

# MEASURING THE PASTOR'S IMPACT ON THE GROWTH, PLATEAU OR DECLINE OF THE CHURCH HE SERVES

Based upon research conducted by  
Kelton F. Hinton in the JBA 2014-2015

# Study Participants

- ✓ 28 participants, a “qualitative” study
- ✓ Minimum of 5 years tenure
- ✓ Located in (or near) the JBA, a rural association in eastern NC

# Parameters for Grouping:

- ❖ Growing – church had to grow FASTER than the 3.5% annual population growth rate over the tenure of the pastor
- ❖ Plateaued – church grew UP TO 3.5% annually in Worship Attendance
- ❖ Declining – church HELD STEADY or DECLINED numerically in Worship Attendance over the tenure of the pastor

# Participating Churches

## Types of churches

- 10 Growing churches
- 8 Plateaued churches
- 10 Declining churches

## Size of churches

- eleven (< 100) — 39%
- Nine (100-200) — 32%
- Three (200-300) — 11%
- Two (300-400) — 7%
- Two (400-500) — 7%
- One (500+) — 4%

## Located in:

- 60% in open country or suburbia
- 40% in small towns or medium-sized cities

# SEVEN (CHANGEABLE) BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES OF GROWING PASTORS

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# The Seven Areas...

- 1) Accepting responsibility for the health of the church
- 2) Daily Quiet Time
- 3) Finding mentors & coaches
- 4) Informal (and deep) peer support
- 5) Connecting w/God in worship planning & execution
- 6) Home visits
- 7) Leadership development

# Accepting responsibility for the health of the church

## GROWING & PLATEAUED

- Vision Issue (# 1-2 out of 11)
- Inadequate Pastoral Leadership (# 3 for growing, #5 for plateaued)
- Calling a new Pastor (# 3 for plateaued, #7 for growing)

## DECLINING

- Vision Issue (# 4-5 out of 11)
- Inadequate Pastoral Leadership (# 5-6)
- Calling a new Pastor (# 10)

# Daily Quiet Time

## GROWING & PLATEAUED

- 60 & 62% read their Bible DAILY for personal instruction (not related to church work)
- (bi-vo pastors struggled the most in this area)

## DECLINING

- Only 30% read their Bible DAILY for personal instruction (not related to church work)



# Finding (and Keeping) a Mentor or Coach

## PASTORS OF GROWING CHURCHES

- 60% in first 5 yrs
- 89% in the past

Now...

- 67% currently maintain such relationships

## PASTORS OF PLATEAUED & DECLINING CHURCHES

- 100% initially

Now...

- 40% of declining
- 33% of plateaued

# Informal (and deep) Peer Support

## PASTORS OF GROWING CHURCHES

- 50% involved in informal peer support groups meeting monthly
- Higher levels of deep interactions and accountability

## PASTORS OF PLATEAUED & DECLINING CHURCHES

- 40% of declining involved in informal peer support meeting bi-monthly
- (only 10% of plateaued pastors)
- Surface-level conversations and low accountability

# Connecting with God in Worship Planning & Execution

## PASTORS OF GROWING CHURCHES

- ❖ 40% “always” (30% “frequently”) felt the presence and power of God in planning and leading worship in the last six months

## PASTORS OF PLATEAUED & DECLINING CHURCHES

- ❖ 38% of plateaued and only 20% of declining “always” felt God’s presence in planning or leading worship (40% “frequently” and 30% “often”)

# Home Visits: one of the keys to growth

## PASTORS OF GROWING CHURCHES

- ❑ 44% favored “home visits” over all other forms of pastoral care

## PASTORS OF PLATEAUED & DECLINING CHURCHES

- ❑ 50% of pastors serving plateaued churches favored “hospital visits”
- ❑ 40% of pastors serving in declining situations favored “hospital” or “bereavement” situations for primary pastoral care

# Leadership Development: Planning for Future Growth

## PASTORS OF PLATEAUED & DECLINING CHURCHES

## PASTORS OF GROWING CHURCHES

- ▣ 80% have a strategy in place (50% formalized, 50% informal)

- ▣ 50% of pastors serving in plateaued situations have strategy (25% formalized, 75% informal)
- ▣ 60% of pastors serving declining churches have a strategy (17% formalized, 83% informal)

# ELEVEN (UNCHANGEABLE) BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES OF GROWING PASTORS

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# Eleven (unchangeable) Behaviors and Attitudes of Growing Pastors

- 1) Birth Order
- 2) Age of the pastor
- 3) Age at conversion
- 4) Call
- 5) Ages of children
- 6) Attitude towards life
- 7) Myers-Briggs Type
- 8) Level of education
- 9) Leadership skills
- 10) DiSC Profile
- 11) Spiritual gifts



