

LAY LEADERSHIP TRAINING: A KEY TO
CONGREGATIONAL GROWTH?

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Our Savior Lutheran Church

Rev. Thomas F. Fischer, Pastor

January 20, 1997

TO: All Saginaw Valley area pastors who participated in my recent research project.
FROM: Rev. Tom Fischer

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Greetings in Christ!

I have finished my research project related to the survey which you received and returned in November, 1996. As promised, I am gratefully responding to your participation by sharing with you the results of my research. 29 of 50 pastors randomly selected in the Saginaw Valley (NE) Pastors Conference responded to the survey. One survey, returned incomplete, was discarded resulting in a total of 28 responses used.

The table, below, summarizes the results of the research. I would note that these are in "Lay" (or, in our case, "clergy") terminology.

	Hypothesis Tested	Results
1.	Is growth (or change) in worship attendance correlated to the number of on-site leadership training events held?	No
2.	Is growth (or change) in worship attendance correlated to the number of off-site leadership training events attended?	No
3.	Is growth (or change) in total annual receipts correlated to the number of on-site leadership training events held?	No
4.	Is growth (or change) in total annual receipts correlated to the number of off-site leadership training events attended?	No
5.	Is growth (or change) in total annual receipts correlated to the combination of on-site and off-site training events held?	No
6.	Is growth (or change) in worship attendance correlated to the combination of on-site and off-site training events held?	Possibly slight

What does this mean? (Sorry, I couldn't resist...)

- 1) **Further research is needed** before generalized conclusions can be drawn. The results of this limited research sample should not be interpreted to mean leadership training has no value. Indeed, the combination of training events seemed to indicate a very slight potential correlation.
- 2) Individual congregations may benefit from identifying specific areas in which leadership training might have the greatest impact for their specific situation and needs. It appeared that most of the churches surveyed had no systematic, structured leadership development program. Further research might set up control groups of congregations using different leadership training strategy approaches and analyze the results over a period of years.

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- 3) It appears from the data that a significant number of congregations have experienced events which dramatically affected offerings and/or worship attendance in the research period. Perhaps other factors exerting a stronger impact on congregational growth are also at work in the congregations—e.g. conflict, lack of ministry focus, etc.—which need to be researched, evaluated, and addressed.
- 4) It may be helpful to for congregations to select specific individual characteristics of leadership most desired in congregations (e.g. persistence, ability to make timely decisions, ability to develop and follow-through a vision, spiritual base in Word and Sacrament, etc.) and focus leadership training efforts on these areas.

Certainly there are other areas which further research could investigate. This, however, went beyond the scope of my research project.

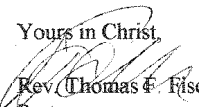
Finally—but most importantly—I want to say that though research may be helpful in *describing* what God is doing among us and our congregations, this research does not—and *should not* be used to—predict, control or manipulate how God will work in our churches. To use social science research as a predictor is improper. To subject God to such “predictability” is blasphemous, arrogant, and presumptuous.

God’s will and timing—as He works through Word and Sacrament—is the most important, foundational, and essential influence in all of our respective ministries. No research can change that! Without Him, we can do *nothing*. His Word works in the way *He* desires (Isaiah 55:11). He—and *He alone*—builds His Church (Matthew 16:18), by grace...*in spite* of our feeble human efforts and our sinful flesh. We are simply stewards of the church and servants of Christ, humbly ministering as we are called to a wide diversity of gatherings of God’s people.

There is much more that could be said. If you would like a copy of the entire research, please send \$10 for postage and copier expenses. If you’d like to chat about the research, feel free to give me a call. Or, if you like, e-mail me at TFFischer@juno.com. As I indicated, your individual responses have been kept entirely confidential. The individual response forms have been destroyed.

Brothers, thanks for your valuable help. May God be your source of strength, support and vision in your respective ministries. I am truly...

Yours in Christ,


Rev. Thomas F. Fischer,
Pastor

Philippians 4:13-14

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Introduction

Certainly congregational growth has been viewed from a variety of perspectives. Some Christian theologians, for example, have indicated that growth was purely a result of God's working in a church. Such theologians quoted a plethora of Scripture passages including Isaiah's words:

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

Lutheran theologians, especially those in conservative Lutheran denominations such as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), followed the lead of Martin Luther's "Principles of the Reformation." Like Luther, they proclaimed that a church will grow as it basis itself only on Scripture (*sola Scriptura*), only on Grace (*sola Gratia*), and only on faith (*sola Fide*) (Schweibert, 1950, pp. 7-9). CFW Walther, a founding father of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), also insisted, as did most conservative Lutheran clergy, that congregational growth was directly related to the use of God's Word and Sacraments (Walther, 1928, p. 403).

Statement of the Problem

To what degree does leadership training affect congregational growth, if at all? It was the purpose of this study to study the relationship between leadership training and congregational growth. More specifically, this project determined if a positive linear

relationship existed between congregational growth in worship attendance and leadership training. It also examined whether congregations which sponsored leadership training for their governing board in the past five years also experienced growth in average annual congregational receipts over the same period.

A Macroscopic Secular Perspective

However important God's Word of the Old and New Testaments might have been to any Christian congregation, one could not deny that various other operative dynamics also affected the church as they have any other organization. This was widely recognized and publicized by organizational theorists especially since the 1960's. Katz and Kahn (1978, p. 63) were just two of many voices which recognized these dynamics. Their "Social Systems Approach" pointed out that many of the classical models describing organizational life were overly simplistic.

Furthermore, they indicated, individuals must focus on the functional integration of multiple dynamics within the organization in order to describe it (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 64). Organizations, they said, were not monolithically structured. Instead, they were composed of interdependent and interrelated parts with many levels of organization, at both microscopic and macroscopic levels (Katz & Kahn, 1979, p. 79).

Karl Weick (1979), one time Rensis Likert Collegiate Professor of Organizational Behavior at the University of Michigan's School of Business in Ann Arbor, echoed and expanded Katz and Kahn's notion that there were multiple factors of influence in organizations in his book, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*. Organizations, in his view, were composed of the sum total of relational and communicative ambiguities within

an organization. Thus, he believed, a general systems theory perspective was necessary to adequately evaluate the multiple factors which influence organizations. This required that one consider the complexity of the organization in which all parts influenced the functioning of the whole (Weick, 1979, p. 164).

A Macroscopic Religious Perspective

The recognition that congregations were complex organizations with a grand diversity of factors affecting congregational health began to surface in religious circles shortly after these factors were identified in the secular corporate world. Perhaps Rabbi Edwin Friedman (1985) was one of the major religious figures to recognize that multiple dynamics, not just leadership, affected congregational health and growth. In his landmark work, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, Friedman (1985) recognized that congregations, like families and other social organizations, were systems of multitude interactive components. Analyzing congregational health and growth, Friedman believed one must take a "departure from traditional notions of linear cause and effect."

Instead, he posited, congregational health must be examined from a general systems perspective which:

focuses less on the content and more on the process that governs the data; less on the cause-and-effect connections that link bits of information and more on the principles of organization that give data meaning (Friedman, 1985, p. 15).

McGavran continued,

only as...we see the reasons for increase, the factors which God used to multiply His churches, and the conditions under which the Church has spread or remained stationary, do we understand church growth (McGavran, 1970, p. 124).

Importance of the Study

This study was conducted in order to help congregational leaders of the Michigan District-LCMS, both ordained and non-ordained, recognize the importance of leadership development in churches. If it could be demonstrated that a relationship existed between the training of congregational leadership and numerical congregation growth, this finding would have dramatic and far-reaching consequences for congregational life and ministry at both the local and denominational level. Such findings would encourage new and renewed efforts in developing leadership training programs.

Certainly many potential recommendations could have been suggested on the basis of the discovery of a linear relationship between leadership and the two major variables of congregational life indicated in the hypotheses. Examples of such consequences for Michigan District Lutheran congregations might have included, for example,

1. A wholesale reorganization of congregational priorities so that worship, teaching, prayer, service, and all ministry is focused to support, encourage, and equip lay leadership through regular training sessions.
2. An essential awareness that Word and Sacrament ministry in the congregations of the Michigan District ought to be specifically targeted toward leadership development.
3. A reassessment of congregationally and denominationally financial resources allocated for leadership training and development. If a positive linear relationship was demonstrated between leadership training and congregational giving, a critical component for strengthened congregations would be discovered.
4. A redefinition of the role of the senior pastor and other staff members to emphasize their critical role as leadership developers and not leaders of (passive) followers.
5. The development of denomination resources and/or staff specifically deployed to develop congregational leadership training resources at the local level.
6. The rise of para-church organizations which would develop and market resources for this critical area of congregational growth.

