

GET READY, GET SET . . . *GO YE!*
EMERGING DISCIPLES IN THE POSTMODERN ERA

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requirements for the degree,
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Advisor: Carl Savage, D.Min, Ph.D.

Marsha L. Williams

Drew University

Madison, New Jersey

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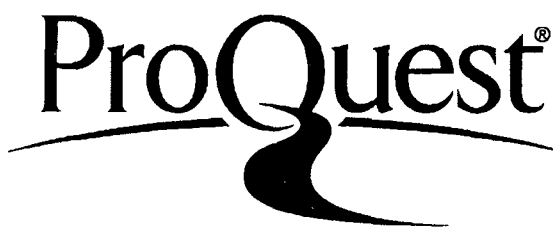
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ABSTRACT

GET READY, GET SET . . . *GO YE!* EMERGING DISCIPLES IN THE POSTMODERN ERA

Marsha L. Williams

Emmanuel Baptist Church
61A Cherry Street
Tinton Falls, New Jersey 07724

The thesis of this dissertation is that discipling, as the foundational mission of the church as outlined by Jesus in the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20), is cyclical and intergenerational in order to maintain a current and vibrant message for every new generation. Further, this discipling requires a church with the built-in life force Alan Hirsch terms *Apostolic Genius* comprised of *missional DNA* which is “the central complex of guiding ideas, phenomena, structures, and experiences that made the phenomenal Jesus movements genuinely dangerous stories...and effective tools of God’s redemptive mission to the world.”¹

The very different postmodern mindset of this current generation coupled with rapid technological gains has significantly changed the course of the Christian race today requiring a change in how we “run the race”...how we “do church.” The advent of the Internet and social media has changed the way we interrelate personally and globally as well as changed our philosophical foundations resulting in an intergenerational church divide and, ultimately, the loss of our young adults from church.

¹ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: +reactivating the missional church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 67.

This project uses SKYPE interviews of recent graduates from the Emmanuel Baptist Church of Tinton Falls, New Jersey, to update church practices to attract and keep the postmodern generation by evaluating the effectiveness of our discipling programs, surveying the status of our young adults' current faith walk and works, and by developing a continuing intergenerational link to ensure the disciplined actually become the disciples. We interviewed using the Narrative Research Methodology of Appreciative Inquiry to encourage all of the participants to "tell their story" with the backward glance of an appreciative eye.² Their recollections of positive and productive times at Emmanuel and in their current church communities enabled the participants and the LAC to construct a preferred future. The conversations with the focused goal of discipling formed new relationships between elder and younger, new self-perceptions, and a renewed determination for seeking guidance, getting/giving support, providing feedback, and, thereby, become the next generation of leaders and disciplers.

² Sue Annis Hammond, *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry* (Bend: Thin Book Publishing Co., 1998).

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CHAPTER 1

ON YOUR MARK . . .

I logged into my email and saw message after message after message from Facebook.

“So and so” commented on “So and So’s” status:
Reply to this email to comment on this status.
To see the comment thread, follow the link below:
Thanks,
The Facebook Team

I could be here all day if I read each one. So I just clicked to see one, intending to quickly scan over the rest...but I was hooked. I read each post. I HAD to...how else could I keep up with what everyone was doing? To be able to keep in contact with all of our young people after they went off to college was so great, and when they “friended” me, I was honored! I HAD to see what they were saying, doing...I still cared...and, yes, I admit it...I still worried about them.

My husband and I had a special bond with the young people in our church. Twenty-some years of working with, driving to and fro, pushing, feeding, encouraging, teasing, teaching, consoling, and counseling them builds relationships. These relationships are strong and can easily bridge a mere separation brought on by going off to college, or a couple thousand miles of distance. Since we now have Facebook and

Twitter and email and texting, we are not really separated at all! We have been communicating digitally for as long as they can remember.

Thus, we continue to communicate. So I plowed through all of the notifications and posts, and viewed all of the tagged photos. I sent words of praise, exchanged personal pleasantries, and gently nudged when needed. However, in the recesses of my mind, a shadow of fear came to life. As I “listened” to their conversations and their comments, and viewed some of their very revealing and telling photos, I grew concerned at what their pictures and words were portraying. I became nervous about the kinds of characteristics they were demonstrating. They were looking less and less like the young Christians we had sent forth to “go ye into all the world and make disciples...”¹ Instead, they were appearing more and more like disciples *of* the world to which we had sent them to *be* disciples.

Questions and Doubts

What happened? Had we failed in our teachings? Had the many youth programs, the conferences, the plethora of workshops not worked? Had all of our “pouring into them” been for naught? I discussed this with a fellow minister and discovered I was not alone in my observations or my concern. Seemingly, the further the young adults moved away from our church – meaning the distance in time from engaging actively on a regular basis – the further away they appeared to be from exhibiting their accustomed behaviors characterizing the victorious lives of Christians who were discipling others.

¹ Matt 28:19 (Authorized Version).

How could this be? These young people had the benefit of the best discipling programs; they received an enormous amount of support from their pastor and the congregation. In the past, they had exhibited leadership skills, Bible knowledge, and a love of the Lord. In fact, our church – Emmanuel Baptist Church of Tinton Falls, New Jersey, was hailed throughout the Seacoast Missionary Baptist Association and the Greater Red Bank area as a model for Youth Ministry. While some might still see us as just a small black Baptist church in the middle of white, Republican, Monmouth County; we saw ourselves as a church full of willing workers with a love for the Lord and for all of God’s children. We were busy in God’s Vineyard at 61A Cherry Street in Tinton Falls, New Jersey. We turned out well-equipped, Christian disciples...or had we?

Seemingly, despite all of the programs and efforts designed for the proper training of our young adults to become mature Christians who take up the Great Commission as a vital part of their lives, our young adults – not just Emmanuel’s, but *all* of our Christian, young adults – seem to be drifting away from the church and their faith after high school.

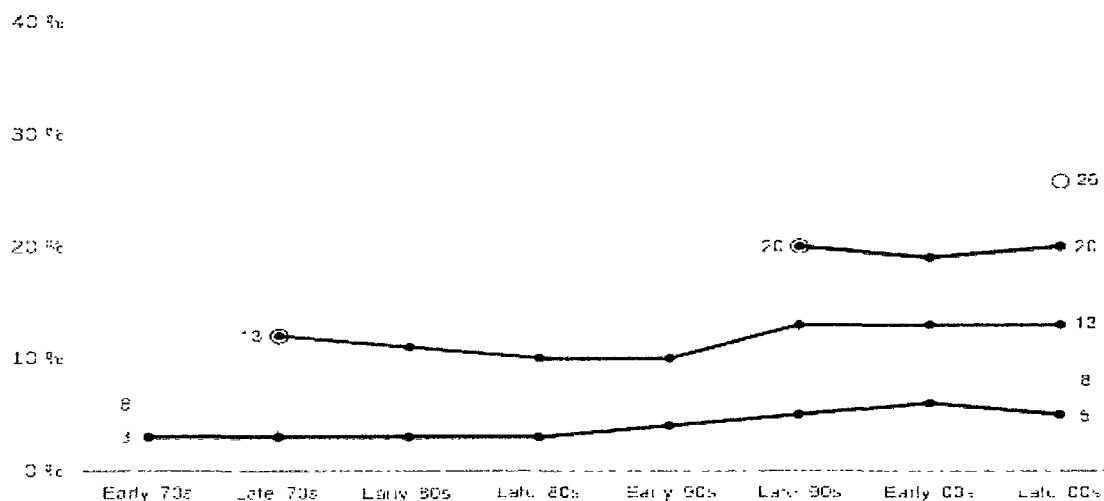
A New Faith Generation

According to the Pew Research Center’s Report, “Religion Among the Millennials: *Less Religiously Active than Older Americans, But Fairly Traditional In Other Ways*,”² there is a significant increase in the number of young adults, or *Millennials*,³ who are not formally following any faith traditions. (See fig. 1)

² Pew Research Center, “Religion Among the Millennials: *Less Religiously Active than Older Americans, But Fairly Traditional In Other Ways*,” [on-line]; available from <http://pewforum.org/Age/Religion-Among-the-Millennials.aspx> (accessed September 22, 1020). Religion

Young People Less Religiously Affiliated

The young adult population has shifted its religious affiliation



Source: General Social Surveys.

Question Wording: What is your religious preference?

1. Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, other religion or no religion?

Millennial (born 1981 or later)
 Gen X (born 1965-80)
 Boomer (born 1946-64)
 Silent (born 1928-45)
 Greatest (born before 1928)
 Ind. dates point when generations were at comparable ages.

Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life • Religion Among the Millennials, February 2010

Figure 1. Pew Research Data on Millennial Religious Affiliation.⁴ Religion Among the Millennials, Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, © 2010, Pew Research Center. <http://pewforum.org/>.

The young adults currently coming out of our high schools are facing more difficulty in entering college, a near nonexistent job market, and higher costs for all of the bare necessities of life. In response to this kind of bleak landscape in years past, many

Among the Millennials, Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, © 2010, Pew Research Center. <http://pewforum.org/>.

³ Millennial (born 1981 or later), Gen-X (born 1965-80), Boomer (born 1946-64), Silent (born 1928-45), Greatest (born before 1928).

⁴ Pew Research Center, "Religion Among the Millennials: *Less Religiously Active than Older Americans, But Fairly Traditional In Other Ways*," [on-line]; available from <http://pewforum.org/Age/Religion-Among-the-Millennials.aspx> (accessed September 22, 1020).

would have turned to the church and received help. That is not the case today. Despite many outreach programs that entreat and entice, our young people in this postmodern society are not seeking the church, or even more specifically, Christianity. Yet, while many of our young adults today appear to be drifting aimlessly with no goals, or pursuing materialistic and even hedonistic goals, they still seem to be seeking something spiritual, something bonding.

This postmodern phenomenon is not confined to the unchurched population, but it is equally applicable to our young adult Christian population. We have a generation of postmodern young adults – churched and unchurched – who are seeking “something” that will bring them into the mystery of a spiritual experience and, at the same time, bring them into a sense of community. We, the Church, have an opportunity to cultivate this huge harvest of young adults if we are willing to explore and understand this changing, postmodern landscape and take “church” to a whole new experience that will specifically draw them back into the fold.

For Such a Time as This...

Returning our young adults to the church is imperative now, because, unlike in years past, these young adults are not returning to the church when they reach the age of parenting. According to the Barna Group,⁵ church attendance is dropping drastically. In

⁵The Barna Group (which includes its research division, the Barna Research Group) is a private, nonpartisan, for-profit organization that conducts primary research on a wide range of issues and products, produces resources pertaining to cultural change, leadership, and spiritual development, and facilitates the healthy spiritual growth of leaders, children, families, and Christian ministries. Located in Ventura, California, Barna has been conducting and analyzing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors since 1984.

a December 2009 research report that examined the state of mainline Protestant churches, George Barna shows evidence that, despite a steadily growing population, the number of adults who attend a mainline church has remained a steady 89-100. They go on further to say,

The current attendance figure is lower than the norm during the heyday of the mainline bodies. Demographics suggest that the mainline churches may be on the precipice of a period of decline unless remedial steps are taken. For instance, in the past decade there has been a 22% drop in the percentage of adults attending mainline congregations who have children under the age of 18 living in their home. Also, the proportion of single adults has risen, now representing 39% of all adult attenders. That has been driven higher by a rise in the number of divorced and widowed adherents. The numerical decline is also related to the relative difficulty that mainline churches have experienced in attracting young adults. For instance, young adults (25 or younger) are 6% of the national population, they are just one-third as many (2%) of all adults attending mainline churches. At the other end of the age continuum, the statistics show that about one-quarter (27%) of American adults are 60 or older, but more than one-third of mainline attenders (35%) are 60-plus.⁶

The rule of thumb for Christian growth has been to “find yourself” in college as one puts on the final trappings of adulthood and career. Much like the prodigal son who “came to himself”⁷ in the pigsty, Christians have been encountering a “pigsty” experience that brings them to a realization of what they already have, and ultimately returns them to their homes. After attempting all of the new things the world had to offer, it was generally the introduction of children and a family that drove young adults back to church in a sense of duty of what they should provide for their children. Once established, they

⁶Barna Group, “The State of Mainline Protestant Churches” (December 7, 2009); available from <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/17-leadership/323-report-examines-the-state-of-mainline-protestant-churches?q=mainline+protestant+churches/> (accessed December 11, 2009).

⁷ Luke 15:17.

would appear to maintain a reconnection with church throughout their adult lives.

However, that rule of thumb has now vanished.

In fact, David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, recently conducted research in this area and reports that a common misconception held among church workers is that parenthood is the catalyst that returns people to church. Kinnaman contends, “While parenthood can reset people’s priorities in life, having children is not an automatic faith-starter for most adults. It’s more complicated than that. Family background and their personal faith history impact their behavior.”⁸ Further, Kinnaman points out the importance of influencing young lives:

Parenthood might help to clarify and enhance people’s pursuit of spirituality, but usually it does not fundamentally alter a parent’s spiritual trajectory. Getting people to transition from church involvement based upon religious inertia to activity driven by a sense of engagement is exceedingly difficult—and relatively rare...If the objective is to incorporate young parents into congregational life, it is important to help shape young people’s beliefs attitudes, habits and aspirations long before they become parents.⁹

Today’s Multi-directional Pull

Instead, young people in their postmodern college years now seem to spend their time searching for connection and meaning in alternative religions and philosophies which, of course, might draw these young adults farther away from the Christianity of their youth and any thoughts of discipling others. Through constant exposure to all

⁸ Barna Group, “Does Having Children Make Parents More Active Churchgoers?” (May 24, 2010) [on-line]; available from <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/391-does-having-children-make-parents-more-active-churchgoers/> (accessed July 22, 2010).

⁹Ibid.

countries and cultures, globalization has shrunk the world, and thereby expands its psychological/social base. Foreign cultures, religions, and philosophies are now a part of the foundational teaching which young people receive in their formative years. In the past, public school or Sunday School or even home school may have helped to develop their social skills and moral compasses. Now these venues seem to have been replaced by the numerous news channels, the pundits of late night TV, extreme activists, and the myriad of professionals and nonprofessionals who have found a venue on the internet via blogs and YouTube. Despite efforts on the part of parents and church elders, and years of teaching invested in our young adult Christians, research demonstrates that once young people leave home for college, they do not seem to maintain their former close relationships with the Lord through church. According to the February 2010 Pew Millennial Report, young adults today are less affiliated than at any other time.

Data from the General Social Surveys (GSS), which have been conducted regularly since 1972, confirm that young adults are not just more unaffiliated than their elders today but are also more unaffiliated than young people have been in recent decades. In GSS surveys conducted since 2000, nearly one-quarter of people ages 18-29 have described their religion as "none." By comparison, only about half as many young adults were unaffiliated in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁰

¹⁰ Pew Research Center, "Religion Among the Millennials: *Less Religiously Active than Older Americans, But Fairly Traditional In Other Ways*," [on-line]; available from <http://pewforum.org/Age/Religion-Among-the-Millennials.aspx> (accessed September 22, 2010).

Religious Affiliation among Young Adults . by Decade				
	<i>Among adults ages 18-29 in the...</i>			
	<u>1970s</u>	<u>1980s</u>	<u>1990s</u>	<u>2000s</u>
Unaffiliated (no religion)	12	12	16	23
Affiliated	88	88	84	77
	100	100	100	100
N	2,722	3,434	2,525	2,711
Source: General Social Surveys				
Question wording: What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion or no religion?				
Percentages have been adjusted to exclude nonresponse.				

Figure 2. Pew Millennial Report, *February 2010*.¹¹

At the same time, the Barna Group study, “What Teenagers Look for in a Church,” states that half (48 percent) of teenagers engage in worship and three-quarters (72 percent) pray each week.¹² Additional Barna Research, “New Research Explores the Long-Term Effect of Spiritual Activity Among Children and Teens,” demonstrates the correlation between attendance in Sunday School as a child and active participation in a church as an adult.¹³ The Barna Group continued by drawing the link between a person’s decision-making filter (worldview) and their resultant character choices in any given situation.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Barna Group, “What Teenagers Look for in a Church” (October 8, 2007) [on-line]; available from <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/16-teensnext-gen/93-what-teenagers-look-for-in-a-church/> (accessed November 19, 2009).

¹³ Barna Group, “New Research Explores the Long-Term Effect of Spiritual Activity Among Children and Teens” (November 16, 2009) [on-line]; available from <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/15-familykids/321-new-research-explores-the-long-term-effect-of-spiritual-activity-among-children-and-teens/> (accessed November 17, 2009).

Go Early, Go Often

The components for a Christian worldview were most impacted by attendance in church and church-related activities, such as Bible study. Thus, it behooves us to shape children's worldviews as Christians from the earliest possible moment until they reach the age of thirteen when that view is set for life.¹⁴ Those numbers for teens will probably be higher in the African-American community, according to another Barna Study showing that African Americans are more faith-centered than others in America: 92 percent of African Americans name themselves as Christians, as opposed to 85 percent of their white counterparts.¹⁵

The Barna Group is quick to point out that they are only showing the correlation of the statistics, not laying claim to causation. However, the combination of the data which reveals the growing absence of young adults in our churches and the correlation of early childhood attendance with adult attendance leads us to examine our current discipling models. The discipling models that we are currently using may have been very effective in the past, but they appear not to be so effective with the current generation of postmodern thinkers.

The old modernist teaching models that appeal to logic and reasoning do not resonate with the postmodern thinker who focuses on experience and relationship. Given the Barna Research findings of the November 2009 report that correlate church

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Barna Group, "How the Faith of African-Americans Has Changed" (July 24, 2009) [on-line]; available from <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/13-culture/286-how-the-faith-of-african-americans-has-changed/> (accessed November 19, 2009).

attendance in childhood (early start and regularly attending) as a factor in adult attendance, we are doing the right thing when we “train up a child in the way he should go.”¹⁶

WWJD?

That being said, the mass exodus of young adults from the church seemingly never to return demonstrates that the church’s current models are no longer effective. As we shall see, they are a generation who has very different questions and needs than in years past. What changes to the current models can the church effect in order to shape a sure foundation for the spiritual lives of this new generation of young adults? For in the ongoing, cyclical mandate to “go ye, therefore, and teach all nations . . .,”¹⁷ we are continually called to disciple the next generation.

Disciple, *mathetes*, comes “from the verb *manthano*, ‘to learn,’ whose root *math* suggests, thought with effort put forth. A disciple is a learner, one who follows both the teaching and the teacher. The word is used first of the Twelve, and later of Christians generally.”¹⁸ Derived from Gr. *ekklesia* meaning assembly, the church is the community of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ. The foundation for the existence of the church is belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In his book, *Baptist’s Beliefs*, noted author E. Y. Mullins says, “Holiness is a classic mark of the church denoting the body of

¹⁶ Prov 22:6.

¹⁷ Matt 28:19.

¹⁸ “Word Wealth: Matt. 10:1 Disciples,” in *Spirit-Filled Life Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 1421.

believers being ‘set apart’ by God for the work of carrying out God’s mission in the world. In fact, the church only “exists in obedience to [Christ’s] command and has no mission on earth save the carrying out of His will.”¹⁹ Donald K. McKim states in his Dictionary of Theological Terms, “The church’s authority is derived from Scripture, tradition, the experience of the Spirit, and reason.”²⁰ As such, it is our responsibility to exert our authority, as the church, to make disciples of all people.

God did not create humankind because God needed to be loved. God is love acted out in the community of the Trinity. As in the reciprocating love of God the Father and God the Son through the Communion of the Holy Spirit, the essence of God is love. It is the extension, or outflowing, of this reciprocating love by which God brings into existence that other than God to be the recipient and mirror of God’s love.²¹ Thus, God created humankind in the image of God – *imago dei* – the reflection of the Triune God. The *imago dei* is an active pursuit of following God to the conclusion of the universe and time, as we know it, and embracing God’s future; thus, the world reflects the intratrinitarian relationship. “God the Father creates the world, through the Son, by the Spirit.”²² “...yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came

¹⁹ E. Y. Mullins, *Baptist Beliefs* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1991), 64.

²⁰ Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 49.

²¹ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.: Grand Rapids, 1994), 101.

²² *Ibid.*, 102.

and through whom we live.”²³ Jesus, the incarnate Son, as our example was one great pointer to God the Father on whom He relied totally and whom He obeyed completely. Jesus, the incarnate Son, as our revelation is how we can understand God the Father in divinity. Thus we, the creatures, are to be dependent and obedient in love.

What is the Way?

What changes can we, as the *ekklesia*, the church, make in our understanding of how to disciple...of how to be “one great pointer to God...in love?” Mounting evidence shows that the church must make changes to the way its members “do church,” or it will lose the next generation of Kingdom workers. As we search for new ways in which to reach the current generation, churches that want to survive or hang on to their postmodern young people must examine what works, and what we need to add or change to make our message relevant and exciting, in order to ensure that it has a lasting impact.

The Barna teens’ study also points to a solution:

As some of the nation’s first digital pilgrims, the research shows that one out of every four teenagers (26%) had learned something about their faith or spirituality online in the last six months. This was true of two-fifths of born again Christian teenagers (39%). Furthermore, one-sixth of teenagers (16%) and one-quarter of born again teens (25%) said they had “a spiritual experience” online where they worshipped or connected with God.²⁴

Given the generational pull to all things digital, how does this timeless, borderless, and somewhat faceless digital connector play into the development of a productive Christian, one who incarnates the love of God in Christ Jesus? Asking

²³ 1 Cor 6:8, NIV.

²⁴Barna Group, “What Teenagers Look for in a Church.”

questions regarding our methodology also means examining our expectations. How does a “successfully disciplined Christian” appear? Or rather, what does to “go ye therefore, and teach all nations”²⁵ mean in today’s society? To where do we *go ye*? How do we *teach* a postmodern mindset . . . to *all nations*? How do we fulfill the Great Commission to go into all the world, teach them about Jesus and bring them into a personal relationship with Him in order to make them learners and followers? As we examine how we “do church,” we realize our need to also examine how to disciple. Who does the discipling? Given the lack of connection between those in authority in the traditional church with the postmodern generation, would a relationship with Jesus Christ be fostered better with recent graduates serving as the best disciplers?

As I considered Jesus and His relationship with the disciples in light of contemporary society, I could not help but make the comparison of Jeter and Canu, of Joe Torre and Joe Girardi, of Girardi and Pasada, and of Pasada and Cervelli. (Please bear with me if you’re not a Yankee fan.) Since about the time that Derek Jeter was a rookie, I have been following America’s best baseball team, the New York Yankees. The Yankees experienced some very good years with a solid core team. However, time passes – people age, the game changes, science improves, and the current team must move over and make room for the new team. However, more is involved than just moving over. The old team trains the new team. Jeter is passing on all of his shortstop wisdom and trade secret movements to second baseman, Robinson Canu. Joe Torre mentored Joe Girardi until he was able to take the reins as Manager. Even in their

²⁵ Matt 28:19.

roundabout way of relating to one another, Pasada is passing on all of his catcher's expertise to Cervelli, just as Joe Girardi did to Pasada when he was a rookie. It is an age-old tradition—the elder trains the younger, who in turn picks up the responsibility of training the next generation, and so, it goes and goes and goes “Go ye...making disciples of all...”

