

An Analysis of the **Church Planting Process** and Other Selected Factors on the Attendance of SBC Church Plants

A NAMB self study
May 2003
Edward J. Stetzer



Summary: The survey results provide good news for those who are serious about assisting church planters in their ministry task. The CPP gives church planters tools that increase their likelihood of success. For years, we have advocated the value of participating in the CPP—now the proof is evident. If we want church plants to succeed, we should provide them with CPP tools.

Inside:

- Results of a study of over 600 church planters
- The first statistical evidence of the positive impact of the Church Planting Process
- Other factors shown to make SBC churches larger
- Suggested areas for improvement for the Church Planting Process

**AN ANALYSIS OF CHURCH PLANTING
PROCESS AND OTHER
SELECTED FACTORS ON THE
ATTENDANCE OF
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH PLANTS¹**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The North American Mission Board came into existence proclaiming a commitment to a more effective church planting system. This system included a series of components that eventually came to be called the Church Planting Process.² Charles Chaney, the HMB Church Extension Vice President when the Church Planting System (CPS) was developed, considered the CPS “the most important contribution of my life.”³ Richard Harris changed the name of the CPS, sharpened its focus, and indicated that the newly named Church Planting Process (CPP) was the fundamental system around which the Church Planting Group was staffed.⁴

The intent of the Church Planting Process (CPP) was to raise the success level of North American planters. Those involved with the development of the process sought to develop resources and relationships to help church planters. Joe Hernandez, part of the development

of the Church Planting System (in partnership with Bob Logan), stated that the CPS was created to focus on, “What happens to the guy out there on the field?”⁵

The CPP has been in place, to varying degrees, since 1996. There is now adequate information to answer the question, “Has it worked?” Has it helped the “guy on the field?”

The study indicated there was a strong relationship between participating in the CPP and numerical growth in all but one case. Results indicated that churches with leaders who have participated in the CPP are larger than those whose leaders have not. These are not direct relationships—“doing” the CPP does not guarantee success, but the CPP does provide tools to assist new churches to be more successful.

Beyond the CPP analysis, this study suggests hundreds of variables for use in analyzing the success or failure of church planting. The study sought to find other measurable factors that impact the attendance of new Southern Baptist churches.

CHAPTER 2: THE CHURCH PLANTING PROCESS

The central focus of the first part of this study is the Church Planting System / Process. The Church Planting System was always an evolving resource. The CPS sought to address the missing elements in the Home Mission Board church planting strategy. I have omitted over 70 pages of history regarding the development of the CPS/CPP. These can be found in the original study.

The surveys were sent out from February 2000 through June 2002. Surveys were followed up when information was incomplete or not clear. At the conclusion of the study, one final call was made to every respondent to follow up on several questions, clear up any confusing data, and ask a few additional questions. Six hundred and one church planters responded to the survey.

The summary does not include information about the metrics or methods used. Thus, it should be seen as a synopsis and not a complete description of the study results.

¹ This is a condensed analysis of a 300 page study, Edward J. Stetzer, *The Impact of the Church Planting Process and Other Selected Factors on the Attendance of Southern Baptist Church Plants*, Ph.D. Dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003.

² The system was originally called the Church Planting System. This name was in use through most of 1997. The name was changed to the Church Planting Process in 1997. When referring to the Church Planting System, it signifies the resource in its pre-1997 development. When referring to the Church Planting Process, this refers to the post-1997 version or the entire process (1994 to present).

³ Charles Chaney, phone interview by author, 23 December 2002.

⁴ Richard Harris, email from Richard Harris to author, 3 January 2003.

⁵ Joe Hernandez, personal interview by author, 11 July 2002.

CHAPTER 3: THE CPP AND ITS IMPACT ON ATTENDANCE

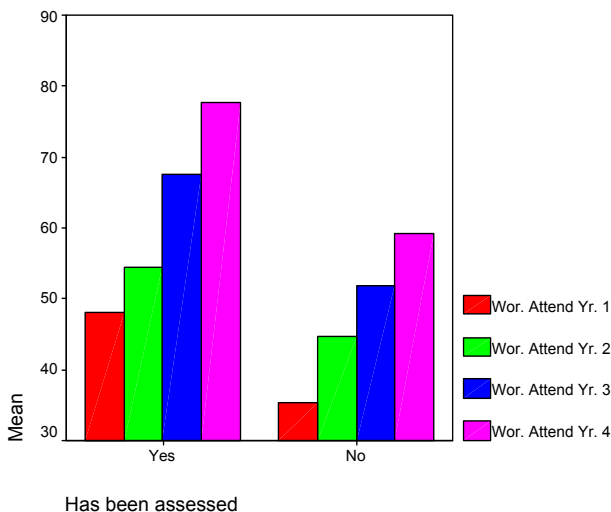
The main body of this study is an analysis of the impact of certain factors on attendance. Each factor is analyzed by the same standard—attendance over four years. Those churches that do not have a four-year history are included until their history was exhausted.

Therefore, there will be three categories. First, there are factors that showed no impact on attendance. (In other words, there was no identifiable relationship.) Second, there are some factors that impacted mean attendance over a four-year period but did not evidence inferential statistics at the .05 level. (In other words, there is a relationship here.) Finally, there are some factors that impacted mean attendance over a four-year period and also evidenced inferential statistic properties. (In other words, there is a relationship between factors which is also demonstrated with statistically significant patterns.)

Assessment

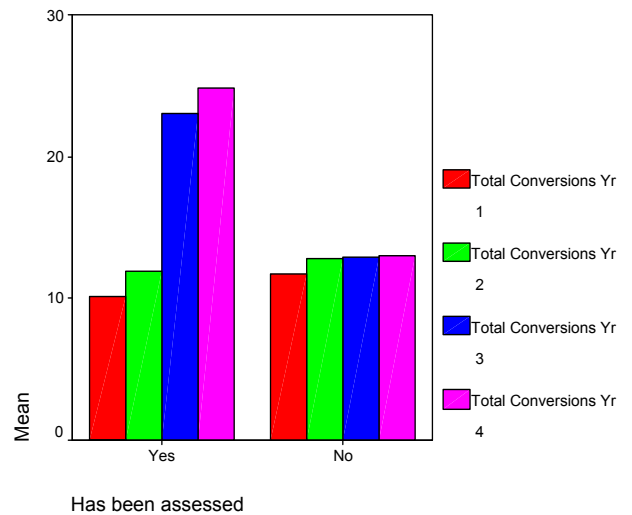
After analyzing assessment, a large sample is available for comparison. Two hundred and four church planters indicated that they went through the Ridley Assessment. Two hundred and eighty seven indicated that they had not.

This is a substantial result that should enable some conclusions to be drawn. The study compared the mean attendance of those who were assessed with those who were not. This means comparison was made over four years. The results are as follows:



There is an observable attendance increase among the assessed church planters. At each year, the church planters who were assessed lead churches that are approximately 20% larger than those who were not assessed (averaged over a four year period). The third year is the most substantial with a 27% difference in church size.

Assessment seems to be a strong indicator of evangelistic effectiveness. For example, those who have been assessed have a substantially higher mean of conversions in their new church as illustrated below:

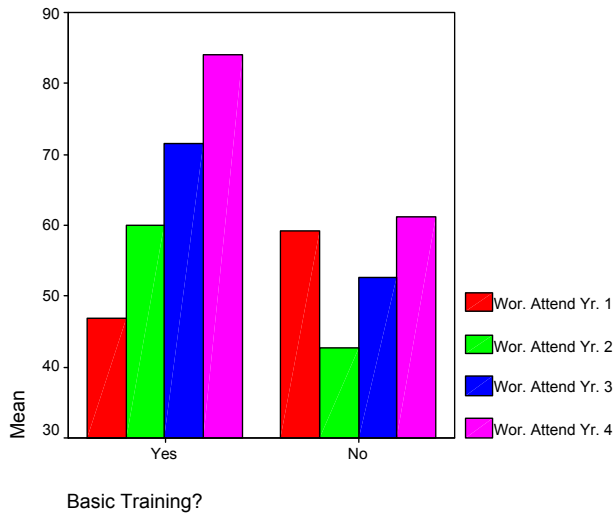


As indicated earlier, some further study on this issue is both advisable and easily accomplished. One option is to analyze the numerical scores of the assessment (similar to a Likert scale) and compare this to attendance means. For example, what is the mean attendance of those receiving a three, four, and five on the assessment scale? Does attendance increase proportionally with the score? This would be a strong validation of the assessment system. Regardless, with the presence of such a means differential, coupled with statistical inferential evidence, assessment clearly is accomplishing its task of eliminating some ill-suited church planting candidates. Assessment has been an effective process to screen candidates.

Basic Training

After analyzing Basic Training, a large sample is available, though that sample is smaller than that in the Assessment category. This was caused by the omission of the Basic Training

question from early PAF surveys. This question had to be asked in follow-up phone calls and only 304 answered this question. Regardless, this sample is more than adequate to explore the impact of Basic Training. The results are as follows:



The bar graph does present a few challenges. First, the first year results may seem counterintuitive, but they are not. Those who were the least likely to participate in Basic Training were ethnic church planters. Ethnic church planters are also most likely to begin with a large core group, therefore, a large part of the non-participating sample would begin with a larger core group.

The most substantial information is found in the second year and following. At years two through four, the churches led by those who have completed Basic Training are larger than those who have not completed Basic Training.

Year	Gap
2	6%
3	30%
4	27%

The complete chart is below:

Report		Wor. Attend Yr. 1	Wor. Attend Yr. 2	Wor. Attend Yr. 3	Wor. Attend Yr. 4
Basic Training?	Yes	Mean 40.20	61.87	71.39	86.23
		N 152	97	64	39
		Std. Deviation 43.339	60.873	71.962	61.124
No	Mean	52.86	58.05	50.40	62.66
	N	71	55	42	29
	Std. Deviation	108.624	77.179	32.670	40.948
Total	Mean	44.23	60.49	63.08	76.18
	N	223	152	106	68
	Std. Deviation	70.943	67.003	60.251	54.385

It seems that it is not possible to establish an adequate difference for year two. However, year three and four are clearly influenced by participation in Basic Training. Furthermore, year three indicates statistical significance. In year three, the two-tailed significance test reads .045 when equal variances are not assumed.

The majority of respondents have completed Basic Training. Basic Training has become a key component of the CPP and is, perhaps, the most widely embraced element within the CPP. Clearly, Basic Training makes an attendance impact.

Some have questioned the value of Basic Training for planters involved in certain preexisting models. This frequently has been an issue with those planting Purpose Driven (PDC) or Seeker Churches. There is strong evidence that Basic Training makes a major impact on PDC church plants. Not only are the Basic Training participating Purpose Driven church plants substantially larger when they participate in Basic Training, but Worship attendance year 4 also indicates a .05 statistical significance. Although the sample declines in size each year, it seems that the means and accompanying inferential statistics make the relationship clear.

	Did not participate	Participated in Basic Training
Year One Worship mean	66	46
Year Two Worship mean	60	76
Year Three Worship mean	73	115
Year Four Worship mean	60	198

Mentoring and Supervision

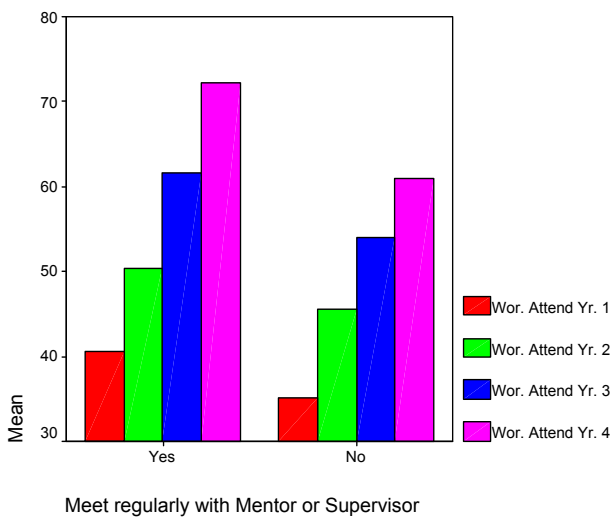
After analyzing Mentoring and Supervision, a large sample is available for comparison. Three hundred and fifty seven church planters indicated that they regularly met with a mentor or a supervisor. Two hundred and thirty eight indicated that they had not.

