

An Evaluation of Pastoral Self-Leadership and Church Health in Church Plants

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The Christian Church in America is in trouble. Estimates are that 80 to 85 percent of all the churches in North America are plateaued or declining (Arn 16). Each year some thirty-five hundred to four thousand Protestant churches in North America close their doors for good (Schaller 173). Entire denominations are foundering. A twenty-year study of church membership between 1965 and 1985 revealed that virtually every mainline denomination is in decline, including the United Methodist (down 16 percent), Episcopal (20 percent), Presbyterian (24 percent), and Disciples of Christ (42 percent) denominations. Figures released in 1991 indicate that more than 70 percent of all Southern Baptist churches are either plateaued or declining in membership. When this study is broadened to include all U. S. churches, the figure leaps to 80 to 85 percent (White and London 48). Threatening storm clouds have appeared, darkening the bright horizon of American Christianity (Malphurs 13). The critical question many churches in America face today is if they will survive. Clearly, something must be done.

The reasons why the Christian Church in America finds itself in this predicament are numerous. Chief among these reasons is the fact that the Church finds itself today in the post-Christendom, postmodern era, a time when the culture is more non-Christian in its outlook than at nearly any other time in history. Meanwhile, in the words of George G. Hunter III, “many Western Church leaders are in denial; they plan and do church as though next year will be 1957” (Celtic Way 9). Many churches have lost touch with the communities they are trying to reach. Hunter laments, “Most traditional churches today cannot reach, or even communicate meaningfully with their unchurched, non-Christian neighbors” (Church 12). Churches must change in order to carry out the Great

Commission effectively (Matt. 28:19-20) in the twenty-first century and beyond. In most cases traditional ways of doing ministry simply do not reach across the broadening chasm that exists between the modern world in which traditional churches thrived and the postmodern world in which leaders and organizations are required to do something entirely new (Cladis 29). The Church's challenge today is to present the gospel clearly to people who look at Jesus through "secular, skeptical and technical eyes" (Towns and Bird 19).

Encouraging signs exist, however. Many are catching a vision of reaching unchurched Americans through the planting of dynamic, culturally relevant Great Commission churches (Malphurs 15). These church planters believe that planting new churches may be the answer, at least in part, to the growing crisis the church in America is facing. The presence of declining morale and numbers in existing churches is seen by these forward-thinking churches and leaders as an opportunity for the Lord to do a "new thing" among his people (Isa. 43:19). Hundreds of these new churches have sprung up across the nation meeting in schools, civic auditoriums, movie theaters, hotels, funeral homes, and industrial warehouses. What these new churches and their leaders have discovered is that the gospel is best conveyed through the medium of culture. They have learned to be faithful to their calling while striving to be contextual, that is, culturally relevant within their specific setting (Guder et al. 18).

Accompanying the growing number of new church plants, each with a desire to be contextually and culturally relevant, is the demand for effective pastoral leadership in these settings. Leadership is critical in any venture but nowhere more so than in church planting. Church growth expert C. Peter Wagner even goes so far as to say that the

church-planting pastor is “the principal key to a successful church planting endeavor” (Church Planting 51). A great deal is riding on the competency, character, vision, and influence of the church-planting pastor if these new churches are to succeed. Far too many church-planting efforts falter or fail because the pastors leading them labor under a faulty set of assumptions concerning pastoral leadership in a church plant. Anyone who begins a ministry brings to it certain assumptions that are either consciously or subconsciously in place (Malphurs 61). Even success in a long-standing pastorate does not guarantee success as a church planter. In fact, success in an established church may make success even more difficult in a church plant because leadership in the two settings is so different. In addition, studies indicate people have more difficulty unlearning what they already know than they do learning something new. Some pastors who leave what they perceive to be the frustrations of leading an established congregation for the greener grass of a new church plant soon discover they are totally unprepared for the rigors and demands they encounter. Church planting is hard, lonely work requiring a unique approach to pastoral leadership. Transferring traditional and more familiar pastoral roles such as “theologian-in-residence,” “chaplain,” or “curer of souls” to a church plant setting often results in a quick exit for the pastor attempting to lead in that manner or the quick demise of the congregation that pastor is attempting to help plant.

Although considerable overlap exists, the characteristics of an ideal church planter are not the same as those of a pastor of an existing church (Wagner, Church Planting 51). Church-planting pastors must exhibit a high degree of self-initiative and self-motivation, qualities that are frequently lacking even among seasoned clergy. Church consultant Lyle Schaller contends church-planting pastors should be “psychologically

healthy, inner-directed, future-oriented, goal-driven, self-confident, experienced, entrepreneurial, competent, happy, extroverted, enterprising, gregarious, skilled, highly committed, and wise” (111). Wagner’s profile of ideal church-planting pastors includes nine characteristics. They must be committed Christian workers, self-starters, be willing to endure loneliness, be adaptable, have a high level of faith, have a supportive spouse and family, be willing and able to lead, have a friendly personality, and finally, be clearly called by God to plant a church (Church Planting 52-55).

