

Use of Concept Mapping/Pattern Matching as a Strategic Planning Tool for a Local Congregation

Darryl L. Jinkerson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Management
College of Business Administration
Abilene Christian University
ACU Box 29334
Office: (325) 674-2493
Email: darryl.jinkerson@coba.acu.edu

**Presented at the annual meeting of the
Christian Business Faculty Association**
Regent University
Virginia Beach, VA

October 16-18, 2003

Use of Concept Mapping/Pattern Matching as a Strategic Planning Tool for a Local Congregation

Abstract

Religious organizations including local congregations are borrowing ideas, processes and methodologies more and more frequently from the corporate business world in order to improve the efficiencies of their respective organizations. This paper presents an example of how a local congregation leveraged one particular corporate methodology to conduct its own strategic planning process for congregational growth. The key component of this corporate methodology was the use of a particular tool known as “Concept Mapping” to support their strategic planning process. Concept Mapping is a structured process which can be used by groups to develop a conceptual framework to guide evaluation or strategic planning (Trochim, 1989b). The outcome of the process is a conceptual framework for planning or discussion, where the framework is displayed in the form a picture or “concept map.” A potential best practice in local congregational strategic planning efforts will be discussed.

Purpose of the Paper

In a typical business, the goal of formal strategic planning is to make sure that key decision makers have a solid understanding of the business, share a common fact base, and agree on important assumptions (Kaplan & Beinhocker, 2003). However, in a church setting, especially in the case of an autonomous local congregation, the goals and nature of strategic planning are very different. For example, the key decisions makers themselves (i.e., congregational leaders) are members at large of the congregation selected to serve as its leaders (Acts 6). Generally, they are selected based on spiritual attributes (I Timothy 3: 1 – 12) and not necessarily on their ability to think and act strategically. Secondly, unlike business where strategic planning is seen as critical to the success of the operation, in many congregations, strategic planning either does not occur or consists entirely of setting the annual financial budget for the next fiscal year. Finally, many congregations lack the energy or expertise to successfully conduct a viable strategic planning effort.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the process that one congregation followed in conducting its strategic planning process and how it successfully leveraged a particular corporate methodology to conduct its own strategic planning process for congregational growth. The paper will share the insights and lessons learned from the process and examine how this congregation overcame the typical obstacles faced by most local congregations in strategic planning. The paper also discusses the cost-benefit and value of this particular approach to strategic planning.

Strategic Planning

In business, planning is one of the four essential managerial functions. Planning is generally defined as identifying and selecting appropriate goals and courses of action (Jones, George, & Hill, 2000). Marshall (2003) suggests that planning is simply a technique for establishing and maintaining a sense of direction so that one can work consistently to make progress in that chosen direction.

Planning that is targeted at strategy formation is known as strategic planning and it generally involves some analysis of an organization's current situation followed by the development of specific actions designed to accomplish its mission, vision and goals. Although targeted at strategic planning for libraries, Riggs (1984) provides a robust definition of strategic planning that is applicable to not only to libraries but also to business and congregations:

Strategic planning is the process of deciding on objectives of the organization, on changes in these objectives, on the resources used to attain these objectives, and on the policies that are to govern the acquisition, use and disposition of these resources. (p. 1)

Townsend (2003) gives six reasons why a church or local congregation should engage in strategic planning:

1. To address change issues (such as demographic or socioeconomic) in their congregation.
2. To set direction (and establish criteria for day to day operations)
3. To establish priorities
4. To mobilize resources
5. To enhance productivity results
6. To determine needed (changes to) structure.

The main problem is that most local congregations simply do not participate in any formal type of strategic planning. Although still true today, Alvin J. Lindgren (1965) observed many years ago that

Most churches do not engage in such systematic long-range planning. Perhaps this is one reason why the church has not been able to reach and change society more effectively. Many churches operate on hand-to-mouth planning. They consider the pressing problems of the moment at each board meeting without placing them in proper perspective in relationship to either past or future. (p. 226).

Many reasons have been suggested as to why planning fails to happen in local congregations today. Migliore, Stevens, and Loudon (1994) suggest that there are three such reasons: (1) members lack the training or expertise, (2) many perceive planning as unscriptural, and (3) leaders encountered problems in implementation. Most congregational leaders are selected based on spiritual attributes (Acts 6; I Timothy 3) and not on their ability to think or act strategically. Many such leaders feel unqualified to champion any type of planning initiative or effort. Consequently, church leaders focus on "spiritual" things and the things for which they have been trained and equipped. As such, their time is spent on teaching and performing other functions that they have either been trained in or believe is more appropriate given their time commitments.

Burns (1992) conducted a study to examine the relationship between the planning process and effective church ministries. She concluded that church leaders are not adequately prepared and must be taught the importance of using managerial skills and abilities, especially planning, in furthering the mission of the Church. Furthermore, she concluded that church leaders must not

only be trained in planning processes but must also be provided the tools necessary to incorporate planning into their respective ministries.

Still others believe that planning is unscriptural (Van Auken and Johnson, 1984) or impractical (Goodson, 2003). They reason that since churches are not businesses, they should not operate like a business. Consequently, since strategic planning is associated with management principles and business, in general, it is shunned. However, as Goodson (2003) points out, the Bible is literally filled with examples and models of planning and reasons to plan:

- Joseph planned for abundant harvest and famine
- Kings planned for war
- Joshua planned for the conquest of Canaan
- Moses planned for the building of the tabernacle
- David planned for the building of the temple.

In addition, there are a number of Bible verses that support and commend planning:

Luke 14:28	Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?
Proverbs 16:3	Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.
Proverbs 16:9	In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.
Proverbs 15:22	Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.
Jeremiah 29:11	“For I know the plans I have for you” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Finally, many congregations face significant problems in implementation of their plans. Implementation problems include scope, time constraints, lack of funding, fear of change or the future, and the perception that planning is not action-oriented. Others object to planning on the basis that planning becomes an end, not just a means to an end (Migliore et al., 1994). Or others fall prey to what Bobbe, Mendel and Schulman (2000) describe as the “strategic planning logic trap.” The trap is sprung when the traditional approach of “first plan; then do” is the logic upon which the process is based. The logic assumes that, given a carefully developed strategic plan, the sought-after results will follow – that the organization will be able to carry out the plan. Although logical perhaps, far too often this assumption proves to be false.

Strategic Planning Example at a Local Congregation: A Case Study

Method

Participants

The participants for this study consisted of two groups: leadership team and the entire congregation. The leadership team consisted of eighteen people (5 elders; 13 deacons). Most of the leaders have attended the congregation for several years with three of the deacons being members for a little over two years.

The West Chicago Church of Christ consists of approximately 200 members. The congregation is located in a small suburban town located outside a large Midwestern city. The entire membership from age 10 up was eligible and encouraged to participate in the process by completing a survey and returning it to one of the leaders. In total, 109 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 54%.

Procedure

Step 1: Developing the Focus Statement

Consistent with the methodology for Concept Mapping (Trochim, 1989b), the strategic planning process began with the development a focus statement. The focus statement serves two purposes: 1) it defines the focus or target for the brainstorming activity and 2) it serves as the focus for the ratings that are to occur in the next step. Given that the present effort was strategic planning for a local congregation and that the leadership had agreed that our collective goal was to grow both spiritually and numerically, the focus statement that was the stimulus for the brainstorming was “In order for the West Chicago Church of Christ to continue to grow spiritually and numerically, we need to ...”