7. The inclusion of leadership training in new member classes.
8. An alteration in current new member assimilation programs to become more intentionally directed to identify, attract, encourage, and enlist those willing to grow as congregational leaders while distracting those who resist growth in leadership areas.
9. Denominational subsidies for financial dependent and co-dependent congregations would be re-directed to leadership training and development.
10. Pastoral and congregational health would improve as "each part does its work," thus energizing the system in a Biblical manner as indicated in St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 4:1 ff.).
11. Congregations growing due to strong leadership would, themselves, become mentors to train and equip leaders in other congregations.
12. The Michigan District-LCMS would experience numerical growth as individual congregations become more pro-active in their own local ministries and in the extension of their ministries through planting new daughter congregations and through the support of other regional, national, and international ministries.

Limitations of the Study

The study relied solely on statistical research. Personal interviews and individual case studies were not considered due to the extensive time needed to utilize these valid research tools.

The study was limited in that it was distributed solely to member congregations of the North-East (Saginaw Valley) Conference of the Michigan District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS). Thus it may neither reflect the experiences of LCMS Districts in other regions of the country nor accurately reflect other denominations, Christian or non-Christian, because of the diversity of religious beliefs and values.

This study was also limited in that its cross-cultural validity was not tested. The congregations sampled were composed largely of white Europeans whose ancestors immigrated to the United States almost one hundred years ago. Thus the attitudes the

sample group demonstrated towards leadership may not be indigenous to other religious groups, cultures (e.g. Native American, Latino, Hispanic, African American, et al.) and foreign countries with different values and attitudes.

The results of this research were also limited by the relative levels of participation in this study. The number of respondents who actually returned and acceptably completed their survey before the termination of the data gathering phase was optimistically expected to be approximately seventy-five percent. The responses of those who did not participate or return their survey could not be measured directly. Resultantly, statistical methods of estimation were utilized.

Responses, of course, may be limited by the relative attractiveness of the survey instrument mailing, the perceived importance of the project to those receiving the survey instrument, the level of theological openness to surveys which may disrupt or threaten closely-held views relating to the nature, purpose and function of the church or other factors. Some pastors, perhaps, may have deeply held convictions that religious and Scriptural-related matters such as leadership training and worship attendance, ought not be subject to scientific research and investigation but exclusively to the Holy Spirit's work in Word and Sacrament.

As only ordained clergy currently serving full-time in a Michigan District-LCMS congregation were tested, the views of denominational executives, other non-ordained professional church workers (e.g. Deacons, Deaconesses, Directors of Evangelism, Directors of Christian Education, Day School Teachers, Director of Music, Parish Nurses, church secretaries, et al.) and other classifications of congregational leadership were not

represented. The most distinctive of classifications omitted also included faculty members of LCMS-owned and operated schools and universities such as Concordia University, located in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Also omitted from the survey were denominational executives such as the President of the Michigan District and the five full-time ordained administrative assistants not currently serving in a congregational setting in the District at the time the survey was conducted. As the clergy roster of the Michigan District-LCMS was composed exclusively of males, a feminine perspective was entirely lacking in this study.

Vacant congregations, that is those who did not have a permanent full-time pastor in their employ, were also excluded from this survey. Perhaps these congregations which, during vacancy, were almost entirely led by indigenous and largely untrained lay leaders may have made a valuable contribution in this consideration of the importance of congregational lay leadership training and growth.

Another identified limitation of this study was the degree to which respondents to the survey accurately reflected the true status of leadership training in their given congregation. Pastors, as most other professionals, were sometimes given to representing themselves and their congregation's ministries in a way not entirely reflective in reality either positively to promote their ministry or negatively to promote their (Christian) humility. Though the survey responses were anonymous, it was expected that the subjectivity of the clergy could not be entirely discounted.

Another limitation of this survey was the assumption that lay leadership training was primarily responsible for church growth. Some growing congregations, led and energized

The church is in the business of ministry: searching out people who need the gift of acceptance, forgiveness, and eternal life that is available in knowing Jesus Christ. For the local church to be a successful business, it must impact a growing share of its market area (Barna, 1988, p. 14).

Church Growth: Toward a More Comprehensive Explanation

A more comprehensive treatment of American ecclesiastical decline was advanced by Donald A. McGavran (1970, p. vi), the widely acclaimed as the “Father of the Church Growth Movement.” His foundational resource, *Understanding Church Growth*, detailed the history of this American movement which began in the 1950’s.

McGavran’s main contribution was to foster a more holistic perspective in viewing the observed trend of decline in mainline American Churches. In his chapter entitled, “Sources to Search for Causes of Growth”, McGavran listed “Some Common Reasons Why Churches Do or Do Not Grow.” This listing of twenty-three reasons for growth or non-growth indicated that sources of church growth included preaching the Gospel clearly to a receptive people, the pouring of the minister or missionary’s life into the church, environmental and contextual factors favorable to increase, prolonged baptismal training, and a refusal for church leaders to be tied to work which did not plant new churches. (McGavran, 1970, pp. 162-3).

Reasons for lack of growth cited by McGavran included organizational dedication to only a slightly productive pattern of ministry, a reluctance to learn the indigenous language of the people, fear of problems, and a reluctance to work with homogeneous populations (McGavran, 1970, p. 163-4).

Of greater interest in this study of leadership was this highly recognized ecclesiastical observer's observation that one of the most notable causes of growth was "able leaders in the church were converted" (McGavran, 1970, p. 163). Thus McGavran was one of the first major ecclesiastical authorities to begin advancing the issue of leadership as a key to congregational growth.

Insights on Leadership From the Secular World

McGavran's observation, which stressed the critical importance of leadership, was really nothing new. Secular authors such as Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr. (1982) in their best-seller, *In Search of Excellence*, deeply explored the concept of leadership and "management excellence" in organizations.

The importance of supportive and effective leadership in the church should not be understated. Kennon Callahan (1983) in his classic book, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, emphasized the importance of leadership in the church:

The fifth central characteristic of effective, successful congregations is strong leadership. A local congregation has this key characteristic...wherever (1) there is a key group of strong leaders, (2) there is a set of strategic objectives these leaders have accomplished and are accomplishing, and (3) there is a good match between the lay leadership and the pastor and staff. Whenever these major components are strongly in place, that congregation has considerable power to advance its future during the coming years of its life and mission (Callahan, 1983, p. 41).

Of course, strong leadership, as Callahan described, has key characteristics:

Strong leadership generates enormous power and momentum to advance a congregation forward. That power is neither dictatorial nor authoritarian, neither oppressive nor domineering. Rather, strong leadership generates power to effectively develop (1) specific concert missional objectives, (2) pastoral and lay visitation, (3) corporate, dynamic worship, and (4) significant relationship groupings (Callahan, 1983, p. 41).

Peters and Waterman stated:

Leadership is many things. It is patient, usually boring coalition building. It is the purposeful seeing of cabals that one hopes will result in the appropriate ferment in the bowels of the organization. It is meticulously shifting the attention of the institution through the mundane language of management systems. It is altering agendas so that new priorities get enough attention. It is being visible when things are going awry, and invisible when they are working well. It's building a loyal team at the top that speaks more or less with one voice. It's listening carefully much of the time, frequently speaking with encouragement, and reinforcing works with believable action (Peters & Waterman, 1982, p. 82).

Other secular authors focused on different types of leadership. Political scientist and author James McGregor Burns discussed transformational leadership in his writings (Peters & Waterman, 1982, p. 84).

Warren Bennis, perhaps one of the most widely acclaimed secular authors on leadership during the latter half of the twentieth century, wrote and co-wrote several books highlighting the importance of leadership in his more widely-acclaimed books including, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge--The Four Keys of Effective Leadership* (Bennis and Nanus, 1985) and *Why Leaders Can't Lead: The Unconscious Conspiracy Continues* (Bennis, 1989).

