CHURCH SIZE: REFRAMING OUR UNDERSTANDING AND CONVERSATIONS[1]

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Dostoevsky (1952), in *The Brothers Karamazov,* tells the story of a doctor who ponders the incongruity between abstract and concrete reality:

> "I love humanity," [the doctor] said, "but I wonder at myself. The more I love humanity in general, the less I love man in particular…. I have often come to making enthusiastic schemes for the service of humanity, and perhaps I might actually have faced crucifixion if it had been suddenly necessary…. and yet I am incapable of living in the same room with anyone for two days together…. As soon as anyone is near me, his personality disturbs my self-complacency and restricts my freedom. In twenty-four hours I begin to hate the best of men: one because he's too long over his dinner; another because he has a cold and keeps on blowing his nose. I become hostile to people the moment they come close to me. But it has always happened that *the more I detest men individually the more ardent becomes my love for humanity*." (p. 27) (Emphasis mine)

The doctor's abstract love of humanity, together with his much darker concrete reality, is a useful metaphor for our consideration of congregational size. For us, as for Dostoevsky's doctor, the world of non-specific abstraction and the spiritual world of theological rhetoric often camouflage much darker concrete realities.

Dostoevsky's doctor, in Argyris' (1994) terms, has identified the contradiction between his "espoused theory of action based on principles and precepts that fit [his] intellectual background… and commitments" and his "theory-in-use to which [he] resort[s] in moments of stress." And, Argyris argues, "very few of us are aware of the contradiction between the two." Consequently, most of us consistently act inconsistently (p. 80).

This paper suggests that, in the matter of church size, incongruity often exists between our theological rhetoric (espoused theory) and our social preferences (theory-in-action). Believing, together with Argyris (1994), that organizational integrity is enhanced and performance is improved when people "identify the inconsistencies between their espoused and actual theories of action" (p. 103), this paper works from the theoretically defensible premise that differently sized churches are different *kinds* of organisms; they are not merely larger or smaller variations of each other. Observing that nearly two-thirds of Nazarene congregations, by continuing in their current size category over time in the face of significant ecclesiastical pressure, have stated their desire to be one *kind* of organism and not another, this paper proposes the following: (1) the reasons for declining the opportunity to become a different *kind* of organism may be "substantive" (rooted in identifiable, defensible preferences) rather than a lack of devotion or zeal; (2) we do not have an organizational language that makes conversation about "substantive preferences" possible; (3) the development of an organizational language will make it possible to reframe our understanding about the importance of church size; and (4) this reframed

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understanding, in turn, will help reframe our conversations, thereby opening the door to more productive decision making.

The genesis of the study (Green, 2005) from which this paper is drawn was my own pastoral experience. In the early years of pastoral ministry, although I did not have a language to articulate what I experienced, I was, nevertheless, aware of fundamental changes in my pastoral behaviors as congregational size moved from 30 to more than 200. I was acutely aware that certain adaptations were required or continued growth would be blocked. For example, my early practice was to invest 10 hours in premarital preparation with couples—a practice that was rewarding for me and for the couples. This kind of individualized care was one source of our congregational growth. But the time came when I had seven weddings on my calendar in the next three months and I realized that my schedule could not absorb 70 premarital preparation hours. The intersection at which I stood was crystal clear: I either had to get the congregation back to a size where individualized couple-care was possible or I had to change my premarital approach. I adapted my approach, meeting with groups of couples and limiting individualized work to issues that were couple-unique. Similar changes occurred in the shape and texture of other aspects of congregational life. For both pastor and people, identifiable gains and losses were attached to the myriad of trades that increased size rendered necessary.

I later pastored a congregation that, running just over 200 in worship attendance, envisioned and built a sanctuary for 1,000 people. Several years prior to my arrival, the congregation, which had peaked at roughly 330, moved into a pattern of decline that continued over the next 20 years. The situation that I inherited imposed twin, competing pressures: first, the pressure to "help us operate in the black" demanded a congregation larger than the 330 from which they were already in retreat. Secondly, parishioners consistently insisted, both formally and informally, on pastoral and congregational practices that I associated with a smaller congregation—practices that had been necessarily abandoned as a concession to congregational growth in my earlier pastoral experience. In an effort to understand—and resolve—this contradiction, I developed a simple instrument, adapted from Schaller's (1988) book, *The Senior Minister.* I wanted the instrument to help us identify the social preferences that I perceived were in play. The outcome was informative because the church's lay leadership team indicated a predominant preference for a small church; it was also fracturing because the instrument uncovered a huge discrepancy between the vision announced by the 1,000 seat sanctuary (espoused theory) and the congregation's social preferences (theory-in-use). Consequently, instead of facilitating a constructive conversation, this uncovering ignited the need to save face. In light of the time, energy, and sacrifice invested in this building, it was just too painful for congregational leaders to consider the possibility that the congregation's social values might suggest relocation to a facility that more closely reflected the prevailing social preferences.

I subsequently concluded that a more sophisticated instrument, applied *before* the building was constructed, would have helped the congregational leaders address these issues when there was no "face" to lose. I reasoned that such an instrument could help congregational leaders and other decision makers fulfill Jesus' counsel to count the costs (Luke 14:28-33), which involves more than an assessment of financial reserves, our typical mechanism of analysis; it also involves the unpacking of social values and an assessment of the trades that an expanded facility or ministry will impose on these values.

If this “count the costs” conversation had occurred at the beginning of this congregation’s decision making process, the decision might have been made to build a facility that fit the congregation’s social values—a better stewardship decision than building a facility that, across more than 25 years, had each parishioner paying for three or more empty seats. Alternative ways of extending the kingdom could have been identified. On the other hand, constructive discussion of the identifiable trades that a 1,000 seat sanctuary would impose might, through theological reflection, have generated cooperation with the trade-offs that the congregation now resisted. In short, if social factors are not assessed, pastors and parishioners may continue to trumpet theological rhetoric that their social theories-in-action resist or reject. Unfortunately, few systems exist to prompt conversation about preferences while the ability to align decisions and preferences still exists. Furthermore, we do not appear to have a language that makes such conversation safe and productive.

Convinced by my own experience, observation, and a review of the literature, that social preferences are more determinative than physical capacity, I anticipated a quantitative study, fully intending to apply an existing instrument to this problem or to develop an instrument that could help congregations with this kind of *a priori* assessment of preferences. My intent was not to limit congregational options but to assist congregations in counting the cost and making congruent decisions. The absence of an existing instrument and insufficient basis in the literature to support the development of an instrument eventually demanded an organizational grounded theory study that will, hopefully, prompt and focus future study.

Study Purpose

The importance of this study was suggested by descriptive data that Charles Crow presented to ANSR in 1997. These data covered an 18-year period. Ken Crow subsequently extended the analysis across a 25-year span (K. E. Crow, personal communication, April 2, 2004). In the following discussion, Ken Crow’s 25-year findings appear in parentheses behind Charles Crow’s 18-year findings.

Charles Crow (1997) identified four size categories, which comprised the following percentages of Nazarene congregations (see Figure 1): Basic Family Churches, 40.1% (39.2%); Extended Family Churches, 44.5% (42.4%); Family Enterprise Churches, 12.3% (14.0%); and Corporate Enterprise Churches, 3.1% (4.3%). These four size categories form two constellations—the Family and Enterprise Constellations. Each constellation reflects values and working assumptions that are distinct from the values and working assumptions of the other the other constellation.

According to this data, 67.7% (60.7%) of Nazarene churches remained in the same size category across the 18 (and 25) year time frame(s), In addition, most of the movement between size categories occurred *within* the Family and Enterprise Constellations; only 10.2% (13.9%) of the migration occurred *between* the two constellations—4.8% (7.8%) up from the Family Constellation and 5.4% (6.1%) down from the Enterprise Constellation. All other movement—22.1% (25.4%)—occurred *within* the two constellations.

Charles Crow (1997) also reported that the sanctuary was less than 60% full at the largest worship service in 63.1% of the congregations and less than 40% full in 31.7% of congregations (¶ 228). This analysis suggests that the general trends that Charles first reported, although altered somewhat by Ken's later analysis, continue. More than 60% of congregations either assign some substantive value to the characteristics of their particular size category *or* they exhibit less social capacity than their physical capacity and rhetoric (expressed as vision for enlarged ministry) suggests. Furthermore, these trends, persistent across a quarter century, suggest that the incongruity is chronic. This observation leads to the notion that resistance, perhaps unspoken, has not been unexpressed.

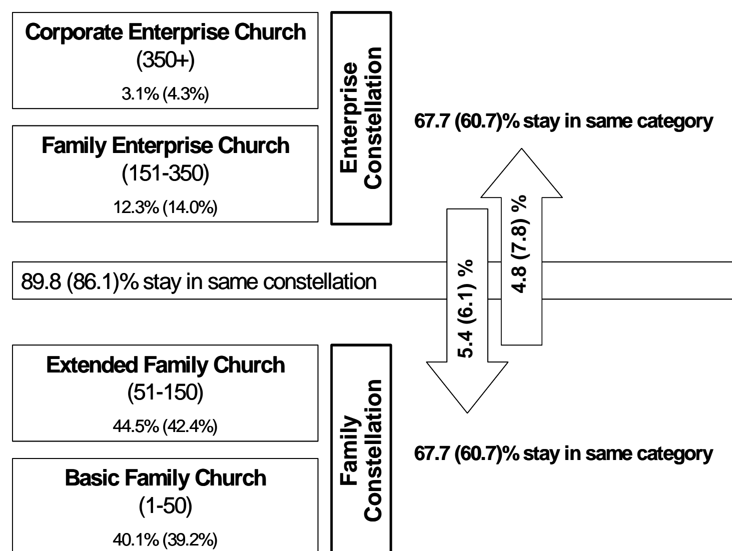

Figure 1. ***Congregational Size Analysis***

Study Design

In order to investigate these issues, eight focus groups of three to six pastors were formed—two focus groups in each of four size categories (see Figure 2). This design made it possible to test the validity of findings by assuring that the data, both *within* and *between* size categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 29), was triangulated—i.e., secured from multiple rather than single sources (Patton, 1980, pp. 108, 329). Populated by 37 Protestant pastors—6 women and 31 men—from 16 denominational traditions in the United States and Canada (Green, 2005, p. 107), this four-tier model was used because a high percentage of Nazarene congregations—84.6% (81.6%) (see Figure 1)—fall into the range that three-tier models refer to as "small" (McIntosh, 1999; Schaller, 1988). Consequently, the four-tier model provided opportunity to explore those factors that distinguish the largest portion of Nazarene

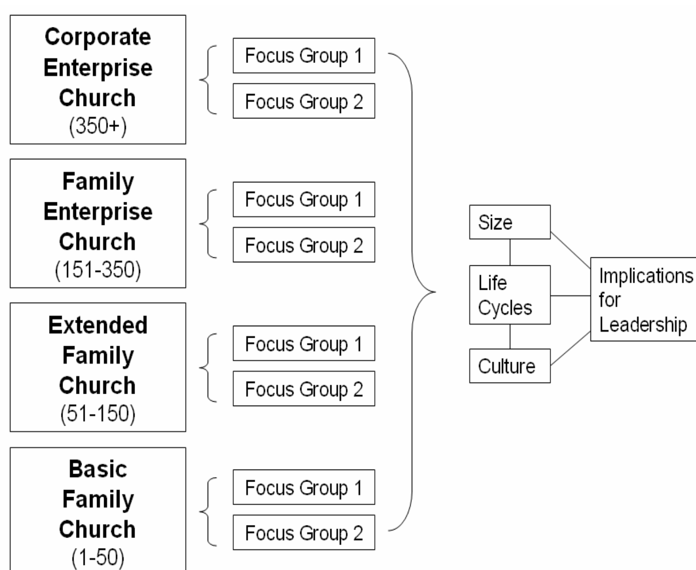

Figure 2. ***Study Design***

congregations—Basic and Extended Family—from each other, an exploration the three-tier model would have forfeited.