Step 2: Generation of Statements

This step began with the leadership team meeting and participating in a three-hour brainstorming session. The typical rules for brainstorming were applied (*A Process Guidebook*, 1991) including encouraging participants to generate lots of statements and to avoid evaluation or criticism of any ideas. In addition, the leadership members were encouraged to ask for clarification of any unfamiliar terms or jargon so that all would understand what was meant by any given statement.

One member of the leadership team who also was a trained facilitator facilitated the session. The brainstorming participants were told to generate short statements or sentences that completed the focus statement. The brainstorming session was conducted in a round-robin fashion and each response was recorded on a flip chart and the flip chart pages were displayed around the room as they were completed. In total, 158 response statements were generated and this list is entitled the Statement List. A partial list of the 158 statements is shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Step 3: Structuring of Statements

The structuring of statements consisted of two separate activities. The first was a sorting activity. Each of the 158 statements was given a number between 1 and 158 and was printed on a separate 2 X 3.5 inch card (about the size of a standard business card). A complete set of these cards or deck were given to each of the 18 congregational leaders and they were asked to sort the cards into piles “in a way that makes sense to you.” There were restrictions on the sorting procedure: each card could be in only one pile (i.e., it cannot be in two stacks at the same time); all statements could not be put into one pile; and one could not create any just miscellaneous piles.

Each leader was also asked to name each of his respective piles and to record which particular statements (by number) constituted each pile. Some leaders had as few as 10 or 11 piles and others had as many as 16 or 17 piles (see Attachment 1 for a set of complete sorting instructions).

The second activity is providing a rating for each of the statements on some dimension. In this case, the dimension was the relative importance of each statement relative to all the other statements. The 158 were converted into a survey and the entire congregation was given an opportunity to rate each statement using the following scale: 1=Relatively Unimportant, 2=Somewhat Important, 3 = Moderately Important; 4=Very Important and 5=Extremely Important. The survey also contained nine demographic questions used for segmenting the results (Attachment 2 contains the initial sections of the survey)

Step 4: Representation of Statements

This is one step that is completed independent of any of the participants. All the data from the previous steps were entered in The Concept System, a computer program which facilitates the entry and analysis of data. The program, developed by Trochim (1989a), uses a combination of multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis techniques to represent graphically the conceptual relationships underlying the data.

First, nonmetric multidimensional scaling uses the information from the sorting activity to locate each item as a separate point on a two-dimensional map (see Figure 1). This

Insert Figure 1 about here

two-dimensional map is known as a Point Map. Statements (points) that are close together on this map are statements that generally were sorted together more often than statements (points)

that are not geographically close together. For example, in the north east region, items 82 and 89 are found close together and both address some type of training (Item 82 is “Teach Spanish here for members” and Item 89 is “Develop a class about Baptism for young children”).

Overlaying the average ratings of importance for each statement on the two-dimensional Point Map yields the Point Rating Map (see Figure 2).

Insert Figure 2 about here

The next step of the analysis groups individual statements on the map into clusters reflecting different types of initiatives. The points on the map are grouped using Ward’s hierarchical cluster analysis (Everitt, 1980; Ward, 1963) on the X – Y coordinate provided by the multidimensional scaling. After examining a variety of differing number of cluster solutions, a solution consisting of 15 clusters was determined to be best (see Figure 3). This diagram of clusters is known as the Cluster Map.

Insert Figure 3 about here

In addition, Attachment 3 contains a complete listing of items within each cluster along with the average importance rating for each item. This listing is known as the Cluster List.

The Point Cluster Map (see Figure 4) displays exactly which items are specific to which

Insert Figure 4 about here

clusters. Similar to the Point Rating Map, overlaying the average ratings of importance on the Cluster Map yields the Cluster Rating Map (see Figure 5).

Insert Figure 5 about here

Step 5: Interpreting the Maps

At this point, the key stakeholders are reconvened to aid in interpreting the maps. In the case of the local congregation, this required that all five elders and the thirteen deacons be present. Each person was provided a hard copy of all of the output consisting of the following:

- Statement List – original list of brainstormed statements, each with an identifying number
- Cluster List – listing of the statements that constitute each cluster as identified by the cluster analysis
- Point Map – numbered point map as produced by the multidimensional scaling analysis
- Point Cluster Map – cluster grouping of points with tentative cluster names
- Point Rating Map – point map with the average importance rating overlaid
- Cluster Map – map displaying the cluster groupings as they relate to each other
- Cluster Rating Map – cluster map with the average importance rating overlaid

All four maps above provide related but unique information about specific initiatives that this congregation should follow in order to reach its respective objective. Generally, the last two maps are the ones that are most interpretable and provide the most insight as was the case in this study.

Interpretation of the Maps begins with an orientation to the Point Map. As seen in Figure 1, this map is not very user friendly. It does, however, provide some interesting insights. The key findings of the point map are produced due to the fact that statements that were piled together frequently appear closer to each other than statements that were not. For example, statements 114 and 147 were grouped so similarly so often (*located at about 6:00 o'clock on the point map*) that they are just about superimposed on each other.

The Point Rating Map (Figure 2) is next briefly examined. This provides insights on the relative importance of each statement in relation to all other statements. Generally, this is more of an interim product and is not generally thoroughly investigated.

Another interim map that is generally just displayed but not thoroughly analyzed is the Point Cluster Map (Figure 4). The value of this map is to display exactly which points constitute which cluster.

The first map that is thoroughly analyzed and interpreted is the Cluster Map. The first major step in this process is the finalization of the cluster names. As an output from the Concept System software, an initial cluster map is produced with each cluster being provided a tentative name. The pool of potential names originates from the sorting participants when they name their respective sorted piles. These names are retained by the software which tracks which items are associated with which names. Following the cluster analysis, the system suggests names based on which items are central to that respective cluster and how often those items were grouped together by different sorters.

Since the names are tentative, the first step in interpretation is obtaining a consensus that the cluster names are indeed appropriate. All of the stakeholders, which in this case were the elders and deacons of the local congregation, were asked to read through the Cluster List to ensure that all were comfortable with the tentative names for each cluster. Minimal changes were made and the final Cluster Map is the one displayed in Figure 3.

As was true in interpreting the Point Map, clusters that are closer together on the cluster map should be more similar conceptually than clusters which are farther apart. Finally, the ratings are

overlaid on the Cluster Map and the relative importance of each cluster is displayed as shown in Figure 5.

At this point interesting insights started to emerge from the discussions of the cluster maps. It is critical that the stakeholders understand that the maps are representations of *their* efforts. The maps are simply a representation of their best thinking. In the case of West Chicago, examining the Cluster Map in Figure 3 reveals the following:

- In the southeast, there is a region of outreach or evangelism
- In the northeast, there is a region that focuses primarily on preparation or training
- In the upper midwest, there is a region on spiritual growth and worship
- In the west, the emphasis is on the Leadership (elders) and prayer
- In the center of the map is the Youth Cluster. This is significant in that the center is known as the bridge (Trochim, 1989b) and can be thought as the core of the whole structure.

The fact that the core of the future growth of this congregation is youth is not surprising. This congregation has invested heavily in supporting its youth through the hiring of a full-time youth minister, providing a special teen room in the building, and by ear-marking significant budget to youth activities. Simply said, the congregation understands that the youth is the church of tomorrow and wishes to invest in it.