The influence of the secular focus on leadership was likely most popularized by the record-breaking bestseller *Iacocca* (1984). This book, perhaps more than any other in the 1980's, made the issue of leadership a household word in both secular and silently into religious circles.

Leadership: The Church Started To Listen

During this time, several key individuals also began to advance the critical importance of leadership in religious circles. C. Peter Wagner (1984), one of Donald

McGavran's most prolific students, wrote *Leading Your Church To Growth*. Lyle Schaller's prolific writings permeated the secular world with such well-known works as *The Decision Makers: How To Improve the Quality of Decision-Making in the Church* (1974) and *The Change Agent* (1972). Having gained such renown in the secular world, Schaller and others gained the credibility needed to begin a more intensive stress on leadership issues in ecclesiastical organizations.

Does *Everything* Rise And Fall On Leadership?

By the final decade of the twentieth century, the importance of leadership was becoming even more recognized in Christian circles. During this time, Dr. John Maxwell, a nationally and internationally renowned and acclaimed speaker on Christian leadership, reached prominence. Through his many books (1993), leadership tapes (1994), and leadership resources (1992, 1993) he popularized in the church what had been more or less recognized in the secular world for decades. His work, of course, built on others before him. Individuals such as Christian motivator Zig Ziglar and countless other Christian authors helped spawn, develop and apply Maxwell's ideas on leadership (1996).

But for all of Maxwell's contributions to the church, especially in the area of leadership, his most memorable contribution was his keynote theme, "*Everything* rises and falls on leadership" (Maxwell, 1993a, p. x).

Dr. Maxwell (1994b), in one of his most popular Injoy Life Club leadership tapes entitled, "*Searching For Eagles*", said, "The most important leadership principle is that those closest to you will determine the level of your success."

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYSIS

Research Subject Selection

The researcher prepared a database for the survey using Microsoft Excel version 7.0 on a 486DX computer running on a Windows 95 operating system from the Microsoft corporation. The research randomly selected congregations from the greater Saginaw Valley area from the congregational listing provided in the *1995 Lutheran Annual*.

The random selection process involved several steps. First, the researcher defined the greater Saginaw Valley area. This encompassed an area bounded on the south by Flint, Michigan, on the east by US-27, on the north by Houghton Lake, and on the east by Lake Huron.

Second, the researcher identified all congregations listed in the *1995 Lutheran Annual* which were in the identified greater Saginaw Valley area. The resulting listing included a total of seventy-eight congregations. These congregations were then placed in a listing in alphabetical order first by location (city) and then, in the case of multiple congregations in the same locale, by the name of the congregation. The congregations, listed in alphabetical order as described, were then numbered sequentially from one to seventy-eight beginning with Alma, Michigan.

The third step was to randomly select research subjects from this numerical listing of congregations. Starting with the first congregation listed, the researcher selected all odd-numbered congregations from the total listing of seventy-eight total congregations. This yielded a total number of thirty-nine Saginaw Valley area congregations. As this first

round of selection did not yield the necessary fifty congregations required for the research design, the researcher then selected eleven additional congregations by selecting every-other listed congregation not selected in the first round.

The researcher anticipated that some of the randomly selected congregations would not, during the time of this survey, have a pastor serving their congregation. Since the research design required the involvement of the senior pastor, an additional four congregations were randomly selected from the remaining even-numbered congregations and added to the listing of fifty congregations. Thus a total listing of fifty-four congregations was generated.

Michigan District-LCMS Approval

On October 25, 1996, at 4:55 pm, the researcher faxed a letter to Dr. John Heins, President of the Michigan District-LCMS, briefly describing the proposed research project and seeking his permission to conduct the research. This letter also included a listing of the fifty-four congregations selected as subjects for this research project (Appendix A).

President Heins responded to the researcher by phone within five minutes of receiving the faxed request giving his verbal approval and support (Appendix B). The researcher returned a letter of thanks to indicating that the final results of the research would be freely shared with Dr. Heins (Appendix C).

Finalization Of Research Subject Listing

Michigan District President Dr. John Heins was also very helpful in providing an up-to-the-minute update of the subject listings verbally indicating the any changes of pastors

since the publication of the *1995 Lutheran Annual*. After making the updates, the researcher removed three congregations which were currently vacant (i.e. without a pastor) from the research subject listing. From the resulting list of fifty-one congregations, the researcher removed the highest-numbered even-designated congregation to reduce the congregational subject listing to the proscribed total of fifty congregations.

From this randomly-generated listing of congregational research subjects, the researcher completed the database for the congregations. The database included each congregation's name, address, city, state, zip code, phone number (including area code), and the current senior pastor's name. Mailing addresses and phone numbers for each congregation selected was derived from the *1995 Lutheran Annual*.

The Survey Instrument

Immediately upon receipt of necessary approvals, the survey was printed and distributed to the fifty Saginaw Valley area LCMS congregations selected in the manner described above for the survey. A one-sheet flyer and accompanying letter (Appendix F) was mailed on November 4, 1996 to the pastors of the fifty randomly selected congregations in the greater Saginaw Valley area.

The letter included a brief explanation of the research project and encouraged each pastor's prompt participation in the project. A near-immediate deadline of November 12, 1996, was indicated on the survey. This short time interval was intended to encourage pastors to immediately complete the survey. The researcher feared an extended deadline would negatively impact the responses of pastors who would lose, toss, or forget about the survey. The immediate deadline also projected the importance of this research.

Enclosed with the cover letter was the "Leadership Survey" instrument developed for this research project (Appendix G). A number ten stamped self-addressed envelope (SSAE) was also enclosed to facilitate the prompt return of the completed Leadership Survey instrument by November 12, 1996.

Data Collection

By November 15, 1996, a total of six surveys had been returned. As this number was dramatically fewer than the research required, the researcher contacted all those pastors who had not yet responded to the survey. This contact was made via phone calls on November 15, 1996. Thirty-four pastors were contacted that day. The researcher was able to talk directly with 22 of the pastors and four of their secretaries. At five congregations, voice mail phone messages were left reminding the pastor to return the survey and, if he had not received one, to request another. Attempts to contact the remaining ten pastors were made early the following week of November 17-25, 1996 by phone. Three pastors were unavailable during the time this research was conducted. As a result of these contacts, seventeen duplicate leadership surveys were mailed to research subjects who indicated they had either lost, forgotten, or not received the survey.

On November 22, 1996, twenty-five additional phone calls were made to the subjects as the researcher had received a total of twenty-one completed leadership surveys by that date. As in the previous phone contact, pastors were urged to complete the survey as soon as possible so that research deadlines could be met in an appropriate manner. Three additional replacement surveys were sent to research subjects as a result of this second phone attempt. By December 6, 1996, twenty-six surveys had been completed and

returned. The final completed returned survey was received on December 9, 1996. The total number of completed surveys received was twenty-eight, a number sufficient for the purposes of this research project.

In order to ascertain any relationships between the various data, a statistical correlation design was chosen. The statistical correlation design was based on the concept:

two (or more) scores are obtained for each member of a selected sample, one score for each variable of interest, and the paired scores are then correlated. The resulting correlation coefficient indicates the degree of relationship between the two variables. Different studies investigate different numbers of variables, and some utilized complex statistical procedures... (Gay, 1996, p. 297).

Though there were a number of different methods of computing a correlation coefficient, the most "commonly used technique is the product moment correlation coefficient, usually referred to as the Pearson r . This test was most appropriate when the variables to be correlated were expressed as ratio or interval data and was commonly used for determining relationships. After a review of several other possible tests, the Pearson r Correlation coefficient test was the correlation test chosen as best suited for the initial data analysis in this study. This choice was based on L.R. Gay's further observation found in *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*:

since the Pearson r results in the most reliable estimate of correlation, its use is preferred even when other methods may be applied (Gay, 1996, p. 302).

Correlation coefficients were important in determining the relationship (or the "amount of common variance") shared by the variables in this study. The selection of the confidence level in this project was .05 ($p=.05$). Representing a confidence level of ninety-five percent on a two-tailed Pearson r correlation test, this confidence level, though not extremely strong, represented a moderate level of relationship. Though not strong enough

to demonstrate causality of relationships between the variables considered, it was at a sufficient level to demonstrate that a true relationship existed between any or all of the variables considered (Gay, 1996, p. 300).

