

African-American Church Planting RESEARCH REPORT

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Executive Summary

This brief summary contains key findings from a study of Protestant African-American church plants nationwide. The study was conducted by LifeWay Research. Lists of church plants were provided by 6 denominations and a list of African-American churches was rented to include additional groups and non-denominational churches. Data was collected through an online survey during February – May 2012. This executive summary highlights key findings from the total sample of the study. The sample size was 290 church plants.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

- Average worship attendance for the first year of African-American church plants is 37.
- By year four, the average worship attendance has doubled (80).

NEW COMMITMENTS TO JESUS CHRIST

- The average number of new commitments to Jesus Christ is 16 for the first year of the church plant.
- The average number of new commitments to Jesus Christ per year peaks in year 3 (20) and remains at 12 or higher for all years measured.

CHARACTERISTICS WITH A POSITIVE IMPACT ON ATTENDANCE AND NEW COMMITMENTS

- 32 characteristics have a positive impact on worship attendance including three items present in more than two-thirds of the churches:
 - Delegation of leadership roles to volunteers
 - Leadership training for new church members
 - Plan for spiritual formation for the church planter
- 23 characteristics have a positive impact on new commitments to Jesus Christ including two practices present in more than two-thirds of the churches:
 - Door-to-door evangelism
 - Conducting a new member class
- Six characteristics were shown to impact both worship attendance and new commitments to Jesus Christ. They are:
 - Church building of their own used as facility during first 5 years
 - Church planter compensated for their work
 - Church planter worked 60 hours a week or more on the church plant during the first two years of the church plant
 - Sponsor or mother church permitted the church plant to meet in the sponsoring church building
 - Week long Boot Camp or Basic Training provided
 - Contemporary worship style

CHURCHES REPRESENTED

- Church plants from more than 20 denominations participated plus non-denominational churches.
- 23% have been part of or resourced by a national church planting network.
- 43% were started since 2007

COMMUNITY

- 41% of churches estimate the community where the church started contained more than 20% Bible believing Christians.
- On average, the ethnic make-up of the community where the African-American churches were planted were:
 - 42% African-American
 - 35% White
 - 13% Hispanic
 - 4% African or Caribbean decent
 - 3% Asian
 - 3% Other
- In 42% of the churches, there has been a major shift in the demographics of the community since the church began. This includes 23% who saw a major shift but stayed in the community and 19% who saw a major shift and moved to a new community.

CONGREGATION

- During the first two years of the church plant, an average of 75% of the congregation was African-American.
- 80% of the church plants stated that their congregation was at least 50% African-American during the first two years.
- 68% indicated that they sought to target African-Americans as they tried to reach their community.
- More than 80% of the church planters intentionally sought to reach a cross-cultural or multi-ethnic group of people.
- Over 60% intentionally encouraged an African-American culture within the church.
- Nearly 70% emphasized racial reconciliation as a primary part of the church's vision and practices.
- 36% of the attendees during the first 5 years were estimated to be previously unchurched.

FACILITIES

- The most common facilities used by church plants in the first year were a church building shared with another congregation (22%), a business establishment (19%), homes (15%), a church building of their own (14%), and schools (13%).

- The most common facilities used any time during the first five years are a church building shared with another congregation (34%), a church building of their own (30%), a business establishment (28%), homes (25%), and schools (24%).

WORSHIP STYLE

- The most common worship styles used are blended (45%), contemporary Gospel (14%), contemporary (13%), and urban contemporary (12%).

CHURCH PLANTING MODELS

- Church planters could select from a series of models which ones most strongly influenced the approach used in planting the church.
- Two models were selected by over 40% of the church planters: ministry based (47%) and attractional (41%).

FUNDING

- Average funding in year one is \$49,800 growing steadily through year 4 (\$97,726) then falling off until resuming growth in year 7.
- Average dollars received from outside sources averages \$21,818 in the first year. Over the first 7 years average outside funding declines 44% while dollars received from members or attendees grows 211%.

SPONSORING CHURCH

- 48% of the church plants had a sponsoring or mother church. 36% of church plants received funding from one or more sponsoring churches.

CHURCH PLANTER

- About two-thirds (66%) of the church planters have at least a Bachelor's degree. For theological education, 45% have at least a Master's degree.
- 55% of church planters received specific training for church planting prior to planting the church. The most common types were conferences on church planting (51%) and week-long boot camps (42%).
- Only 16% of church planters received specific training on the dynamics of the African-American context prior to planting. 69% believe they would benefit from that specific training today.
- Only 6% of the church plants had a paid, staffed team of more than one person to start the church.
- In the first two years of the church plant's existence, over 60% of the church planters worked 40 hours a week or more at the church plant.
- 52% of the church planters received some financial compensation for their work as a church planter.
- 69% of church planters had an outside job in addition to their work as a church planter during the first two years of the church plant's existence.

Acknowledgements

The African-American Church Planting Study was an idea that first emerged within the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Carolyn Curtis, a layperson who had attended an African-American church plant near Washington D.C. that closed, approached PCA leadership with seed funding for a study to equip future African-American church plants in the same way the 2007 Church Planting Survivability study had equipped churches a few years before.

Wy Plummer and Dr. Carl Ellis, Jr. brought the idea to LifeWay Research, and Ed Stetzer shared the opportunity with the Church Planting Leadership Fellowship (CPLF). Soon a group of sponsors emerged to make this study a reality. These included the Mission to North America (PCA), Assemblies of God (AG), Path 1 (United Methodist Church), International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), Southern Baptists of Texas, the Foursquare Church, and North American Mission Board (SBC).

The cross-denominational working team was essential in survey development and reviewing reports. Many thanks go to Candace Lewis (Path 1), Stacy Hilliard (IPHC), Wy Plummer (PCA), and Leroy Fountain (NAMB) for their church planting experience and insights. Much appreciation goes to Dr. Carl Ellis, Jr. (Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Redeemer Seminary in Dallas, TX) who served as consultant. Thanks are also extended to Carolyn Curtis for reviewing the survey and reports and providing helpful suggestions.

Much appreciation is also given to the LifeWay Research team that guided the project from methodology to final statistics and all of the emails, interviews, and phone calls in between: Scott McConnell, Daniel Price, Lizette Beard, and Matthew Lowe.

Finally, this project would not have been successful without the participation of almost 300 church planters. Their contribution of time and reflection on their experiences will make this study valuable for many future church planters. Much appreciation goes to AG, PCA, Church of God MD-DE, districts of the United Methodist Church, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and NAMB for providing lists of church planters for this study.

Methodology and Response Rate

The African-American Church Planting Study was conducted by LifeWay Research. Its objectives were to quantitatively measure characteristics of African-American church plants and to identify characteristics that are related to higher attendance or higher numbers of new commitments to Jesus Christ, to measure the health of African-American church plants, and to measure characteristics that are distinctive to the African-American context.

Project sponsors were Mission to North America (PCA), Assemblies of God (AG), Path 1 (United Methodist Church), International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), Southern Baptists of Texas, the Foursquare Church, and North American Mission Board (SBC).

The quantitative questionnaire was designed by LifeWay Research in consultation with a cross-denominational working team of African-American church planting experts. Lists of African-American church plants that were started between 2005 through 2010 (and beyond) were provided by Assemblies of God, Presbyterian Church in America, Church of God MD-DE, districts of the United Methodist Church, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and Southern Baptist Convention. Lists were requested from traditional African-American denominations. Lists were rented to ensure invitations would be sent to African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Church of God in Christ, Church of the Nazarene, National Baptist, Baptist Missionary Association, other Baptist, other Christian, other Pentecostal, and Non-denominational churches. A total of 2,880 churches were identified although contact information was incomplete for many churches and more than a third of responding churches were in fact started prior to 2005.

LifeWay Research emailed invitations to complete the quantitative survey to all churches with an email address (at least 1,250) – this is more than three times the number promised in the original project design (400). Reminder emails were sent up to 5 times that included recommendations from denominational leaders, an introduction to the expert cross-denominational working team, and the additional offer of a study Bible for everyone who completed the survey. Phone calls were also made to at least 1,130 church planters to encourage participation. All respondents completed the survey online. In total, 290 surveys were completed between February 16 and May 31, 2012.

Survivability rate of church plants could not be determined since only 18 church plants interviewed stated they were no longer operating. Due to this low response among failed church plants, a year by year analysis for survivability is not possible.

Follow-up qualitative interviews were conducted with 15 of the most effective church planters surveyed in the quantitative survey. Results from the qualitative interviews are available in a separate report: **African-American Church Planting: Qualitative Report**.

Introduction

By Dr. Carl Ellis, Jr.

Today's debate about whether or not there should be an African American church ignores the fact that we live in a society with a variety of cultures – each with a corresponding influence. Usually, in multi-cultural societies such as ours, one culture is dominant and the others are sub-dominant to varying degrees. This has an effect on how we apply God's word to life.

We all have core concerns – life defining and life controlling values and/or issues. These 'concerns' can be personal, social and/or cultural, yet the cultural core concerns distinguish people groups. Generally, the societal norms and protocols are oriented to the dominant culture. Because of this, the cultural core concerns of the sub-dominant culture tend to be left unaddressed. In the African American culture, these concerns are related to empowerment, namely, dignity, identity and significance.

To apply all of God's word to life is to "do theology." Therefore, theology tends to be historically and culturally determined. Witness the great creeds and confessions of the church; each of these was formulated in response to a challenge the church was facing at the time. The context in which theology develops plays a formative role. Doing theology can be approached in two ways: cognitively involving conceptual knowledge, and intuitively involving perceptual knowledge.

19TH CENTURY

African American theology emerged during the antebellum period. In the South, this theology was a theology of suffering because of the stresses of slavery. It was also intuitive because

Blacks in the South were denied access to formal education. In the North, the theology was more cognitively oriented because northern Blacks had greater access to formal education. Like its southern counterpart, the northern theology addressed salvation by grace through faith in Christ, etc., however the two differed in one fundamental aspect; the northern theology adequately addressed empowerment core concerns, whereas southern theology did not.

With the end of slavery, the southern church began to adopt the northern empowerment theology. As a result, between 1870 and 1910 the African American church experienced explosive growth. However the stresses of the late 19th Century, namely, the Jim Crow practices and terrorism of the post-Reconstruction South, caused the southern church to turn inward and revert to the old intuitive theology.

By the end of the 19th Century, much of the northern theological tradition was eventually undercut by humanistic heresies. This rendered these cognitively oriented churches powerless and non-transformative. Without a prophetic voice, many churches of this tradition ended up degenerating into mere sociological institutions or political bases. Thus, African American cultural core concerns were no longer addressed.

20TH CENTURY

Before 1900, about 90% of African Americans lived in the South. The early to mid 20th Century saw great migrations from the rural South to the urban North, South and West. As African Americans with southern roots gained dominance in urban Black communities, their intuitive theology came to define the urban church. The intuitive theology of suffering was a life-serving and even beneficial in the context of the rural South, but was inadequate for addressing empowerment concerns and other 20th and 21st Century urban realities.

As younger African Americans became more cognitively oriented, the traditional church continued in the intuitive mode. Many in the younger generations however, were unable to connect with the message of the traditional church, and they began to search elsewhere for answers to questions involving African American core concerns. As a result, the theological influence of the church began a general decline – this, in spite of higher rates of church attendance when compared to other American people groups.

The great exception to the general decline in theological influence was the Civil Rights Movement. It was rooted in the theology of suffering, however this theology was transformed into a weapon against injustice and a tool of empowerment. Unfortunately, the central role of theology in the movement was never fully recognized. Furthermore, the Civil Rights Movement more adequately addressed southern issues than northern issues. By the 1970s, the majority of African Americans lived in the North. As a result, most younger generation African Americans began to become disconnected from the traditional Black church.

The story of 20th Century African American culture can be told in terms of attempts to bridge this growing gap with alternative theologies and ideologies, e.g., the Garvey Movement, several Black Nationalist Islamic sects, the Harlem Renaissance and Black Consciousness, to name a few.

By the end of the 20th Century, it was apparent that all these non-Christian attempts to adequately address African American cultural core concerns had fallen short. In the wake of this failure has emerged a creeping cultural crisis mainly seen in the rise of nihilism and the loss of identity.

TODAY

Because today's core concerns remain unaddressed, increasing numbers of African Americans are looking for theological answers. The church is strategically positioned to meet this challenge. While the traditional church has played a key role in the Black experience, it is not equipped for the task before us in its present state. It will continue to be unable to connect with those who are seeking answers to their theological questions. Addressing these concerns requires new models of the church – models able to appreciate the old traditions yet armed with theology that is biblical, cognitive and applied to addressing legitimate African American cultural core concerns.

This partly explains the increased efforts at church planting among African Americans, and the need for a return to a biblical understanding of addressing African American cultural core concerns. It is hoped that the findings of this study will better equip denominations and church planters in their efforts to address today's African American community.

Comparisons to Previous Study

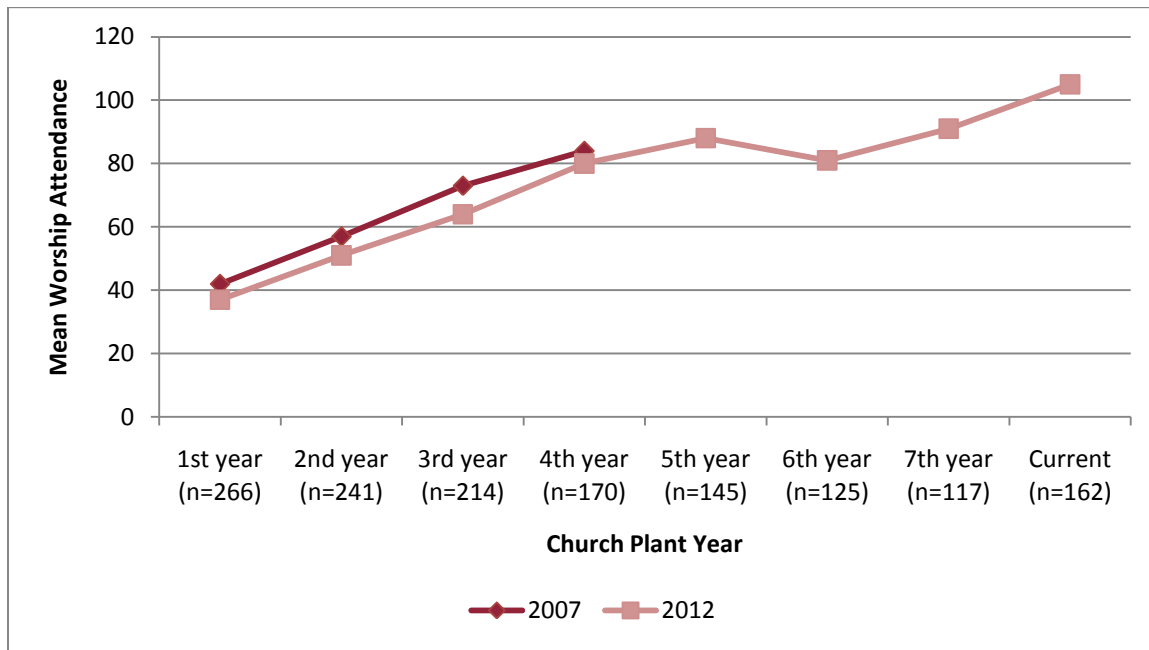
The 2012 African-American Church Planting study provides quantitative measures of African-American church plants that both describe their formation and identify characteristics that are related to higher attendance and higher numbers of new commitments to Jesus Christ. The primary emphasis and commentary of this report are the findings from this 2012 survey, but where question wording matches, comparisons are shown to the Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 2007 by Ed Stetzer and Philip Connor (noted as 2007). The church plants in this previous study whose primary ethnicity is known were 57% Anglo, 17% Hispanic, 5% African-American, 6% multi-ethnic, and 15 % among a variety of other language groups.

Church Plant Attendance

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

The following graph shows the average attendance for each year of the church plant's existence. Churches provided their attendance in their first through seventh year when applicable along with current attendance. The overall trend is for churches to increase in attendance. Average worship attendance for the first year of African-American church plants is 37. By year four, the average worship attendance has doubled.

Figure 1 – For each year the church has been in existence please indicate the average worship attendance.



VARIABLES ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER ATTENDANCE

The following variables had a positive impact on worship attendance of the church plant. The question becomes how to decide what measure should be used to determine higher attendance. Is higher attendance simply who has the most attendees currently or is it the growth in attendance and should that growth be measured in absolute numbers or as a percentage? In order to cover many scenarios and to not discount variables that impact different measurements of growth, a series of regression analyses were used to find the variables associates with higher attendance. The attendance variables include first year attendance, growth in first four years both percentage and count, and current attendance.

NOTE: Variables are listed in the table with similar items from the same question (e.g., facility or worship style). The order and strength of relationship with worship attendance varied across the series of regression analyses. Numbers in **(RED)** are the percentage of church planters answering in the affirmative for the specific item. For example, 7% of church planters stated the Simple Model influenced their approach. **{2007}** denotes items that were also shown to impact attendance in the earlier study.

Table 1 - Variables Associated with Higher Attendance in Regression Analyses

- NOTE: Large Launch Model is the most significant variable in having higher attendance in the first year. It was removed from the analysis to determine if other variables are significant. **(2%)**
- Hotel as other facility during first 5 years **(6%)**
- Church building of our own as other facility during first 5 years **(20%)**
- Seeker-Targeted model influenced approach **(6%)**
- Simple Model influenced approach **(7%)**
- Purpose-driven church model influenced approach **(13%)**
- Children’s special events (e.g. Easter Egg Hunt, Fall Festival) **(65%) {2007}**
- Evangelistic visitation for identifying prospects **(63%)**
- Contemporary worship style **(13%)**
- Contemporary Gospel worship style **(14%)**
- Postmodern or emerging worship style **(1%)**
- Traditional worship style **(1%)**
- A proactive stewardship development plan for church to be financially self-sufficient **(57%) {2007}**
- Meetings and interviews with area leaders to understand the community **(49%)**
- Being self-sufficient financially **(60%)**

- Rented a facility for the church plant to meet (mother church provided) (14%)
- Worked 60 hours a week or more during first two years of church plant (39%)
- Church planter compensated for work (52%) {2007}
- Worked less than 20 hours a week at job outside church (5%)
- Church planter arrived with paid staff (6%) {2007}
- More people included on the paid, staffed church planting team (6%)
- The church plant started at least one daughter church within 3 years of existence (11%) {2007}
- Delegation of key leadership roles to volunteers (74%)
- Fundraising events for potential donors to hear the vision for the church plant (28%)
- Church planter has health insurance paid for (23%)
- Permitted the church plant to meet in the sponsoring church building (32%)
- Active involvement in political process (23%)
- Leadership training for new church members (71%) {2007}
- Week long boot camp or Basic training provided (42%)
- Specific training on African-American context (16%)
- The church planter had previous experience as a lead church planting pastor (15%)
- The church planter was actively engaged in a plan of personal spiritual formation throughout the duration of the church plant (73%)
- The church planter's expectations of the church plant met the reality of the church planting experience (48%) {2007}

It is common in regression analysis for variables that are shared by a large majority of the population to not be predictive. That holds true among these variables that are associated with higher worship attendance. Only 8 of the 32 items are present in the majority of African-American church plants and only 3 of these are present in two-thirds of the churches. These three can be considered best practices: delegation of leadership roles to volunteers, leadership training for new church members, and a plan of personal spiritual formation for the church planter.

For application, the characteristics that impact worship attendance can be grouped into three categories: 1) Characteristics that should be beneficial in all situations, 2) Characteristics that represent distinct choices for which more than one option have been successful or helpful, and 3) Characteristics that represent opportunities (e.g., funding, compensation, training, etc.) that may not be available for all church plants.

Characteristics that should be beneficial in all situations include:

- **Outreach** (children's special events and evangelistic visitation)
- **Leadership** (delegation of key leadership roles to volunteers, leadership training for new members, church planter engaged in a plan of personal spiritual formation, Fundraising events for potential donors used to hear the vision for the church plant)

- **Mission** – While many things must go well for a church plant to start at least one daughter church within 3 years of existence, this represents a clear Kingdom focus that should be pursued by all church plants.
- **Context Discerned** (Meetings and interviews with area leaders to understand the community, Active involvement in the political process in the community)

Choices with more than one option that has been successful or helpful include:

- **Facility** where the church plant meets (Hotel, Church building of your own, Rented church facility)
- **Influential Models** for the church plant (Seeker-Targeted, Simple, and Purpose-driven models)
- **Worship style** – While the largest number of African-American church plants use a blended worship style, it is the distinctive styles that see higher attendance (Contemporary, Contemporary Gospel, Postmodern or emerging, and Traditional)

Opportunities that are not available for all church plants:

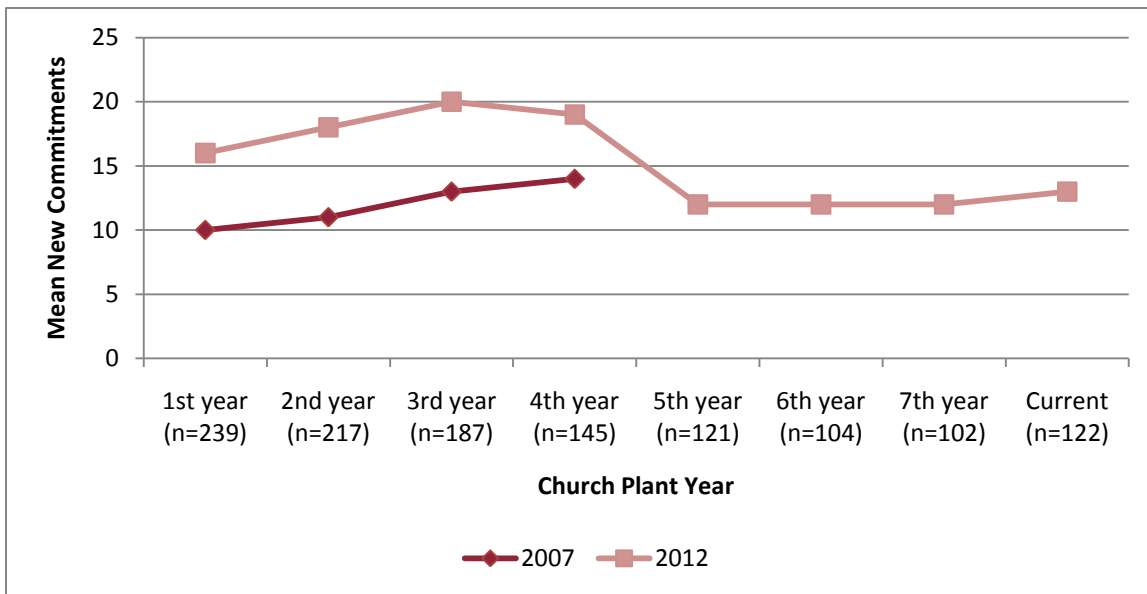
- **Church planter**
 - The church planter received financial compensation for their church planting work during the first two years,
 - The church planter worked less than 20 hours/ week outside the church
 - The church planter worked 60+ hours a week on the church plant during the first 2 years
 - The church planter arrived with a paid staff (and a larger staff is better)
 - The church planter had health insurance (majority paid by church plant)
- **Preparation of church planter** (Week long boot camp or basic training provided by denomination and/or sponsoring church, Previous experience as a lead church planting pastor, Church planter's expectations of the church plant met the reality of the church planting experience)
- **Funding** (The church is financially self-sufficient, A proactive stewardship development plan enabling the church to be financially self-sufficient)

Church Plant New Commitments

NEW COMMITMENTS

The following graph shows the average new commitments for each year of the church plants existence. Churches provided their new commitments in their first through seventh year along with current new commitments. The average number of new commitments to Jesus Christ is 16 for the first year of the church plant. The average number of new commitments to Jesus Christ per year peaks in year 3 (20) and remains at 12 or higher for all years measured.