¹⁸And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹***Go ye therefore, and teach all nations***, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.²⁶

The teacher/student, mentor/apprentice model is quite prevalent throughout the Bible: Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Paul and Timothy, and Jesus and the Disciples. This model is patterned after the same kind of relationship that the Holy Spirit has with all of us as the *Paraclete* – coming alongside to provide guidance, wisdom, strength, patience, grace, compassion...all of the traits and characteristics that are borne of a regenerated heart that has been informed by the Gospel and transformed by the presence of God. We are called to actively pursue following God to the conclusion of the universe and time...embracing God's future, thus, reflecting the intratrinitarian relationship²⁷...to “go and teach” to make more of us . . . to disciple others, so that we may live and glorify God, and that others do the same. Jesus called His disciples from their everyday tasks and trained them continuously for three years. He sent them forth, where they proved to be inadequate. They ran into obstacles such as the demons called

²⁶ Matt 28:18-20.

²⁷ Grenz, 102.

Legion; they lacked faith on more than one occasion. Yet, Jesus never gave up on them. He spoke to them in parables to facilitate their understanding. Even while warning Peter that he would deny Him three times, Jesus still gave Peter the mandate to “go and . . . strengthen your brothers.”²⁸

Just as Jesus, we are all called to work with the ones whom God has placed in our charge. Just as Jeter showed Canu, we have to pull them alongside of us and teach them how to jump and spin to get the throw to first base in time to command the out! The old ways will no longer suffice. We are always raising the bar, keeping current with technology and new information. As we have adjusted our teaching in the past, so shall we in the future.

However, this raises questions. Wouldn't *what* we will adjust in our approach for this postmodern generation best be determined by those closest to that generation as opposed to those who are only versed in the old ways? Will determining *how* we can refocus our efforts to ensure we complete the task of making disciples best be done in conjunction with those young adults?

What Must We Do So They Save

Turning out mature, intelligent, responsible, intentional Christian disciples remains the church's goal; or shouldn't it? Unfortunately, evidence shows that many congregations have lost this focus. In fact, even when pastors and church leaders were included in the survey for his book, *Growing True Disciples*, Barna relates the fact that

²⁸ Luke 22:23 (NIV).

“Not one of the adults we interviewed said that their goal in life was to be a committed follower of Jesus Christ or to make disciples.”²⁹ To make disciples, according to Barna’s read of the original biblical texts is to make “someone who is a learner or follower who serves as an apprentice under the tutelage of a master.”³⁰ As we get caught up in the “form and fashion” of worship, and the “experience” of it all, along with “how to increase our numbers,” we seem to have strayed from the original commandment to “go and make disciples.” The Barna report on mainline Protestant churches further stated, “There is a behavioral reason for the decline of mainline churches, too: just one-third (31%) of mainline adults believe they have a personal responsibility to discuss their faith with people who have different beliefs.”³¹

To address that shadow of fear that was growing in the back of my mind—the question of whether we had “unfinished business” with our young adults—to address the facts of declining membership that are staring us all in the face, as well as to address the probing questions that kept springing up from our conversations, the Pastor and lay leaders at the Emmanuel Baptist Church and I met in September 2009 to discuss a project with those involved in our concerns. We proposed a project to begin in January 2010 to engage in a dialogue with the young adults who graduated from high school within the last four years and the adults who worked with the youth over the years in order to discover our collective preferred future.

²⁹ George Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2001), 6.

³⁰ Ibid., 17.

³¹ Barna Group, “State of Mainline Protestant Churches.”

For the project, we solicited the narratives of the young adults as they remembered the significant times in their church life through their eyes and experiences. We invited them to examine and evaluate Emmanuel's discipling education support, as well as their own Christian walk. With these narratives, coupled with current research, we began an evaluation to see what changes we might want to bring about to make our teachings relevant and engaging enough to the postmodern Christian young adults to keep them all in church beyond high school. Additionally, the data enabled us to determine how to provide that final, crucial support that transforms them from the disciplined to the disciples.

Given all the research, the nature of these young adults and their inextricable tie to the ionosphere, we also set out to explore and/or develop an on-line vehicle providing these young adults with a venue for staying connected, seeking guidance, getting support, providing feedback, and, thereby, becoming the next generation of leaders and disciplers. All output from this project would be developed in conjunction with the young adults and would take whatever shape and medium best suited them, according to their responses.

As you shall see, what we discovered with the young adults was far from what I expected. The years of discipleship training *had* impacted them and their lives; yet they still needed, and desired, ongoing guidance. Also, they actually *had become* the disciples we trained them to be, at least for the most part.

In Chapter 1, "On Your Mark," I have laid out the narrative of concern and its development as the impetus for this project. I explore the biblical mandate to continually reproduce ourselves as we train others to become working Christians. I have also made

available some of the current research data from notable sources that support my thesis and also provide foundation for the questions explored.

Chapter 2, “Get Ready,” will provide an in-depth look at the implementation of the project at Emmanuel Baptist Church to include selection of participants, the formation of the LAC and the use of the Narrative Research Methodology, Appreciative Inquiry. Through the narratives shared by our young adults, we will look at the markers of success in the various discipling components traditionally shaping and molding our young adults. We will look at Emmanuel’s history and environment to discover why it is uniquely poised to produce *emerging disciples*.

Chapter 3, “Get Set,” provides my evaluation of the project implementation using the Narrative Research Methodology Structuralist approach. As we review the discipling work currently being done by the young adults in their new independent lives, we will examine the components needed to engage the postmodern generation. We will also look at the hindrances and obstacles to change as we explore our relationships.

Chapter 4, “Go Ye...” will wrap-up the project as I address the transforming affect of the project on the young adults, the LAC, and myself as we utilized the Appreciative Inquiry approach to discover and stir up the gift that we all have within us. I review the challenges I encountered to many of my beliefs and how we, as the elders and the younger, have to continually challenge our faith community to update our training regimens and methodologies, and to take the necessary steps to engage this postmodern generation on their turf, with their tools and God’s Command to “Get Ready, Get Set, Go Ye. . . !”

CHAPTER 2

GET READY . . .

“At its very heart, Christianity is therefore a messianic movement, one that seeks to consistently embody the life, spirituality, and mission of its Founder. We have made it so many other things, but this is its utter simplicity. Discipleship, becoming like Jesus our Lord and Founder, lies at the epicenter of the church’s tasks.”

Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*

This project began with one of those infamous casual, chance-encounter conversations...you know the one that yields 100 fold and was “such a coincidence that we just ran into each other.” I have learned the importance of continually connecting with our partners in ministry and not relying on chance encounters...to intentionally look for opportunities to actively pursue, following God to the conclusion of the universe and time, and embracing God’s future and the world reflecting the intratrinitarian relationship of interdependent love and compassion. I have also learned to recognize when God intentionally places something in your path such as the “chance encounter” and what might have been perceived as “small talk” that led to the development of this project for my Doctor of Ministry in the Global-Online concentration at Drew University. It was a conversation that grew to include all of the ministerial staff, deacons, and teachers. As our narrative of concern crystallized in our discussions, we agreed that we had a unique opportunity to partner with our young adults to evaluate the effectiveness of our

discipling programs, to determine if they are creative enough for this postmodern generation, and to explore what the effects would be on Emmanuel's elders if we effected changes proposed by the young adults.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to examine the discipling programs currently being provided to Emmanuel's youth in conjunction with recent Emmanuel high school graduates to determine changes needed to thoroughly engage postmodern Christian young adults and keep them churched beyond high school. Given the research and the nature of these young adults and their inextricable tie to the ionosphere, the purpose of this project was also to develop an online vehicle to provide these young adults with a venue for seeking guidance, getting support, providing feedback, and, thereby, become the next generation of leaders and disciplers. The output product of this project was to be developed in conjunction with the young adults and would take whatever shape and medium best suited their responses. In addition, we planned to interview the adults who disciple/teach the young people to determine what kind of response we could expect from them to changes to the existing discipling methodology proposed by the young adults. Given the apparent lack of relationship between the existing teachers/disciplers in the traditional church and the postmodern generation, we also planned to explore the feasibility of a cooperative and productive intergenerational connection.

Background

My home church, the Emmanuel Baptist Church of Tinton Falls, New Jersey, where I was ordained as the Assistant Pastor in November of 2005, is a very hands-on, nurturing congregation probably because it is a small congregation (350 active members). Its size fosters a personal intimacy that seems to draw most everyone “into community.” Emmanuel is a Bible-based, family-focused, teaching church that takes very seriously our Commission to *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*¹



Figure 3. College young adults lead Praise & Worship at Emmanuel Baptist Church during Christmas break.

¹ Matt 28:19-20.

The mission of Emmanuel Baptist Church is to glorify God, by fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ through preaching and teaching. We affirm the renewing power of God's grace and the redemptive force of His truth to transform the lives of people. Not only do we recite the Great Commission to close each weekly Sunday School, it is also the foundational concept for all of our discipling programs. Our Christian Board of Education, which determines those programs, receives the largest portion of our budget which should attest to the fact that "*study(ing) to show thyself approved*"² is a scriptural challenge that the entire congregation values and supports. During our Worship Service, we recognize and honor every new level of Christian education attained by the students: young and old – collectively and individually. The criteria for the scholarships awarded by the Church focus the young students on foundational Christian principles and ethics as well as good academics. Participation in Sunday School is the highest valued activity, followed by participation in various ministries throughout the church such as Ushering, Sunday School Officer, as well as their activities in school and community. At Emmanuel, as throughout the entire National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBC, USA, Inc.), Bible education is the critical component to the proper formation of a disciple of Christ after the work of the Holy Spirit.

Within that biblical teaching model, leadership is a key characteristic that we cultivate in our youth from their earliest classes: leadership to support the mandate to

² 2 Tim 2:15.

“Go ye...” with the confidence that *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*³ Training begins with the smallest toddler and continues on through graduation from high school.



Figure 4. Recognition at the Red Bank Westside Track & Field Scholarship Luncheon, Oct 2007.

They participate in these leadership programs at the local (association), state (convention), and national level. At Emmanuel, we are intentionally fostering living what Len Sweet termed the *GodLife*: a life that is lived in “the mystery of a real, live

³ Phi 4:13.

relationship with God.”⁴ Let me take a moment to provide a more detailed view of Emmanuel’s operation and the discipling programs under review.

What Did Emmanuel Do?

Emmanuel is a leading member of the Seacoast Missionary Baptist Association of the General Baptist Convention of New Jersey in the NBC USA, Inc. Emmanuel currently has the Associational President of the Women’s Auxiliary as a member and has many other members who have previously held offices at the State and even the National level including myself. As a past 1st Vice President of the Congress of Christian Education for the Seacoast, I was involved in the changes to the methods of study and fellowship used in the 1980’s to engage, encourage, and develop the youth in response to our changing society. As I stated earlier, within the NBC USA, Inc., there has always been a great emphasis placed on Bible Study because we firmly believe that the appropriation of foundational biblical principles is the key to creating productive, Christian adults.

To that end, during their formative years (kindergarten through high school), the Emmanuel youth participate in structured discipleship study in Sunday School classes, Friday Night Youth Activities, an after-school care program (EBC EXcel), and in sponsored activities such as Bible Bowls, Oratorical Contests, and Summer Assembly (a Leadership Camp). The youth gather quarterly as an Association and bi-annually at the State level. At these gatherings, they participate in classes, competitions, and basketball

⁴ Leonard Sweet, *Out of the Question...Into the Mystery: Getting Lost in the GodLife Relationship* (WaterBrook Press: Colorado Springs, 2004), 31.

games. The youth are exposed to each other within the Association's churches as often as possible to foster proper relationships and to help reinforce the Christian discipling they have received in their individual churches. There are also local classes provided for credit at the National level in various disciplines within the church. Within the NBC USA, Inc, as well as at Emmanuel, much focus is on Christian education and preparation of the next generation of Christians to continue the church's mission to "*Go ye...*"

As the young people have pointed out in their interviews, one particularly successful program was the Emmanuel's Eagles Step Team. A Step Team mimics the rhythmic hand-clapping and foot-stomping found in Boot Dancing and Fraternity marches. The Step Team, Emmanuel's Eagles, reached the young people in the most dynamic of fashions. They were thoroughly engaged. They explored and learned at the age of reasoning—8th grade and beyond. We were able to abduct their attention through the use of music, theater and dance. We used the Theological Reflection techniques that I learned at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS) to expand their perspectives. Initially, we held 3 weekly intensive immersion classes with them. The objective was to slowly bring these young people to an understanding of who they were in Christ, who God was, what God's expectations were of them, and what their expectations were of God. We also taught them to learn to think and process information

through a theological lens.



Figure 5. Emmanuel's Eagles Step Team - Isaiah 40:31.

To our modern way of thinking, this was another step in a logical progression in our discipleship praxis. They had the foundation from Sunday School lessons. Now, they had an outlet to evangelize in a manner they could and would do. They became Emmanuel's Eagles; they could "*mount up with wings of eagles.*"⁵ They developed the step routines and Deacon Williams and I put words to them, channeling everything into a Christian discipling format. They wouldn't accept defeat if a step was difficult, because they knew and encouraged one another with Scriptures. Their theme was "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*"⁶ When we ran into a contentious moment,

⁵ Is 40:31.

⁶ Phil 4:13.

they had to “esteem one another highly with love.” They internalized the Word of God through their routine repetitions, learning to articulate their faith and then translating it for their generation in a manner of their choosing – through Step. A critical component to their participation and subsequent reception by their audiences was that it was all genuine, authentic.

They began to write the routines and the words themselves. We had one young man, who survived leukemia, who has since published a book of poetry using the poems he had written specifically for the Step Team routines. Today, he is an active supporter and participant of The Valerie Fund, an organization that provides support for the comprehensive health care of children with cancer and blood disorders. He is also the President of the Poets Society at Prairie View A&M University in Texas.



Figure 6. Emmanuel's Youth Choir sing praises in the Pavilion on the boardwalk in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, August 2007.

Our Youth Choir, another dynamic component of Emmanuel, has performed in support of fund-raisers for The Valerie Fund as well as for the Governor of the State of New Jersey. The Youth Choir is another avenue whereby the young people have a creative outlet that engages them thoroughly. Their narratives show creativity and energy are both strong elements of their spiritual maturation.

Church's Changing Landscape

In his book, *The Forgotten Ways: +reactivating the missional church*, Alan Hirsch brought us to a clear understanding that we are experiencing a critical, transformational time for the Church in our ever-changing world.⁷ In his edited collection of writings titled, *The Church of the Perfect Storm*, Leonard Sweet said the church is...

“...entering the ‘Perfect Storm.’...First is the tsunami known as postmodernity. Second is the big hurricane, or more precisely an epidemic of related hurricanes, called post-Christendom. The third is a global warming I am calling post-scale.”⁸

They are both speaking of the changing landscape that is our world today and how it is affecting “church” as we know it. People are moving from thinking in modern terms (analytical, rational, scientific) to a postmodern perspective (cynical, relational, spiritual). One would be hard pressed not to see that we no longer have the accepted,

⁷ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: +reactivating the missional church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 51.

⁸ Leonard Sweet, ed., *The Church of the Perfect Storm* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 9. According to Sweet in his article, *Outstorming Christianity's Perfect Storm*, in a post-“progress” world, the devil is in the scale more than the devil is in the details. Everything is scalable, but there are thresholds or “tipping points” when scalability suddenly accelerates or becomes more significant. A post-scale world is a very dangerous place. In every one of these problem “details,” the devil of “scale” is putting us in a most dangerous place: greenhouse gases, global warming, dying oceans, famine, superbugs, trash, unclean water, air pollution, epidemics.

institutionalized version of Christianity that was Christendom in America, but rather suspicion and hostility toward it. And our rate of growth is happening so fast that we can't assimilate fast enough to keep up; begging the question asked in *Economist* magazine and quoted by Dr. Sweet, "Is the speed of technology development exceeding humanity's moral and mental capacities to control it?"⁹ I believe our young adults (as well as the rest of us) are reeling with the feeling that they are missing something and don't know how to frame the question to find the answer in the plethora of real-time, high-def data in the palm of their hands. This could not be truer for our young adults as it pertains to their individual spiritual lives.

I've declared in my Credo, my belief that the purposes of the church are worship and proclamation of the Word. The church has preserved, defended, and made the Scriptures new in that the Gospel, as the Good News, is contextualized and made relevant for each group of people in each period in time. Worship is corporate as the Holy Spirit brings the Church together on one accord to lift up praise and thanksgiving to God through Scripture reading, prayer, and song. The Church then receives a Word from God in a gathered setting, but hearing a message tailored for each individual. Proclamation includes evangelizing, witnessing to the Gospel, promoting peace and justice, being an alternative community, and serving others.¹⁰ This still holds true today, with the addition of our enlarged global perspective and scope.

⁹ Sweet, *The Church of the Perfect Storm*, 28.

¹⁰ Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996) 49.

Hirsch believes, and I concur, that survival of the church in Sweet's "perfect storm" requires what Hirsch has pegged the *Emerging Missional Church (EMC)* and its *Apostolic Genius*. Hirsch defines the *Emerging Missional Church (EMC)* as the resulting complete church after cross-fertilization of all of the current systems that have been created in response to the postmodern, post-Christendom, post-scale world. He defines *Apostolic Genius* as "the factors that must come together to both catalyze as well as maintain exponential multiplication movements. Apostolic Genius is a 'latent potential' that lies dormant in the church and can be reactivated by both internal as well as external circumstances."¹¹ It is the built-in life force and guiding mechanism of God's people. *Apostolic Genius* is comprised of what Hirsch calls *Missional DNA (mDNA)*. *mDNA* is "the central complex of guiding ideas, phenomena, structures, and experiences that made the phenomenal Jesus movements genuinely dangerous stories...and effective tools of God's redemptive mission to the world."¹² They are the living components or elements that make up the Apostolic Genius. The term represents a combination of the concept of DNA (the substance carrying an organism's genetic makeup) with the distinction of being *missional* in the church context. It is comprised of six interrelating elements.

1. *Jesus is Lord (central component)*
2. *Disciple Making*
3. *Missional-Incarnational Impulse*
4. *Apostolic Environment*

¹¹ Alan Hirsch, The Forgotten Ways Organization website, <http://www.theforgottenways.org/> (accessed October 8, 2010).

¹² Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 67.

5. *Organic Systems*

6. *Communitas, not community*¹³

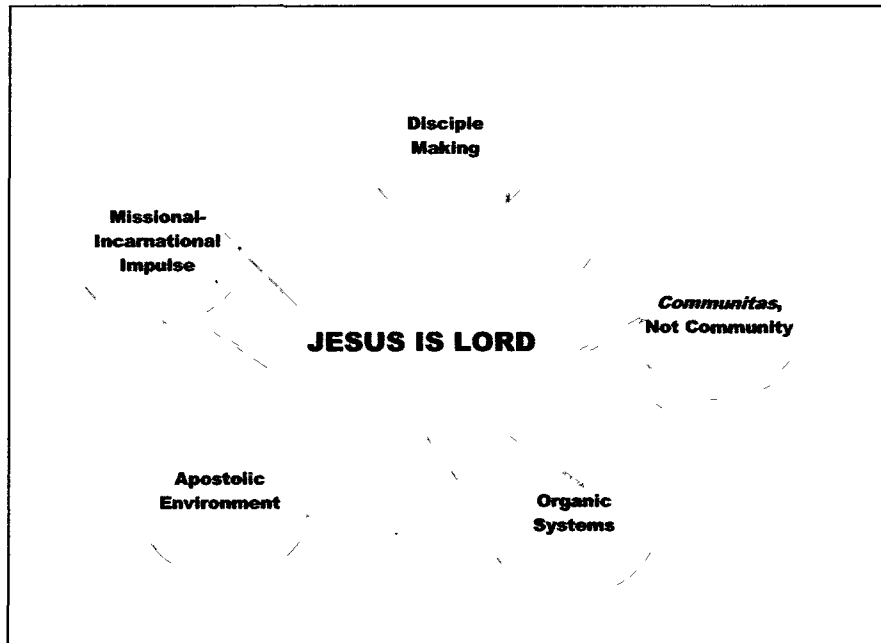


Figure 7. The Structure of Apostolic Genius from Hirsh's *Forgotten Ways*.

Current teaching revolves around the term *emerging* such as *emerging adults* and *emerging churches*. According to Hirsch, this terminology has its germination in the scientific term *emergence* which Hirsch describes as “the process by which patterns or higher levels of organization arise from interactive processes on the micro level.”¹⁴ This scientific terminology explains the reactions within the organic system that “allows the

¹³ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 24-25.

¹⁴ Quote taken from Hirsch's footnote on the principle of emergence where he references Kevin Mihata's "The Persistence of Emergence" in Raymond A. Eve, Sara Horsfall, and Mary E. Lee, eds., *Chaos, Complexity & Sociology: Myths, Models & Theories* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997), 30-38.

free flow of information and relationships and creates the conditions of bottom-up learning.”¹⁵ As you will see from our operation, it follows the pattern that a church like Emmanuel Baptist which has all the components for what Hirsch named the *Emerging Missional Church*¹⁶ would be able to produce *emerging disciples*.¹⁷ How far-reaching would the impact be of developing the right tools to convey and firmly embed the message of the Gospel to a generation of fresh mindsets and deep yearnings, as well as put the finishing touches on the lives of our disciples who are newly minted?

Project Preparation

In September of 2009, I met with the Pastor and the people I potentially identified as members of my team to formally develop our project. In January 2010, after receiving approval of my Project Prospectus and approval from the Review Board to safeguard the participants of this project in accordance with Federal law and Drew University policy,¹⁸ I formally formed my Lay Advisory Committee (LAC), a representational cross section of elders and former young adults of the church.

1 Associate Minister
1 Chair, Deacon Board

¹⁵ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: +reactivating the missional church* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 263.

¹⁶ *Emerging Missional Church (EMC)*: the resulting complete church after cross-fertilization of all of the current systems that have been created in response to the postmodern, post-Christendom, post-scale world.

¹⁷ *Emerging Disciples*: the resulting disciple after appropriating the Gospel and activating an incarnational lifestyle with a postmodern mindset.

¹⁸ This is a research project with human participants, so I was required to be certified by the National Institute of Health (NIH) to do no harm. Also, the Drew University Review Board had to review and approve the Consent Forms, the Debriefing Forms, and the Questions used with the participants of the study.

- 1 Chair, Board of Christian Education
- 1 Chair, Trustee Board
- 1 President, Missionary Circle
- 1 Recent college graduate

While they represent a cross section of the leadership, all of the LAC members are also Sunday School teachers who are an integral part of the discipling at Emmanuel. At our initial September meeting I requested the involved members commit to serving on my LAC by assisting in the implementation as well as evaluation of my project. As members of the LAC, they committed to some reading and to participating in weekly online meetings/interviews from January through May of 2010.¹⁹ Each session was a SKYPE conference call involving the members of the LAC and one of the young adults, as we gathered the narratives from the young adults by way of interviews that lasted no more than one and a half hours. Utilizing a rotating schedule, I tried to accommodate everyone's schedule to ensure at least two of the LAC members were available for each session. We met after each interview using SKYPE, by conference calls and through shared Mindjet files to analyze what we had heard and to eventually develop recommendations for the Pastor. To invite the young adults, I developed a Facebook page so we could freely, yet confidentially, discuss thoughts and ideas at our own pace between meetings. In addition, we used Emmanuel's Facebook page to reach out to invite the young adults.

