

BEN CABITAC

Lead Pastor, Bethel Church; Glendale, CA



From the Lord's Table to His Church: Managing Congregational Conflict for the Sake of the Gospel

Project Adviser: Dr. Gary Allen

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Jim Hernando

It is not a matter of *if*, but *when*, conflict will vehemently unleash in churches with devastating and costly consequences. In light of this, the purpose of this project was to prepare and present a church conflict management seminar for Bethel Church in Glendale, California with the goal of encouraging and empowering participants to positively embrace and peacefully manage congregational conflict. The anticipated outcomes were intrapersonal and interpersonal growth and development, as well as the manifestation of unity among believers.

The contents of the seminar provided biblical-theological and practical foundations for a Christ-centered praxis of conflict management based on the following proposal: the Lord's Supper provides a profound resolution to congregational conflict and preserves unity, which is critical for the sake of the gospel. To measure the effectiveness of the seminar, I administered pretests and posttests to the participants. Based on the quantitative and qualitative analyses, the church conflict seminar was a success.

The project provided Bethel Church the following recommendations. First, leaders should present a conflict management seminar annually as a spiritual checkup and maintenance for the church and its members, so the congregation can spend more of its valuable time fulfilling the gospel mission. Second, the church should place the Lord's Table at the center of Bethel's worship, because the Lord's Table provides a profound resolution to congregational conflict and preserves unity.

DAVE COLE

Executive Director of Missions and Associate Network Leader, Northwest Ministry Network



The Outward-focused Church: Leadership Training for Established Northwest Ministry Network Churches to Transition Church Culture from Inward-focused to Outward-focused

Project Adviser: Dr. Earl Creps

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Waldemar Kowalski

The Church faces great challenges in reaching today's secular culture. As churches in America continue to age, they gradually become inward-focused and can lose the ability to relate with people in their communities. These churches can pressure the leadership to spend the majority of its resources and time in meeting the members' escalating demands, thus reducing the church's ability to carry out the Great Commission. As a result, nine out of ten churches are declining in America, or growing at a slower pace than their communities.¹ Although this statistic seems alarming, hope still exists for the Church.

Outward-focused, God has pursued people since the creation of Adam and Eve and continues to encourage His people to look beyond themselves. This project challenged churches in the Northwest Ministry Network to move from an inward-focused to an outward-focused culture. A roundtable of Northwest Ministry Network pastors and leaders met to strategize and develop eight outward-focused lenses that provide keys to transforming the local church culture. Following the research phase, pastors from local churches attended an Outward-focused Seminar for training, resulting in participants understanding their church cultures need to change and implementing a plan to execute that change.

¹ Thom Rainer, *I Am a Church Member: Discovering the Attitude That Makes the Difference* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2013), 16.

CHRIS CORBETT

Professor, Southeastern University; Lakeland, FL



Intentional Beginnings: A Curriculum to Assist Parents in Raising Emotionally and Spiritually Healthy Children

Project Adviser: Dr. Carolyn Tennant

Biblical Adviser: Dr. David Clark

Christian parents face the tremendous challenge of raising children who love God, themselves, and others. A critical part of learning to love deals with children internalizing the truth that God created them in His image and likeness. Culture, peers, and even other adults bombard children with negative messages related to their identity. When children know God loves them and views them as His masterpiece, they gain the freedom to be who they truly are rather than trying to conform to what others think they should be.

This project partnered with families at Oak Hills Church in Eagan, Minnesota, to raise emotionally and spiritually healthy children. A parents' training session introduced the components of emotionally healthy spirituality based on Peter Scazzero's book, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, followed by a four-week curriculum series taught to elementary-aged children.

Results indicated that all participants increased their knowledge in the components of emotionally healthy spirituality. Children revealed a greater understanding of their true identity and recognition of the freedom God wants them to experience as His sons and daughters.