Overlaying the importance ratings provided additional insights (see Figure 5). First, the most important clusters, as indicated by the number of layers, were Evangelism, Worship, Prayer, and Youth. These results also were not too surprising. The mission of the church, reverence in worship and the power of prayer were strong themes often presented from the pulpit by the congregational minister in addition to the efforts regarding the youth previously mentioned. In addition, this congregation strongly believed in and practiced prayer. Regularly scheduled congregational-wide prayer times in addition to normal worship times were common.

Somewhat surprising was the lack of importance for Missions, Spanish Outreach and Community Outreach. This was particularly surprising given the emphasis and efforts spent in world missions by this congregation. Specifically, this congregation had supported full-time missionaries in Taiwan, Russia and Honduras for several years. In addition, a number of members had personally visited and supported the efforts in Honduras.

Lack of support for local outreach and the Spanish community was also surprising. This congregation happens to be located in a small city with a very large Hispanic population, many of whom are lower middle class. There is significant opportunity to reach out and evangelize the local community but relative to other initiatives, this concept was viewed as less important. Perhaps one reason for the lack of support is the fact that the membership of the congregation includes virtually no Hispanics. Despite its geographic location, the congregation consists primarily of upper middle class Caucasians.

Step 6: Utilization of Maps

Although the approach is generally viewed as very novel and interesting, the question now turns to “so what”? How does an organization such as a local congregation turn these pictures into some type of planning initiative or strategy and identify specific action steps? Often, the interpretation process of the map itself often leads directly to the identification of next steps.

In the case of West Chicago, the lack of importance for Spanish Outreach and Community Outreach was a red flag. In identifying action steps, it was important to return to the purpose of the whole process; that is, what should this congregation do to grow spiritually and numerically? Likewise, the most important clusters (Evangelism, Youth, Worship and Prayer) validated current efforts and reinforced the need to continue the emphasis in classes and from the pulpit. Finally, ratings were also taken into consideration in terms of budget allocations.

Further analysis also revealed additional insights that contributed to specific action steps. Pattern Matching (Concept System Software Guide, 1996) was conducted to compare the importance ratings of clusters by various groups. Pattern Matching utilizes a ladder graph format to visually display the degree of agreement between the ratings of the groups being compared. If the two groups are in complete agreement, the graph would consist of a series of parallel lines and closely resemble a ladder. To the extent that the two groups are not in agreement, the lines cross and represent varying amounts of agreement/disagreement. The amount of correlation (Pearson r) between the two groups is also reported.

The demographics provided in the original survey were also entered into the Concept System in order to provide a basis for these comparisons. Although there were nine demographic questions on the survey, only three were considered for comparison purposes in the ladder graphs. The questions considered included:

- Whether or not one was part of the leadership (elder or a deacon in the congregation)
- Children living at home
- Gender

Figure 6 displays a ladder graph comparing the ratings of importance for the Leadership versus

Insert Figure 6 about here

the remaining congregation. Careful examination reveals a fair amount of agreement in priorities between the leadership and the congregation (Pearson $r = .7$). For example, the first four concepts (clusters) were rated the highest for both groups but in a slightly different order. The leadership’s first four concepts in descending order were Prayer, Worship, Evangelism and Youth. The congregation’s first four concepts in descending order were Worship, Prayer, Youth and Evangelism.

However, the biggest differences in perception between the leadership and the congregation were the concepts of Spanish Outreach and Building and Grounds. The leadership rated Spanish Outreach fifth (out of fifteen) on the importance scale but was rated last for the congregation.

This difference in perception is shown graphically by the sharp slope of the line associated with the Spanish Outreach cluster on each side of the ladder graph. This sharp contrast in importance led to significant discussions among the leadership and was viewed strategically as a priority action step to be taken. Specifically, it was viewed as an opportunity for teaching (from the pulpit) and leading the congregation (primarily by example) in the importance of outreach especially to the Spanish community.

Likewise, the congregation rated Building and Grounds ninth, whereas the Leadership rated this concept which included such things as finishing repairs on the minister's home or replacing the water and septic system for the church with city hook-ups less important and preferred to focus more on ideas with more of a spiritual emphasis.

As shown in Figure 7 by the number of bars that are crossed, there was less agreement between

Insert Figure 7 about here

members with children living at home and those without (Pearson $r = .63$). Although there was agreement on the importance of youth (both groups rated it third in importance), there was not a lot of agreement on much else. Strategically, it was important to once again build on the congregational support for the youth program, but it was also useful to visually understand the diversity of thinking between members with or without children.

Finally, Figure 8 displays the ladder graph that compares the perceptions of the males in the

Insert Figure 8 about here

congregation to the females. Overall, there was a high degree of agreement between the males and the females in the congregation in rating the importance of the respective items that constituted the clusters. The overall correlation is .82 and once again the first four clusters are the same but in a slightly different order. The first four for the males in descending order were Prayer, Worship, Evangelism, and Youth. This order is identical to the list for the leadership group which may reflect the fact that the leadership is all male. The order for the first four for the females was Worship, Prayer, Youth and Evangelism. This order is the same as the congregation's when compared to the leadership which may reflect the large percentage of the congregation that is female.

Discussion

This paper presented the results of a strategic planning effort that was conducted by a local congregation in an effort to identify specific action steps and initiatives to be pursued in the

hopes of growing spiritually and numerically. The novelty of this effort was the use of a particular methodology originally developed as a measurement tool for organizations but which has found utility in the arena of strategic planning. The tool is known as Concept Mapping/Pattern Matching.

There are a number of specific benefits of this methodology to any organization that is attempting to do strategic planning. The first benefit is that the process brings a definite structure and order to what many find to be a difficult task. There are six definite steps that must be followed in order if the process is to be successful. Secondly, the methodology expresses the problem or issue to be addressed in the language of the participants. Third, the process of participating in the brainstorming session itself by reacting to the focus statement and thinking creatively and freely and listing all of the ideas is in itself rewarding. Participants often gain significant insights into the thinking of the other participants and the brainstorming session can be conducive to building a team consensus in a number of areas. Marshall (2003) suggests that many times the greatest value in strategic planning is the process itself and not the actual plan.

Fourth, the maps themselves are a product that the organization can own. A picture is worth a thousand words and this graphic product is comprehensible to all of the participants and can be presented to other audiences quite easily. Finally, the concept mapping process has been shown to increase group cohesiveness and morale.

There are some downsides to this methodology. First and foremost, the methodology requires two essential things: a trained facilitator and the Concept Systems software itself. Training in facilitating and using the software is available from the developer at a fairly reasonable cost. However, use of the software itself can be fairly expensive, especially for smaller congregations.

Secondly, there can be a temptation to get overwhelmed by the whole process, especially the statistics and the engine that drives the methodology. This is very manageable by a trained facilitator but it is an issue that must be managed.

Finally, this approach as compared to other less structured planning processes such as a simple group discussion or committee meeting requires much more rigor and effort. It takes time and energy to generate the statements and later to sort them into appropriate categories. In addition, someone must enter the data into the system unless the data can be electronically entered by each participant which is available in the more recent versions of the software.

Strategic planning is not the latest management fad. Planning is as old as creation. However, it must be done properly, with prayer and wisdom and patience. Strategic planning is one resource that helps local congregations to discover what God is calling them to do to glorify Him in years to come.