¹⁹ In September 2009, I retired from my day job of 31 years because my place of employment, Ft. Monmouth, was on the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list announced in May 2005 as being scheduled to close in June 2011. I relocated from New Jersey to Texas during the Prospectus approval process. The actual implementation of my project was remotely executed via SKYPE, Facebook, and email with a few faxes, some snail mail, and telephone calls. I made one brief visit to New Jersey in March and was able to have a second face-to-face meeting with the Pastor and now formally constituted LAC.

In order to prepare the LAC members for the project implementation, I introduced them to the postmodern mindset by sharing a couple of class documents and webpage links to include 1) My approved Project Prospectus with all of the details on the actual project as it was approved by Drew's Internal Review Board (IRB): Background, Purpose, Scope, Methodology, and Evaluation; 2) The Bibliography for info purposes only; and, 3) A Word document with links to YouTube and other videos and write ups that provided background for understanding on this postmodern generation. About the same time, I brought the congregation into the project in a letter updating the congregation on our family's move across country. This allowed us to generally inform the parents of the participants as well as the other teachers and mentors, while soliciting the congregation's prayers for our project.

I chose to interview using the Narrative Research Methodology of Appreciative Inquiry because I wanted to encourage all of the participants to "tell their story" with the backward glance of an appreciative eye. The recollections of positive and productive efforts could enable the participants to actually construct a preferred future.²⁰ At our initial meeting, I reviewed the Appreciative Inquiry methodology with the LAC and followed up by purchasing copies of "The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry"²¹ for each LAC member. I believe that the Emmanuel youth were particularly suited to the Appreciative Inquiry methodology because of their leadership training and their

²⁰ Sue Annis Hammond, *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry* (Bend: Thin Book Publishing Co., 1998).

²¹ Ibid.

experience with articulation and public speaking in the National Baptist Oratorical Contest.

As I was preparing the LAC to participate in the interviews, we were preparing the young adults. I used the Facebook page to lay out the details of the project for the young adults and to invite them to participate. I made it a closed Facebook page to ensure privacy while enabling full disclosure of the participants – LAC as well as the young adults – regarding the project. I placed the Consent Form (Appendix A) on the Facebook page to allay any fears and gain their confidence up front. We planned to interview as many as possible of the EBC young adults who had graduated between 2005 and 2009 because they were close enough to their time at Emmanuel and yet had already stepped into the next phase of their life and spiritual development. The goal was to get the young adults to tell the story of their faith journey and their relationships at Emmanuel so we could discover what programs and methods were most effective in the shaping of their faith and why. Conversely, we also wanted their perspective of what was ineffective or even counter-productive in their spiritual development. Finally, we wanted to discover how they were maintaining/continuing that faith journey in their new environment as young adults, be it in college or wherever.

CHAPTER 3

GET SET. . .

"Just as during a hurricane the safest place for ships is not the harbor, but the deep water, so Christianity in a postmodern era must launch out into deep water and face head-on the perfect storm created by the convergence of postmodernity, religious pluralism, institutionalized Christianity, and militant atheism."

– George Bullard, formal endorsement of Len Sweet's *The Church of the Perfect Storm*.

As we evaluated the discipling programs and environment of Emmanuel Baptist Church, we discovered that it was operating as that *Emerging Missional Church* and developing its *Apostolic Genius*, albeit unknowingly for the most part. Hirsch points out, both are necessary for the Church to stay relevant and effective in this new, postmodern world and be viable in its effort to continue carrying out the Great Commission. In a footnote, Hirsch quoted Loren Mead, author of *The Once and Future Church*:

Reinventing the Congregation for a New Mission Frontier, who says:

"The dilemma of the church in this transitional time is that the shells of the old structures still surround us even though many of them no longer work....He notes that some of these shells are institutions, some are roles, and some are mind-sets and expectations. Whatever, these need to be acknowledged, analyzed and dealt with if we are to move on."²²

²² Loren Mead, *The Once and Future Church: Reinventing the Congregation for a New Mission Frontier* (Washington: Alban Institute, 1991), 66.

At Emmanuel, we were aware of the dwindling members in attendance at churches in general and we saw the number of churches leaving the Parent Body organizations.²³ We were fielding very probing questions being asked by our young people and we, ourselves, were questioning rigid rules and structures within the NBC USA, Inc., that seemed to stifle, rather than support ministry. We acknowledged these truths and planned how we would adjust all of our discipling programs to prevent losses and to better serve those who were still attending. The implementation of this project is our first formal evaluation of those changes. It has been, and continues to be, a great journey for all of us, young adults as well as teachers.

Project Implementation

Right out of the gate, I ran into technical difficulties as I encountered a whole new way of conducting business in Texas as opposed to New Jersey. We took possession of our new home on September 11, 2009. We made sure to set up all of our technical connections to include internet usage. We initially opted for one major tv/internet provider (who shall remain nameless to avoid lawsuits) so we could get the Yankees Entertainment System (YES) Network (to follow the Yankees, of course!) Then we discovered that the Texas way of doing business means they will give you the YES Network, but they black out all of the Yankee games! Needless to say, we switched to another major tv/internet provider (who shall also remain nameless for the same reason). Along with adjusting to new Texas business rules, I discovered that Texas is not wired

²³ Emmanuel was actually experiencing steady growth as other churches were losing members. We attributed much of that increase in attendance to the successful youth programs being offered.

for digital communication as well as the Northeast corridor...at least not my section of Houston. Let me say here that I was a systems programmer in a former life, so I am part of the new digitized generation. I love all things digital and have on occasion been called a “techno nerd.” I am not a novice; however, I was quite challenged by the Houston way of providing technical support for installing and setting up my tv/internet. To mail you equipment and expect you to set it up on your own is just wrong! Since I was the Director for Resource Management for a local military installation, I also had enough experience to get this large, national communications company to actually install and finally set up my system in January 2010. This all caused a one-month slip in my project timeline. While I was experiencing technical difficulties, other members of the LAC were making the contact with the young adults and garnering commitment to participate. Once my technical difficulties were overcome, we began our interview process in February 2010.

Of 27 eligible young adults, we had 14 students who were willing and able to participate equaling a 52% participation rate. I will explain the rationale for the admitted small sample number below. The goal was to complete two interviews per week with at least two LAC members available for each session with me. Alas, “the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.”²⁴ We managed to interview all 14 within two months, however, the slip in our start date caused a timing conflict between the project implementation and the planning and execution of the Pastor’s upcoming 40th Anniversary in March 2010. Needless to say, we didn’t always have two LAC members

²⁴ Accepted paraphrase of Robert Burns poem, *To a Mouse* (November, 1785).

present – nevertheless, we trudged on. Prior to each interview, I spoke to each participant by phone to review and ensure they understood to what they were consenting. Prior to each interview, I also secured their signed Consent Form (Appendix A), then emailed each young adult a read-ahead copy of the specific questions (Appendix B) so they could be prepared to evaluate the discipling programs, articulate the status of their faith journey, and tell us how they viewed their role in the Kingdom.

Despite weak signals, crashed PCs, dropped calls, lost emails, and missed appointments; we had some great conversations with the young adults. We documented each interview using audio tape that was later transcribed to retain a copy of the complete interview to include the LAC comments. I also had one great technical member of the LAC who documented the young adults' responses using the Mindjet software, thus, providing us alternate sources of what was actually said when we compared notes in our discussions and analysis. The Mindjet software produced a report for each individual with their responses, by question, from the interview. It wasn't until later that we discovered a reporting capability of Mindjet that would have grouped all of their responses by question. Unfortunately, we didn't discover this about the software until after we had destroyed the original files as promised to maintain confidentiality. To compensate for the lack of an anonymous repository for the data, I input the answers from the Mindjet reports into an Excel spreadsheet. (Interview Matrix with all Questions and Answers is at Appendix C.) This spreadsheet facilitated creating the proposal for the Pastor. I grouped the responses by question which facilitated comparison as well as

maintaining anonymity by precluding recognition of any particular young adult's speech protocol.

The intent was to interview the 27 young adults from Emmanuel who had participated in all of the discipling programs over the years or at least for their last years in high school. As the project began, we ran into various obstacles that prevented full participation by all of the available young adults such as loss of a family member and illness or lack of time and even lack of interest. All of the changes resulted in our final number of 14 participants in the project. Mid-way through execution during one of our after-interview LAC discussions, we began to discuss the apparent similarities of the responses being given. These discussions were interpretive and discovery as much as they were analytical. We wondered if our indoctrination had worked so well over the years that they were simply regurgitating exactly what they had been taught. One of the LAC members suggested we include someone from another church within our Seacoast Association to offer comparison. As stated previously, some of the major components of the discipling programs such as the Oratorical Contest were institutionalized through the Seacoast Association from the NBC USA, Inc. Therefore, we included one participant (included in the final count of 14) from another Seacoast church that had many similarities in the way in which they conducted their discipling programs. We discovered that the similarities in discipling produced very similar results.

At the same time that we were interviewing the young adults, I was leading the LAC in further discussions immediately following each interview. We would discuss and analyze the answers provided by each of the young adults. As we proceeded with

our discussions, I noticed that some of the LAC members were becoming more excited as we proceeded with each interview, while others seemed to lose interest and developed many conflicts in scheduling. I couldn't help but remember Jesus' parable for the Pharisees of the new wine and old wineskins:

³⁶ He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old. ³⁷ And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. ³⁸ But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. ³⁹ And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, 'The old is good.' " ²⁵

As one commentator put it, "New Testament truth cannot be bound up in the structure of the Old Testament law." ²⁶ Neither can we expect the postmodern Christian to come into a deeper relationship with the Lord if we continue to use the old structures. It appears we older folk aren't so open to change. We're used to what we've been doing, it feels comfortable, "I'm not young anymore!" or "I'm not looking for any more work!" There are very valid reasons for being set in one's ways. The key is to be able to recognize when you are in that mindset and to be able to see what impact it has on your work and those around you. Jesus told this parable early on in his preaching ministry. It was a lesson that had to be learned early...Change requires elasticity and stamina. Following Jesus is about Change. Older people are not necessarily going to be open to change, and understandably so. By the same token, however, some younger people are just as set in their ways. It is critical to the success of any discipling program to have

²⁵Luke 5:36-39 (NRSV).

²⁶*KJV Bible commentary*, 1997, c1994 (2023), Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

people who have vim, vigor and sincerity; because their walk is the model for those they are discipling.

After our analysis of the data in late April and early May, the LAC presented the Pastor and members with a formal proposal recommending changes to our roles as teachers/students in our existing programs, changes to the teaching methodology, ideas for new programs and a cyclical review to ensure the discipling programs remain relevant for each new generation. The proposal was developed from the preferred future that emerged from the young adults' narratives and the LAC's continued discussions. An excerpt is below.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

1. The existing programs here at EBC such as Sunday School, Friday Night Youth, Choir, EXcel, Oratorical Contest, Bible Bowl, Lock-In, and Summer Assembly have proven to be very affective in training our young adults to become Disciples. The favorable and effective aspect of these programs most noted by the young adults was the **freedom to speak and ask questions**. These free and open discussions are the culmination of years of "*training up a child*," enabling them to now define their own identity as an active participant in God's work in the world. It is important that they have a foundation of years of Bible stories and faith from Sunday School so they can understand their faith. Early and often attendance in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School is critical. Friday Night Youth is the key for pulling together learning and fun engagement. This methodology of fostering collective "faith seeking understanding" by guided group discussions works well in conjunction with teaching them how to articulate their faith through the Oratorical Contest.

RECOMMENDATION: These programs should continue operating in this open environment. Must emphasize Sunday School attendance as early as possible to establish a pattern. This also shows the interrelated aspect of all of the programs that requires oversight and management to ensure everyone gets the full discipling.

2. The second most noted effective aspect of training is to **engage them in something that includes physical movement, excitement, and interaction**.

To reach this postmodern generation, the Discipling Programs must be the vibrant and interesting physical activities which capture the attention of those who are being disciplined by being engaging and fun, but also relevant. In the past, the Step Team was very affective at integrating teaching, witnessing and fun, but times change, and so do taste. The Liturgical Dances have captured the interest of the young ladies and the Choir captures the rest. However, we must remain engaged with the young people to know what captures their attention now. Perhaps a Mime Team or integration of Bible software games for the gaming systems. This continuous dialogue between artistic interpretations of real life application of Biblical lessons is key to them understanding how to successfully live the Christian Life.

RECOMMENDATION: A discussion with the young adults still in the area and current high school students could be helpful in determining what would interest the young people on Friday nights now. You could solicit the ideas from the young people directly.

3. **The Leaders/Teachers of the Discipling Programs are a very critical component, in that they must have a good relationship with the students to be effective role models.** Careful selection and Formal Training for new Leaders/Teachers is critical for them to be capable as well as properly equipped to serve in this capacity. As noted, the young adults unanimously voted the most important aspect in their spiritual growth was their ability to freely discuss their faith and ask questions. They made particular note that the leader for the Young Adult class needs to be knowledgeable more than just the right age. They are looking for serious discussions and need someone who has experience and who also understands their lives now. **It is crucial that they know they are valued as young people and that the church cares about them as young people.**

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to train new teachers who are flexible and open to new ideas. Update training for teachers already in place to give them help in staying current in their positions.

PROPOSAL FOR NEW PROGRAMS

1. GRADUATE MENTORS

- a. Add this kind of **Q&A survey** of graduate students on a regular (annually or every 2 years) basis to evaluate the continued effectiveness of Emmanuel's programs and to solicit any suggested changes of the students.
- b. Set up a **Mentoring Program** for the young adults who have graduated high school. The Objective of the Mentoring Program is to pair them with an adult

who can help them talk through the tough life decisions they will be making and help keep them grounded in their faith and in their relationship with the Lord. These critical decisions made in the years immediately following graduation have the most profound impact on how the rest of their life will be lived.

- 1) Assigning mentors should occur when the young people are entering 11th grade to enable the mentor to help them with the process of successful SAT prep as well as selecting a college and a major. Pairing with the right mentor can only be effective if the personalities match and if they have an actual connecting relationship.
- 2) Have everyone get free SKYPE accounts so they can speak to one another. Face-to-face conversations are more personal and connecting and will enable them to make better, more informed choices. The visual contact allows the mentor to pick up on the non-verbal signals. It is also a more personal contact.
- 3) Have both parties commit to speaking at least once every two weeks.

2. SPECIAL ACCESSIBILITY

- a. Provide a **special email** box for the young adults to access Pastor Perkins directly so he can maintain contact with them, also.
- b. Put the **Sunday Sermon online** for everyone's viewing at their own time.

3. DISCIPLING IN RETURN

- a. Provide a time on a Friday Night during school breaks when the **college students can speak** to the high school students (11th & 12th grades) and give them pointers on where they should be headed and what they should be doing. They have valuable insight for the young people and they will still have it fresh in their minds.
- b. Allow the young adults to **try new programs** as they develop them, such as the Coffee House with Open Mic Night idea for young musicians and poets. Promoting an atmosphere of acceptance and fostering innovation in ways of teaching and worshipping will invite the young people to take an active part in ensuring the programs stay relevant and fun.

- c. Support and publicize any programs the young adults become involved in outside of Emmanuel after they graduate. **Allow them the opportunity to provide feedback to Emmanuel on their programs – how they are supporting/worshipping in another community**, i.e., Judah's program FLOS for Future Leaders of Society. Sharing this during the Worship Service shows the mission activity that results from our young adults who are going into the world and carrying out the Great Commission. Emmanuel's focus on the Great Commission is another area that has made a huge impact in their faith journey.²⁷

To change for this postmodern generation, traditional classes that sat quietly and listened to a teacher have to give way to mental and physical interaction to keep the young people's attention. Then, they have to be challenged to develop their own curiosity and desire to understand their faith and their relationship with the Lord. Classes with more dialogue/conversation enable the young people to progress from learning by rote and rhyme and move into reasoning and emotion. As we change our approach to maintain the interest of the young people, we have also adapted our relationships – where and how they take place.

Accepting the recommendations was facilitated by an almost complete turnover of the Ministerial Staff, Teaching Staff, and Deacon Board because of the closing of the nearby Army Installation, Ft. Monmouth, a major employer in Monmouth County. Our Ministerial Staff went from three down to one resulting in the one left becoming the new Assistant Pastor. Our Deacon Board went from five down to one (one moved with Ft. Monmouth, one was my husband who retired and left with me, and one had died recently of a heart attack). Our Teaching Staff was depleted by five. However, by the providence

²⁷ Recommendations excerpted from the formal proposal the LAC presented to the Pastor and members of the Emmanuel Baptist Church, Tinton Falls, New Jersey.

of God, the LAC proved to be the most stable of all of the groups and is the connecting and guiding force in implementing the recommendations with the Pastor.

As a result of all of the staff losses, we are ordaining four new Deacons this May, 2011. The remaining Minister is now ordained as the Assistant Pastor. Also, we are updating the Teacher Training program with the new focus on training the new teachers with an awareness of the subtle nuances to multi-layered relationships and their importance. The old teacher/student model is being supplemented with an emphasis on mentoring. As the new teachers are being trained, they will be taught how to foster “faith seeking understanding” while maintaining an approachable attitude that is not judgmental.

Listen, with me, to the voices of our young adults and LAC members as we review the journey that brought us to this point.

In Their Own Voice

We began each of our interview sessions by establishing how long each young adult had attended Emmanuel enabling us to determine how much of the discipling they had experienced at Emmanuel, at another church, or not at all. Our pool of respondents may appear to be very small, but this is a very specific study with a targeted audience. Given the size of Emmanuel and the number of young people who have participated in these programs, 14 of 27 who agreed to be interviewed are a fair representation at 52%. This even extends to the one participant who came from a church with which Emmanuel has close ties. The ones who chose not to participate in the project, also generally did not participate in the activities of the church. This may appear to omit an important segment

of the population; however, they would not have an impact on the outcome since we are focusing on the effectiveness of the existing discipling programs and how they affected the young adults.

Of the 14 who did participate, half of them have been in church at Emmanuel, or a similar church, all of their life. Of the 14, all have had at least five years of attendance, meaning they have all had benefit of all of Emmanuel's Discipling Programs at least during their high school years.

<u>YEARS AT EMMANUEL</u>	<u>PARTICIPANTS</u>
5 YEARS	5
10 YEARS	2
ALL MY LIFE	7

Figure 8. Years of attendance and participation in Discipling Programs at Emmanuel.

Just as expected when employing the Narrative Research Methodology Appreciative Inquiry with a group for the first time, initially the young people responded with the answers they thought we wanted. They were acting according to the rules of group behavior which had been established over the years using the words and ideas we had taught them. As each discussion progressed, they opened up and began to share their honest thoughts and opinions. As we questioned them further, urging them to evaluate what they had told us, they became more revealing and even analytical of their own thoughts and actions. While they were using the words and ideas we had taught them, it became obvious that they had, indeed, appropriated the principles and concepts as their own; and they had, in fact, learned to articulate their own faith.

We began each interview with an overview of the overall project. I also reviewed the Narrative Research Methodology of Appreciative Inquiry in enough depth so they would understand what we were doing collectively. As a group, we were looking back over our experiences and programs with an appreciative eye for the positive and productive pieces so we could determine our preferred future together. Then, we began to question the young adults about the specifics of their faith journey. Q1a. “Given your many years at Emmanuel, what is the best memory you have?” We followed up with Q1b. “What made it a good time? Who was involved? What did you do? How did it make you feel?” Their responses, which are grouped by category but list individual responses by select young adults, are as follows:

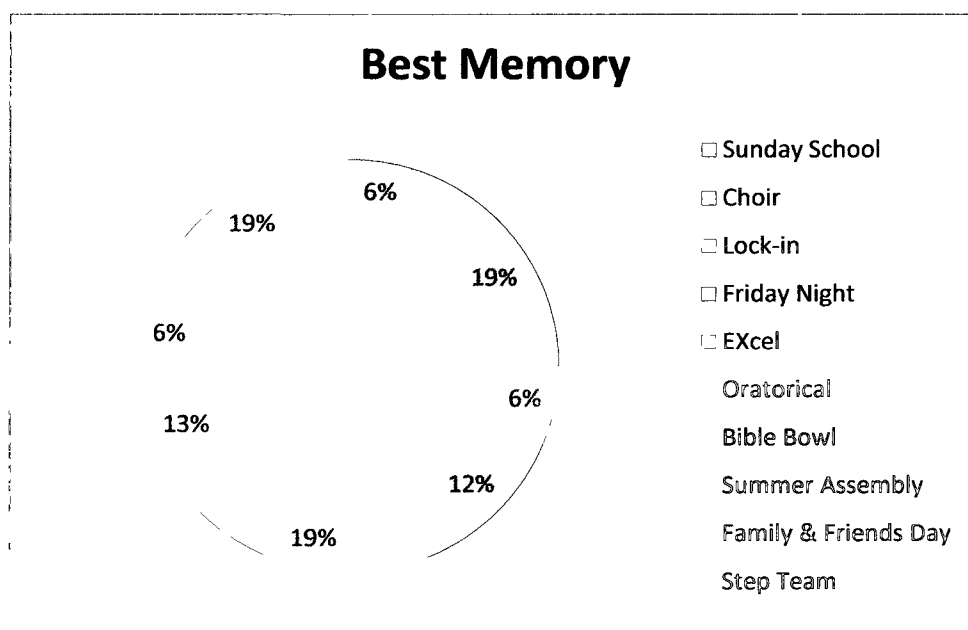


Figure 9. Choir, Oratorical Contest, and Step Team evoked the best memories at EBC.

Choir

When we had a really good practice and everybody was singing, was sweating...that's one of the best times. Everybody is all into it. That's one of the best times. That's when everybody was close.

I had two, the other was the choir. We would sing and it would be fun. You learned stuff...Scripture in song.

Oratorical Contest

We got to work with others. Rev. Perkins really showed us how to do the Oratorical. It was my first time speaking out like that. It gave me more confidence to speak in public.

When I won the Oratorical Contest my senior year, it was something I had worked hard on for 4 years. I really practiced! I was able to present it and illustrate it so the body of believers could understand. I was more exposed with Rev. Perkins, Rev. Williams, Deac. Williams – everyone was helping me. I felt a sense of accomplishment.

Was a process that involved the whole church and taught how to handle being in front of people.

Step Team

The Step Team. It gave me a chance to interact in church that I never knew was possible. I had seen it at college [Stepping] but didn't know this could happen at church.

You are surrounded by a lot of young people. When we were at church there were a lot of young kids. There were young kids my age to learn with.

Step Team was my favorite. We got to travel and we were ministering outside the church. We were in service but not in church.

Their responses had key elements that show the young people's love of camaraderie and fun, as well as a sense of accomplishment and confidence. There was also recognition that the young people made a distinction between traditional church – the old way – and infusing their ministering experience with fun, movement, music, excitement. It also exhibited the importance of who was involved in the program, because that individual modeled behavior they appreciated and to which they could relate.

That was one thing that I enjoyed about Summer Assembly. That was one of the best experiences that I ever experienced to me. It was mostly because I could get together with people my age, my peers and not have to feel like I felt in school where there were different people and different religions, different mind sets, different beliefs and things like that. But for all of us to get together and because we are the same age, we could just fellowship together and be comfortable with each other. Comfortable enough to shout, to sing, to pray, to do whatever we wanted to do and feel it and not feel ashamed of it later on...or feel shy because we did it in front of somebody else. It was one of the most exhilarating experiences I've ever had and I really enjoyed fellowshiping with people that I can feel comfortable around. Comfortable enough to open up and not feel like somebody's watching me or somebody's judging me.