Controlling for size by means of this grouping scheme, each focus group engaged in four two-hour conversations. The first three conversations related to *organizational size, organizational life cycles,* and *organizational cultures;* the fourth conversation sought relevant *implications for leadership.* Each two-hour session included a brief "teaching" segment that introduced that session's theoretical framework. The themes that this paper reports and synthesizes emerged entirely from the 90-minute interactive segments that followed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45).

Key Findings

The thumb-nail sketch of key findings included in this paper reflect the experience of the pastor-participants and their perceptions of congregational perspectives (Green, 2005, p. 5). These findings reinforce and extend knowledge that has been, heretofore, anecdotal (C. D. Crow, personal communication, November 7, 2001; G. L. McIntosh, personal communication, November 19, 2001; G. Bullard, personal communication, January 3, 2005).

Church Size

Congregational size is important. Organizational complexity increases with size, the way pastors function is reshaped, new and different pastoral skill sets are required, and congregations exhibit very different expectations. Congregational size reshapes the way the pastor uses time, it reshapes the relationship between pastors and parishioners, and it reflects unique working assumptions. The inward focus of smaller churches is displaced by an outward focus in larger churches (Green, 2005, pp. 133-134). More people create "more people input, therefore, more squabbles," one pastor said, which, in turn, created the demand for more meetings and more administrative engagement (p. 135). Decision making processes were also different: What is good for that "small nucleus" of people who "prayed and hung in there for the [small] church" was replaced, in larger churches, by "what is good for the church" (p. 135).

Congregational growth impacts pastors profoundly. "In a smaller church," one pastor said, "if someone walks in… they can come and sit down in my office." His enlarging congregation, however, forced an adaptation: "I can't meet with everybody and so I have to make choices, and be more strategic about it," he said. "And that stinks. That's hard when you love just being with people" (pp. 136-137).

An Extended Family pastor identified a fundamental shift that faced his congregation: "They don't need to absolutely know everyone," he observed. "The difficult question is, 'Do we—myself included—want to let go of that [expectation]?'" (p. 135). The degree to which congregations managed to navigate these kinds of shifts correlated positively to increased church size in this study.

Life Cycle Stage

Greiner (1972) summarizes a common tenet of the life cycle literature, stating that periods of organizational *evolution* are separated by turbulent, whitewater-like periods of *revolution* (pp. 38-39). Practices, procedures, and working assumptions are improved incrementally in the evolutionary periods; fundamental changes occur in the revolutionary periods. This means two things: first, some practice, procedure, or working assumption will never again be the same. Second, if the organization uses the revolutionary whitewater as a bridge to new ways of doing things, opportunities open that will never be possible if the organization views the whitewater as a gate because it prefers its current evolutionary state. One pastor applied this organizational construct to congregations, using the analogy of the high jump to talk about the importance of "thinking about the core thing in a different way."

> The scissors kick… was about how high could you get your foot off the ground. That was the driving force. [The Fosbury Flop] was about how high can you get your hips?.... These transitions have a lot to do with that. If you're trying to make a really good Family [church], you'll always be thinking, "How high can I kick my foot?" And at some point you will hit the physics limit of that. (p. 135)

Progression from a small to larger congregation, then, in concert with the claims of the life cycle literature, imposes fundamental shifts on congregational life that impact both pastor and parishioners. One pastor captured the nature of these shifts with a powerful metaphor:

> The manufacturing world… helps me sometimes. You think of making boxes. You start off, a one-man box making company and you get pretty good at… making wood boxes…. But, at some point…the demand is for boxes you can't make yourself. So you go from being a box maker to an industrial machine design engineer. And you design machines that build boxes. And then you get better and better at making the machines…. And then, down the road, you train people who design industrial box making machines…. In our case, the box is a person—we're trying to make disciples. And you've got to get the box to go along with you. (p. 134)

If one dares the whitewater, making the trades—the fundamental shifts—which passage through the revolutionary turbulence involves, something is gained and something is lost (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 29). The tasks and roles of everyone in the organization will be reshaped, leaders will need to develop and apply new skills, and everyone in the congregational system will need to adopt new working assumptions (Green, 2005, pp. 70-71). The relative value of these gains and losses, as experienced by pastors and congregations, determines whether or not the requisite trades will be made.

Identifiable differences between the four size categories, representing different organizational life forms, emerged from this study's focus group conversations. These differences, or characteristics, appear, for a large sector of Nazarene congregations (more than 60%), to represent substantive values that congregations want to conserve rather than trade away in the movement up to the next size category. (See Appendix A for an extended description of church size characteristics, transitional descriptions, and key structural adjustments.)

Congregational Cultures

Prior to the congregational cultures conversation, focus group participants completed an adaptation of Cameron and Quinn's (1999) *Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument* (OCAI). Each participant's score was plotted, producing a kite-shaped graph that reflected the four quadrants in Cameron and Quinn's model (see Figure 3), which were defined for participants as follows:

> *Clan Culture:* A very friendly place where people share a lot of themselves. It is like an extended family. Leaders are regarded as mentors and perhaps even parent figures. The congregation is held together by loyalty and tradition. Commitment is high. The long-term benefit of personal and spiritual development is emphasized and great importance is attached to cohesion and morale. Success is defined in terms of internal climate and concern for people. A premium is placed on teamwork, participation, and consensus.
>
> *Adhocracy Culture:* A dynamic and creative place. People stick their necks out and take risks. Leaders are considered innovators and risk takers. The glue that holds the congregation together is commitment to experimentation and innovation. The emphasis is on being at the leading edge. The long-term emphasis is on growth and acquiring new resources. Success means unique approaches and new services. Being on the leading edge is important. Individual initiative and freedom is encouraged.
>
> *Market Culture:* Results-oriented. Getting the job done is a major concern. People are goal-oriented. The leaders are producers. They are tough and demanding. The glue that holds the congregation together is an emphasis on hitting its missional targets. Reputation and success are common concerns. The long-term focus is on productive ministry tasks and achievement of measurable goals and targets. Penetration of the marketplace is a primary definition of success, and leadership in this regard is important. The organizational style is hard-driving.
>
> *Hierarchy Culture:* A very formalized and structured place. Procedures govern what people do. Leaders pride themselves on being good coordinators and organizers who are efficiency-minded. Maintaining a smooth-running church is most critical. Formal rules and polices hold the congregation together. The long-term concern is on stability and performance with efficient, smooth operations. Success is defined in terms of dependability, smooth scheduling, and efficient use of resources. Management is concerned with security and predictability. (Green, 2005, p. 328)

The OCAI's "competing values" design presented a variety of assumptions. The values associated with each quadrant (clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy) "pull on each other"—vertically, horizontally, and diagonally; in the same way, the model's four horizons tug on each other. On the northern horizon, clans and adhocracies value "flexibility and discretion." Hierarchies and market cultures, on the southern horizon, value "stability and control." Clans and hierarchies, on the western horizon, reflect an "internal focus" and a preference for "integration," which can be thought of as sameness, continuity, or recognizability. By contrast, adhocracies and market cultures, on the eastern horizon, reflect an "external focus" and a preference for

"differentiation," or the willingness to accept different ways of doing things in order to interact more aggressively with the congregation's ministry arena (Cameron & Quinn, 1999, p. 31).

The pastors in each focus group then discussed the meaning of their individual graphs, which were an invaluable discussion starter. Each participant's graph helped them "picture their congregation's dominant and subordinate cultural characteristics and several participants reported that the kite-shaped graph helped them visualize the cultural characteristics they had experienced in their congregational settings" (p. 116). Figure 3 reflects the composite graph or organizational profile that was generated for each size category. The Basic Family profile appears on the lower left, the Extended Family profile on the upper left, the Family Enterprise profile on the lower right, and the Corporate Enterprise profile on the upper right. (An extended discussion associated with these profiles appears in Appendix B.)