There is a substantial reason for concern that 40% of NAMB related church planters meet with *neither* a Mentor nor a Supervisor. This shows that a substantial number of people are not participating in these basic activities.

The survey asks if the church planter meets “regularly” with a Mentor or Supervisor. The church planter was then asked to define the frequency of the meeting with a Mentor and with a Supervisor. Both will be addressed, but the “regularly” question will be addressed first.

Of those who responded to the survey, 59.2% indicated they had met with a Mentor or Supervisor, 39.5% indicated that they had not, and 1.3% did not answer the question. Of those who answered the question, 60% indicated that they had been meeting with a Mentor or Supervisor:

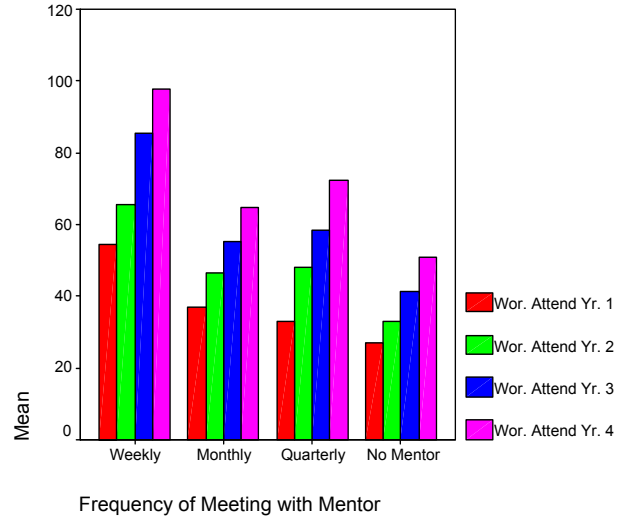
This is the largest sample in the survey. The study compared the mean attendance of those who met regularly with a Mentor or Supervisor and those who had not. This means comparison is made over four years. The results are as follows:



There is a noticeable attendance increase among church planters meeting with mentors. In year one, the gap is 12%. In year two, that gap is

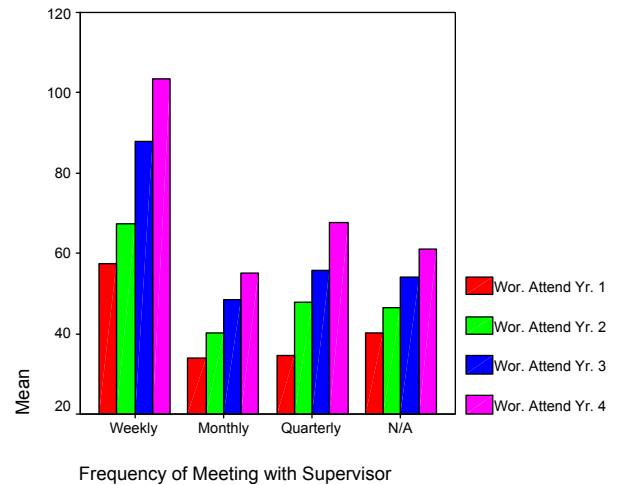
16%. Year three is 13%. Finally, year four evidences a 25% gap.

As indicated, the question was then addressed in more detail, separating the categories and adding frequency. The first addressed the frequency of meeting with Mentors:



Supervision

Supervision has similar positive results. Churches led by church planters involved in weekly supervision meetings lead churches that are substantially larger than those who are not. The graph below helps illustrate this reality:



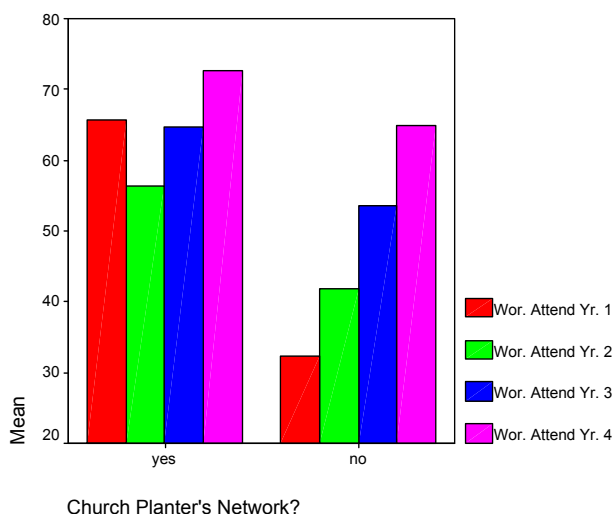
Similar to mentoring, a weekly supervision meeting makes is the best stewardship. Supervision does matter, but meeting weekly makes more of a difference. Meeting with a supervisor may indicate a heavy involvement by the sponsoring entity—the planter would probably have a close relationship with the supervisor.

Church Planter Networks

After analyzing Church Planter Networks, the smallest sample (among the CPP processes) is available. One hundred and thirty five participated in a Church Planters Network, and one hundred and seventy one had not.

This question was not included in any of the earlier surveys. It was, therefore, asked only of those who participated in the follow up telephone survey (306 persons). Of those who answered the question, 44% indicated that they had been assessed as illustrated in the pie chart below:

The study compared the mean attendance of those who participated in a Church Planters Network with those who had not. This means comparison is made over four years. The results are as follows:



This graph and analysis is probably the least useful. There is a clear difference between the bars, but the results are unclear. If there is a positive impact, it seems to decrease over time. By the fourth year, there is little difference. The difference is statistically insignificant at each year.

Conclusion

The Church Planting Process passes the impact test. Those who participate in the Church Planting Process elements evidence larger churches. With the exception of the Church Planters Network, the connection is very clear. In the case of CPN, the evidence is not as clear and needs further study.

CHAPTER 4: OTHER FACTORS THAT IMPACT ATTENDANCE

The explored factors include socio-cultural factors such as ethnicity, church setting, economic level, etc.; methodological factors such as outreach methods chosen, worship style, church paradigm, etc.; educational and attitudinal factors such as schools attended, influential books, etc.; and miscellaneous factors such as the spouse's employment if they show a correlation to attendance. The key characteristic for inclusion in the study will be correlation, positive or negative, to attendance.

Socio-cultural factors

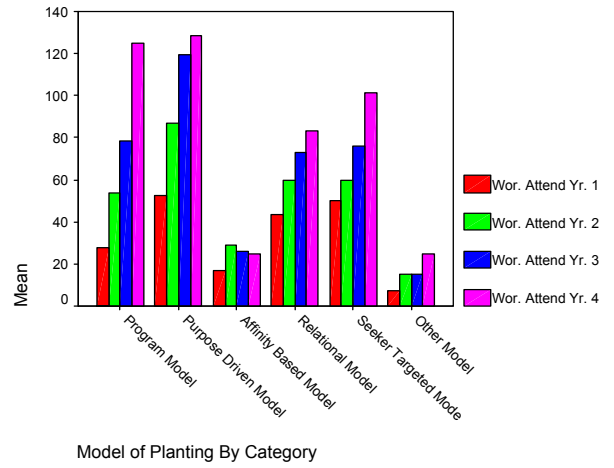
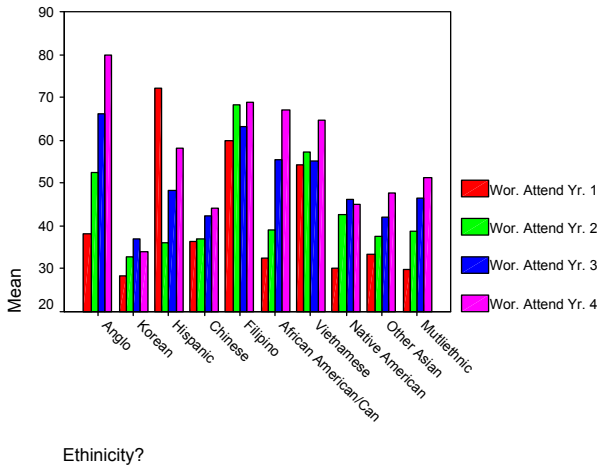
There are several socio-cultural factors that impact the attendance of new churches.

Ethnicity

The most obvious is the broad category of ethnicity. The size of the sample does decline with the broad number of ethnic categories. In the case of African church plants, there is only one example and thus no mean can be created—just the average of that one church.

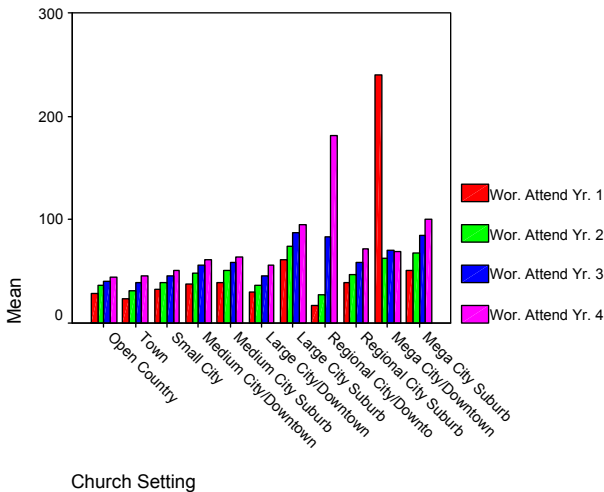
Ethnicity?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Anglo	354	58.7	64.7	64.7
	Korean	22	3.6	4.0	68.7
	Hispanic	44	7.3	8.0	76.8
	Chinese	8	1.3	1.5	78.2
	Filipino	7	1.2	1.3	79.5
	African American/Canadian	12	2.0	2.2	81.7
	African	1	.2	.2	81.9
	Vietnamese	7	1.2	1.3	83.2
	Native American	6	1.0	1.1	84.3
	Other Asian	27	4.5	4.9	89.2
	Multiethnic	59	9.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	547	90.7	100.0	
Missing	System	56	9.3		
Total		603	100.0		

When ethnicity is the factor used to analyze attendance means, the graph conveys the following information:



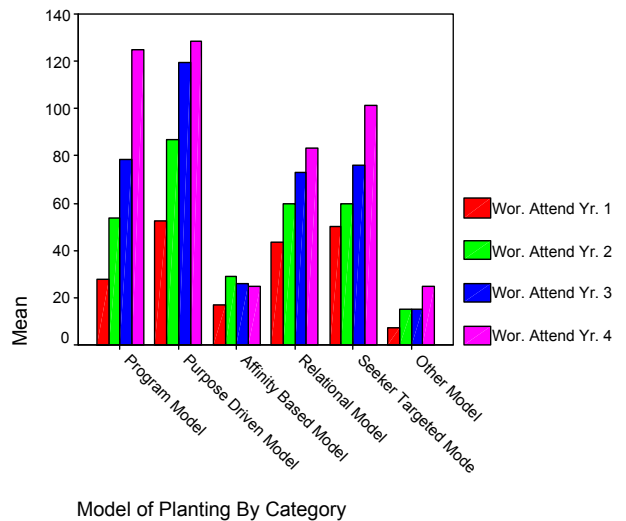
Church Setting

Church setting also plays a role in the size of the new church. There are a good number of churches in each category, so the sample is strong. The chart looks as follows:



The two most effective church planting models would appear to be the Programmatic Model and the Purpose Driven Model. The Seeker Targeted is a close third and is followed by the Relational Model. Affinity Based churches did not experience growth after the second year.

Some may be surprised by the success of the Programmatic Model. However, a significant number of church planters indicated that they used the model, and the numbers indicate it is an effective model.