We probed further about their relationship with Emmanuel by asking Q2a. "What do you value most about Emmanuel? Why?" Again, their responses revealed that relationship and trust was the most compelling aspect of their attendance and participation. Two things stood out quite prominently: 1) the feeling of family, of belonging; and 2) the genuine caring and compassion of the elders for the young people.

Feeling of Family

It's kind of like a big extended family. My whole family goes to Emmanuel but I also have a big extended family that I'm always counting on...It's a big help.

I value how there is a family atmosphere. Some churches you can't even go up and say hi to people because they're like all fake. Everybody knows each other. It's not such a big church that you only know 5 people in the whole church.

The friendships and the families... everybody was so close and everybody looked out for each other, everybody knew each other. Just like the love that was there.

Relationships with others that you can trust. Honest people. People that won't put you down.

Care and Compassion

Respect adults as well as children and vice versa. Accessible to talk.

I would say it's the way you guys treat the youth. It's like absolutely phenomenal. It's like growing up. You guys fill in for things a lot for parents in certain things. Emmanuel does it through fellowship; they have events for the children. I just love the fact that when it comes to Emmanuel Baptist, the youth usually comes first. Well...God comes first, then the youth are priority.

They are very involved with the young people. Many different activities. They mold us into who we should be.

In their recounting, the young people let us know that what was most important to them was that we cared *about* them as well as cared *for* them as displayed by their answers to question Q2b. "What activity do you believe best conveys that about Emmanuel to people?"

How you pick up the kids for Sunday school. If you're doing activities, you'll get a ride, you don't have to worry about that. Everybody is just friendly and always in your business.

Family and Friends Day - you see people you don't see every day. Family and friends are what I value the most.

When we concentrate on the young people. Teaching this generation is important so we can pass on to the next generation.

When we go out and worship with other churches. We have a sense of who each other is. Even if I come in and out of church, everyone still knows me.

Every Sunday Rev. Harrington has us "stretch out in the Spirit." We stretch to God and stretch to one another. We hug a neighbor, we hug ourselves, we go around and hug 3 people who we haven't met before. Makes me not so scared to approach people. Just welcomed in. Made a part of the family.

These connecting, compassionate qualities were not only important to the young people, but they are also important to the adults at Emmanuel as evidenced by the discipling programs, themselves, as well as everything that Emmanuel did. All was done with a purpose. As we return to the narratives of the young adults, we see that they had, indeed, appropriated the message of the Gospel and the Great Commission for themselves. Also, in that appropriation, they had begun a translation for themselves that, in turn, enables and uniquely qualifies them to reach the current generation.

With Lifted Voices

As we questioned the young adults about their preferences in worship style, we probed for specifics such as Q3a, "Which part of the Worship Service connects you most

to God?" Five connected most through Altar Prayer because of the mystery and awe of the connection with God:

...when we all join hands and pray for each other out loud. Feel the aura; faith together, believing together.

... because everyone is touching, agreeing and holding hands. You can feel the energy in between everyone.

... We all come together in prayer as one. Asking God to help others helps me feel good. Speaking to God, knowing He will answer my prayers.

Two and one half named the Sermon as the connecting factor citing the reaching and teaching effect:

I love music but after going to Summer Assembly, the words started making sense to me. I started to see how God was blessing me.

Rev. Perkins' preaching I connect most with. He has a gift to capture the young kids' attention; especially when he calls your name out. He makes sure you are involved in the service.

The singing and the preaching. The singing helps you praise Him in your own way. The preaching helps teach you things you didn't know.

The most engaging portion of service appears to be through the music, specifically singing. In this participatory act, coupled with the interaction between God and the rest of the Body in the act of worship, some are taught, others ministered to, and still others experience the joy of corporate, outward praise. Seven are most moved by the music.

The singing part. Because when I learn something, I have to hear it, even in school. So I'm singing, I learn scriptures that way. I'm not really good at memorizing...I know scriptures through song.

Anything to do with singing. That's just my way of worship is through song.

I like the songs. The singing and doing worship. Some songs are touching, you feel the connection. Sometimes what the Pastor says doesn't always get you but I feel like music always brings you back. Makes you think and brings you to that point.

Just the general praise and worship. I love when the choir sings. I love the prayer to do. I like that we are a collective effort

It is no wonder that the maintenance of their faith walk in their current places has made its connection strongest through music because of their long connection with music at Emmanuel. Music is a great connector for all generations.

Roz: Hey ..., this is Rosalind. You have such a strong personality and you're such a leader here at Emmanuel, do you find that, I know your personality translates just so well, probably anywhere you'll go, do you find people are following you more or did you kind of start out at college and didn't know where to go and you were following someone who was Christian mentor, somebody you met there? Give me an idea of how you started off once you got to college and how you kept your Christian walk going.

Young Adult: When I got to college, my roommate blasted gospel music at 6:00 in the morning while she got dressed. We both would just have Church and we would actually hold Church service in our room on Wednesday and people would come from our dorm. They'd pack in our little room and we would have Church. That too helped me to develop into everything. We'd read the Bible and we would pray for our friends together. She was the one that really helped me because when I first got here, I was quiet. ... She was the one who definitely helped me.

Marsha: Was she a freshman also?

- Young Adult: Yes, she was a freshman also.
- Marsha: So God placed you two together.....ok. Is there anything that you would like to add understanding disciples, people who have been disciplined become disciples...you all are becoming disciples. It sounds like you've stepped into your role and have done a very fine job of it so far. You're just maturing right along in getting your support from your Aunt Patty, family and everybody else. That's a great thing. That's a wonderful thing. So we're thanking God for that. I thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to be interviewed. ...

The narratives surrounding the connecting qualities of the Worship Service were just as poignant for the LAC as for the young adults being interviewed. A lively discussion centered on the order of service ensued as we “remembered times gone by...” and all of the angst experienced as we made changes back then. There truly is nothing new under the sun!²⁸

- Roz: ... my Dad's theory was that the service should flow and then announcements afterwards. Then his thought was offering shouldn't even be part of the service. Offering should be done either before church or after church. I used to love that when we would go....we would have the full service, like we're doing now, offering, announcements, everything and the last thing that was done was sermon and then we would leave.
- Marsha: ... Well, we still do that.
- Ella: The sermon is the last thing we do, and after the sermon you have to have Invitation.
- Roz: That is true.
- Marsha: That was one of the things that Pastor was very adamant about and I think is true too. When your father was talking about those

²⁸ Eccl 1:9, NRSV.

things, I think...and I've seen here, too...when offering is put in the proper perspective it is a part of the worship. And it's just how people react to it. But as far as changing, it's interesting that all the kids said that they wouldn't change anything.

Roz: They wouldn't change a thing.

Marsha: They wouldn't change anything and that's one of the things...I've been reading this book, *Flickering Pixels*²⁹ and one of the things I was looking for was how to move this into their realm now which is in the digital.....you know they Tweet, they're on Facebook, 24/7 the whole thing but they are also the generation that wants that mystery. They're looking for those old religions because there's mystery there. Well, you know what I realized, that in all of the different things that I'm seeing and I'm hearing...the medium may change but the message is the important thing. And that's it. You know what, you just "come see a man who knows all about you, loves you anyway, and did everything for you." And that's the message. What I'm seeing now is, if we prepare our kids, they will be the disciples. Because they can't help it, that's what they were taught and that's what comes out of their mouth. They're going to be placed into situations where they have the opportunity to be disciplers and they will, because they have it in them. They just respond in kind. When I was looking at how to connect them...because my original part was to work on the youth to make them understand they need to become the disciplers now... they've already made that transition and it's like "Ok God, you're right." You'll put them in the right position where they can do all the things that you want them to do because they've been trained.

More of Their Voices

After establishing their history by finding out how long they had attended

Emmanuel and their best memory, we asked the young adults to provide their evaluation

²⁹ Shane Hipps, *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2009).

of what they had received as discipleship training. Articulation/interpretation of one's faith is a critically, important part of the discipling process. It is evidence of the appropriation of an idea or belief. Recitation, while not evidence of appropriation, does play a role in the discipling process. We are implored by the Word of God to "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have."³⁰ The evidence of self-appropriation became apparent as the interview questions became more personal. We transitioned from what had been instrumental in their growth in the past to what they currently desired; we asked Q3b "What else could we do to make the Worship more meaningful for you? How?" Some were very thoughtful and forward thinking in their answers. There was recognition that maturation was required and that it must be individually experienced, but also understanding that the corporate worship must be cognizant of the intergenerational needs of the congregation...especially the young people. They offered ways to incorporate the young people in the service more, or even pattern a service just geared toward them.

Feel the congregation needs to get more involved. Sometimes I think people are ashamed of how they react in church. The kids at Emmanuel seemed inhibited. Every time I went to Summer Assembly, it opened my eyes how youth were free to express their love for the Lord. At Emmanuel, some kids seemed too cool to do that. If I had seen that was acceptable at Emmanuel I probably would have done it more. Need to engage that back into the church.

You can't; must do that for yourself.

More modern gospel (contemporary).

³⁰ 1 Pet 3:15, NIV.

It's always been something that I don't think anybody can say or add anything to make it any better so it's all about the individual mind and how you feel. You can't please everyone.

I think a lot of the reasons that you have the teens sitting in the corners is because they feel like aside from singing then...it's directed towards the adults who understand more. I think the sermon can be more connected towards the teenagers and the young adults... I think the 3rd Sunday is when the young people are most connected but we should try having them become more involved and not just 3rd Sunday.

I don't think you really have to do like making it more meaningful, I think it's when you get more mature you understand more aspects of the service. When you're younger you don't want any part of the sermon. But as you get older you understand that's important to you.

Maybe have the youth do the devotion. Maybe once a month. When young people see other young people - more likely to participate. Young people need to see others modeling what they do.

I think, sometimes, we are so caught up with being robotic and staying with the schedule, we should be a little less rigid. Allow the Holy Spirit to work more.

Incorporate a more array of music that everyone can feel. I attend a service where they have a Jubilee Choir - keeps the old Negro spiritual alive. You hear the songs and can think back to how our ancestors worshipped without instruments.

It should be noted that the most moving aspect of the Best Memory for the young adults was centered on feelings of *communitas* in worship. Alan Hirsch says

*"communitas...happens in situations where individuals are driven to find each other through a common experience or ordeal, humbling, transition, and marginalization."*³¹

The sense of shared experience as a family, because of the love of God in Christ Jesus, is noted as a foundational characteristic of Emmanuel. It is something known throughout

³¹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 221.

the congregation and the congregation is known as such in the surrounding community. This shared sense of mission is also one of the shared values as depicted in the McKinsey 7-S Model analysis of Emmanuel. It is demonstrated in the projects the young adults are working on in their communities.

In my own apartment when my friends are over Sunday's I like to have praise and worship time. I put on my Gospel music which they like. I quote Scripture to them. I have the Bible on my phone.

My friends think I'm the resident preacher or something because they always come to me about something or another. So I'm like the advice giver when they're down and they don't know where else to go. Somehow they get my number.

The people that I'm around are all on the same spiritual ground. We pray together, we pray for each other. We go to church other.

It is evidence of what impacted them most as they were being disciplined.

The heart of this project was to review the existing programs to discover what was effective in discipling the young adults and to look for possible changes to make them more effective in this postmodern society. What we discovered was the most enduring qualities are open and honest dialogue. Q4. asked, Of all of the discipleship training you received in Sunday School, Friday Night Youth Activities, EBC Excel, Youth Choir, Step Team, Jr. Missionaries/Laymen, etc. which was most effective in teaching you about your relationship with the Lord? The existing programs here at EBC such as Sunday School, Friday Night Youth, Choir, EXcel, Oratorical Contest, Bible Bowl, Lock-In, and Summer Assembly have apparently proven to be very affective in training our young adults to

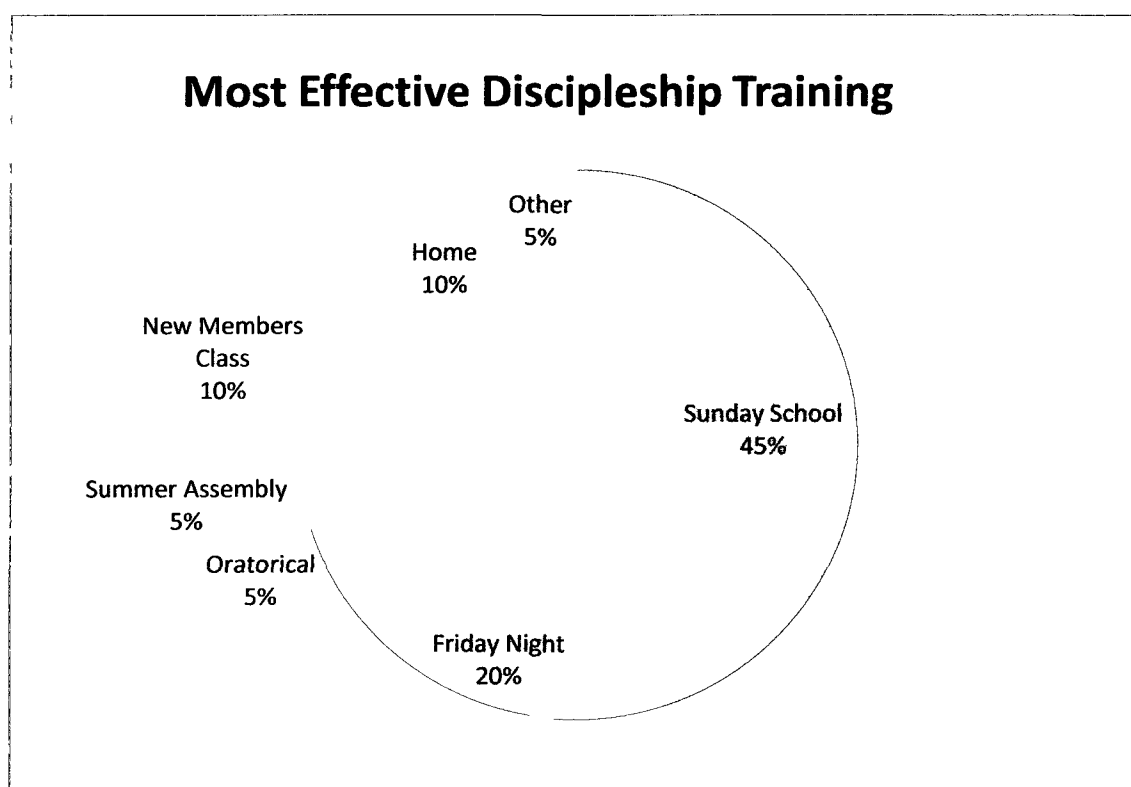


Figure 10. Sunday School was most effective because the teacher encouraged discussion.

become disciples. The favorable and affective aspect of these programs most noted by the young adults was the freedom to speak and ask questions. These free and open discussions are the culmination of years of “*training up a child*,”³² enabling them to now define their own identity as an active participant in God’s work in the world. This methodology of fostering collective “faith seeking understanding” by guided group discussions works well in conjunction with teaching them to articulate their faith through venues such as the Oratorical Contest and the Step Team. The young adults recommend

³² Prov 22:6

these programs continue operating in this open and encouraging environment.

Surprisingly, Sunday School remains the most impacting program. As you'll see, it is because it provides a forum for real and open discussion where they can get answers about God, Kingdom Living and anything else they can dare to ask. It is always Bible based and follows the leading of God's Holy Spirit.

Sunday School classes.

It was a huge part. Some classes are strictly Scripture reading and they teach you a lesson. I like when the teacher would ask us a question and we'd all talk about our views on whatever topic. I learned so much more from my peers and the teacher at the same time.

We can ask questions and not just be shut down immediately like "no, that's not the way it is." I mean we're asking questions we're obviously curious on why and how. I just kind of felt like I wasn't really brought up to ask certain questions. Not even because of religion, even in my own family background usually things were the way they were and you just had to accept it and there was no asking questions. So I never felt that I had freedom to ask a lot of things until now.

When I did go to Sunday School I would reflect afterwards about my relationship with God.

Sunday School. When I came to college - being able to teach a Bible study class for kindergarten's to High School age kids. When I started going to college, that's when I realized how important my relationship was. I've been blessed with everything.

Sunday School and sometimes when we would have Youth on Friday night. We used to ask questions; we could be ourselves and talk about stuff. Eddie Lee was teaching the class. He was telling some story. I was listening to what he was saying. Then it was in the sermon. It was very touching. I joined church that Sunday.

I really liked Ms. Hatton...was a really good Sunday School teacher. She was definitely always in your business but it was in a good way.

Together with Friday Night Youth. Teachers really want us to get into the Word; let us talk, convey feelings. Made lesson specific to us. You can ask questions and don't get ridiculed. They were open, you could ask anything.

I had Sis. Hatton as a teacher. I had a real cool class. You could talk about anything. Everybody would talk. We learned. The lesson would be applied to our lives.

When we approached the young adults about their own faith walk and their relationship with God, we received varying degrees of responses but all were highly impacted by the question. It seemed as if each had an epiphany as they stepped back for a moment for this project to assess what they actually were doing. Q5 Since you are on your own and/or are at College, what have you done to maintain your relationship with the Lord? How? Why?

I go to Chapel. When I don't have time, I have a daily lesson from T.D. Jakes book.

I try to pray every morning. I walk every morning and talk to God. I go to Chapel (not crazy about it) they have people in the pulpit that aren't really ordained. Sometimes I go to the church down street. I'm not active in the church but I try to go. I need to work on my prayer life. I ask God to allow me to work in my purpose. Pray that He orders my steps.

My relationship is becoming closer than before; I've learned to face my problems. I've learned to better myself in becoming a better person and not being that person that I once was. I have learned that that's not who He wants me to be. As far as the person I used to be. I have most importantly learned to pray more and trust. I have to work on reading my Bible daily.

I believe I stepped it up when I got alone. Since I've been in college I've been in three community service faith-based organizations. I've also attended Church every Sunday, I've cheated for awhile but I'm back now...for two months every Sunday. I've joined a couple choirs; I've joined a couple Bible studies. Basically just staying in the swing also a couple of my friends we're starting a faith based organization called FLOS. That will

be my number one accomplishment that I can say that God this is for you when we get that up and running.

Marsha: What is FLOS?

YA: FLOS stands for “Future Leaders of Society.” In the community we are, I’m in Columbia, South Carolina, they have some of the worse schooling districts here and we see the need in our own surroundings around the college ... kids act up and they don’t have a lot of parents home so they don’t have the right influences on their life. We thought we should get together and do something so we started developing this program, Future Leaders of Society. Whatever the school wants us to do, we do... Whatever the community needs us to do, we’ll be there...so we could do like motivational speaking, power point, whatever.

Marsha: Can I get a collective Hallelujah from the group?

The LAC was excited and offered to help with grant writing, software support, whatever they needed. The LAC responses were very positive; and, yes, there was surprise. The optimism displayed by these young adults is something that is a part of the postmodern nature, according to Christian Smith and Patricia Snell, who authored *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*.

The 230 emerging adults who were interviewed are as a group some of the most optimistic people we have ever encountered or listened to – at least when it comes to their own personal lives and futures. For the most part, their eyes are firmly set on the future, and they look to it with great hope and confidence. Some are beset by trepidation or despondency about what awaits them in their lives. But these are not many. Rather, for most, their hopes run high, their expected prospects are bright, good things are anticipated. If “reality” at some point settles in as people come to terms with the hard facts of their own limitation, misfortunes, and failures, it has not settled in for most of America’s 18- to 23-year-old emerging adults.³³

³³ Christian Smith with Patricia Snell, *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (Oxford: University Press, 2009), location 623, Kindle e-book.

As we continued our discussions and they began to talk about what programs we have and what needs to change, they became very specific and very inventive. Q10a If you could create a discipling program that would attract your friends, what would it look like? All of the responses involved vibrant and interesting activities that captures ones attention and keep them engaged in fun while being relevant.

Something along the line of a Sociology Class. We could be open and talk about topics.

The programs at Emmanuel are good. Just a matter of connecting with the programs. We need to make them want to come every Friday. Have activities for them – bowling, ice skating rink. Just anything to get the kids interested. Need Laymen to reach out to the young men a little more. In comparison to the Missionaries –they have daughters – the Laymen should be a mentor to the Junior Laymen; keep them on the right track. Be a father to them or a role model they can talk to. Have the Laymen be there for the young men.

Faith-based game park; play games. Faith is not a game. Games would attract kids to come. Have a theme park day with the theme being God.

The young people of today need to be activity based...It's more effective when you have activity and dialogue. They need to be able to express their ideas (basketball, football). Some way to incorporate the Word. Need to be active and have the ability of dialogue.

I've thought about this before...it would be like a Christian fellowship music jam session amongst Christian musicians, like whoever wants to come just come and do fellowship and minister and get together. Open mic, poetry, storytelling. Like a coffee house.

With younger people you always have to have a gimmick, especially when you're trying to get them to come to Church. Either some type of singing or something that would hold their interest...there should be some type of activity (like Vacation Bible School) for them just so you can get their interest and hold it. Just sitting there and listening to somebody, I'm just like in another world sometimes. But when I'm physically asked to do something or have to engage in a conversation and it's not just left to one person to

talk...that's more engaging for young people because they get distracted too quick.

I thought everybody's on to this thing it's called FormSpring and everybody is on it at Facebook. You can ask Christian questions. Ask other Christians questions. Just answer anonymous. An opportunity to ask questions and get answers when you need it. So we can ask questions and someone who knows can answer.

I would do a community service program. Because one of the most important things that Jesus did was helping people. I would try to serve other people. Helping the elderly or the underserved. It doesn't matter the religion - just to help people. If you can get people in, God will do the rest. I like debutante and cotillion programs. They help you improve. God expects us to plant the seed. He holds us accountable. Personal Development programs.

It would have to be, of course, the Bible would need to be taught. Bible Study might scare someone. A social gathering (food must be there) - whatever you have on your mind we can talk about. A social gathering first, then ease in the Word.

Use the Praise and Worship; Dance team to attract people. At the end (last 1/2 hour) I would start talking about the Bible. Even at Choir practice, Step Team. I think that would help.

Friday Night Youth Group. We should go out and find more youth. Invite other churches would be good.

All of their creative ideas have been adapted to specific improvements to the existing programs and put forth in our formal proposal to Emmanuel's Pastor and congregation. Along with the infusion of more fun and activity within the existing programs, the most impacting proposal is in connecting the young adults with a mentor. Connecting is one of the most important factors in everything that is done with the postmoderns. There must be an authentic relationship. They have seen something they know, they like and they believe it could be helpful. The one-on-one relationship is something that they saw modeled within the Missionary Circle at Emmanuel. The young

men discussed a desire to have support supplied for the young men along the lines of the support being provided to the young ladies.