REFERENCES

- Bobbe, R.A., Mendel, J. & Schulman, Y. (2000). The strategic planning trap: How to avoid it. *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, 76, 194-204.
- Burns, C.F. (1992). A study of the relationship between the use of planning and ministry effectiveness in the church. [Abstract]. *Masters Abstracts International*, 31, 158.
- The concept system software guide* (1996). Ithaca, NY: Concept Systems, Inc.
- Everitt, B. (1980). *Cluster analysis* (2nd ed.). New York: Halsted Press.
- Goodson, J. (2003). Biblical basis of planning. *Church Administration*, 45, 11-13.
- Jones, G.R., George, J.M., & Hill C.W.L. (2000). *Contemporary management* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill Companies, Inc.
- Kaplan, S., & Beinhocker, E.D. (2003). The real value of strategic planning. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 44, 71-76.
- Lindgren, A.J. (1965). *Foundations for purposeful church administration*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Marshall, M. (2003). Mapping your church strategy. *Church Administration*, 45, 7- 9.
- Migliore, H.R., Stevens, R.E. & Loudon, D.L. (1994). *Church and ministry strategic planning: From concept to success*. New York: Hawthorne Press.
- A Process guidebook: Tools and techniques for effective presentation* (1991). St. Charles, IL: Arthur Andersen & Co. SC.
- Riggs, D. E. (1984). *Strategic planning for library managers*. Phoenix: Oryx.
- Townsend, H. (2003). Strategy development – to do, or not to do? *Church Administration*, 45, 26-28.
- Trochim, W.M.K. (1989a). *The concept system*. Ithaca, NY: Concept Systems.
- Trochim, W.M.K. (1989b). An introduction to concept mapping for planning and evaluation. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 12, 1-16.
- Van Auken, P. & Johnson, S.G. (1984). Ten steps to an effective evaluation. *Church Administration*, 26, 28-29.
- Ward, J.H. (1963). Hierarchical groupings to optimize an objective function. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 58, 236-244.

Table 1

Partial List of the 158 Brainstormed Statements

1. Be mighty in prayer, learn to “Cry out” in prayer as they did in the OT
2. Humble ourselves daily as leaders, fathers, husbands
3. Seek the sweet fellowship and glory of the face of God
4. Learn to hate our sin and turn from it
5. Develop mighty men of God by training fathers in spiritual warfare and raise up men in ministry
6. Reach out to this neighborhood in prayer canvass
7. Reach out to the community in service
8. Friends Day in Feb/May/Aug/Nov
9. Visit to every family member who is unsaved
10. Commit to evangelize to every family member who are not saved
11. Spanish class for members
12. After school program for neighborhood kids who need a place to stay
13. Write a unified (same) curriculum for adults and kids
14. Use Minister’s wife in ministry for the church
15. Schedule more public prayer time sessions
16. Focus more on the lost in our community and congregation
17. Bring in a teacher of Spanish to outreach to our Hispanic community
18. Seek financial freedom for our families and the church
19. Open this building to help the community: AA, drug treatment, safe house