Methodological factors

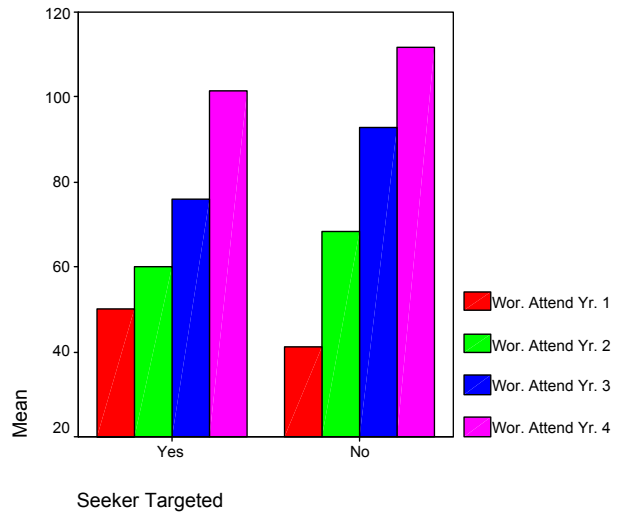
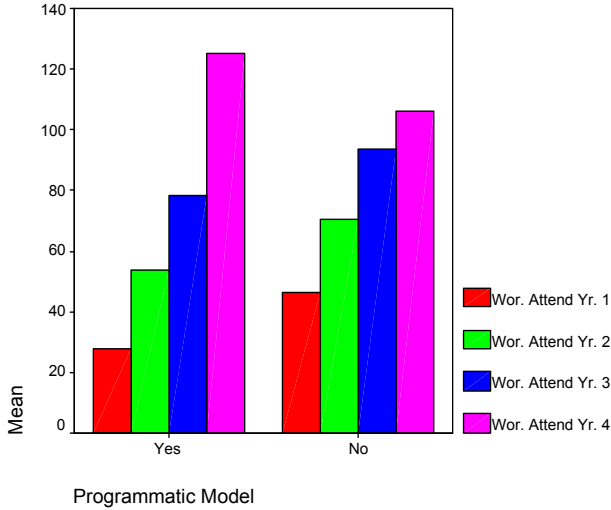
Methodological factors play a significant role in many cases. In some cases, they have a more important impact than participating in the CPP.

The chart below illustrates on a broad scale the impact of the church planting strategy chosen:

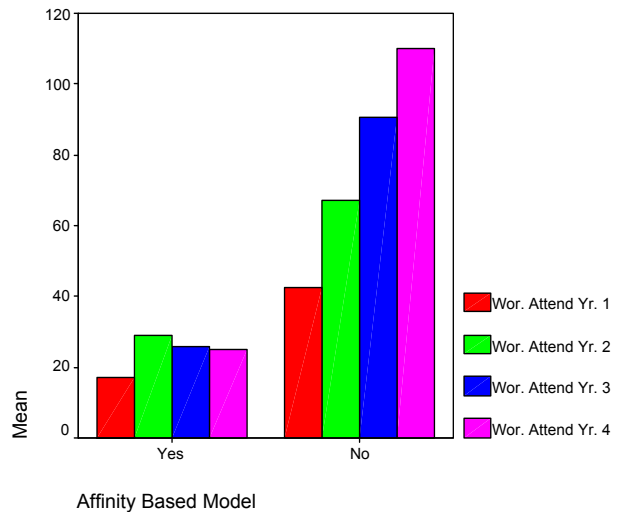
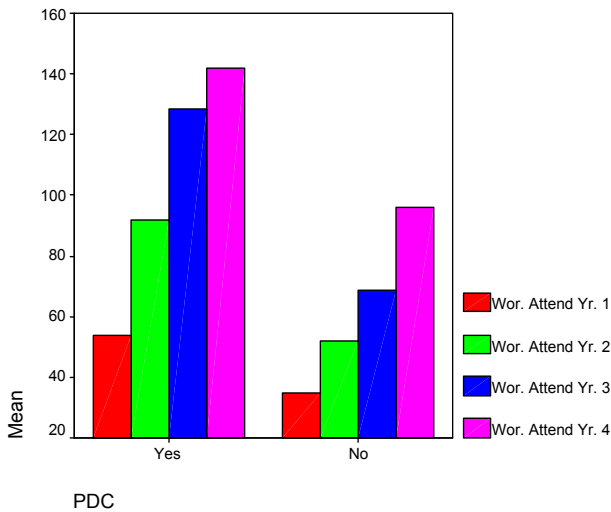
Since this is a frequently discussed issue, this study also includes a breakdown of mean attendance by individual statistic. In other words, what is the mean attendance of those who were Programmatic Model compared to all that are not.

The results of these comparisons help illustrate the value of each model.

Those who used the Programmatic Model and the Purpose Driven Model have a higher attendance mean than those who do not. The Purpose Driven Model has a greater impact on mean attendance than the Programmatic Model does.

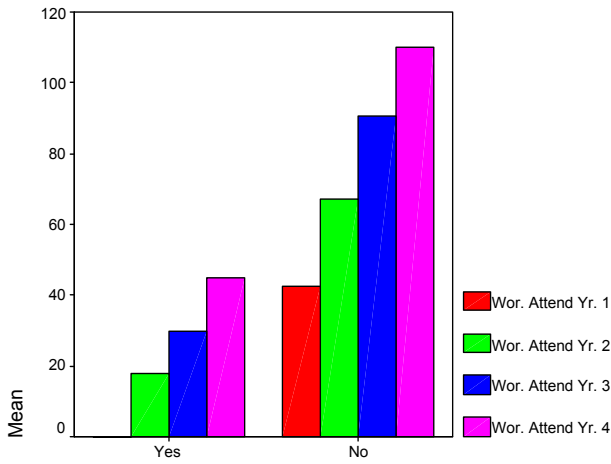


Several models have an adverse impact on attendance. The Affinity Based model is the model with the most negative impact. As the description states, the model is a “church started among a unique people or ethnic group.” Churches started among certain ethnic or similarity groups seem to plateau quickly.

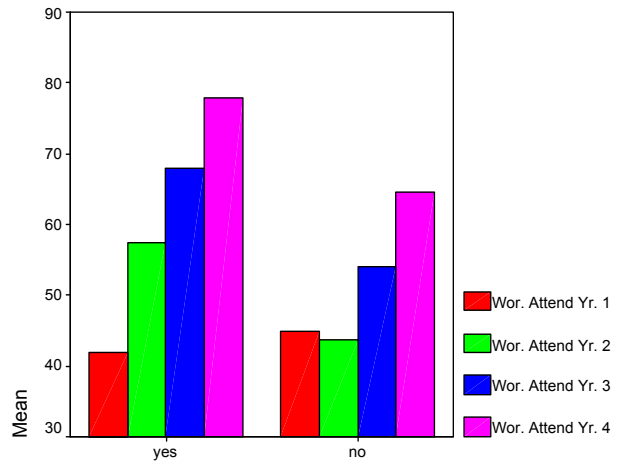


There are some factors that, upon further study, do not make much more of a difference than average. The Seeker Targeted model falls in the middle attendance range:

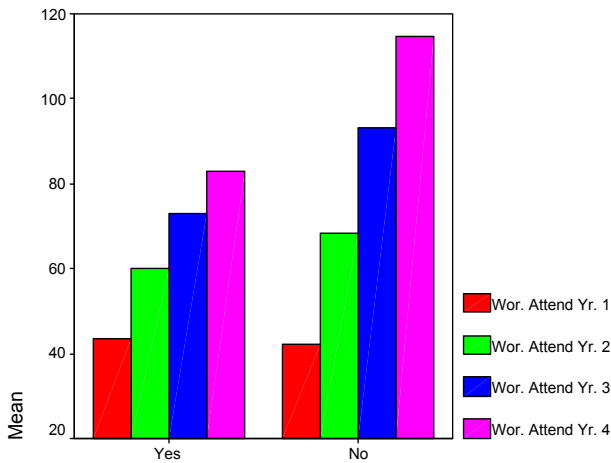
The Ministry Based and Relational Model also show a lower mean attendance.



Ministry Based



Big First Meeting?



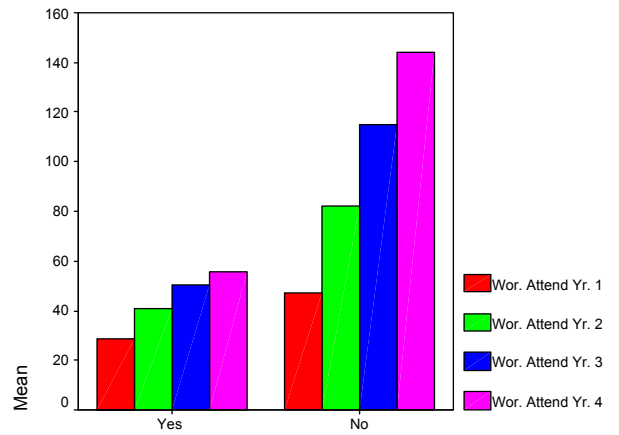
Relational Model

Big First Meeting

Those who use a “large first meeting” to start their church do evidence a larger attendance in the second through fourth years:

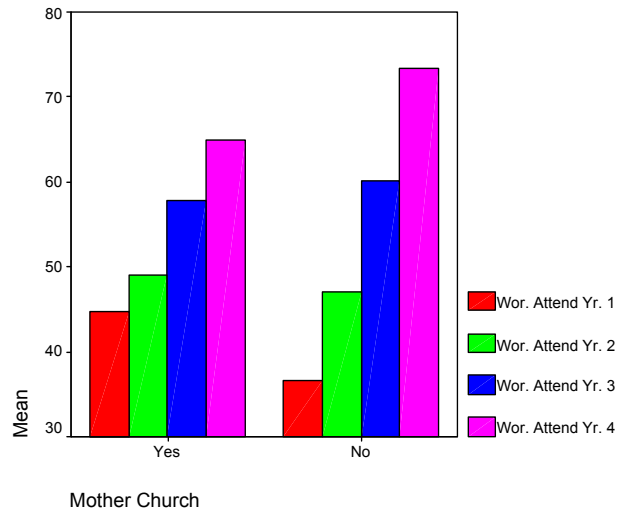
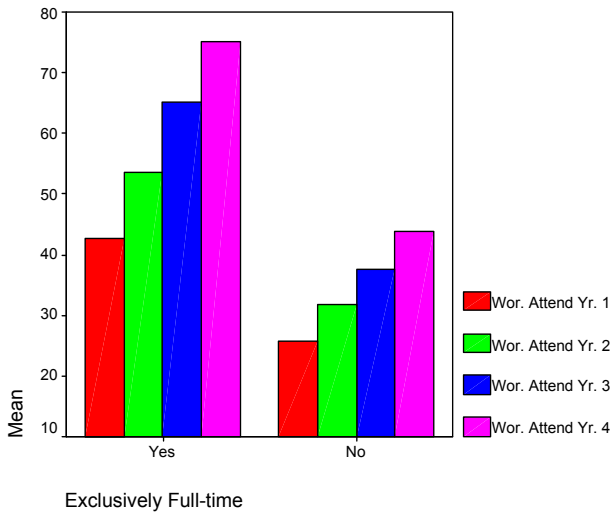
Employment of the Spouse

One of the most significant factors was the employment of the spouse. Although the category asked about the spouse, none of the church planters who responded to this question were women. The impact on the mean is substantial and progressive:



Spouse Employed?

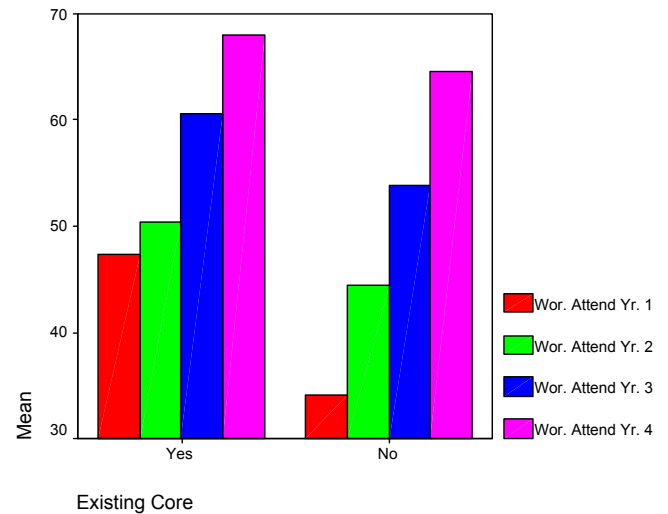
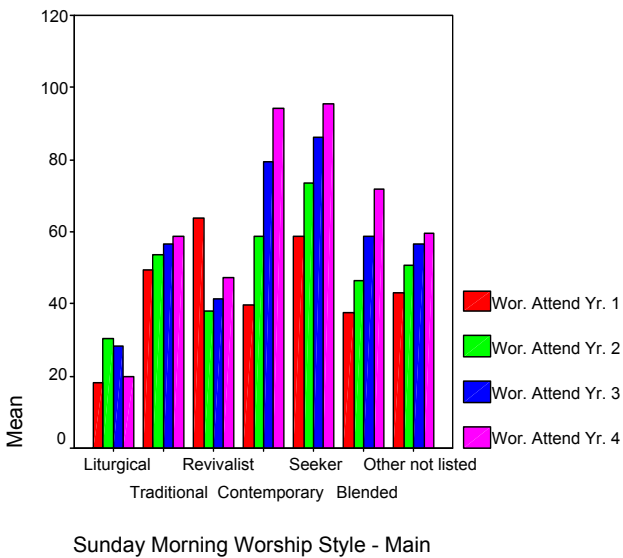
This relates to another significant factor. As the graph below indicates, full-time church planters lead churches that are larger than those who are not full-time. This is not a surprise and it seems reasonable that no causal relationship can be established.