PAUL DROST

Lead Pastor, Grace AG, Bel Air, MD



Church Planting: A Strategic Method for Increasing Missional Effectiveness in the Assemblies of God

Project Adviser: Dr. Randy Walls
Biblical Adviser: Dr. Roger Cotton

Worldwide the Church continues to grow and flourish in the most hostile environments. Today's church provides living proof that Jesus actively, intentionally, and powerfully builds His church. Around the world wherever the Church grows, it is growing through a church planting movement of unprecedented proportions.

This project proposes to show that church planting in America, as in the rest of the world, is a crucial, strategic, and biblical method for increasing the missional effectiveness of the Assemblies of God (AG). Historically, the AG in the United States has committed to fulfilling the Great Commission through a two-fold emphasis of planting new churches and sending out missionaries to foreign fields. The missional importance of church planting was demonstrated through research data from over 8,000 AG churches, comparing the spiritual metrics of church plants to existing churches over thirteen years of age. Additionally, research compared the missional metrics of churches that plant churches with churches that do not engage in planting other churches.

Today, the AG shows encouraging signs of growth. However, two realities must temper these signs. AG numerical growth as a whole is not keeping up with population trends. Nationwide the number of AG churches per one thousand people continues to decline, and the AG continues to be underrepresented in the growing urban areas. Although the AG should rejoice in God's continued blessings, it must intentionally prioritize proven ways to increase missional effectiveness. God strategically uses the planting of new churches to break new ground for the gospel and increase the harvest.

KENT DUNCAN

Lead Pastor,
Jefferson Assembly of God; Meriden, KS



The Holy Spirit Goes to Work: Facilitating Marketplace Ministry in a Blue-collar Context

Project Adviser: [Dr. Johan Mostert](#)
Biblical Adviser: [Dr. David Clark](#)

Contemporary blue-collar employees often fail to appreciate the biblical significance of ordinary human labor. Consequently, they perceive work as a necessary evil while frustration and alienation characterize time spent on the job.

This research utilized data from the Discipleship Dynamics Assessment to compare the attitudes of blue-collar workers (N=31) to those of a paired sample of white collar workers. Significant differences were observed on thirteen outcomes associated with vocation and sense of calling indicating that, compared to white-collar workers, blue collar workers have a significantly lower sense of divine purpose, calling, and giftedness in relation to their work. Furthermore, they consistently see themselves as less connected to their workplaces strategically and relationally than do white-collar workers.

To address this discrepancy, a sermon series, discussion materials, and other work-related ministry resources were developed for use at Jefferson Assembly of God in Meriden, Kansas. Thirty-one blue-collar employees participated in a four-week process designed to challenge work-related misconceptions through the presentation of a biblical theology of work. The series concluded with a commissioning service created to acknowledge and celebrate God's Kingdom-advancing purposes always present in all labor, including ordinary labor.

As a result, workers reported a new understanding of their labor as God-ordained, already significant in the advance of Christ's Kingdom today, and made eternally valuable when refined and renewed through Christ's redeeming work.



SAM FARINA

Evangelist and Leadership Development Coach,
Sam Farina Ministries;
Director, AG Coaching

Leadership Development Coaching: Best Practices for Improving Performance in Crafting Vision, Building Alignment, and Championing Implementation

Project Adviser: Dr. Bob Dale

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

Church leadership effectiveness has failed to craft a vision, align people to that vision, and champion implementation of vision that would reverse the American church's continuing loss of vital influence within society. Leadership development coaching holds the potential to improve effectiveness and reverse this crisis. The opportunity to discover the best practices of leadership development coaching to address that need led to this research. Through analysis of pre-coaching assessment and post-coaching assessments, this project investigated the impact of coaching on the leadership development of ministry leaders.

Coaching has received much attention as a means of developing exceptional leaders in for-profit turn-around performance. However, exploring the predictive relationship between leadership development coaching in clergy leadership and a control group without leadership development coaching is substantially lacking. This research did statistical analysis of perceived growth in eight approaches to leadership that impact the crafting of vision, building alignment to the vision, and championing of vision completion. Pre-coaching assessment data and post-coaching assessment data from the *Everything DiSC Work of Leaders* self-assessment and the *Everything DiSC 363* multi-rater assessment were collected from thirty church leaders after twenty had worked with a coach and ten had not.