# Birth Order

**Growing Pastors — 50% Firstborn**

(20% Middle, 30% Youngest, NO only)

**Plateaued Pastors — 38% Middle children**

(25% Firstborn, 25% Youngest, 13% Only)

**Declining Pastors — 40% Youngest**

(30% Firstborn, 10% Middle, 20% Only)



# Age of the Pastors

## (34—78 years old)

(see Num 4:1-3 & 8:24-26; Lk 3:1-2, 23)

### GROWING & DECLINING

Average age – 51

60% Growing began w/in 30-50 range (30% below, 10% above)

50% Declining began w/in 30-50 range (40% below, 10% above)

### PLATEAUED

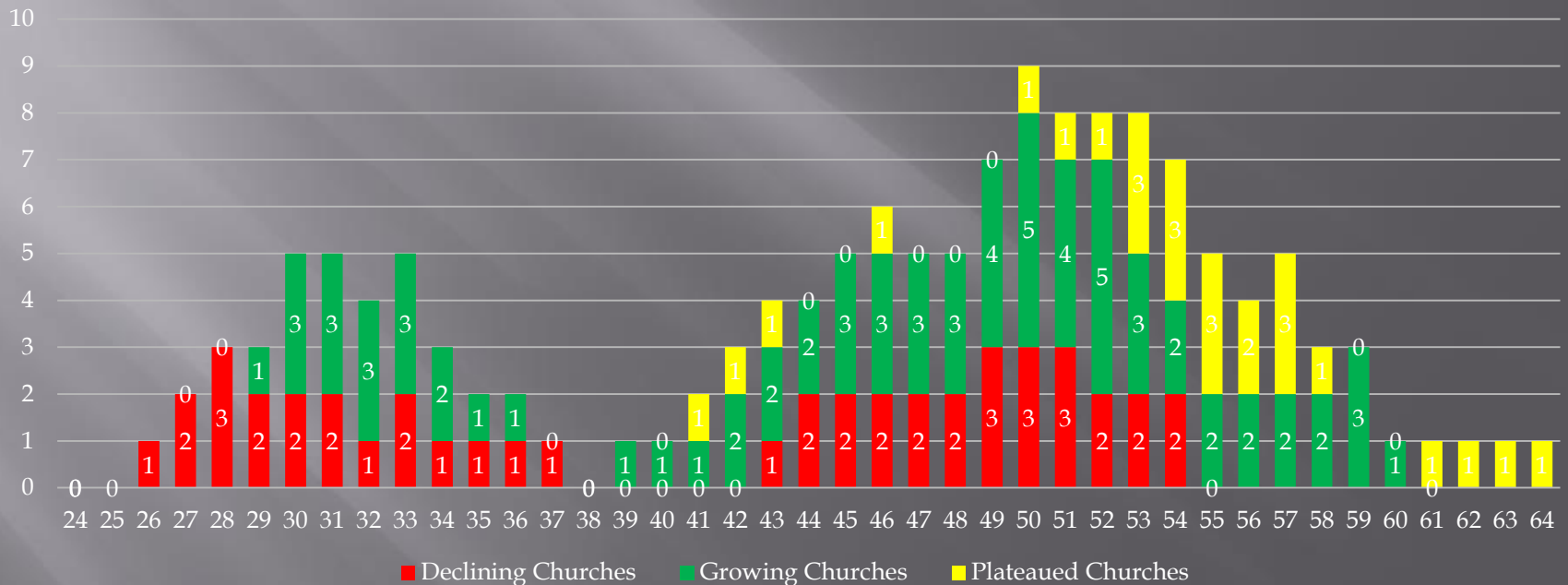
Average age – 63

38% Plateaued began w/in 30-50 range

63% above that range

# Pastor's Most Generative Years

Pastor's Most Generative Years



# Age at Conversion

## GROWING & PLATEAUED

Growing — age 16, Lordship at 19

67% Developmental conversion  
experience (67% Lordship)

33% Process conversion  
experience

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Plateaued — age 17, Lordship at  
22

63% Developmental conversion  
experience (60% Lordship)

25% Crisis, 13% Process

## DECLINING

Declining — age 13,  
Lordship at 17

80% Developmental  
conversion experience  
(only 38% Lordship)

10% Crisis, 10% Process

# Types of Conversion Experiences (and its impact on reaching people)

## DEVELOPMENTAL

19 Pastors (6 growing, 5 plateaued, 8 declining)

Avg age – 10

9 followed with a Lordship response

Avg age – 18

Baptized the most children (28.4%)

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## CRISIS

3 Pastors (2 plateaued, 1 declining)

Avg age – 32

Baptized the most adults (59.7%)

## PROCESS

5 Pastors (3 growing, 1 plateaued, 1 declining)

Avg age – 22

Baptized the most youth (26.6%)

# Call to Ministry

## GROWING

Pastor's age at call – 27

70% responded to a  
“specific” call (pastor,  
preach, evangelist, etc.)