- Dea. Anderson: Ayden, remember we had lunch with you and Daryl, both you and Daryl were expressing perhaps the need for the Layman to reach out to the young men a little more. Do you want to talk a little bit about that might be interesting to share that.
- Young Adult: I look at most teens, missionaries and stuff like that, they have daughters and mothers. I think the Layman should have that also... actually one of the Laymen being a mentor to the Jr. Laymen. ...keep them on the right track. Like be their father for them. Like be a role model that they never had.
- Roz: I hear what you're saying because in one perspective it's nice to have a dad at home, sometimes it's really cool to have someone who's older but more like a brother than an authoritarian father figure, almost a big brother. Somebody who you can talk to and even as a family member, Church member, I would feel comfortable in having them go and talk to this person. That's a really good idea. I have my own plans and things I want to do with the young people ... they're the key to breaking a lot of these curses that are going on in our country now and I think you've hit right on here. We really need to let them know, Hey..., There's no limit, no judgment here. I'm here for you.
- Young Adult: Like the same thing that the women did. Take care of your daughters. Like my mom, when Linda is going through something, my mom would do something for her. Anything...anywhere, my mom would be there for that.
- Marsha: That's a good thing to take note of and I do know that the young men were voicing their desire to have something like that when we did our spa day. Having something that the older men can do with the younger guys, the younger men will learn from them. When they made those chairs, Deacon Anderson that was a great thing. That was awesome. Teach them how to use the power tools and stuff like that. But at the same time recognizing that when they get older they need somebody to talk to. That's a good thing.

Ella: To keep it short, somebody did that for me. So all I'm doing is passing it on and I'm glad to see that feeling to have that kind of support because we'll just do it.

The mentoring would have most benefit if begun in the early high school grades and continued into their college years. Having someone who will model the discipling via a close relationship should foster confidence and better decision making. The relationship requires a face-to-face meeting via SKYPE at least once every two weeks. After seeing the benefit and the effects of meeting with the young adults during the interviews, there is an expectant air of enthusiasm regarding the future of the mentoring program. The young adults also became excited at the prospect of coming back to speak to the young people on specified Friday Youth Nights. It appears that knowing that the leaders were genuinely interested in what the young adults were thinking and that their opinions were valued had a far-reaching impact. Affirmation that they had "gotten it right" was as exciting to the young adults as it was for members of the LAC. This evaluative process provided valuable feedback that reassures the young adults and ensures the best quality programs are being continued at Emmanuel as well as strengthens the intergenerational connection. It also ensures that the programs the young adults start in their respective schools and communities can be led and supported with the right guidance.

I just want them to be aware of what's going on in society and where they need to be. I don't want to pose the expression "oh, you want to go to heaven or hell" just get them to see our way of Jesus Christ or the Lord. There's certain information you don't know. People will go different ways depending upon the type of facts, information that you're able to present to

them so I go more so on facts than just my own personal opinion. That's just in anything.

Roz: Hey Joan, this is Rosalind. You have such a strong personality and you're such a leader here at Emmanuel, do you find that, I know your personality translates just so well, probably anywhere you'll go, do you find people are following you more or did you kind of start out at college and didn't know where to go and you were following someone who was Christian mentor, somebody you met there? Give me an idea of how you started off once you got to college and how you kept your Christian walk going.

Young Adult: When I got to college, my roommate blasted gospel music at 6:00 in the morning while she got dressed. We both would just have Church and we would actually hold Church service in our room on Wednesday and people would come from our dorm. They'd pack in our little room and we would have Church. That too helped me to develop into everything. We'd read the Bible and we would pray for our friends together. She was the one that really helped me because when I first got here, I was quite. She was the one who definitely helped me.

Marsha: Was she a freshman also?

Young Adult: Yes, she was a freshman also.

Marsha: So God placed you two together.

The evidence of God's Holy Spirit working in and through these young adults has impacted the LAC as well as the young adults, themselves. As I stated earlier, the very act of discussing the intentional faith walk has infused the current worship services with a fresh wind.

The LAC members and I recognized the breakthrough we made in tearing down the wall between teacher and student in our narrative sessions. We were able to get their evaluation about what had been good in the past in light of what we were doing right

now. By enabling a free dialogue in the classrooms with room for honest criticism and disagreement as well as frank suggestions and unique desires, we had trained out young adults to listen, evaluate, appropriate, and then regurgitate each Kingdom principle. Our mindset, as the disciplers who are teaching these young people, is critical to their successful appropriation of the Gospel message with the intent of becoming carriers of that message in the future as a discipler. Note the conversation held by some of the teachers as we waited for yet another technical glitch to rectify itself before our scheduled interview. As an aside, the use of technology in this project is also an integral part of this project because it is an example of how much we rely on technology as well as how far-reaching the impact is. I would not have been able to conduct this project without the use of peer-to-peer technology, the conference calling, taping, transcribing. I relied heavily on the software of the day to solve all of my requirements for storage, interpretation, transcription, and other aspects of my data collection and storage.

A Teacher's Perspective

Evette: Sometimes, you try to allow them [to speak freely] because it's a social opportunity on one hand...but you try to keep the focus. Try to take whatever they're talking about that's important to them and incorporate it into the lesson. So sometimes you don't know if they got it. You don't know if they really understood the scriptural association with how everything that you're encountering is applicable to principles in the Scripture as your sourceyou really want to get an idea to what and how you should be....you can always go back to the Word because it's always appropriate even though most people tend to want to rule it out. Young people anyway want to say that it doesn't apply. That was somewhat encouraging but on the other hand, she said that having her active or opportunities that were fun are good... but you want to ensure they have the message behind them and they can incorporate it into

their daily interactions with reality.

Roz: Evette, I agree with you because it was really good to hear her talk about things she liked. If I was asked those questions twenty five years ago I probably would have said Sunday School, also. Because I had a great Sunday School teacher who made it fun and who made it interesting and it was a lot of fun to go to class.

Evette: Right. Well you know now it's almost like it's a social opportunity too because even though they don't all go to the same school, even though they sometimes socialize after school... you know you have to keep it focused. I loved the fact that she said doing or almost like making the Sunday school, the sitting Ministry, interactive where they did stuff... that solidifies the intent of the message.

Roz: Right. And I think this generation is very perceptive, I want to say. I think they've been so exposed to stuff so early that they get it, they get it quickly. And sensory wise, they get it by seeing it, by hearing it, by experiencing it. They've just been grown from babies. I can remember a time when I had no TV. *(laughter from group)* So for me, I kind of grew into.....I can remember when the internet started or when I first got internet access. These kids have grown into this. That's common for them. It's common to have cable. Some of these kids have come into having cell phones and mobile devices and microwaves. The instantaneous idea of "I can get it now" that's what they're used to. She is a great example ...she's more of a social person. Now if you asked me now the same questions, when you asked the question about Church on line? I'm like, yeah I would kind of like church online, but I would miss that social interaction.

“...one cannot lead without first becoming a meaningful participant in the common life. Such participation can be developed by involvement in the conversation and sharing the Story through the act of listening within specific cultural context.”³⁴ As we continued to share the narratives of growth at Emmanuel, the LAC – as the elders and

³⁴ William Presnell and Carl Savage, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern/Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 139.

teachers doing the discipling –reclaimed our eagerness for “faith seeking understanding:” not for ourselves only, but for our young protégé’s as well. This enabled us to begin to shape and mold our preferred future together as we developed our proposal for the Pastor.

Post-Project

The Pastor and Laymen are now working closely with two young men in particular who have recently graduated college. The Pastor is using these young men to reach the young people who are still active in the church. The young men are being incorporated in the training for Friday Youth Night. It is anticipated that their close proximity in age to the young people they are teaching will enable the young people to be more receptive to the guidance and training they provide. The relationship the young men had as fellow students is now changed as they become the teachers and trainers – the disciples. This has already yielded favorable results from adults, the young adults as well as the young people. Most everyone’s mindset is now focused on intentional discipling, resulting in a new way of relating. We now disciple at the track meets, at choir rehearsal, and during Youth Night as the Bible instructs us to “teach them diligently... when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up.”³⁵ We have adapted the purposes for which we gather – specifically to disciple, to worship, or just for fun. These kinds of changes are a part of the ongoing, cyclical reincarnation of the love of God in Christ Jesus as the church carries out the Great Commission, adapting

³⁵ Deut 6:7 (NKJV).

to each new generation. The mission of the church remains the same; however, the changes have never seemed to be as radical as they seem in today's postmodern society.

I said most everyone's mindset has changed, because there is still some resistance to change. Emmanuel is hierarchical in its structure and operation. As a result of the project, we are now exploring new roles and new relationships. We now recognize that the flow of information and learning must be multi-directional in that it reaches up, down and across roles and positions. Fostering intergenerational relationships that show mutual respect and appreciation is now a key goal to be implemented with a mentoring program. These two young men and how they handle their new roles are a critical test of how we, as a Body of Believers, will be able to adjust to our postmodern changes.

The Pastor is reinforcing the support provided to our young adults in college, especially as it relates to their continued mission work in their local communities. The current support such as Care Packages will now be supplemented with ministry support as well. The young adults' narratives opened our eyes to their ongoing work of discipling and uncovered a need to provide guidance and even monetary support. The Pastor is expanding the young adults' roles in the services and programs when they return home for Spring Break and other holidays. He is also actively soliciting their stories of their current mission work for incorporation in the church's newsletter. This is another vehicle used to maintain communication with the Emmanuel Diaspora throughout the world. The transient nature of Ft. Monmouth employees has caused Emmanuel to launch many disciples throughout the world over the years. Articles about our young adults which

show the fruit of their labor inspire and inform others, and also help us all to learn to see one another through our new eyes.

The Pastor is also working with the local college students to provide them with a venue for their postmodern discipling ideas. One of the local young women is ready to explore ways of infusing even more technology in the Friday Youth Night experience coupled with intense physical activities and competition. She is another graduate who is transitioning from the disciplined to the discipler. One young man is developing his idea for an Open Mic Night for the local musicians and poets. These new ideas are also being supported by the Laymen of the church. As part of the turnover, there are now quite a few new members. All are excited about the new direction and proposed recommendations. They are also excited to work with the young adults in implementing the new ideas. Recognizing what an impact they can have on their lives, they have made themselves available for whatever the young adults want to try. They are fully cognizant of the critical impact their intergenerational relationships have on these young people's lives and their own.

The Pastor is working with the elders to make changes so our existing programs will transition our young people to be assigned a Mentor who will track with them from 11th grade through graduation from College. This will foster a long-term one-on-one relationship with one person, particularly suited for a particular child. If commitments are made to speak face-to-face (with SKYPE or another digital connection) to one another on a regular basis providing the theological sounding board for molding their lives at a most critical time, they will be most effective. The Pastor is satisfied that the

young adults are already availing themselves of a direct connection to him by phone and email, but he also recognizes that each young adult needs someone specifically assigned to them who can lead and guide them from PSAT prep through college graduation. This remains a work in progress.

CHAPTER 4

GO YE. . .

¹⁸ ... All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matt 28:18-20

Structuralist Evaluation

I am using the Structuralist Approach to evaluate the transformation of the young adult participants, the LAC members and myself brought about by the implementation of this project. The Structuralist Approach in Narrative Research Methodology looks for

...unconscious patterns that may shape the context. This may have remained unobserved during the development phases of the project, when narratives were being listened to and a project was being proposed, only to come to the fore as resistive elements to the changing of the story of the future of the context, team or researcher. The post-project structure may instead be an emerging structure. New patterns arise to replace old one, new textures are applied to old patterns. By examining these, one can gain a renewed sense of the identity of the context as it exists and perhaps gain insight toward unforeseen barriers to the emergence of a preferred story.¹

¹ William Presnell and Carl Savage, *Narrative Research in Ministry*, 129.

As I stated at the beginning, the purpose of the project was to review Emmanuel's discipling programs for effectiveness in producing disciples and becoming attractive to postmoderns. What we ended with was far from that original focus. I initially chose the Structuralist Approach during our Methods class because I anticipated changes to our hierarchical structure, resistance to that change, as well as resistance to accepting recommendations from young adults. However, I also anticipated a change of heart and changed minds. My anticipated and hoped for outcome became "to foster new relationships and new roles for the elders, young adults and youth." I really hoped that we could come to a new plane of relating. Some call it living as Kingdom citizens. As we move into the Structuralist Evaluation, let me review some other relevant research concerning how we, modernist thinkers, interact with and are affected by the postmodern mindset.

In his book, *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith*,² Shane Hipps helps us to understand the melding of our modern and postmodern mindsets as we continue to evolve in our thought processes in our every-changing, ever-expanding global society. As Mr. Hipps reviews the differences in Eastern and Western cultural thought processes, we discover that the advent of the linear phonetic alphabet (our ABC's) versus the pictographic or ideographic alphabet of the Chinese is the foundation for our linear, sequential, abstract Western thoughts versus the holistic, intuitive, and more concrete Eastern thinking. While it was the alphabet that provided us with an almost limitless

² Shane Hipps, *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Helps Shape Your Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), Kindle e-book.

array of thoughts and expressions by means of an ever-expanding vocabulary, its full impact and weight was not felt until the development of the printing press. As Mr. Hipps so aptly put it, “In Gutenberg’s printing press, the phonetic alphabet was given a megaphone to amplify its reach.”³

Our alphabet is the great enabler that allowed our society to develop into the logical, linear reasoning people who have reduced Christianity to an “efficiently compressed ...linear sequential formula: APOLOGIZE FOR YOUR SINS + BELIEVE JESUS = GO TO HEAVEN.”⁴ We became very adept at using our standardized method of communication, to the exclusion of the “appreciation of mysticism, intuition, and emotion.”⁵ We were admonished to spread the Gospel using reason and fact; don’t rely on feelings. And yet we are now surrounded by young adults who are seeking just that...a genuine faith-filled feeling with mystery and awe. We can attribute this to the anticipated pendulum swing in the existence of all media. In other words, chalk it up to progress.

As we consider the technology explosion that is occurring daily, we realize that everything we have continually goes through a metamorphosis as we continue to “improve.” As I stated at the beginning, we are hard-pressed to stay current with the speed of our improvement these days. Ms. Hipps is careful to point out that we are

³ Ibid., location 398-404, under Chapter 4, *The Efficient Gospel*.

⁴ Hipps, *Flickering Pixels*, Location 410-17, under Chapter 4, *The Efficient Gospel*.

⁵ Ibid., Location 430-37, under Chapter 4, *Beware of Your Feelings*.

constantly adjusting to new uses for old things as we examine the four dimensions to all media.

1. Every medium is an amplification or extension of something.
2. New medium makes an older technology irrelevant or obsolete.
3. Every new medium retrieves some experience or medium from the past.
4. Every medium, when pushed to an extreme, will reverse on itself, revealing unintended consequences.⁶

We are experiencing a melding of two philosophies that do not cancel each other out, but rather complement and complete one another. The old way of doing church is not being discarded, but rather revamped. The old way of understanding a relationship with Jesus Christ is taking on a new vantage point. We are now in the middle of a generation that is learning to take something beyond face value and search for the deeper meaning, embracing feelings and emotions as well as be appreciative that meaning/contextuality comes from varying, legitimate sources. I believe this is manifesting itself in our wave of “extreme” shows:

Extreme Sports

Extreme Home Make Over

Extreme Roommates... housewives... families.

Perhaps Extreme Christianity...

⁶ Ibid., Location 307-13, under Chapter 3, *4-D Vision*.



Figure 11. Extreme Interpretation of Jesus and His disciples.⁷

The technological explosion coupled with the extreme search for philosophy has resulted in *emerging* adults and specifically, *emerging disciples*. We have a very intense generation that is seemingly seeking a radical relationship with a compassionate outlet. Those who were discipled through the programs at Emmanuel appear to be engaged in exactly that manner and it goes well beyond the norm. Intensity, integrity, creativity...all these qualities that appear to be at work in the life of the young adults in their new roles are the same qualities of Hirsch's *mDNA* as I outlined in Chapter 2. Hirsch's components of Apostolic Genius – the *mDNA* – comprised of the six interrelating elements of

1. Jesus is Lord (central component)

⁷ Joshua Robinson, PK (Pastor's Kid), a friend of my son. They are postmodern Christians.

2. Disciple Making
3. Missional-Incarnational Impulse
4. Apostolic Environment
5. Organic Systems
6. *Communitas*, not community⁸

Each of the young adults are displaying all of these components as they are moving out into their respective communities continuing to praise and serve the Lord in their own way. What the LAC discovered was that we were being transformed by these narratives, as much, if not more, than the young people recounting their stories. To have affirmation of your work and to actually see the fruit of your labor is very heady stuff! To hear the young adults recount their productivity, and know that we had taken part in forming them was very uplifting. To see the young adults as disciples also required a spurt of growth in our thought processes as modern-minded Christians because they were not necessarily operating in their gift in a manner that we might have chosen.

Marsha: “Rasta man, out there on his own,” but when he started answering I was like “wow!” And that’s the thing. They get it early and it is part of indoctrination early and I totally believe that. But if you give them something they’re grounded in then they will be placed in a position where they can hold an argument. I mean they can have an answer for a question that’s being given. And then they can learn.....Joan of all, I thought...not shy, but yeah, intimidating when you first get to school and God places a roommate there that helps her come back out of her shell and that’s what He does. I’m really pleased with what I’m seeing and yes, it’s amazing that they’re all giving the same answers but guess

⁸ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 24-25.

what...that's what we trained them. They are reciting what we've given them. So that's a good thing. I think it's a good thing. And I'm amazed, and then not amazed, that they are all in a position where they are... and they don't know it...ministering to other people.

Roz: Right, right. You know, they have been very interesting and I really like to listen to their thoughts on the discipleship programs. They're exciting. I'm really excited about those. I think they give a really good perspective from their age group because when I was that age, I probably wouldn't have been able to think of anything. I like the idea about the activities, tying it to some kind of Bible story especially for those who are coming in. I think the difference between our kids is they all started when they were young.

Aaron: It was very informative to actually be on the opposite side of the table and get to hear some of the other reactions from the youth in EBC. Being a former youth that has graduated from this program I was surprised to see the effects that it has had on the youth that came after me. I am not surprised in the decisions that they made because that is evidence that they were listening to what they were being taught. I'm surprised that they have picked up the lessons and are acting on them. They are showing that they can activate the lessons that they were taught and adapt them to their present life and also be a witness to their friends and that they are willing to step up and teach others about what they have learned.

We were all – LAC and young adult interviewees – being brought to a new appreciation of what it means to walk and work consciously in God's Kingdom. The missional aspect of their involvement became a very prominent component of the narratives as the young adults spoke faith to understanding. One of the LAC members was ready to start sending funding and other support for the FLOS program as soon as she heard of it. The interaction would never have occurred if it had not been for the

project. They forged a new relationship because they viewed each other in a different capacity. The prism of the gem had been turned to reflect the light in a whole new way!

This work we had all been trained in and were actually carrying out in our daily lives was all wrapped up in our personal appropriation and recounting of the Gospel Story. As we listened to each of the young people tell of their work in school, around school and with other young people, a revitalized spirit rose in some of the LAC members.

Evette : Perspective...just living in another part of the country gives you a whole new perspective. Listening to them and their new perspectives has given me a whole new perspective. Hearing them like this validates what we've been doing. Whenever we take on a responsibility, we know we're doing it under the unction of the Holy Spirit. We look for confirmation even though we don't see the fruit of our labor. The process of the interviews showed points of progress. What are the milestones or key areas they spoke of? You can see that God is taking their heart and guiding them. It was encouraging. It reminds us that the struggles are not as imposing...don't let the naysayers overshadow you. It was very much a validation and encouragement. It also brings on the responsibility we all have. It is under the Lord's Will and ministry; but in new ministry, people need to take ownership.

Ros: Listening to the young people talk about what they had experienced in classes and how it translates to their everyday lives now was so exciting. We heard that they actually "got it." They had taken in all that we taught and were actually putting it to use. As we talked with the young adults about what the teaching meant to them over the years and how it was impacting their lives now, I became excited thinking about what an impact we could have on lives right now. I was inspired to start working more closely with the youth. I had never really thought about my role and the work I do at Emmanuel in this light before. Being intentional in discipling...in everything we do, not just our church work. Living intentional lives is so important. I've been so stirred up by all that

is going on.

This particular LAC member was so inspired by the entire project; she started the business she had been planning for years. She also committed to setting aside 10% of her business to support the young adult women, because she was so inspired by their need and, more so, their tenacity in attaining their goals while serving the Lord. When we began to focus on the intentionality of what we were all doing, bringing it to the forefront of our consciousness, it changed her outlook on her personal life and how it is so intertwined with others in the Kingdom of God. For the first time, she was able to translate her work in the church with her work outside of the church. She had a complete reconciliation of her work as all being accomplished in the Kingdom.

A couple of us LAC members shared a special excitement about what we were hearing because it totally transformed our current ministry outlook. We had passion before, but now our work has taken on new meaning. We now approach our ministry with a renewed sense of purpose – intentional discipling. For me personally, it took over everything I was doing. I refined my focus in my ministry in both my new and old churches. Even my husband, the unspoken, yet Most Valuable, member of the team did not go unchanged by our conversations. He was a Deacon and Teacher and had just as much invested in this project as the rest of us. He, too, voiced his joy at the confirmation of all we had done; at the evidence of their appropriation and utilization of the Gospel; and the excitement at what they were accomplishing. By the same token, he also has a new appreciation for working with elders, recognizing that discipling is needed at all ages because it is dependent on the age of the person in the walk with Christ. In this, he is not

alone. We made a key recognition in acknowledging that all of the work we were doing with the young people needed to be emphasized for our senior members as well.

Just the act of dialoguing about our Worship preferences caused the LAC members and the young adults to reflect more deeply on what it was we were actually doing in this project and how it was really affecting us. This intentional reflection lead to the formulation of a Worship preference: a recognition of our own likes and dislikes, and how they affect our actions in Worship as well as in our relationship with God and with one another. The result of the intentional intergenerational interactions with the goal of creating effective discipling programs, is a preferred future that opens up countless opportunities for changes for future generations as well as those of us participating now. Let us review those recommendations in light of a foundational understanding of how Emmanuel operates to enable us to make the comparison of what is effective now and will be for the future. Below is a snapshot of the analysis of Emmanuel using the McKinsey 7-S Framework.⁹ It is important to understand the inner workings of this organization in order to understand the how and why of what works and what doesn't work in our discipling programs.

⁹ A full report of the McKinsey 7-S Framework analysis is available at Appendix D.

Analysis using McKinsey's 7-S Framework

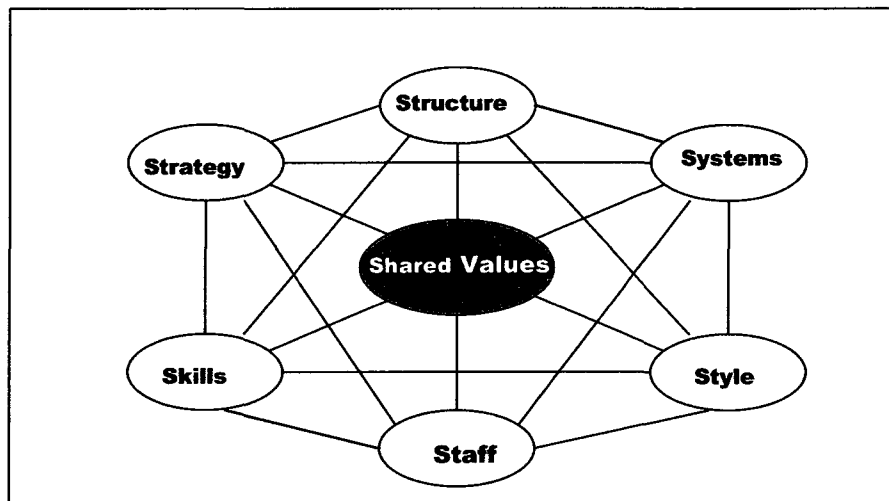


Figure 12. McKinsey's 7-S Framework Model.