Table V of *Fisher and Yates: Statistical Tables for Biological, Agricultural and Medical Research*, and found in L.R. Gay's *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application* (5th Edition), was used to determine the significance of the relationship between variables in this study (Gay, 1996, p. 613).

In order to test Hypothesis Five and Hypothesis Six, a more complex statistical method was utilized based on the recommendation of Dr. Peter Loubert of Central Michigan University. The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC), a complex and not often used variation of the analysis of variance (ANOVA), was utilized (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). The ICC test had several available analyses approaches available. The ICC test selected for this research was the (2,1). The ICC (2,1) applied to the data of this research tested the combined effect of two (hence the "2" designation) independent variables, namely self-sponsored and other-sponsored trainings relative to one (hence the "1" designation) dependent variable. In hypothesis five the dependent variable was the growth (or change) in average total annual congregational receipts. In hypothesis six the dependent variable was average annual worship attendance. In both hypothesis five and hypothesis six, the researcher posited a null relationship between the given variables.

The ICC (2,1), used to measure the relationship of a combination of two different sets of variables (in this case self-sponsored and other-sponsored trainings) with one other variable. In the case of hypothesis five:

Growth (or change) in the total amount of annual congregational receipts is not correlated to the amount of combined leadership training events—other sponsored and self-sponsored—held over the five-year period of this research project.

Hypothesis Six compared these variables annual congregational receipts. In the case of

Hypothesis Six,

Growth (or change) in the average annual congregational attendance is not correlated to the amount of combined leadership training events—other sponsored and self-sponsored—held over the five-year period of this research project.

The purpose of Hypotheses Five and Six was to ascertain whether an interactive affect of the two types of leadership training considered in this research affected average congregational worship attendance, annual congregational receipts, or both. Certainly, it was felt, if a relationship between the combination of the different types of leadership training and congregational giving and attendance could be determined, this would add additional insight to the role and relative criticality of leadership training. If the null hypotheses were confirmed in Hypotheses Five and Six, one would need to investigate other areas of congregational life which might be correlated to average annual congregational attendance and total congregational receipts. Examples might be the nature of leadership training offered, level of lay participation in ministry, the presence or absence of certain ministries (specifically those related to outreach and resource development), leadership styles of the pastor(s), worship style, the distribution of membership by age, sex, and marital status, and numerous other potential variables.

CHAPTER IV

STATISTICAL ANALYSES/EVALUATION OF DATA

Data Entry

All data received from congregational subjects during the period the research was conducted in November and December, 1996, was entered into a spreadsheet using Microsoft Excel, version 7.0. This computerized spreadsheet program provided an ideal tool for compiling a suitable database for this project.

The research database was set up in such a manner that each respective data group was represented on an Excel 7.0 spreadsheet. The "Self-Sponsored Trainings Held" were identified by the respective year in which the training was held (1991, 1992, etc.). "Other-Sponsored Training Events Attended" for each respective year were also identified on column headings. The researcher created a third component on the spreadsheet which recorded data relating to the congregations' average annual worship attendance for the five-year period during which this research was conducted. A fourth component of the spreadsheet contained a record of each congregation's total annual receipts for each respective year, 1991-1995.

The Pearson r Correlation Coefficient

The most commonly used technique is the "Product Moment Correlation Coefficient," usually referred to as the Pearson r " (Gay, 1996, p. 302). This test, appropriate when the variables to be correlated are expressed as ratio or interval data, was used by this researcher to determine relationships between the variables considered.

As discussed previously in Chapter III, the Pearson r was also selected because:

the Pearson r results in the most reliable estimate of correlation, its use is preferred even when other methods may be applied (Gay, 1996, p. 302).

The reliability and preference of the Pearson r dominated this research as the only and exclusive statistical tool to evaluate the given data.

Prior to discussing any relationships between any variables, the researcher was careful to identify at least three common errors made in interpreting statistical analyses.

Three of these errors were described by statistician Mario Triola (1992):

1. We must be careful to avoid concluding that a significant linear correlation between two variables is proof that there is a cause-effect relationship between them... Mark Twain summarized the issue of causality when he commented on a cold winter by saying, "Cold! If the thermometer had been an inch longer, we'd all have frozen to death."
2. Another source of potential error arises with the data based on rates or averages. When we use rates or averages for data, we suppress the variation among the individuals or items, and this may easily lead to an inflated correlation coefficient.
3. A third error involves the property of linearity. The conclusion that there is no significant linear correlation does not mean that x and y are not related in any way. Data may be related in another manner, e.g. parabolic, etc. (Triola, M., 1992).

Triola also identified the properties of the value r derived from the Pearson r test.

The four properties Triola identified include:

1. The value of r is always between -1 and 1.
2. The value of r does not change if all values of either variable are converted to a different scale.
3. The value of r is not affected by the choice of x or y . Interchange all x and y values and value of r will not change.
4. r measures the strength of a linear relationship. It is not designed to measure the strength of a relationship that is not linear (Triola, 1992, p. 464).

Critical Values of r

Critical values of the Pearson correlation coefficient r were taken from Table A-6 in Triola (1992), p. 674. Any value of r equal to or greater than the following values would be considered significant for the respective value of α , which for this research was determined to be $\alpha=.05$ (Table 1).

Table 1: Critical Values of r

Critical Values of r		
n	$\alpha = .05$	$\alpha = .01$
5	.878	.959
10	.632	.765
15	.514	.641
20	.444	.575
25	.396	.505
27	.375	.480
30	.361	.463

Since the population sample for this research totaled twenty-seven congregations ($n=27$), the value for α was interpolated for both .05 and .01 levels of significance. The difference in the values for α at $n=25$ and $n=30$ was divided by the difference of value for n immediately before 27 (i.e. 25) and immediately after 27 (i.e. 30). The resulting quotient was multiplied by a factor equal to the difference between the value of n for this research (2) and the n value immediately preceding the desired value of 27 (i.e. 25). The result of this factor was then added to the α values given for the .05 and .01 levels of significance. The interpolated value was inserted and indicated by a bold italicized entry at $n=27$ in the table above. The resulting values of r were used in evaluating the linear relationship in hypotheses one, two, three and four.

Data Analysis

The data analysis conducted considered four categories of potential relationships.

The categories of potential linear relationships considered mirrored the research hypotheses which, as stated in Chapter One, were:

1. Growth (or change) in average annual congregational attendance is not correlated to the amount of leadership training—self-sponsored leadership training events held for elected congregational leadership over the five-year period of this research project.
2. Growth (or change) in average annual congregational attendance is not correlated to the amount of leadership training—other sponsored leadership training events held for elected congregational leadership over the five-year period of this research project.
3. Growth (or change) in the total amount of annual congregational receipts are not correlated to the amount of leadership training—self-sponsored events held for elected congregational leadership over the five-year period of this research project.
4. Growth (or change) in the total amount of annual congregational receipts are not correlated to the amount of leadership training—other sponsored events held for elected congregational leadership over the five-year period of this research project.
5. Growth (or change) in the total amount of annual congregational receipts is not correlated to the amount of combined leadership training events—other sponsored and self-sponsored—held over the five-year period of this research project.
6. Growth (or change) in the average annual congregational attendance is not correlated to the amount of combined leadership training events—other sponsored and self-sponsored—held over the five-year period of this research project.

Hypothesis One: Self-Sponsored Leadership Training vs. Growth In Average Annual Worship Attendance

Hypothesis One was a null hypothesis which proposed no linear correlation to the amount of leadership training that was sponsored by the local congregation and growth in average annual worship attendance. In consideration of growth, the researcher, by

implication, was also considering not only growth, but any change—positive or negative—in average annual worship attendance that could be attributed to self-sponsored leadership training.

Table 2: Self-Sponsored Trainings vs. Growth In Annual Average Church Attendance

Training Year	Average Change in Church Attendance At End Of Training Year	Value of r	Confidence Interval r	Linear Correlation?
1991	4.7407	0.3186	0.101506	No
1992	-6.4815	0.1502	0.02256	No
1993	-4.6296	0.2161	0.046699	No
1994	5.7778	-0.0124	0.000154	No
1995-1991	-0.5926	0.0626	0.003919	No
Median Value of r		0.1502	0.02256	No
Mean Value of r		0.1470	0.021609	No

The researcher noted that in all cases in this example, the data demonstrated a remarkably strong central tendency, i.e. the value of r tends to be very near the middle of the normal distribution curve indicating that the relationship between the number of self-sponsored trainings in a given year and the growth (or change) in average annual church attendance is totally random (Table 2).