Schaller (38), Wagner (Church Planting 54), Malphurs (105), and others conclude that pastoral leadership is a critical factor in the success of a church plant. Unfortunately leadership also turns out to be one of the weakest areas in pastoral ministry. Researcher George Barna reports in a 2001 survey that only 4 percent of American senior pastors claim to have the spiritual gift of leadership (Barna by Topic). Even more discouraging is the fact that if leaders are weak at leading others, the probability is high that they are weak leaders of themselves as well. In the lonely, often discouraging life of the church-planting pastor, weak self-leadership is an open invitation to personal and moral failure.

Church planters are often left to their own devices concerning the organizing, scheduling, and prioritizing of their work. In the beginning these leaders are not even answerable to a congregation since the congregation has not yet come into existence. Most often external supervision and guidance comes to the church planter from one or two denominational leaders or from a small group of leaders in the church plant. In the final analysis, church planters are their own leaders, and just like any other type leader, they can either be good leaders or bad leaders of themselves. One of the primary assumptions of this study is that effective, enduring leadership is contingent upon

effective self-leadership. People's ability to lead their own lives successfully provides the firm foundation from which they can lead others (Rima 17).

Self-Leadership and Church Health

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the presence of self-leadership practices in church-planting pastors and the health of those churches. Many factors converge in space and time to result in a successful church plant. At a minimum these include the pastor, the context of the church plant, and *kairos*, or God's timing. This research focused specifically on the role of the planting pastor in the church plant. Leading a church as a pastor involves the interaction among the person's sense of call, appropriate and honed spiritual gifts and personality, temperament, and style. This study zeroes in on one aspect of planting pastors' leadership style, namely their ability to lead themselves.

Self-Leadership

This study focused on a particular process of leadership called self-leadership. *Self-leadership* is the leadership people exercise over themselves. The basic premise of self-leadership is that if people ever hope to be effective leaders of others, they must first learn to lead themselves effectively (Manz, Art 2). Leadership is commonly described as "a process of influence," usually with regards to influencing others (Manz and Neck 2). Self-leadership, by contrast, is about the intrapersonal process of influencing oneself. More specifically the term refers to the process of influencing oneself to establish the self-direction and self-motivation needed to perform (Manz, Art 5).

Self-leadership is built primarily upon research and theory in two areas of psychology: social cognitive theory (Bandura 25) and intrinsic motivation theory

(Deci and Ryan 233). These theories are largely the basis for three distinct but complementary sets of strategies: (1) behavioral focused strategies, (2) natural reward strategies, and (3) constructive thought patterns (Manz, Art 103-04).

Behavior-focused strategies are aimed at increasing self-awareness leading to the management of behaviors involving unpleasant but necessary tasks (Manz and Neck 16). Behavior focused strategies include self-observation, self-set goals, practice, self-reward, and self-punishment. Self-observation involves observing and gathering information about personal behavior to determine when, why, and under what conditions individuals engage in certain behaviors (Manz and Sims, Superleadership 45). Used in conjunction with self-observation, personal goal-setting is an important way to provide direction in self-leadership (Manz, Art 25). By establishing goals for both immediate tasks and long-range achievements, self-direction and priorities are clarified. Practice is the physical or mental rehearsal of an activity in advance. Practice can be a powerful strategy to improve behavior. Thinking through and practicing important tasks before they are done “for keeps” can contribute significantly to performance (Manz and Sims, Superleadership 20). Performance can also be enhanced by administering rewards to oneself based upon successful completion of an activity. Self-administered rewards can be concrete and physical, like dinner out at a nice restaurant, or they can be private, mental creations such as imagining the future success and benefits due to the completion of the task at hand (Manz and Sims, Superleadership 23). Finally, self-punishment is related to self-reward in that it focuses on self-applied consequences for a person’s own behavior, but in this case it involves negative rather than positive reinforcement of

the behavior. Research indicates that self-punishment is generally *not* an effective strategy for controlling behavior; therefore, self-punishment should be used sparingly if at all. Recently, many self-leadership theorists have moved away from the term “self-punishment” toward the term “self-correcting feedback” (Manz and Sims, New Superleadership 83). Charles Manz and Henry Sims now believe a more effective way to employ this behavioral strategy is to use failure as learning opportunities by providing positive, encouraging, self-corrective feedback to increase long-term effectiveness (83).