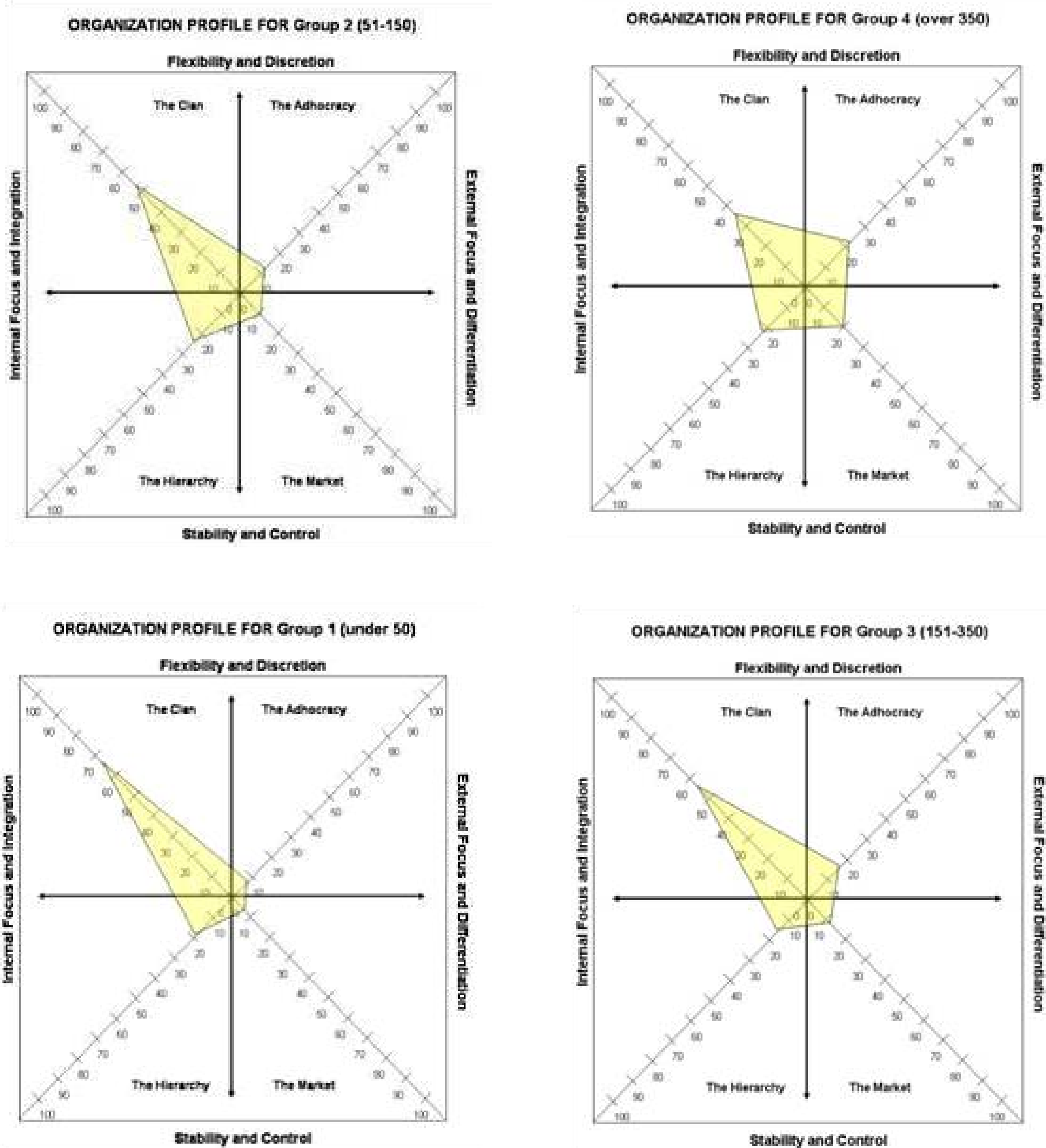

Figure 3. ***Composite OCAI Graphs for Each Size Category***

Scherer (1988) argues that each quadrant in this graph represents a “different dimension of reality” (p. 481). Ouchi and Price (1978) acknowledge that each quadrant can organize relationships and guide organizational behavior (p. 35); they also suggest that organizational robustness is heightened when all four cultural mechanisms are utilized (p. 35). In this regard, it is interesting to note the additional squaring of the kite shape in the larger size categories. Whether the shapes emerging from this study are different in statistically significant ways will be

the subject of future study; nevertheless, this study's focus group conversations suggest that future research is merited and that the OCAI may be useful for framing count-the-costs conversations with pastors and congregations.

The clan culture, receiving the largest percentage of the OCAI scores, was the dominant quadrant for all four groups (see Table 1). However, each larger size category registered increased interaction with the adhocracy and market quadrants, and the Corporate Enterprise category produced the squarest, most balanced quadrangular kite-shape.

Table 1. ***Analysis of OCAI Scores***

	Basic Family	Extended Family	Family Enterprise	Corporate Enterprise
Clan	66.9%	52.9%	55.4%	35.7%
Hierarchy	18.7%	23.7%	15.9%	22.1%
Adhocracy	7.9%	12.5%	16.6%	22.4%
Market	6.6%	10.8%	12.1%	19.8%
Internal Focus	85.6%	76.6%	71.3%	57.8%
External Focus	14.5%	23.3%	28.7%	42.2%

Two anomalies are apparent in this analysis. First, it was expected that the increased complexity associated with the Family Enterprise Church's increased size would produce increased attention to structure, which this study associated with hierarchy (p. 227). This did not occur; instead, compared with the Extended Family composite, the Family Enterprise composite reflects a significant decrease of attention to hierarchy (15.9%) and an increased attention to clan (55.4%).

Mann (2001) proposes a possible rationale for this counter-intuitive outcome, which she refers to as an "N-Curve" (p. 12) (see Figure 4). Basic Family churches, in her model, are group-centered organisms and Extended Family churches are pastor-centered organisms. The Family Enterprise church then makes a fundamental shift—from *organism* to *organization.* This shift includes a return to a group-centered focus.

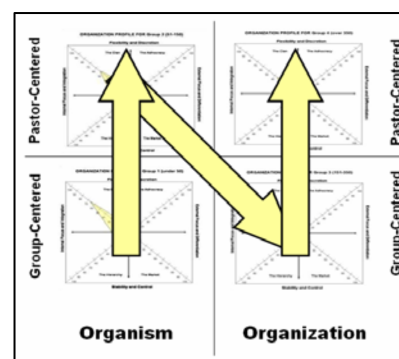

Figure 4. ***Mann's N-Curve***

Focus group discussions clearly revealed a restructuring of the clan emphasis in the Family Enterprise category. Small groups were invoked and organizational devices (e.g., planning and intentionality) were used to preserve the clan's organic qualities. Nevertheless, the organizational (vs. organic) nature of this shift was effectively summarized by one focus group participant's statement, "You have to plan clan" (p. 224).

> It is conceivable that the [Family Enterprise] church's upturn of emphasis in the "clan quadrant" [is] an act of retrenchment, that… [is] a response to the cost (sticker shock) of congregational growth, and an attempt to reorganize the "clan feeling" on new terms. (Green, 2005, p. 300)

Corporate Enterprise churches, assuming a pastor-centered focus, subsequently complete the N-Curve.

The second anomaly, the Corporate Enterprise hierarchy report (22.1%), seems a bit lower than expected. However, it is apparent that resources in the Corporate Enterprise category, having been drawn from the clan quadrant, are redeployed in approximately equal proportion among the other three quadrants, which corresponds to Ouchi and Price's (1978) suggestion that organizational robustness is heightened when all the cultural mechanisms [quadrants] are utilized (p. 35).

Both of these anomalies are mitigated significantly by the internal (clan and hierarchy) and external (adhocracy and market) scores reported in Table 1. This analysis shows that the resources assigned to the internally and externally focused quadrants reveal consistent curves in each larger size—away from an internal focus (85.6% to 57.8%) and toward an external focus (14.5% to 42.2%). Thus, the Family and Corporate Enterprise churches appear to manage their resources in ways that consistently achieve an increasing external focus.

Observations and Recommendations

These findings and the process by which they were accrued have coalesced to produce the following observations and recommendations.

Differences Are Real; They May Also Be Substantive

This study, with its sample of 37 Protestant pastors from 16 denominational traditions in the United States and Canada, gives texture and depth to the descriptive data this paper has recalled (Crow, 1997) and reported (K. E. Crow, personal communication, April 2, 2004). These findings lend empirical support to the literature's assertion that different sized churches are different *kinds* of *organisms* (McIntosh, 1999, p. 19); and these findings (Morgan, 1997, pp, 6, 33)support the idea, suggested by demographic descriptive data (Crow, 1997; McIntosh, 1999; Chaves, Konieczny, Beyerlein, & Barman, 1999), that smaller churches often prefer to be simpler *kinds* of organisms. That is, some congregations decide *not* to make the passage through the revolutionary whitewater, having concluded that the losses outweigh the gains.

This finding is consistent with Greiner's (1972) claim that a small company's management team "could well decide *not* to grow" (p. 46) in order to protect a way of life that they value, understanding that small size is essential to the valued way of life. Furthermore, Morgan (1997) contends that "certain species of organizations," like certain organisms, "are better 'adapted' to specific environmental conditions than others" (p. 33). Consequently, a decision to continue in a current size category (not grow) may be "substantive" rather than a decision borne of flawed devotion or lack of zeal. *If, then, a particular congregational organism produces benefits that the other organisms cannot provide, it seems appropriate to describe the decision to continue in the particular size category as "substantive."*

Reframing Our Definition of Health

Remember, nearly two-thirds of Nazarene congregations have continued in their current size category over extended periods of time and most of these congregations, in concert with the

general trend reported by the National Congregations Study (Chaves et al., 1999), have "decided," either tacitly or consciously, to remain in the Basic and Extended Family categories. For this reason, the idea that a congregation may decide *not* to proceed to the next size category, or that a pastor may decide that his or her skills are suited for one kind of congregational organism but not another, may suggest that a reframed understanding of congregational health has merit. One pastor wrestled aloud with this matter, saying,

> I'm just wondering if, somehow… it's appropriate to have different sized churches to reach different cultures, different peoples, different communities. I've often wondered, if a church has been in a location for a long time and it's just not going to go beyond that size category…. does that make its whole ministry illegitimate? Does that make it an unsuccessful church? Does that make its pastor unsuccessful? Or is that a legitimate enterprise that needs to be continued, and where kingdom growth comes is to the establishing of another church, and another church, and another church…. Every one of those [churches] that gets established has the potential to go from this to megachurch. Or to stop at anywhere in between and say, "This is who we are." (Green, 2005, p. 269)

Competing views establish that the definition of congregational health is not a settled matter. For instance, associating lack of growth with dysfunction, Borden (2003) asserts that health requires growth (p. 15), which currently appears to be the dominant view. However, the landscaping in almost any yard challenges this view: not every plant is a tall tree or large shrub; indeed, some plants are, by design, six-inch border plants. Performing different functions, each is healthy.

Mann (2001) observes that "numerically static congregations… feel successful if they 'replace' the members they lose to death, relocation, or discontent" (p. 17), and Dudley (1979) asserts that "well-being," in small churches, is based on "how many people know and respond to each other by name" (¶ 13). And this paper argues for a definition of health that reflects an essential harmony between social preferences and theological rhetoric. According to this definition, health exists when the theological rhetoric of parishioners and the pastor match both of their social preferences. This harmony frees the pastor and parishioners to be themselves and to set ministry agendas that, in addition to being satisfying and rewarding, open the door to alternative mechanisms of kingdom expansion—a proposition that the remainder of this paper will more fully explore.

Clearly, certain risks are inherent in any decision to lock into the current evolutionary stage of a congregation. Stagnation and decline are primary risks and congregations on these tracks may eventually be unable "to successfully reverse [their] decline" (Bedeian & Armenakis, 1998, p. 2). On the other hand, large organisms are not absent risk and largeness may camouflage significant unhealth. For instance, a homeowner was told, "It's a good thing you removed those three huge trees from your back yard now. They were rotting at the core and would have been too unstable to climb in the next couple of years. I don't know how you would remove them then."

Dislodge the Myth

Any reframed understanding of congregational health must dislodge the myth that larger churches are merely variations of smaller churches. McIntosh's (1999) book title, *One Size*

Doesn't Fit All, makes this case eloquently. Unfortunately, a preference for abstraction and theological idealization, combined with organizational naiveté, leads to the myth that a large congregation is merely a larger variation of a small congregation. Pastors and congregations either "forget (or perhaps do not know) that different sized churches become different *kinds* of *organisms"* (Green, 2005, p. 3)—an assumption (or myth) that leads to decisions that frequently fail to cross-reference theological rhetoric and social preference.

One church had been in its current size category for more than a quarter century. Meanwhile, the city was six times larger than it had been a quarter-century earlier. The church felt the same on the inside but its influence in its community had reduced by 600% across the years and, in order to exert the same influence in its community that it exerted 25 years earlier, the church should have been six times larger *or* there needed to be six churches just like it.