The most important measure of central tendency is the mean or arithmetic average. The mean is the most commonly used statistic in both descriptive and inferential research. (Hickey 1986, p. 70). The best measure of central value is the median. In hypotheses one, the median value of r for the years 1991-1995, was 0.1502. The median value of r ($r=0.1470$) was nearly identical to the mean. Together the mean and median gave a very strong indication of agreement in the central tendency of r and, by inference, imply a randomness of the data.

Values of r greater than or equal to ± 0.95 would indicate that a positive or negative linear relationship existed between the two variables at a level of ninety-five percent certainty. If the value of r was positive, this would indicate that a positive linear relationship existed between the two variables considered (i.e., as the independent variable x increased, the value of the independent variable y also increased). If the value of r was negative, this would indicate that a negative linear relationship existed (i.e. as the variable x increased, the value of the independent variable y value decreased).

Confidence intervals for r were also computed by squaring the value of r , yielding the resulting factor r^2 (Table 1). None of the values of r^2 indicated any significant linear relationship or impact between the variables. The mean value of $r^2=0.021609$, estimated that 2.1609 (2.2) percent of the variation in annual average church attendance was attributed to self-sponsored trainings. The median value of $r^2=0.02256$ estimated that 2.256 (i.e. 2.3) percent of the variation in annual average church attendance was due to self-sponsored trainings.

The values of r^2 for each respective year, 1991-1995 ranged between the highest computed figure of $r^2=0.101506$ and the lowest figure of $r^2=0.000154$. These values indicate that the estimated amount of growth (or change) in average annual church attendance that could be attributed to self-sponsored trainings for any given year (1991-1995) was between 10.1506 (10.2) and 0.0154 (1.5) percent. The percentage of growth in average annual church attendance attributed to other variables not tested study ranged between 89.8 and 98.85 percent.

Hypothesis Two: Other-Sponsored Leadership Training vs. Growth In
Average Annual Congregational Attendance

As suggested in the second null hypothesis, growth (or change) in average annual congregational attendance was also demonstrated by this research to bear no linear correlation to the amount of other-sponsored leadership training events in the sample population for the five-year period of this research project.

Table 3: Other-Sponsored Trainings vs. Growth In
Annual Average Church Attendance

Year	Average Change in Annual Giving At End Of Training Year	Value of r	Confidence Interval r^2	Linear Correlation?
1991	\$12,385.11	0.2983	0.088954121	No
1992	\$35,536.07	0.0204	0.000417985	No
1993	\$822.70	-0.0491	0.002412507	No
1994	\$13,286.00	-0.1762	0.031037551	No
1995	\$13,292.48	0.0151	0.000228316	No
Median Value of r		0.0151	0.000228316	No
Mean Value of r		0.0217	0.000471016	No

There was no linear correlation between other-sponsored training and change in average annual church attendance over any of the years considered (Table 3). Both the median value of r ($r=0.0151$) and the mean value of r ($r=0.0217$) gave clear indications of the central tendency—and hence, the total randomness—of the relationship between the variables considered. Indeed, one will note that the median and the mean were, as in hypotheses one, within very close proximity of each other, re-emphasizing the strong central tendencies demonstrated by the data.

Confidence intervals for r^2 were also computed as in the first hypotheses. This was computed by squaring the value of r (Table 3). None of the values of r^2 indicated any

linear relationship between the variables. The mean value of $r^2=0.000471016$, underscored the certainty of the statistical estimate that there was no linear relationship between the variables of growth in church attendance and self-sponsored trainings.

Computed confidence intervals (r^2) for the median ($r^2=0.031319553$) and the mean ($r^2=0.005866278$) gave resounding support of the null hypothesis. The meaning of these data were that a median 3.1319553 (i.e. 3.13) percent of the variation in annual congregational receipts was due to self-sponsored trainings. The mean value of r^2 of 0.5866278 (i.e. .58) percent estimated that nearly six-tenths percent of the amount of growth (or change) in average annual church attendance was attributed to other-sponsored trainings. The values of r^2 for each respective year, 1991-1995 ranged between the highest computed figure of $r^2=0.031037551$ and the lowest figure of $r^2=0.000228316$.

These values indicated that the estimated amount of growth (or change) in average annual congregational attendance attributed to other-sponsored trainings for any given year (1991-1995) was between 3.1 and 0.023. Thus, between 96.9 and 99.77 percent of the growth (or change) in average annual church attendance was due to factors other than other-sponsored trainings.

Hypothesis Three: Self-Sponsored Leadership Training vs. Growth In Total Annual Congregational Receipts

Research Hypothesis Three suggested that there was no linear relationship—and thus no linear correlation—between the number of self-sponsored leadership training events and the growth in total annual congregational receipts. The relevant data was collected and subjected to the Pearson r Product Moment test (Table 4).

Table 4: Self-Sponsored Trainings vs. Growth In Annual Average Congregational Receipts

Year	Change in Annual Congregation Receipts at End of Training Year	Value of r	Confidence Interval r^2	Linear Correlation?
1991	\$12,385.11	0.0222	0.000492758	No
1992	\$35,536.07	0.0791	0.006263649	No
1993	\$822.70	-0.0830	0.006886416	No
1994	\$13,286.00	-0.1770	0.031319553	No
1995	\$13,286.00	-0.2243	0.050329232	No
Median Value of r		-0.1770	0.031319553	No
Mean Value of r		-0.0766	0.005866278	No

Again the researcher found no linear relationship between the two variables considered. As in the previous hypotheses, the median value of r ($r = -0.1770$) and the mean value of r ($r = -0.0766$) both demonstrated a very strong central tendency—and therefore no linear relationship between self-led training and the growth (or change) in congregational receipts among the sample population for all the years considered.

Computed confidence intervals (r^2) for the median ($r^2 = 0.031319553$) and the mean ($r^2 = 0.005866278$) gave resounding support of the null hypothesis. The meaning of these data was that, based on the median and mean respectively, 3.13 percent and 0.5 percent of the amount of growth (or change) in total annual receipts was attributed to self-sponsored trainings. Relative to the median and mean, 96.87 and 99.5 percent of the growth (or change) in total annual receipts was attributed to factors other than self-sponsored trainings. The values of r^2 for each respective year, 1991-1995 ranged between the highest computed figure of $r^2 = 0.050329232$ and the lowest figure of $r^2 = 0.000492758$. These values indicate that the estimated amount of growth (or change) in total annual receipts attributed to other-sponsored trainings for any given year (1991-1995) was

between 5.0329232 (5.0) and 0.0492758 (.05) percent.

Consequently, between 99.0 and 99.96 percent of the amount of growth (or change) in congregational receipts was attributed to factors other than self-sponsored training. Such results led to the conclusion that self-sponsored trainings had very little to do with the growth (or change) in total annual receipts in the sample population.

Hypothesis Four: Other-Sponsored Leadership Training vs. Growth In Congregational Receipts

Hypothesis Four, which posited a null linear relationship between the final research variables considered, was also confirmed. The value of r clearly demonstrated that there was no linear correlation between other-sponsored leadership training and growth (or changes) in congregational receipts (Table 5).

Table 5: Other-Sponsored Trainings vs. Growth In Annual Average Congregational Receipts

Year	Change in Annual Congregation Receipts at End of Training Year	Value of r	Confidence Interval r^2	Linear Correlation?
1991	\$12,385.11	-0.1019	0.010385555	No
1992	\$35,536.07	-0.0816	0.00665738	No
1993	\$822.70	0.1304	0.01701658	No
1994	\$13,286.00	-0.0449	0.002012009	No
1995	\$13,286.00	-0.1305	0.017034872	No
Median Value of r		-0.1019	0.010385555	No
Mean Value of r		-0.0457	0.002087171	No

Again, using the research data gathered from the sample population of this study, the null hypotheses was supported in a dramatic fashion. As was clearly demonstrated in the previous hypotheses, the data in this hypothesis also demonstrated a very distinct central

tendency. The median value of r was -0.1019 and the mean value of r was -0.0457 (cf. Table 5). Thus, the Pearson r estimated no linear relationship between other-sponsored trainings and annual average congregational receipts. Any relationship which existed between data was estimated to be attributed to coincidence and random chance.