Figure 2 – For each year the church has been in existence please indicate the annual number of new commitments to Jesus Christ through your church plant.



VARIABLES ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER NEW COMMITMENTS

The following variables had a positive impact on new commitments of the church plant. To determine the variables impacting number of new commitments, multiple independent variables were used in regression analysis. The different independent variables include first year new commitments, new commitments during first four years, current year new commitments, and new commitments per attendee in the first year and current year.

NOTE: Variables are listed in the table with similar items from the same question (e.g., facility or worship style). The order and strength of relationship with new commitments varied across the series of regression analyses. Numbers in **(RED)** are the percentage of church planters answering in the affirmative for the specific item. For example, 7% of church planters stated they used telephone campaigns. **{2007}** denotes items that were also shown to impact new commitments in the earlier study.

Table 2 - Variables Associated with Higher New Commitments in Regression Analyses

- Church building of our own as other facility during first 5 years **(20%)**
- Conference Center as other facility during first 5 years **(2%)**
- Telephone campaigns **(7%)**
- Door hangers or flyers **(42%)**
- Attractional model influenced approach **(41%)**
- Ministry based model influenced approach **(47%)**
- Multihousing Model influenced approach **(3%)**
- Door-to-door evangelism **(75%)**
- Loaned lay people for specific time period as workers **(25%)**
- Bought property and/or facility for the church plant to meet **(11%)**
- Worked 60 hours a week or more during first two years of church plant **(39%)**
- Worked 40 to 59 hours a week during first two years of church plant **(24%)**
- Contemporary worship style **(13%)**
- No particular identified style **(4%)**
- Permitted the church plant to meet in the sponsoring church building **(32%)**
- Week long Boot Camp or Basic Training provided **(42%) {2007}**
- Month long training course provided **(8%)**
- Several month internship provided **(13%)**
- Revival meetings **(45%)**
- A new member class **(68%) {2007}**
- A source of funding was directly from the church planter or church planting team **(49%)**
- Have always been self-sufficient **(26%)**
- Church planter compensated for work **(52%)**

It is common in regression analysis for variables that are shared by a large majority of the population to not be predictive. That holds true among these variables that are associated with higher new commitments to Jesus Christ. Only 3 of the 23 items are present in the majority of African-American church plants and only 2 of these are present in two-thirds of the churches. With 75% of African-American church plants utilizing door-to-door evangelism and 68%

conducting a new member class, clearly the church plants who did not use these methods had fewer new commitments for these variables to be predictive of higher new commitments.

For application, the characteristics that impact the number of new commitments can be grouped into 9 principles:

- **Awareness** – Churches with more new commitments invested in building awareness through telephone campaigns and door hangers/flyers.
- **Intentional outreach** (Door-to-door evangelism and Revival meetings)
- **Sweat equity** – Church plants with more new commitments have church planters who put in long hours on the church plant (40-59 or 60+ hours per week during the first two years) and are directly helping fund the church plant themselves or with their church planting team.
- **Financial stability** – More new commitments are seen in church plants that compensate their church planter and that are self-sufficient from the beginning.
- **Training received by church planter** (Week long Boot Camp or Basic Training, Month long training course, Several month internship)
- **Facility where the church plant meets** (Church building of their own during first 5 years, Meet in sponsoring church building, or Conference center during first 5 years)
- **Influential Models** for the church plant (Attractional model, Ministry based model, Multihousing model)
- **Church sponsor or mother church** – More important than just having a sponsor is the types of things the sponsor is willing to do: Loaned lay people as workers, Bought property and/or facility for the church plant to meet, Permitted the church plant to meet in the sponsoring church building
- **Contemporary worship** (expressive, celebrative, informal)

Note that only six variables are shown to impact both worship attendance and new commitments to Jesus Christ. They are:

- Church building of their own used as facility during first 5 years
- Church planter compensated for their work
- Church planter worked 60 hours a week or more on the church plant during the first two years of the church plant
- Sponsor or mother church permitted the church plant to meet in the sponsoring church building
- Week long Boot Camp or Basic Training provided
- Contemporary worship style

Descriptive Statistics for Church Plants

Although descriptive statistics do not indicate factors that increase the chances of survivability nor church plant health, the following tables and graphs do provide a summary as to what African-American church plants are doing and experiencing.

DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

At the time of planting (n=290):

American Baptist: 4	International Pentecostal Holiness Church: 5
Assemblies of God: 37	Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod: 1
Baptist Missionary Association: 11	National Baptist Convention of America: 9
Church of God Cleveland: 1	National Baptist Convention USA: 7
Church of God in Christ: 4	Presbyterian Church in America (PCA-MNA): 13
Converge: 1	Progressive National Baptist Convention: 3
Evangelical Covenant Church: 4	Southern Baptist Convention: 101
Evangelical Free Church of America: 4	United Methodist Church: 24
Foursquare Church: 26	Wesleyan: 1
Free Methodist: 1	Non-denominational: 27
General Association of General Baptists: 2	Other: 24

All denominations listed here were invited to participate. None of the church planters selected the following options: African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Church, Christian Reformed Church, Church of the Nazarene, Churches of God General Conference, Disciples of Christ, Missionary Church, and Vineyard.

89% are still affiliated with the same denomination(s) (n=256). Among those that have changed to another denomination, the new denominations are:

American Baptist: 1
Assemblies of God: 1
Baptist Missionary Association: 1
Foursquare Church: 2
International Pentecostal Holiness Church: 1
National Baptist Convention USA: 1
Southern Baptist Convention: 13
United Methodist Church: 1
Non-denominational: 4
Other: 5

NETWORK AFFILIATION

Only 23% of African-American church plants currently are or were a part of or were resourced by a national church planting network. The church planting networks identified include (n=276):

Acts 29: 2	Multicultural Church Network: 1
Association of Related Churches: 3	New Church Initiatives: 2
Church Multiplication Associates: 5	Path One: 3
Church Multiplication Training Center: 1	Rebuild Initiative: 1
Church Resource Ministries: 1	Vision 2020: 3
Great Commission Ministries: 2	Other: 36
Leadership Network/Burning Bush: 1	None of these: 216
Mission to North America: 5	

None of the church planters selected the following options: The Bridge – Church Network, Campus Church Networks, Covenant Fellowship International, Dynamic Church Planting International, Emerging Leadership Initiative, Fellowship Associates, Fellowship of Church Planters – Rhode Island, Global Church Advancement, Glocalnet, Growing Healthy Congregations Network, Harvest International Ministry, Imagine a Church Network, Kairos, Mission Alive, Mission Catalyst, The Next Church Network, Northeast Church Planting Network, Northwest Church Planting Network Orchard Group, Spanish River Church – Global Outreach, Stadia, Vision USA, World Impact, and Xpansion.

YEAR BEGUN

Nearly half (43%) of the African-American church plants responding to the survey began after 2007. Responses older than the years requested are included in this report.

Table 3 - What year did the church plant begin? (n=285)

Year Began	Percent	2007 Survey
Prior 1995	10%	0%
1995-1998	11%	7%
1999-2002	18%	40%
2003-2006	18%	53%
2007 – Present	43%	N/A

BEGINNINGS OF CHURCH PLANT

2012 - A majority of African-American church plants (58%) consider “The vision or call to begin the church plant” as the best descriptor of the beginning of their church plant. “A core group of people gathered together indicating initial interest” (16%) is the only other event selected by more than 10% of those surveyed.

2007 – While several options were worded differently in 2007, several concepts are similar between the two studies. Forty-three percent of all church plants indicated the starting point to be the church planter’s vision to start the church, whereas 19% stated it was the development of a core group. Thirteen percent stated the commencement of the church plant was the day of its first worship service while 8% stated it was when relationships were begun in the community. The remaining 17% included a variety of other reasons such as the commissioning of the church planter and the church planter moving to the area.

Table 4 – Which of the following best describes the event, idea or concept you consider to be the beginning of this church plant? (n=284)

Event, Idea, Concept	Percent
The vision or call to begin the church plant	58%
Core group of people gathered together indicating initial interest	16%
The assignment, appointment, and/or commissioning of the church planter or church planting team	8%
The first public worship service	4%
Revitalization or restart of a declining congregation	4%
Intentional effort begun to build relationships in the focus area	3%
Existing church’s adoption into a new denominational affiliation	1%
Formal association with denomination or local group of churches	1%
Not sure	1%
Church planter or church planting team moved to the area	1%
Denominational or church planting network funding in place	1%
Legal constitution of the church	1%
The completed construction or renovation of a church building	0%

CHURCH PLANT EXISTENCE (n = 285)

Ninety-four percent of the church plants are still in existence today. Among the 18 church plants that have closed 7 did so in years 0-4, 6 closed in years 5-9, 4 closed after 10 or more years, and one did not specify a year started since they started prior to 1995.

The following tables show how these church plants ceased and what contributed to the need for the church plants to cease to operate. Please note these results are based on a small sample size.

Table 5 - Which of the following best describes how the church plant ceased to operate? (n=16)

How Church Plant Ceased	Percent
The church merged with another congregation	44%
The congregation disbanded	31%
The church was closed by the denomination or church planting network	19%
Not sure	6%

Among this small group of churches, lack of financial support was the most common contributing factor selected for the church plant closing. Most also listed unique circumstances in the “other” selection that included things like military deployment, pastor death, and not connecting with the community.

Table 6 - Which of the following contributed to the need for the church plant to cease to operate? (n=16)

Contributed to Church Plant Ceasing to Operate	Percent
Other	69%
Outside financial support was insufficient	25%
Inside financial support (amount of offerings) was insufficient	25%
The church planting pastor was reassigned to another church or project	13%
Outside oversight group decided the church plant didn't reach established benchmarks	13%
The church plant had a good beginning but stopped reaching new people	13%
None of these	13%
The church planting pastor or church planting team resigned or retired	6%
Outside financial support ended before the church was self-sufficient	6%
The church plant never really began	0%

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Forty-one percent of African-American church plants estimate the communities where the church started contained more than 20% Bible believing Christians. In the 2007 study, 33% of all church plants were in communities estimated to be 10% or less evangelical Christian.

Table 7 - What do you estimate the percentage of Bible believing Christians to be in the community where the church was started? (n = 280)

Percent Bible believing Christians	Percent
More than 20%	41%
Not sure	22%
Between 11 and 20%	21%
Between 5 and 10%	12%
Less than 5%	4%

Over three-fourths (77%) stated that Protestant Christian denominations are the predominant religion within the community in which the church started.

Table 8 - What religion or denomination would be predominant in the community where the church was started? (n = 282)

Percent Bible believing Christians	Percent
Protestant Christian denominations	77%
Catholic Church	15%
Not sure	4%
No religion	2%
Personal Spirituality	2%
Cult or Sect (Mormonism, Jehovah Witness, etc.)	1%

On average, African-American church plants were started in communities that were largely African-American (42%) and African or Caribbean decent (4%).

Table 9 - In the community where the church was started, about what percentage of the people were in each of the following ethnic groups? (n = 273)

Ethnic Group	Mean Percent
African-American	42%
White	35%
Hispanic	13%
African or Caribbean decent	4%
Asian	3%
Other	3%

One of the hypotheses of the cross-denominational working team was that the residents' approach to personal decision making would have an impact on their response to the methods used in the church plant. While none of these descriptors were predictive of higher attendance or new commitments to Jesus Christ, the importance of building relationships is clearly seen in the following table.

Table 10 - In the community where the church was started, which three of the following best describe the driving forces for personal decision making among the residents? (n = 290)

Driving Force	Percent
Relationships	79%
Social connections	53%
Work	38%
Survival	29%
Belief in fate/destiny	17%
Planning for the future	11%
Entertainment	11%
Achievement	9%
Belief in the value of networking	6%

In 42% of the communities there has been a major shift in the demographics since the church plant began including 19% of the church plants that have moved to a new community. Among those that have seen major demographic shifts, about one-third (32%) of the communities experienced a decrease of median income.

Table 11 - Has there been a major shift in the demographics in the community since the church plant began? (n = 280)

Major Shift in Demographics	Percent
No	51%
Yes, the church plant stayed in the community as it shifted	23%
Yes, the church plant moved to a new community	19%
Not sure	7%

Table 12 - What major demographic shift took place? (Select all that apply) (n = 131)

Major Demographic Shift	Percent
Median income decreased	32%
Targeted ethnic group – population increased	21%
Vacant housing – population decreased	21%
New housing developments – population increased	18%
Targeted ethnic group – population decreased	17%
Community aged	16%
Community became younger	16%
Under-class cultural values increased	11%
Not sure	9%
Middle-class cultural values increased	8%
Median income increased	7%

CONGREGATION DEMOGRAPHICS

During the first two years of the church plant, the majority of the congregation is African-American. Eighty percent of the church plants stated that their congregation was at least 50% African-American during the first two years.

Table 13 - About what percentage of your congregation was in each of the following ethnic groups during the first two years of the church plant? (n = 283)

Ethnic Group	Mean Percent
African-American	75%
African or Caribbean decent	10%
White	10%
Hispanic	3%
Other	1%
Asian	0%

During the first two years of the plant, 86% describe the majority of their congregation as primarily people from families who have been in the U.S for 3 or more generations.

Table 14 - Which one of the following describes the majority of your congregation during the first two years of the church plant? (n = 276)

Immigrants	Percent
Primarily people from families who have been in the U.S. for many generations (3 + generations)	86%
Primarily 1st generation immigrants	9%
Primarily 2nd generation immigrants	4%

About two-thirds (68%) of church plants targeted African-Americans as they sought to reach the community around their church. Among the 19% who selected “other,” most indicated that they did not target one ethnicity or race or that they targeted all people. Less than 10 church plants indicated targeting multiracial people and a couple specified specific target groups.

Table 15 - What ethnicity or race did you target most as you sought to reach the community around your church? (n = 279)

Ethnicity or Race	Percent
African-American	68%
Other	19%
African or Caribbean decent	8%
White	3%
Hispanic	2%
Asian	0%

FACILITIES

Over three-fourths (78%) of church planters stated the facilities used in the first year were adequate in size and functionality for the church plant. Also, about two-thirds (63%) stated the facility was in a high visibility area (i.e., along a major highway or roadway).

Church planters were asked to select both the facility or facilities used within the first year of the church and the other facilities used by the church plant during its first 5 years of existence. In the first year, the main types of facilities used by African-American church plants including church building shared with another congregation (22%), business establishments (19%), homes (15%), church buildings of their own (14%) and schools (13%).

Responses on the 2007 study of all church plants to comparable facility choices showed 18% meeting in homes, 12% in schools, 10% in business establishments, 7% in a community hall, and 2% in movie theaters. Thirteen percent used a church building in their first year and 4% used a hotel or conference center in their first year.

If church plants did use other facilities during their first five years the most common types are church buildings either shared with another congregation (20%) or their own church building (20%), homes (17%), and schools (15%). The following table shows the percentage of churches using various facilities.

Table 16 – Facility type for church plants (n = 290)

Facility	Percent of church plants using this facility in the first year	Percent of church plants using this other facility during first 5 years	Percent of church plants using in <u>either</u> their first year or first five years
School	13%	15%	24%
Movie Theater	1%	0%	1%
Church building shared with another congregation	22%	20%	34%
Church building of our own	14%	20%	30%
Home(s)	15%	17%	25%
Business establishment	19%	14%	28%
Hotel	11%	6%	15%
Conference center	2%	2%	4%
Community hall	11%	8%	17%
Other	13%	10%	21%
No other facilities	-----	22%	-----

PROMOTION

For communicating the news of a new church in the community, 92% used word of mouth as a form of publicity. The other most common forms of publicity uses are door hangers or flyers (42%), mailers (29%) and internet communication (29%). Since 2007, some newer forms of communication, internet communication (46%) and social media (27%), are becoming more popular among church planters.

Table 17 – What were the top 3 forms of publicity used to communicate news of a new church in the community? (Select up to three)

Promotion	Percent of church plants using this form of promotion		Percent of church plants started after 2007 using this form of promotion
	2012	2007 Survey	
Word of mouth and/or personal relationships	92%	45%	92%
Door hangers or flyers	42%	12%	41%
Mailers	29%	24%	30%
Internet communication	29%	9%	46%
Social media	15%	NA	27%
Newspaper ads	14%	23%	8%
Other	10%	NA	8%
Billboards/Road Signs	9%	8%	9%
Radio or television ads	9%	10%	7%
Mailers to new movers	2%	3%	2%
Telephone campaigns	7%	2%	8%

More than a third (36%) of new people who began attending the African-American church plants were previously unchurched.

Table 18 – Among the new people who began to attend your church during the first 5 years of existence, please estimate the percentage of newcomers who began attending from each of the following situations. (n = 272)

Type of Church Newcomers	Percent of church newcomers
Previously part of other existing churches	45%
Previously unchurched	36%
Previously part of a sponsoring/mother church	10%
Children born to people who attend your church	8%

The table below shows the percentage of church plants using different outreach activities either at the launch only or something they continued to use after the launch. For most churches, the use of specific outreach activities was not isolated to just the launch but continued to use them after launch. The most common outreach activities used only at launch are prayer walking (17%), door-to-door evangelism (13%), mail invitations (12%), block party (11%), and evangelistic visitation (10%). As for the outreach activities that continued to be used after launch, children’s special events (68%), ministry evangelism (66%), evangelistic visitation (62%), door-to-door evangelism (62%), and outreach Bible studies (61%).

Table 19 – For each of the following types of intentional outreach activities, please indicate if it was used by the church plant for purposes of evangelistic outreach.

Outreach Activity	Percent of church plants using this only at launch	Percent of church plants continuing to use this after launch
Children’s special events (n = 250)	8%	68%
Ministry evangelism (n = 255)	4%	66%
Evangelistic visitation (n = 253)	10%	62%
Door-to-door evangelism (n = 256)	13%	62%
Outreach Bible studies (n = 258)	1%	61%
Mail invitations (n = 249)	12%	58%
Children’s weekday ministries (n = 244)	4%	55%
Prayer walking (n = 254)	17%	49%
Block party (n = 244)	11%	42%
Revival meetings (n = 251)	6%	39%

WORSHIP STYLES

A blended (traditional, gospel, and/or contemporary) worship style is used by 45% of the African-American church plants making it the most commonly used worship style. The other common worship styles are all of a contemporary nature: contemporary gospel (expressive, celebrative, contemporary arrangements), contemporary (expressive, celebrative, informal), and urban contemporary (use of technology, spoken word, informal).

The 2007 survey of all church plants indicated that 62% utilized contemporary worship. The second most common worship style was blended (19%), defined in that study as Blended traditional and contemporary.

Table 20 – Which of the following best describes the worship style of the church plant? (n=281)

Worship style	Percent of church plants using this worship style	2007 Survey
Blended	45%	19%*
Contemporary Gospel	14%	NA
Contemporary	13%	62%
Urban Contemporary	12%	NA
Traditional Gospel	7%	NA
No particular identified style	4%	2%
Fellowship	2%	1%
Seeker	1%	1%
Postmodern or emerging	1%	4%
Traditional	1%	8%

CHURCH PLANT CULTURES

Church planters were asked for their level of agreement on three different cultural scenarios. In all three of these questions, the majority of church planters agree they sought to accomplish the described scenario.

- More than 80% of the church planters intentionally sought to reach a cross-cultural or multi-ethnic group of people.
- Over 60% intentionally encouraged an African-American culture within the church.
- Nearly 70% emphasized racial reconciliation as a primary part of the church’s vision and practices.