Worship Style

The worship style of the new congregation has a clear and consistent impact on the mean attendance of the new church. The chart below indicates that contemporary and seeker new churches are significantly larger than the others. The smallest churches, by far, tend to be liturgical churches.

A factor with more impact would seem to be the presence of an existing core group, but this impact seems to become less important by the third and fourth year as indicated below:

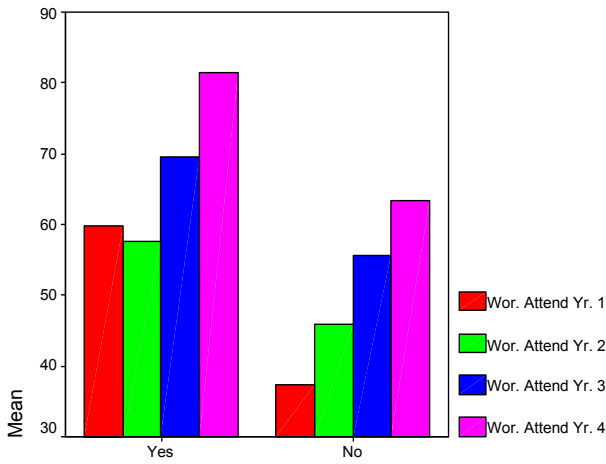


The most important impact is found when both of these factors are combined. When a mother church sends a core group, the impact is significant and consistent.

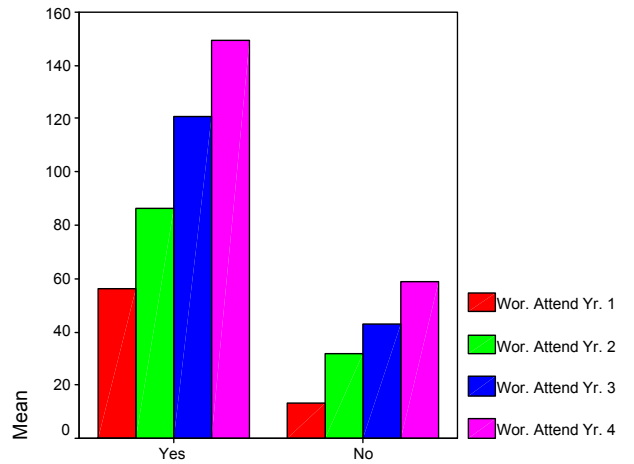
Miscellaneous Factors

Mother Church

When a mother church is involved in the planting of a new church, there is a slightly positive impact. The surprise is that this impact is not greater.



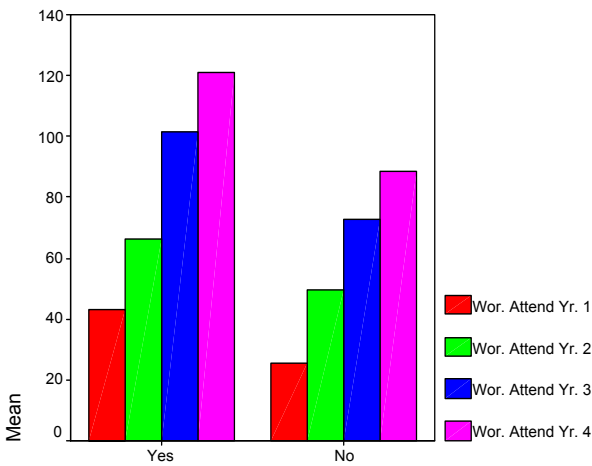
Mother/Sponsor send core



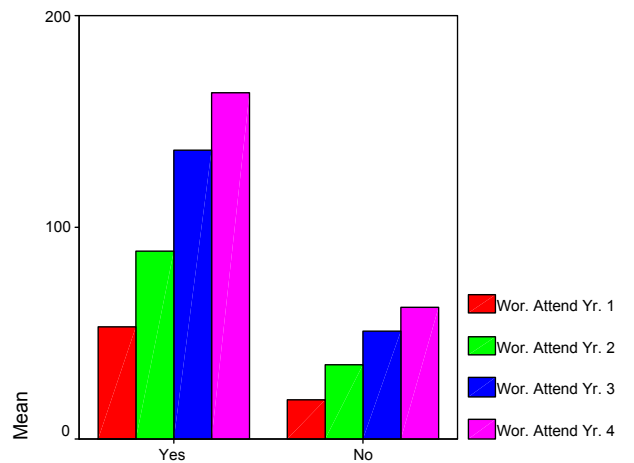
Is Signing a Membership Covenant a Membership Requirement?

Membership Standards

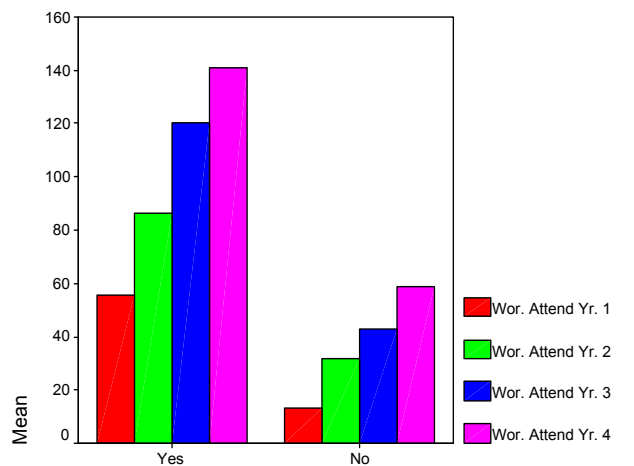
The presence of high membership standards seemed to have a positive correlation in several samples. Each time a membership requirement is included, an increase in mean attendance is noticeable.



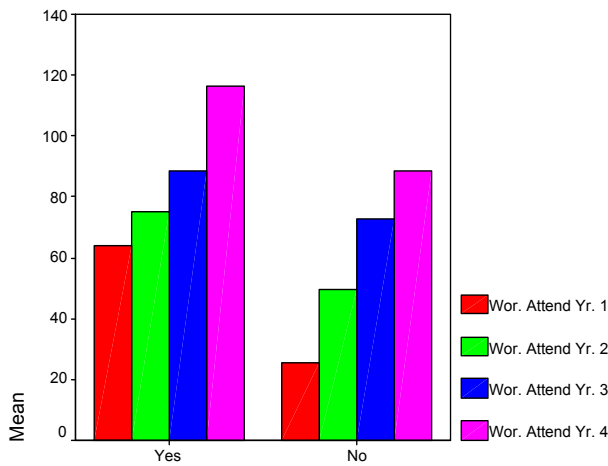
Is Tithing a Membership Requirement?



Is Ministry Involvement a Membership Requirement?



Is a New Members Class a Membership Requirement?

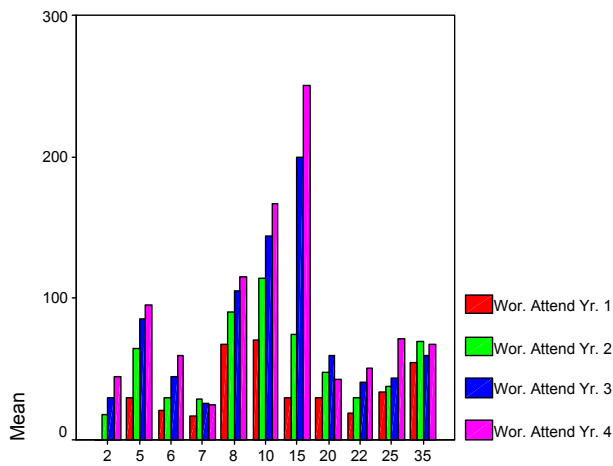


Is Small Group Involvement a Membership Requirement?

Each factor that addresses committed members correlated to increased mean attendance. In my judgment, this conclusively demonstrates that new churches need to set high membership standards.

Family Time

The time that a church planter spends with his or her family is an important issue. Based on the written responses, church planters struggle with family issues. There is some statistical evidence that either spending too *much* or too *little* time with the family decreases the mean attendance of the new church.



Family Time Hours per Week

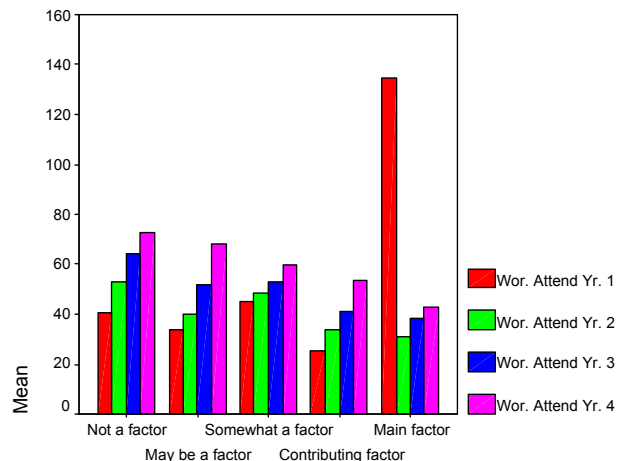
Evangelistic Methodologies

This study researched a series of evangelistic methods. The list comes from Thom Rainer's survey in *Effective Evangelistic Churches*. The survey instructs the participants, "Respond to

each of the following statements in terms of which one or more of these activities or situations best interprets your church's methodology for outreach."

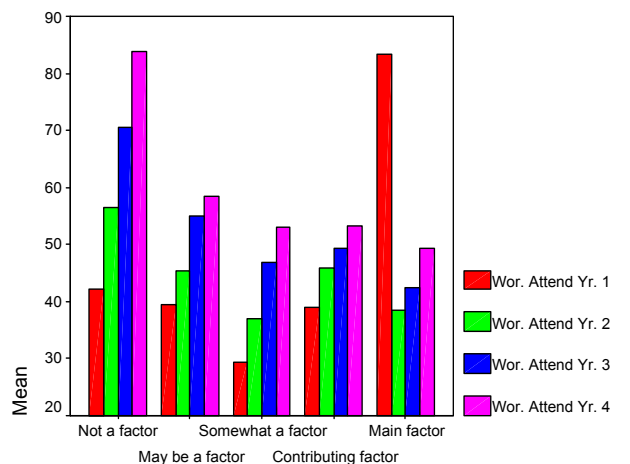
Short-term impact

When the church planter reports that "Bus Ministry" or "Revivals" are the church's strategy, it can likely be assumed that these methods produced strong results in the first year, but these results did not last.



Evangelistic Method - Bus Ministry

The same mean attendance pattern was evident when looking at an evangelistic revival. Churches that used a revival had a larger mean attendance in the first year but this attendance did not last. The average mean was substantially lower than those who considered revival a factor.

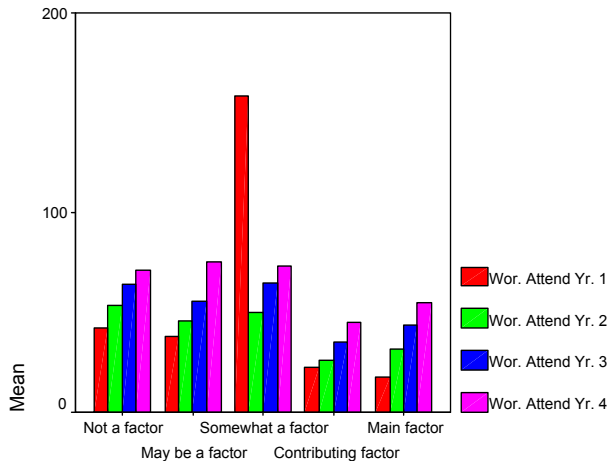


Evangelistic Method - Revival

Negative Impact

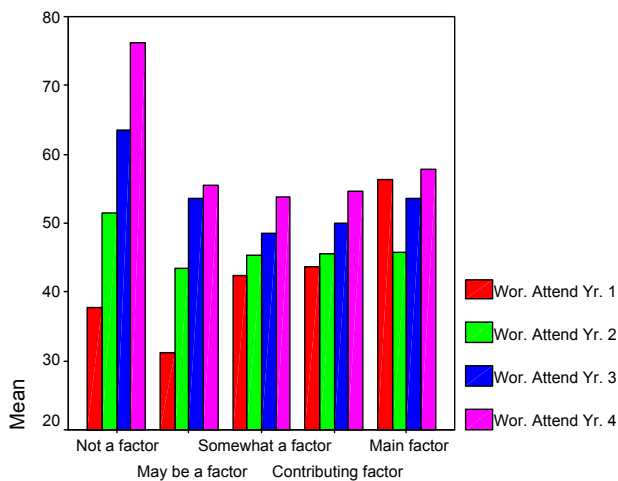
In some cases, when the planter reported certain methodologies as “main” or contributing factors, there was actually a negative impact. In other words, when certain categories are listed as key methods, the mean attendance of the church was lower than when not key methods.