Natural reward strategies emphasize the desirability of recognizing and using the enjoyable aspects of a given task or activity toward the pursuit of more effective self-leadership (40). Manz recommends two strategies using natural rewards to enhance self-leadership. The first strategy is to build more naturally enjoyable features into activities. Manz offers three ways to create such an environment: (1) choosing a pleasant context for the task that would make it more appealing, (2) identifying activities that could be built into the tasks that would make them more rewarding, and (3) redesigning the task by working in the contexts and building in the activities that make them more naturally rewarding (Art 47). The second natural reward strategy Manz suggests is to focus intentionally on the naturally rewarding aspects of activities. With any activity a person’s thoughts can be directed toward the unpleasant aspects of that activity or they can be focused on the more naturally rewarding aspects of that activity. The latter of these two choices naturally makes the activity more enjoyable.

Constructive thought patterns involve the creation and maintenance of

functional patterns of habitual thinking (Manz and Sims, Superleadership 45). Manz and Sims offer three tools to help facilitate this cognitive approach to self-leadership. They label the first tool “managing beliefs.” Beliefs or assumptions are fundamental to thinking, and an especially powerful characteristic of beliefs is that they frequently become self-fulfilling (Superleadership 38). A second method of establishing constructive thought patterns involves imagination and is based on the premise that people carry unique mental images of the world around with them in their heads. These mental images occur naturally and can have a constructive or a destructive influence (Manz and Sims, Superleadership 39). Positive mental images can enhance a person’s competence, performance, and enjoyment of a task or activity while negative mental images can just as easily detract from, and even undermine, performance. The third constructive thought pattern strategy involves individuals learning to speak more effectively to themselves using self-talk. Everyone talks to themselves, often in a negative or self-defeating manner (Manz, Art 64). Research from several fields provides support for the relationship between an individual’s self-talk and performance (Neck, Stewart, and Manz 287). Observing patterns of internal dialog and replacing dysfunctional self-talk with constructive self-dialog is a major step toward improving a person’s psychological world and a productive way to help effectively manage thinking (Manz and Sims, Superleadership 41).

Self-leadership is not another example of the unbiblical individualistic American spirit of “every person for themselves” or the latest self-help strategy. Little room in the Church exists for individualism. The Church is the gathered community of believers all gifted and called to serve in unique and significant ways in unity with one another. The

Apostle Paul reminds the church in Rome, and by extension all Christians, “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought” (Rom. 12:3, NIV). Paul goes on to write, “Just as each of us has one body with many members ... so in Christ we who are many form one body. [W]e have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (Rom. 12:4-6, NIV). One of those important gifts is leadership: “[I]f it [one’s gift] is leadership, let him govern diligently” (Rom. 12:8, NIV).

John Wesley, founder of Methodism, always found a place for the individual but seldom found room for individualism. Wesley’s emphasis on community with his class meetings, bands, and societies is well-known. D. Michael Henderson articulates Wesley’s view on group participation versus acting as isolated individuals:

Wesley was convinced that all learning is expedited by group interaction whether the content of that learning is behavioral transformation, redirection of attitudes and motives, cognitive data gathering, strategic training, or social rehabilitation. It seems that he responded to every instructional need he met by establishing a group.... He felt that his own personal growth was largely due to participation in group experiences and he advocated them for others.... [T]here was always the people-to-people element in his solution to human problems and development. (132)

Self-leadership and collaborating with others are not conflicting concepts. The introduction of empowered work teams into the workplace represents one of the most important new organizational developments in years (Manz and Neck 81). Self-leadership is not only an integral dimension of individual performance but also a key element of team success (89). For individuals to reach their potential while working within teams, the individuals must still lead themselves (82). For these reasons and more, self-leadership is not an individualistic endeavor. Those studying and interpreting the concept of self-leadership are in agreement that the whole purpose of effective self-leadership is not to create superhero leaders; self-leadership is instead a method of

empowering workers and leaders to be better team players. Team unity demands individual enrollment (Leider 192), and effective self-leadership involves a coordinated effort between the leader (in this case the planting pastor) and the organization (the church) as a whole. A proper self-leadership perspective encourages leaders to find their own personal identities and modes of contribution within the context of the broader organization.

As for the possible negative impression of self-leadership being a part of the self-help movement, Charles Manz contends that in addition to its behavioral and cognitive components, self-leadership has another important component—the spiritual: “Time and time again over the last ten years, I heard from people that their religious beliefs were remarkably consistent with my self-leadership principles” (“Exploring”). Manz lifts up the spiritual aspect of self-leadership in his 1998 book The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus. This book includes a chapter specifically about self-leadership in which the author concludes that Jesus’ leadership was essentially empowering leadership from a spiritual center. The ministry of Jesus was largely about facilitating and unleashing the gifts and abilities of others. The way leaders lay the foundation to empower others is by mastering the art of leading themselves first (9).