Figure 3 – The church plant intentionally sought to reach a cross-cultural or multi-ethnic group of people. (n=279)

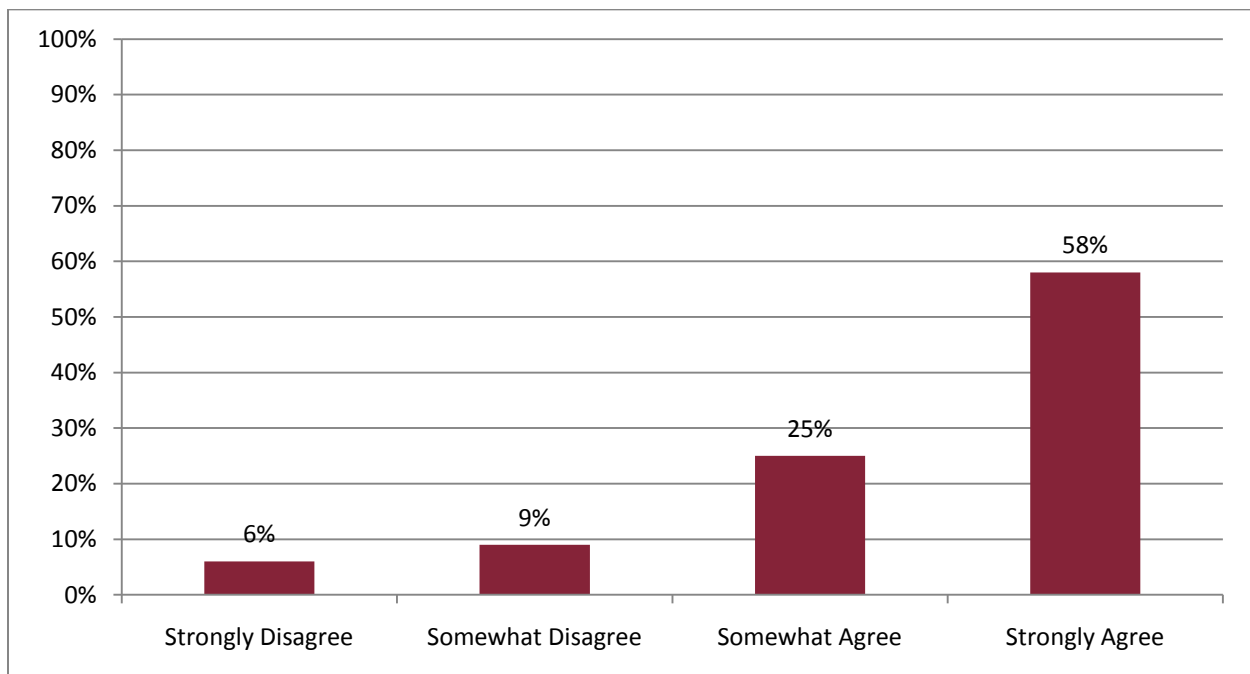


Figure 4 – The church plant intentionally encouraged an African-American culture within the church. (n=278)

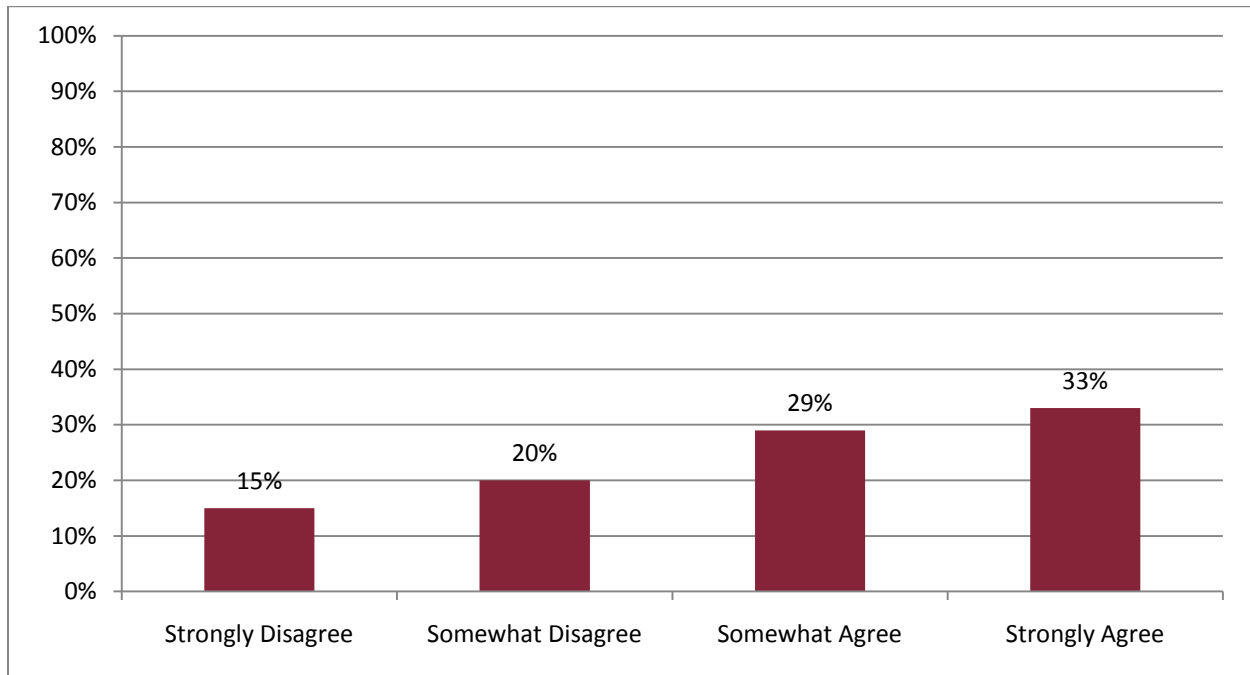
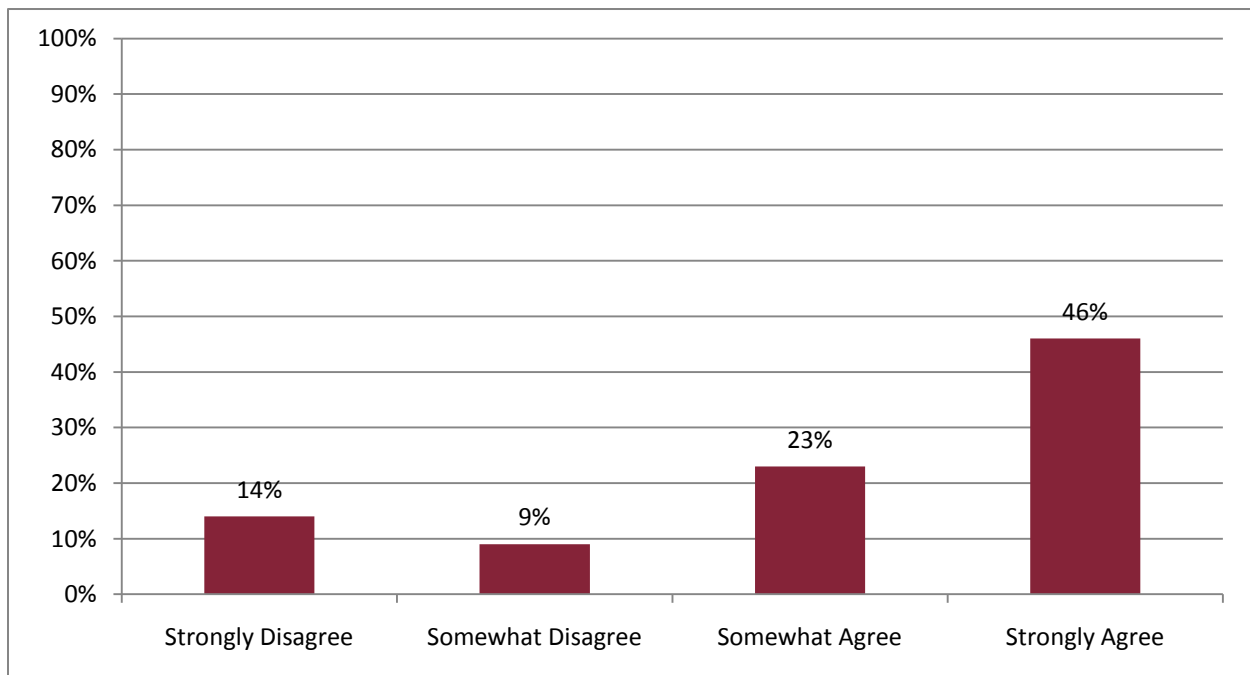


Figure 5 – The church plant emphasized racial reconciliation as a primary part of the church’s vision and practices. (n=280)



CHURCH PLANTING MODELS

2007 - Only 19% of all church plants identified themselves with a particular church planting model. Of those who identified a model, the breakdown is: 35% indicated Purpose-Driven, 11% indicated Ethnic, 10% indicated Relational, 7% indicated Ministry Based, and 6% indicated Seeker Targeted.

2012 - Church planters could select from a series of models which ones most strongly influenced the approach used in planting the church. Two models were selected by over 40% of African-American church plants: ministry based (church that goes into the community, impact people’s lives and draw them to the gospel) and attractional (outreach emphasis is designed to draw people to visit the church to learn about God and follow Him). There were only two other models selected by more than 15% of the church plants; missional (the church as “sent” to join God on His mission in this world) and programmatic model (church that will minister through a variety of programs such as Sunday school and organized visitation). The following table shows the percentages of church plants influenced by different models.

Table 21 – Which, if any, of the following models most strongly influenced the approach used in planting the church? (Select up to three) (n=290)

Church model	Percent of church plants influenced by church model
Ministry based	47%
Attractional	41%
Missional	24%
Programmatic Model	15%
Relational	13%
Purpose-driven	13%
No particular model	12%
Simple Model	7%
Seeker Targeted	6%
Ethnic Language	4%
Affinity	4%
Multihousing Model	3%
Organic Model	2%
Large Launch Model	2%

Nearly three-fourths (74%) of the church plants relied on the pastor as the primary decision maker in the first two years of the church plant.

Table 22 – Which one of the following best describes the primary decision making process in the first two years of your church plant? (n = 284)

Primary Decision Making Process	Percent of church plants
Pastor led	74%
Committee or Team led	8%
Staff led	5%
Elder led	4%
Board or Council led (other than elders)	4%
Congregation led	4%
Other	2%

PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

Church planters were asked about various preparation and strengthening activities. For all but three activities, over 50% of the church planters stated the activity occurred in the church plant. There are four activities with over 70% of the church planters using it including intentional weekly prayer meeting (78%), delegation of key leadership roles to volunteers (74%), a demographic analysis of community (71%), and leadership training for new church members (71%).

The following table shows the percentage of church plants utilizing the specified preparation or strengthening activities.

Table 23 – For each of the following types of preparation or strengthening activities, please indicate if it occurred in the church plant

Activity	Percent of church plants using activity
Intentional weekly prayer meeting (n = 272)	78%
Delegation of key leadership roles to volunteers (n = 270)	74%
A demographic analysis of community (n = 276)	71%
Leadership training for new church members (n = 274)	71%
Weekly Sunday School classes (n = 273)	69%
A new member class (n = 272)	68%
Evangelistic training (n = 268)	67%
A proactive stewardship development plan (n = 268)	62%
Weekly small group discipleship program (n = 269)	61%
One-on-one discipleship program for members (n = 265)	57%
Meetings and interviews with area leaders (n = 271)	53%
A church covenant signed by new members (n = 269)	38%
Active involvement in political process (n = 264)	23%
A church plant restart (n = 263)	19%
Started at least 1 daughter church within 3 years of existence (n = 265)	11%

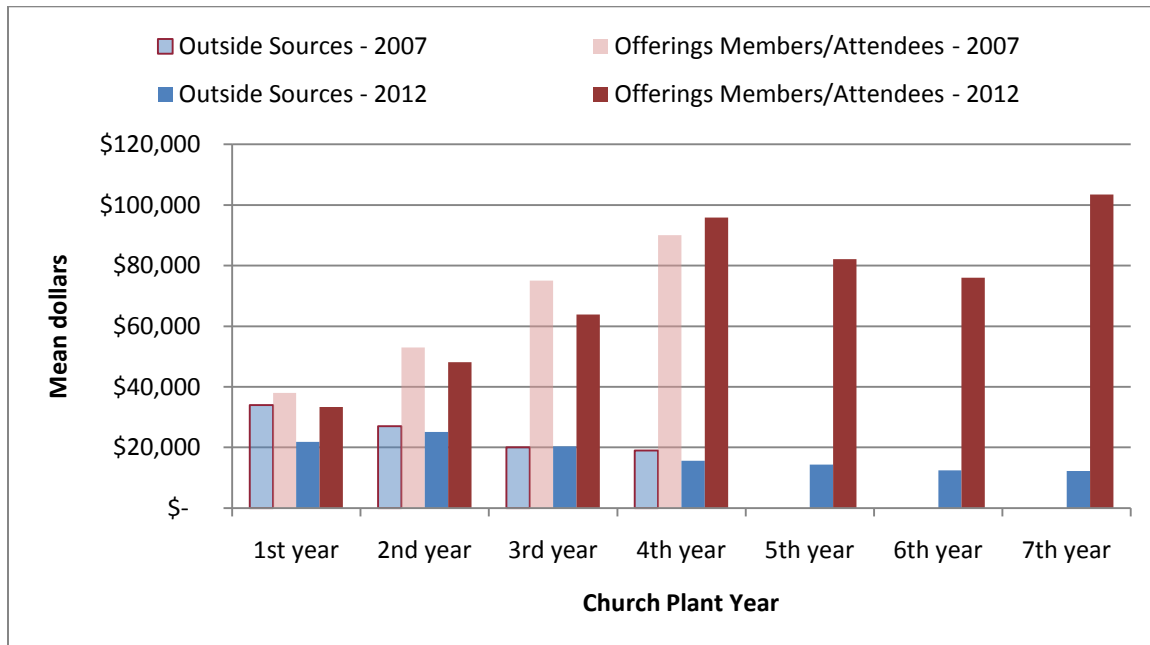
FUNDING

The primary funding sources for church plants were funds provided by core members (84%), funding from the affiliated denomination (62%), funding from the church planter or church planting team (49%) and the personal financial support network of the church planter (44%). The following table shows the percentage of church plants receiving funding from the listed sources.

Table 24 – For each of the following possible sources of the church plant’s funding (including the church planter or church plant team’s salary), please indicate if this was a source of funding for the church plant.

Funding Source	Percent of church plants receiving funding
Church plant core members (n = 275)	84%
Affiliated denomination (n = 273)	62%
Directly from church planter or team (n = 265)	49%
Personal financial support network (n = 261)	44%
One or multiple sponsoring mother churches (n = 266)	36%
Fundraising activities (n = 259)	28%
Fundraising events for potential donors (n = 260)	28%
A single individual or non-profit foundation (n = 255)	10%

Figure 6 – For each year of the church plant’s existence, please indicate the amount of total dollars received from outside sources.



On average, church plants received \$49,800 from all sources in the first year. The average peaks in year four at \$97,726. Average dollars received dipped in years 5 and 6 but rebounded in year 7.

Average dollars received from outside sources averages \$21,818 in the first year. After rising 15% in year 2, it declines each subsequent year. In total average dollars received from outside sources declines 44% over the first 7 years.

Average dollars received from members or attendees averages \$33,301 in the first year. After rising steadily through year 4 it declines in years 5 and 6 before increasing again in year 7. In total average dollars received from members or attendees grows 211% over these 7 years.

Table 25 – Average dollars received from different sources by year of church plant existence

Year	Mean \$ from Outside Sources	Mean \$ from Members/Attendees	Mean Total \$ from Both Sources
1 st year	\$21,818 (n=222)	\$33,301 (n=200)	\$49,800 (n=231)
2 nd year	\$25,113 (n=197)	\$48,113 (n=178)	\$64,959 (n=208)
3 rd year	\$20,360 (n=162)	\$63,857 (n=151)	\$73,112 (n=177)
4 th year	\$15,637 (n=121)	\$95,835 (n=122)	\$97,726 (n=139)
5 th year	\$14,351 (n=101)	\$82,125 (n=108)	\$83,894 (n=123)
6 th year	\$12,435 (n= 86)	\$75,990 (n= 87)	\$75,299 (n=102)
7 th year	\$12,179 (n= 80)	\$103,439 (n= 84)	\$97,609 (n= 99)

Note: A number of respondents only answered one source of dollars received. The number of churches in the mean total column will then be higher because it includes all church plants that reported a number for either source. Therefore the Total column will not equal the sum of the other columns and in fact will be less than adding those averages.

Further examination of the percent of African-American church plants receiving different portions of their funding from outside sources, shows the number receiving no outside funding doubling in the first four years. During that same time period, the percentage receiving a majority of funding from outside sources dropping from 40% to 15%.

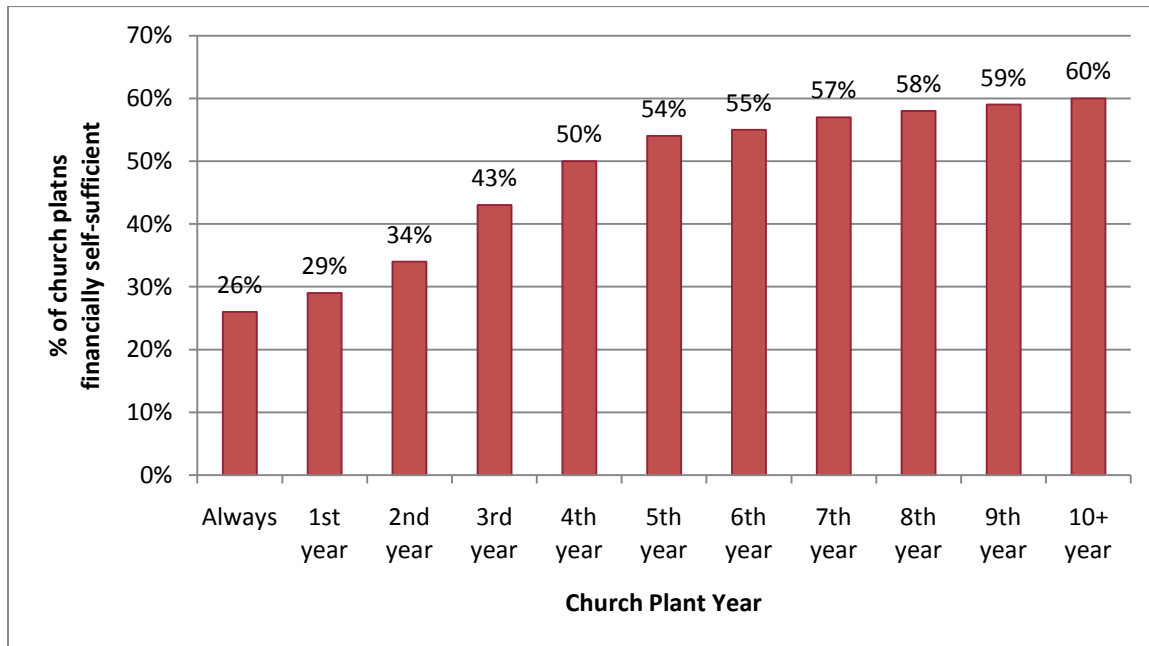
Table 26 - Percent of Funding Coming from Outside Sources

	Year 1 (n=216)	Year 2 (n=191)	Year 3 (n=165)	Year 4 (n=126)
0%	26%	27%	31%	47%
1% to <25%	23%	28%	30%	29%
25% to <50%	11%	10%	12%	9%
50% to <75%	16%	18%	15%	9%
75% to 100%	24%	17%	13%	6%

2007 - Around 30% of all church plants were self-sufficient by their first year and 54% achieved self-sufficiency by year three.

2012 – Among African-American church plants 26% have always been financially self-sufficient. By the fourth year, half of the church plants are financially self-sufficient and 60% achieved financial self-sufficiency by the tenth year. There are also a third of church plants that are not self-sufficient.

Figure 7 – During which year (if at all) did the church become financially self-sufficient – meaning no financial support was being received from outside sources. (n = 275)



CHURCH PLANT SUPPORT

2007 - Denominational helps were used extensively by all church planters. Approximately 49% of church plants accessed demographic information about their communities from a denominational office. Almost 74% had a church planting mentor or supervisor provided by a denomination. About 60% of church planters were involved in a church planter peer network. Church planter training was provided by denominations for 79% of church planters surveyed.

2012 - Besides financial support, church planters were asked about whether they received or had available a variety of other resources. The resources most often cited as being received by church planters are church planter mentoring, coaching, supervision (60%) and training for church planter and/or team (60%). The following table shows whether different resources were made available by a denomination or network and whether it was received.

Table 27 – For each of the following other forms of support please indicate whether the resource was made available and/or received from a denomination or network.

Resource	Percent of church plants with resource available and received	Percent of church plants with resource available but not received	Percent of church plants with resource not offered
Demographics and/or research expertise (n=273)	46%	9%	38%
Church planter mentoring, coaching, supervision (n=279)	60%	10%	24%
Church planter peer network (n=268)	41%	13%	37%
Training for church planter and/or team (n=273)	60%	8%	26%
Church planter assessment program (n=271)	54%	11%	28%
Accounting or bookkeeping (n=272)	24%	18%	48%
Legal work on counsel (n=271)	21%	18%	50%

SPONSORING OR MOTHER CHURCH

About half of the African-American church plants (48%) have a sponsoring or mother church (n=135). The 2007 survey of all church plants showed 61% had a sponsoring church.

2007 –Among all church plants in the 2007 study that had a sponsoring church, approximately 80% of these sponsoring churches provided funding to the church plants. Thirty-seven percent of church plants were loaned lay people from their sponsoring church. About 28% of sponsoring churches sent their pastor to preach at the church plant at least once. Nearly 39% of sponsoring churches permitted the church plant to meet in the sponsoring church building.

2012 – Among African-American church plants with sponsors, 79% of the sponsoring churches provided active prayer support while 53% provided mentoring to the church planter or church planting team. The following table shows the percentage of churches receiving the different types of assistance from the sponsoring or mother church.

Table 28 – For each of the following, please indicate if it was a type of assistance provided by the sponsoring or mother church or churches during the first 5 years of existence.

Type of Assistance	Percent of church plants receiving assistance
Active prayer support (n = 133)	79%
Mentored the church planter or church planting team (n = 133)	53%
Permitted the church plant to meet in the sponsoring church building (n = 130)	32%
The sponsoring church pastor preached occasionally at the church plant (n = 130)	25%
Loaned lay people for specific time period as workers (n = 130)	25%
Rented a facility for the church plant to meet (n = 130)	15%
Bought property and/or a facility for the church plant to meet (n = 131)	11%

CHURCH PLANTING TEAM

2007 - Approximately 24% of all church plants began with a staff team of more than one person. Of those church plants that did start with a staff team, the average number of team members is 4 persons.

2012 – Among African-American church plants, only 6% (16 total churches) of the church planters arrived with a paid, staffed team. The median number of staff members on the team is 3.

CHURCH PLANTER EDUCATION

2007 - The great majority of all church planters (61%) are a “college graduate” or higher.

2012 - About two-thirds (66%) of the church planters in African-American churches have at least a Bachelor’s degree.

Table 29 – What was the highest level of formal education completed by the lead church planter? Do not include formal theological education. (n = 280)

Highest Education Level	Percent of lead church planters
High school graduate	7%
Some college	17%
Associates degree	5%
Bachelor’s degree	33%
Some graduate studies	6%
Master’s degree	21%
Doctoral degree	6%
Not sure	4%

2007 – Most church planters in America have a seminary Master’s degree (56%).

2012 - For theological education 45% of church planters in African-American churches have at least a Master’s degree, and 11% have completed a theological doctorate degree.

Table 30 – What was the highest level of theological education completed by the lead church planter? (n = 280)

Highest Theological Education Level	Percent of lead church planters
Certificate	13%
Associates degree	6%
Bachelor’s degree	16%
Master’s degree	34%
Doctor of ministry	6%
Doctor of theology	4%
Doctor of education	1%
No formal theological education	13%
Not sure	6%

CHURCH PLANTER TRAINING

Only 16% (n = 285) received specific training on the dynamics of the African-American context prior to planting the church. But, 66% (n = 238) believe the lead church planter would have benefited from this training and 69% (n = 239) believe they would benefit from that specific training today.

2007 - Of those stating they receive church planting training, nearly 52% of church planters participated in Basic Training or a similar boot camp while about 9% had been involved in a church planting internship prior to planting their church.

2012 - The majority (55%) of church planters (n = 281) in African-American churches received specific training for church planting prior to planting the church. The most common type of training received by the planters is conferences on church planting (51%).

Table 31 – Which of the following types of church planting training was received by the lead church planter? (n = 166)

Training	Percent of lead church planters receiving training
Conferences on church planting	51%
Week long Boot Camp or Basic Training provided by the denomination and/or sponsoring church	42%
Seminary	37%
Ongoing training course or academy provided by the denomination and/or sponsoring church	30%
Bible College	28%
Training courses provided by a non-denominational or para-church organization	15%
Several month internship provided by the denomination and/or sponsoring church	13%
Month long training course provided by the denomination and/or sponsoring church	8%

CHURCH PLANTER WORK

2007 - The great majority of all church planters worked full time (79%) but those who actually received compensation for full time work and other work levels vary. The following table shows the percentage of church planters in the 207 study receiving financial compensation for different levels of work.