The 7-S Framework of McKinsey is a management model that describes seven factors to organize a company in an holistic and in an effective way. Together these factors determine the way in which an organization operates. Without going into the detail of each of these components for Emmanuel, look at the framework and understand that the components all point to the relationships, beliefs, resources, and the goals of the organization as a whole and how they are centered on shared core values. When you review the detailed analysis in Appendix D, you'll see that Emmanuel is a family-oriented, Bible-based church that believes and acts upon the great Commission as outlined in Matthew 28:18-20. As a part of the Seacoast Missionary Baptist Association, within the NBC USA, Inc., Emmanuel is geared to becoming an EMC even though it has not been named as such. The missionary focus of this Baptist organization is the very seed that makes it a prime candidate to become the church that Hirsch wrote of in his

chapter on the *Missional-Incarnational Impulse*. “As God sent the Son into the world, so we are at core a sent or simply a *missionary* people.”¹⁰ This “sending” is not only Biblical in its roots; it is in direct contrast to the well-known *evangelistic-attractional impulse* of Christendom.

As I stated at the beginning, Christendom has ended. Christianity is no longer the norm—at least, not as we’ve known it. It would appear as though church, as a medium, is now approaching the extreme and reversing onto itself. What was once a haven, now feels as a prison. What had been a place of protection for the marginalized is now becoming the one who marginalizes. This can be changed with the right voices, hearts and mindsets set to intentionally disciple. That being said, who better to translate and make the Gospel message new to the postmodern seeker than a postmodern Christian?

Changed Relationships

Our relationships today are changing because our media have changed the circles in which we operate as well as how we operate within those circles. Technology such as SKYPE which enables a long-distance, face-to-face discussion with a mentor using a PC, camera and Internet fosters a more intimate relationship. Conversely, web access has broadened the base of knowledge of the young people, but has not done anything to refine that knowledge. The face-to-face encounter enables the kind of conversation that fosters real interaction, thus changing the relationship from the teacher/student model to mentor/mentee.

¹⁰ Hirsh, *The Forgotten Ways*, 129.

When I spoke of the relationship between Derek Jeter and Robinson Canu, of the NY Yankees, I neglected to bring out an important point about their relationship. Jeter was in fact, the teacher who was schooling Canu on the finer points of playing his position, but the relationship also went the other way. There were things that Canu could do with his body that were beyond Jeter's capabilities and that is because Canu is from this very different, postmodern generation. Canu had access to technology and training that didn't exist for Jeter. This resulted in the fact that Canu also had something to contribute to the teaching process so that they both – elder and younger – benefited. So, too, the young adults of our congregations have something to contribute to our discipling methodology. Their experience over the years as well as their appropriation of the Bible story and the good news of the Gospel is interpreted in them in a way that incorporates all of the current aspects in today's society. We, as the elders, learned we have to keep ourselves open to receive from the younger generation remembering that the Word of God reminds us, that it is the innocent and untarnished heart of a child that God values as Jesus reminds us "...of such is the kingdom of God."¹¹ We came to understand that we bring two sides of the same coin when the elders and young adults come together to develop our shared preferred future.

As said previously, a major key in discipling is relationship between the older generation and the younger generation. If we maintain our relationships using Kingdom principles (Titus 2:1 implores the older to teach the younger), we will be able to ensure we mentor the young in Christ (regardless of their age) and work toward building

¹¹ Luke 18:16.

disciples. It may not appear as the traditional teaching model to which we are all accustomed: just as it was suggested that Emmanuel switch from Adopted Daughters by the Missionary Circle¹² to Mentors at a particular age. Transformation of the postmodern mind can be fostered through consistent, contextual Bible Study that adjusts to engage as well as excite the participants. Our intergenerational relationship problems can be addressed through appropriation of the biblical principles. The relationships changed between the young adults and the LAC as our discussions moved into the work that the young adults were doing. Seeing the young people actually putting to use what they had been taught and embodying the Christian principles in their actions enabled the elders to view them in a different light. At the same time, the young adults were able to see the benefits of what they had been taught over the years.

Receiving Responsibility

I believe each of us is given the opportunity to present our witness in our own way. It is critical to engage our young people at an early age to instill the sense of responsibility and accountability in participating in the work of the Kingdom before they are subjected to the peer pressure not to participate at church. Instilling the values and principles early and often enables an authentic witness that will necessarily come out in that young person's voice, thus, reaching their peers. As one of our LAC members

¹² The Missionary Circle is comprised of women of the church who attend to the spiritual and physical needs of the congregants providing assistance to those who are sick and shut-in as well as other services. Along with "adopting" one of the elderly women as their "mother," the Missionaries also "adopt" one of the young girls of the church as their "daughter" to provide help, support, and a compassionate ear.

commented as we were in discussion after an interview one day, “To keep it short, somebody did that for me. So all I’m doing is passing it on...”

In other words, the cyclical nature of discipling comes as we remember what has been done for us and should be done by us in return. We have been shown value and recognize its importance and we want to provide that same support and guidance to the next generation. However, we have to do this recognizing that the boundaries and worldviews our youth are dealing with these days are much different. They are well beyond the issues and musings of our youth. Discipling and mentoring these postmodern youth is a give-and-take affair because of their exposure to things of which we may have never been aware. As such, the young adults also had to come to recognize their place of responsibility in sharing what they have that will benefit the Kingdom of God. Be it a technical expertise or a special connection with a particular group, be it tangible or emotional... if they have something that will benefit the Body of Believers, it is their responsibility to share. This is a crucial Kingdom principle...the responsibility to share as they did in the early church in Acts Chapter 2 when they sold all that they had to ensure everyone had everything they needed.

As a result of this project and our formal evaluation, we have changed our self-perspective and understanding of our role in the Kingdom as opposed to our role in the church. Becoming more intentional requires a mindset that is focused on a goal, an outcome. That goal is a discipling environment that actually produces disciples. We began with the intention of improving our programs to ensure they could reach the current postmodern generation and we have come to the realization that we all, teachers

as well as young adults, needed the change to occur within us. We needed to change our perspective of our role as disciples of Christ.

As we contemplated the role of the Great Commission in our lives as members of Emmanuel and as citizens of God's Kingdom, our mission-minded hearts were revived. The physical act of raising our right hands and reciting the Great Commission as we closed out each Sunday School catechism had the desired effect of embedding that principle in our hearts and minds. And the heart that had been molded over the years by the Bible stories and the many classes that brought us to know God, Kingdom living, and life in Jesus Christ was kindled to put it into practice once again, as it had done as a youth in the church in various roles. Because the young people had been taught who they were and what to strive for, they were able to put it all together at the right time and apply the same principles themselves. Principles of the Kingdom translate from generation to generation if each new generation that comes forth has been prepared to continue the cycle with the foundational knowledge.

With each narrative recounted, the act of reliving the good things from the past stirred up excitement within all of us. As they related their past experiences with what they were doing now within their current church/faith circle, we all became excited to see the fruit of our labor over the years. As the students recognized how their training over the years resulted in their current actions and the teachers saw actual output products from their years of teaching, we experienced our epiphany. Students and teachers experiencing the "Aha Moment" together was very powerful as we collectively recognized God at work in us.

The relationships between the elders and the young adults have taken on new tones as a new partnership is formed as we view each other as fellow Kingdom workers. A new and different kind of relationship is developing between the college level young adults and the youth that currently attend Emmanuel. There is new sense of responsibility on the part of the high school graduates. They recognize their new role in the Kingdom and they are learning how to operate in that role. This requires mentoring in and of itself. Intergenerational consciousness fosters new and exciting venues for sharing the Gospel message. As we continue to explore the new technologies available and new applications, we are assured of refreshing our repertoire and staying current. Instituting an annual review of the discipling programs with the latest batch of graduates positions Emmanuel to be on the cutting edge of spiritual growth for years to come.

Ensuring that discipling remains at the core of all that we do in ministry within the church is the transformative application of God's Word to us to "*Go Ye...*" If we focus on keeping discipling as the foundational goal, we will address the declining numbers and the lack of young people. If we adjust our approach to employ all of the things which attract them such as music, interaction, authenticity, mystery, participation and we develop theme parks such as the Sight and Sound Theater in Pennsylvania, perhaps we will be able to keep those postmodern young adults who have attended from leaving as well as attract those who have not ever attended. However, it would behoove us to pay closer attention to the little ones. Focusing on the very young as our disciples provides the very foundation which research supports as the most impacting factor in creating a practicing young adult postmodern Christian. Go early, go often. It appears

that if the young are indoctrinated early and then they are properly engaged to remain active through high school graduation, then they will become the disciples who can reach others of their generation. More importantly, they will be engaged enough not to become lost to the worship and work of a local congregation; rather, they will be trained *emerging disciples*...prepared to *Get Ready...Get Set...Go Ye!*

APPENDIX A

EMMANUEL BAPTIST DISCIPLESHIP STUDY CONSENT FORM

1. INTRODUCTION

You are invited to be a participant in a research study about identifying the successfully working components of Emmanuel's discipling programs and identifying and addressing the missing components to reach this postmodern generation. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a young adult who has had benefit of Emmanuel's discipling programs and you are uniquely equipped to reach this postmodern generation of which you are a part. We ask that you read this document and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. The study is being conducted by Drew University, Doctor of Ministries Program student, Rev. Marsha Williams and the Emmanuel Baptist Church Lay Advisory Committee (LAC)

2. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study is to determine the successfully working components of Emmanuel's discipling programs and to identify and address the missing components to reach this postmodern generation. You have been trained through Emmanuel's discipling programs such as Sunday School, Friday Night Youth Activities, Choir, Oratorical Contests, Step Team, etc. and are fully aware of our Great Commission to "*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations...*" (Matt 28:19. KJV). You are also a part of this postmodern generation and can speak to their view point. Based on your feedback, we will adjust the existing Emmanuel discipling programs. We also need your help in developing an online tool to provide you with continued support after graduation and to assist you in attracting and discipling other postmodern young adults with whom you have daily contact so you can "*Get Ready, Get Set...Go ye!*"

3. DURATION

The length of time you will be involved with this study is four months, from January through March 2010. You will be asked to contribute an hour and a half to the study for an initial interview with the LAC using video conferencing such as SKYPE. Any follow on questions or discussions will be done via email or Facebook.

4. PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

1. You will be given an appointment to meet with the LAC and answer specific questions during an interview using teleconferencing software on the internet or by phone. The questions will be

provided ahead of time so you may prepare your answers.

2. You may receive follow up questions from the LAC via a secure online page which you will be asked to join specifically for this project.

3. You will also be expected to help develop an online tool that will 1) be used to mentor you young adults after you graduate and go off to college; and 2) will be used to attract and disciple other postmodern young adults.

5. RISKS/BENEFITS

This study has the following risks: There are minimal risks expected with this study.

The benefits of participation are: You will receive additional mentoring support in your critical college years. You will also become knowledgeable in the thinking of the postmodern generation and develop communication skills that will assist you in future interpersonal relationships. You will learn new technologies and uses for the internet.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

The records of this study will be kept private. In any report that is published or presentation that is given, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. The LAC and Pastor will have access to the data which will reside on standalone notebook PCs. The data will be maintained for up to, but not to exceed, five years after the study before being destroyed.

7. VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Emmanuel Baptist Church or Drew University. If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting those relationships and without penalty.

8. CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

At the conclusion of the study you will be debriefed by the LAC and provided a means for follow up of the project.

The researcher conducting this study is Rev. Marsha Williams. You may ask any questions you have right now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at (732) 895-9756.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to speak with someone other than the researcher(s), you may contact the Pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Rev. Robert J. Perkins at (732) 747-4438.

9. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

The procedures of this study have been explained to me and my questions have been addressed. The information that I provide is confidential and will be used for research purposes only. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw anytime without penalty. If I have any concerns about my experience in this study (e.g., that I was treated unfairly or felt unnecessarily threatened), I may contact the Drew Institutional Review Board member whose contact information is given above regarding my concerns.

Participant

signature _____ Date _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

_____ Date _____

APPENDIX B

EMMANUEL BAPTIST DISCIPLESHIP STUDY APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY FORM

1. Given your many years at Emmanuel, what is the best memory you have? What made it a good time? Who was involved? What did you do? How did it make you feel?
2. What do you value most about Emmanuel? Why? What activity do you believe best conveys that about Emmanuel to people?
3. What part of the Worship Service connects you most to God? Why? What else could we do to make the Worship more meaningful for you? How?
4. Of all of the discipleship training you received in Sunday School, Friday Night Youth Activities, EBC EXcel, Youth Choir, Step Team, Jr. Missionaries/Laymen, etc., which was most effective in teaching you about your relationship with the Lord? Why? How did you learn about the relationship? From whom?
5. What do you feel is the most important aspect of your relationship with the Lord? Since you are on your own and/or are at College, what have you done to maintain your relationship with the Lord? How? Why?
6. How do you see the Great Commission at work through Emmanuel? Why?
7. How do you see the Great Commission at work through your life? Why?
8. Can you explain the way your Christian walk is viewed by your peers? Do you know why they think that way?
9. Can you explain the way you view your Christian walk? Why do you believe that?
10. If you could create a discipling program that would attract your friends, what would it look like? Why would they like it? What would make them continue to use it?
11. If you could create a mentoring program for you for what you need in your life right now, what would it look like? Why would it be helpful for you? What would it do for you?

12. If you could “do church” online instead of in the sanctuary, would you like that better? How would you “do church” online?
 13. If you could “do church” however best suits you, what would you do? Why?
 14. Would you like to add anything?
- Thank you for your help and participation in this study.*

INTERVIEW MATRIX

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Question	Sunday School	Choir	Lock-In	Friday Night	EXcel	Oratorical
1a	Given your many years at Emmanuel, what is the best memory you have?	1	3	1	2		3
1b	What made it a good time? Who was involved? What did you do? How did it make you feel?	Moments of understanding when everyone would get the lesson at the same time. Felt like I learned something valuable	When we had a really good practice and everybody was singing was sweating and that's one of the best times. Everybody is all into it. That's one of the best times. That's when everybody was close. I had two, the other was the choir. We would sing and it would be fun. You learned stuff Scripture in song.	It wasn't the simple fact that we were going to Church but it was more so that we were able to just come together and have a great time and fellowship with God. Just the fact I could be with my peers all night at church, funtime, movies, Bible bowl quizzes, fellowship. Families were there. We had fun.	Youth on Fridays when I was in middle school and high school. You always had something and we could have fun with kids that had the same values as I had. *Friday night youth was always fun to me. They used to be so interactive and it used to just be a fun time to come to Church go to Choir practice and you would have your activities afterwards. It was just a good time to be around everybody.		Oratorical Contest - We got to work with others. Rev Perkins really showed us how to do the Oratorical. It was my first time speaking out like that. It gave me more confidence to speak in public. *When I won the Oratorical Contest. My senior year. It was something I had worked hard on for 4 years. I really practised. I was able to present it and illustrate it so the body of believers could understand. I was more exposed with Rev Perkins, Rev Williams, Deac Williams - everyone was helping me. I felt a sense of accomplishment. *Was a process that involved the whole church and taught how to handle being in front of people.
2a	What do you value most about Emmanuel? Why?	Respect adults->child and vice versa. Accessible to talk	Home feeling. Like walking into my house.	Emmanuel more so as a whole is more personable and I feel like we're very open with each other. We are all open minded. Real personal, tight knit family. All open with each other. Open-minded.	Church Anniversary. Just to see that everybody came out. Made it look like our church family. Saw people I hadn't seen in a while. The slideshow reminded me of all the events we've had over the years. To see people who have grown up together. Real happy to see the pictures.	I would say it's the way you guys treat the youth. It's like absolutely phenomenal. It's like growing up. You guys fill in for things a lot for parents in certain things. Emmanuel does it through fellowship, they have events for the children. I just love the fact that when it comes to Emmanuel Baptist, the youth usually comes first. Well God comes first then the youth are priority.	It's kind of like a big extended family. My whole family goes to Emmanuel but I also have a big extended family that I'm always counting on. It's a big help.

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Question	Sunday School	Choir	Lock in	Friday Night	EXcel	Oratorical
2b	What activity do you believe best conveys that about Emmanuel to people?	Family & Friends Day	Family & Friends Day	Visitors get that sense of family	How you pick up the kids for Sunday school. If you're doing activities, you'll get a ride, you don't have to worry about that. Everybody is just friendly and always in your business.	Family and Friends Day. You get to come in casual and comfortable and everybody. It's such a happy occasion everybody laughing and telling jokes. It's a comfortable environment.	When we concentrate on the young people. Teaching this generation is important so we can pass on to the next generation.
3a	What part of the Worship Service connects you most to God? Why?	Alter Prayer when we all join hands and pray for each other out loud. Feel the aura, faith together, believing together.	When young it was Scripture, but now Music.	(Music) Selection before the Sermon.	Rev Perkins preaching. I connect most with. He has a gift to capture the young kids attention. Especially when he calls your name out. He makes sure you are involved in the service.	Alter Prayer because everyone is touching, agreeing and holding hands. You can feel the energy in between everyone.	Anything to do with singing. That's just my way of worship is through song.
3b	What else could we do to make the Worship more meaningful for you? How?	Change order of program (didn't say how)	You can't, must do that for yourself.	Feel the congregation needs to get more involved. Some times I think people are ashamed of how they react in church. The kids at Emmanuel seemed inhibited. Everytime I went to Summer Assembly, it opened my eyes how youth were free to express their love for the Lord. At Emmanuel, some kids seemed too cool to do that. If I had seen that was acceptable at Emmanuel I probably would have done it more. Need to engage that back into the church.	More modern gospel (contemporary).	It's always been something that I don't think anybody can say or add anything to make it any better so it's all about the individual mind and how you feel. You can't please everyone.	I think a lot of the reasons that you have the teens sitting in the corners is because they feel like aside from singing then it's directed towards the adults who understand more. I think the sermon can be more connected towards the teenagers and the young adults. I think the 3rd Sunday is when the young people are most connected but we should try having them become more involved and not just 3rd Sunday.
4a	Of all of the discipleship training you received in Sunday School, Friday Night Youth Activities, EBC EXcel, Youth Choir, Stop Team, Jr. Missionaries/Laymen, etc. which was most effective in teaching you about your relationship with the Lord?	Sunday School	Choir	Friday Night	EXcel	Oratorical	Bible Bowl
		9			4		1

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Question	Sunday School	Choir	Lock In	Friday Night	Excel	Oratorical
4b	Why? How did you learn the relationship? From whom?	<p>I don't remember *When I did go to SS I would reflect afterwards about my relationship with God *SS When I came to college being able to teach a Bible study class for kindergarten's to High School age kids When I started going to college that's when I realized how important my relationship was I've been blessed with everything *SS & sometimes when we would have Youth on Friday night We used to ask questions we could be ourselves and talk about stuff Eddie Lee was teaching the Sunday School class He was telling some story I was listening to what he was saying Then it was in the sermon It was very touching I joined church that Sunday *I really liked SS Ms Haddon was a really good SS teacher She was definitely always in your business but it was in a good way *It was a huge part I like when the teacher would ask us a question and we'd all talk about our views on whatever topic I learned so much more from my peers and the teacher at the same time *Together with Friday Night Youth Teachers really want us to get into the Word let us talk convey feelings Made lesson specific to us You can ask questions and don't get ridiculed They were open you could ask anything *I had Sis Hatton as a teacher I had a real cool class You could talk about anything Everybody would talk We learned The lesson would be applied to our lives</p>		<p>At my uncle's Church it was mostly family it was a very small Church so everybody was very close knit and we used to do Youth night like at Emmanuel except it was more one on one like group study We went to a Youth Retreat once a year It was really fun They had very young youth teachers At my uncle's church we had this young youth advisor guy and it was like he taught you that it was fine to be a Christian a young Christian and there was nothing wrong with that *Together with Sunday School Youth Group breakouts made me want to listen and focus on how to live how to follow the Commandments</p>		<p>Oratorical Contest was a breakthrough for me Hard themes made me think</p>	
5a	What do you feel is the most important aspect of your relationship with the Lord?	<p>Maintaining a healthy relationship can just go and call him not just for what I want but for thanking Him</p>	<p>My Christian walk is the foundation of my life</p>	<p>I need to have the relationship of knowing what is right or wrong my strong foundation Knowing I can have a continuing relationship and not be ashamed to do it</p>	<p>Prayer</p>	<p>To have a closer relationship I went off to college and I became closer and closer so I joined the gospel choir</p>	<p>I don't know what you mean by that I guess prayer because prayer gets you through everything</p>
5b	Since you are on your own and/or are at College, what have you done to maintain your relationship with the Lord? How? Why?	<p>Nothing different</p>	<p>Fallen off the band wagon but I did pack a Bible</p>	<p>I go to Chapel When I don't have time I have a daily lesson from T D Jakes book</p>	<p>Go to church on campus Not the same as home Kind of like Catholic service Don't go every Sunday don't really look forward to going</p>	<p>The way I can best say is just love everyone God is love I believe that</p>	<p>I've visited a lot of churches out there</p>

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Question	Sunday School	Choir	Lock-in	Friday Night	EXcel	Oratorical
6	How do you see the Great Commission at work through Emmanuel? Why?	When we invite people to our church or we go to their church Events/functions especially World Changers	Underlying meaning of Emmanuel It is why Emmanuel push the youth to go out The Oratorical contest was a big part of my high school	We are the living generation It was instilled in us and we went out and actually did it	We have a lot of good role models people that lead the right way I feel everybody at church looks up to somebody There is a lot of positive energy in the church I remember when we were young and we would go on trips - we would go the games (baseball) we would hang out and have fun (no drinking)	It goes from the way Emmanuel tries to teach all nations, inviting anyone regardless of where they came from, their religious background no matter how much money they have It doesn't matter It's like you guys try to teach everyone the same cause there's only one God So people will understand a lot better if you put it through words where everybody can understand and that's what you guys do well	I know when I was about 13, 14, you could tell people knew the age of the group that went through Sunday school, Friday night youth because most of our friends came with us on Friday night I think it really helped us we took that scripture into consideration and everything
7	How do you see the Great Commission at work through your life? Why?	Have many serious and controversial but respectful discussions with friends of different faiths Talk about how MAIR changed all the religions Try to find common ground and why they are the way they are	Base most of my decisions off my Christianity	I heard it from Church, "Go ye, therefore, teach all nations" and I found myself at school actually proclaiming the Lords' Word and actually sharing certain information that a lot of my friends didn't know they weren't at Church and actually sharing with them I found myself at school proclaiming God's	I don't go around and tell people about my relationship with God People know They know I have a religious family My friends can see a difference If I've been praying a lot, my friends know it There is a difference I walk differently, I talk differently	A lot of my friends even tell me I'm always preaching to people I'm always bringing up God I'm always quick to pray for somebody	Well I try to be a good role model towards the little kids because I know that even kids in my community look up to me Like the little nine year old girl that just died, this week I was at her funeral, her mom came up to me and said "I thank you for teaching my daughter" and her aunt, "I thank you for teaching my niece Christian songs" They didn't go to Church before, none of them went to Church That's a good thing
8	Can you explain the way your Christian walk is viewed by your peers? Do you know why they think that way?	Confident about what I believe and say Not ashamed of being a Christian	Friends were interested in how church is run They were interested in a Black Baptist Church Does your church stomp and clap like that?	I feel as though they think I have an advantage They know I was raised in the church I think they feel I have a head start He's holier than us I tell them we are all the same they need to have their own relationship with the Lord I want them to be aware of what's going on where they need to be I don't ask the question if they want to go to heaven or hell I let them ask me questions about what they do and don't know	My friends know I'm Christian Once or twice they would ask me why do I go to church so much They never really question why that was my religion I had Christians friends but they would only go to church on Sundays	No Whenever I talk religion, it goes to more of the political views I believe human beings don't know enough to say they know all the answers People are pessimist My friends grew up in church - when it became like a habit they kind of stray away from it Teenagers always want to do what they want to do Arguments about Is there a God? What about omnipotence? Some friends did not build a relationship with God They were just forced to go to church Most of my friends are older	In my own apartment when my friends are over Sunday's I like to have praise and worship time I put on my Gospel music which they like I quote Scripture to them I have the Bible on my phone