In order to interrupt this kind of pattern, congregations and pastors must "unpack" their social preferences, determining whether or not they will make the trades necessary to be "six times their current size." If so, they need to identify the relevant trades, along with the predictable "sensations" that those trades will create as passage across the revolutionary whitewater unfolds (Adizes, 1988, p. 6). If, on the other hand, the current social preferences contain substantive value, the corresponding preferences, at some point, become a constraining gate, rendering the congregation unable—now or in the future—to respond to the gospel-opportunity that any growing community presents. By understanding that "six-times" growth cannot occur without fundamental change to the congregational life and by dislodging the parallel myth that 600% growth can occur without any trade-offs, congregations can position themselves to replicate what they value in their church, either starting or cooperating with a church start in their community instead of viewing it as a competition or threat.

Develop an Organizational Language

In order to reframe our conversations in this way, we need to develop an organizational language that makes this kind of conversation both possible and safe. This reframing means three things:

Create a Zone of Safety. First, we must create a zone of safety in which these conversations can unfold, considering which ecclesiastical patterns make such conversation impossible (or too unsafe and dangerous); in other words, the conversation must be rendered discussable. In his paper, "Hard Pills to Swallow: Difficult Topics and Organizational Health," Fein (2005) defines a difficult topic: *"Any topic that is so uncomfortable to confront that it is euphemized and avoided—and when confronted, may engender anxiety or discomfort in the audience"* (p. 8). Wondering what retreat from "difficult topics… reflect[s] about the health of [a] group" (p. 5), he hypothesizes that "the definition of a healthy organization… is not an organization without problems; but an organization that can openly discuss its problems, that is, where there are no 'undiscussables'" (p. 9).

Argyris (1994), in this same vein, talks about the "logic… [of] organizational routines"(p. 81), which serve to keep some topics from being observed. This logic, framed as a hypothetical conversation about church size, might look like this: "Your decision to assign 'substantive' value to your current size was a good decision, and the ecclesiastical powers are (or ethos is)

overruling it" (a mixed message is sent); "You can be proud of your contribution" (pretend the message, which may be intended to encourage compliance, is not mixed); "I feel good about this outcome, and I'm sure you do too (makes the mixed message *and* the pretense undiscussable); and, finally, "Now that I've explained everything to your satisfaction, is there anything *else* you'd like to talk about" (the undiscussability has now been made undiscussable). Barth (2001) describes the reasons for avoiding this practice:

> Nondiscussables are subjects sufficiently important that they are talked about frequently but are so laden with anxiety and taboos that these conversations take place only in the parking lot, the men's room, the playground, the carpool, or the dinner table at home. We are fearful that open discussion of these incendiary issues in polite society… will cause a meltdown. The nondiscussable is the elephant in the living room. Everyone knows this huge pachyderm is there, right between the sofa and the fireplace, and we go on mopping and dusting and vacuuming around it as if it did not exist. (p. 9)

Have we, in our spiritual society, somehow rendered conversation about the substantive value inherent in these different church size categories an "incendiary issue," sparking fear that an honest preference for the unique characteristics of a particular *kind* of congregational organism will be devalued as flawed devotion or lack of zeal, or seen as a lack of vision?

Whether intended or not, the lack of a language and, perhaps, the failure to provide a zone of safety for the use of this language has produced euphemism. McIntosh (1999) suggests the kind of euphemism that may be practiced by as many as 60% of our churches: "Some people say they want the church to grow, but what they really mean is they do not want the church to die" (p. 166). As a result, preferences may be unspoken in our spiritual society but it appears that they have, nevertheless, been persistently expressed. And it may be worth noting that, if substantive values are undiscussable, euphemism may be the only language available.

Maybe Everyone Doesn't Want to Be/Pastor a Large Church. Second, if we are to reframe our conversations, leaders must reconsider some of their assumptions, which may be especially difficult because most denominational leaders have been "bigger is better" enthusiasts. Having produced this phenomenon in most (if not all) of their pastoral experiences, the conclusion, "Anyone can do it, if only they will," may seem intuitive and it may be instinctive.

Jaques and Cason's (1994) work may be useful here. Their experimentation with the impact that the capacity for mental complexity exerts in the workplace (pp. 30-31) produced the *Time Horizon Progression Array* (see Figure 5) (p. 85). This graph, for which Jaques and Cason cite empirical evidence, illustrates the aptitude for complexity generated by

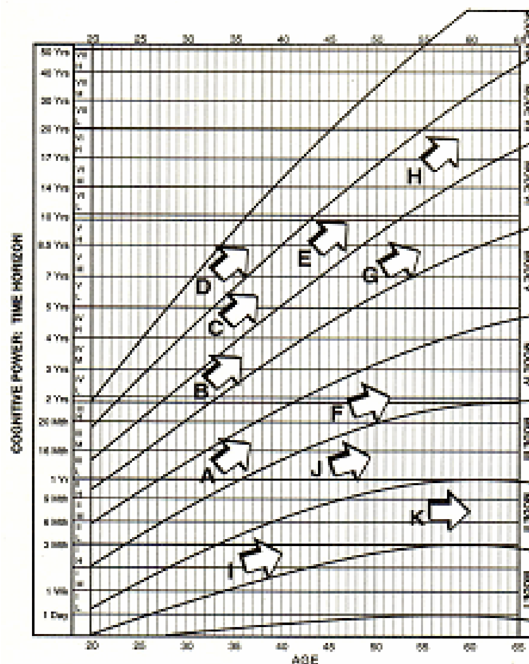

Figure 5. ***Time Horizon Progression Array***

different mental processing combinations (pp. 32-35). Jaques & Cason propose that people can mature within their particular band (e.g., C, E, and H); they also argue that people, in contradiction to Piaget and others, do not cross from one band to another (e.g., B to C to D) (p. 86). Acknowledging that this idea "run[s] counter to the democratic dream of opportunity for everyone to reach the top," these researchers argue that we often have "unrealistic beliefs… about what others might be striving for." They suggest, further, that people "find it difficult to believe that people working below [them] could be satisfied to be where they are," erroneously assuming that everyone below them on the organizational ladder wants to "be on a par" with them. Jaques and Cason dispute this conclusion, asserting,

> *If we have been fortunate enough to be in work that matches our current potential,* it does not seem to occur to us to covet the work of those above us…. Nor does it occur to us that those working above us might be looking down their noses at us in the same way that we do to those below. (p. 92)

This study suggests that this observation has an organizational application and, more specifically, a congregational and pastoral application—i.e., everyone in smaller churches does not have a secret desire to pastor (or be in) a large church, especially when they think concretely about the realities this paper discusses. One Family Enterprise pastor, talking about the Extended Family church's inclination to engage in "self-sabotage" and to employ a size-based "governor," captured a recurrent theme:

> It's not… that they don't value other people or they don't value growth; it's that it smacks against what they need in their life from a church…. They need 100 people; they don't need 300 people. They need 100 people so that they can have the potlucks and everybody can come over to the house and the back yard can be filled and they can put the volleyball net up and all of that stuff can happen. That's what they need. (Green, 2005, p. 261)

Furthermore, parishioners are not the only people to register substantive social preferences. It is interesting to note that six of the eleven Extended Family pastors, in the safe environment of their transdenominational focus groups, reported disinterest in pastoring a church in the next larger size category. More significantly, this disinterest went beyond mere preference; it was, for many of those who voiced it, seen as a potential violation of self or of God's divine call on their life, primarily because of their relational approach to ministry (p. 278). This assumption-reshaping discovery introduces a question: Should the church ask someone to violate his or her sense of self or, more importantly, his or her sense of call in order to serve institutional interests?

Harness "Powerful Tendency of Organizational Nature." Third, if we are to reframe our conversations, we must cooperate with organizational behavior rather than trying to overcome it. Christiansen (1997), in his book, *The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail*, argues that customers exert more power on organizations than executive decisions (p. 102). The Nazarene experience with congregational resistance—over 60% of churches have remained in their current size category—to denominational growth initiatives and to the accompanying ecclesiastical pressure across the past quarter-century certainly adds weight to Christiansen's claim.

Christiansen argues that managers have two options when customers resist a “disruptive technology.” (For the church, this disruptive technology may be the decision to become a different kind of organism.) The first option is to “convince everyone in the firm that the company should [adopt the disruptive technology] anyway, that it has long-term strategic importance despite rejection by the customers who pay the bills.” The second option is to “create an independent organization and embed it among emerging customers that *do* need the technology” (p. 102), which for the church looks like the “new start” efforts that the denomination has promoted.

Christiansen argues that “managers who choose the first option are picking a fight with a powerful tendency of organizational nature—that customers, not managers, essentially control the investment patterns of a company” (p. 103). His second option, in the denominational setting, involves the identification of that percentage of congregations that are responsive to upward movement, together with the trades that this movement demands. This responsiveness can be most effectively discovered if social values are rendered discussable instead of undiscussable. According to Christiansen, this “second option offers far higher probabilities of success than the first” (p. 103).

If Christiansen is right, the better course may be to help pastors and congregations unpack their social preferences, identifying the predictable trades that growth will require and the constraints that their preferences will impose. If it turns out that a congregation attaches substantive value to their current size, a profitable conversation can unfold. Denominational and district leaders can help the congregational leaders reframe the conversation in a way that dislodges the myth that growth-without-fundamental-change may occur—an opportunity they will not have if their concrete reality (theory-in-action) remains camouflaged by abstraction or theological rhetoric (espoused theory). If, on the other hand, the myth is dislodged, the rationale for resisting new starts can be abandoned and a heightened chance exists that these congregations will respond affirmatively to spawning or cooperating with a new start. In significant part, this reframed response will result from increased understanding. Geographical turf that is currently protected for the day the hoped-for myth magically occurs may be released if the myth’s futility is understood. Having faced their rejection of the disruption that being a new *kind* of organism will exert on their deeply-held (substantive) values, congregations and pastors may decide to replicate those values in another setting (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 27). This kind of conversation promises to meet two important interests (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1983, pp. 41-80): first, the social preferences of the current congregation can be protected and, secondly, through replication, the gospel value of extending the gospel’s influence can be fulfilled.

It is also possible that theological reflection will render the congregation uncomfortable with its social preference, in which case the congregation, responsive to God’s veto, may reshape its social preferences in a way that is congruent with their theological understanding. Either way, the development of an organizational language, steeped in a robust comprehension of the underlying issues this paper has discussed, makes it possible to reframe our understanding about church size issues and opens the door to expanded cost-counting conversations. (A variation of this conversational rubric can also be applied to pastors, whose preferences are simultaneously in play.)

Conclusion

It is my experience, observation, and belief that unexamined social preferences almost always trump theological rhetoric within the congregational dynamic. Therefore, it seems prudent to create a language that makes enhanced understanding possible, to create a zone of safety in which the conversation can unfold, and to render the undiscussable discussable. The issue of size thus reframed, the kind of open and informative conversation that this paper has proposed may cultivate replicative cooperation from some portion of the 60% of churches that will otherwise, without speaking, continue to pursue the myth and resist the strategic plan that they have consistently resisted to this point in time. By defining a healthy church as one in which the theological rhetoric of the people and pastor match both of their social preferences, pastors and congregations may be freed to set ministry agendas that are mutually satisfying and rewarding—perhaps affirming their social preferences and, perhaps, crafting an adjusted set of social preferences that flow out of theological reflection. Toward this end, future study needs to develop instruments and processes to accelerate this kind of health.