Churches that attribute “Weekday Ministry” as a key part of their outreach strategy are smaller than those that consider it a minor factor:



Evangelistic Method - Weekday Ministries

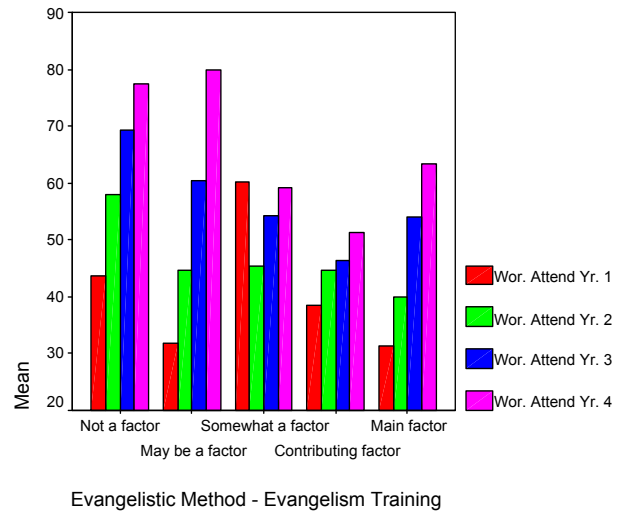
One interesting factor was when a church did *not* see ethnic ministry as a main factor, it tended to be larger than those that did. This supports earlier evidence that ethnic churches tend to be smaller than Anglo churches.



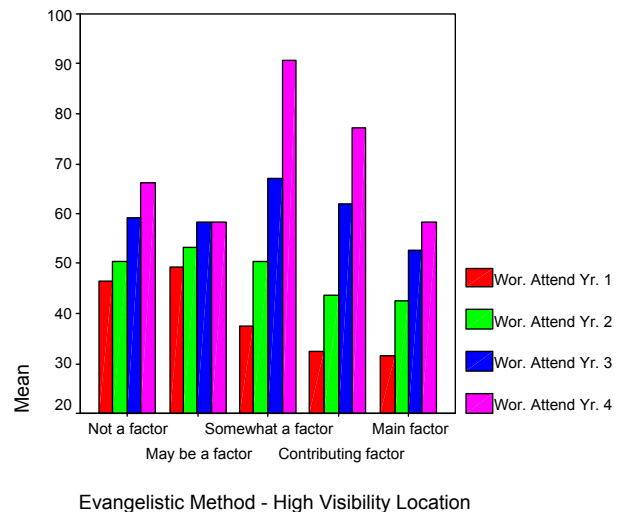
Evangelistic Method - Ethnic Ministry

One counterintuitive factor related to “Evangelism Training Programs.” When

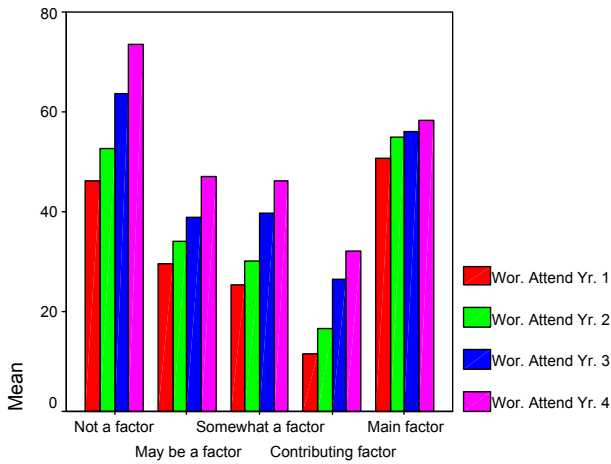
churches consider evangelism training as a key factor, they are smaller than those that do not. This finding seems to make little sense. Perhaps churches that emphasized evangelism training were programmatic in their approach, and they struggled with relational evangelism. Further study would be necessary to explore this variable.



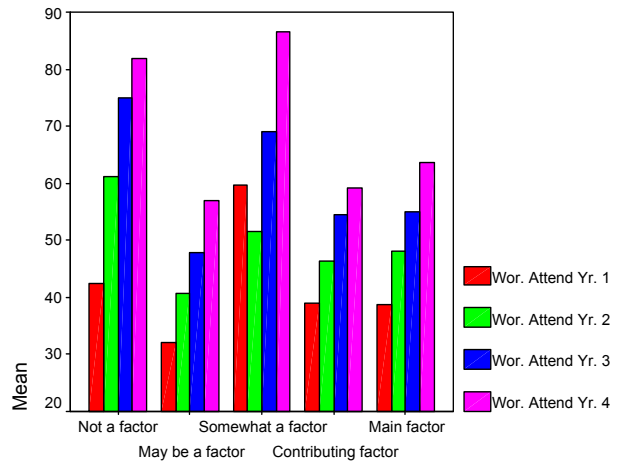
When churches use “High-Profile Speakers, Musicians, Major Events, etc.,” as their main strategy, they are smaller than those who do not:



The location of the new church, “Next to the Right Institution, University, Hospital, etc.,” is only important when the church considers its main factor to be its location. In most cases it makes little difference:

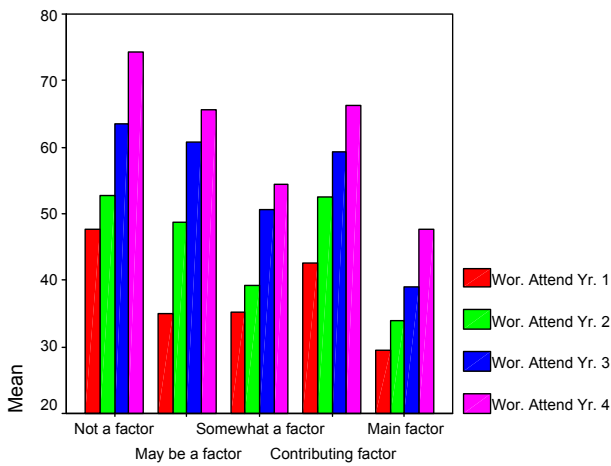


Evangelistic Method - Next to Right Institution



Evangelistic Method - Sunday School

However, location in general does make a difference. When it is not the “Main Factor,” it increased the mean attendance when it was “somewhat” or a “contributing” factor:

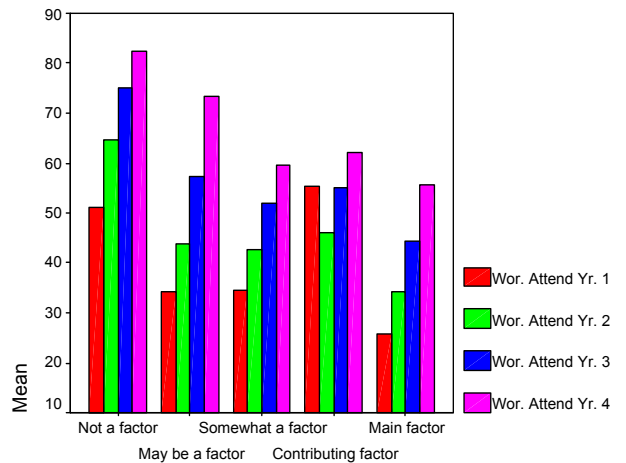


Evangelistic Method - High Visibility Speakers

Sunday School shows a similar pattern. Generally, churches that use Sunday School show a smaller mean attendance than those that do not. The exception is when Sunday School is “somewhat” of a factor.

In a few cases, the results were surprising and odd. These results require further study beyond the scope of this exploratory study. In my professional judgment the results are significant.

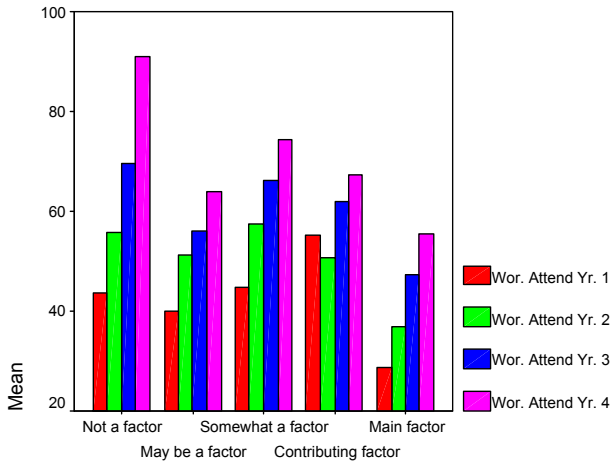
In one case, among churches reporting that “Weekly Outreach Programs” was a key part of their strategy, the mean attendance was lower than those who reported it was not a factor. This finding, coupled with the early graph regarding evangelism training, may be reporting that organized outreach strategies such as soul winning training and weekly visitation are not as helpful in new churches.



Evangelistic Method - Weekly Outreach Ministry

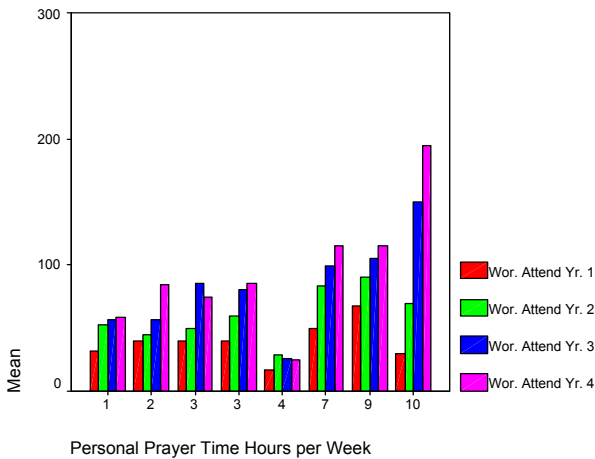
Another odd, though clear, conclusion is that churches who consider “Prayer Ministry” to be a main or important part of their outreach strategy demonstrate smaller mean attendance than those which do not. Again, the reasons are not clear.

Perhaps those who focused on prayer did so to the detriment of action.



Evangelistic Method - Prayer Ministry

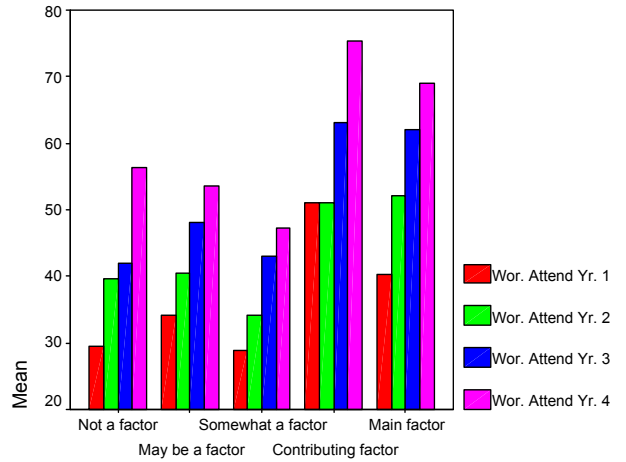
The finding is confusing considering the relationship between the number of hours spent each week in prayer and mean attendance:



Personal Prayer Time Hours per Week

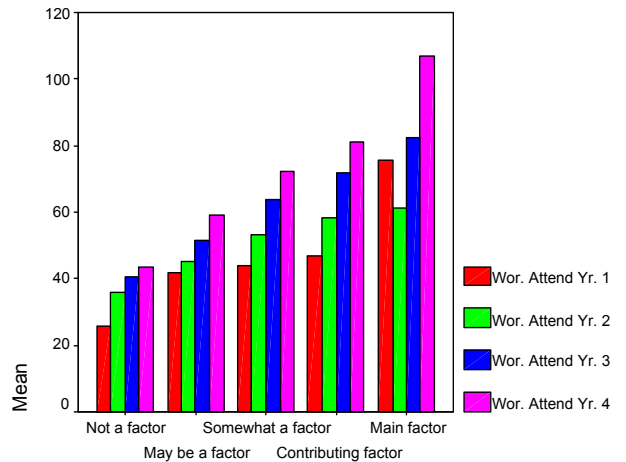
Positive Impact

Several factors demonstrated positive correlation to mean attendance over several years. Those who consider “Preaching” to be a main or contributing factor led churches with a significantly larger mean attendance than those who do not.