Number of Hours Worked	Percent of church planters receiving financial compensation 2007 Survey
Worked 40 hours a week or more	89%
Worked 20 to 39 hours a week	65%
Worked less than 20 hours a week	25%

2012 - In the first two years of African-American church plants' existence, over 60% of the church planters worked 40 hours a week or more with 39% working 60 hours a week or more at the church plant.

Table 32 – What level of involvement did the lead church planter contribute to the church plant during the first two years of the church plant's existence? (n = 283)

Number of Hours Worked	Percent of church planters
Worked 60 hours a week or more	39%
Worked 40 to 59 hours a week	24%
Worked 20 to 39 hours a week	23%
Worked less than 20 hours a week	7%
Not sure	7%

CHURCH PLANTER COMPENSATION

Slightly more than half, 52% (n = 284), of the church planters in African-American churches received some financial compensation for their work as a church planter. Only 38% (n = 148) of the planters stated the financial compensation was adequate to meet the basic needs of the lead church planter and family.

The vast majority, 69% (n = 197) of the church planters had an outside job in addition to their work as church planter during the first two years of the church plant's existence. Of those with another job, 80% of the lead church planters worked 40 hours a week or more at that job.

Table 33 – How many hours per week did the lead church planter work at the job outside of the church? (n = 197)

Number of Hours Worked	Percent of church planters
Worked 40 hours a week or more	80%
Worked 20 to 39 hours a week	15%
Worked less than 20 hours a week	5%

CHURCH PLANTER ATTRIBUTES/ACTIONS

The most common attribute for the lead church planter was a definite calling from the Lord to the geographic location. Also, 80% of the lead church planters had previous ministry experience as a pastor or church staff.

Table 34 – For each of the following attributes, please indicate if it was true for the lead church planter.

Attributes	Percent of church planters
A definite calling from the Lord to the geographic location of the church plant (n = 284)	81%
Previous ministry experience as a pastor or church staff prior to planting the church (n = 283)	80%
A cultural background matched the church plant setting (n = 283)	79%
A definite calling from the Lord to a specific people for the church plant (n = 284)	72%
Previous ministry experience as a bivocational church leader (n = 284)	70%
Geographic roots relatively near the church plant setting (n = 283)	61%
Previous church planting experience as part of a church planting team (n = 282)	28%
Previous church planting experience as a lead church planting pastor (n = 283)	15%

Nearly three-fourths of the lead church planter enlisted prayer partners prior to church plant and were actively involved in a plan of personal spiritual formation throughout the duration of the church plant.

Table 35 – For each of the following actions, please indicate if it was true for the lead church planter.

Actions	Percent of church planters
Enlisted several personal prayer partners prior to the church plant and continued to engage their prayer support during the first few years of the church plant.	74%
Was actively engaged in a plan of personal spiritual formation throughout the duration of the church plant.	73%
Participated in a church planter’s assessment by a denomination, network, or sponsoring church prior to planting the church.	54%
Expectations of the church plant met the reality of the church planting experience	48%
Met at least monthly with a supervisor who provided guidance in the church planting work	43%
Met at least monthly with a church planting mentor who guided the planter both in the church planting work and personal spiritual formation.	40%
Met at least monthly with church planting peers for accountability and support.	38%

MISCELLANEOUS CHURCH PLANTER QUESTIONS

The mean and median age of the church planters is 42 with the youngest planter being 23 and the oldest 71.

Table 36 – What age was the church planter when the church plant began? (n = 275)

Age	Percent of church planters
23-29	8%
30-39	32%
40-49	37%
50-59	19%
60-71	4%

96% of the church planters (n = 280) were married during the first five years of the church plant. Of those that were married, 79% of the spouses were very supportive for the lead church planter.

Table 37 – Please indicate the level of spousal support for the lead church planter for the church plant. (n = 272)

Spousal Support	Percent of church planters spouses
Very supportive	79%
Supportive	13%
Somewhat supportive	3%
Not supportive	2%
Not sure	3%

As a whole, the spouses were involved in the church plant. The most common activity for spouses was to be devoted to a particular church ministry within the church plant.

Table 38 – Which of the following best describes the type of involvement the spouse of the lead church planter had in the church plant? (n = 272)

Type of Involvement	Percent of church planters spouses
Spouse devoted to a particular church ministry within the church plant (i.e. prayer, teaching, women’s ministries, children’s ministry)	40%
Spouse assisted wherever necessary working almost as many hours as the lead church planter	27%
Spouse served as a staff member on the church planting team	24%
Spouse had no active involvement in the church plant	5%
Not sure	5%

Table 39 – What would you say was the average number of hours per week that the lead church planter devoted to personal family activities? (n = 267)

Hours per Week	Percent of church planters
20 hours a week or more	24%
10-19 hours a week	38%
5-10 hours a week	30%
Less than 5 hours a week	7%

For 35% (n = 282) of the church planters, they or their spouse lived over 300 miles from their parents at some point during the first five years of the church plant.

Only 23% (n = 283) of the church planters had health insurance for them or their family with the majority of the premiums paid for by the church plant, sponsoring church, or denomination or network.

Doctrinal Positions for Church Planters

Church planters were asked a series of questions about doctrinal positions. The tables below show the responses to each of these questions.

Figure 8 – Our church considers Scripture to be the authority for our church and our lives. (n = 283)

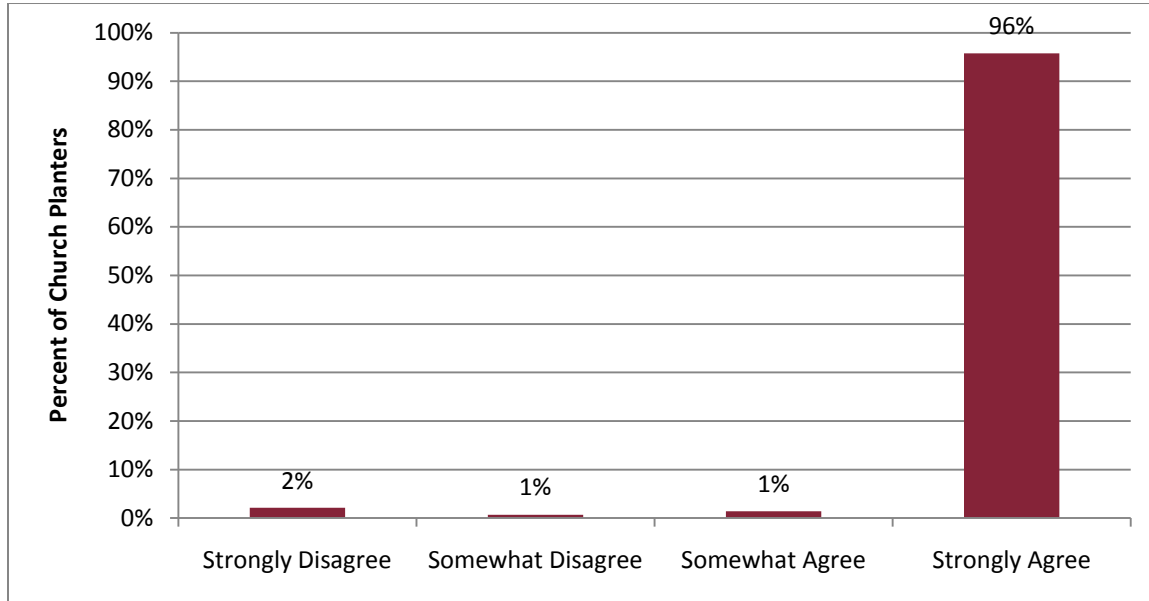


Figure 9 – If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity. (n = 282)

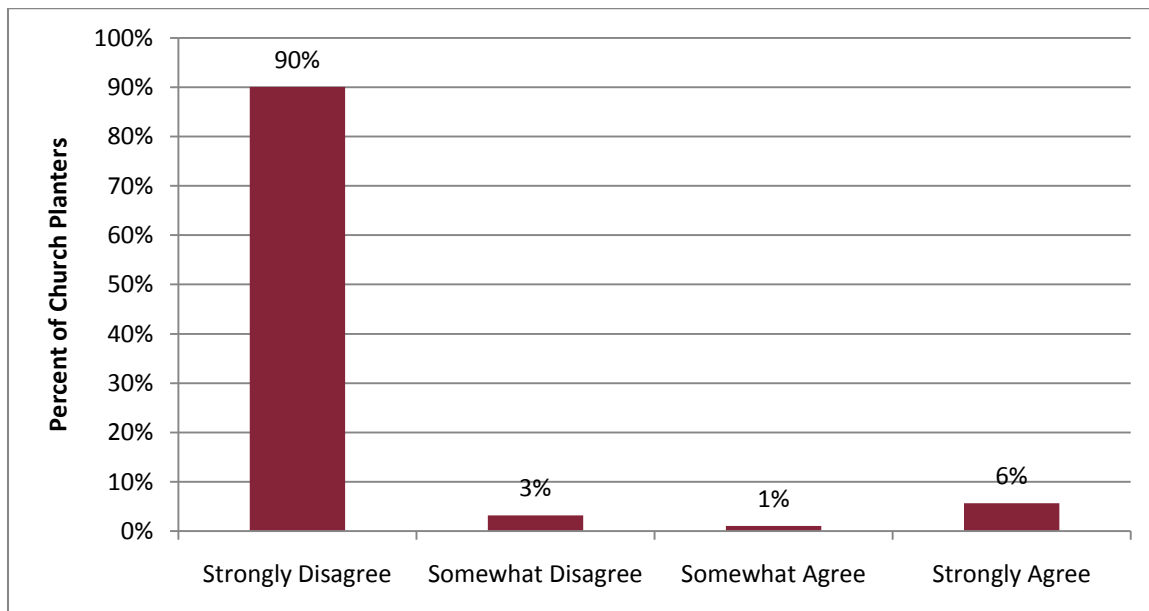


Figure 10 – The God of the Bible is no different from the Gods or spiritual beings depicted by world religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. (n = 282)

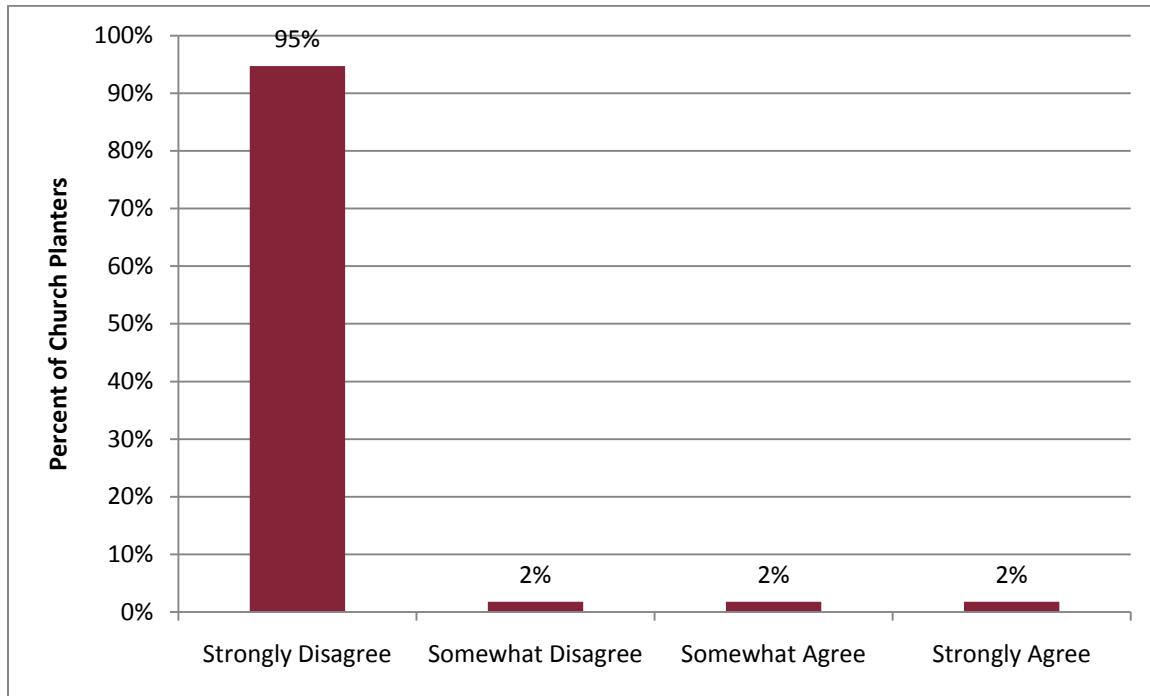


Figure 11 – Salvation is possible through Jesus Christ alone nothing we do can earn salvation. (n = 283)

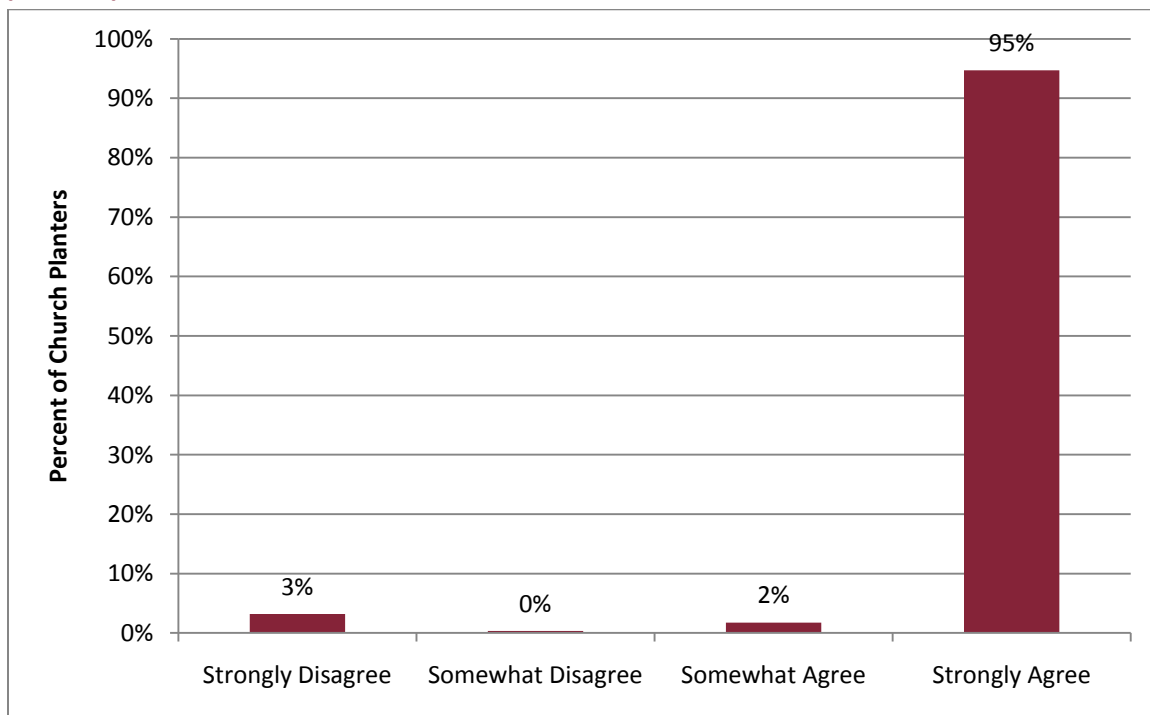


Figure 12 – God promises to provide material blessings to his followers as a sign of His favor. (n = 279)

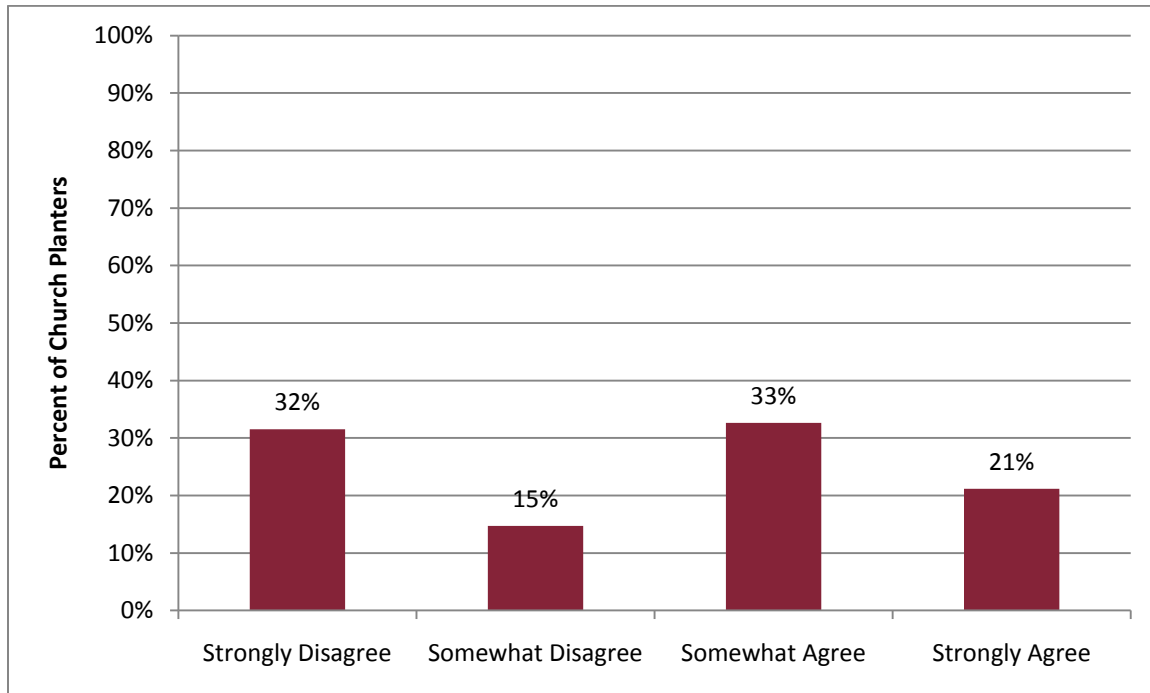
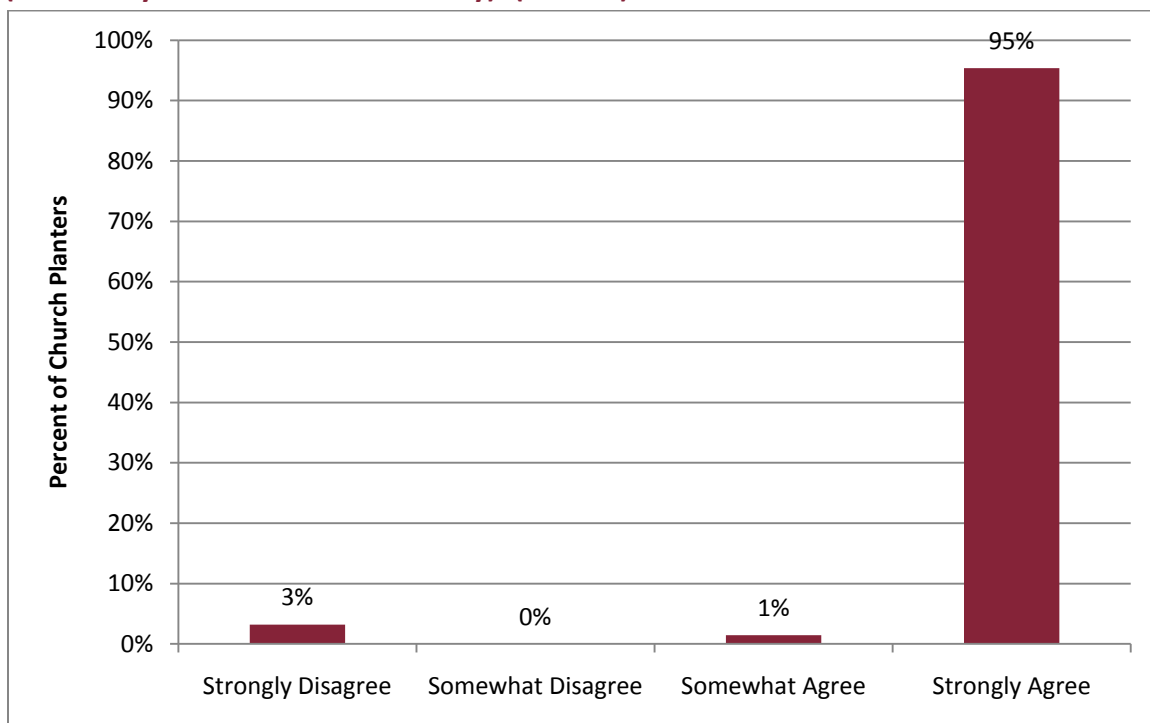


Figure 13 – There is one true God who is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (commonly referred to as the Trinity). (n = 281)



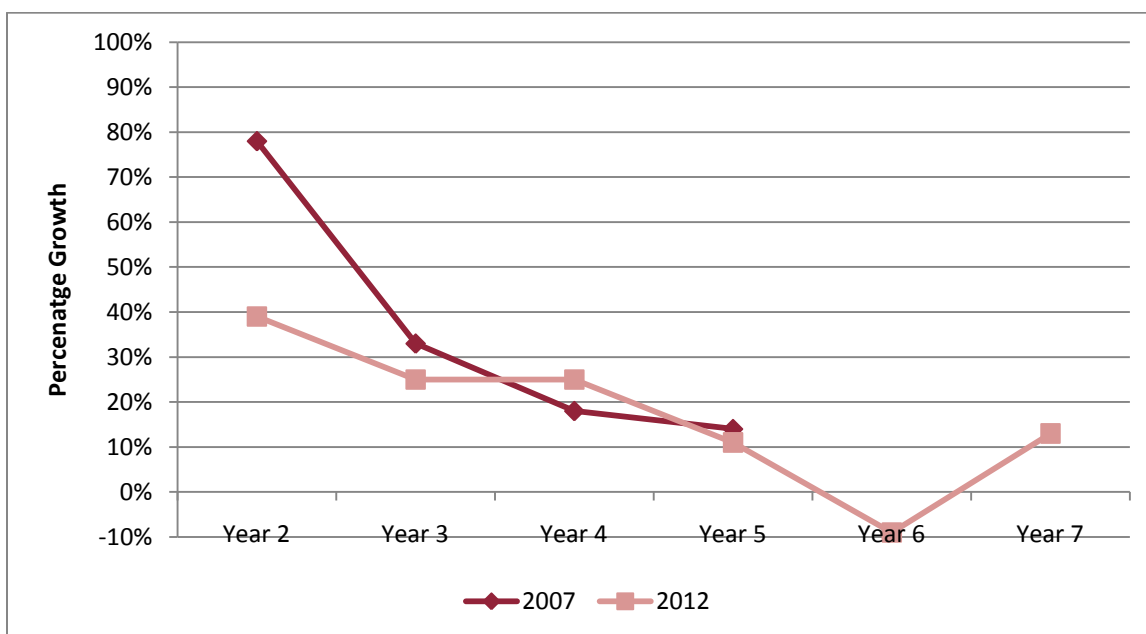
Church Plant Health

Worship attendance and number of new commitments are two measures that demonstrate the health of the church. To decide if the churches are healthy and growing it is necessary to review the data in a different manner. The following two charts provide additional information regarding these church plants.