My insistence on addressing social preferences as the first order of business has been questioned by some. However, Dostoevsky's (1952) doctor was unable to see the flaw in his abstract reality ("I [ardently] love humanity in general") until he unpacked his concrete reality ("I detest men individually"). Then the incongruity became clear and he was positioned to reconcile the inconsistency. In the same way, when we unpack our social preferences, the incongruities with our theological perspective can be addressed and our theological perspective is then positioned, either to affirm or trump our social preferences.

It has also been my experience that "Aha's" occur most frequently and dramatically when people think practically and concretely about congregational life and about ministry. Two vignettes demonstrate this phenomenon:

> The congregation consistently averaged 150-180 in worship attendance. They built a beautiful facility for 400 people. Ten years later attendance had not increased. The observation was made early in a workshop that utilized the language this paper has discussed, "We assumed that a larger facility would free us to be larger congregation; now we see that the old working assumptions have constrained us, preventing us from being what we thought we wanted. We have, instead, continued to be a church that fits our assumptions."
>
> Reflecting on his interview with the church board, a pastor wondered aloud to a friend if this congregation of 80 could become a congregation of 250 or 300. His friend asked, "What changes would the church need to make to become a church of 250 or 300?" The pastor's list was insightfully accurate. The friend's second question followed: "If the congregation made those changes, what changes would you need to make in order to pastor a church like that?" The reply came quietly, "I don't think I want to be that kind of pastor."

When social preferences are identified, theological reflection can begin with increased forthrightness.

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APPENDIX A
CHURCH SIZE CHARACTERISTICS,
TRANSITIONAL DESCRIPTIONS, AND KEY STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENTS

Basic Family Characteristics

Relationships are a primary value in Basic Family congregations. Results are routinely sacrificed to preserve relationships and protect feelings. Two examples illustrate this tendency: One pastor described a "totally incompetent" chairperson who was "not functioning." "We can see how it's harming us," he remarked, and "we can't change it because it would hurt his feelings" (Green, 2005, p. 137). Another pastor discovered that one member of his board had not won reelection the year before, prior to the pastor's arrival. "But they didn't want to hurt his feelings so they didn't tell him and he stayed on the board. He'd been voting at every meeting," the pastor recalled, "one of the faithful attenders, all year long" (p. 138).

This emphasis on maintaining relationships, which is attached to the desire "to know everyone" and a parallel desire for a high level of pastoral attention, appears to reduce urgency about congregational growth. The expectation that "everyone [is] at everything,'" together with a tenacious desire to maintain a high level of ownership over the church's vision and practices, place serious constraints on the church's ability to grow (pp. 138-139).

Extended Family Characteristics

Extended Family churches, like Basic Family churches, tend to function as single units," especially in the category's lower end. However, more people appeared to function "in positions of responsibility," although the pastor is expected to participate in most everything that occurs. Consequently, the pastor wears more hats and juggles an increased schedule of activities (p. 146). "This was a very busy phase," one Corporate Enterprise pastor recalled. "I was doing everything" (p. 147).

This pattern of dependence on the pastor imposes increasingly significant constraints on congregational growth as congregations move toward the upper end of the category (p. 148). "A lot more [is] going on." Consequently, "a lot more activities… require a pastoral presence" (p. 150). This constraint was mitigated in a variety of ways. Regular office hours became more standard—a formalization that was driven by the fact that "enough [is] going on… that the presence of the pastor in the office [is] needed" (p. 149). More committee activity required more formal organizational structures and shifts of power were generated by the increasing number of people "who own chunks of the church's work." "There's some power you give up," one pastor emphasized, "and some that you take on" (p. 149).

Personnel were hired to care for more congregational tasks, which changed the congregation's relational profiles. One pastor, recalling that the full-time staff person he hired built relationships with the people in his ministry sphere, observed that this "distanced me by a person…. I wrestled with that tension," he observed, "with that point of separation, that I wasn't the one" (p. 148).

Relationships continued to be a high priority in Extended Family churches. One pastor described relationships as “all that mattered,” recalling that his Extended Family church had been “run by relationships, by the weakest common denominator of somebody’s family…. Management… was kind of by stand up committee and coffee shop talk.” Another pastor asserted that “whether you’re a success at [his] church… is pretty much determined by how well you maintain relationship with [the key couple of families] and meet [their] expectations” (p. 147).

Family Enterprise Characteristics

“There [isn’t] nearly so much attention to catering to an individual’s feelings” in the Family Enterprise setting. “The needs of the organization as a whole tend to be placed above one particular individual’s feelings” (p. 158). Flirtation with this quantum shift, accompanied by expressed anxiety, aligns with Dudley’s (1993) discussion of relational and rigorous communities (pp. 7-8). Relational communities want to “know each other better”; in rigorous communities, by contrast, relationships are secondary to the pursuit of the defined vision and agreed-upon plans (p. 31).

The frequent introduction of double worship services that was evident in this category signals movement toward a rigorous community. The “desire to know everyone” remained active; nevertheless, these churches typically engaged in the dramatic change from the single unit pattern that characterizes the Family constellation of churches, which retreated from the disruption of relationships (Green, 2005, p. 160).

The increased number of people in these congregations produces a new dynamic, illustrated by the experience of the pastor who reported a couple’s attempt to schedule the staff for dinner: “The first night I have available is three weeks from now, the second night that I have available is five weeks from now.” The issue was further complicated because the staff could not coordinate their schedules with his, “so it [the effort to have dinner together] continues” (p. 161).

Access to the pastor adjusts radically in these churches. Pastors experience difficulty sustaining contact with parishioners and they invest more energy in their leaders, which impacts the level of contact available to rank-and-file parishioners (p. 159). One pastor recalled instructing his administrative assistant to tell parishioners who dropped by for an informal visit, “I’m sorry, he’s not available right now” (p. 159). Another pastor said, “‘I *don’t* do much visitation’…. a declaration that would be regarded as unacceptable in the Basic and Extended Family settings” (p. 159). Contacts are increasingly structured in these churches (p. 159), programmed responses replace responses that are “exclusively personal and informally spontaneous” (p. 162), and parishioners begin to regard contacts from persons other than the pastor as pastoral calls (p. 161). Intimacy, which the smaller congregations regard as direct contact with the pastor, is reshaped (p. 160). This adjustment does not occur without pain but the pastor’s increased engagement with organizational issues makes the shift unavoidable (p. 161).

An explosion of programs and ministry opportunities necessarily reverses the expectation that people will “come to everything that’s going on” (p. 162). In addition, multiple activities, the need to harmonize multiple schedules, together with increasing demands on scarce resources (e.g., time and space), create the need for increased attention to organizational structure.

Consequently, small groups (p. 161) and Dare to Care type ministries become increasingly important, and the work of the church becomes more specialized. The upturn of these structures and programmatic responses all compensate the reduced accessibility of the pastor (p. 162). Family Enterprise parishioners generally cooperate with these developments (p. 159).

Corporate Enterprise Characteristics

Pastors and parishioners in the Corporate Enterprise setting have established comfort with the radically different working assumptions with which the Family Enterprise experiments and that are essentially unacceptable in the Family constellation of churches. For example, understanding that "there's no way [the pastor] can stop by every week and just casually visit for a while without an agenda," Corporate Enterprise parishioners routinely assign validity to the ministry provided by persons other than the senior pastor. And pastors, formally and informally excused from being the exclusive practitioner of ministry tasks, minister *through* other persons rather than directly (pp. 167-168).

The pastor increasingly oversees "the pursuit and realization of the church's mission" (p. 166), shifting direct care-giving tasks rather dramatically to key leaders, making contacts strategically rather than spontaneously and informally, and experiencing a continued narrowing of relationships in the continuing focus on key leaders and ministry providers (p. 169).

Systems and structures, intentionally designed to move the focus and responsibility for a whole myriad of tasks away from the pastor to the organization, are constructed. One pastor described this work as "build[ing] conduits… so that the 'stuff' finds a more natural place [than the pastor's desk] to go and be taken care of" (p. 170). The expectations that people have of the senior pastor do not disappear in these churches; they are, however, "relocated" to other personnel (e.g., the single's pastor or adult class leader) and systems (e.g., small groups, which become "structurally important sources of quality body life") (p. 170). These relocations free the senior pastor to oversee "the business aspects" of the church (p. 166).

Growth Transitions: The Trades Required to Become a Different Kind of Organism

In light of these evolving characteristics, what kinds of trades must be made for a congregation to successfully transition upward into any next size category? Life cycle theory suggests that trades must be made in order to become a different *kind* of organism. If the requisite trades are not made, successful transition will be unlikely; instead, a preference for the current *kind* of organizational organism has been declared—perhaps formally but, more commonly, informally. Each trade (or non-trade) creates particular opportunities and applies unique constraints; which are experienced as gains and losses by pastors and parishioners alike. The next three sub-sections will explore the kinds of trades that these transitions require, along with their impact on pastors, as experienced and reported by the pastors in this study.

Transition: Basic Family to Extended Family Church

This transition appeared to be a transition of degree rather than of kind. One pastor suggested that the move "'from 50 to 100' had more to do with defining values than it did with trading values" (p. 140). Another pastor affirmed this perspective, suggesting that he did not sense much change until 120, at which point he discovered that he was unable to sustain his Sunday pattern of direct contact with everyone (p. 141). However, 70 was set by another pastor as the point at which he was unable to sustain the customary Basic Family level of relational contact (p. 145).

The increased complexity that results from increased cellular mass (more people) requires that pastors and congregations learn to relinquish control (p. 143). Some power necessarily shifts toward the pastor. "There is going to be more going on [in the life of the church] than [the dominant] families can manage," one pastor reasoned (p. 142). Control also needs to be dissipated among constituents so that the desire to exercise direct control over every element of the church's ministry does not become a "bottleneck" to growth. The transition also involves "the crisis of understanding [that the pastor] can't do everything" (p. 143). A significant departure from the ethos of the Basic Family church, this recognition is limited in scope, however. The pastor is no longer expected to "put on" events; s/he is expected to give input, expend effort in the planning phase, and participate (p. 143), which means "more meetings [and] more administration (p. 141).

Although the Extended Family church remains highly relational, "the Basic Family church expectation that the 'committed are at everything' begins to be challenged in the Extended Family church because these churches tend to add more events to the weekly calendar, a practice that eventually forces a choice" (p. 144).

Impact on the Pastor. One pastor described the "sadness within my soul" created by the Extended Family's increased structure, which included "much more time at the desk." Describing his need to "see some of the fruits [of his ministry] on a one-to-one basis," he concluded, "I think I would have a very hard time… being [in a church of]… 150 or more because then the dynamics really change. I know that much about myself, at this point in my life" (p. 144). Another pastor recalled his response to his increasing failure to accomplish Sunday worship contact with every parishioner: "It just killed me," he said. "They might be there for two or three weeks and I may not ever personally shake their hands, have a good moment with them." On the one hand, he understood the need to get used to this reality; on the other hand, he expressed grief: "I find myself at times feeling… disconnected," he lamented. "[It's] a hard process" (p. 145).

