be made to gather the data. Churches that closed were under represented since those planters were unavailable. Other church plants could not be identified because regional leaders responsible for church planting could not be reached or did not respond.

A second limitation of the study related to the timeline. When churches were started in 1993 or 1994, the figures given for their first year of ministry were partial years. This was readily apparent in observing the financial statistics. Thus, when attempting to analyze the first-year subsidies of church plants, the second and third years were added and averaged out to come to a reasonable figure.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

One suggestion for further study would be to conduct a longitudinal study where new churches currently being started could be tracked over a five- to ten-year period. If church

planters agreed to participate in the study ahead of time, then timely reports could be received regularly to track growth and development. Each of the five denominational leaders of church planting have expressed their denominational goals to increase the number of new church plants started each year. This type of study could include more congregations and gather more complete data.

Since completing the data gathering portion of this study, I learned of such a study currently underway by Stan Wood of Columbia Theological Seminary. Several denominations of various sizes and involvement in church planting are participating in this study.

This study did not address issues related to evangelism and ministry in new church plants. Another helpful study would identify the major outreach style, preaching themes, facility development, and purpose of new churches to discover how those factors influence the growth and development of a new congregation. Certainly these factors change according to the needs of particular communities, but common threads could be identified which would assist future church planters in general and perhaps specific church plants in communities similar to those in the study.

Although data on the annual average worship attendance of each congregation were gathered for this study, numerical growth was not used as a dependent variable. The dependent variables were limited to progress toward becoming self-supporting. It was apparent from a cursory examination of the data that churches became self-supporting at various sizes. My assumption had been that a congregation of 100 could financially support its own ministries, upkeep on a facility, and a full-time pastor salary. However, several churches became self-supporting prior to attaining 100 in average worship attendance.

Further study could correlate average worship attendance with maturity of the congregation. Also, an examination of where the new attenders came from would be helpful in discovering an effective mix of those beginning to attend a new church who were

previously churched or previously unchurched. This type of examination would be helpful in goal setting for a new congregation.

#### Recommendations for General Baptist National Missions

The General Baptist church planting ministry can be described as anemic. Churches are started but do not grow to self-sufficiency at an appropriate rate. The items studied were examined with the underlying question of whether discovery of this information would help increase the rate of growth toward self-sufficiency for new churches. I believe the following recommendations will help move the General Baptist ministry in an appropriate direction.

Since those denominations included in this study which planted the most churches were also growing numerically and in number of churches, General Baptist National Missions should work toward beginning more new churches. However, such an increase would not be well advised until the following recommendations have been implemented to provide a greater opportunity for those churches to mature at a reasonable rate.

#### Assessment and Training

General Baptist National Missions needs to modify its approach to the training and assessment of church planters. Assessment centers need to be used as indicators of a person's giftedness for church planting. To date, no planters in this denomination have ever attended such an assessment. Over the past fifteen years, several persons selected for church planting have been unsuccessful in planting churches, and after personal reflection felt they were not gifted in this area. Several of these ministers have left the denomination for other groups. Each occasion resulted in a minimum of one-year, full-time salary and other expenses which did not bear fruit in the form of a new congregation. Assessment centers can help eliminate such improper planter selections.

In my opinion, General Baptists are not currently in a position to develop their own assessment centers. No one in this denomination is presently skilled or experienced in this area. It is recommended that other denominations be contacted concerning the possibility of participating in their centers.

Presently the oversight system for General Baptist church planters is based more on a supervision model than a coaching model. Although coaching does not appear to provide an advantage toward self-support, it does play an important role in the church planting process. General Baptists need to move in this direction by providing extensive training for regional church planting coordinators and pastors of existing, growing churches in how to coach church planters. Such training is presently offered by parachurch organizations. It is possible that denominations approached about assessment centers may also have coaching training programs which General Baptist coaches could attend.

Gene Koker, former director of General Baptist National Missions, added a line item in the annual budget to provide funds for church planter continuing education. Not all planters have made it a practice to attend seminars and other training events. Most of the bi-vocational pastors do not regularly attend seminars due to time and perhaps budget constraints.

In addition to providing funds for continuing education, General Baptist National Missions should make continuing education a part of every ministry agreement between a planter and the sponsoring agency. Funds appear to be available, but an appropriate emphasis on the importance of continuing education from the national office may help stimulate planters to take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

### Funding

Budgeting has been a particular concern of mine in General Baptist church planting for some time. Budgeting for individual churches sees no consistency from church to church. No guidelines assist a planter or a regional group in setting an appropriate budget. It is recommended that a method of determining an appropriate annual budget for new church plants be developed. Such a budget would consider potential income from offerings, gifts, and potential subsidy. It would take into account the various expenses necessary for beginning a new church, including salary and benefits for the planter (full or part-time), facility costs, outreach expenses, operations, and missions giving. Every church plant should

have a minimum of \$10,000 in non-salary budget whether making use of a full or part-time church planter. Every planter must be provided with the materials needed to begin a high quality new congregation.