The confidence interval r^2 underscored this conclusion in all cases (Table 4). The mean value given was $r^2=0.002087171$ (Table 5). The meaning is that 0.208 (.21) percent of the amount of growth (or change) in total annual receipts was attributed to other-sponsored trainings. The values of r^2 for each respective year, 1991-1995 ranged between the highest figure of $r^2=0.017034872$ and the lowest figure of $r^2=0.002012009$. These values indicate that the estimated amount of growth (or change) in total annual receipts attributed to other-sponsored trainings for any given year (1991-1995) was between 1.7034872 (1.7) and 0.2012009 (0.2) percent. As in the previous hypotheses, this null hypothesis was confirmed.

Further Statistical Analyses: Hypotheses Five and Six

A most intriguing analytical tool added to the statistical analyses was the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC). The primary use of the ICC is when one desired to seek an inter-relationship between data sets which may or may not be statistically correlated by other analytical methods. Shrout and Fleiss (1979) in an article entitled, "Intraclass Correlations: Uses in Assessing Rater Reliability," presented the following guidelines for choosing an appropriate form of the ICC. These guidelines, quoted below, were followed by the researcher in this study so that the last two hypotheses, namely, Hypotheses

Five and Hypothesis Six, could be tested.

1. Is a one-way or two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) appropriate for the analysis of the reliability study?
2. Are difference between the judges' mean ratings relevant to the reliability of interest?
3. Is the unit of analysis an individual rating or the mean of several ratings? (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979, p. 420).

The strength of the ICC is that it can perform a multiple-factor ANOVA correlation.

Relative to the data received in this study, though all four research hypotheses were estimated, by statistical methods, to demonstrate no linear correlation, the ICC was applied to investigate whether there were any combination of variables in this study which would estimate a statistical relationship. More specifically, the researcher desired to determine whether a combination of self-sponsored and other-sponsored leadership trainings was correlated to either a growth (or change) in annual average giving, a growth (or change) in average annual church attendance or both.

When the researcher explored these possible correlations, the ICC (2,1) test was run using ICC Version 1.03 (Adams & Chambers, 1992). This statistical tool, not normally included in computer-based statistical packages, was used to test research hypotheses five and six.

The first stage of preparing the ICC (2,1) was to create a data file based on the research population sample in a matrix (table) format required by the program. This file consisted of twenty seven rows (one row for each sample), and nineteen columns. Columns one through ten contained the amount of self-sponsored trainings and other sponsored trainings for each respective year, 1991-1995, inclusive. Columns eleven

through fourteen contained the change in average annual church attendance between each set of years (1992-1991, 1993-1992, 1994-1993, and 1995-1994). Columns fifteen through eighteen contained the change in total congregational receipts over the research period: 1992-1992, 1993-1992, 1994-1993, and 1995-1994 (Table 6).

Confidence levels of 99%, 95%, and 90% were selected. However, determining exact confidence levels using the ICC (2,1) were difficult as there are no universal criteria for what is an acceptably high ICC value (Adams & Chambers, 1992). A first group of researchers suggested that ICC values less than 0.4 represent poor reliability, those between 0.4 and 0.75 fair-good reliability and those greater than >0.90 excellent reliability (Fleiss, 1986):

“Within the Physical Therapy literature a more restricted range of values has often been regarded as representing high reliability. For example, Youdas et al. (1991) argued that values between 0.9-0.99 represent ‘high’ reliability, 0.8-0.89 ‘good’ reliability, 0.7-0.79 ‘fair’ reliability and values less than 0.69 ‘poor’ reliability. While these benchmarks provide a useful starting point for judging the worth of a measurement, it is also important to consider the potential use of the measurement and the reliability of alternate measurements when making a judgement on the value of a test” (Adams & Chambers, 1992).

Other researchers prescribe a second method by which to determine ICC confidence intervals at levels:

1. Consider only the lower bound of the range for each confidence interval.
2. If the lower bound is equal to or greater than zero, the resulting ICC (2,1) matrix correlation is significant.
3. If the lower bound is less than zero, the resulting ICC (2,1) matrix correlation is not significant (Adams & Chambers, 1992).

Given these approaches, the relationship described by the resulting ICC (2,1) values was unclear. By every criteria above, the ICC (2,1) clearly demonstrated no linear relationship between the variables of combined training and total congregation receipts.

However, consideration of the values considered in Hypothesis Six were not statistically significant by the stricter levels described by Fleiss (1986) and Youdas (1991). Using three-step criteria suggested above, an extremely weak linear relationship may exist between the variables of combined training and growth (or change) in average annual worship attendance (Adams & Chambers, 1992). Levels at which a significant relationship may exist are indicated by an asterisk (*) (Table 6).

Table 6: ICC (2,1) Analyses Results

	SSTrng/OSTrng vs. Receipts	Statistically Significant?	SSTrng/OSTrng vs. Attendance	Statistically Significant?
ICC (2,1) Correlation Factor	-0.05111	No	0.04372	No*
Confidence Interval...				
@ 99%	-0.06262 to -0.01971	No	-0.00914 to 0.16831	No
@ 95%	-0.08059 to -0.03021	No	0.00058 to 0.12972	No*
@ 90%	-0.05939 to -0.03463	No	0.00626 to 0.11262	No*

* May be statistically significant (Adams & Chambers, 1992)

Hypothesis Five: Combined Leadership Training vs. Growth In Total Congregational Receipts

Hypothesis Five was an outgrowth of the foregoing hypotheses in that it considered the linear relationship, if any, of all trainings to total congregational receipts. Hypothesis Five was:

Growth (or change) in the total amount of annual congregational receipts is not correlated to the amount of combined leadership training events—other sponsored and self-sponsored—held over the five-year period of this research project.

Since all the values of the ICC (2,1) were negative at all three confidence levels (99%, 95%, and 90%), the null hypothesis stated in Hypothesis Five was supported and no linear relationship estimated between the variables of training and total congregational receipts.

Hypothesis Six: Combined Leadership Training vs. Growth In
Average Annual Congregational Attendance

Hypothesis Six, the final research hypothesis considered by the researcher, stated,

Growth (or change) in the average annual congregational attendance is not correlated to the amount of combined leadership training events—other sponsored and self-sponsored—held over the five-year period of this research project.

The significance of the ICC (2,1) analysis relative to Hypothesis Six was that though self-sponsored training and other-sponsored trainings were not by themselves significantly linearly related to growth (or changes) in average annual worship attendance or growth or changes) in total annual congregational receipts, one interpretation of the ICC (2,1) values (Adams & Chambers, 1992) estimated a significant intraclass relationship between the combined effect of self-sponsored trainings and other-sponsored trainings on the growth of annual growth in church attendance at both .05 and .10 levels (Table 6). By at least one standard, the null hypothesis for Hypothesis Six was rejected (Adams & Chambers, 1992).

CHAPTER V

RESEARCHER OBSERVATIONS

This study tested the relationship between leadership trainings and growth or changes in congregational worship attendance and growth or changes in congregational receipts. Surveys were sent to the administrative pastors of fifty randomly selected greater Saginaw Valley congregations of the Michigan District Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) in the fall of 1996. Twenty eight surveys were returned. As one survey was incomplete, the sample research population represented twenty seven congregations.

The research conducted in this study seemed to suggest a number of ramifications for leadership training in congregation settings. Though more research certainly needs to be conducted, some research observations deserve to be noted and discussed.

Though research hypotheses one, two, three and four estimated no linear correlation between self-sponsored trainings or other-sponsored trainings and growth (or changes) in annual average worship attendance or growth (or changes) in total annual congregational receipts, this estimate may have been affected by several factors, some of which were described below.

Perhaps the most obvious factor is the general lack of any kind of self-sponsored or other-sponsored leadership training of any kind in the sample population in general. The vast majority indicated less than two trainings per year of any kind. Indeed, it seemed difficult to draw inferences regarding the relationship between the variables considered in this research without a critical minimum number of trainings per year in each area. The

researcher believed that there may not have been enough data to draw estimates that could be applied on a broad basis.