Self-leadership as discussed in this research is based on several biblical-theological assumptions and has implications for faith and practice in the lives of church-planting pastors. The Bible frequently addresses the importance of leadership in general and the importance of leaders’ own ability to lead themselves. Stories about great leaders and leadership principles abound in the Bible including incidents from the lives of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Deborah, Nehemiah, David, and Jesus to name a few.

The Apostle Paul, writing to his young protégé in the faith, Timothy, speaks often of the need for Timothy to pay close attention to the manner in which he leads himself as he leads others. At times the Apostle Paul focuses more on Timothy's self-leadership than he does on giving specific advice on leading others in the churches for which Timothy was responsible (Rima 30).

In one sense self-leadership is almost entirely about stewardship, defined as using all God-entrusted resources wisely and in God-honoring ways. If God grants pastors the privilege of planting congregations, then they need to do all they can to be “good and faithful steward[s]” (Matt. 25:21, NIV) of that opportunity. Likewise, if denominational boards or local churches invest time, money, personnel, and other resources in church plants, the pastors leading those church plants should be good stewards of that with which they have been entrusted. Good stewardship begins with effective self-leadership.

Church Health

The church health movement has grown out of the church growth movement. The dawn of the church growth movement is generally held to coincide with the publication of Donald McGavran's book The Bridges of God in 1955. By the mid-seventies the conversation began shifting away from church *growth* and more toward church *health*. In 1973, Donald McGavran and Win Arn suggested that diagnosing church health is an important and worthwhile endeavor: “Doctors and dentists tell us of the need for regular check-ups. The same is true of the church. Each church board needs to have at least an annual picture of the health and growth of the church” (74). The result of this new interest in church health instead of church growth is that today many churches are moving away from purely numbers-driven church growth

strategies to an emphasis on growing healthy churches (Towns and Bird 21).

Healthy churches, like healthy people, should exhibit certain vital signs (Wagner, Your Church Can Grow 32). As church health thinking has come to be more in vogue, numerous scholars, teachers, and practitioners have published lists of characteristics of healthy, effective churches. These lists vary in the number of quality characteristics used by the writers as well as in the scientific effort exerted to create the lists. Some of the lists were compiled using large-scale, verifiable, scientific research projects, while others have emerged from the personal ministry experience of pastor-practitioners, and still others are so-called “biblical models.” Unfortunately, while numerous authors have written about church health, little effort has been put forth by these writers to interact with each other’s ideas or to develop a comprehensive definition of church health (Day 2).

After reviewing and contrasting a number of lists of health characteristics, a collaborative research team in the doctor of ministry program at Asbury Theological Seminary defined eight church health characteristics (McKee 33). The Beeson church health characteristics are (1) authentic community, (2) empowering leadership, (3) engaging worship, (4) functional structures, (5) intentional evangelism, (6) mobilized laity, (7) passionate spirituality, and (8) transforming discipleship.

In this research the Beeson characteristics are used to gauge church health. *Church health* is therefore defined as the presence of and balance among eight church health characteristics as described in the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire. These characteristics were chosen because they represent an attempt to engage and interact seriously with the various authors and practitioners and their respective lists concerning exactly what constitutes church health. Finally, a *church*

plant is defined as a community of faith that has held its initial public worship service, and is still being led by its planting pastor, excluding house churches. The world today needs healthy, vital churches to reach and disciple the world for Christ. One possible answer to this crisis may be to plant healthy twenty-first century churches led by pastors who exhibit high levels of self-leadership.

Methodology

This was a descriptive study utilizing two standardized questionnaires. Each pastor's level of self-leadership was compared to the health of the church he or she planted to determine if a correlation exists between pastoral self-leadership and the health of those churches.

Subjects

The subjects of this study were pastors who graduated from the Beeson Pastor program at Asbury Theological Seminary and planted churches. The Beeson Pastor program is a one-year, in-residence, full-scholarship course of study toward a Doctor of Ministry degree. As part of the program, Beeson pastors visit dynamic churches around the world and get the opportunity to interact with leaders from those churches. A high priority of the Beeson program is to train leaders to plant and develop culturally relevant and cross-cultural congregations. Since the program's inception in 1995, ninety-two Beeson pastors have completed the program with Doctor of Ministry degrees, and forty-two of these graduates have planted churches in at least nineteen different states. Thirty of these pastors from seventeen states participated in this study. Fifteen adult leaders of each congregation were invited to participate, and 263 church leaders completed questionnaires. Letters were sent to church-planting pastors requesting their voluntary

participation in this study and advising them they would receive a survey packet the next week. These packets were then mailed one week later. The cover letter instructed the pastors to complete and return a self-leadership questionnaire on themselves along with instructions to distribute the church health questionnaires to fifteen of the adult leaders of their churches. To reduce the effects of bias during data collection as much as possible, care was taken to make the purpose of this research completely clear to the pastors and confidentiality was assured to both the pastors and church leaders.