On the basis of T-test statistical analysis, results showed that coaching advanced the development of approaches to leadership. This project recommends coaching as a best practice in all areas of church leadership development.

VICKI FARINA

Spiritual Formation and Leadership Coach for AG missionaries, pastors, and denominational leaders



Coaching Next-Generation Leaders: Utilizing Coaching to Enhance Personal Growth

Project Advisers: Dr. Randy Walls and
Dr. Katie Brazelton
Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

Next-generation leaders face a crisis that creates formidable challenges for twenty-first century leaders called to work in the church and marketplace. Old hierarchical methods of training leaders and transferring leadership principles do not necessarily fit the DNA of this generation. Authentic spiritual leaders are in short supply, yet society cries for people whose inner compass is anchored in the fear of the Lord and can provide healthy and authentic spiritual leadership throughout their lifetime.

This project conducts an investigative study of next generation leaders at the Oaks School of Leadership in Red Oak, Texas, by providing a fresh look at the unique leadership challenges facing a new generation of potential leaders. It analyzes the data from the *Spiritual Leader Trait Assessment (SLTA)* and explores relevant theological themes, authentic spiritual leader traits, and the impact of coaching emerging leaders toward healthy leader growth and the ability to design and implement leadership development strategies. The findings provide an applicable resource for individuals who want to minister to the next generation by outlining discipleship and spiritual formation coaching steps to develop and grow formal and informal spiritual communities of authentic healthy leaders. On the basis of solid biblical and psychological research, this investigative study of next-generation leaders provides a conceptual foundation experienced leaders can use to develop healthy and authentic spiritual leaders.



DICK GRUBER

Associate Professor of Children and Family Ministries, University of Valley Forge;
Phoenixville, PA

“Perspectives on Parenting,” An Undergraduate Course for the University of Valley Forge

Project Adviser: Dr. Wayde Goodall

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Jerome Douglas

The University of Valley Forge (UVF) is part of the international network of Assemblies of God colleges and universities. It serves students primarily based in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions of the United States. UVF provides undergraduate, graduate, and lifelong learning programs. Under the direction of UVF leadership, this project initiated the development of a new undergraduate course to prepare students for ministry with, and to, parents. The course, Perspectives on Parenting, fills a void in course requirements for children’s ministry and family studies, two of the sixty-seven undergraduate degree programs offered at this institution.

The creation of Perspectives on Parenting required this project to identify the need, obtain approval for course development, design the course and its content, then teach and evaluate the course. Biblical and contemporary literary research laid the foundation for successful completion of this project. Pretest and posttests, combined with student and peer evaluations, assessed the impact of the course.

The course was launched in the spring 2014 semester. Evaluation of this project confirmed the need for and effectiveness of this course. Students learned about parenting perspectives with application of that knowledge in real world settings. The project produced a wealth of research notes and course materials. These will benefit future students of children’s and family ministries, local churches through seminars, and others through the development of parenting support materials.



PETE HARTWIG

Lead Pastor, City Church, Charlottesville, VA

Nic at Night: A Missiological Response to Reaching One Percenters

Project Adviser: Dr. Dick Foth

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Doug Oss

The Americans who comprise the top one percent of wealth in this country represent a missiologically unique people group that has been underserved by evangelical churches. Despite the sound theology and vibrant spiritual experiences such churches provide, the wealthy are not being integrated into the body of the local church. Worse, churches neglect One Percenters, failing to carry the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ to all the world. Bad theology and the creep of cultural values that vilify the rich and influential reinforce the message that the kingdom of God does not welcome the rich.