Another observation was that “leadership training”, though defined in the survey instrument (Appendix G), may have been understood differently by each pastor. This may have caused some pastors to overlook leadership training in areas such as financial giving, Bible Study facilitation, youth ministries, etc. and thus under-state their training program. This may also have implied that in the sample population, there is little awareness of leadership training and its possible benefits—though these benefits were largely not demonstrated by this research.

Further research on a broader scale would also have been helpful. Classifying congregations into homogenous groups by congregational size, needs, challenges, geographical setting, etc. Christian congregations, including those in the Saginaw Valley area of the Michigan District-LCMS, enjoy a broad diversity. Not only did they vary greatly in size from twenty in Sunday worship to well over one thousand and in the total annual amount of congregational receipts, they also varied in their respective settings and communities (i.e. inner city, urban, suburban, rural, economically deprived, ethnically mixed, congregational age, composition of members, etc).

Each congregation thus had different leadership challenges. Some, having experienced precipitous losses in receipts and or congregational attendance have a set of leadership training needs much different, perhaps, than those congregations which are plateaued in receipts or attendance, and those few congregations which were growing—and thriving—in growth of annual receipts and/or congregational attendance.

Another disadvantage of this study was that pastors may or may not have correctly recalled the frequency of trainings conducted over the five year research period. Further studies would start by recruiting randomly selected congregations to participate in a research project, then have those selected congregations regularly record and report to the researcher the nature, type, and frequency of leadership trainings conducted or attended by their membership.

Further research might advisedly have made some case study and statistical analyses of thriving congregations to identify the most relevant factors for congregational growth. Relative to the area of leadership, research should be conducted to identify those leadership areas which most greatly impact and enhance congregational life, especially worship attendance and congregational receipts. Dr. John Maxwell (1994a), in his tape, "Searching for Eagles," listed a number of characteristics of effective congregational leaders. Some of the qualities he listed were persistence, ability to make prudent, timely decisions, ability to attract positive people into the organization for the cause, the ability to train and mentor other leaders, demonstrating loyalty, and ability to communicate the organizational vision. A research model which could test relationships between these and other leadership characteristics and desired aspects of congregational life (e.g. increase in worship attendance and receipts) in a large number of congregations, the researcher believed, would be especially insightful.

Other factors may also have affected the results. Congregational mores and cultures which de-emphasized trainings may have compensated for direct methods of training by having assimilated more indirect modes of training. Among these indirect modes of

leadership training might be the modeling of leadership by certain charismatic leaders in the congregation, perhaps including the pastor. Bible Studies and fellowship groups may also be an indirect mode of leadership training. In such settings, people are often subject to “on the job” leadership training. Though admittedly haphazard, if this indirect training method was shown to be effective and correlated to growth, perhaps other more intentional models of leadership training could be developed.

Many congregations, it is believed, did not emphasize leadership training because they did not emphasize—or define—their vision, goals, and objectives for ministry. Without a clear, well-defined organization planning target, the perceived need for leadership will be greatly minimized. Only when there are challenges to meet, obstacles to overcome, impossibilities to be made possible will leadership issues emerge. Congregations which are driven by the unchanging inertia of the year in, year out traditional way of doing things will not only refuse leadership training, but will likely repel progressive, positive, forward-driven leaders.

This survey also did not take into account other mentoring processes which may have occurred outside the context of the local congregation. Members may have received training from their employers, from outside clubs or organizations, from peers, or from other experiences not directly connected to their church life. Though this would also be difficult to measure, to assume that leadership training occurs only in the church—or in just one limited setting—would, at the least, be naïve.

Lack of leadership training may also have been affected by congregational budgets. Operating under a variety of budget constraints, organizations—including churches—

often deprive themselves and their workers of needed leadership training. Such events can range from \$150 to several thousand dollars each. In small churches, this can easily represent a sizable portion of a small budget. Of course, this dynamic would cause a repeated cycle which would denigrate—or at least minimize—leadership training in these congregations. Not able to attend or sponsor quality leadership events, congregations would not experience whatever benefits such trainings had. Not having experienced the benefits, they would then tend to neglect attending, financially supporting, or sponsoring trainings on-site or off-site.

Further research might also recognize the affects of a potential theological bias against leadership training among pastors in the sample population. Numerous pastors in the LCMS had the attitude that only the Holy Spirit builds churches. Thus, all the pastors needed to do to encourage congregational growth was to preach the Word of God in a clear, doctrinally-pure manner and administer the sacraments regularly in the congregation. Such myopia to the human dynamics of the organization would tend also to make research difficult in such congregations who would oppose the perceived commingling of research data and spiritual truth.

Pastors, who were the data respondents in this project, may also have misrepresented or misstated certain facts of data to save face in a profession which emphasizes “respectability” and “infallibility” of the pastoral office. Though pastors are human and they like other leaders are often the subjects of undue and unfair skepticism. Thus, saving face to avoid conflict, ridicule, humiliation, etc. may have been quite common among some of the clergy respondents in this study.

Should leadership training be discontinued? Should it be ignored? This researcher believes that it should neither be discontinued nor ignored. Indeed, when the relationship between total trainings and average annual congregational attendance was tested using the ICC (2,1), the test demonstrated that the null hypothesis stated in Hypothesis Six has some basis by which it can be rejected and that there was, in fact, an ever-so-slight relationship between the combined effect of self-sponsored and other-sponsored leadership training and growth in average annual congregational worship attendance. This suggests that more research should be conducted in this area to explore whether the current research's limitations either under represented or over-represented the linear relationship between the variables.

This conclusion was further demonstrated by the overall number and of leadership training events—either self-sponsored or other-sponsored—in which the congregations participated. Sampled congregations attended an average 2.62 self-sponsored trainings per year and 1.87 other-sponsored leadership training events year over the research period (1991-1995). This averaged 4.49 total leadership training events each year. Future research would also ask for specific types of leadership events attended including topic, duration and sponsor of the seminar.

On one hand, a congregation which averaged 4.5 trainings per year would have held, on average (and excluding summer months), one training event every-other month. Perhaps this was a good start. Indeed, it indicated that congregations and their pastors were not opposed to self or other-sponsored leadership training. Further research might include the development of specific leadership modules featuring focused, systematic, and

formalized training at regular, frequent intervals such as twice-a-month. Such leadership modules could be developed and/or sponsored by the denomination (or other appropriate agencies) to focus on key areas of congregational leadership from various perspectives—religious, secular, administrative, evangelistic, etc. Indeed, if effective resources could be found and utilized on a frequent basis in local congregations, perhaps a positive linear relationship between leadership training and congregational growth in worship attendance and receipts might emerge. If such training modules were conducted in such a manner as to hold congregations and pastors accountable for utilizing such trainings on a regular basis, this would enhance this training and, perhaps, the impact on the congregations. Indeed, such research might help to clarify the weak linear correlation tested in Hypothesis Six and give denominational leaders, pastors, staff and congregational leaders greater insight into the most effective use of valuable volunteer leaders' time and critical congregational finances money and other resources.

Future research might also assess whether a relationship existed between the number of lay, staff and/or clergy participants at each training and the growth (or change) of congregational receipts and average annual congregational attendance over a given research period, e.g. five years. Though leadership may imply that one has to lead, it is hypothesized that the more well-trained leaders a congregation has, the greater the level of potential impact they would wield on their organization. This would include some of the more measurable congregational items, specifically including congregational receipts and worship attendance.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Given the research result that there was no direct linear relationship between leadership training and two areas of congregational life, namely, changes in average annual church attendance and changes in total annual receipts, should leadership training be continued? Or should it be discontinued? Should it be encouraged or discouraged? What leadership areas have the greatest impact on church organizations? Which have little, no, or negative impact?

All of these questions, and others, remain to be answered. This study has only made one small step onto the long road of analysis of leadership training and congregational growth. By analyzing a very small population of Michigan District-LCMS congregations in the greater Saginaw Valley, this research tested six null hypotheses. These were

1. Growth (or change) in average annual congregational attendance is not correlated to the amount of leadership training—self-sponsored leadership training events held for elected congregational leadership over the five-year period of this research project.
2. Growth (or change) in average annual congregational attendance is not correlated to the amount of leadership training—other sponsored leadership training events held for elected congregational leadership over the five-year period of this research project.
3. Growth (or change) in the total amount of annual congregational receipts are not correlated to the amount of leadership training—self-sponsored events held for elected congregational leadership over the five-year period of this research project.
4. Growth (or change) in the total amount of annual congregational receipts are not correlated to the amount of leadership training—other sponsored events held for elected congregational leadership over the five-year period of this research project.