One potential method of determining an appropriate budget would be to consider the potential size of the anticipated congregation. If a new church in a given area can be expected to grow to 100 or more in average worship attendance within five years, then a budget could be set equal to that of existing congregations which average 100 or more in worship. If a new church plant can anticipate growing to an average worship attendance of fifty within five years, then a budget equal to that of existing congregation averaging fifty in worship could be used as a guide.

General Baptist National Missions works as a partner with regional groups in the church planting ministry. Most of what is recommended by the director of National Missions becomes policy in the regional groups. The director needs to establish a policy related to new congregations giving to the denominational Unified Budget or some other means of contributing to ministries outside of the local congregation.

This would accomplish two objectives. First, it would establish the congregation from day one as part of a larger ministry family. The connection between the new church and the denomination would be stronger because the congregation would be financially involved in other ministry. Second, it would follow the missiological principle that "the more you give away, the more you receive" (Koker). Churches, both new and existing, need to recognize that the principle of tithing is true for the local church as it is for the individual. God blesses those who give beyond themselves.

### Church Planting Models

Use of the catalytic church planter model by General Baptists began in the mid-1980's. It was chosen because it was a better fit for General Baptist tradition and context. Historically, those who began new General Baptist churches traveled from town to town on preaching tours. When enough converts were won to Christ, a congregation was organized.

Later planters were often sent out to a community with a promise of help to acquire a church building, but with little money and no help.

When an opportunity for change emerged in the 1980's, the focus moved away from those models to one focusing on personnel. Emphasis was placed on hiring highly qualified persons as catalytic church planters. Salaries were adjusted to accommodate full-time ministers, and planters were sent out. Even so, little was available in the way of training, start-up funds, or other assistance.

At this point General Baptist National Missions leaders became aware of the rate of success of churches started with a committed core group. However, General Baptist pastors were unwilling to support such a model. Pastors were extremely reluctant to encourage "their" church members to leave, even for the high goal of starting a new church.

General Baptist National Missions is encouraged to pursue a course which will make the sending out of lay families to become the committed core group for new churches a positive option for existing churches. It is my belief this can and should be accomplished. Those involved in the church planting ministry anticipate a major fundraising project in the near future. Recruitment of committed Christian families for core groups of new congregations can be promoted in addition to the financial goals. Also, goals can be set for recruitment of parent churches for development of new daughter congregations. This is an attainable objective.

General Baptist National Missions needs to explore the potential for starting new congregations through the use of teams. Research can be conducted which will build on the experiences of other denominations which have successfully utilized this model. This model may be new enough in the church planting field that General Baptists can pioneer in making it the predominate church planting model used.

### Demographics

The General Baptist denomination is one of small churches. The average worship attendance of all churches is just below 63.8 (Proceedings, 1998 39). Consequently, when

new churches are started, many church planters' sights are set on starting churches which are small. Also, when targeting an area, they select small population areas.

General Baptist National Missions should establish a threshold for target ministry areas for new congregations. Projects should rarely be approved where the planter intends to reach out to an area of less than 30,000 persons. This population threshold represents approximately 10,000 households. Larger groups of people represent greater opportunities for the new church to grow to maturity.

This recommendation should perhaps be tempered to the point that church plants in smaller areas should not automatically be written off. Certainly, opportunities exist to begin churches in small towns and rural areas where identifying a population of 30,000 would cover hundreds of square miles. Such church plants can and do succeed in doing good ministry. However, in the overall denominational church planting focus, these should not be the norm. Where it is evident God has a great work to do in a small population area, General Baptists should step up and do the work God has called them to.

Greater emphasis may need to be placed in the future on using demographics to insure an appropriate match between planter and community, a trend underway among other denominations. When a good match exists between the planter and the target area, a greater opportunity for a successful church plant is present.

#### Changing Thoughts

When I began as a church planter in 1986, I was concerned that I had no idea what types of goals would be reasonable to shoot for. Early in this ministry I felt the need to know more about church planting in order to provide reasonable amounts of funding and to set achievable goals for the growth and development of a new church.

Through this study I have learned that General Baptists are products of the models they use to plant churches. Typically, a planter may receive what is considered a full-time salary, but the church is started with no committed core group and usually no start-up funds. This situation usually ends up producing a slow growing, though valid, new church plant. I

have learned that slow growth is to be expected with the present church planting structure. In short, I did not do too bad by starting small congregations given what I had to work with. My hope is that future church planters will have all the resources they need without being smothered by too much help.