MEAN ANNUAL GROWTH

Figure 14 shows the year-to-year percentage change in worship attendance. This graph shows that as time goes on, the average church plant is not adding members at the same rate as at the beginning of the church plant's life.

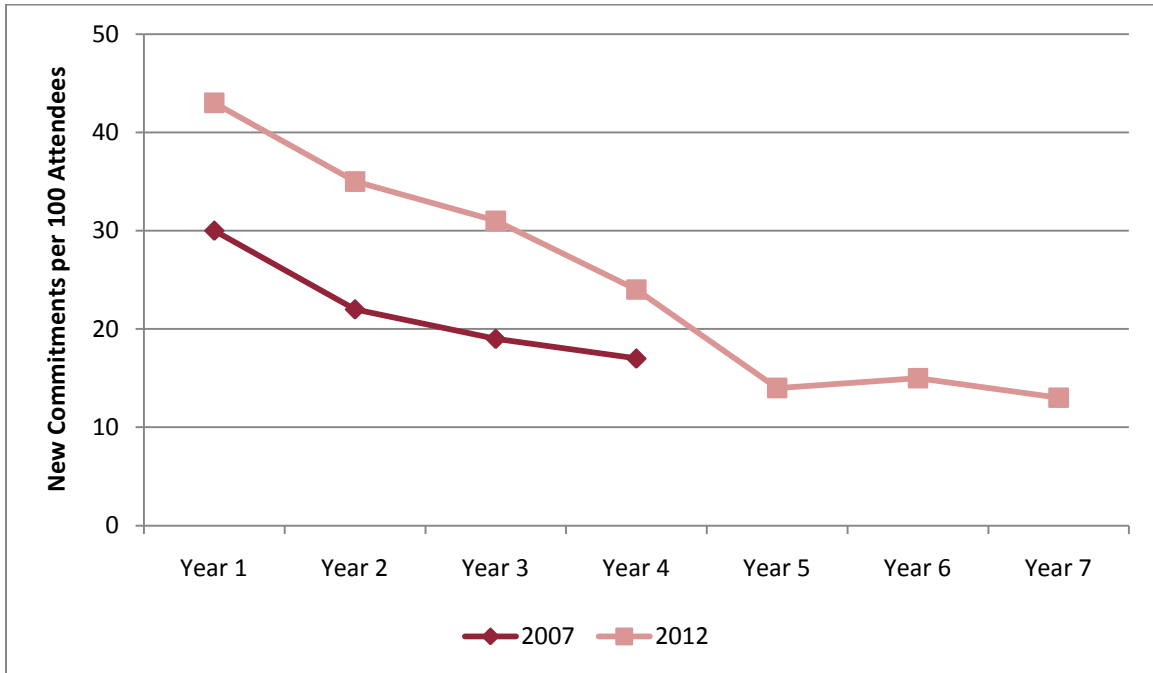
Figure 14 – Mean annual percentage growth in worship attendance.



MEAN ANNUAL NEW COMMITMENT RATE

Figure 15 shows the average number of new commitments per 100 worship attendees annually. This number drops steadily until leveling off in year five of the church plant.

Figure 15 – Mean annual new commitment rate per 100 worship attendees



Observations and Implications

By Dr. Carl Ellis, Jr.

I. The Effectiveness of Ministry Based Models

From 1900 to 1960, the scope of African American cultural involvement was restricted when compared to Anglo Americans in the broader community. For example, careers such as domestics, nurses, physicians, beauticians, etc., were open to African Americans, but careers as executives of major corporations, airline pilots, academicians in non-HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) etc., were off limits. During these years, as the pastor crafted his sermons and encouraged his congregation toward a better day, most of the experiences of the entire Black community were within the theological reach of the traditional church.

As the pace of civil rights gains began to accelerate, African Americans began to move into previously uncharted cultural waters, and they began to encounter issues beyond the traditional cultural scope. However, the traditional African American church did not expand its theological reach in response to this shifting cultural ground. Thus for those African Americans who expanded their cultural involvement, a smaller percentage of their life issues were theologically informed. This not only applied to those who were upwardly mobile, but to those who were laterally mobile – those who remained below the poverty line but were increasingly disconnected from the church's theological influence. This can be illustrated by the experience of Harlem's Canaan Baptist Church – a traditional church with a rich history of pastoral involvement in the Civil Rights Movement.¹ The church continued to be the strongest institution in the African American community, but the quality of its influence went from primarily theological in 1900, then to sociological by the 1960's. Today, its influence is primarily stylistic.

Competing theologies and ideologies vied for attention throughout twentieth century African American church history, but the inability to fully address emerging issues and concerns gave rise to the need for new forms of ministry. Increasing numbers of African Americans today are reachable by churches willing to engage in creative ministry concepts.

The data reveals that between the third and fifth years of the church plant, the number of new commitments to Christ often decline and then level off. This could be due to the fact that as the church plant establishes itself, institutional functions of the church demand more of the church planter's attention, at the expense of the creative ministries that once drew in the curious. It should also be considered that the shifting dynamics of the target community necessitate the formation of new creative ministries. To overcome this, the church plant should maintain a strong emphasis on creative ministries, and flexibility in developing new ones.

Those who wish to reach African Americans must create ministries beyond the parameters and limitations of the traditional African American and non-African American church. If this can be accomplished, these church plants may reach many cultures and generations, even those who are hostile to Christianity. This is especially true given the global appeal of contemporary African American culture.

II. The Advantage of a Paid Church Planter

Before the turn of the 20th Century, the institutional church ordered the life of the African American community; the pastor played a key role central to the life of that community. There was little need for the church to “reach out” because it was the hub of the community – a ‘gathered church’ as ‘opposed to a scattered church.’ In other words, “If you build it they will come.”

Today the traditional church continues to play an important role, but it rarely exists as the hub of the community. However, the concerns of African Americans tend not to be addressed as extensively as those of the dominant culture within the larger culture itself, so where does the African American turn to have these concerns addressed? Multiple opportunities for ministry from emerging churches now exist. Meeting this challenge requires a ‘scattered church approach’ – engaging in ministry models not associated with the role of the traditional church. However, this takes time; merely ‘hanging out a shingle’ is not enough. Today it is necessary to take the ministry to the people. The more time a church planter has for such sustained and focused creative ministry around the felt concerns of the community, the more likely the success of the new church.

Currently, it is not necessary for the church as an institution to be the hub of the community for its presence to be felt. The scattered church approach enables the church planter to become pastor of the whole community.

III. Contemporary Worship Styles

African American culture today has greater diversity than at any time in its history. When cultural involvement was more restricted, the matrix of Black culture was less complex and patterns of racial discrimination made demographic studies unnecessary. For successful African Americans today, most barriers to mainstream American life have substantially diminished. Therefore, cross-cultural contacts (friendships, associations, partnerships, etc.) have become

commonplace. Currently most African Americans clearly identify with their own culture, yet resist being confined by it. Likewise, most successful African American church planters are aware of this phenomenon and a contemporary worship style is best suited to reaching the demographic of the targeted community.

IV. The Significance of a Church Edifice

Identifiable church buildings are a strong part of the African American paradigm. Major exceptions to this were the storefront churches, which sprang up in the urban scene during the time of the great African American migrations. About half of these storefront churches were Holiness or Pentecostal/Holiness, and the rest were predominantly Baptists. In most cases the attendees had once lived near each other in the rural South, yet the alien realities of urban life drove many to seek comfort in familiarity of the local community they had once shared. This was found as they gathered in the storefront church.

As the new generations emerged in the urban context, the need to affirm memories of life in the rural South diminished. Increasingly, the storefront church was seen as irrelevant and outmoded and eventually, all churches lacking a church building were progressively seen as illegitimate. Partly because of this stigma, within 5 years many of churches in this survey had acquired their own identifiable buildings. Generally, it is not uncommon for African American churches to be planted after acquiring a building.

V. The Advantage of a Church Sponsor or “Mother Church”

A sponsoring or mother church is often a crucial aspect of successful church plant for obvious reasons. The fewer burdens a church plant has to carry in the initial stages, the greater is the likelihood that the new church will succeed. However, when the sponsoring church is of one culture and the new church plant is aimed at another culture, the burden of misunderstanding can overcome the advantages of sponsorship. This is especially true if the mother church has a

dominant cultural orientation. Not intentionally dealing with the cross-cultural or dominant/sub-dominant dynamics puts the church planting effort at risk.

Transfer growth has been part of the equation in many dominant cultural church planting strategies. However African Americans who are Generation X and older tend to be much more reluctant to leave their home churches, even if attendance requires a long drive. As previously discussed, in the African American experience the church historically played a much more central role in the community. Unlike those in the dominant culture who had a variety of available institutions in which to be involved, African Americans mainly had the church. As the hub of the community, the church was tasked to play a multifaceted institutional role. Therefore, among older African Americans there is a deeper sense of attachment and loyalty to the 'home church.'

A similar phenomenon can also apply to denominational involvement. For example, Baptist, Methodist, Church of God in Christ, etc., have a much greater historical presence among African Americans than do Presbyterians, Christian Reformed, Evangelical Free, etc. If African Americans transfer to another denomination, they are much more willing to switch to a familiar one than to an unfamiliar one. Because of their much greater presence in the dominant culture, denominations less familiar to African Americans are often unaware that their church planting strategies assume an unspoken and built in demand for churches of their type; such a demand does not necessarily exist in the African American diaspora. Because this assumption for demand is not valid in an African American context, and because of the lack of reliable transfer growth, misunderstandings of the progress of the church plant or even its premature shutdown often result.

The wise sponsoring church would take full advantage of available seminars and leadership training, and seek out a professional consultant on these topics for long-term assistance.

VI. Church Planting Teams

In an African American context, a team leadership approach to church planting would probably be more effective than the ‘lone wolf’ approach. However, economic realities undercut the practicality of this. The existing fundraising infrastructure that has functioned in the dominant cultural context is relatively unknown in the African American context. This issue has also come to light in para-church ministries. For African Americans, it has been much more difficult to ‘raise support’ than for their Anglo counterparts. It would be advantageous if a study could be done on ways to overcome this disadvantage.

VII. Basic Planting “Boot Camp”

African American church planters should be encouraged to participate in church planting boot camps, as they promote valuable basic principles that apply universally. However, given the distinctive dynamics of today’s African American context, the effectiveness of these boot camps can be multiplied with some specific training geared to African American distinctives.

¹ www.nytimes.com/2013/05/25/nyregion/church-tithing-slips-in-harlem-even-as-neighborhood-improves.html?pagewanted=2&utm_campaign=Buffer&utm_medium=twitter&_r=1&hp&utm_content=buffer1092&utm_source=buffer

Appendix A

Graphs for Variables Associated with Higher Worship Attendance

The following pages contain graphs comparing the worship attendance by year for the variables associated with higher worship attendance. Each graph will compare the average for those who have and have not taken the action described by the variable. Remember that different variables have positive influence on different measurements of worship attendance; therefore each data point in the chart may not always be higher for the church planters in the affirmative.

While all the variables listed in the Church Plant Attendance section are shown to have some association with higher worship attendance, graphs are provided for all variables having at least thirty church planters responding affirmatively to the action described by the variable. The lone exception is for churches starting a daughter church which has twenty-nine church planters answering positively.

Figure A1 – Mean attendance by year and working 60 hours a week or more in first two years

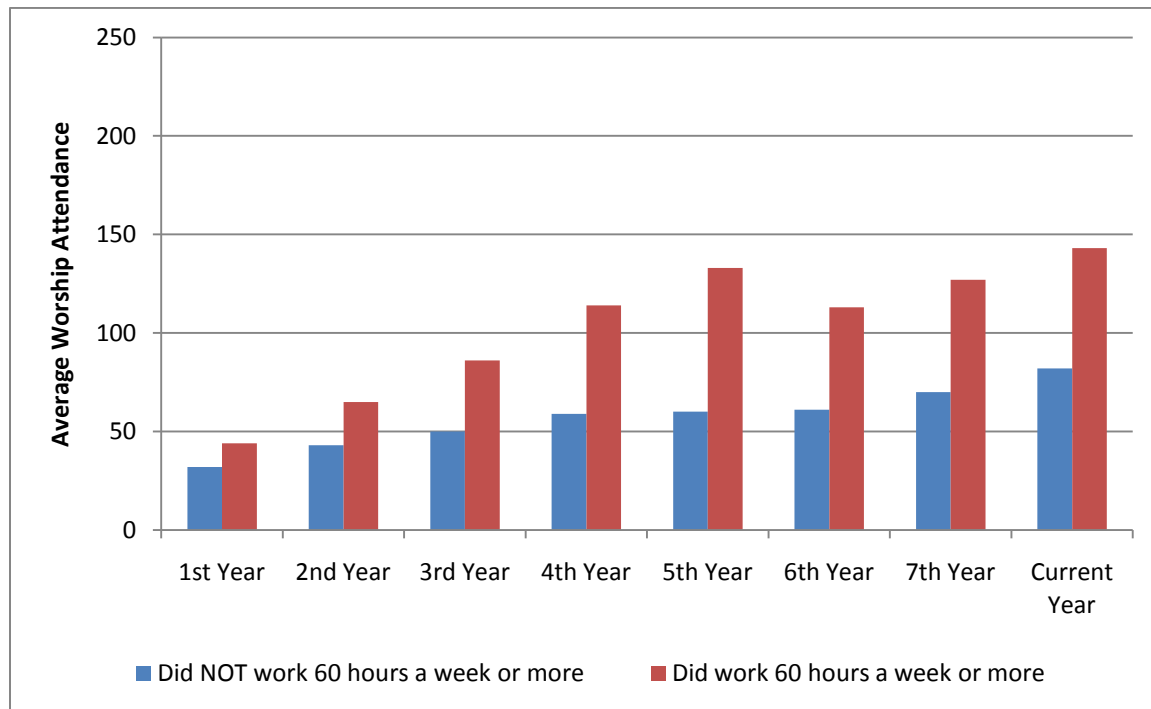


Figure A2 – Mean attendance by year and church planter receiving financial compensation

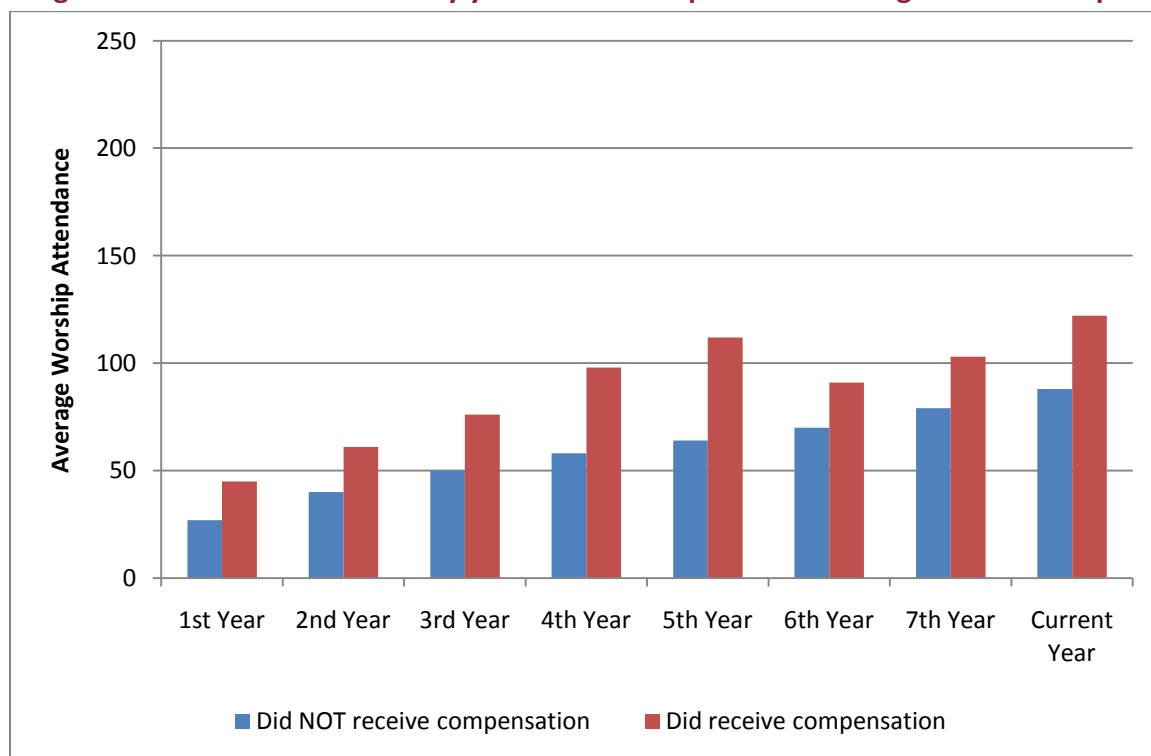


Figure A3 – Mean attendance by year and started a daughter church within 3 years of existence