“Nic at Night” uses Jesus’ night time encounter with Nicodemus to examine Jesus’ inclusion of One Percenters in the kingdom of God and to shine a light on God’s view of the wealthy. Further analysis of the unique characteristics of One Percenters provides understanding and context for how to approach ministry opportunities with One Percenters and the inherent challenges a minister to the wealthy will face.

During the course of the field project, I identified eleven ministry priorities which were used to implement changes and increase effectiveness in the One Percenter ministry in Charlottesville, Virginia. This model of identification and implementation of priorities could be transferred into any effort to evangelize a specific unchurched people group.

The ultimate goal of this project is to challenge prevailing views of the rich and influential, alter the hearts of Spirit-filled evangelical churches toward One Percenters, and victoriously empower those who share the burden to reach the One Percent for Christ.

TROY JONES

Lead Pastor, New Life Church; Renton, WA



Relationally Consulting Lead Pastors of Established Suburban Congregations: Clarifying Direction as a Catalyst to Relaunch the Church

Project Adviser: Dr. Mel Ming

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Waldemar Kowalski

The North American church is plateaued and dying. The last decade has seen many attempts to revitalize established churches, with nebulous results at best. Many pastors feel discouraged and hopeless, even to the point of questioning their call. Further exacerbating the issue, the popular writers on church leadership are founding pastors, not pastors who have led established churches through the revitalization process. Many mainline denominations have responded to this crisis by strengthening their emphasis on church planting. However, the Church will experience limited Kingdom impact without a rigorous effort to revitalize established churches.

My project created a model that included a Relaunch Cohort and personal consultations with seven pastors of established churches in suburban communities with three precise goals: (1) Clarify the direction of their churches, (2) lead their churches in a well-defined and time-bound strategic initiatives, and (3) learn proficiencies to lead their churches through revitalization.

All seven pastors reported an increase in their own personal clarity and confidence and described tangible ministry results. Collectively, the pastors reported significant quantitative and qualitative results. The greatest improvement in scale score occurred for clarity, which increased on average by $M = 7.4$ points from the pretest. The pastors conveyed an increase of hope for the future of their congregations and a sense that God used this project as a catalyst or tipping point to revitalize their congregations.

HELEN KIM

GCD (Gospel-Centered Discipleship) Coach, CityVine Church; New York, NY



Developing a Discipleship Culture in the Church through Increased “With-God” Conversations

Project Adviser: Dr. Debbie Gill

The health and impact of the Church depends on the formation of followers of Jesus who engage life well with God and others. Current discipleship literature and studies of the American Church reveal a decline in church attendance and a lack of knowledge and life application of the gospel. The conversations that do and do not occur in any church tell a more accurate, revealing story of church health than church reports.

A desire for relationship, and hence, conversation, lies at the center of God’s interactions with humanity. Rather than disengagement, God personally challenges, probes, dialogues, and asks questions of men and women to which He already knows the answer. By walking with God into conversations, Christians can similarly see common verbal exchanges become transformative spaces where they and others can grow in discovering the gospel and experiencing life with God.

This project examines (1) dialogue in the Scriptures, (2) current church examples of discipleship through conversations with a special emphasis and case study presented on CityVine Church in New York City, and (3) conversational skills found in the field of coaching to present a way for churches to move away from program-based discipleship toward a discipleship culture of greater formational impact where every Christian receives and gives discipleship. The research undertaken and applied through the field project enabled a transformational shift at CityVine Church from program-based to an emerging organic discipleship through conversations that holds import for any church.

DAVID LONG

High School Bible Teacher,
Faith Christian Academy; Orlando, FL



Restoring a Biblical Perspective: Equipping Leaders in the West Florida District of the Assemblies of God to Effectively Implement Church Discipline

Project Adviser: Dr. Gary Allen
Biblical Adviser: Dr. David Clark

This project determined that many ministers and laity within the West Florida District of the Assemblies of God give insufficient attention to the practice of church discipline. Several reasons lead to this inattention, including the prioritization of cultural sensibilities above Scripture's commands, the exacting nature of discipline, and ignorance.