I believe the results of this study do provide a basis for planning for a new church plant that will start and grow to maturity in a reasonable period of time. Some of my personal theories were proven true, others were proven false, and still others need further examination. I am certain that in terms of the physical "stuff" of planting a new church, I can enter into a new project better equipped than ever before. Certainly the spiritual issues of personal devotion, prayer support, calling of God, spiritual receptivity, etc., are of greater importance in the total scheme of things. Most of these issues are well founded in the hearts and minds of church planters. By adequately blending the two areas of importance, new churches can and will be started which will bring glory to God and faith to new believers.

#### Conclusion

The purpose of this study has been to describe elements of successful church plants in similar-sized denominations in order to develop an approach to church planting for the National Missions program of General Baptists. Several elements have been examined. Their relationship to the development of new churches which grow to maturity as measured by attaining financial self-support has been documented.

Apparently several components must come together to provide a planter with the best possibility of starting a quality congregation. Coupling these elements with a church planter's giftedness and the personal direction of the Holy Spirit will give opportunity for making a difference in a community through a positive new church plant.

APPENDIX A

Letter to National Missions Directors

Missions of Southern Indiana  
3426 Paoli Pike  
Floyds Knobs IN 47119-9701

Rev. Gene Koker  
General Baptist National Missions  
100 Stinson Drive  
Poplar Bluff MO 63901

Rev. Gene Koker,

I am requesting your help in doing a research project in the area of church planting in the United States. I am completing a Doctor of Ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary with an emphasis in Evangelism, Church Growth, and Missions. I have served as a church planter for General Baptists since 1986. This project is an effort to analyze the church planting programs of similar sized denominations in hopes of developing a model for the General Baptist National Missions program. My intention is to collect data for the study during September-October, 1998.

This will be a multiple case study model utilizing three phases. First, I will want to examine all documentation used in your church planting program such as training manuals, promotional pieces, recruiting materials, report forms, etc. Second, I will need access to all monthly and/or annual reports for all new congregations started in 1993 and 1994. If such reports do not contain all needed data or if such reports do not exist, I will need information on how to contact church planters or regional supervisors. Third, I would like to conduct an interview with you and with one or two successful church planters.

At this point, I am simply seeking to discover if you are willing to participate in this study. I plan to attempt to contact you by phone by July 31 to answer any questions you may have and to discuss your potential participation in this study. Upon completion of this study and its acceptance by the dissertation committee at Asbury Seminary, you will receive a bound copy of the dissertation at my expense.

This study will be valuable to my denomination, General Baptists, in improving the success of our church planting program. It is my hope that information gleaned will also be helpful to your efforts to begin new churches in North America. I hope you will give this opportunity your serious consideration. I look forward to talking with you soon.

In His Mission,

Rev. Dennis D. Powell

APPENDIX B

Database Form for Case Study 1

**Denominational Overview**

Denomination: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Members 1990: \_\_\_\_\_ Churches 1990: \_\_\_\_\_

Members 1997: \_\_\_\_\_ Churches 1997: \_\_\_\_\_

Origins: \_\_\_\_\_

History: \_\_\_\_\_

Polity: \_\_\_\_\_

**Church Planting Program**

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

National Control or Regional Control: \_\_\_\_\_

Typical Church Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Churches Started in 1990: \_\_\_\_ 91 \_\_\_\_ 92 \_\_\_\_ 93 \_\_\_\_ 94 \_\_\_\_ 95 \_\_\_\_ 96 \_\_\_\_ 97 \_\_\_\_

Most Common Model: \_\_\_\_\_

1998 National Missions Budget: \_\_\_\_\_

Use Assessment Center? \_\_\_\_ Started Using AC: \_\_\_\_ Pct. Plants Successful: \_\_\_\_

Annual Training Events: \_\_\_\_\_

Sources: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C

Database Form for Case Study 2

**Church Planting Statistics**

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Denomination: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Planter: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Work Began: \_\_\_\_\_ 1998 Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Self-Supporting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Model Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Committed Core?: \_\_\_\_ Deputation?:

_____	1993	94	95	96	97	98
-------	------	----	----	----	----	----

Ave. Worship

**Income**

Offerings

Subsidy

Other

Total Income

**Expenses**

Salary

Building

Operations

Outreach

Missions

Total Expenses

**Church Planter**

Highest Degree Attained: \_\_\_\_\_ Coach Assigned?: \_\_\_\_\_ Coaching Meeting Monthly:

\_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Used?: \_\_\_\_\_ If Yes, Score: \_\_\_\_\_ Seminars Attended To Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Training: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Community**

Community Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Target Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Target Group: \_\_\_\_\_

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Population 1980: \_\_\_\_\_ 1990: \_\_\_\_\_ 1995: \_\_\_\_\_

Target Population 1980: \_\_\_\_\_ 1990: \_\_\_\_\_ 1995: \_\_\_\_\_

Growth Rate 1990: \_\_\_\_\_ 1995: \_\_\_\_\_ 1990 Median Age: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D

Letter to Church Planters Requesting Statistical Information

3426 Paoli Pike  
Floyds Knobs, IN 47119-9701

Rev Church Planter  
Address  
Their City State ZIP

Rev Church Planter,

I received your name from Gary Walter's office with the Evangelical Covenant Church because you began work on a new church plant in either 1993 or 1994. I am currently completing my Doctor of Ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary. My research project is a study of the development of new churches over a four to five year period. I am focusing on the types of support provided through national church planting offices and their effect on the rate of growth of the new church. The study is limited to denominations of similar size in terms of membership and number of churches.

I have been in contact with your national church planting leader, Gary Walter, and his office has been extremely helpful in providing information about your denomination overall as well as your church planting ministry.

I am enclosing a statistical survey sheet to collect the information needed for this study. Originally, much of the information was to be collected from monthly or annual reports, however, the needed reports are not on file.

Would you be willing to complete as much of this form as you can within the next week and mail it back to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope? This information will help national church planting programs to plan for more effective starts in the future. Your assistance will help future church planters by developing successful models of national support.

Thank you very much for your assistance. May God bless your continued ministry.

In His Mission,

Rev. Dennis Powell

## APPENDIX E

## Self-Reporting Form for Church Planters

Church Planting Statistical Survey

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Denomination: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Planter: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What Month/Year did work begin on the new church? (not your public launch date) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the current status of your church?

*still under subsidy (mission status)    closed    self-supporting*

If not self-supporting, when do you anticipate being so? \_\_\_\_\_

3. On the last page, you will find a list of church planting models? Which one more closely represents the model used in your situation? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please provide the following information for each year. Sponsor Subsidy Income and Outreach Expense are most needful along with total income and expenses.

	93	94	95	96	97	98
Ave. Worship						
Income						
Offerings						
Sponsor Subsidy						
Other						
Total Income						
Expenses						
Salary						
Building/Rent						
Operations						
Outreach						
Missions						
Total Expenses						

5. What is your highest level of education? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did you have a Coach assigned to you for your church plant? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, did you meet monthly? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Did you attend an Assessment Center before beginning your new plant? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, what was your score?    Red    Yellow    Green

8. How many seminars have you attended during the time your church was planted until it became self-supporting or until now? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What additional significant support was provided by your national church planting office?  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What was your target community? \_\_\_\_\_

Is this a town, county, township, or other area? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What was the 1980 and 1990 total population for your target community?

1980 \_\_\_\_\_ 1990 \_\_\_\_\_

12. Did you have a target group within the community you were attempting to reach such as a specific age group, family situation, ethnic group, racial group, etc?

If so, please describe your target group. \_\_\_\_\_

13. What was the population of your target group within your community in 1980 and 1990?

1980 \_\_\_\_\_ 1990 \_\_\_\_\_

14. What was the median age of your community in 1990? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact me at (812)949-7904 or

Dennispowell@worldnet.att.net. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

## APPENDIX F

## Interview Form for Case Study 3

**Church Planting Leader Interview**

Leader Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_

1. This study found that churches started with a committed core from an existing church had a 70% success rate, while those without such a core had a 38% success rate. How do you respond to this finding? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What models of church planting do you believe will be the most effective at starting and growing new churches in the future?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is an appropriate first year budget for a new church plant with a full-time church planter? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you believe church planters should be required to raise a portion of the funds needed for their project? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_
5. This study showed that 91% of new churches giving over 3% of their income to missions became self-supporting. Which do you believe occurred? Did growth occur allowing churches to give to missions, or did missions giving create an atmosphere where growth could occur? \_\_\_\_\_
6. This study found that the use of a coach did not improve the chances of a church becoming self-supporting. What role do you believe coaching plays in the church planting process?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How important do you believe it is for a planter to be assessed prior to beginning a church plant? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the minimum level of education needed to successfully plant a new church?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you believe continuing education should be required for all church planters? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_
10. What demographic numbers are most important in determining where to begin a new church? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Churches started which targeted areas with less than 30,000 total population typically did not become self-supporting. How do you respond to this finding?
- 

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