Instrumentation

Self-leadership was measured using the Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (RSLQ; Houghton and Neck 677). The RSLQ is a self-administered survey tool consisting of thirty-five items representing the three primary self-leadership dimensions: behavior-focused strategies, natural reward strategies, and constructive thought pattern strategies. The scale is administered utilizing a five-point Likert scale with labels ranging from “Not At All Accurate” to “Completely Accurate.”

Church health was measured using the Beeson Church Health Questionnaire (BCHQ; McKee 5) designed by doctoral students at Asbury Theological Seminary. The BCHQ is a self-administered survey tool consisting of sixty-nine items representing eight characteristics of healthy churches: (1) mobilized laity, (2) engaging worship, (3) intentional evangelism, (4) authentic community, (5) transforming discipleship, (6) passionate spirituality, (7) empowering leadership, and (8) functional structures. The scale is administered utilizing a five-point Likert scale with labels ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree,” which indicate the relative accuracy of descriptive statements concerning the subject church.

Analysis

Correlation analysis performed at the overall scale level was used to explore the relationship between the presence of self-leadership practices in church-planting pastors and the health of those churches. Single and multiple regression analyses were then performed to substantiate the finding of the correlation analysis. After that, correlation analysis was carried out at the subscale level to identify any significant correlations that might exist between the eight BCHQ subscales and the nine RSLQ subscales that may not have been reflected at the overall scale level.

Before averaging the church leaders' individual responses to obtain a composite score for church health, levels of analysis calculations were performed to determine if aggregation was appropriate. Verifying the possibility of aggregation was necessary because the church health questionnaires used in this research measured church health at the *individual* level of analysis; each church leader's perception of church health was revealed in the BCHQ that person completed. Church health, however, is an *organizational/group* level concept. Averaging the individual perceptions of health to get an overall picture of church health was not statistically correct without first determining if aggregation was appropriate. This was done using the James, Demaree, and Wolf R_{wg} index of rater agreement to justify aggregation (90). R_{wg} Values falling between 0 and 1 and greater than .7 indicate sufficient interrater agreement to aggregate. Aggregating across levels from the individual level to the group/church level was justified because there was sufficient interrater agreement to aggregate as determined by the R_{wg} indices, all of which were above .70 and between 0 and 1.

Results

Table 1 displays the Pearson's correlation coefficient between pastor self-leadership and church health along with some other correlations. None of the variables in the table are very strongly related to overall church health. The correlation coefficient between pastor self-leadership and overall church health is .18. Of the variables shown, pastor self-leadership has the strongest relationship. Also of note is the significant negative correlation between church age and pastor self-leadership.

To verify the findings of the Pearson correlation, two additional analyses were executed. The first was a simple linear regression with pastor self-leadership as the predictor of overall church health. The second additional analysis was a multiple regression analysis including the other variables analyzed in the Pearson correlation in Table 1.

As shown in Tables 2 and 3, the results of these analyses support the findings of the Pearson correlation. A weak but statistically insignificant positive relationship was found between pastor self-leadership and overall church health. In the simple linear regression (see Table 2), pastor self-leadership explained an insignificant 3 percent of the variance and the adjusted R square was -.02. Adding the other variables in a multiple regression (see Table 3) also revealed little difference, with only the pastors' age and church age even approaching significance.

The final correlation analysis performed was at the subscale level to identify any significant correlations that might exist between the eight BCHQ sub-scales and the nine RSLQ subscales that may not have been evident when correlating at the overall scale level. This analysis is detailed in Table 4. The results of this last analysis revealed few

cross correlations as would be expected since very little correlation was found between the overall scores on both instruments. The two subscales of the BCHQ that were most strongly correlated with the RSLQ subscales were empowering leadership and passionate spirituality.

Discussion

The present study's data suggest that the relationship between pastor self-leadership and church health is positive, but not statistically significant. While this finding was not the anticipated outcome, a few aspects of this result are worth discussing.

First, on the positive side, a correlation was found between pastor self-leadership and overall church health, and the correlation was in the predicted direction (positive). The correlation could have been zero, which would have indicated no correlation exists, or, worse yet, a negative number, which would have indicated a potential negative impact of pastor self-leadership upon church health.