The need to become "more of a leader [and] less of a friend" also occasioned expressed grief. "You [do] not have the time to be close friends with everyone in the congregation when you have 150 people in your congregation," one pastor said (p. 146). Another pastor recalled the difficulty of his adjustment to the addition of a staff person: "I wasn't the [only] one" to whom people in the congregation looked and to whom they assigned loyalty" (p. 148).

Transition: Extended Family to Family Enterprise Church

"People are not coming to the church [because of]… their relationship to me," one Family Enterprise pastor observed, "but [because of] their relationship to other people…. It's not all dependent upon my ability to relate personally and effectively in deep relationship with every single person" (p. 151).

Formalized mechanisms of communication become increasingly important in this category (p. 150), together with "administration, planning, [and] programming" (p. 151). The pastor's role, more functional than the relational role that is standard in the Family Constellation of churches, reflects a distinctive adjustment. Increased investment is made in programs that attract people and the pastor "equips people" to lead those programs (p. 152). Consequently, "quality time with leadership" becomes a priority (p. 151).

Contacts are accompanied by "an agenda," which is different than just saying, "How's the family?" (p. 151). In fact, Family Enterprise pastors reported a downturn in the amount of visitation they did (p. 153) and an upturn in mechanisms (e.g., small groups) created to connect people to each other, thereby compensating programmatically for the reduced access to the pastor (p. 153). These adjustments of practice were explained by one pastor as a factor of time and physics—"Can't be in [multiple] places at the same time" (p. 152).

Family Enterprise churches routinely devised non-pastoral sources of pastoral care (p. 153), "assign[ing] significance to contacts from persons other than the senior pastor" (p. 153) and exhibiting tolerance for the pastor's absence from ministry events (p. 154).

Multiple worship services, which allow these churches to maximize their physical capacity, introduce another "trade-off" that one pastor described succinctly: "We will not be the same family…. [We have] to trade in family for community" (p. 155).

Increased attention is given to infrastructure in the effort to coordinate increased levels of activity and specialization, reflected by parishioner involvement as well as increased levels of pastoral and support staff (p. 155).

The exercise of control dissipates with the increased number of people in the congregation. "It is bringing discomfort," one pastor said. "There are so [many] new people, new ways, less control…. It's just not the same as what it was" (p. 152).

Impact on the Pastor. Concern was expressed that one can "get to this place where you don't have time to really care about people because you always have an agenda" (p. 156). Another pastor talked about the freedom his Extended Family schedule provided, a freedom that movement to the Family Enterprise category would impinge, which he was reluctant to forfeit (p. 156).

Pastors need to exhibit or develop the ability to "trust… people to do the things that I used to do" (p. 157). They also need to confront issues of ego, addressing the inclination to regard ministry as a "kind of solo act" (p. 157). The addition of staff, a routine act in this size congregation, renders this adjustment mandatory.

The losses experienced in the movement from a highly relational to more functional framework are captured in the words of several pastors: Even if the “church is growing and… running smoothly,” one pastor said, “loss [the closeness of friendship] occurs,” one reported (p. 153). Another pastor described the “Family Enterprise church stage…. [as] a really tough phase because I had to be less accessible” (p. 153). “My heart wants to be with people,” another pastor said, describing the impact that the increased demands of the larger congregation had imposed on his relational approach to ministry, “my head knows I can’t” (p. 158). “I’m really wrestling with not knowing everybody,” said another. (p. 158).

Transition: Family Enterprise to Corporate Enterprise Church

The expectation that members “will know and be known by everyone” is set aside in this transition, “alternative mechanisms for belonging” (e.g., small groups) are established, and comfort with these alternative mechanisms is reflected (p. 164). “Accessibility,” in the Corporate Enterprise setting, “is no longer the primary pastoral virtue” (p. 165) and the decision to not attend ministry events was framed as a “strategic necessity” instead of a “technical or practical impossibility”—a philosophical rationale rather than a pragmatic rationale. One pastor put it this way: “I’m raising up leaders and I want them to lead…. They have a commensurate amount of privilege, responsibility, and authority that goes with the task. If I’m there, it gives the appearance of micro-managing” (p. 165).

Governing boards learn to not micromanage the staff and other ministries, often reframing their philosophies of governance. Focus is increasingly placed on strategic concerns rather than tactical concerns. One pastor described this shift of focus with an example, suggesting that the question, “Are we worshipping God the way we ought to be?” must replace the question, “Do we have enough chaperones for the overnight for the senior highs?” (p. 163). This shift requires increasingly sophisticated infrastructure, supported by decentralization. We are right now [in] this growth-through-delegation thing,” one pastor said, describing the move away from high levels of personal control, “where…. decisions are made in the area where people are doing the ministry rather than having the decision come up to [the] board” (p. 164). Mission and vision play central roles in “creating… environment[s] with flexibility” and as evaluative standards. “Ineffective ministries” are dismissed (p. 165).

Impact on the Pastor. “[It] was a huge shift,” one pastor said, describing the shift to the needs of his Corporate Church, “I had to look in the mirror…. I needed to shift my whole orientation and leadership style. I realized that I must have a staff team that balances me and that helps us go in a missional direction” (p. 165). A comparison captures the magnitude of this alteration. “I would never feel comfortable asking someone else to do a funeral,” a non-Corporate Enterprise pastor declared. “I [would] feel like I was doing someone a huge disservice.” A Corporate Enterprise pastor, on the other hand, comfortably described it as a “blessing” when parishioners engaged someone other than himself to perform ministry functions (p. 166).

“Right now, I look out at my congregation and I know people,” a Family Enterprise pastor said, expressing the difficulty and scope of this transition. “I’ll call them by name.” He then voiced the dilemma that this transition presents:

> Nobody has the ability to know everybody in a 500-person church…. [Heavy sigh] I don't know if I want to do this, you know…. I would have to say, I am not going to know everybody…. I'm wrestling with that right now. Do I want to reach that point? (p. 166)

Structural Adjustments

Structural differences concern resources (e.g., time, energy, information) and the way the church does its work (p. 172). Focus group participants reported different tolerances for the structural complexities that increased congregational size stimulates. Each size church approached its work differently, based on the number of resources it possessed and how it utilized those resources.

Organizational Resources

Physical capacity, available personnel, and discretionary resources are the three sets of organizational resources that emerged in this study. These resources are significant markers for how the churches in the four size categories operated to accomplish their goals.

Physical Capacity. Physical capacity, the space available for ministry activity, facilitates (and limits) organizational activity. More importantly, congregational attitudes may impair a congregation's ability to fully utilize their physical capacity, which may help explain Crow's (1997) data on sanctuary under-usage (¶ 228).

Among churches under 150, the desire to be *all* together for congregational events was a common value. Conversely, larger churches adapted this desire to be *all* together, routinely using their spaces multiple times for different constituencies (Green, 2005, p. 173).

Family Enterprise pastors were very open about the turbulence experienced in the transition to multiple worship services—a significant move away from the *"all* together" preference. "It was very hard on them," one pastor said (p. 173). These pastors expressed ambivalence, tempered with necessity, about the relative merit of the missional gains and social losses that this trade invoked. Nevertheless, these churches made the social trade, thereby maximizing their physical space in the effort to extend their influence. Corporate Enterprise pastors and their congregations all appeared to have moved past the question, "Should we make this fundamental change?" Instead, "comfortable with the inevitability or prudence of multiple services," no one entertained the possibility of "a return to the simple unity of a single service' (p. 174).

Available Personnel. Pastors appear to be the primary source and resource for ministry in the Basic Family church. Other personnel appear to be scarce. Ministry, in the words of one pastor, is "the pastor's job" (p. 175). This perspective began to modulate somewhat in the Extended Family church. Reference to the "solo performer" dissipated and pastors increasingly reported a "coaching" focus (p. 175), which they defined as "working with other leaders, trying to cast vision and to share vision and to plant vision" (p. 176).

This alteration of involvement extended in the Family and Corporate Enterprise churches, including professional and support staff as well as laity (p. 183). The "pastor sponsors and

facilitates ministry partnership" in these settings rather than being "the primary 'doer' of ministry," which infers that personnel is available (p. 176). Basic Family pastors dream about available personnel; in the three upper size categories, by contrast, pastors regard this resource as, to varying degrees, within reach (p. 176)

Discretionary Resources. Discretionary resources are the "net assets" that congregations can apply to its mission (Hall, 1982, p. 57). Discretionary resources include money; they also exist in the form of people and time (Leonard-Barton, Swap, & Von Krogh, 2002).

Pastors reported that surprisingly similar tasks and activities occurred in the four size categories; the way in which those tasks were accomplished shifted in the different sized congregations, however. For example, a dominant theme among Basic Family pastors was that they "function[ed] as generalists, responsible for everything that no one else will do…. Vestiges of this do-it-all reality were also evident in the Extended Family churches" (p. 177). Family and Corporate Enterprise churches, by contrast, abandoned this "do-it-all" approach, suggesting that the congregation's ability—and willingness—to identify and validate resources other than the pastor is an essential component of congregational growth (p. 179).

The Pastor's Time (as a Discretionary Resource). Parishioners typically register far more concern about access to the pastor than they do about the availability of other personnel, suggesting that the manner in which the pastor uses his or her time "has to be continually renegotiated as congregations get larger" (p. 174). This renegotiation occurs on two levels: First, the minister must consent to the renegotiated use of time "because he or she sets a pace that either assures nongrowth or permits growth" (George & Bird, 1993, p. 18). Second, the congregation must consent because, in the words of Parry (1999) an "absence of leadership is more than… a failing on the part of the potential leader. It is also… associated with the 'roadblocks' that organizations throw up to thwart the emergence of leadership" (¶ 97).

The Basic Family pastor experiences acute pressure. "When all the responsibility for ministry is put on the pastor," one pastor lamented, "things… drop through the cracks and don't get taken care of." He concluded, "In many ways that leads to the size of the church" (Green, 2005, pp. 179-180).

In the three larger settings, the pastor's time is an increasingly scarce resource because of the "fixed sum problem," as Schaller (1985) calls it. "The minister has only 168 hours in a week" (p. 133), which means that larger congregations place more demands on a fixed quantity. Consequently, the pastor's time is intentionally and necessarily conserved in the larger settings (Green, 2005, p. 180). This conservation occurs in a variety of ways. For example, an Extended Family pastor disclosed, "I may only have 45 minutes with that person who just found out their loved one died… Before [in the Basic Family setting] I could spend two hours" (p. 180). A Family Enterprise pastor described a further refinement: "I can't keep up with all the calls to visitors and absentees any more. So we've got a team that does that" (pp. 180-181). And the addition of pastoral and support staff, according to Corporate Enterprise pastors, did not reduce the time-related pressure: "I've discovered that the more staff I have" one pastor said, "the more of my time that it takes in staff interaction and management and team building and relationship building and sometimes just flat out problem solving…. Staff issues take a great deal of time, either positively or negatively (p. 181). In addition, Corporate Enterprise pastors reported their

need “to strategically withdraw from avenues of direct ministry” in order to “facilitate the ‘multiplication’ of ministry by expending… energy in the development of human resources (p. 181). These adjustments— very different sets of congregational permissions—reflect successful renegotiation between pastors and congregations (p. 180).