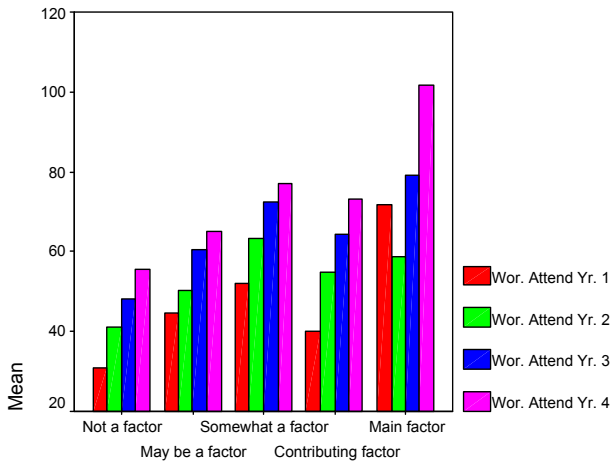
Evangelistic Method - Preaching

Another factor with a clear connection to growth is “Music Ministry.” This impact is perhaps the most significant. Clearly, those who consider “Music Ministry” to be a Main Factor are significantly larger. New churches need quality music ministry.

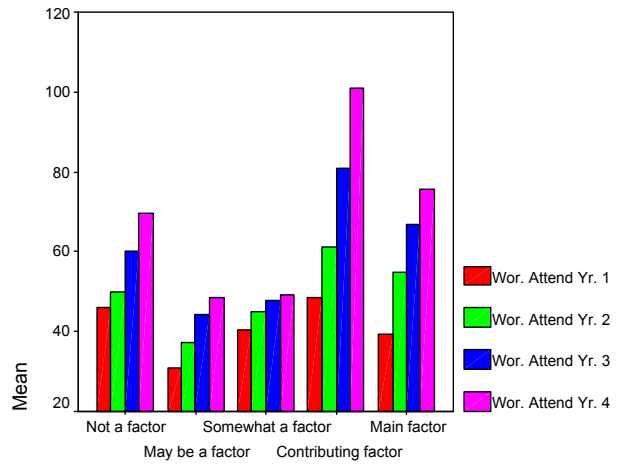


Evangelistic Method - Music Ministry

Churches that use “Intentional Positioning That Targets a Specific Population” through advertising, etc. are larger than those that do not.



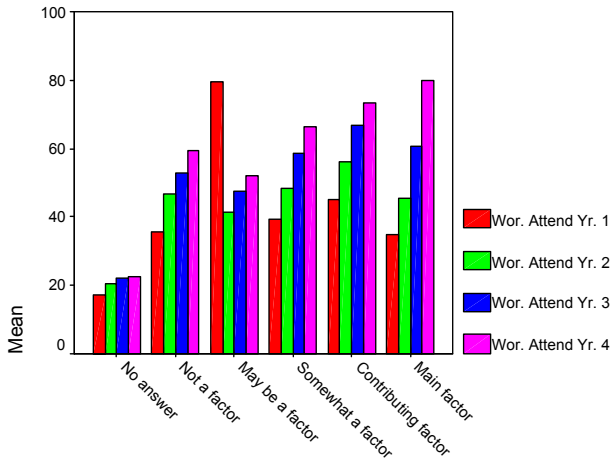
Evangelistic Method - Intentional Positioning



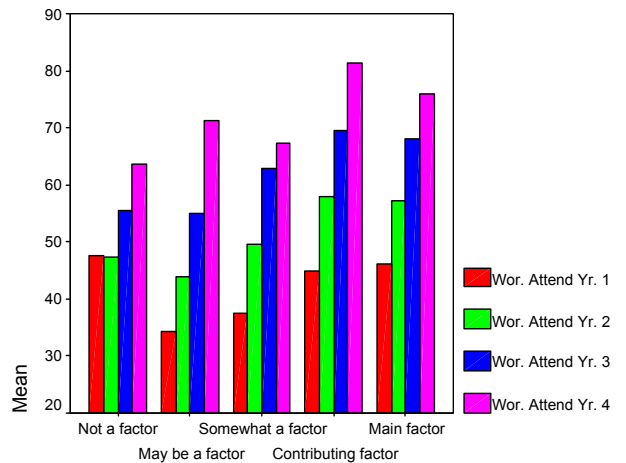
Evangelistic Method - Seeker Targeted Services

Those who consider “Unchurched Relationships with Church Members” to be the key factor are significantly larger than those which do not.

Finally, “Seeker Sensitive Services” also seem to make an impact on attendance, particularly when comparing those who considered it not a factor to those who consider it the main factor.



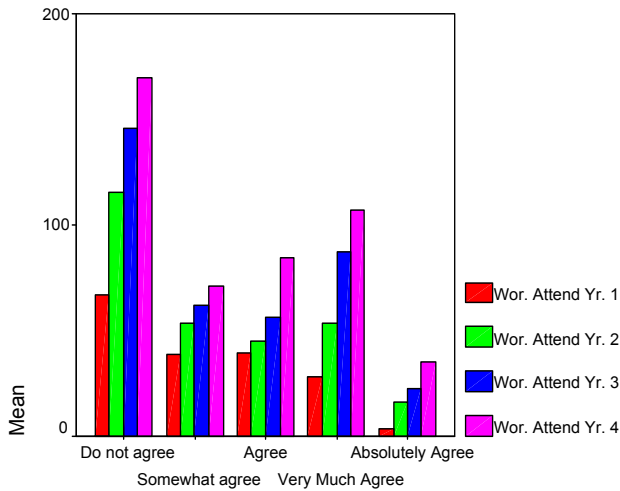
Evangelistic Method - Unchurched Relationships



Evangelistic Method - Seeker Sensitive Services

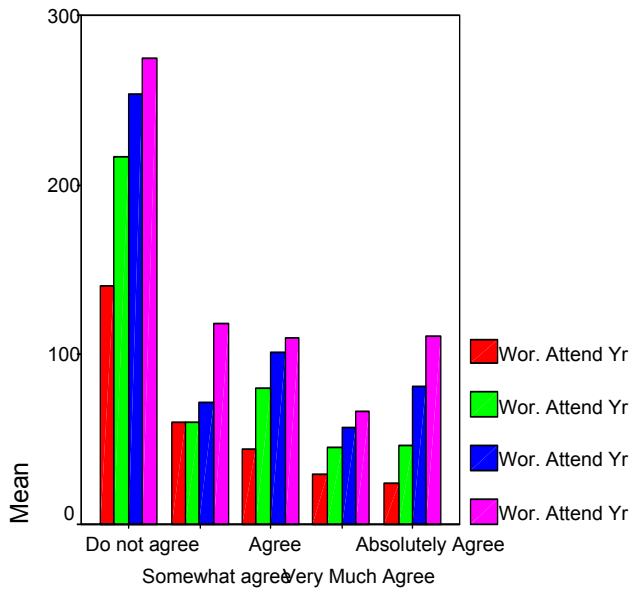
Another factor that made a positive impact on attendance was the presence of “Seeker Targeted Services.” Those who considered these services a main or contributing factor were larger than those that did not.

Decreased Mean Attendance
 Those who agreed with, “Evangelism is not concerned with numbers, but with meeting the spiritual needs of people,” have a much lower mean attendance than those who disagreed with this statement. This factor shows that when planters are not concerned about attendance, the new church attendance suffers.



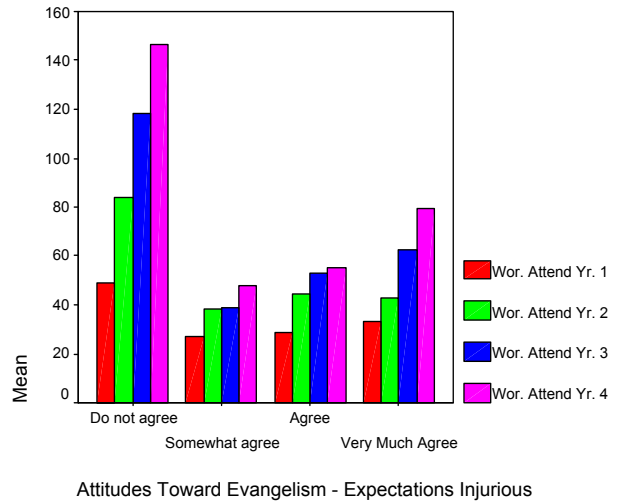
Attitudes Toward Evangelism - Not Numbers

Another factor with a clear impact is the question, “We are committed to prayer as an essential element of any successful outreach venture.”



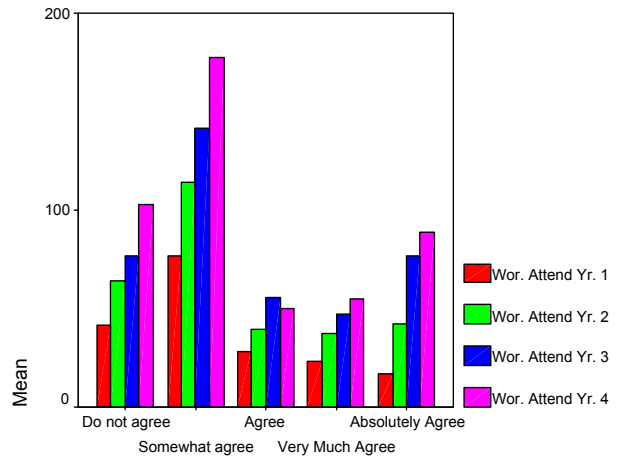
Attitudes Toward Evangelism - Prayer as Outreach

The survey asked, “Placing expectations upon someone we are evangelizing is always injurious and works against that person coming to Christ.” Those who agreed with this statement led churches that were significantly smaller than those who disagreed with this statement.



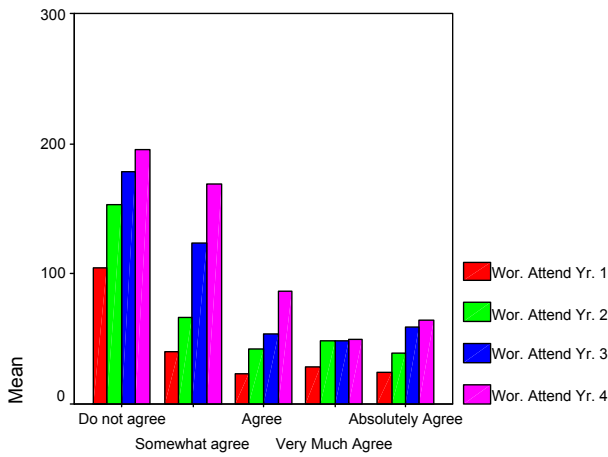
Attitudes Toward Evangelism - Expectations Injurious

The survey asked, “The Holy Spirit is the only true evangelist who has ever existed, as well as the only disciple-maker.” Those who agreed, very much agreed, and absolutely agreed led churches that were smaller than those who “somewhat agreed” or “did not agree.”

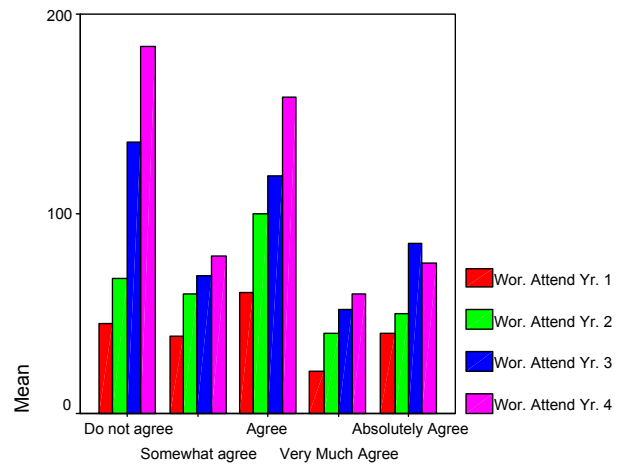


Attitudes Toward Evangelism - HS is Evangelist

The survey asked, “Non-Christians usually will not come to us to find God. We have to go to them.” The response to this question is a bit confusing, but those who agreed with this statement lead churches that are smaller than those who do not. Perhaps this response measured the interest in evangelistic visitation rather than “invitation to church” evangelism.