## PLATEAUED & DECLINING

Pastor's age at call –  
23 for plateaued

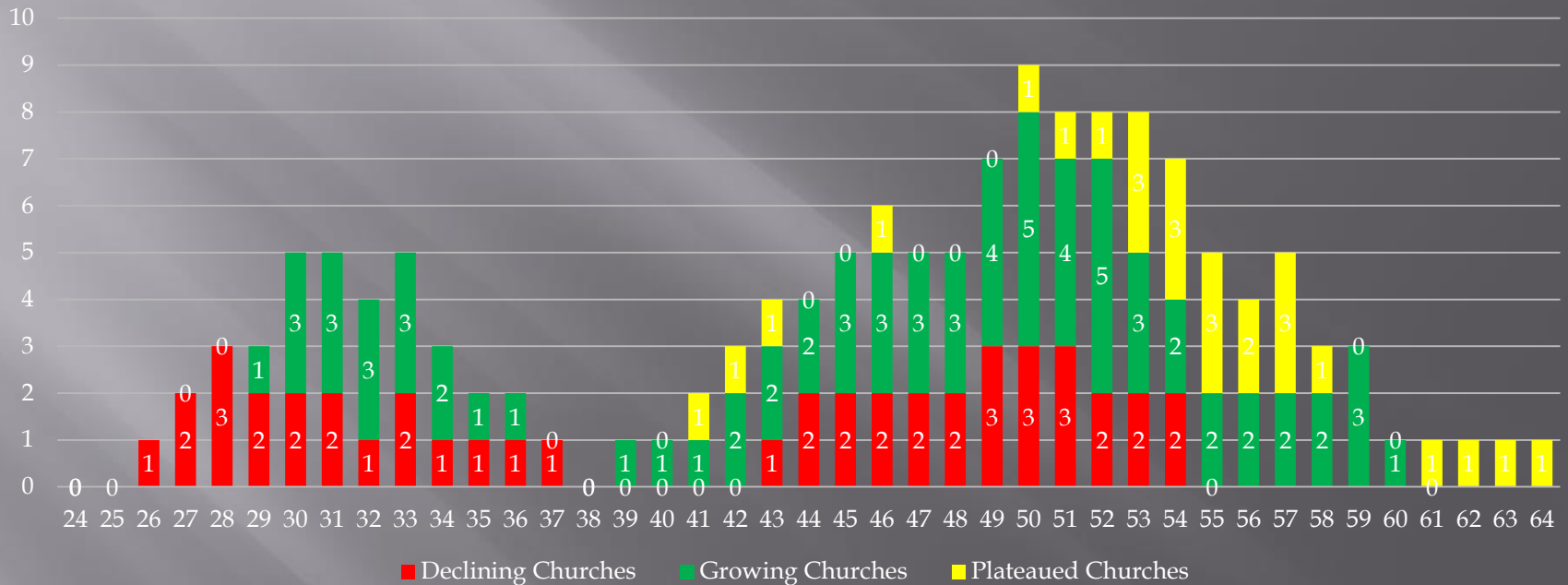
50% responded to a  
“specific” call

Pastor's age at call –  
22 for declining

Only 40% responded to a  
“specific” call

# Ages of Children

Pastor's Most Generative Years



Age of Pastor	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43
Babies born	1	2	3	2	4	2	2	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0

# Ages of Children (cont.)

Generally speaking, when the number of pre-school aged children increased to three, numerical growth in the church ceased.

Once the youngest child began elementary school, numerical growth in the church began again.