As a proposed remedy, the project laid out a thorough biblical-theological analysis and general review of contemporary literature in order to create a guide for implementing church discipline. Moreover, the project conducted surveys to illuminate the problem and gauge perspective changes, and then used a conference and seminar venue to educate ministers and laity.

As a result of the research and the intervention efforts, participating ministers and laity experienced a dramatic shift in perspective concerning church discipline. This shift brought with it a renewed commitment to practice discipline.

The implications of this project include 1) the establishment of a strong biblical foundation for church discipline, 2) the formation of a step-by-step guide for implementing discipline, and 3) the building of a strong apologetic against the many excuses the church uses against discipline. Churches that teach on the subject of discipline, prepare for it, and implement it, will result in churches that reflect the love and holiness of Christ.

FAY NIEMANN

Executive Pastor, Muldoon Community Assembly; Anchorage, AK;
Central Region Presbyter, Alaska Ministry Network of the AG



Commissioning Women into the Fullness of God's Call: A Mentoring Seminar for Muldoon Community Assembly in Anchorage, Alaska

Project Adviser: [Dr. Dan Crabtree](#)

The command to make disciples remains the greatest mandate of the Church. True discipleship welcomes transformation into the spiritual formation process. To reach the goal of spiritual maturity effectively, believers must be motivated and empowered to take the next step in their spiritual growth and development journey.

Creating a discipleship pathway, this project led women at Muldoon Community Assembly (MCA) in Anchorage, Alaska, to discover and define biblical foundations for a woman's divine design and missional praxis while offering insight into destroying growth barriers, developing growth strategies, and disseminating growth ideals. In four seminars conducted at MCA on March 4, 18, and April 1 and 8, 2014, participants were guided through a mentoring map, which charted their spiritual growth journey.

The project utilized six assessment tools which provided a current picture of each participant's spirituality, offered insight into activity within seven spiritual disciplines, analyzed Christian character, and delineated and evaluated spiritual gifts and functions within the body of Christ. The data analysis revealed the project's success in empowering MCA women to take the next step in their spiritual walk. Encouraged by discovering their self-worth, empowered through application of their personal mission statement, women are making disciples. Commissioning women into the fullness of God's call enables a woman to reach her full potential in Christ, thereby fulfilling the Church's mandate.



GWENDA PLUMMER

Director of Fresh Life Counseling Center,
St. Charles First Assembly;
Administrator of Counseling Services, The Bridge House

Marriage Enrichment: A Strategic Ministry and Counseling Resource Guide

Project Adviser: Dr. Melody Palm

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Jim Railey

God ordained the institution of marriage between a man and a woman in the Garden of Eden when he brought Adam and Eve together in a perfect union. He planned for husbands and wives to remain committed for life; however, many marriages end in divorce. Ministry leaders and counselors must respond proactively by providing insights and tools to strengthen relationships. A focus on marriage enrichment has the potential to impact the present generation and future generations for years to come.

This project developed the *Marriage Enrichment: A Strategic Ministry and Counseling Resource Guide* to assist ministry leaders and counseling professionals desiring to provide marriage enrichment to couples. The six modules in the guide include God's Design for Marriage: Healthy Partners Formed by a Relationship with God; Benefits of Healthy Marriages; Influences of the Family of Origin; Temperament and Personality; Communication Skills and Conflict Resolution; and Trust and Commitment.

Twenty-five ministry leaders and seventeen counseling professionals evaluated the guide through a web-based Market-Product Research Survey. The results indicated that both groups reconsidered the importance of marriage enrichment and learned a new marriage enrichment concept from the guide. One hundred percent were likely to use at least one of the concepts in the future. This reinforces the efficacy of the guide, as well as the need to continue to raise awareness of enrichment tools.