Figure 1

Two-Dimensional Point Map

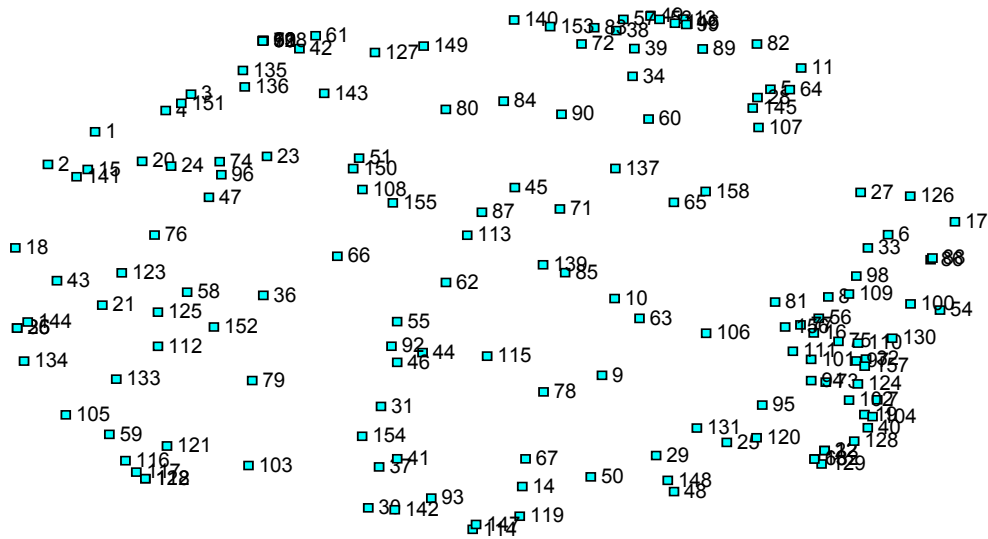


Figure 2
Point Rating Map

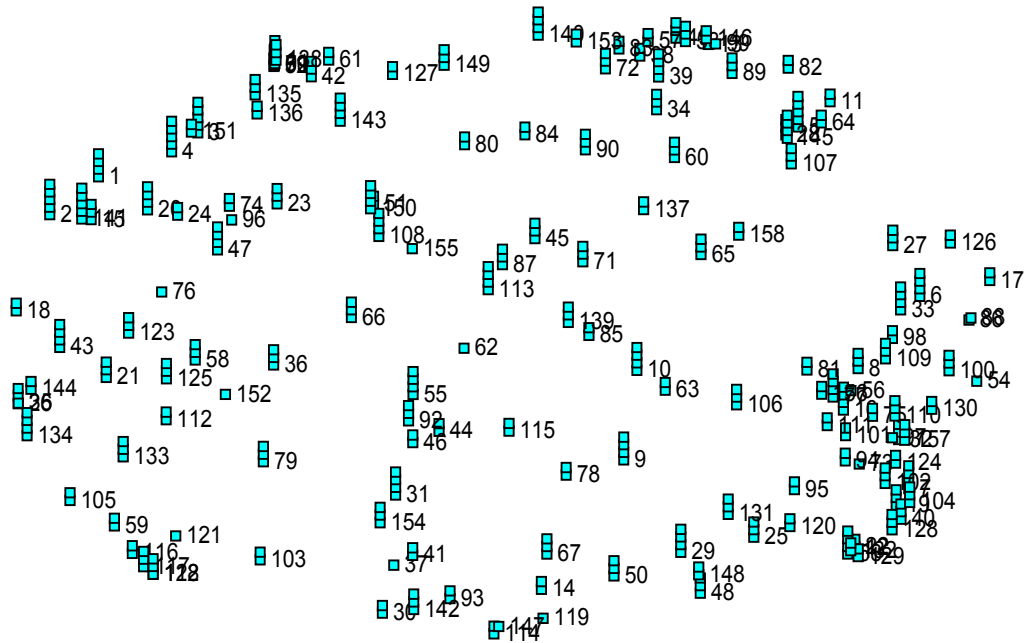


Figure 3
Cluster Map

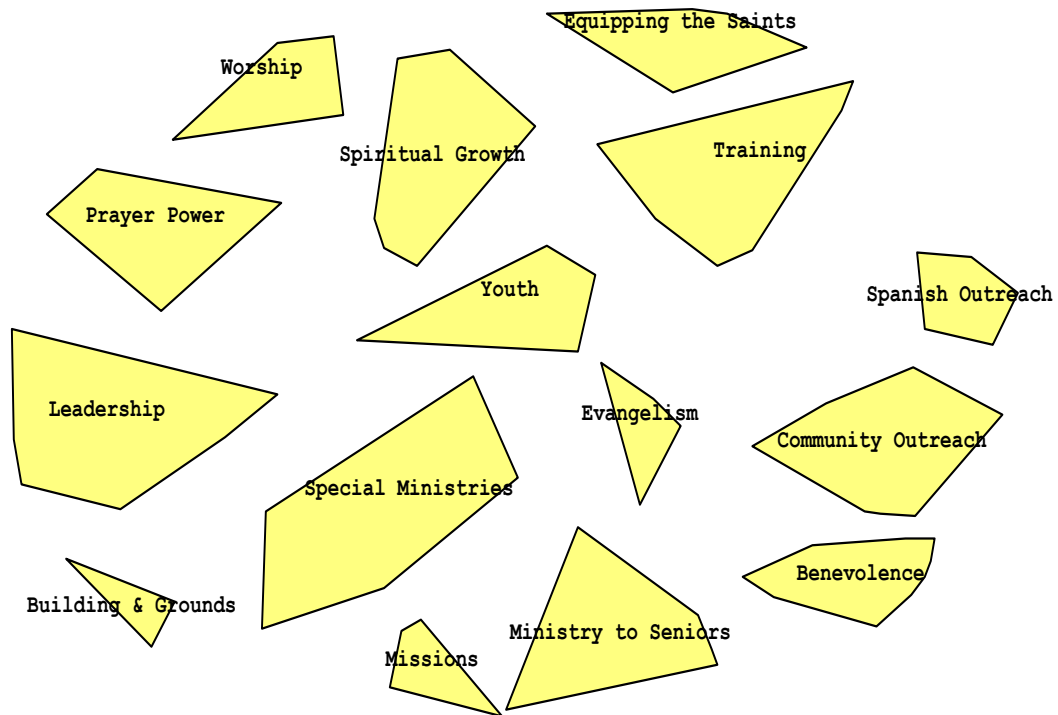


Figure 4
Cluster Point Map

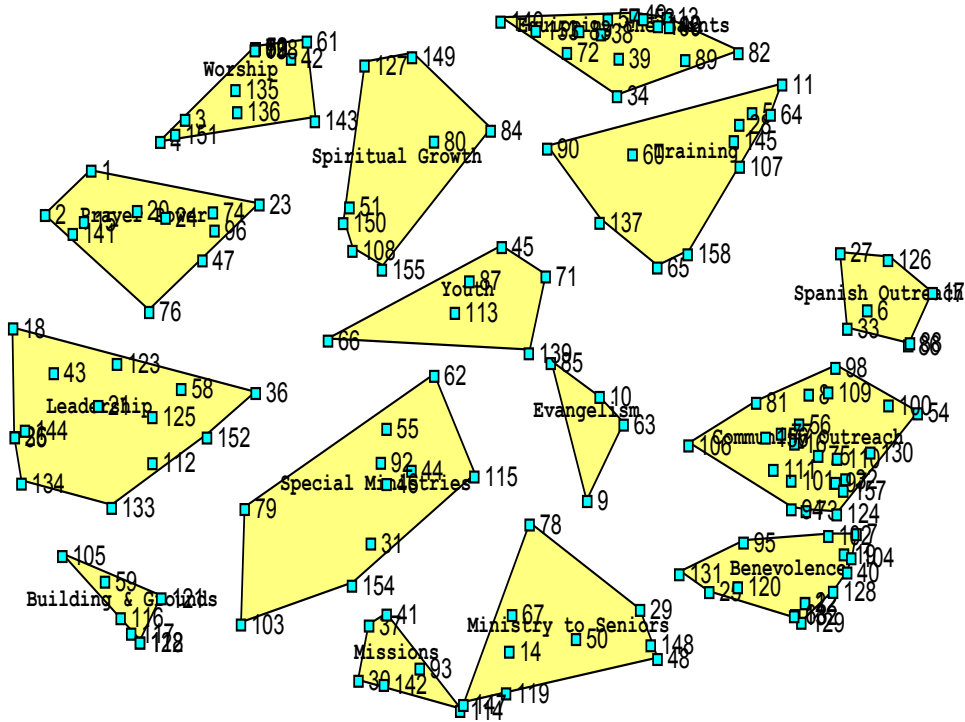


Figure 5
Cluster Rating Map

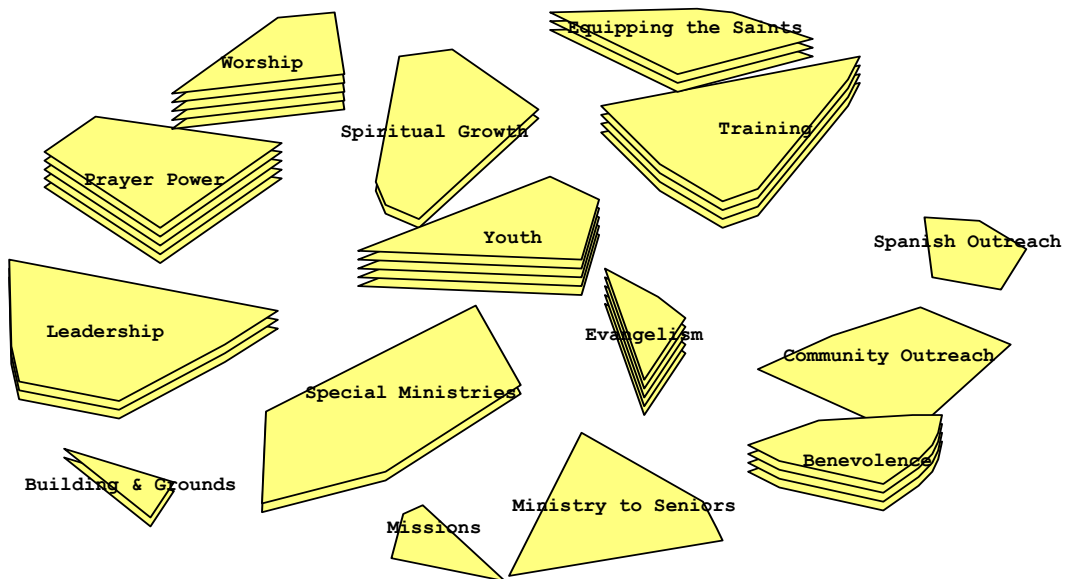


Figure 6
Ladder Graph of Leadership vs. Congregation

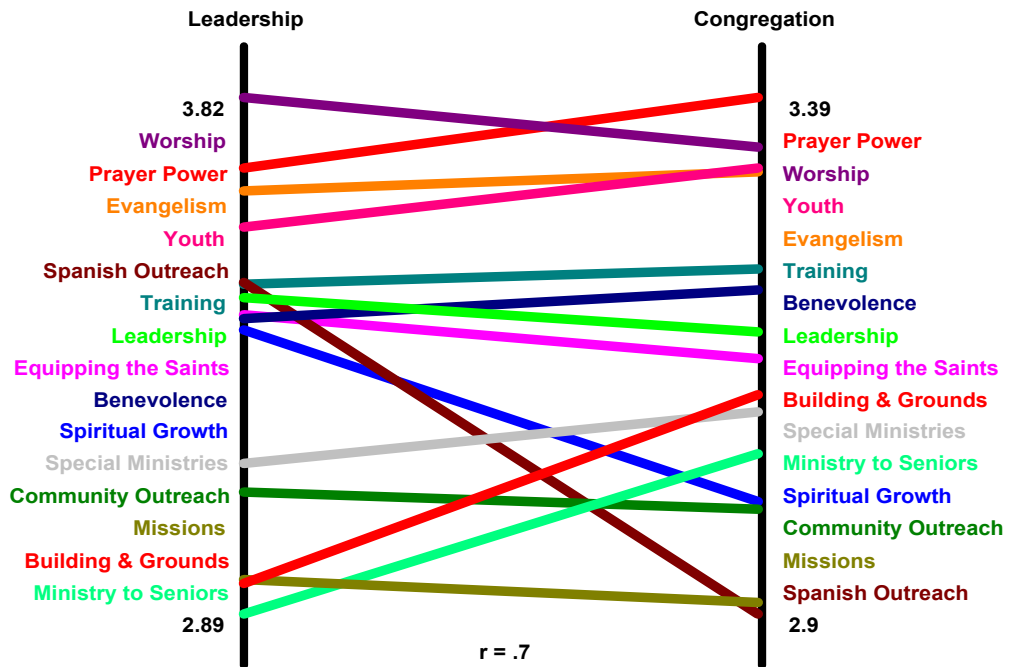


Figure 7
Members with Children vs. Members with No Children

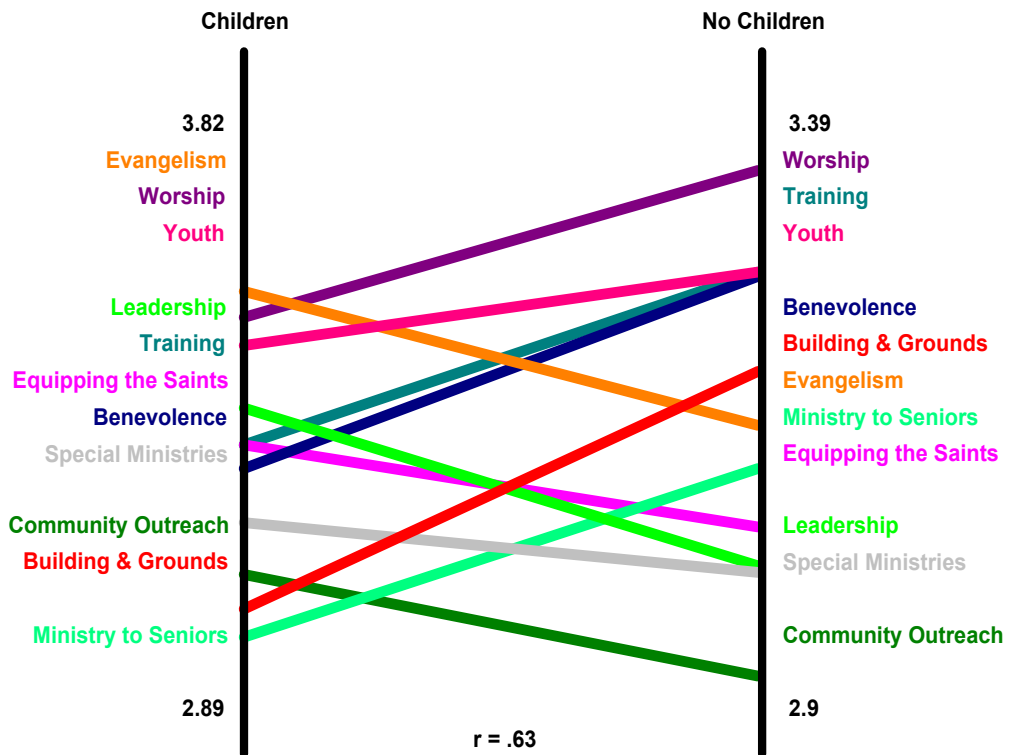
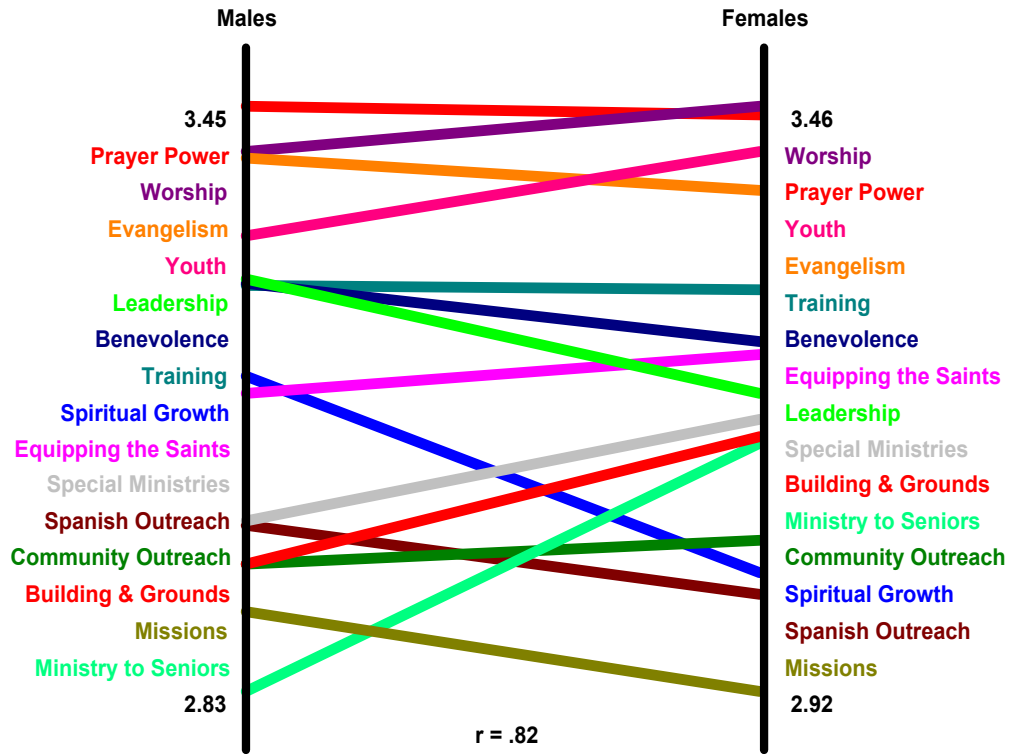


Figure 8
 Comparison of Males vs. Females



West Chicago Church of Christ Leadership Sorting Activity

Step 1 – Sorting the Idea Cards. You have been handed a group of idea cards. Each card has a unique idea and an idea ID number. *Group the ideas into piles that make sense to you*, following these guidelines:

- Group the ideas according to how *similar in meaning* they are to one another. Do not group the statements according to how important they are, how high a priority they have, etc. The survey you will complete later will address how important each idea is.
- There is no right or wrong way to group ideas. You will probably find that you could group the ideas in several ways. Pick the arrangement that feels best to you.
- You cannot put one idea into two piles at the same time. Each idea must be put into only one pile.
- People differ on how many piles they wind up with. In most cases, anywhere from 10 to 20 piles usually works out well.
- An idea may be put alone as its own pile if you think it is unrelated to the other ideas or it stands alone as a unique idea.
- Make sure every idea is put somewhere. Do not leave any ideas out.
- Do not create any piles that are “miscellaneous” or “junk piles”. If you have ideas left over that will not fit anywhere else, put each idea in its own pile.

Step 2 – Recording the Results. You should also have a **Sort Recording Sheet** for recording the results of your groupings. On that sheet, please write the results of your sorting as described below. An example of how to record a pile is shown in the first box on the **Sort Recording Sheet**.