Development of (Discretionary) Resources. Extended Family, Family Enterprise, and Corporate Enterprise pastors invest significant energy in the development of people—a primary discretionary resource. This expenditure, in turn, produces increased differentiation (specialization) and the need for increasing decentralization. (p. 181).

Leadership Development. Extended Family, Family and Corporate Enterprise pastors generally talked more hopefully than Basic Family pastors about leadership development tasks and initiatives (p. 182). Basic Family pastors did not fail to see the importance of leadership development but they did not as readily perceive that laity were available for this purpose (p. 182).

Training and leadership development, in the Extended Family category, tended to be “organic and relational.” “I spend a lot of time with the leadership, one pastor said, “just sharing with them and… dreaming with them” (p. 183). Family Enterprise descriptions moved beyond “sharing” and “dreaming” to “more intentional, focused, [and] structured” delegation (p. 183). The opportunity and need for increased attention to leadership development “was evident in the increased size of pastoral and support staffs and [a variety of] lay-driven ministries, such as care groups” (p. 183).

Corporate Enterprise pastors drew a purposeful distinction between “lay development” and “leadership development,” believing that the development of leaders was a key to the church’s ministry strength. These investments of “significant scheduled time” (p. 184) with lay and professional staff necessarily “narrow[ed] the pastor’s relational connections, focusing those connections increasingly in key personnel rather than on the congregation at large” (p. 185). Again, “congregants in these larger categories appeared to exhibit an increased desire to be involved in ministry or service, partnering with the pastor in ministry and willing to accept increased relational distance from the pastor” (pp. 183-184).

Differentiation. Differentiation, which can also be thought of as increased specialization, is measured by the number of levels, departments, job titles, and specialized tasks within an organization (p. 185). Differentiation became deeper (more layers of hierarchy) and broader (increased specialization) in each larger size category. For example, one Corporate Enterprise pastor with a staff of seven pastors, two part-time program people (FG803.71.12), and a support staff of eight (FG802.71.8), reported, “We have 45 ministries that are going on right now” (191). This depth and breadth in this report contrasts starkly with the Basic Family church in which the primary ministry provider was the pastor, the congregation was the primary focus of the pastor’s ministry (p. 190), and the paid staff, without exception, consisted solely of the pastor (p. 185). By contrast, Extended Family pastors began to report a variety of paid positions (p. 185), Family Enterprise pastors reported “increased professionalization and full-time equivalency, and Corporate Enterprise pastors were the only group to ponder the question, “How many pastoral and support staff do you have?” The need to calculate an answer to this question reflects the increased complexity of the Corporate Enterprise environment (p. 187).

Parishioners were more aggressively utilized in each larger setting (p. 187) and staff designations became increasingly specific, with placement decisions "more directly targeted to fleshing out the team" (p. 189). Staff meetings became more complex, pointing to an escalating division of labor and the need to "coordinate a multiplicity of ministries [horizontal complexity] and key players [vertical complexity]" (p. 189).

Decentralization. Purposeful and consistent delegation of ministry tasks to others received little mention by Basic Family pastors and reference to administrative activity among these pastors "generally described the pastor's own tasks rather than activities associated with delegation" (Green, 2005, p. 192). Delegation, reflected in words like "oversight" and "supervision," became more common in the Extended Family discussions. These pastors reported increased incidents of "helping," which was distinct from "doing" (p. 192). The stimulus for delegating was, in part, pragmatic: "There's only so much I can do," one pastor said (p. 193).

Decentralization is a more aggressive leadership strategy than delegation because decentralization moves initiative and authority down the hierarchy *along with* the responsibility for the task (Adizes, 1988, p. 40). Consequently, decentralization tended to displace mere delegation in each larger category. One Corporate Enterprise pastor illustrated this impulse: "What I'm openly trying to get is decentralization for the purpose of having people who carry the same weight and gravity of leadership that I carry" (Green, 2005, p. 193). Decentralization, which necessarily moves the pastor from micro-management toward macro-management, also enables the pastor to increasingly float to his or her areas of strength, or to the place of greatest congregational need (p. 194).

Delegation was, for many of these pastors, a learned skill (p. 194).

> Reorientation from *doing* "the stuff" to "caus[ing] stuff to happen" creates ambiguity…. "Tak[ing your] hands out of getting involved in every detail of everything that happens" also creates complexity for the pastor: "You have less direct control," one pastor explained. "You're in a people management rather than a project management role…. The decisions are slower, the feedback's slower, the week takes longer to close. The variables go up exponentially." (p. 194)

Delegation was difficult for some "because the pastor ceases to be conversant with every detail, an adjustment that challenges many pastors" (p. 195).

Resistance to delegation originates from several sources.

> One Extended Family pastor reported that his parishioners "wanted to be told what to do"…. A Family Enterprise pastor confessed his own tendency to "make sure [ministry] happens" by hands-on involvement…. Another Family Enterprise pastor described the discomfort associated with the need to trust others (p. 195).

Resistance to delegation may also result from the distance that delegation creates between the pastor and others. "The real intimate or personal contact is lost, or… certainly diminished," a Family Enterprise pastor asserted (p. 196).

<u>The Work of the Church.</u>

Six "families" of activity, which reflect the way churches do their work, emerged in this study (p. 199). This paper focuses on those activities that produced discernible differences.

Pastoral Care. The pastoral visit, perhaps the most fundamental pastoral care expectation, evolved significantly across the size categories. A primary expectation in the Basic Family church, the expectation remained fairly important in Extended Family churches, although some shifting became apparent. "Visitation is not a role in my job," one Extended Family pastor explained (p. 203), a theme that became more common among Family Enterprise pastors. "I don't do much visitation," one pastor simply and forthrightly declared (p. 203).

This metamorphosis was attributed to "workload" (p. 204) and to the number of "different things going on," which prompted increasingly programmatic responses (p. 203).

> Extended Family pastors appeared to add staff to meet some of the visitation needs; Family Enterprise pastors began to structure their care programmatically, creating small groups to facilitate that care… and Corporate Enterprise pastors extended this pattern. [One Corporate Enterprise pastor reported, for example, that "80% of the pastoral care" in his church "was done by lay people in small groups" (p. 184).] The value of this approach is reflected in the fact that trained people can visit people a lot more often than the pastoral staff can, which provides pastoral contact without overwhelming the pastor (pp. 204-205).

This metamorphosis required a parallel adjustment from parishioners—i.e., "a call from someone other than the senior pastor" needs to "count" (p. 204). Each larger sized church reflected increasing comfort with this shift of practice and "Corporate Enterprise pastors generally reported congregational comfort with this highly adapted reality" (p. 204).

Organizational Management. Defining organizational management activities included administration, planning, the supervision of staff, communication and coordination, and leading/visioning (p. 206). Key highlights from these activities are sketched here.

<u>*Administration*</u>. For most Basic Family pastors, administrative activity was "hands-on.... It was labor intensive and involved a wide range of tasks (p. 207). The definition shifted among Extended Family pastors, who "began to engage others more energetically" (p. 207). These pastors expanded the definition to include "planning structure" (p. 208). Family Enterprise pastors became occupied increasingly with macro issues and they "sought to create systems to assure that ministry activity occurred" (p. 208). Corporate Enterprise pastors extended this pattern, moving away from "administrivia," as one pastor called it (p. 207), which they associated with micro-management, to leadership activities (p. 208). These pastors engaged in noticeably broader planning activity. "We spend board time vision[ing], planning," one pastor explained (p. 208).

<u>*Communication and Coordination*</u>. Informal mechanisms, sponsored by those with history and status in the congregation, tended to be the preferred mechanisms of control, communication, and coordination in the Basic Family church (p. 209). Additionally, Basic Family pastors tended to reside on the margins of the information loop (p. 209). Extended Family pastors became

central networking “hubs” (p. 208) because the increasingly complexity of the enlarging congregation became “too cumbersome” and unreliable (p. 209). Family Enterprise pastors and their staffs became “communication ‘conduit[s],’ in settings that required “increased attention to the use of communication networks as mechanisms of coordination” (p. 210). These mechanisms are important for regulating increased traffic in common spaces and for managing an accelerating rate of change (pp. 211-212). In the Corporate Enterprise setting, “intentional,” “regular,” and specific” communication is even more necessary to achieving control and maintaining coordination (p. 210). Staff meetings are one example of this phenomenon. Furthermore, these “mechanisms of control and coordination” are “designed to help [these congregations] achieve their mission and goals,” rather than to endlessly reinforce existent congregational relationships (p. 211).

The Pastor as Initiating Leader. The dominant Basic Family sentiment was that these churches do not want the pastor to function as an initiating leader. “A leader implies movement,” one pastor offered, “and they don’t want to go anywhere.” “They need a leader,” another pastor said, “because they don’t want to have to answer the phone” (p. 212). Extended Family and Family Enterprise pastors, in contrast, reflected more optimism about their ability to initiate action. “Leading, envisioning, and meeting with the leadership of the church” were more frequently and confidently listed as “significant” areas of pastoral activity. The positive response to delegation in these size categories affirms this openness to initiating leadership by the pastor (p. 212). The most active initiating roles were typically played by Corporate Enterprise pastors.

> “I am responsible for vision and spend as much time there as I can,” one pastor said. Another pastor reported that his church “look[s] to [him] to set the broader vision of the church. The board no longer sets the practical direction of the church,” he explained. Instead, the board cites “parameters” that it has set. Then “they look to the senior pastor to say, ‘You and your team get us there’” (p. 213).

APPENDIX B
OCAI PROFILES FOR THE FOUR SIZE CATEGORIES

Basic Family Church

Clan. The clan culture was evident in the following Basic Family characteristics. Pastors consistently reported that their congregations would sacrifice performance, if necessary, to protect the feelings of those inside the congregational clan. In addition, the high value on relationships makes it hard for outsiders to access the rules of the clan. “You have to be adopted and enculturated into [the congregational] family,” one pastor remarked, “because [the expectations are] not spelled out” (p. 220). Finally, an external focus was routinely experienced as a threat: “They know the rules, they know their functions,” one pastor explained. “Everything is predictable. You introduce new people and there is that loss of predictability, which means a loss of comfort” (p. 221).

Hierarchy. The relatively high hierarchy score (18.7%) was not driven by organizational complexity because specialization seldom extended beyond the pastor and these congregations did not report much infrastructure; instead, an internal focus, with its concern for integration or predictability, provides a likely explanation (p. 230). One pastor defined hierarchy in his Basic Family church as “rigidity—‘a reliance on tradition and rules and how things are done’—rather than efficiency. Success,” he said, “is defined in terms of… keeping things as they are’” (p. 231). Thus, “traditional authority”—a function of the clan’s relational structure—rather than “the formal authority of the administrative board”—appeared to be the primary decision-making structure (p. 231).