Another positive aspect of this finding is that pastor self-leadership was more strongly correlated to church health than any of the other contextual variables measured including average church attendance, church age, and pastor age. Pastor self-leadership had the strongest relationship to church health among these other variables, even though the relationship was not that strong.

One very interesting finding was the negative correlation between church age, pastor age, and pastor self leadership. The negative correlation between pastor self-leadership and church age (-.407) could suggest that pastor self-leadership is more important to the health of newly planted churches (where the need for pastor self-leadership is greatest) than at older, more established church plants, where the need for

pastor self-leadership is not as great. The negative correlation could also suggest that church-planting pastors perhaps lose their focus over time, and their sense of urgency diminishes once the church plant becomes more established.

On the negative side, the positive correlation found between pastor self-leadership and church health was statistically insignificant. Another negative is that the positive correlation could also be due to chance, as the sample was relatively small. The correlation could also be due to some systematic error factor such as social desirability. Since church health and self-leadership are both generally considered “good” things, the church leaders may have been tempted to rate their churches as healthy and the pastors to rate themselves as self-leaders, thus introducing bias. This social desirability bias could have caused some degree of correlation. Self-reporting may have introduced measurement errors as well.

The simple linear regression analysis substantiated the weak positive Pearson correlation finding. Adding the other variables in a multiple regression revealed a slight relationship between the pastor’s age and church age. This finding, that longer established churches with correspondingly older pastors are likely to be healthier, seems related to the finding of the BCHQ developers that longer established churches with longer tenured (and hence older) pastors tend to be healthier (McKee 106). The relationship between church age, pastor’s age and tenure, and church health warrants further investigation by other researchers.

In an effort to dig deeper, correlation analysis was carried out between the eight subscales of the BCHQ (the eight characteristics) and the nine subscales of the RSLQ (the nine strategies). As was expected after the results of the overall analysis, the

subscale analysis revealed very few cross-scale correlations. Few cross-scale correlations were expected since the overall analysis disclosed so little correlation.

The most interesting aspect of the subscale analysis was the finding that of all the subscales, the two subscales of the BCHQ most strongly related to the RSLQ subscales were empowering leadership and passionate spirituality. The correlations observed were all moderate ones, but only three correlations were found at .4 or higher across both the questionnaires for all seventeen of the subscales, and all three of these correlations were found in these two subscales (see Table 4). The average correlations were also much higher across these two subscales than any of the others. In fact, much of the overall .18 correlation between pastor self-leadership and overall church health was found in the relationship between these two subscales. Many of the other subscales show no relationship at all. The correlations found still do not show a significant relationship between pastor self-leadership and overall church health, but the stronger relationship between these subscales does carry some potential implications.

For example, the subscale analysis could suggest that pastor self-leadership has the strongest impact on overall church health in these two areas. The bulk of the overall correlation appearing in these two subscales suggests that these are two areas of church health that could most directly be affected by a self-leading pastor. Perhaps the explanation for this finding is that many of the other church health items relate to programmatic aspects of the church, to the respondents themselves, or to structural features of the church. Few of these are as easily influenced by the pastor as the two subscale characteristics that came out the highest. The empowering leadership and passionate spirituality subscales concern the extent to which effective leadership exists

and the extent to which a healthy spiritual atmosphere is being created in the church. Both of these can, and are, more directly influenced by the pastor than most of the other subscales. The fact that these two subscales are where the majority of the significant cross-scale correlations were located, therefore, seems logical. The subscale analysis finding suggests that pastor self-leadership manifests itself most through the church health subscales of empowering leadership and passionate spirituality. In this sample these are the church health areas where the pastors' self-leadership characteristics have the most impact on church health.

The implications of this study lend partial support for an increasing awareness and emphasis on the importance of self-leadership in church-planting pastors. When this study began, a substantial positive correlation between church-planting pastor self-leadership and church plant health was anticipated. If such a relationship had been found, the implication would be that self-leadership aptitude tests could be given to potential church-planting pastors to help identify those pastors most likely to plant healthy churches. In addition, self-leadership training courses could have been developed for potential and existing church-planting pastors to strengthen self-leadership skills, which would, in turn, strengthen the church plants' health.

Even though the relationship between self-leadership and church health turned out to be statistically insignificant, such a finding does not mean self-leadership traits in church-planting pastors is not important. As has been demonstrated, self-leadership does have a positive, though fairly insignificant, effect on church health. As such, totally ignoring self-leadership when selecting or training a church planter would be a mistake.

This study was limited to graduates of the Beeson Pastor program who have

planted a church. The limitation of using the Beeson Pastor group means the findings of this study may not be applicable in a more generalized setting. The applicability of the findings of this study remains unclear and limited at best to Beeson pastors who plant churches.