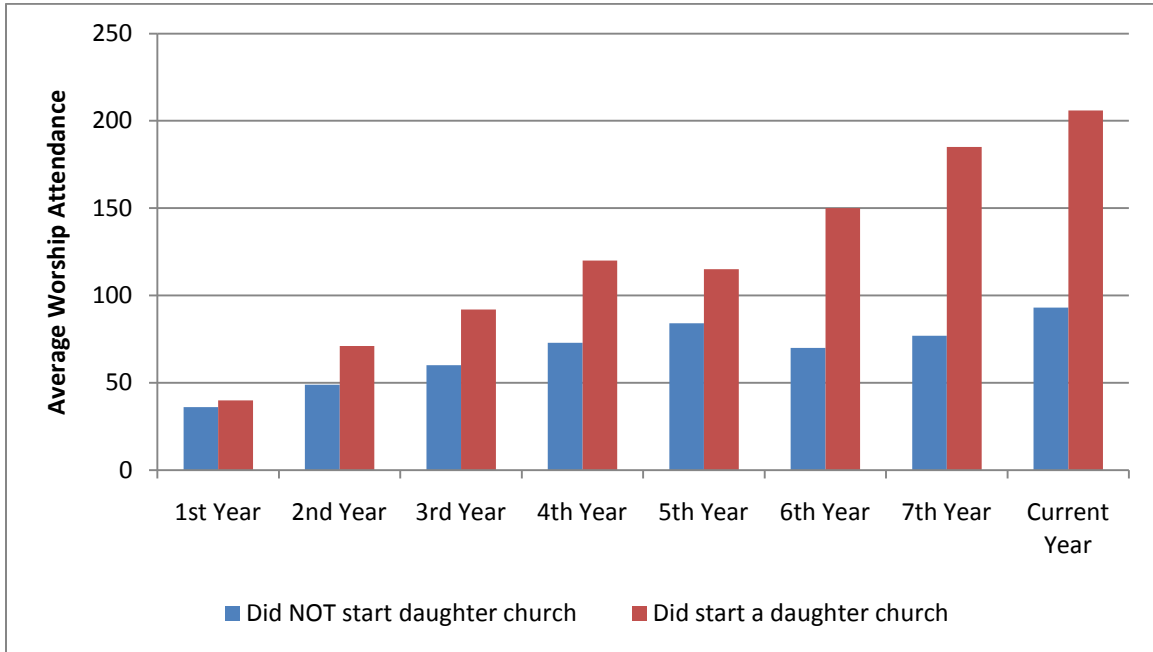


Figure A4 – Mean attendance by year and health insurance

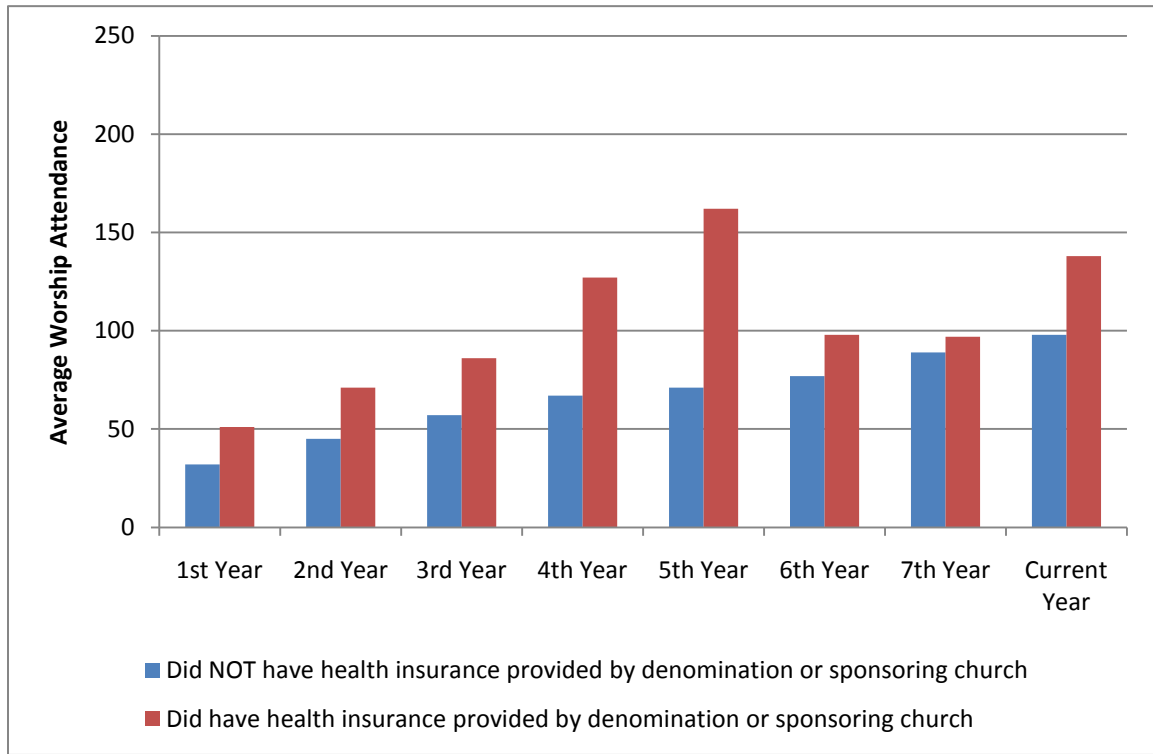


Figure A5 – Mean attendance by year and stewardship development plan

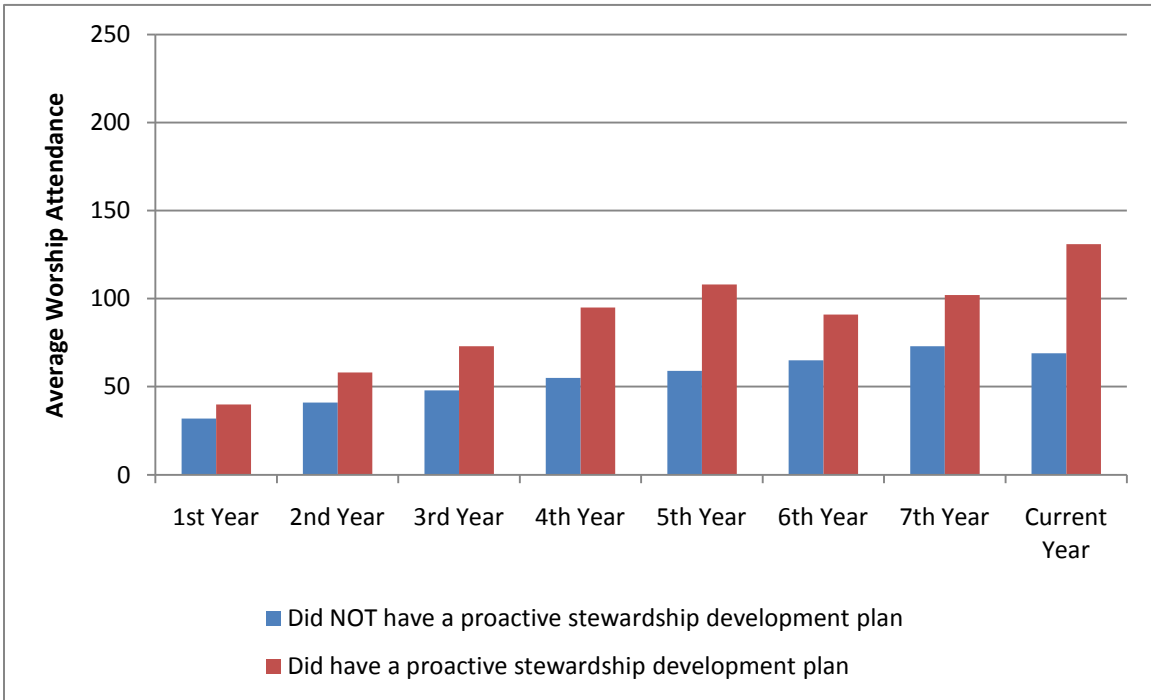


Figure A6 – Mean attendance by year and self-sufficiency

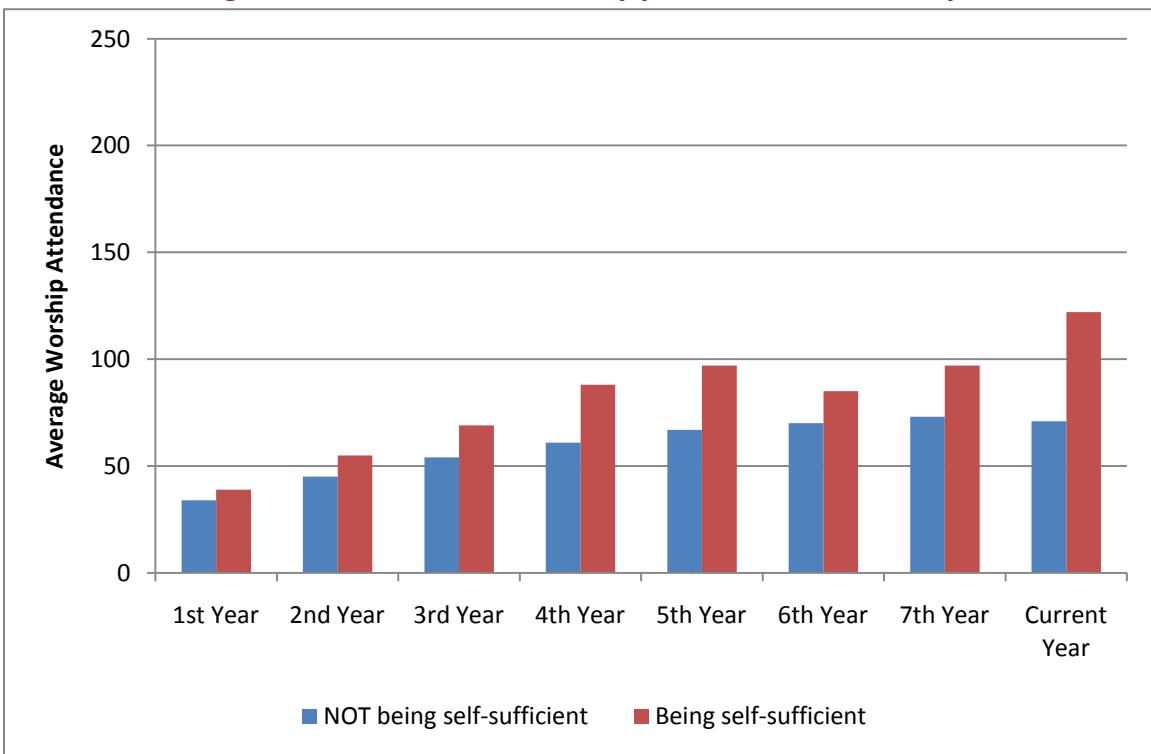


Figure A7 – Mean attendance by year and African-American context training

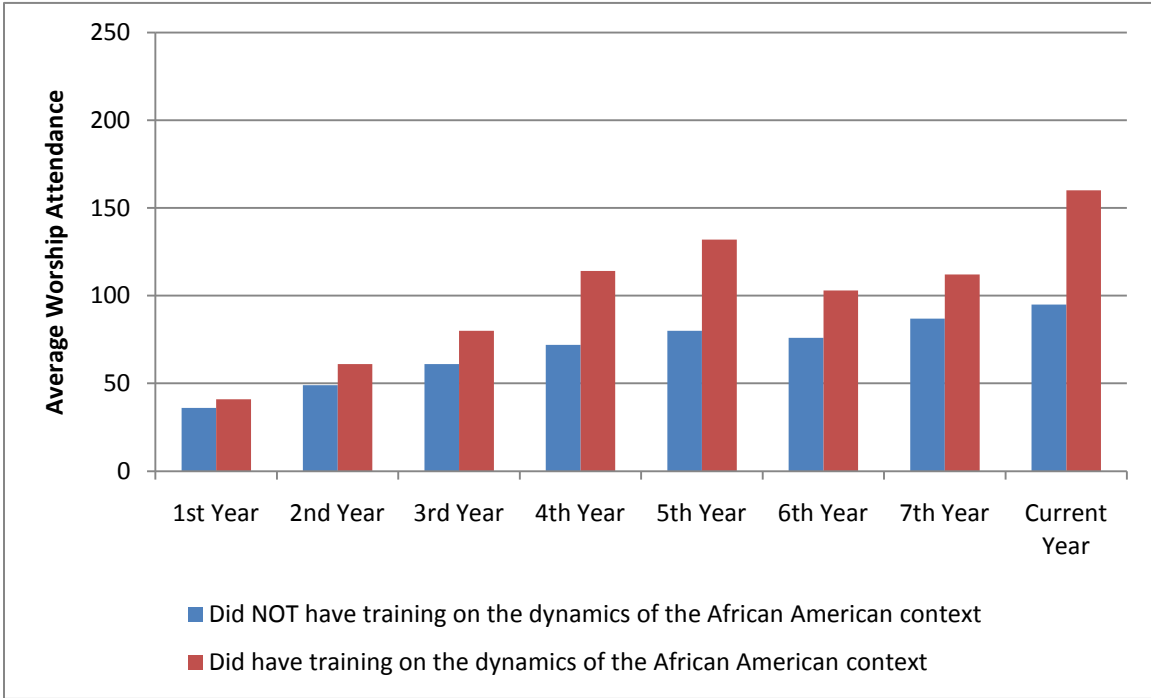


Figure A8 – Mean attendance by year and children’s special events

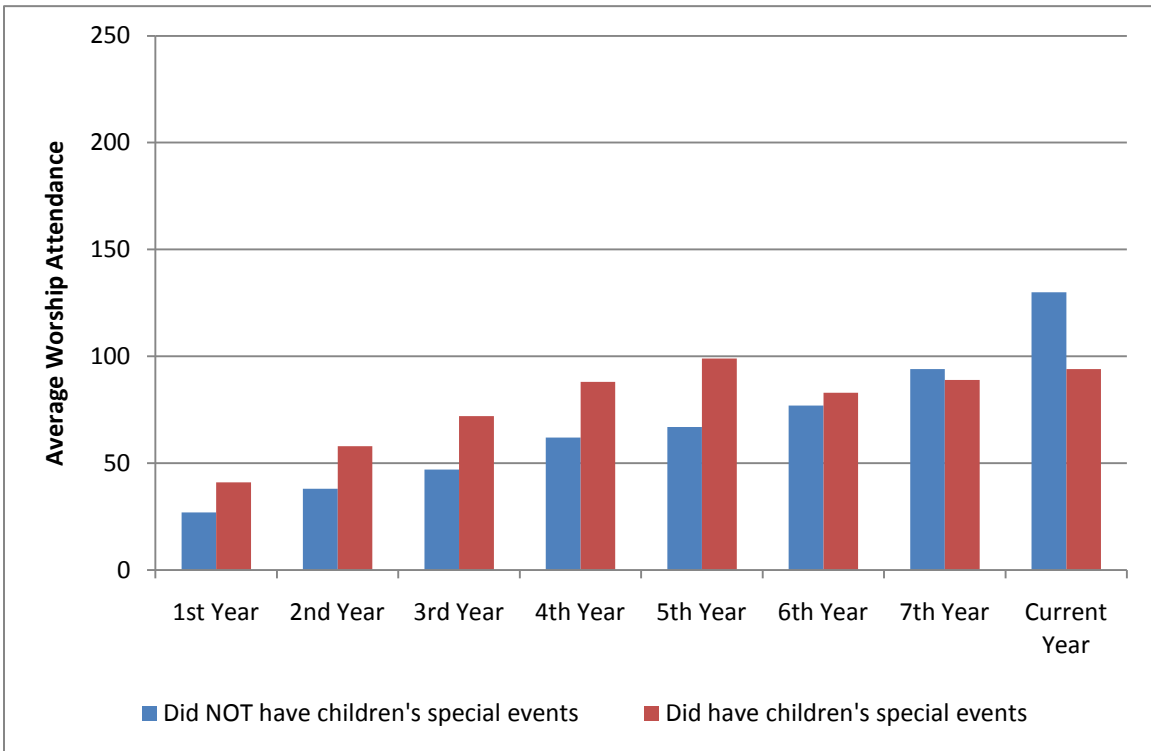


Figure A9 – Mean attendance by year and evangelistic visitation

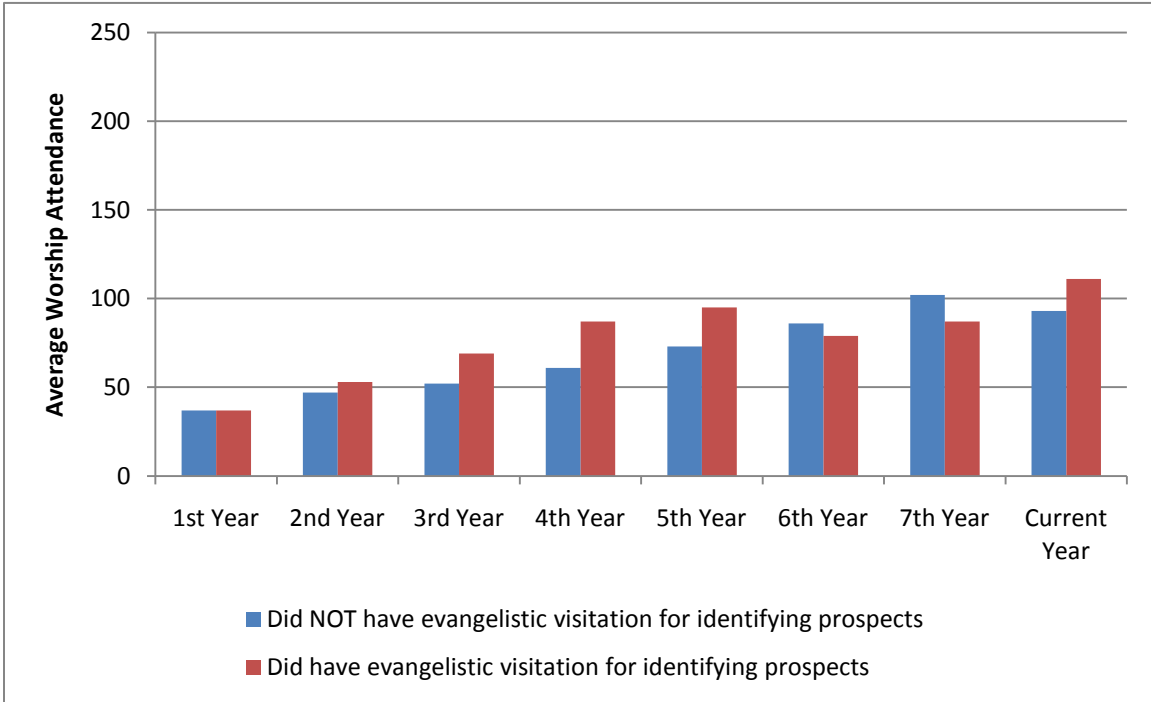


Figure A10 – Mean attendance by year and leadership training

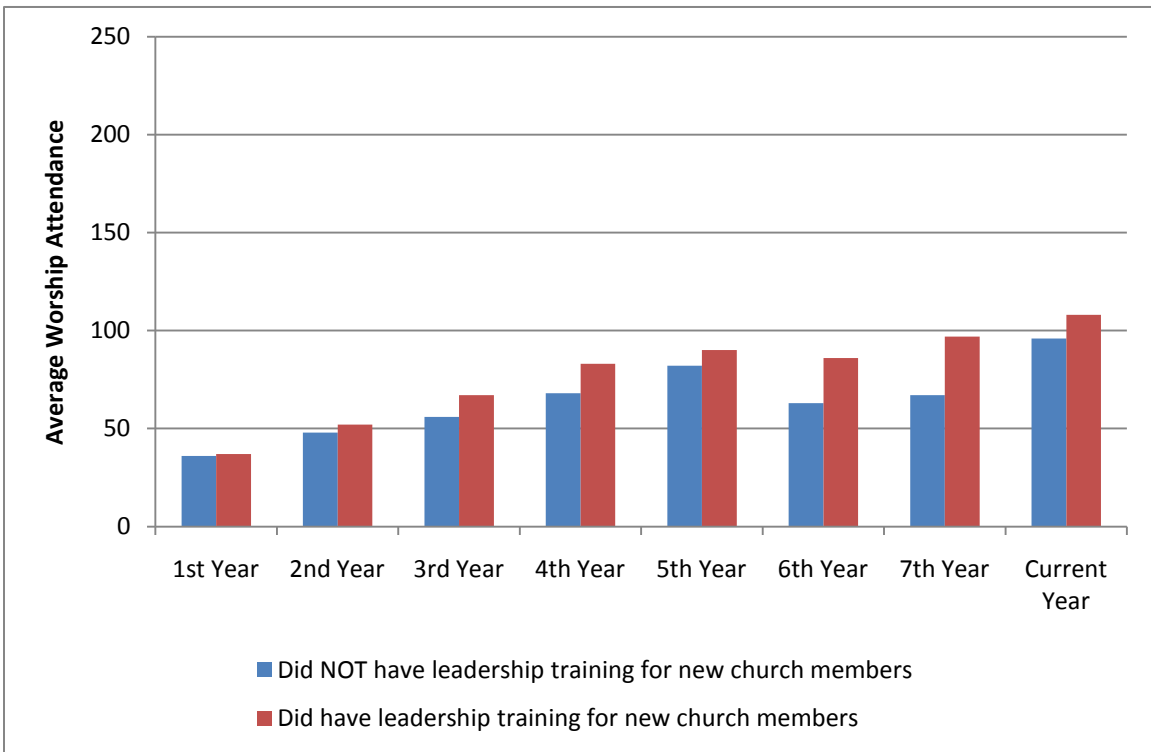


Figure A11 – Mean attendance by year and contemporary worship

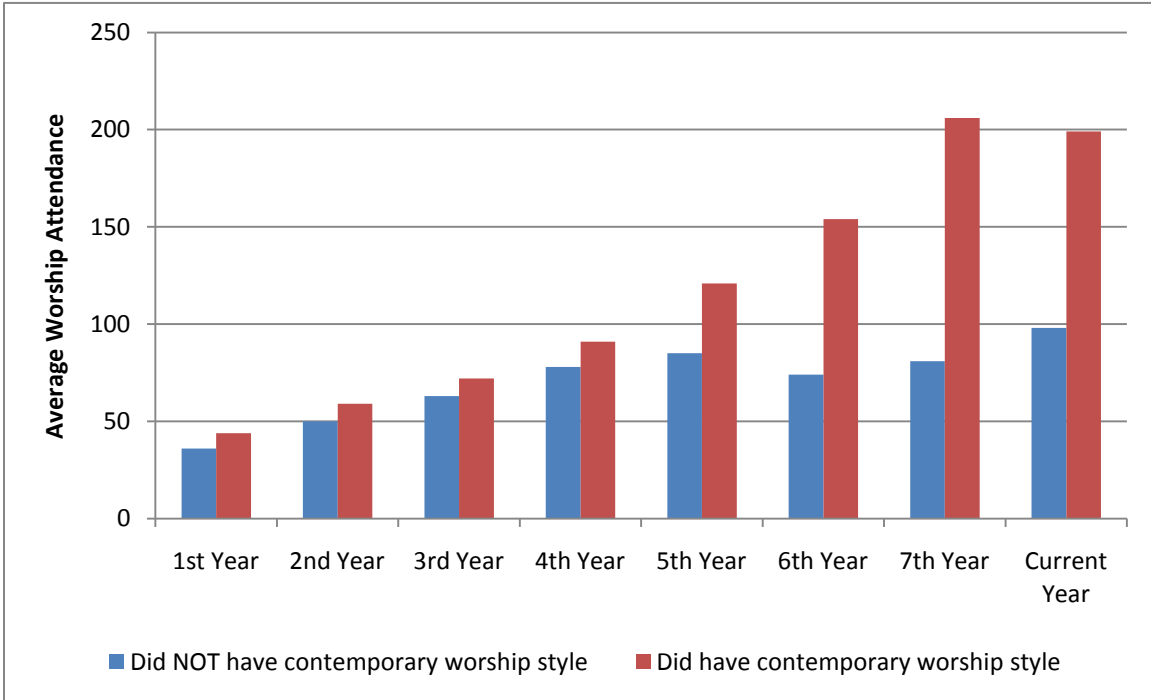


Figure A12 – Mean attendance by year and contemporary gospel worship

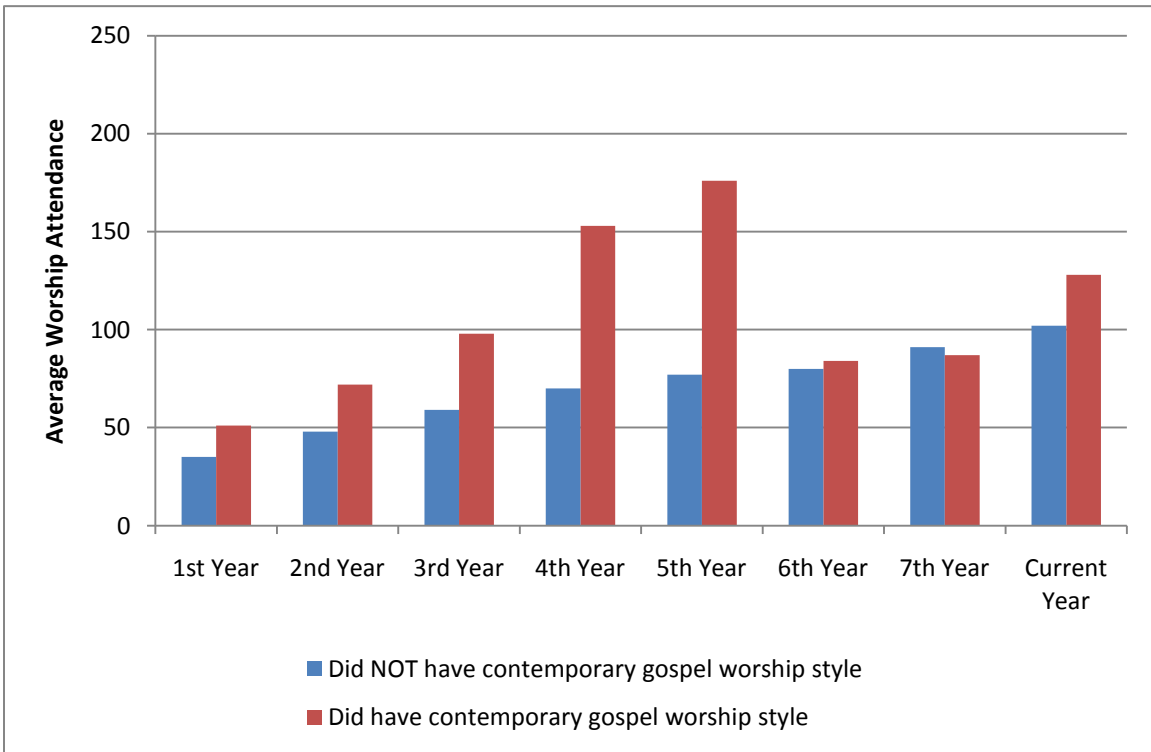


Figure A13 – Mean attendance by year and Purpose-driven model

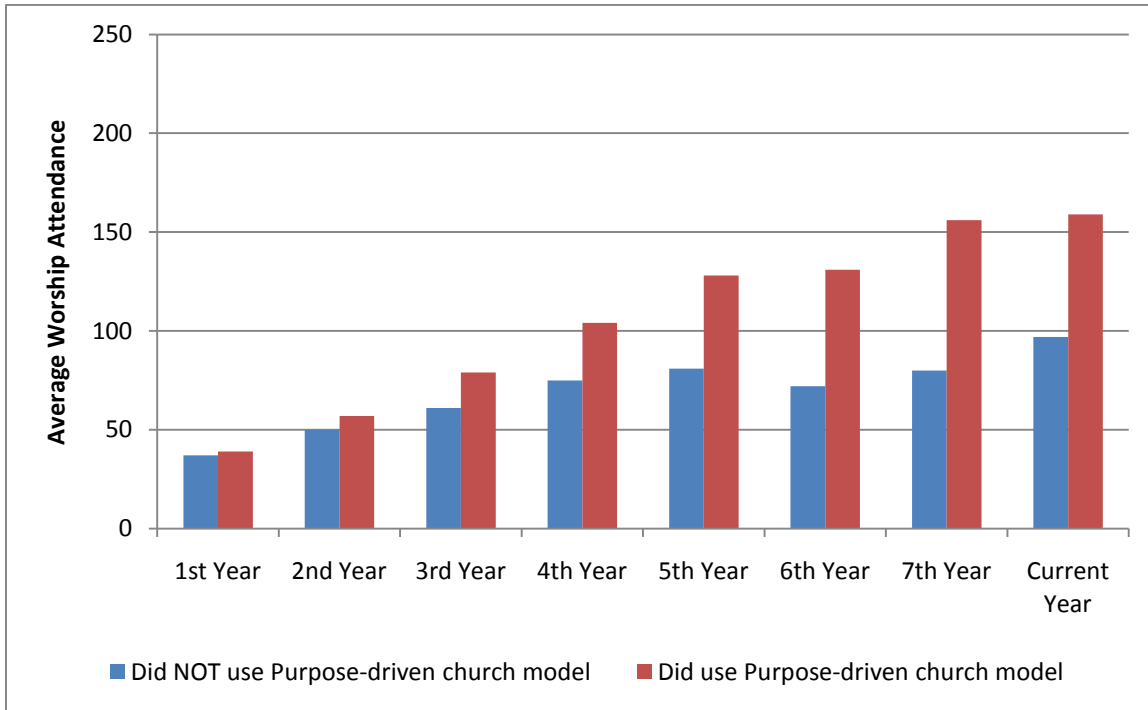


Figure A14 – Mean attendance by year and own church building

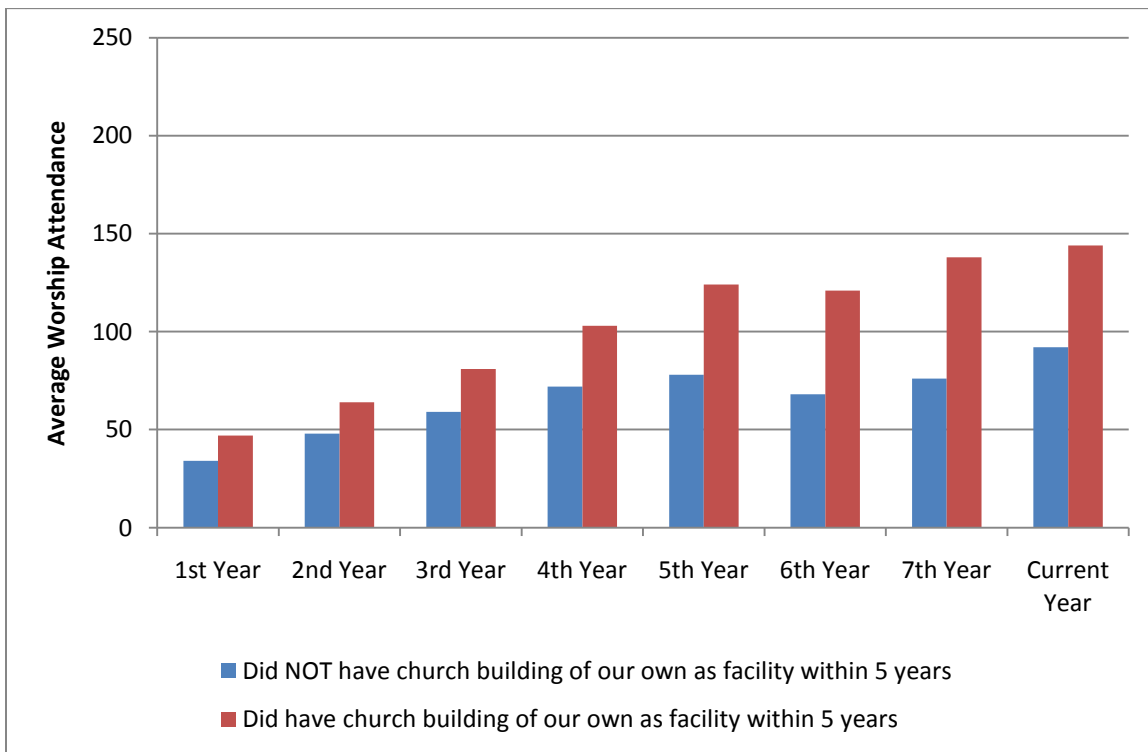