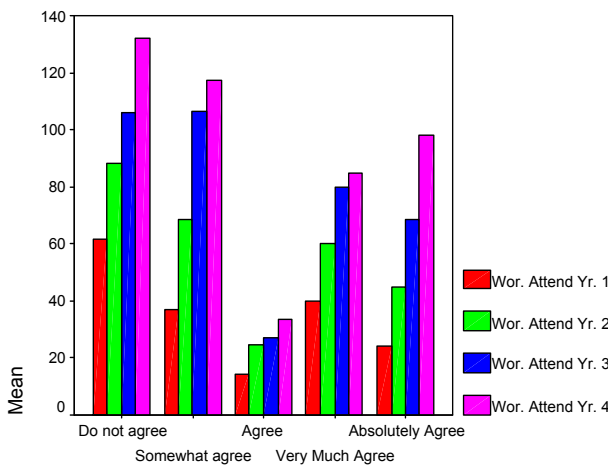
Attitudes Toward Evangelism - We go to Them



Attitudes Toward Evangelism - Friendly

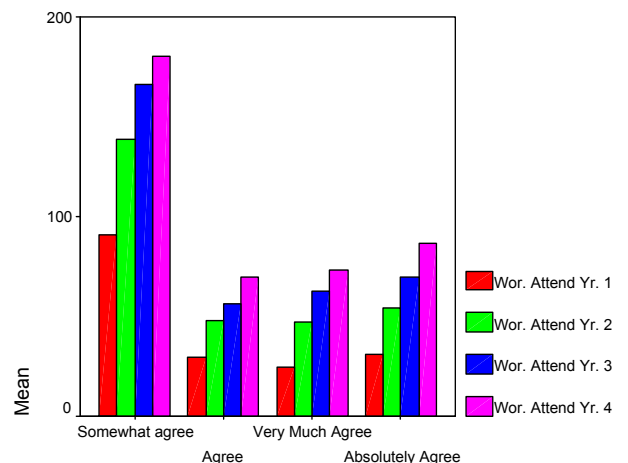
Respondents were asked, “Because God is highly committed to the lost, almost any evangelistic approach will work given enough time and commitment to sharing the good news.” Those who agreed pastured churches that were smaller than those who did not.

Finally, those who agreed with, “Evangelism provides a wider outreach to people in need” demonstrated a smaller attendance mean than those who did not.



Attitudes Toward Evangelism - Any Approach Will Work

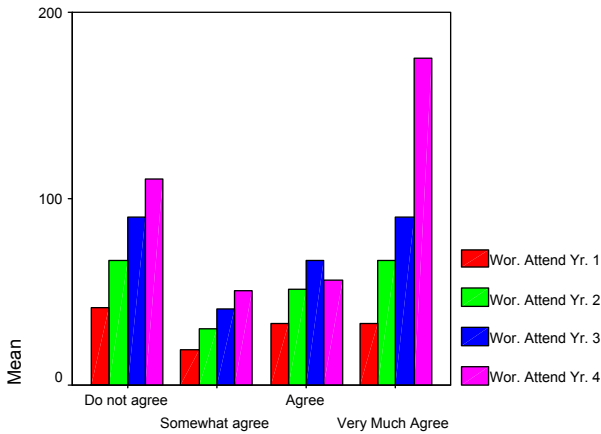
Respondents who agreed with the statement, “Friendly, openhearted people make the best evangelists” led smaller churches than those who did not.



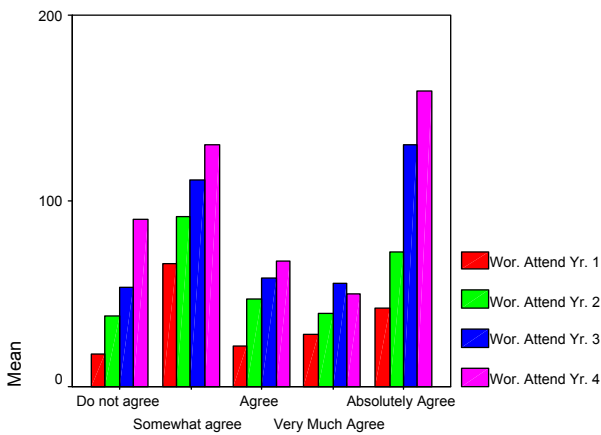
Attitudes Toward Evangelism - Needs

Increased Mean Attendance

There are some factors that, with agreement, lead to higher mean attendance. Two cases are included below, “Evangelism is the easiest and most natural of the church’s ministries,” and “Deep down, non-Christians really want to know and obey God.”



Attitudes Toward Evangelism - Most Natural



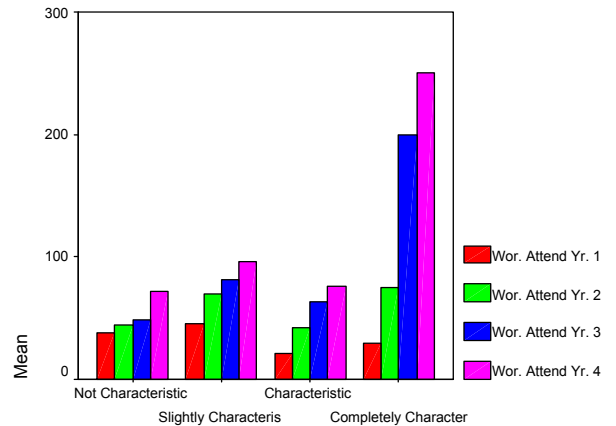
Attitudes Toward Evangelism - Non Christians want God

Leadership Styles and Influences

One part of the survey addressed Leadership issues—both of style and of influence. Leadership Style addressed the way that the church planter exercised leadership. The church planter was asked what style was most reflective, and then these are compared to the mean attendance. Leadership Influence asked what molded the planter’s current approach to leadership. Each Style or Influence stood alone—a church planter could indicate that multiple factors fit his or her personality.

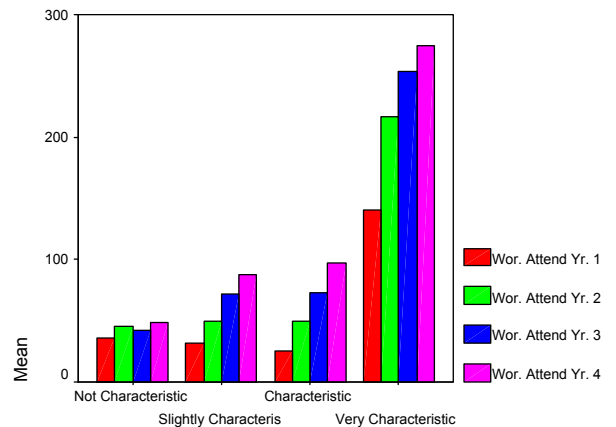
Increased Mean Attendance

When church planters evidenced certain leadership styles, it had a positive impact on the mean attendance of the church. First, those that were suggestion-oriented, “leads by making suggestions to others,” were much more likely to lead churches with a larger mean.



Leadership Style - Suggestion Oriented

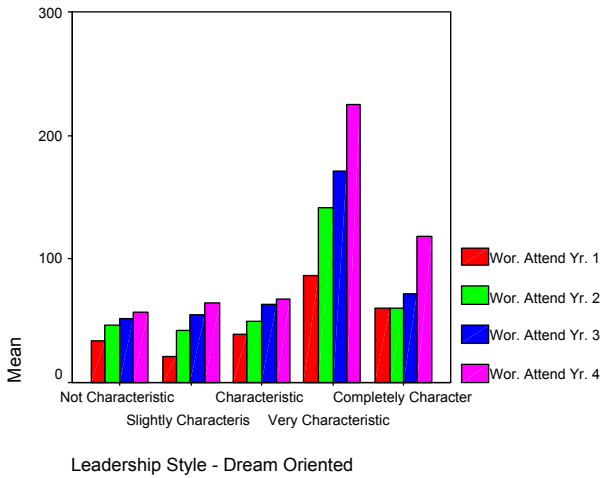
For those that were knowledge-oriented, “leads by superior knowledge and understanding rather than by example,” were much more likely to lead churches with a substantially larger mean.



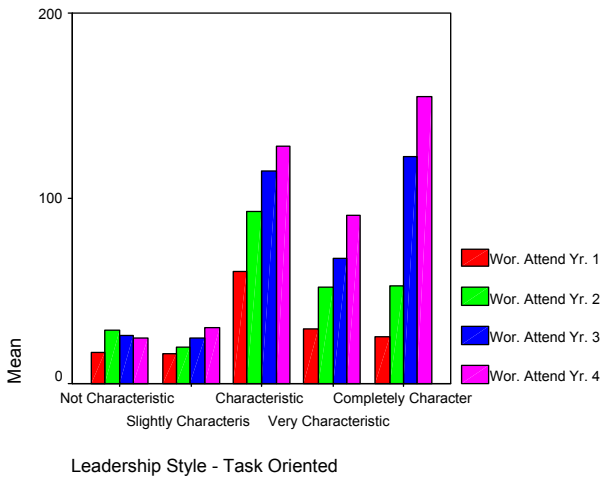
Leadership Style - Knowledge Oriented

Another factor that had some degree of positive impact is a dream-oriented leadership style—except if it is “completely characteristic.” Those who believed that “a lot of time spent dreaming big dreams with little worry for

completion” was characteristic of their personality saw a large mean attendance increase.



Task-oriented church planters lead churches that are significantly larger than those who do not consider themselves task oriented. Those who have “high interest in production and getting things done” lead larger churches than those who do not.

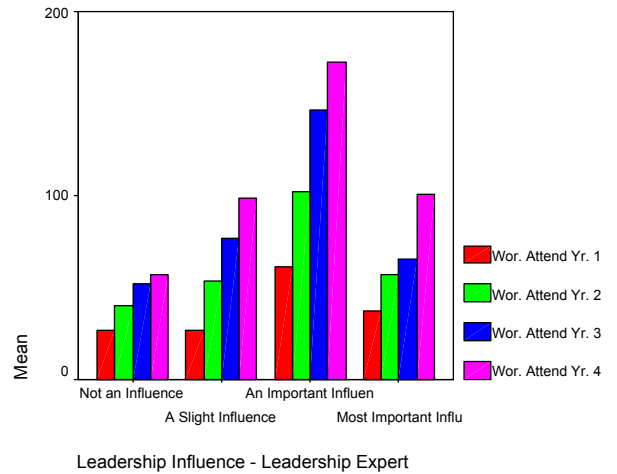


Effective church planting leaders, based on the data listed above, share certain characteristics. They are suggestion-oriented leaders who lead by their knowledge and their dreams, while keeping the central task in mind.

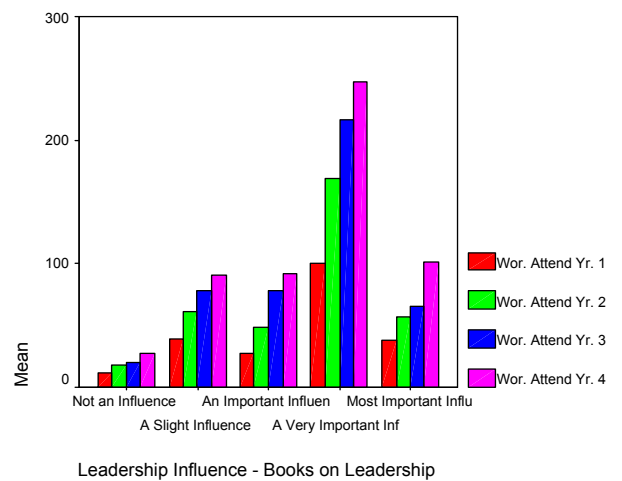
Leadership Influence-

Increased Mean Attendance

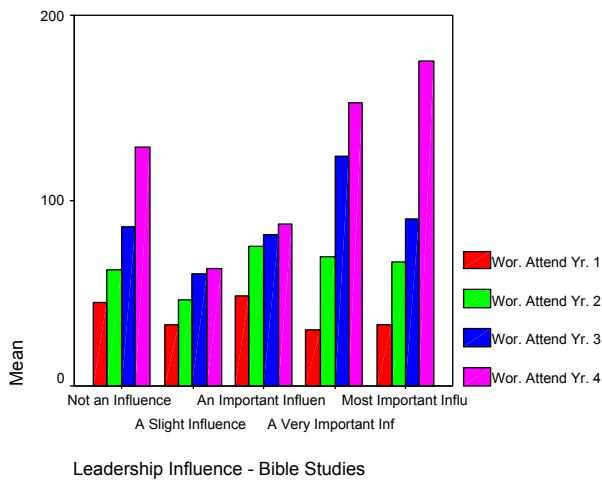
Those who were influenced by a leadership expert showed a mean attendance increase as long as it was not the most important factor.