The primary weakness of the study was the methodological weakness of having a relatively small sample size. First of all, only thirty churches were involved in the study, which is a relatively small number. Second, only 263 church leader responses were completed and returned out of the 450 sent (a 58 percent return). The relatively small number of responses to the BCHQ reduces the probability that perceptions of church health were accurately portrayed.

Another weakness encountered was the method used to measure church health. Distributing questionnaires exclusively to church leaders limited perceptions of church health to only those who were more involved in the churches and left out less involved members' perspectives. Limiting church health responses to leaders only meant running the risk that the leaders were more likely to be strongly attached to the church-planting pastor, which could introduce significant bias. Compounding this risk was the method by which questionnaires were distributed. Each of the pastors was asked to find up to fifteen leaders to complete and return a questionnaire. No controls were placed on who the pastor actually chose to complete the questionnaires, and no attempt was made to monitor how the pastors explained the study to potential respondents. In the end, the method chosen to collect church health data was deemed acceptable, though far from perfect.

Many questions remain unanswered by this study, and further exploration of both self-leadership in the church and church health is welcomed and needed. As is often the

case when doing research, more questions have perhaps been raised than have been answered. One area ripe with possibility concerns the question of which characteristics or personal traits of a church-planting pastor have the greatest impact on church health. This research selected one such feature—self-leadership—and demonstrated that particular characteristic’s relatively minor role in church health. While this research narrowed the possibilities with its findings, the question of which qualities in a church-planting pastor are most important with regard to church health remains.

An even broader study, but one certainly worth the effort, would be to research which factors other than the pastor are most critical in overall church health in church plants. This research revealed a few variables that are apparently not as important as pastor self-leadership—average church attendance, church age, and pastor’s age, but many other factors remain to be explored.

Finally, this study concerning self-leadership in church-planting pastors in no way exhausts what can be learned about the impact of self-leadership in the Church. Further research on self-leadership between pastors and church boards, within church staffs and ministry teams, the role of self-leadership in preaching, or the role of self-leadership in discipleship in the church, and many other important applications come to mind that are worthy of further research. In short, self-leadership appears to offer many potential benefits to individual pastors and to the Church as a whole and is, therefore, a concept worthy of further study and research.

In the final analysis, pastor self-leadership appears to be only one of many factors that lead to overall church health in the long run. Self-leadership is important for church planters, especially at the early stages of the planting process and especially in the health

areas of empowering leadership and passionate spirituality. In the meantime, traits in church-planting pastors more important than self-leadership that impact church health remain to be discovered (should they exist). Effective pastors and healthy churches of the twenty-first century and beyond must continue to rely on God's Spirit, while at the same time striving to make the most of their gifts, graces, natural abilities, and acquired skills. Leaders must continue to cast vision, identify core values, persevere with integrity, generate momentum, and equip and empower others. Leaders must also take the time and make the effort to listen to the still, small voice from above, and, in so doing, never stray far from the only reliable fount of wisdom and power.

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Table 1. Overall Correlation Analysis

		ATT	CAGE	OCH	PAGE	PSL
Pearson Correlation	ATT	1.00	.507**	.011	.046	.145
	CAGE	.507**	1.00	-.158	.508**	-.407*
	OCH	.011	-.158	1.00	.137	.180
	PAGE	.046	.508	.137	1.00	-.344
	PSL	.145	-.407	.180	-.344	1.00
Sig. (2-tailed)	ATT	.	.004	.953	.809	.443
	CAGE	.004	.	.406	.004	.026
	OCH	.953	.406	.	.471	.340
	PAGE	.809	.004	.471	.	.063
	PSL	.443	.026	.340	.063	.
N	ATT	30	30	30	30	30
	CAGE	30	30	30	30	30
	OCH	30	30	30	30	30
	PAGE	30	30	30	30	30
	PSL	30	30	30	30	30

** . Cor. is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Cor. is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

ATT = Average Church Attendance CAGE = Church Age OCH = Overall Church Health (Aggregated Mean of BCHQ Responses) PAGE = Pastor Age PSL = Pastor Self-Leadership (RSLQ Score)

Table 2. Simple Linear Regression Analysis**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.180 ^a	.033	-.002	12.7143

ANOVA^b

Model	Perceived Church Health	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	152.378	1	152.378	.943	.340 ^a
	Residual	4526.322	28	161.654		
	Total	4678.700	29			

^a. Predictors: (Constant), PSL**Coefficients^a**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	214.440	17.112	1	152.378	.943
	PSL	.122	.126		161.654	

^a. Predictors: (Constant), PSL^b. Dependent Variable: OCH

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables Entered/Removed ^b			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	PSL ATT PAGE CAGE ^a		Enter

^a. All requested variables entered.