# Attitude Towards Life

- Growing – 56% considered themselves “optimistic”
- Plateaued – 75% “optimistic”
- Declining – 45% “optimistic”



# Myers-Briggs Type

16 MBTI Personality Types			
ISTJ Inspector 6%, 7%, 8% 0/1/1	ISFJ Protector 6%, 9%, 4% 0/0/1	INFJ Counselor 1%, 8%, 4% 1/0/0	INTJ Mastermind 1%, 4%, -- 0/0/0
ISTP Crafter 5%, 1%, 4% 0/1/0	ISFP Composer 5%, 3%, 8% 1/0/1	INFP Healer 1%, 4%, 4% 0/0/1	INTP Architect 1%, 2%, -- 0/0/0
ESTP Promoter 13%, 1%, 4% 0/0/1	<b>ESFP</b> <b>Performer</b> 13%, 3%, 8% 2/0/0	ENFP Champion 5%, 12%, 12% 1/2/0	ENTP Inventor 5%, 2%, -- 0/0/0
ESTJ Supervisor 13%, 7%, 12% 1/1/1	<b>ESFJ</b> <b>Provider</b> 13%, 12%, 23% 3/3/0	ENFJ Teacher 5%, 16%, -- 0/0/0	ENTJ Field Marshall 5%, 7%, 12% 1/0/2

# Myers-Briggs Type

Church Type	E	%	I	S	%	N	T	F	%	P	J	%
Growing	8	<b>80</b>	2	7	70	3	2	8	<b>80</b>	4	6	60
Plateaued	6	<b>75</b>	2	6	75	2	3	5	63	3	5	63
Declining	4	50	4	5	63	3	<b>5</b>	3	38	3	5	63
All Churches	18	69	8	18	69	8	10	16	62	10	16	62

# Level of Education

Type of Church	High School	Associates	Bachelors	Masters	Doctorate
Growing	1 (bi-vo)	1 (bi-vo)	2 (bi-vo)	6 (1)*	(1)
Plateaued	1 (bi-vo)	0	3 (bi-vo)	3 (1)	1
Declining	2 (bi-vo)	1 (bi-vo)	0	4	3 (1)
All Churches	4	2	5	13	4

\*( ) around a number indicates the number of pastors in the next lowest category currently pursuing that degree.

# Baptist Giving Patterns

Type of Church	BSCNC & SBC Giving Only	%	CBFNC & CBF Giving Accepted	%
Growing	10	100	0	0
Plateaued	7	88	1	12
Declining	7	70	3	30
All Churches	24	86	4	14

# Leadership Skills

Type of Church	Sports (Captains)	SGA	Work	Pastoring	Scouting	Military	ROTC
Growing	5 (2)	3	2	0	1	1	1
Plateaued	1 (1)	2	1	3	1	2	1
Declining	5 (1)	4	3	2	2	1	1
All churches	11 (4)	9	6	5	4	4	3

Type of Church	Life Experience	Youth Ministry	Father	God	Teacher	Reading
Growing	1	2	1	2	1	0
Plateaued	1	0	1	0	0	1
Declining	1	1	0	0	0	0
All churches	3	3	2	2	1	1

# Leadership Skills (Observations)

- ▣ Both GROWING and DECLINING pastors had equal opportunities to hone their leadership skills.
- ▣ The PLATEAUED pastors appear under-represented in every leadership learning category except “pastoring” and the “military.”

# DiSC Profile

D		i	
Developer	<b>Inspirational</b> 1/0/0*	<b>Persuader</b> 1/0/2	Promoter
<b>Creative</b> 1/0/0	Result-Oriented	Appraiser 0/1/0	<b>Counselor</b> 3/0/0
Tight	Practitioner 0/0/1	<b>Achiever</b> 2/0/0	<b>Agent</b> 2/5/2
Objective Thinker	Perfectionist 0/1/2	Investigator 0/1/0	Specialist 0/0/2
C		S	

\*The three numbers represent the number of pastors of this “type” in the survey – first the growing, then the plateaued and finally the declining ones.

# DiSC Profile

Type of Church	Initiating Pastors		“Mixed” Initiators		“Mixed” Accomodators		Accomodating Pastors	
	D	I	D or I in top two		S or C in top two		S	C
Growing	2	3	10	100%	8	80%	5	0
Plateaued	1	2	7	88%	8	100%	4	1
Declining	0	2	5	56%	7	78%	4	3
All churches	3	7	22	81%	23	85%	13	4



# Spiritual Gifts

	Administration	Apostleship	Discernment	Encouraging	Evangelism	Faith	Giving	Hospitality	Knowledge	Leadership	Pastor	Prophecy	Serving	Showing Mercy	Teaching	Wisdom
Growing (N=9)	1	1	<u>3</u>	4	2	<u>6</u>	3	2	1	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	0	2	3	2
Plateaued (N=8)	1	0	2	4	1	4	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	3	0	5	4	2	1	3	<u>4</u>
Declining (N=10)	<b>2</b>	1	0	4	2	4	<b>4</b>	1	<u>4</u>	1	<u>6</u>	4	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>
All churches	4	2	5	<b>12</b>	5	<b>14</b>	11	5	8	4	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	5	6	<b>13</b>	11