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Question	Sunday School	Choir	Lock In	Friday Night	Excel	Oratorical
9	Can you explain the way you view your Christian walk? Why do you believe that?	Training was complete, but not sure if it was enough	The Oratorical contest was a big part of my high school. It helped me relate to my friends. Friends on my cheerleader team would ask I would invite them to church. The younger you are taught the more comfortable you will become.	I try to live right. I do find myself making mistakes. I remind myself that no one is perfect. I don't want to keep taking backwards steps. I try to walk with the righteousness of God. I know the Holy Spirit won't send me astray.	It's pretty good. I wouldn't say it's the best. I am comfortable. Stay true to your beliefs even around your friends.	I think I'm doing good, of course. It's not perfect or anywhere close to it. I think it's definitely a walk. May be a light jog. It's definitely getting there. It's a lot better than it was 5 years ago when I was just going to Church but it wasn't really meaning anything to me. Now everything means so much more to me.	I think that my friends think that I'm way better than what I am. So I know there's improvement but I'm working on it.
10a	If you could create a discipling program that would attract your friends, what would it look like?	Something along the line of a Sociology Class. We could be open and talk about topics.	Faith-based game park, play games. Faith is not a game. Games would attract kids to come. Have a theme park day with the theme being God.	The young people of today need to be activity based. It's more effective when you have activity and dialogue. They need to be able to express their ideas. (basketball, football). Some way to incorporate the Word. Need to be active and have the ability of dialogue.	The programs at Emmanuel are good. Just a matter of connecting with the programs. We need to make them want to come every Friday. Have activities for them – bowling, ice skating rink. Just anything to get the kids interested. Need Laymen to reach out to the young men a little more. In comparison to the Missionaries – they have daughters – the Laymen should be a mentor to the Junior Laymen, keep them on the right track. Be a father to them or a role model they can talk to. Have the Laymen be there for the young men.	I've thought about this before. It would be like a Christian fellowship music jam session amongst Christian musicians, like whoever wants to come just come and do fellowship and minister and get together. Open mic, poetry, storytelling. Like a coffee house.	With younger people you always have to have a gimmick, especially when you're trying to get them to come to Church. Either some type of singing or something that would hold their interest. There should be some type of activity (like VBS) for them just so you can get their interest and hold it. Just sitting there and listening to somebody, I'm just like in another world sometimes. But when I'm physically asked to do something or have to engage in a conversation and it's not just left to one person to talk, that's more engaging for young people because they get distracted too quick.
10b	Why would they like it? What would make them continue to use it?		See what the secular world has to offer kids but tweak it a little, relate it to God - you would be able to make it attractive to kids. Tell kids about the good stuff, yelling and telling they're going to hell doesn't work.	Have open conversations about sex, STDs, etc. Have a panel and have the audience ask questions. Something that would get people thinking. Get people to want to go ahead and reach out and come out to certain events and get them to be involved in Church.	I think you would get a better answer from them rather than me.	They could remain anonymous.	Any special group that has a need, if we focus the discipleship program to the need that they have or to bring people common together so that they would be able to share and discuss things.

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Question	Sunday School	Choir	Lock-in	Friday Night	EXcel	Oratorical
11a	If you could create a mentoring program for you for what you need In your life right now, what would it look like?	Sitting down with someone and talking about your day and understand the things that have occurred	Incorporate a Big Brother program A lifetime mentor Someone who has knowledge about life not that much older than me Someone I would want to emulate I would have loved to have someone who had knowledge in corporate America and knowledge from life period	Help with school work	as a college student, I would love to have someone help me manage my time better	How to create timeliness Time management I also think it's always important to have a spiritual mentor Just for when you're down and have somebody that obviously knows much more than you	A mentoring program for me? It wouldn't be on line Mentor face to face, talk I wouldn't like the whole on line thing I really don't know I mean there's things at Church that I could be doing right now but I just don't go
11b	Why would it be helpful for you? What would it do for you?	I like to talk Once a week just sitting down with someone (kind of like therapy) A lot of college students lose their way (amount of work)	I look up to the people in church When you are younger, you look up to the older teenagers That would serve some effectiveness in helping our kids	Time management, I figured that is probably the biggest thing in college	Everyday questions, just calling someone talking, guidance that would be amazing	Reading the Bible, becoming closer, learning to walk the walk because I'm in the process of learning Like you said, learning from other people who have more experience than what we have My mind is open I can't really say I need one because I need all of them	God is providing everything I need I need a venue where I can go and bring more and learn more I need to know more I'm not an expert but I want to know more Something where college kids could explore seeking for God and their gift

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Question	Sunday School	Choir	Lock In	Friday Night	EXcel	Oratorical
12a	If you could "do church" online instead of in the sanctuary, would you like that better?	Too lazy! Must interact face to face	If my grandmother cannot get up and go to church she will go online and listen to the sermon. Some folks it's great. They can get the Word and feel immersed in the Word. Some folks it's great. It depends on the situation and the age group. There is no excuse for me not to go. I don't know if online things are the best.	No. I haven't been exposed to online church. I do not think it would be better.	Not at all. Not seen any.	No. Haven't heard about church online.	No. I never knew they had them.
12b	How would you "do church" online?	Church would be like a video game. Group exercises.	I don't understand how that could work.	I don't know.	I don't know.	It's interesting but I wouldn't do it myself. There's a feeling you get when you get in the presence of other believers. Church is supposed to be a gathering. You can have Bible study by yourself. If you HAVE to then if you are an able body you should go to church.	
13a	If you could "do church" however best suits you, what would you do?	Same way. I like the traditional way. Seems deteriorated. Church just seemed better. more of a giving time. everyone appreciated kids more respectful.	I think it would best suit me to do it the old fashion way. how I was raised. Doing in Church on Sunday.	Same as Emmanuel. I wouldn't change anything. More Contemporary music.	The way we do it now. It's all that I know.	I would want my Church to be like a spiritual filled Church with lots of songs.	I think that the way we do Church now is good. I think the only reason why I didn't like Church the way we have it now when I was younger I did say I wanted Children's Church in the service.

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Question	Sunday School	Choir	Lock-In	Friday Night	EXcel	Oratorical
13b	Why?	Discipline under control, you like the way we do things now (Worship/Prayer) would like more interaction, wants more hands on, interaction having her mind stirred up being able to ask questions freely	That always did the job If it's not broke, don't fix it So I would just stick to old fashion	It was actually much better when I was younger to go to Children's Church or Youth Church We went to a separate building Actually, I thought that was much more effective It makes it easier to get closer to God You see your peers are doing it and it makes you feel easier	I just don't feel comfortable in the church Being around people makes me feel uncomfortable, feel judged by people I would like to skype just to hear someone's voice would be enough Skype would be a good idea	High energy service - not jumping all over the aisles A way that everyone can be involved The service is not as "lively" as it should be	
14	Would you like to add anything?	Maybe a small cotillion, music/concerts, missionary work/volunteer work *I feel that I couldn't get out of a lot of stuff at the church No one pushes the kids now That bothers me The kids now a days can say no The younger kids don't have a lot of say	People feel why am I bringing my friends into this environment where they're not going to be openly welcomed That was in the age group of 16 to 18 or 19	I don't anything should be taken away I think Sunday School is the best Friday nights is not what it used to be I felt comfortable enough to talk The time was perfect on Friday nights It was a cool place to go	College students need to be more emphasized I don't see a lot of the college kids back during the summer time I think they feel they were pushed out the nest and there is nothing else there for them Meet in June or July and discuss their college experiences Can be led by an Adult It can be lead by someone who has already been through the college experience		

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Question	Sunday School	Choir	Lock-In	Friday Night	Excel	Oratorical
			<p>I feel like it doesn't fall into the line of you guys being the reason why we're not coming back to Church. It falls on the individual. You guys have definitely set some great examples being positive leaders but at the same time I think that the kind of mission, that common ground trying to catch the younger youth. Usually the younger adults are the ones that catch the younger youths attention more just because their still in that age group where they can laugh and joke. I'm not saying that the older ones are uptight and stuff like that.</p>				
	What doesn't work?	Young Adult Class The age of a person doesn't matter. As long as they know they subject.					

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Bible Bowl	Summer Assembly	Family & Friends Day	Step Team				Other
1a		2	1	3				1
1b	<p>That was one thing that I enjoyed about Summer Assembly That was one of the best experiences that I ever experienced to me It was mostly because I could get together with people my age, my peers and not have to feel like I felt in school where there were different people and different religions, different mind sets, different beliefs and things like that But for all of us to get together and because we are the same age, we could just fellowship together and be comfortable with each other Comfortable enough to shout, to sing, to pray, to do whatever we wanted to do and feel it and not feel ashamed of it later on Or feel shy because we did it in front of somebody else It was one of the most exhilarating experiences I've ever had and I really enjoyed fellowshiping with people that I can feel comfortable around Comfortable enough to open up and not feel like somebody's watching me or somebody's judging me *It was a good experience being away from your family and being around other Christians that you don't see everyday</p>		<p>It was Junlor Laymen against Laymen basketball game It was a couple years ago</p>	<p>The Step Team It gave me a chance to interact in church that I never knew was possible I had seen it at college but didn't know this could happen at church *You are surrounded by a lot of young people When we were at church there were a lot of young kids There were young kids my age to learn with *Step Team was my favorite We got to travel and we were ministering outside the church We were in service but not in church</p>				<p>I remember one Sunday, it was raining outside really bad, and we were part of the flood so a lot of people didn't make it to Church that Sunday we had an open forum for Church that Sunday Rev Schenk basically had me stand up and as a younger person in the Church and holding leadership in the Church he just had me speak my mind about how I feel Things that they wouldn't understand because it was different from their generation He basically helped us bridge a gap in between the two generations to help us understand each other better Honestly I feel like that was one of the best memories because I got to know a lot about the people that I called family and even at home it helped me out a little bit</p>
2a	<p>I value how there is a family atmosphere Some churches you can't even go up and say hi to people because they're like all fake Everybody knows each other It's not such a big Church that you only know 5 people in the whole Church</p>	<p>The friendships and the families everybody was so close and everybody looked out for each other, everybody knew each other Just like the love that was there</p>	<p>They are very involved with the young people Many different activities They mold us into who we should be</p>	<p>I value the sense of church home/family My whole spiritual development started when I went to live with my Grandmother My whole spiritual family</p>	<p>Growing up, it's the way Emmanuel appreciates the kids The way we make new kids and people to feel at home</p>	<p>Family aspect of Emmanuel Everybody knows each other It's like a big family</p>	<p>Relationships with others that you can trust Honest people People that won't put you down</p>	<p>I really like how everybody accepted me That's one thing that I can say I didn't come in as a stranger I came in as somebody who was part of the family They made me feel like I had been there for years Some of them did know me because I was throughout Sea Coast and they just made me feel real at home and real warm I never felt like I was a visitor in their Church I always felt like I belonged I belonged there That's one thing that I liked about them</p>

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Bible Bowl	Summer Assembly	Family & Friends Day	Step Team				Other
2b	Family and Friends Day - you see people you don't see everyday Family and Friends are what I value the most	EBC Excel, Choir, Youth Group			When we go out and worship with other churches We have a sense of who each other is Even if I come in and out of church, everyone still knows me			Every Sunday Rev Harrington stretch out in the spirit We stretch to God and stretch our number We hug a neighbor, we hug ourselves, we go around and hug 3 people who we haven't met before Makes me not so scared to approach people Just welcomed in Made a part of the family
3a	The singing part Because when I learn something, I have to hear it, even in school So I'm singing I learn scriptures that way I'm not really good at memorizing I know scriptures through song	I like the songs The singing and doing worship Some songs are touching, you feel the connection Sometimes what the Pastor says doesn't always get you but I feel like music always brings you back Makes you think and brings you to that point	The singing and the preaching The singing helps you praise Him in your own way The preaching helps teach you things you didn't know	The Sermon I love music but after going to Summer Assembly, the words started making sense to me I started to see how God was blessing me	Just the general praise and worship I love when the choir sings I love the prayer to do I like that we are a collective effort	Altar Prayer - Even though there is someone up there get to have my own little prayer	Altar Prayer - We all come together in prayer as one Asking God to help others helps me feel good Speaking to God knowing he will answer my prayers	Altar Call Usually we start with a worship song I enjoy music That is the way I connect myself to God We prepare ourselves (30 seconds before we pray) We sing and then we all come to the altar to pray You don't feel shy or awkward In your mind you are already thinking about God The person next to you is thinking the same thing Close off everything around us - focus on ourselves - focus on God Relax, let it all go
3b	I don't think you really have to do like making it more meaningful I think it's when you get more mature you understand more aspects of the service When you're younger you don't want any part of the sermon But as you get older you understand that's important to you	I don't think it's much more that you can do If it's a good worship service, I don't think that you can do more	Maybe have the youth do the devotion Maybe once a month When young people see other young people - more likely to participate Young people need to see others modeling what they do	I think, sometimes, we are so caught up with being robotic and staying with the schedule, we should be a little less rigid Allow the Holy Spirit to work more	Incorporate a more array of music that everyone can feel I attend a service they have a Jubilee Choir - keeps the old Negro spiritual alive You hear the songs and can think back to how our ancestors worshipped without instruments	All bases are covered I have been to other churches I think Emmanuel does a pretty good job	Not really Everything is fine to me	A lot of services are fluffed out a lot of extra stuff in the middle of service that is not necessary We do devotion scripture, benevolent offering, prayer invocation choir sings, then Pastor, altar call then everything else, open the doors of the church and then we are ready to go I think we bring too much into the service that doesn't need to be there Changed about a year ago Most people do like the change
4a	Summer Assembly	New Members Class	Home	Other				
	1	2	2	1				

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Bible Bowl	Summer Assembly	Family & Friends Day	Step Team			
4b	I started Sunday School when I was young I knew the Lord all my life The Step team helped me learn scriptures Scripture showers It didn't really set in until Summer Assembly	I first learned about it in New Member's Class *Great beginning Helped me come into my own I was scared	KH Started when I was very young I was raised by my grandmother I was in church at least 4 to 5 times a week There were any other things to occupy my time Basically, she taught me everything She was active at MBI I've picked up a lot of things just being with her at Sunday School I used to read the Bible at home with my Grandmother *Born into it I always knew about I can't remember a time when I didn't	I always had a relationship Since Emmanuel, I've been closer Being involved with Summer Assembly brought me much closer to God Just experiencing with the some people, was a good support system Being spiritual aware Everything, singing in the choir, noon-day prayer, like the Sun-Water to nourishing a plant The seeds were already planted when I was growing up with my Dad Sometimes I would listen to sermons on the radio by myself When I was 10, I was trying to read the Bible I feel that God always had an anointing on my life I've felt He was always there - always in my life * All of them in their own way Taught you how to get the Word out and not look lame Missionaries taught how to go out in the community			Started when I was very young I was raised by my grandmother I was in church at least 4 to 5 times a week There were any other things to occupy my time Basically, she taught me everything She was active at MBI I've picked up a lot of things just being with her Sunday School I used to read the Bible at home with my Grandmother
5a	My faith Believing He is always going to be there	I stumbled on that question That I have a relationship	It's personal He's a God for everybody, but He's my God He loves me I'm God's #1 fan because I show up and do what I gotta do for Him!	Knowing you are not perfect and that you are going to sin I think it is a misconception that you are supposed to be perfect God knows we are not perfect	Communicating		Communication (Prayer) knowing that I have that support Knowing when things are happening in my life I know God will be there and he listens Everything he tells me will be according to His Will He will give me an understanding My prayer life is my strongest connection
5b	Well I try to make sure to go to Church Cause like since I grew up in Church I always make sure Dylan is with me even though she's only one You still have to bring them I pray every night	I talk to my mom because I don't go to Church as much so whatever she learned in Church, I ask her to recite it back to me I talk to her about it	My relationship is becoming closer than before, I've learned to face my problems I've learned to better myself in becoming a better person and not being that person that I once was I have learned that that's not who He wants me to be As far as the person I used to be I have most importantly learned to pray more and trust I have to work on reading my Bible daily	I try to pray every morning I walk every morning and talk to God I go to Chapel (not crazy about it) they have people in the pulpit that aren't really ordained Sometimes I go to the church down street I'm not active in the church but I try to go I need to work on my prayer life I ask God to allow me to work in my purpose Pray that He orders my steps	I stepped it up when I got alone I've been in three faith based organizations I also go to church every Sunday I joined a couple choirs, joined a couple Bible studies Me and my friends see the need around the college Kids are home and no supervision We are starting a faith based organization - called FLOS (Future Leaders of Society) for Elementary and Middle School	I still go to church I visit different churches	Pray everyday Once in a while, sing a good hymn
							Staying steadfast Rev Harrington just started us on another thing Reading 5 Psalms and a Proverb Diligently studying on my own Going to church singing with the choir Keeping myself grounded in the world

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Bible Bowl	Summer Assembly	Family & Friends Day	Step Team				Other
6	By the kids If I saw one of them when we were in High School nobody was afraid to talk about Jesus Sometimes somebody would just break out in gospel song and nobody cared So at Emmanuel they teach you not to be shy about it	All the youth programs how they have kids go out to meetings and Summer Assembly Every couple of weeks we were all doing something at some kind of Church function I think that works	The short answer would be everything they say that Integrates Christian, Emmanuel is doing in their own way through programs, through Bible study, things like that They're teaching things that they should be teaching Teaching you to teach others what the Word of God means	I know we do outreach programs prison ministry through the kids we try to bring other kids in, I can't really think of any other programs It's more of an individual thing - we bring someone to church We witness on our jobs	I think that every Sunday School we recite It's in their minds We say it every Sunday Also, the outreach ministries, the way the kids go out	When I attended People were trying to make that part of their Emmanuel Baptist experience	I see it with the Youth With Youth Night Giving opportunities to the youth to do things We have other youth come on Friday nights	At Good Hope, I see Rev Harrison is an awesome Pastor He takes time out to teach and preach He doesn't spend most of his time just preaching He takes advantageous of teaching moments He will walk up and down the aisle, he will answer a question right in the middle of the service We have a plethora of very good teachers in our Church that will take their time and sit down and talk with you If there's something you want to talk about they'll ask you if you want to know certain things and if you don't know certain things they will take the time to explain them to you Not just explain but show you where they're coming from Everything that we tell somebody is based on what's in the Bible
7	I need to be working on that When I was younger I was into church As I got older, I slacked off I haven't fallen	I am starting to change as a person I am no longer that person that holds grudges No longer that person who keeps hating a person Of course there are a few people that I do not care for but I love them anyway And of course never hate a person because that's what I've been taught I have learned to forgive more and I know exactly what it means to be a real person	I believe there are different ways to minister to people If I get a good grade, I will say GOD IS GOOD! I was in New Orleans for Mardi Gras I asked the driver did he know Jesus I said a quick prayer and asked for healing of his body	I'm putting this together now I know I have to do something in this world to help bring people to God I'm trying to do it without even thinking about it Emmanuel implanted this scripture in my head	I feel like whenever I have a chance, I try to bring people to church		Telling other people - the one's that don't go to church I speak to those folks Going to community events People ask me why I am so happy I tell them I am a good person and I believe in God	I am the same way If there is something I have or something I can explain to you, I will take the time to do that Most young people tend to approach me about certain things If there is something else you need to talk about, I will take the time The kids told me and Justin that they look up to us I try to portray my life the way I should live It's also work for me to live up to what they believe I am
8	My friends think I'm the resident preacher or something because they always come to me about something or another So I'm like the advice giver when they're down and they don't know where else to go Somehow they get my number	I talk to my friends all the time about the Lord I have a friend who claims he is Atheist He spent time in Japan and didn't understand how people could suffer if there was a God We talk about God all the time I have friends that believe and we have friends that talk More muslims (fake 5%) They claim to it but they don't know about their religions They just like the names I talk to them, simple things I ask them different questions They are only concerned about themselves I'm not trying to convince them, I'm just talking to them	I have a very big heart and have a hard time saying no to people I try to help out anyway I can Taking my sister's son I didn't want to do it I'm just learning that prayer works I didn't know what it meant at first	The people that I'm around are all on the same spiritual ground We pray together, we pray for each other We go to church other I think they would say there are some things I can improve on We are all about the same	Freshmen year, a couple of guys use to call me Jesus-guy I used to get upset but I got use to it I put pressure on me to do right This year, I've mentioned my religion in my projects Everyone knows I think I am a pretty good example of what God wants me to do	I know my boyfriend feels that my walk with God can be better stronger I kinda agree I'm no saint Boyfriend's church is in Bloomfield I don't have many friends My best friend and I talk about God She tells me to pray	They were aware of it I believe they didn't mind it They accepted it I didn't harass them about the Lord I kind of sneaked it in every once and a while I would invite them to church or Bible study every once in a while	My peers view me the same way They know if they have a problem, I will be there for them They won't get the type of advice they can get everywhere else I am blunt and will tell them the honest truth It may not be what you want to hear

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Bible Bowl	Summer Assembly	Family & Friends Day	Step Team				Other
9	I've been called a prude or prune. Some of things they do, I don't do. I don't go out like they do. I have morals. I do think about my upbringing.	I need more work. I'm not where he wants me to be but I'm making progress. Changing my heart, my mentality, my whole outlook on things. on life, on people, on situations.	I have friends who believe in God but don't believe in Jesus. One of my co-workers believes he is God's son. I never attack anyone. I just listen to what they say. I ask them questions. I tell them what God has done for me. I have a friend who is Jewish by birth but is an actual Atheist.	They come to me for advice outside of religion. I always bring the Bible in. If I don't know, I call my Dad. I always try to give them a Scripture. My roommate has problems. He came to church with me a few Sundays. He enjoyed himself. I'm going to keep working on him.	It could be better. I'm working on it. I'm trying to find a church home where I am happy and comfortable.	They have a Christian Community at the school. I hung around with these folks.		My Christian walk is important. When I set a goal, I want to reach and exceed it. I am happy I am not where I used to be. I am happy I am growing. I am happy I have been in the church. I'm happy that I have stayed in Church and I think about my peers and everybody else around me. I think a lot of people leave the Church at my age and most of them have left the Church around that 18 to 30 era. A lot of people leave the Church and I'm just glad that I was strong enough to stay and not turn my back away from it.
10a	I thought everybody's on to this thing. It's called FormSpring and everybody is on it at Facebook. You can ask Christian questions. Ask other Christians questions. Just answer anonymous. An opportunity to ask questions and get answers when you need it. So we can ask questions and someone who knows can answer.	The kind of program that we had on Friday night. Everyone was sitting and relaxing, no judgement, just talking - relaxed. The environment wasn't uptight.	Single mothers of course. I have a very huge circle of friends who are single parents but we're all starting to learn from each other like what Christians should be like. Even though I may not come to Emmanuel every weekend, I may not even go to Church every week, but we all talk. If one of us has a problem, we all tell each other the same thing, like pray and then we'll call each other. I could see that if there was a program where this type of bond that we all have together, it should be extended to other people who maybe in the same situation as us or who may know someone in the same situation. I guess.	I would do a community service program. Because one of the most important things that Jesus did was helping people. I would try to serve other people. Helping the elderly or the underserved. It doesn't matter the religion - just to help people. If you can get people in, God will do the rest. I like debutante and cotillion programs. They help you improve. God expects us to plant the seed. He holds us accountable. Personal Development programs.	It would have to be, of course the Bible would need to be taught. Bible Study might scare someone. A social gathering (food must be there) - whatever you have on your mind we can talk about. A social gathering first, then ease in the Word.	Use the Praise and Worship, Dance team to attract people. At the end (last 1/2 hour) I would start talking about the Bible. Even at Choir practice, Step Team. I think that would help.	Friday Night Youth Group. We should go out and find more youth. Invite other churches would be good.	It seems like the general consensus is that Churches are full of hypocrites these days. I feel like sometimes as Christians we judge people. I feel like the discipleship program, to reach those people who have turned away from the Church would have to reach those people at their level not walk in there as if we're holier than thou or we're better than them because we have stayed in the Church but come down to their level and help them where they need to be helped at. It's a difference between giving somebody criticism and constructive criticism. That's what some discipleship programs and Churches lack.
10b	Personal Development program. Bible based program. Values based. Help the kids.	Yes. I have a friend who has a program called Queen Esther Mentoring Program that teaches young girls values, strength and courage. Good attributes that all women should have.	It could start with questions, comfortable environment. Draw discussion and give them answers. Get them interested in coming back.	It would take a little time but people will eventually open up. I go to a Catholic institution and some times people can't really talk freely about religion but some place where they can ask any questions would be good.				