Figure A15 – Mean attendance by year and meeting with area leaders

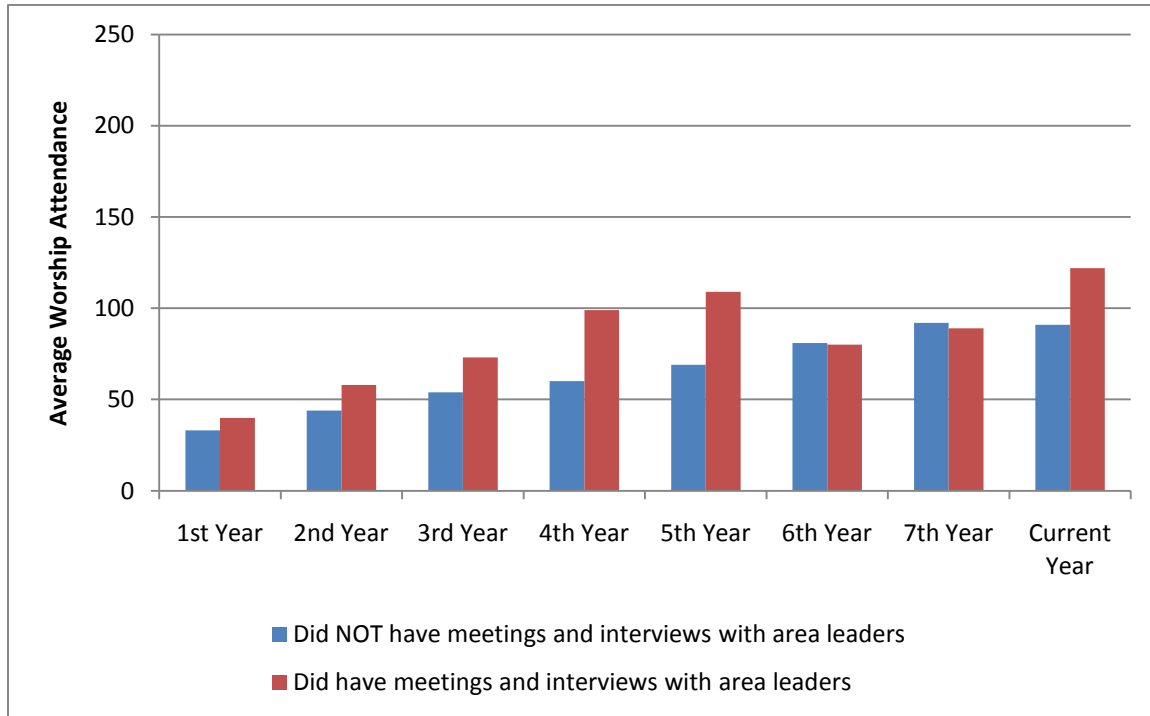


Figure A16 – Mean attendance by year and political process involvement

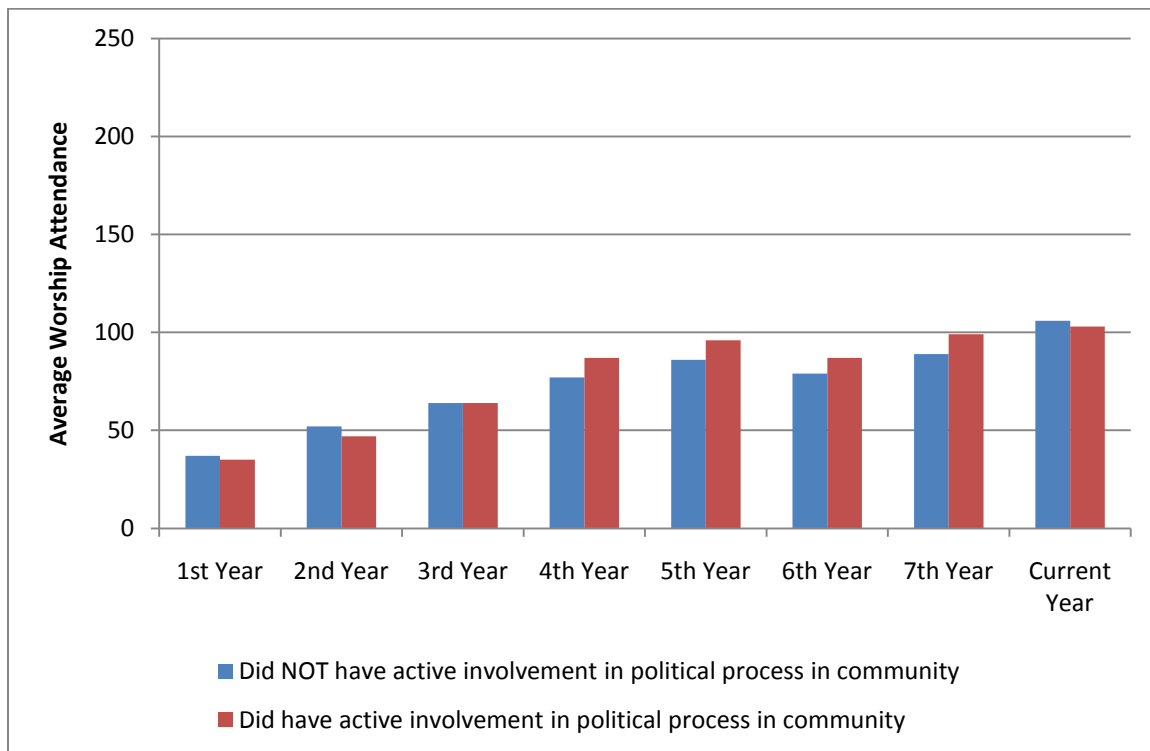


Figure A17 – Mean attendance by year and fundraising events

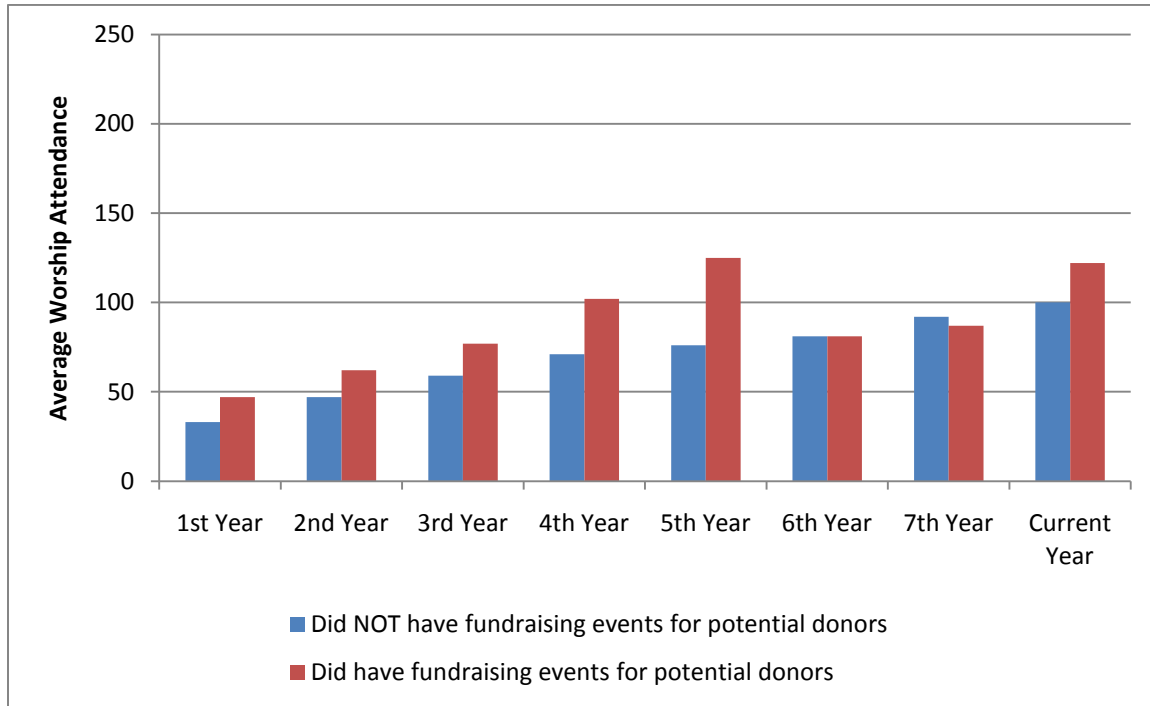


Figure A18 – Mean attendance by year and delegation of leadership roles

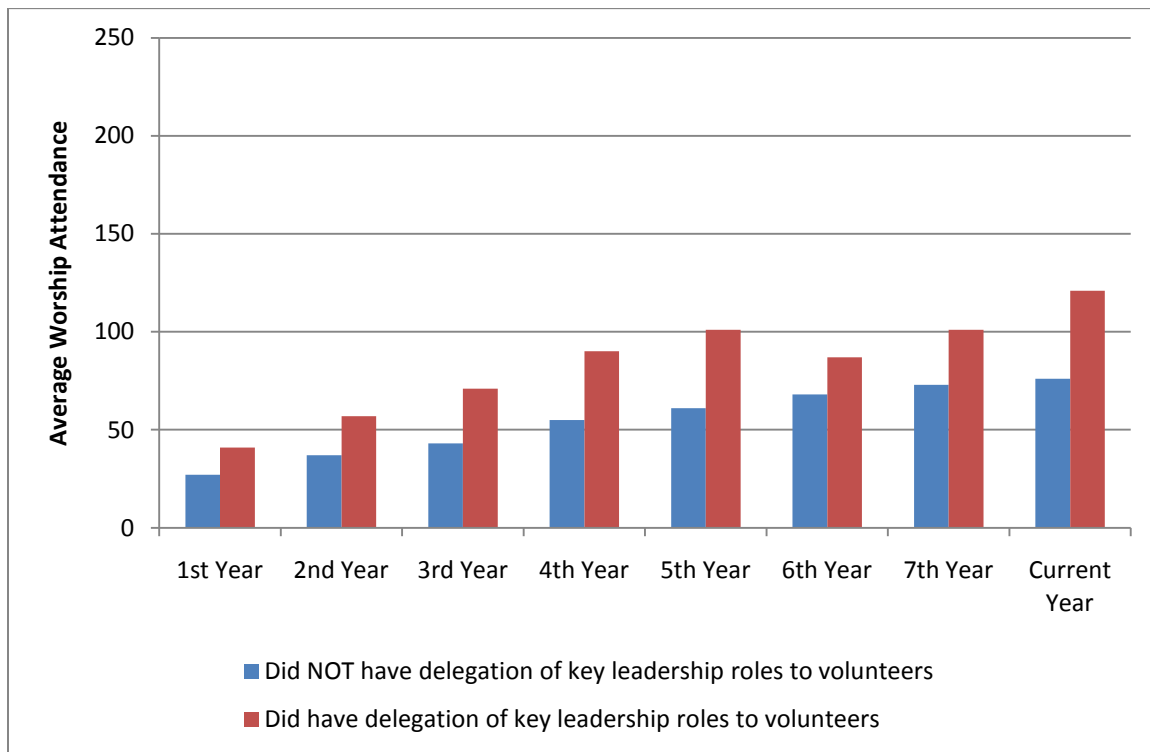


Figure A19 – Mean attendance by year and meeting in sponsor church building

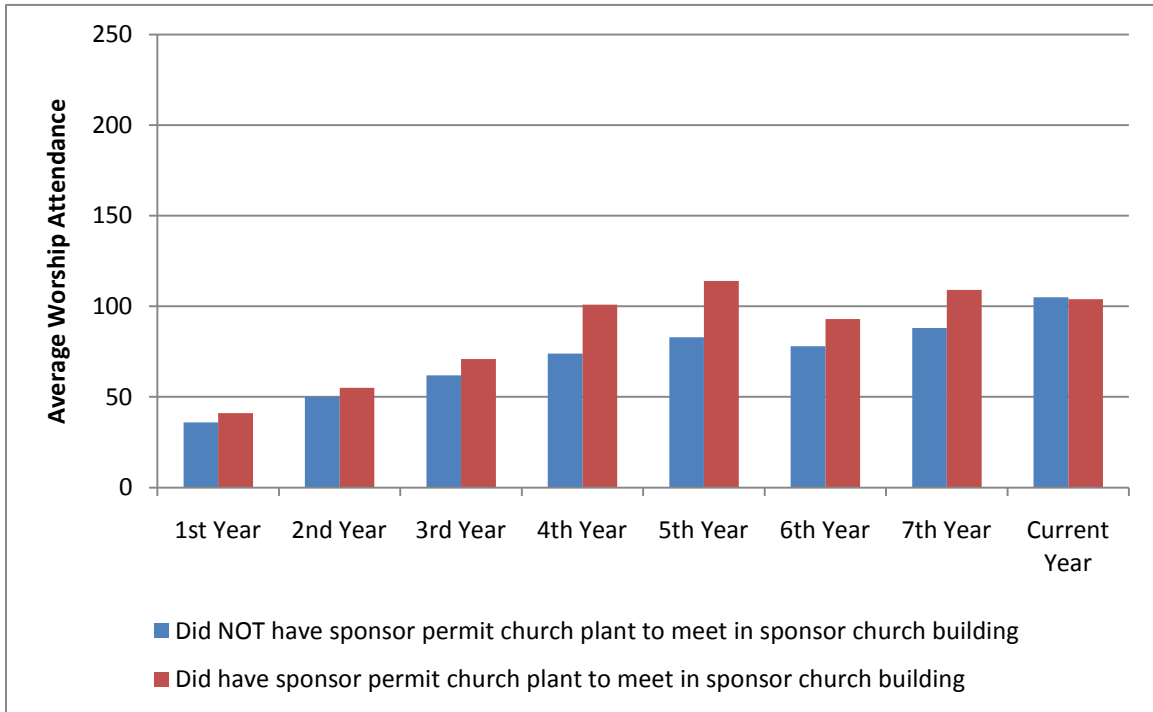


Figure A20 – Mean attendance by year and boot camp

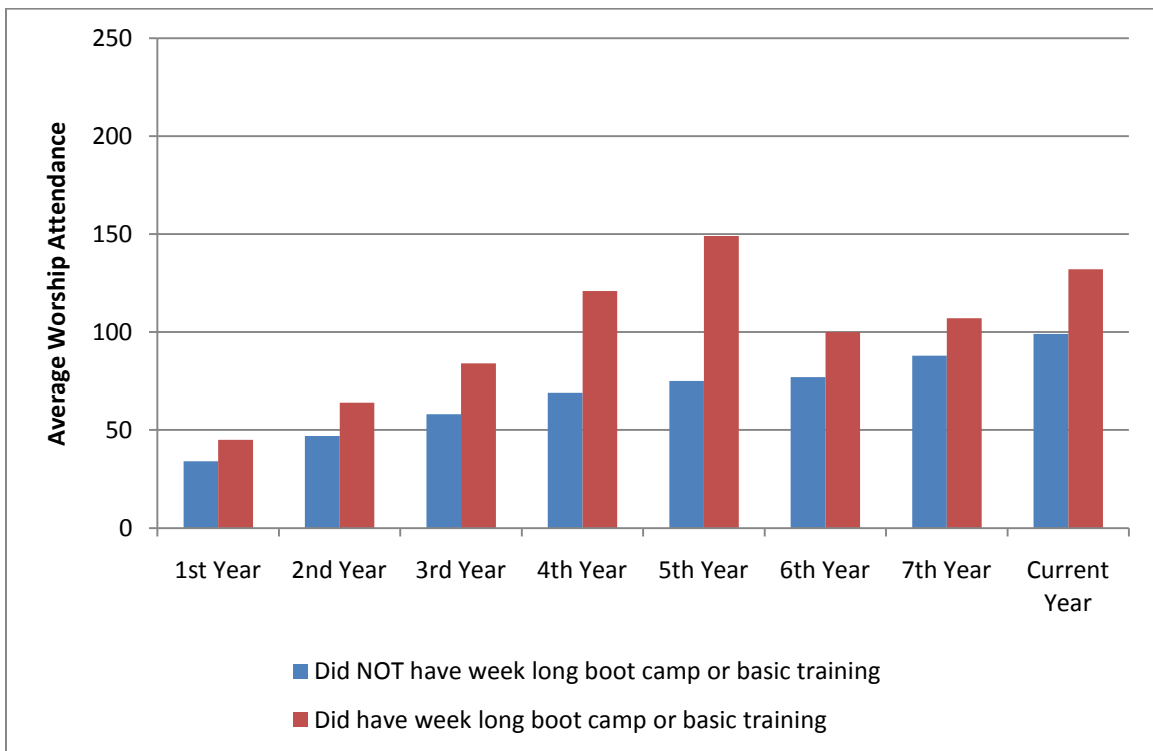


Figure A21 – Mean attendance by year and previous experience

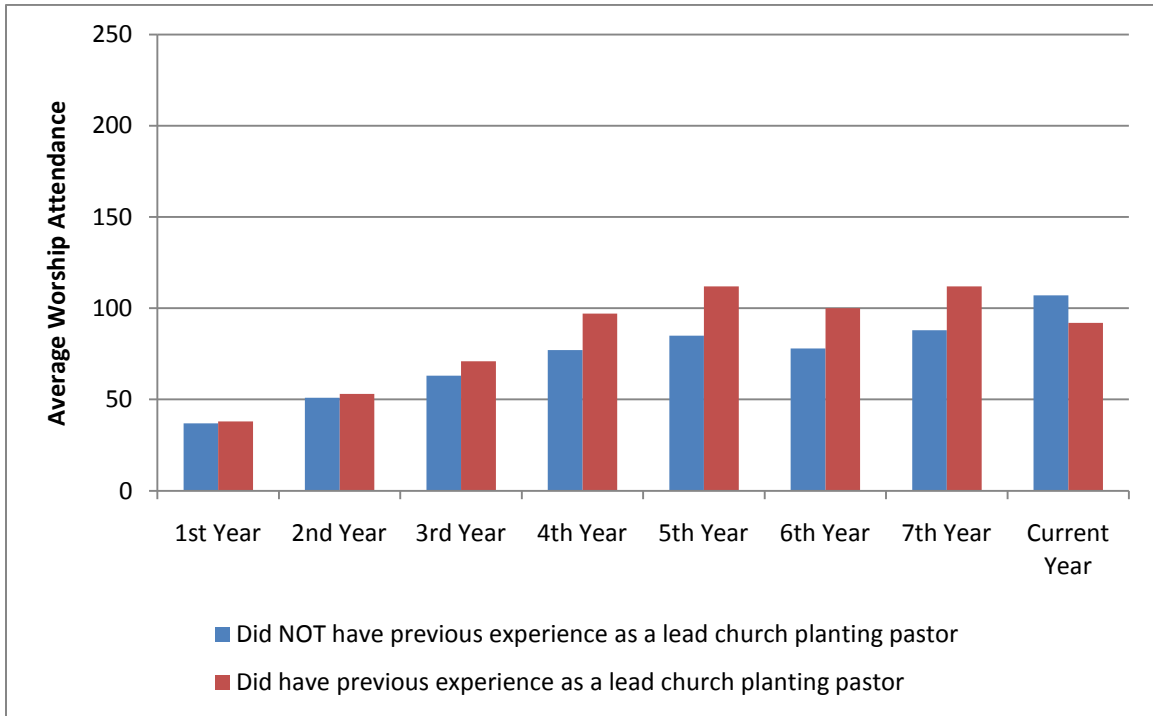


Figure A22 – Mean attendance by year and plan of personal spiritual formation

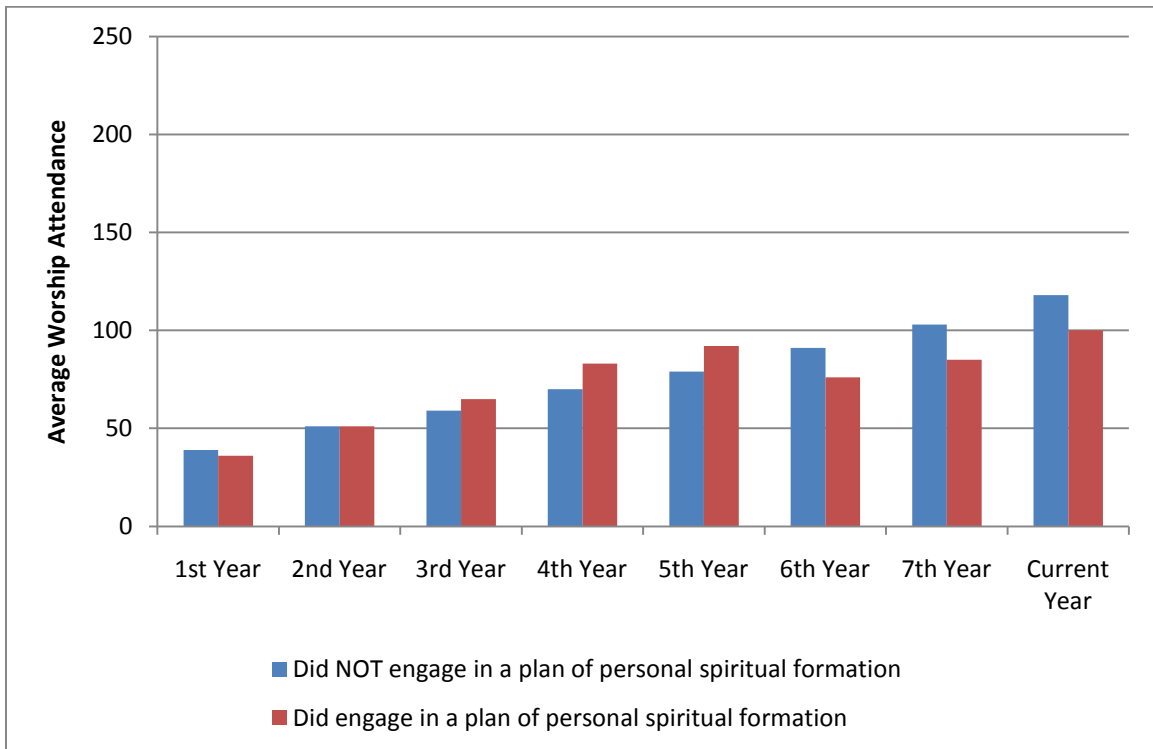
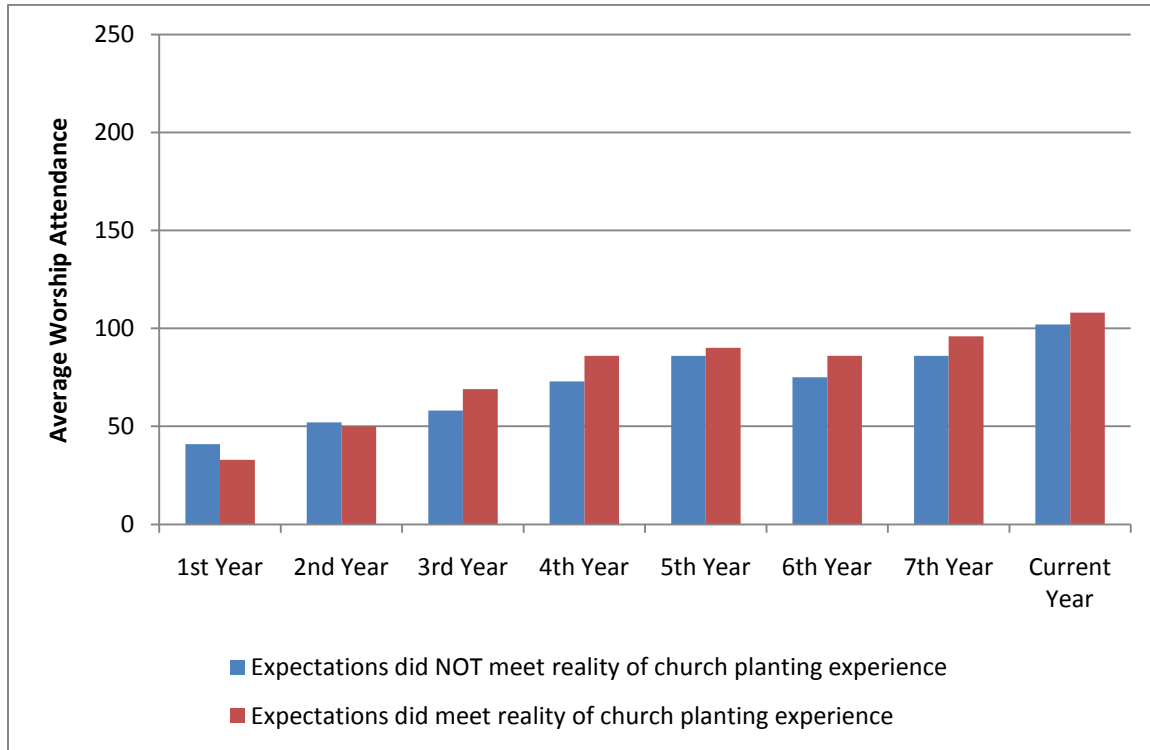


Figure A23 – Mean attendance by year and church planter expectations



Appendix B

Graphs for Variables Associated with Higher New Commitments

The following pages contain graphs comparing new commitments by year for the variables associated with higher new commitments. Each graph will compare the average for those who have and have not taken the action