5. Growth (or change) in the total amount of annual congregational receipts is not correlated to the amount of combined leadership training events—other sponsored and self-sponsored—held over the five-year period of this research project.
6. Growth (or change) in the average annual congregational attendance is not correlated to the amount of combined leadership training events—other sponsored and self-sponsored—held over the five-year period of this research project.

In all cases, except in Hypothesis Six, the null hypotheses were supported. Statistical methods appropriate for each hypothesis were utilized to ascertain whether a linear relationship existed between two different types of leadership training, namely, self-sponsored and other-sponsored, and two measures of congregational life, namely, average annual church attendance and total annual congregational receipts. The Pearson r Correlation Coefficient statistical test was utilized in hypotheses one through four. The IntraClass Correlation (2,1) was utilized in hypotheses five and six to test the relationship between a combination of the two types of leadership training and each measure of congregational life studied in this project.

Though there was no linear relationship demonstrated in hypotheses one through five, the weak correlation discovered in hypotheses six suggested that more research needs to be conducted before one concludes that leadership training is relatively ineffective. Before such conclusion can be reached, denominational leaders, pastors, professional staff, and congregational leaders should develop and implement leadership programs specifically directed to specific areas of ministry on a frequent (at least semi-monthly) basis over a short-term time period of at least two years. Of course, prior to the implementation of such training programs, accurate and useful data recording systems ought to be

developed so that information can be accurately and validly tested, analyzed, and evaluated.

Research ought also to be conducted relative to other areas of congregational life which may be correlated to changes in annual average worship attendance and changes in total annual congregational receipts. Such research might test whether the variables of this study are related to the level of lay participation in ministry, the presence or absence of certain ministries (specifically those related to outreach and resource development), leadership styles of the pastor(s), congregational worship style, the distribution of membership by age, sex, and marital status, and numerous other potential variables.

Does *everything* rise and fall on leadership? Whether or not it does, the study demonstrated that leadership training, overall, was not related to growth (or changes) in average annual worship attendance and increases (changes) in total annual receipts. Only with more research will the answer be discerned.

APPENDIX A:

Permission Request To President John Heins



Our Savior Lutheran Church

Rev. Thomas F. Fischer, Pastor

November 4, 1996

Rev. John Heins, President
The Michigan District-LCMS
3773 Geddes Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Dear President Heins,

Greetings in Christ!

As you may know, I am currently completing my studies at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant for a Masters of Science in Administration (MSA) degree.

In order to complete the requirements for this degree I am preparing a research project assessing whether there is any relationship between lay leadership training and growth in average annual congregational worship attendance and total annual congregational receipts.

In order to conduct this research, I seek your permission to send the enclosed survey to fifty randomly selected congregations of the Saginaw Valley Pastors' Conference. After the research has been analyzed, I will be happy to share the results with you and any other District staff which might have interest in reviewing the results.

As I am working within deadlines, please reply with your written permission at your earliest convenience.

God's blessings to you, John, as you continue your essential ministry of leadership to the Michigan District-LCMS. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact me at (517) 832-3667 any weekday mornings, 9 am - 1 pm. I am truly...

Yours in Christ,

Thomas F. Fischer,
Pastor

TFF

APPENDIX B:

President John Heins' Statement Of Permission



3773 Geddes Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-3098 (313) 665-3791 Fax: (313) 665-0255

November 4, 1996

The Rev. Thomas F. Fischer
Our Savior Lutheran Church
1501 N. Saginaw Road
Midland, MI 48640


Dear Brother Fischer:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

By means of this letter I am approving the research document that you have created as well as giving you permission to send this document as a part of your Masters of Science in Administration degree from Central Michigan University research project. I will be most happy to receive a copy of the results.

God's blessings!

In His service and yours,


John L. Heins, President
The Michigan District

JLH/ck

APPENDIX C:

Researcher Letter of Thanks To President John Heins



Our Savior Lutheran Church

Rev. Thomas F. Fischer, Pastor

November 7, 1996

Rev. John Heins, President
The Michigan District-LCMS
3773 Geddes Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Dear President Heins,

Greetings in Christ!

I just wanted to thank you for your enthusiastic support and willingness to allow me to conduct my research for my MSA degree among the pastors and congregations of the Saginaw Valley Pastor's Conference of the Michigan District.

I will be sending the surveys to the research subjects in the immediate future and look forward to analyzing the results. As I mentioned in my letter of request for permission, I will be happy to share the results with you and your staff.

God's blessings to you, John, and thanks so very much for your prompt and enthusiastic support! I am truly...

Yours in Christ,

Thomas F. Fischer,
Pastor

TFF

APPENDIX D:

Sample Survey Letter



Our Savior Lutheran Church

Rev. Thomas F. Fischer, Pastor

November 4, 1996

Rev. (Pastor's Name)
% (Name of Lutheran Church)
Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear (Pastor's Name),

Perhaps you have heard John Maxwell's words, "Everything rises and falls on leadership."

Certainly leadership is an important area of church ministry. For this reason I am conducting research on leadership training in the Michigan District-LCMS congregations in the greater Saginaw Valley area. Your congregation has been one of the fifty congregations selected for this study. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

This research is being conducted as part of the requirements for my Masters of Science in Administration (MSA) degree from Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. Your *prompt* response is very important so that the data can be analyzed. All surveys returned will remain *strictly confidential* and be destroyed after the survey data has been entered.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact me at (517) 832-3667 any weekday mornings, 9 am - 1 pm. A summary of the final results will be sent *to all participants*. Your *prompt* response is appreciated. A self-addressed stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Thanks, (Pastor's name), for your participation in this project! I am truly...

Yours in Christ,

Thomas F. Fischer,
Pastor

enc: Leadership Survey

TFF

APPENDIX E:

Sample Leadership Survey

Instructions For "Leadership Survey"



Directions: In the table below, please print the number of leadership training events held, sponsored or attended in your congregation in each of the previous years.

In the "*Number of Self-Sponsored Training Events Held*" column, please indicate the total number of any on or off-site structured events developed by the local church specifically oriented to equip, develop and/or enhance leadership skills in *any* area of the local church ministry in that given year. Such events may have been led by the Pastor(s), staff or lay members of the congregation. Examples of such training in this study included workshops, seminars, portions of board meetings dedicated to leadership training or development or study series specifically dedicated to training purposes.

In the "*Number of Other-Sponsored Training Events Attended*" column, please indicate the total number of any seminars and workshops, held on or off-site, sponsored and directed by denominational, para-church, or independent agencies (religious or secular) designed to facilitate growth in *any* area related directly or indirectly to any ministry of the congregation. Such events may have been led by denominational officials, consultants, trainers (secular or religious), or other facilitators. Examples of such training might include seminars sponsored by Injoy Ministries, Psychological Studies of Farmington Hills, Michigan District Evangelism Festival, or out-of-state events, conventions, etc.

In the "*Average Weekly Church Attendance*" column, please indicate the average weekly church attendance which your congregation reported for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod *Statistical Annual* for each given year. Please indicate the amount of the "Total Annual Congregational Receipts" by adding together the contributions reported for "Work at Home" and the contributions reported for "Work at Large" as reported in the *Statistical Annual* for each given year.

Year	Number of Self-Sponsored Training Events Held	Number of Other-Sponsored Training Events Attended	Average Weekly Church Attendance	Total Annual Congregation Receipts (All Sources)
1991				
1992				
1993				
1994				
1995				
Total				

Name : _____ Congregation: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Please return by November 12th

Simply fold the completed survey in half, stapling it, and dropping it in the mail.

The survey is already pre-stamped and addressed for your convenience.

Thanks for your prompt response!

Any questions or comments you may have may be directed to: Rev. Thomas Fischer, Pastor,
Our Savior Lutheran Church-LCMS, 1501 N. Saginaw Road, Midland, MI 48640.
(517) 832-3667 or e-mail at TFFischer@aol.com

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