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Bible Bowl	Summer Assembly	Family & Friends Day	Step Team			Other
11a	<p>She'd guide me or help me in anyway I needed help. At the age I'm at, I need a lot of guidance and help a lot of times. Sometimes you need somebody from the Church. Somebody that knows a little bit that could help or guide me. That would be great.</p>	<p>Reading the Bible, becoming closer, learning to not walk the walk because I'm in the process of learning. Like you said, learning from other people who have more experience than what we have. My mind is open. I can't really say I need one because I need all of them.</p>	<p>I need direction. I have so many interests right now. I'm not sure what my calling is and what I'm good at. What I'm supposed to do. Maybe a program that helps you work through my skills. Something that provides me the tools, Internship programs (not like a psychiatrist).</p>	<p>Blog/Forum. Question of the Week. Would be good for the College Kids. One-on-one contact would be better. Add discussion to the Facebook page. When I received the care package, I received the newsletter. I was happy to see it. Can you send the newsletter?</p>	<p>Just sit down and talk to somebody. I need to just call somebody and talk about what I'm going through. Life in general dealing with college things.</p>	<p>Focus on what you have to do. Time Management. Taking school more serious.</p>	<p>We don't have anything for age specific. We have a Women's Ministry. Me and a friend of mine were going to present a mentoring program to invite the younger woman into the Woman's ministry. Give each other encouragement, friendship. We organized a bowling event for all the women of the church. Each person was to approach 5 people (different woman) to invite them to the event. In order to open up, they need to feel comfort. Most of the women are married. We don't want the single mothers or single woman to feel like they can't join or they don't have anything in common. They are a woman of Good Hope. Started in September 2009. Organizing another event. We started out with lighthearted FUN events. Take seriousness out of the group and show the church another side of the people in the group.</p>
11b							<p>I really want for the people in our Church to become more approachable and I want us to not be scared to come and talk to each other about something and I want everybody in the group to be able to look at each other not just as I don't want to lose the respect boundary as an elder in that aspect of it but I do want them to feel comfortable enough to come to them and say "can we sit down and talk and sit down and laugh and have a nice conversation" and not feel uncomfortable because of that person's position. Who that person is. That type of thing. I would really like for the women to become more open with each other.</p>

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Bible Bowl	Summer Assembly	Family & Friends Day	Step Team				Other
	It's horrible for me because I know that It's a totally different experience when you're at Church. Like Church on TV, I think that's just a ridiculous thing. It works for my one friend. He was watching Christian TV forever then he finally went to Church. So I guess it was a good thing but I don't think it should be a total substitute.	Comfortable. I would like that. I would feel comfortable. Relaxed. People are not there looking at you.	NO. Because that takes the purpose out of sharing in the spirit with your fellow Christians. But if there was also a place say in the middle of the week you had a question, if you could go on line and submit your question and have someone answer it, that would help because in all reality, there's not enough time in the day.	No. Haven't heard of it. Wouldn't be my first choice.	My friend goes online and looks at stuff. I don't officially know anything.	I would view a YouTube sermon. I wouldn't personally want to do church online. The best part of church is the face to face. Somethings you should come out of your house and do. Church is one of those things.	Never heard of them. Heard of drive-thru churches. There are a lot of them in Canada and Daytona, Florida.	No. I've not heard of that.
12a								
12b								My uncle does a lot of broadcasting on line. I remember him talking about broadcasting on line and he had his own on line web site and everything set up for that.
13a	I like church the way it is now. Webcam. I just don't feel comfortable in the church. Being around people makes me feel uncomfortable, feel judged by people. I would like to skype. Just to hear someone's voice would be enough. Skype would be a good idea.	If I had to choose one it would be the praise and worship longer. When I went to Georgia and that is the best Church I've ever been to and it's only because they had the whole shenanigan's with the TV's on the walls but the TV's had scriptures on them and the youth, the songs that they sung you couldn't help but to get up there and clap. More upbeat songs they did a mixture of old and new. I think that's the way it should be because everyone in the service can get in.	It's a hard question. Worshipping God through prayer and through song. All the components are there now.	I would probably have more lengthy praise and worship. I always thought people should have a time after church when people come together and get things off their mind. A time after church to discuss issues in the church or from the community. Like a town hall meeting (2x a month). We will have a church meeting (business related).	I like when you go out to the church building. I'm visiting other churches now. Their church sang for the 1st hour than the sermon came. No program - pretty cool. It gets you warmed up and ready for the sermon. They had a prayer thing at the end.	Leave it the way Emmanuel does it now. I would like to hear two preachers. One who speaks about general things. The other would preach about the youth and the parents (Family oriented). Preach to both groups in one service (Age 12 - Up). Younger if they could understand. How important it is to listen to your parents. Anything that would help and encourage the kids to do right.		I actually prefer to be in the sanctuary. I love the fellowship of Church.

INTERVIEW MATRIX

Q #	Bible Bowl	Summer Assembly	Family & Friends Day	Step Team				Other
13b								<p>It did free me to open up to a certain extent but still not as far as I felt comfortable around my peers at Summer Assembly. When Sis King told the parents some of your kids ran some of your kids prayed your kids read Scriptures your kids are anointed and they did this and they did that together and a lot of parents sat there and said I know that wasn't my kid." That comment in a way cripples you because you feel like you can be free and you were free that week. Then to know that you have to go home and feel like you have to be quiet. But to go home and get back in Church it was still bittersweet because now I feel crippled like I'm not sure if it's going to be ok for me to jump up. I'm not sure it's going to be ok for me to shout or be happy right now.</p>
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APPENDIX D

ANALYSIS USING MCKINSEY'S 7-S FRAMEWORK

Description/History: The 7-S Framework of McKinsey is a management model that describes seven factors to organize a company in an holistic and in an effective way. Together these factors determine the way in which an organization operates.

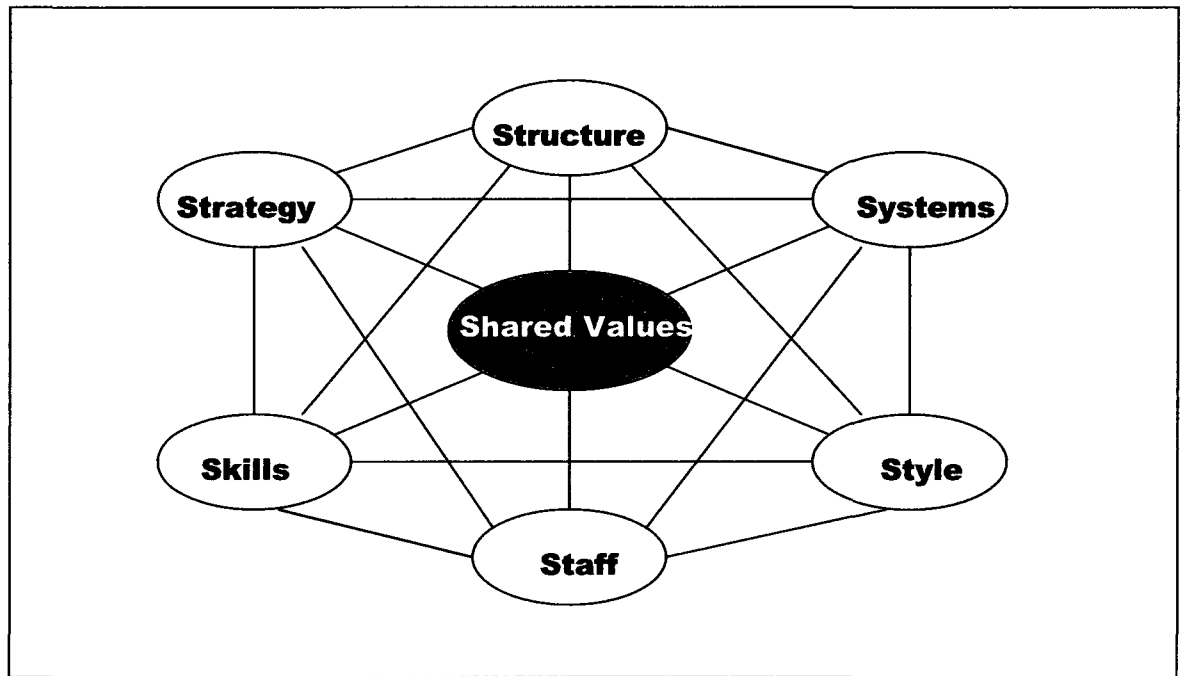


Figure 1. McKinsey's 7-S Framework Model.

Shared Values: The mission of Emmanuel Baptist Church is to glorify God, by fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ through preaching and teaching. We affirm the renewing power of God's grace and the redemptive force of His truth to transform the lives of people.

Emmanuel is constantly moving its members toward a missional mindset, turning their focus to others. Each program is designed to foster relationship, thereby making disciples. For instance, each of the classes in the Sunday School has adopted a child

disciples. For instance, each of the classes in the Sunday School has adopted a child through the Feed the Children program. This has increased awareness of people in other countries, and particularly the plight of children. In an innovative approach to a pretty traditional outreach program, one of the teachers had their class develop a profile of the child. They gave the child a name, family and personality. This gave them the opportunity to explore a country in order to have a more authentic background. This is in keeping with the interactive nature of the postmodern mind. It also shows recognition of the need to make something concrete, more real, for the youth, in order to develop a relationship.

Strategy: Emmanuel Baptist fulfills its mission with living examples of Christian discipleship to help develop and mature its members physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. This is accomplished through the following ministries:

- a. Ministers and Deacons
- b. Board of Christian Education
- c. Sunday School
- d. Laymen (Senior and Junior)
- e. Missionary Circles (Senior and Junior)
- f. Music Ministry
- g. Usher Ministry
- h. Transportation Ministry
- i. Computer Ministry
- j. Kitchen Ministry

k. Special Programs

- a. Friday Night Youth Program
- b. EBC EXcel (After School Tutoring)
- c. Track and Field
- d. Liturgical Dancing
- e. Oratorical Contest

The allocation of the budget is an indication of the placement of emphasis in accordance with the Mission and Strategy.

Expense	% of Budget
Total 4000 · AUXILIARIES & MINISTRIES	1%
Total 4103 · Insurance	1%
Total 4104 · Membership Fees	0%
Total 4105 · Mortgage Payment	18%
Total 4107 · Office Expense	1%
Total 4108 · Professional Fees	1%
Total 4109.2 · Inspection Fees	0%
Total 4109.5 · Maintenance	1%
Total 4109 · Repairs and Maintenance	3%
4115 · SALARY EXPENSE	
Total 4115.4 · Payroll Taxes	0%
Total 4115.5 · Salaries & Fringe Benefits	33%
Total 4115 · SALARY EXPENSE	35%
Total 4125 · UTILITIES	5%
Total 4100 · OPERATING EXPENSES	63%
4200 · CHRISTIAN BOARD	
Total 4225 · Sunday School	3%
Total 4200 · CHRISTIAN BOARD	9%
Total 4300 · KITCHEN COMMITTEE	3%

Total 4400 · COMPUTER MINISTRY	2%
Total 4550 · Audio/Visual Ministry	0%
Total 4570 · Music Ministry	1%
Total 4500 · MUSIC & AUDIO/VIDEO	1%
Total 4600 · PASTOR'S AID	3%
Total 4700 · TRANSPORTATION	18%
Total Expense	100%

Figure 2. Emmanuel Baptist Church Budget Allocation.

While it may not have been recognized as a *Missional-Incarnational Impulse*, Emmanuel has been making intentional moves in the direction of becoming more missional, more outwardly focused. This is the result of an active Board of Christian Education that is constantly reviewing the effectiveness of our programs in carrying out the mandate of the Great Commission. In an effort to facilitate members increasing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, we implemented a rigorous Transportation Ministry to pick up members, young and old, to attend Sunday School as well as participate in the After-School Tutoring program, Emmanuel Baptist Church, EXceptional Children Earnestly Learning (EBC EXcel). The Sunday School makes regular visits to a local Nursing Home to sing and share the Gospel. The visits allow the church to be intentionally incarnational as the members become a visible and tangible presence of the love of God in Christ Jesus in the lives of the clients. It also discipless the Sunday School members, young and old, to intentionally live what Len Sweet terms the *GodLife* in their everyday actions.¹

¹ Leonard Sweet, *Out of the Question... Into the Mystery: Getting Lost in the Godlife Relationship* (Colorado Springs: Water Book Press, 2004), 31.

Structure: Emmanuel is an autonomous body with a management structure indicative of a Baptist church in the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.

(<http://www.nationalbaptist.com/Index.cfm?FuseAction=Page&PageID=1000014>)

Locally, EBC is a part of the Seacoast Missionary Baptist Association within the General Baptist Convention of New Jersey, Inc.

EBC's operation is hierarchical with all Auxiliaries reporting to the Pastor. The Deacons have oversight responsibility for segments of the membership. Formally, decisions are made by the members of the church in quarterly or Special Called meetings. The financial operation of the church is managed by the Board of Trustees which makes recommendations to the Church Body through the Joint Board.

In Style, Emmanuel has EPIC tendencies; however, in **Structure** we are Rational, Logical, Linear (NOT Experiential), we like Performance-based and Representational Ministry (NOT Participatory), we like to focus on words (NOT Images), and we are highly individualistic (NOT Connective). While we operate in the hierarchical structure, we have the seeds to support the informal structure of the *apostolic genius* as presented by Hirsch.² The challenges of the church in the current environment require fluidity and imagination on the part of the leadership of the church. The Pastor is open to entertaining ideas from the congregants and provides guidance on how to proceed with putting those ideas into practice while giving creative license.

Systems: Emmanuel has one major system and a number of procedures and processes in place to carry out its mission.

² Hirsch, 150.

1. Central to the operation of Emmanuel and all of its programs is the budget. It is maintained with a financial system that is managed by the Board of Trustees. The church uses the LOGOS II, Church/Donor Management software which is a comprehensive management tool to manage the congregation's personal and financial information and the church's income and expenses.
2. All major decisions are voted on by the Church Body in accordance with the Church's bylaws.
3. Emmanuel has a system of recognition for a number of components.
 - a. School Honors for good grades, perfect attendance or any recognition is recognized in front of the congregation.
 - b. Graduates of all ages are honored in front of the congregation.
 - c. Birthdays are recognized weekly during the worship service, as well as all Holidays i.e. Mother's Day, etc.
 - d. Scholarships are given based on participation in service or mission

Staff: Emmanuel has a large staff, comprised mostly of volunteers who are members of the congregation. The volunteer staff is a major part of the operation. The positions listed below are the regular Staff. They are supplemented on a regular basis by occasional volunteers. The result is that approximately 25% of the regular attendees actually work in the church operation.

Salaried Positions:

Pastor

Asst. Pastor

Director of Music
 Church Clerk
 2 Musicians (Piano, Guitar)
 2 Sextons

Stipends:

2 Musicians (Drummer, Bass)

Volunteers:

3 Associate Ministers
 5 Deacons
 Treasurer
 Asst. Treasurer
 Financial Secretary
 Director, Board of Christian Education
 Superintendent of Sunday School
 13 Sunday School Teachers
 5 EXcel Tutors (After-School Program)
 6 Kitchen Ministry
 6 Transportation Ministry
 2 Sound Ministry
 2 Video Ministry

As you've seen, Emmanuel has a very active Youth Ministry. The young people hold Offices in the Sunday School and are active participants in meetings, planning and daily operation. They "shadow" the adults in their official capacity to learn the proper procedures. The youth of the church also expand the "workforce" for special projects such as semi-annual church clean up.

Style: Emmanuel is a relaxed, family-oriented church. In Worship, we follow a program, but we are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. There is a lot of spontaneity in the worship service.

Emmanuel places special emphasis on nurturing the youth, recognizing that they are the lifeblood of a continuing congregation and Kingdom work. We operate as the

proverbial “village” with all taking responsibility to raise all of our children in *the training and instruction of the Lord*.³ We take to heart the biblical mandates.

*“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he shall not turn from it.”*⁴

¹⁸ Fix these words of mine in your hearts and mind; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.⁵

Emmanuel is also a “feeding” church. We have many occasions to sit at the table and break bread together...literally. Our Kitchen Ministry provides a full breakfast on Sunday mornings to facilitate Sunday School attendance. They also provide a hot meal for the students and tutors to facilitate the After-School Tutoring Program (*Greet them with a hot meal, hugs, and homework!*). They provide a meal for the youth and the adults every Friday to facilitate the Friday Youth Night and Choir Rehearsal. This provides many members and acquaintances the opportunities to fulfill the needs of relating in the spatially specific public, personal, social, and intimate environments as outlined by Joseph R. Myers in his book, *The Search to Belong*.⁶ Fellowship during those times when we meet to work and eat as well as during the Track and Field practices and events or during the tutoring provides the members with the modern-day “front porch.” This is where we relate and have conversation on whatever level we feel comfortable—

³ Eph 6:4, NIV.

⁴ Prov 22:6, NIV.

⁵ Deut 11:18-19, NIV.

⁶ Joseph R. Myers, *The Search to Belong: Rethinking Intimacy, Community, and Small Groups* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 36.

transitioning back and forth through the Four Spaces. Recognizing that all of our relationships are multidimensional and we relate to one another on multiple levels. How we relate depends on our modern or postmodern mindset.

One of the most impacting activities that moves the Emmanuel Family toward becoming a full-fledged EPIC EMC is the Oratorical Contest, referred to often by the young people in their narratives. This is an NBC USA, Inc., initiative held annually. A topic is given with a supporting Scripture. The youth are to write, memorize and present their thoughts on the topic. The Emmanuel Family becomes fully immersed in this great discipling effort. The youth are encouraged to think about and learn to articulate their faith. Their focus is in reaching other youth, so they are encouraged to incarnate the Love of God in Christ Jesus so their peers might “see Jesus” and come to “know the Lord in the pardon of their sins.”

This process begins just before Thanksgiving and continues through to February when they all participate in the competition on the Associational level. Emmanuel has had a winner in the Junior and Senior categories for a number of years, so the process continues through to the State level in April and sometimes to the National level in the summer. There are a few key people, such as the Pastor, Ministers, Deacons and EXCEL tutors, involved in the writing process, tutoring each youth. The circle of support expands as the youth memorize and begin to present their oration. Finally, the entire church becomes involved as the youth take turns presenting their orations each Sunday during the Worship Service as a means of practice.

This very EPIC event also provides the connectivity desired by the young people with one-on-one tutoring and coaching as well as the group setting which fosters bonding within the particular age groups. This relational learning, with opportunity to question, test, and define their faith, was noted in the narratives of the young adults as a strong element of their Christian maturation, as you'll see in later chapters.

Skills: Many of the staff (paid and volunteer) are degreed—from Bachelors through to two PhDs. Our Church Treasurer is a CPA. Along with the degrees, the members participate in various training conferences through the year, some of which are sponsored by the National Baptist Parent Body and others that come from outside sources such as the Willow Creek Association. We also have congregants who bring their expertise to various positions for the benefit of the church. Each staff member—volunteer or salaried—takes seriously every aspect of their job and its impact on the church as a whole and the individual spiritual, psychological, emotional and physical aspect of every member's life.

The entire Emmanuel Family also went through *The Purpose Driven Church Program* developed by Rick Warren. To some extent, this created *Communitas* for some of the small groups within the Emmanuel Family. In fact, one small group which was formed in that experience continues to this day.

As far as **Skills** are concerned, Emmanuel is very much an EPIC church in the sense that learning is on-the-job training or “trial by fire.” Discipling, as a way of life, is also done in a participatory manner, such as with the Oratorical contest. Emmanuel has a variety of activities aimed at arresting and abducting the imagination of the young people,

then following up to ensure they remained engaged. Interaction is a key that is continually tweaked to ensure it is effective. Technology is a major component.

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V I T A

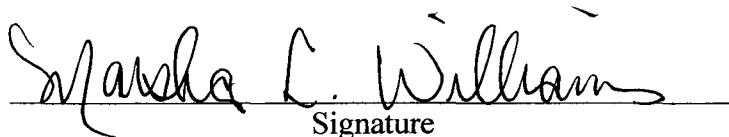
PERSONAL DATA

Full Name: MARSHA L. WILLIAMS
Place and Date of Birth: PHILADELPHIA, PA DEC 13, 1952
Parents= Names: WILLIAM J. RICHIE, SR. AND HELEN L. RICHIE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

	<u>School (Name and Address)</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Date</u>
Secondary:	OVERBROOK HIGH SCHOOL 5898 Lancaster Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19131		6/70
Collegiate:	Various schools over the years as well as 30 yrs of numerous Federal equivalent courses. WAGNER COLLEGE, Staten Island, NY STATEN ISLAND CC, Staten Island, NY PHILADELPHIA CC, Phila., PA BROOKDALE CC, Colts Neck, NJ		
Graduate:	NEW BRUNSWICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY 17 Seminary Place New Brunswick, NJ 08901	MDIV cum laude	5/03

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MARSHA L. WILLIAMS
Name, typed

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Date