- Pick up any one of your piles of ideas. It does not matter what order the piles are recorded in.
- Quickly scan the ideas in this pile, and write down a *short phrase* or *title* that describes the contents of the pile on the line provided after **Stack Title** or **Main Topic** in the first available box on the **Sort Recording Sheet**.

- In the space provided under the pile name, write the statement ID number of each card in that pile. Separate the numbers with commas. When you finish with the pile, put it aside so you don't mistakenly record it twice.
- Move on to your next pile and repeat the three steps above, recording that idea numbers in the next available box on the **Sort Recording Sheet**. Continue in this way until all your piles have been named and recorded.
- Your **Sort Recording Sheet** has room for you to record up to 20 piles or groups of cards. As mentioned above, any number of piles (usually 10 to 20) is fine. If you have more than 20 piles, continue recording your results on the back of the 2nd sheet and be sure to follow the same directions.

Please write legibly and clearly. Most of the errors that find their way into the program and results are made at this stage and are due to illegibility.

**West Chicago Church of Christ
Leadership Sorting Activity**

Sort Recording Sheet

Example Stack Title or Main Topic: Evangelism

Record here the identifying number of each item in this stack, separating the ID numbers with commas.

1, 4, 29, 43, 12

Stack Title or Main Topic: _____

Record here the identifying number of each item in this stack, separating the ID with numbers with commas

Stack Title or Main Topic: _____

Record here the identifying number of each item in this stack, separating the ID with numbers with commas

Stack Title or Main Topic: _____

Record here the identifying number of each item in this stack, separating the ID with numbers with commas

Stack Title or Main Topic: _____

Record here the identifying number of each item in this stack, separating the ID with numbers with commas

Stack Title or Main Topic: _____

Record here the identifying number of each item in this stack, separating the ID with numbers with commas

Stack Title or Main Topic: _____

Record here the identifying number of each item in this stack, separating the ID with numbers with commas

Stack Title or Main Topic: _____

Record here the identifying number of each item in this stack, separating the ID with numbers with commas

Attachment 2

West Chicago Church of Christ
Congregational Questionnaire

Instructions:

Each member should complete his or her own questionnaire. We are asking for some biographical information below in order to allow us to compare perceptions of different segments of the congregation with other segments. For example, how do the perceptions of parents with teens compare to perceptions of parents with just younger kids or how do the perceptions of our senior citizens compare with our young married couples?

Step 1: Pray. Pray for insight and that God will bless our efforts to do His will in this planning effort.

Step 2: Complete the biographical section.

Step 3: Rate the importance of each idea listed on the attached **Rating Sheet**.

Step 4: Place your questionnaire in the box in the foyer label "Congregational Questionnaire" or give it to one of the Elders or Deacons.

Thank you for you input and prayers.

Biographical Section

1. How many years have you been attending this congregation? _____
2. How many children do you have living at home? _____
3. Do you have teenagers living at home? Yes No
4. What is your age category? 20 years or younger 21- 30 31- 40
 41-50 51-60 61-70 71+ years
5. Are you an Elder or a Deacon in this congregation? Yes No
6. Do you often teach a bible school class on Sunday morning or Wednesday nights? Yes No
7. Are you actively involved in the Ladies Ministry? Yes No
8. Marital Status: Single Married Widowed Divorced
9. Gender: Male Female

Rating Section

Rate each statement on a 1 to 5 scale where:

1=Relatively Unimportant 2=Somewhat Important 3=Moderately Important 4=Very Important 5=Extremely Important	The ideas listed below are answering this question: In order for the West Chicago Church of Christ to continue to grow spiritually and numerically, we need to...
---	---

	1	2	3	4	5
1) Be mighty in prayer, learn to "Cry out" in prayer like they did in the Old Testament	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Humble ourselves daily as leaders, fathers, husbands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Seek the sweet fellowship and glory of the face of God	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Learn to hate our sin and turn from it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Develop mighty men of God by training fathers in spiritual warfare and raise up men in ministry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Reach out to this neighborhood in prayer canvass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Reach out to the community in service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) Friends Day in Feb/May/Aug/Nov	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Visit to every family member who is unsaved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) Commit to evangelize to every family member who are not saved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11) Spanish class for members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) After school program for neighborhood kids who need a place to stay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) Write a unified (same) curriculum for adults and kids	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14) Use Minister's wife in ministry for the church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15) Schedule more public prayer time sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16) Focus more on the lost in our community and congregation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17) Bring in a teacher of Spanish to outreach to our Hispanic community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18) Seek financial freedom for our families and the church	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19) Open this building to help the community: AA, drug treatment, safe house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Attachment 3

Cluster List

Cluster	Statement Number	Statements	Importance Rating	
Prayer Power	2	Humber ourselves daily as leaders, fathers, husbands	4.67	
	141	Pray for God's continued grace	4.62	
	1	Be mighty in prayer, learn to "cry out" as they did in the OT	4.16	
	20	Involve every member in church activities according to interests and talents	3.98	
	47	Strengthen prayer support project for children	3.80	
	15	Schedule more public prayer time sessions	3.43	
	23	Understand spiritual gifts of members	3.21	
	74	Understand how people with different spiritual gifts think	2.98	
	24	Assign spiritual gifts leaders	2.69	
	76	Create a prayer database/book to publish at end of year	2.44	
	96	Wash the feet of members of the congregation	2.13	
			Average Rating	3.46
	Worship	4	Learn to hate sin and turn from it	4.82
3		Seek the sweet fellowship and glory of the face of God	4.67	
91		Increase a spirit of reverence in worship	3.78	
143		Utilize a regular youth led worship with participation of children and teens	3.73	
138		Offer Sunday night communion to all or in a separate room	3.48	
70		Put our best foot forward in worship appearance	3.27	
135		Initiate worship time prayer warriors	3.19	
42		Plan and develop more celebrative and vibrant worship services	3.16	
69		Offer vibrant, celebrative, coordinated worship every Sunday	3.16	
151		Practice solitude	3.11	
61		Restructure Wednesday night: song, prayer, class	2.89	
136		Practice fasting	2.85	
52		Evaluate the casual approach to worship service (appearance)	2.75	
			Average Rating	3.45
Spiritual Growth	108	Act on current prayer list	3.84	
	150	Develop a youth ministers' program plan	3.72	
	149	Develop a planned preaching strategy	3.30	
	80	Institute home church one Sunday night/month for closer fellowship, edification, and outreach	3.13	
	127	Have a different man speak one Sunday night each month	2.93	
	84	Develop a James Prayer Action Program	2.93	
	51	Develop small accountability groups: men, women, children (5 or less)	2.73	
155	Develop a praise garden	2.39		
		Average Rating	3.11	
Training	5	Develop might men of God by training fathers in spiritual warfare and raise up men in ministry	4.51	
	145	Initiate programs to strengthen men's spiritual leadership	3.93	