PAUL RAY

Director of Chaplaincy Services, Adena Health System; Chillicothe, OH



The Talk: Empowering Spiritual Caregivers to Facilitate End-of-Life Family Discussions

Project Adviser: Dr. Peggy Wobbema

Biblical Adviser: Dr. David Clark

One of the most challenging situations families face occurs when a member of the family receives a terminal diagnosis. Some family members view discontinuing life-sustaining treatments as “killing” the loved one in question. Others believe just as strongly that continuing life-sustaining treatment when no hope of recovery exists merely prolongs the family member’s death, rather than the loved one’s life. While these situations provide a significant challenge for families, they provide a compelling ministry opportunity for spiritual caregivers such as chaplains and pastors.

This project empowers spiritual caregivers to initiate and facilitate end-of-life health care conversations with families. A review of biblical and contemporary literature provided a basis for a training seminar for chaplains serving Adena Health System in Chillicothe, Ohio and pastors serving congregations in nearby communities. The seminar included a pretest and posttest instrument designed to measure changes in attitude regarding the value and efficacy of this ministry opportunity.

The seminar evaluation reveals that the participants experienced positive change on twelve of the thirteen survey items. Respondents expressed through the survey that the seminar equipped them to facilitate end-of-life health care conversations with terminal individuals and their families. The project resulted in a resource that chaplains and pastors anywhere can adapt to their particular context to enhance their ministry to dying patients or parishioners and their families.

RAUL SANCHEZ

Assistant Superintendent, Northern Pacific Latin American District



Personal Resiliency: A Training Module for Fostering Personal Wholeness for Newly-credentialed Ministers of the Northern Pacific Latin American District

Project Adviser: Dr. Gary McIntosh

Biblical Adviser: Dr. Roger Cotton

The Church of Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century consists of local assemblies of believers led by biblical, denominational overseers; many begin pastoral ministry with human brokenness and dark side issues. The process to credential these pastors involves the completion of educational requirements, applications, and personal interviews. Most, including Assemblies of God ministers, do not go through training to learn how to foster personal wholeness.

Research in this project led to the establishment of a one-year personal resiliency-training module to foster personal wholeness for all newly-credentialed ministers of the Northern Pacific Latin American District of the Assemblies of God. Training sought to help leaders identify their dark side issues and the personal character maladies they bring with them. Pastors discovered their personality types, weaknesses, and strengths and developed strategies to cope with and overcome their dark side issues. Training equipped the ministers with resources to help them continue to foster personal wholeness and match them with accountability teams. Training was offered once a month for three consecutive months on Saturdays.

Evaluations of workshop participants corroborated the need for a personal resiliency-training module. Entry and exit evaluations quantified the effectiveness of this training for newly-credentialed ministers to help them foster personal wholeness at the beginning of their ministries.

METITI (“MATT”) SILIVA

Senior Pastor, River of Life Worship Center
Section Presbyter, Samoan District Council NW; Tacoma, WA



Equipping Northwest Samoan Pastors with Strategies for Planting Healthy Missional Churches

Project Adviser: Dr. Judy Cagle
Biblical Adviser: Dr. David Clark

The planting of new Samoan Assemblies of God churches in the Northwestern U.S. plays a critical role in the Samoan ecclesiastical landscape. Church planting efforts to accommodate the needs of the ever increasing Samoan population in America is only the beginning. Planting healthy churches, which seeks to improve the spiritual fitness and maturity of the body of Christ, is the goal. To accomplish this goal, Samoan church planters must return to the biblical-theological foundation for church planting. While the responsibility of planting new churches lies with the Samoan church leaders, ultimately all church planting ventures are a supernatural work of God.

This project serves as an impetus for planting Samoan churches and encourages the training of Samoan pastors and church leaders in implementing relevant strategies for planting healthy churches.

Based on a missional theology for church planting and biblical support for planting healthy churches and a review of previous research on effective church planting, the project’s leadership training seminar assessment indicated an urgent need to plant more Samoan churches in the Northwestern U.S. With increased interest in church planting as one of the most effective evangelistic strategies for reaching the lost, this project hopes to ignite a new passion among Samoan pastors and church leaders to plant healthy churches.