^b. Dependent variable: OCH

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.366 ^a	.134	-.005	12.7329

^a. Predictors: (Constant), PSL, ATT, PAGE, CAGE

ANOVA ^b						
Model	Perceived Church Health	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	625.511	4	156.378	.965	.444 ^a
	Residual	4053.189	25	162.128		
	Total	4678.700	29			

^a. Predictors: (Constant), PSL, ATT, PAGE, CAGE

^b. Dependent Variable: OCH

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
1	(Constant)	184.980	31.597	1	5.854	.000
	ATT	8.438E-03	.013	.165	.663	.513
	CAGE	-1.139	.904	-.373	-1.259	.220
	PAGE	.930	.578	.363	1.608	.120
	PSL	8.801E-02	.155	.130	.569	.575

^a. Predictors: (Constant), PSL

Table 4. Subscale Correlation Analysis

	AC	EBA	EL	EW	FS	IE	ML	NR	PS	SC	SGS	SO	SP	SR	ST	TD	VSP
Pearson r																	
AC	1.00																
EBA	-.104	1.00															
EL	.593	-.124	1.00														
EW	.683**	-.033	.688**	1.00													
FS	.658**	-.018	.846**	.837**	1.00												
IE	.320	.070	.261	.378**	1.000												
ML	.806**	-.049	.442*	.770**	.442*	1.000											
NR	.084	.433*	.266	.055	.055	.054	1.000										
PS	.214	.298	.725**	.758**	.758**	.340	.328	1.000									
SC	-.123	.259	.349	.078	.078	-.043	.016	.562**	1.000								
SGS	-.037	.371*	.357	-.046	.047	-.016	-.030	.546**	.427*	1.000							
SO	-.041	.195	.290	-.096	.085	-.097	.043	.510**	.325	.576**	1.000						
SP	.108	.116	-.112	-.048	-.063	-.250	-.135	.140	-.049	.196	.206	1.000					
SR	.127	.017	.408*	.101	.229	-.018	.182	.373*	.344	.408*	.160	.347	1.000				
ST	.189	.578**	.347	.170	.252	.155	.262	.480**	.493**	.425*	.382*	.333	.280	1.000			
TD	.527**	.056	.548**	.641**	.534**	.305	.659**	.014	.450**	-.025	.159	.033	.111	.064	1.000		
VSP	-.037	.436*	.231	-.182	-.030	-.025	-.114	.644**	.361	.487**	.561**	.484**	.190	.139	.038	1.000	
AC		.583	.514	.864	.923	.713	.798	.017	.110	.168	.044	.301	.543	.931	.001	.768	.016
EBA																	
EL		.514															
EW		.864															
FS		.923															
IE		.713	.164	.001	.039		.015	.650	.426	.823	.934	.610	.183	.924	.412	.101	.895
ML		.798				.015		.775	.076	.933	.876	.820	.476	.335	.162	.000	.547
NR		.661	.155	.933	.774	.650	.775			.001	.002	.004	.459	.043	.007	.940	.000
PS		.256	.110	.000	.011	.001	.426	.066	.076	.062	.019	.079	.796	.062	.006	.013	.050
SC		.168	.058	.769	.681	.823	.933	.001	.062		.003	.001	.300	.025	.019	.896	.006
SGS		.847	.044	.808	.805	.934	.876	.002	.019	.003		.000	.276	.399	.037	.401	.001
SO		.828	.301	.615	.656	.610	.820	.004	.079	.001	.000		.157	.060	.047	.863	.007
SP		.572	.543	.801	.740	.183	.476	.459	.796	.300	.276	.157		.770	.072	.094	.315
SR		.504	.931	.595	.223	.924	.335	.043	.062	.025	.399	.060	.770		.134	.735	.463
ST		.318	.001	.369	.180	.412	.162	.007	.006	.019	.037	.047	.072	.134		.233	.000
TD		.003	.768	.002	.000	.101	.000	.94	.013	.896	.401	.863	.094	.735	.233		.843
VSP		.848	.016	.335	.875	.895	.547	.000	.050	.006	.001	.007	.315	.463	.000		

Fig. 2 Tail

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Variable Codes

- AC = Authentic Community
- EW = Engaging Worship
- ML = Mobilized Laity
- SC = Self-Cueing
- SP = Self-Punishment
- TD = Transforming Discipleship
- EBA = Evaluating Beliefs and Assumptions
- FS = Functional Structures
- NR = Natural Rewards
- SGS = Self Goal Setting
- SR = Self-Reward
- VSP = Visualizing Successful Performance
- EL = Empowering Leadership
- IE = Intentional Evangelism
- PS = Passionate Spirituality
- SO = Self-Observation
- ST = Self-Talk