		within the home	
	28	Develop more family training for young mothers and fathers	3.46
	60	Develop a personal growth program: enrichment, retreats	3.44
	107	Initiate a children's and teen's mentoring program	3.27
	65	Visit those we are praying for in hospital in large groups	3.25
	90	Continue men's lectureship on quarterly basis	3.20
	64	Provide adult classes with emphasis on prayer for lost, outreach, and accountability for outreach	3.07
	137	Explain church events every Sunday (like Friend's Day)	2.70
	11	Spanish class for members	2.68
	158	Host a Bill Gothard Seminar	2.67
		Average Rating	3.29
Equipping the Saints	140	Teach a personal relationship of a humble spirit, seeking God's face and turning from sin (2 Chron. 7:14)	4.15
	39	Encourage again daily Bible reading program	4.13
	53	Develop new converts classes with a seasoned leader	3.64
	34	Offer training for greeters, ushers, young men, etc	3.59
	49	Develop class for 18-30 age group so they are not "lost"	3.47
	72	Present a series of lessons on revival and the Holy Spirit	3.25
	89	Develop a class about Baptism for young children	3.25
	146	Create a directed 3 – 5 year curriculum plan	3.11
	83	Revitalize interest in Bible Drill	3.09
	153	Instruct church in principle of rhemas	3.09
	38	Teach concepts of First Fruits and Tithing more powerfully to the congregation	3.09
	57	Develop more training in the pitfalls of debt	2.98
	82	Teach Spanish members here	2.64
	13	Write a unified curriculum for adults and kids	2.41
	99	Hire J.M. to teach Greek/Hebrew Classes	2.25
		Average Rating	3.21
Spanish Outreach	6	Reach out to this neighborhood in prayer canvass	3.93
	33	Assign people to watch for and reach out to newcomers and make contacts with other members	3.82
	27	Create a prayer list for Turner School: students, parents, teachers, administrators	3.16
	17	Bring in a teacher of Spanish to outreach to our Hispanic community	2.96
	126	Host a Bible-based ESL class	2.82
	86	Hire a part time Hispanic minister	2.38
	88	Hire a full time Hispanic minister	2.02
		Average Rating	3.01
Community Outreach	16	Focus more on the lost in our community and congregation	4.18
	77	Develop a focus on soul winning	3.96
	32	Find new ways, use existing way, to minister to community: Marriage encounter, block parties, family workshops, etc	3.68
	109	Develop our own BSF type program and invite people to our location	3.37
	106	Develop a communications strategy to the community	3.36
	8	Friends Day in Feb/May/Aug/Nov	3.34

	110	Offer topical workshops on spiritual matters to the community	3.36
	100	Develop post-VBS evangelism task force	3.22
	157	Develop a teen outreach develop program	3.19
	94	Partner with Lakeview in inner city outreach & fellowship	3.13
	101	Reach out to other faiths within our community	3.09
	111	Develop a WCCC Big Brother, Big Sister program	3.09
	124	Support neighborhood revitalization	3.05
	130	Participate more in community programs like Railroad Days	2.96
	98	Follow through on our computer training	2.91
	75	Develop bus/van ministry	2.83
	81	Institute a weekly evangelism cell group program	2.81
	156	Develop a host family network for local college students, high school exchange program	2.62
	54	Subscribe to Christian magazines to give to Friends Day visitors	2.35
	56	Initiate a dads and lads Monday night football bar for outreach	2.27
	73	Open a community coffee house for those who wouldn't come to the building	2.13
	97	Adopt a highway section for cleanup	2.13
		Average Rating	3.04
Benevolence	7	Reach out to the community in service	4.05
	68	Revitalize the benevolence program, specifically for convalescent homes, food pantry, helping in emergencies	3.75
	25	Make packets for non-members visitors	3.59
	104	Volunteer for programs such as Habitat for Humanity, PADS	3.45
	40	Involve ourselves in Inspiration Café ministry or local equivalent	3.32
	102	Ask the townspeople how we can best serve their needs	3.29
	19	Open this building to help the community: AA, drug treatment, safe house	3.23
	131	Develop a business-card-like invitation to hand out for outreach	3.23
	128	Provide greater participation in Mom's in School	3.21
	129	Establish a free clothes project	3.07
	132	Expand pantry and offer a Come Share program	3.02
	12	After school program for neighborhood kids who need a place to stay	3.02
	22	Provide Christian child care at building	2.96
	120	Make the building for parents who are home schooling	2.91
	95	Host a community work camp for teens, college students, and visiting teens	2.89
		Average Rating	3.27
Evangelism	10	Commit to evangelize every family member who are not saved	4.00
	9	Visit to every family member who is unsaved	3.80
	85	Create a small group ministry	3.02
	63	Host a real youth meeting using Turner School facilities	2.80
		Average Rating	3.41
Youth	113	Continue the camp tuition for our children	3.79
	71	Have a teen-family devotional night on a regular basis	3.48
	66	Provide more adult help for youth minister with the children	3.40
	45	Structure committees so that experienced Christians bring	3.30

		along the next generation	
	139	Open building one day per week for prayer with ministers and elders for families and children	3.21
	87	Plan a prayer and worship retreat for entire church	3.18
		Average Rating	3.39
Ministry to Seniors	29	Advertise the church to the local community	4.04
	50	Develop an active service program for the elderly	3.64
	48	Increase benevolence from Christians – not depend on government for help	3.25
	67	Create a web site for communication purposes	3.19
	78	Reinstall the Silver Streak ministry	2.91
	14	Use Minister's wife in ministry for the church	2.89
	148	Provide support for children's home graduates for vocational training and housing-apprenticeship	2.80
	119	Hire a parish nurse to minister to our senior citizens	2.38
	147	Establish a senior home facility	2.28
		Average Rating	3.04
Missions	142	Airbrush church logos on van for community identification	3.20
	93	Target two or three more missionaries	3.13
	41	Communicate about what's happening to Saints of the world	2.98
	30	Actively participate in our missions abroad; visit	2.93
	114	Plan to build a family activity center in the next five years	2.88
	37	Provide "Voice of the Martyr" bulletin inserts	2.55
		Average Rating	2.94
Leadership	43	Develop common vision for this long-term plan; be willing for God to take us where we feel uncomfortable	3.95
	134	Increase general accountability of staff	3.76
	123	Match talents of individuals to ministries	3.61
	58	Expand our circle of friends within the church	3.59
	36	Develop a mentoring program where existing leader develops the next generation of leaders	3.55
	125	Conduct needs assessment of the various groups in the congregation	3.55
	133	Establish a congregational calendar	3.49
	26	Increase the number of elders and deacons	3.46
	21	Distribute interest/skill survey to membership	3.23
	18	Seek financial freedom for our families and the church	3.04
	112	Commit to providing services to our women on a quarterly basis praising their service and showing appreciation	2.96
	144	Initiate a sacrificial mortgage program	2.62
	152	Write a church testimony publication	2.27
	35	Consider a full time elder	2.27
		Average Rating	3.25
Special Ministries	55	Increase the follow through on planned youth activities	3.78
	31	Support a vibrant ladies' ministry: serving, working, caring	3.76
	154	Encourage adoption by church families of widows and orphans	3.42
	92	Have a men's retreat at RCC	3.36
	79	Set goals for ministering to each individual child	3.20

	103	Tithe on the church's offering to deserving ministries	3.00
	44	Interview people of the church and publish family profiles in bulletin	2.89
	46	Reinstitute Dinners of 8	2.73
	115	Host another homecoming in the next few years	2.63
	62	Plan family fellowship with anonymous guest list	2.40
		Average Rating	3.12
Building & Grounds	122	Finish repairs on minister's home by 6/1	3.69
	117	Replace water and septic system with city hook-up	3.48
	118	Identify group of people to be responsible for landscaping	3.07
	59	Create a building expansion plan without debt	3.04
	116	Expand the building on the empty lot with a multi-purpose room	3.02
	105	Payoff the building by Oct of next year	2.96
	121	Look into purchasing adjacent building for Youth Minister	2.41
		Average Rating	3.10