Adhocracy and *Market.* Although interest in adhocracy was expressed by Basic Family pastors, they reported little congregational receptivity to the elements of adhocracy (p. 242). The market culture produced strong disinterest among these pastors, who also anticipated strong resistance from their congregations (p. 246).

Extended Family Church

Clan. “Because of its emphasis on relationships rather than programs,” the clan culture was credited with helping congregations work through difficult times; it was also credited with crafting challenges to any growth that posed a threat to the clan culture (pp. 221-222). “They want me to spend my primary time helping them be comfortable in relationships with those who are already there,” one pastor complained. “I am the pontiff for that [congregational] family” (p. 222). Another pastor talked about the tension generated by the infusion of new people and his congregation’s desire to assimilate people slowly: “There’s some feeling that these ‘new people’ are trying to take over” (p. 223).

Hierarchy. Organizational structures evolved to handle the increasing organizational complexity generated by an increasing number of parishioners and ministries. One pastor, for instance, described the need to “put [in] some more structure… to keep track of [new] people [and visitors].” Structural attention was necessary if the congregation intended to fulfill one of the key

qualities of clan—"that we take care of our own" (p. 232). Another pastor talked about his congregation's new van—a "wonderful gift" from a donor:

> We had to argue about what color the van was going to be, where we'd keep the van, who was responsible to put gas in the van. Our church used to be able to plan a lot of activities off of the grounds of the church just by saying, "Let's meet at such and such a time. We'll carpool to where we're going to go." Now everybody wants to use the van. So we had to establish a crew of van drivers. You had to establish rules by which activities could be approved.

These solutions, designed to apply fairness by impersonal methods that did not consider a person's status or history in the congregation, interrupted some of the clan's informal collegiality. "We had arguments," the pastor recalled. "We had people leaving the board…. because now we had this wonderful new van" (p. 234). It seems, then, that "enhanced emphasis on structure threatens a central value of the Extended (and Basic) Family church. Policies and procedures, even if well-intentioned, well-framed, and necessary, can feel impersonal in a culture that values friendliness (p. 233). Perhaps this score—the highest of all the hierarchy scores (23.7%)—reflects the additional infrastructure necessary to accommodate increased cellular mass and the organizational complexity that results from engaging more people in ministry tasks (p. 227), together with a residue of the Basic Family church's "rigidity" factor.

Adhocracy. Extended Family pastors reported more adhocratic activity than Basic Family pastors; they also reported some hesitation. "I can't always [do] both adhoc stuff and the clan-shepherding stuff," one pastor said. "Sometimes I feel like I'm wearing too many hats to go there" [adhocracy] (p. 243).

Market. The *market* culture, possessing an "inherent intensity… [that] tends to clash with other Extended Family values," posed significant problems for this category of churches. One pastor explained his congregation's resistance to the "out there first" aspect of the market culture by questioning whether it is possible "to do [an] efficient kind of market culture…in a consensus style without [the] leader going too far ahead" (p. 248). Pastors generally joined their congregations in expressing resistance to the market culture: "I personally hold out my hand and say, 'Slow down,'" one pastor disclosed. "'Let's think about the people'" (p. 248).

Family Enterprise Church

Clan. As discussed earlier, Mann's (2001) N-Curve seems apparent in this group of churches: "We're in a cycle where we keep coming back [to clan]," one pastor said. "Only when you get back to… clan, it doesn't look exactly like the first clan" (p. 224). Clan becomes "planned clan" and small groups become a primary feature of this phenomenon. Thus, the informal, single-unit, nature of clan in the Family Constellation of churches is displaced and "the creation of relevant systems… [for] sustaining congregational growth and a quality congregational life" becomes acceptable (p. 225). "We want to create large churches," one pastor said, "but we want the large churches to have clans within them to meet those needs. Everybody needs clan, everybody needs family" (p. 225). This shift eventually requires the pastor to "stop being a shepherd and [become]

a rancher" (p. 275). One pastor described this shift-of-relationship with a metaphor: "I'm not going to be able to be a daddy to everybody" (p. 275).

Hierarchy. Although the OCAI scores for this size category were reduced, focus group conversations reflected an increased strategic attention to structure. Central calendars and sign-up routines became necessary mechanisms of coordination and communication (p. 235). "Procedural networks and policy appeared to replace… organic and informal agreements" (p. 236). One pastor described the shift with an eloquent phrase: "It moves from conversation to calendar" (p. 236). Small groups become increasingly important mechanisms of pastoral care (p. 236), multiple worship services increase the complexity that must be managed (p. 236), and "agreed upon mechanisms for communication" become increasingly important "for maintaining organizational clarity' (p. 237).

Discomfort with the hierarchy was also evident among pastors in this category. One pastor, anticipating the need for a more robust presence in the hierarchy quadrant, said, "I think that [the OCAI kite's] going to shift to where none of us wants to go [hierarchy]." "Let somebody else worry about the administration and the meetings," another pastor said. "I was not called by God to be an administrator" (p. 265). Thus, "comfort with the hierarchy was frequently identified by Family Enterprise and Corporate Enterprise pastors as a learned or acquired skill" (p. 237).

Adhocracy. Family Enterprise pastors registered an active interest in this quadrant. "I (Green, 2005, p. 243) don't think [the congregation] would find anything distasteful in it," one pastor said. "I think actually there's a… hunger [for] that" (pp. 243-244). Adhocratic activity was seen, among other things, "as a hedge against decline" (p. 244).

Market. Affirming the need for "some market aspects" (p. 249), resistance to this quadrant remained evident among these pastors. For instance, acknowledging that he and his congregation would have to become more "results-oriented" in order to move out of the Family Enterprise category, one pastor nevertheless argued that "being goal-oriented… is not our nature" (p. 250). Another pastor remarked that the market culture is "almost… a violation of our culture…. [It] just kind of goes against the grain" (p. 250). Another pastor described the emotional and organizational tension that the clan and the "goal-oriented" market quadrants exert on each other:

> Let's get some results, let's get people in…. We have a desire to do that…. But I think that butts up against the whole clan activity of caring, watching out for people…. We want everyone to feel like they belong, creating [a] family atmosphere… Then to suddenly get aggressive and say, "Well, you're not doing the job for us here so you need to step down"…. Then we bump against this whole clan thing…. Somebody's going to really get hurt…. Oh, my goodness! (p. 250)

Corporate Enterprise Church

Clan. Referring to his church "federation of clans," one pastor said, "It's impossible to get that one-clan feeling in one room. It's too diverse. And I think our small groups' ministry has forged that clan identity." (p. 226). Interestingly, this group entertained the idea that the clan quadrant plays a role in softening the impact of the Corporate Enterprise church's results-orientation: "As

I look ahead into the next two to three years," one pastor said, "I can see that we will need to put a warmer touch on the church and balance the way the church looks" (p. 226).

Hierarchy. Recognizing the need for hierarchy, this group's recognition was tempered by suspicion. Effort was expended to make structure, which "plays an important role in holding things together" (p. 239), as invisible as possible. "We put a lot of energy into building the skeletal frame," one pastor explained, "and we should quickly bury it so it's there but it's not seen" (p. 241). However, having experienced the "gravitational pull" (p. 239) of structure, these pastors did not want the structures that their size rendered necessary to become "bureaucratic" (p. 238). One pastor explained this concern:

> You do want to get systems in place but never be slave to the system…. That's why I can't conceive of a time where [hierarchy] gets the weight and attention that institutional gravity always [creates]…. There's a subtle poison that sets in there. The intentionality of not over-structuring…. If it doesn't have to do with the primary reason we are here, we eliminate it…. The issue is not efficiency but effectiveness…. The most effective way is to not let the institutional gravity pull the weight of your energy, time, and resources. (p. 238)

Another pastor used the metaphor of a moving sidewalk to illustrate the positive role of structure:

> I want to develop a system that allows people to do their ministry in a way that makes it easier for them, kind of like a moving sidewalk, so that… they can get on the moving sidewalk and find they are moving more rapidly as they walk along than the person that's off the sidewalk…. When I think about hierarchy and about organization, I think about removing the obstacles rather than creating them…. Hierarchy can move into bureaucracy but I also believe that timeliness, efficiency, smooth functioning—there is a very positive side to that. (p. 239)

Corporate Enterprise churches wrestle with organizational structure in unique ways. The redefinition of leadership model was a common dilemma, for example. "We're in the middle of moving to…. the Carver [1997] model," one pastor remarked. "It's a certain style of governance in which the board is committed to the ends, not the means. And their whole focus is 'What's the vision?' Their focus is not how we get there" (p. 240). And, of course, the need to administrate a "federation of clans" infers the need for hierarchy (p. 240). However, the Corporate Enterprise church's particular challenge seemed to be the maintenance of "flexibility in the ministry environment, which includes the periodic need to simplify and redesign the hierarchical structures" (p. 240).

Adhocracy. Adhocracy exerted its strongest presence in this size category. "[We've been] innovative, trying new things," one pastor said (p. 244) and another pastor talked about his church's continuing effort to be "relevant, productive, and connected" (p. 244).

Market. The "hard-driving, goal-oriented characteristic of the market quadrant," although not universal, was most evident among this group of pastors (p. 251). "The primacy of the church's mission" and a corresponding ability to subordinate relationships to the church's formal "vision

and the mission" were pronounced among this group (p. 251). "Hurting someone's feelings" is not unthinkable here (p. 252). One pastor illustrated this set of priorities:

> He's a good man …. He was part of the church at a critical stage. If it wasn't for his family, the church would have died …. But he never adapted as we changed…. When he goes, and I'm sure he will, it'll be like a tooth getting ripped out. A big tooth…. [But] we're okay if he goes to a different church… It will be painful but we'll let that happen. (p. 251)

The subordination of relationships to results was also evident in the selection of leaders. Requisite skill sets were more important than relational history (p. 252). Increasingly rigorous critique also extended to the maintenance of particular ministries. One pastor, reporting the need to prune back the number of ministries in his church, declared that the evaluative procedure he anticipated would be based, not on the question, "Are you doing it?" but on the question 'Are you doing it *well* or not?" (p. 253).

> [Another] pastor observed, "Big churches change people to be the way that they're going to be and smaller churches are changed by people." Relationships are not unimportant in the Corporate Enterprise setting but the maintenance of relationships does not appear to be the primary value; numerical growth and expanding influence are the primary values; relationships, built to facilitate that goal, demonstrate that the goal has been achieved (p. 252).

The formalization of goals, a characteristic of market cultures, together with the assignment of "intrinsic value" to those goals (Mann, 2001, p. 18), was evident in this category of churches (Green, 2005, p. 253). This perspective contrasted significantly with the profile of Basic and Extended Family churches, which "prefer[red] softer indicators of effectiveness to hard, measurable indicators such as numbers" (p. 248).

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