The same can be said about books on leadership. In this case, the study asked what the most influential books were. The most common books mentioned were, in order of reference, Rick Warren’s *The Purpose Driven Church*, Henry Blackaby’s *Experiencing God*, and Jim Cymbala’s *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*.



Bible Studies were likely to increase mean attendance in most cases, though there were a significant number of those who did not consider it a factor yet still had a large mean attendance.



Comments of the Church Planters

The final source of data was the words of the church planters themselves. Recurring themes are reproduced below.

- First, the most common comment was regarding the difficulty of solo church planting. The overwhelming desire is for church planting teams and not just individuals.
- Second, the financial challenges were frequently overwhelming. Very few churches became self-supporting before HMB/NAMB funding ended.
- Third, church planters want more networking with other church planters.
- Fourth, mother churches need to be better trained and motivated in order to be more involved in the daughter church. Ethnic planters were particularly concerned about this. They struggle with finding a genuine partner.
- Fifth, and it relates to the first, church planters feel that they are “dropped in the middle of nowhere” with no further contact from HMB/NAMB (in the case of appointed missionaries) or the state in the case of others.
- Sixth, church planters felt that more work should be done before they arrive on the field—including demographics and support raising.

- Seventh, community involvement, social ministry, and servant evangelism are key bridges into a community. Evangelism takes time and soil preparation, and these provide those things.
- Eighth, prayer is an often overlooked key. Church planters should enlist prayer warriors before they go out to plant.

An additional question asked the church planter to share “What were the 3 most important things you wish you knew before you planted?”⁶ Those voiced more than once are reproduced below, and the majority voiced those in bold face.

1. What resources were available.
2. How long it would take between arriving on the field and launching.
3. How incredibly lonely it would be after arriving on the field.
4. That more skills in counseling were greatly needed.
5. Knowing how to better mobilize laity and raise up additional leadership.
6. That a team approach would have been easier.
7. That there would be a revolving door of core people.
8. How to fund raise.
9. Should have started a building fund right away. Even if it was just 1/2% of undesignated funds.
10. That contact with NAMB, state and local associations would practically cease to exist once arrived on the field.
11. How to develop the business end of the church plant.
12. That commitment from the mother church would be in name only.
13. That growth would be slow.
14. That prayer partners and a continuous commitment to prayer would be key.

⁶ Note: The majority of the Asian pastors that took part in this part of the follow-up survey did not understand the question. The majority response is reflective of Anglo and Hispanic pastors.

CHAPTER 5: PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING PLANTING PERFORMANCE

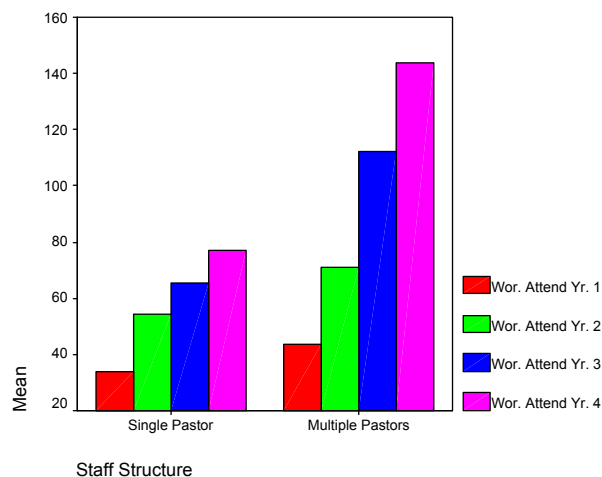
The last chapter of the study included several recommendations. These were only the recommendations of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed or approved by NAMB. Recommendations included:

- Church planter support systems are lacking and need to be re-addressed. When denominational funding is included, it is possible to mandate participation. More importantly, if the systems add value, church planters should want to participate. This study should help address the issue.

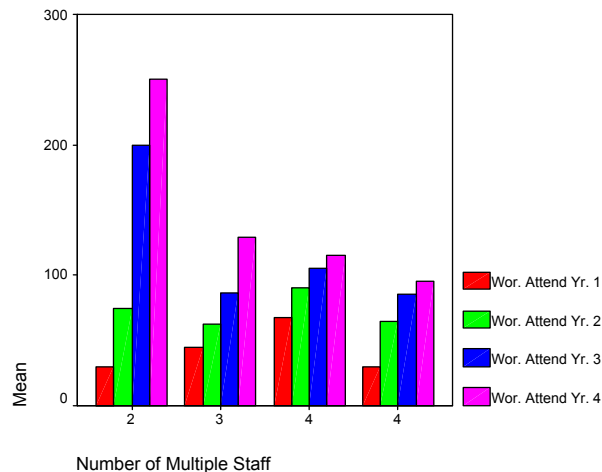
- It is not surprising that the most frequent comments dealt with the lack of finances. No church planter thought there was adequate funding but the HMB/NAMB system, as adopted, has been able to fund many church planters with less funds rather than supporting a church planters with much funding.

- The CPP must be reemphasized in all contexts. With the evidence contained in this study, there should be adequate justification for such. The reality is that most state conventions and associations are not taking the CPP seriously. There seems to be an “on-paper” mentality. States are “requiring” mentors and supervisors, and the local field is listing people on the paper as serving in these roles. Outside of the state conventions, there is simply limited vision on the local level. Charles Chaney was correct when he explained, “We never got down to the Associational level.”⁷ A reemphasis needs to be made at all levels.

- One of the recurring themes from the church planter surveys was the need for church planting teams. This needs further study. There is a demonstrable attendance difference when there is more than one church planting pastor on staff. The attendance is almost double.

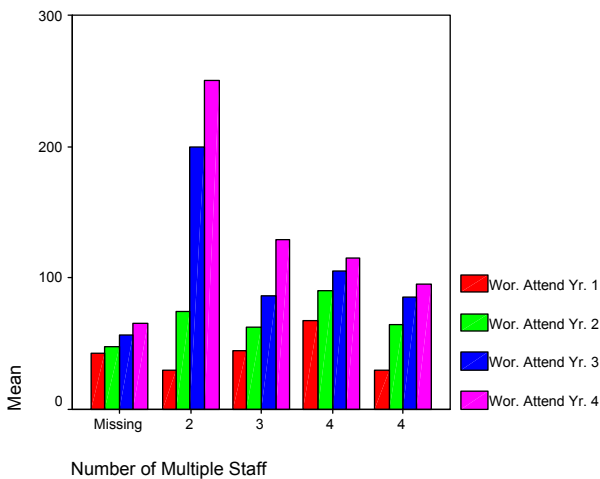


It is not just the presence of multiple pastors that makes a difference. This mean attendance is most present when there are two staff members—but not three or more.



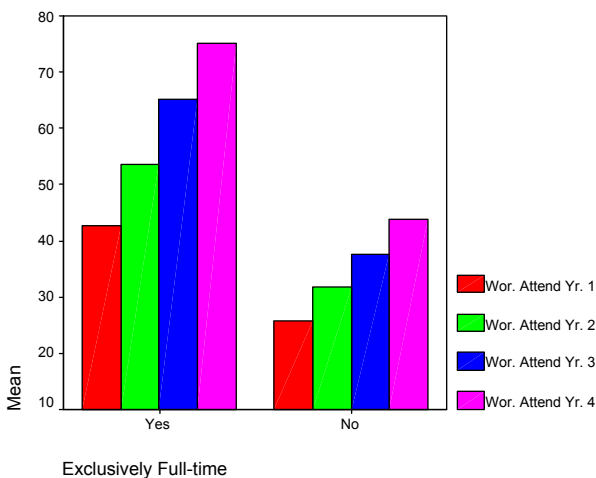
In all cases, more staff is better than a single staff pastor. The “missing” variable below would include those who did not have any additional staff.

⁷ Chaney, phone interview.



- Funding issues were the most frequently mentioned issues in the church planter surveys. Church planters consistently complained that they were under funded. Those who received part-time funding indicated that they would have been more successful if they received full-time funding. Those who received full-time funding wanted start up funds. Those who were full-time with start up wanted additional staff. It is fair to say that funding was never enough for the church planter.

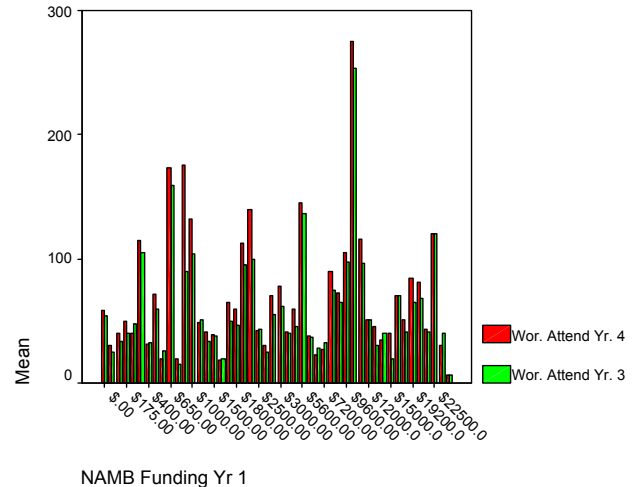
There is some evidence that full-time church planters lead larger churches than those that are part-time. Those that are full-time and specifically indicate that they do not have full-time employment lead substantially larger churches than those who did not indicate such.



This graph does not give a complete picture. When comparing the amount of NAMB funding in year one and comparing it to the mean

attendance for worship in years three and four, there is no clear pattern.

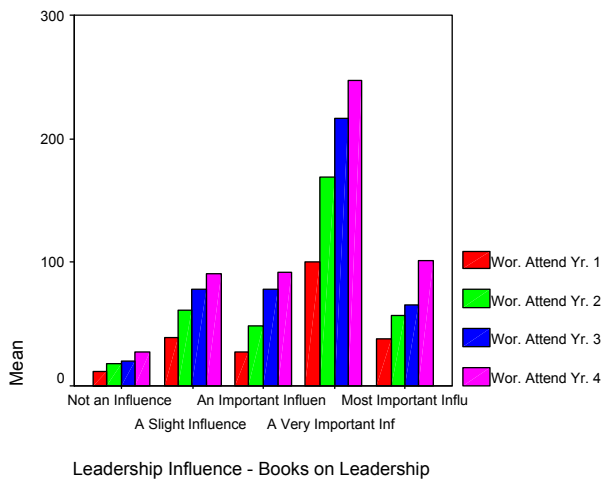
If the comments were accurate, greater funding should automatically lead to larger churches. This cannot be demonstrated by the data. Greater funding does not automatically lead to a higher mean attendance:



- Perhaps the most obvious shortfall of the Church Planting Process is that a central part of the program was not completed. The Church Planting Guides were intended to be the resources that the planter could use on a daily basis. These guides were the focal point of the personal interaction for the planter. In 1995, it was explained that these would be “the state of the art and the best in the field. Plans are to eventually produce these on an interactive CD format.”⁸

The evidence indicated that someone who considered a book a “very important influence” led churches that had substantially larger mean attendance than those who did not.

⁸ Church Planting System Team Meeting; October 11, 1995.



Yet, the North American Mission Board cannot offer its planters a well developed, cultural, or model specific resource. This needs to be reconsidered and new resources need to be developed that are mission based and culture specific.

Conclusion of the summary:

The North American Mission Board is the leading agency for church planting in North America. It has the resources and the vision to partner in the planting of thousands of reproducing churches. Furthermore, its systems are working *when applied*. The next five years will need to include better application and better training.