described by the variable. Remember that different variables have positive influence on different measurements of new commitments; therefore each data point in the chart may not always be higher for the church planters in the affirmative.

While all the variables listed in the Church Plant New Commitments section are shown to have some association with more new commitments, graphs are provided for all variables having at least thirty church planters responding affirmatively to the action described by the variable.

Figure B1 – Mean new commitments by year and working 60 hours a week

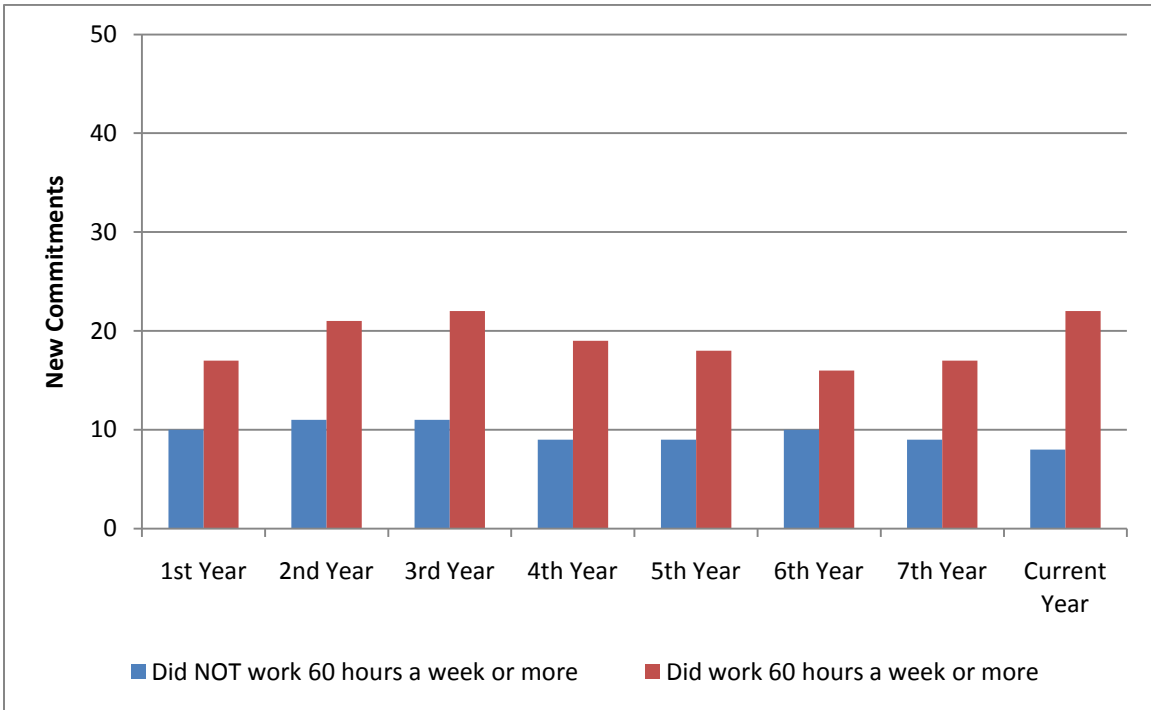


Figure B2 – Mean new commitments by year and working 40-59 hours a week

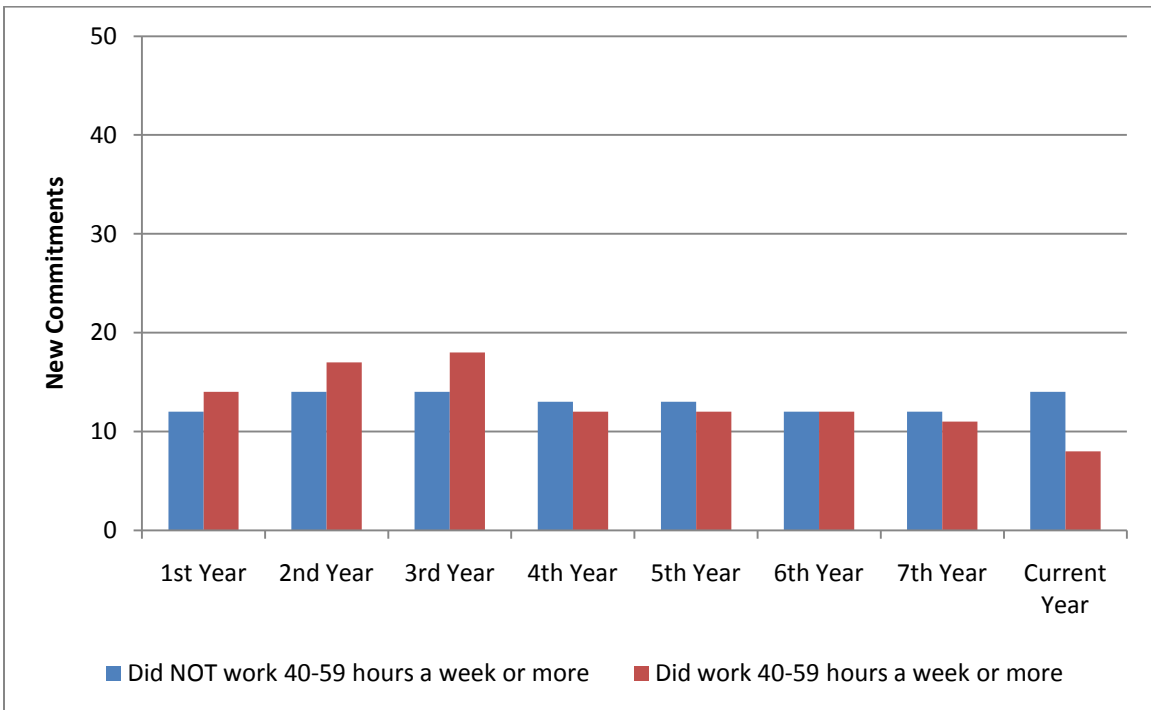


Figure B3 – Mean new commitments by year and financial compensation

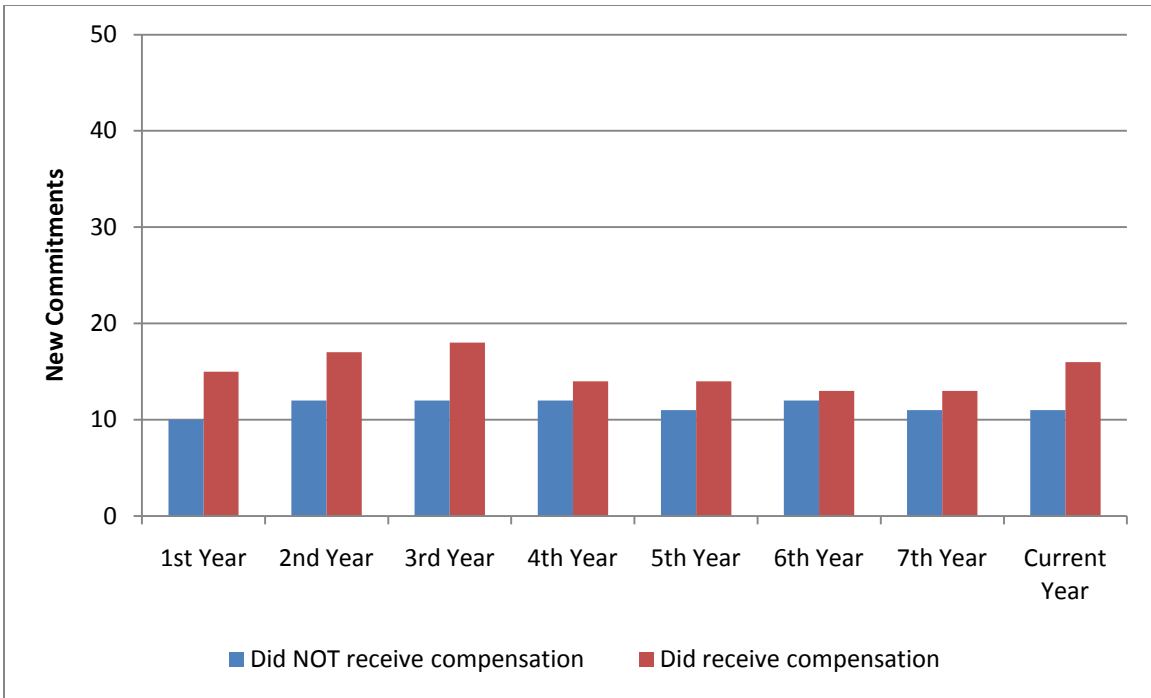


Figure B4 – Mean new commitments by year and new member class

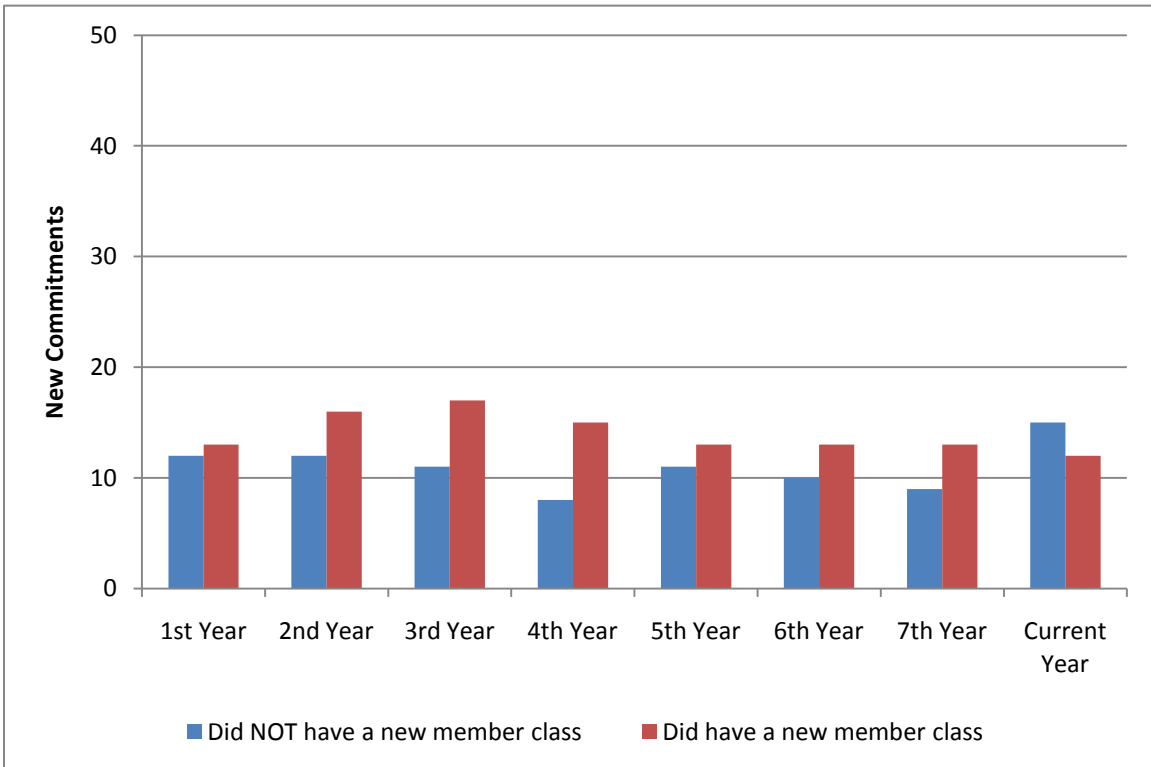


Figure B5 – Mean new commitments by year and always self-sufficient

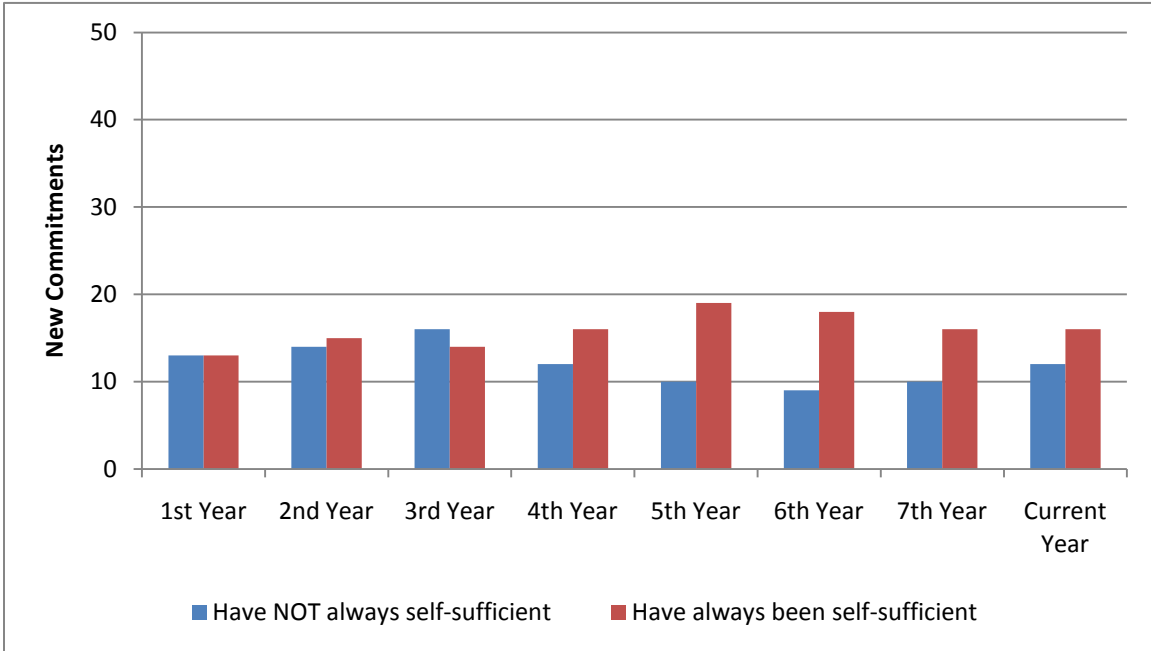


Figure B6 – Mean new commitments by year and own church building

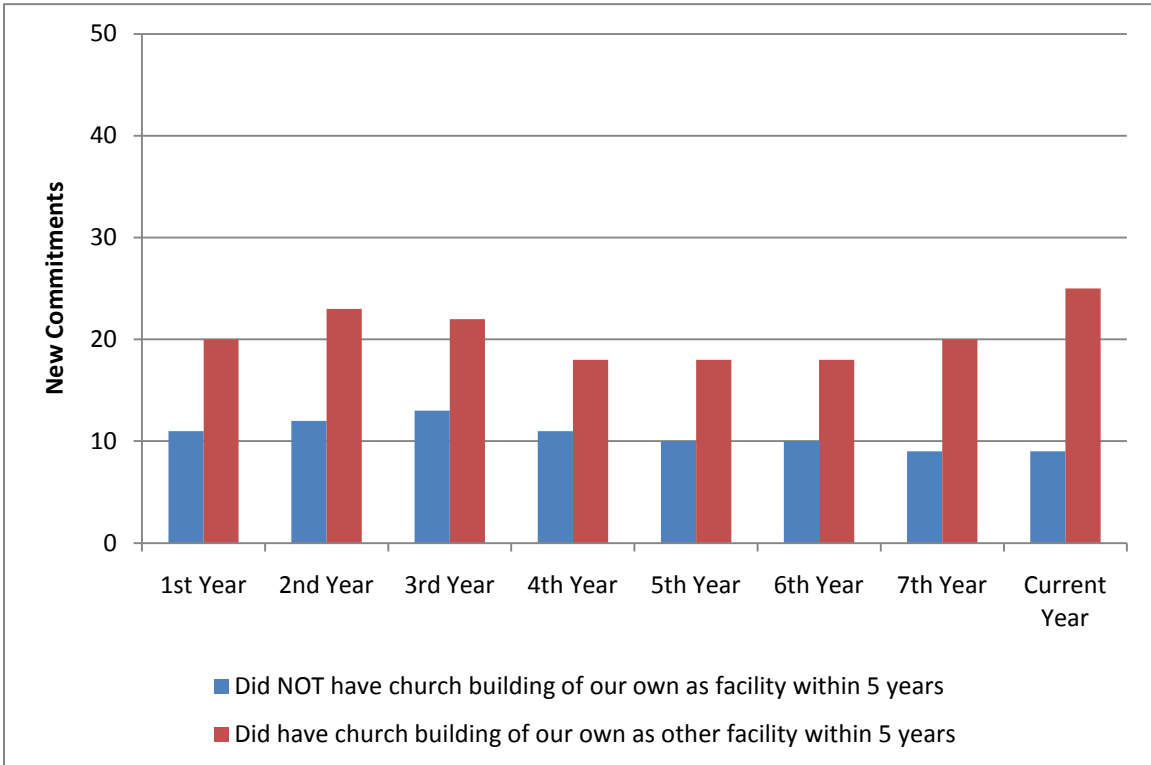


Figure B7 – Mean new commitments by year and contemporary worship

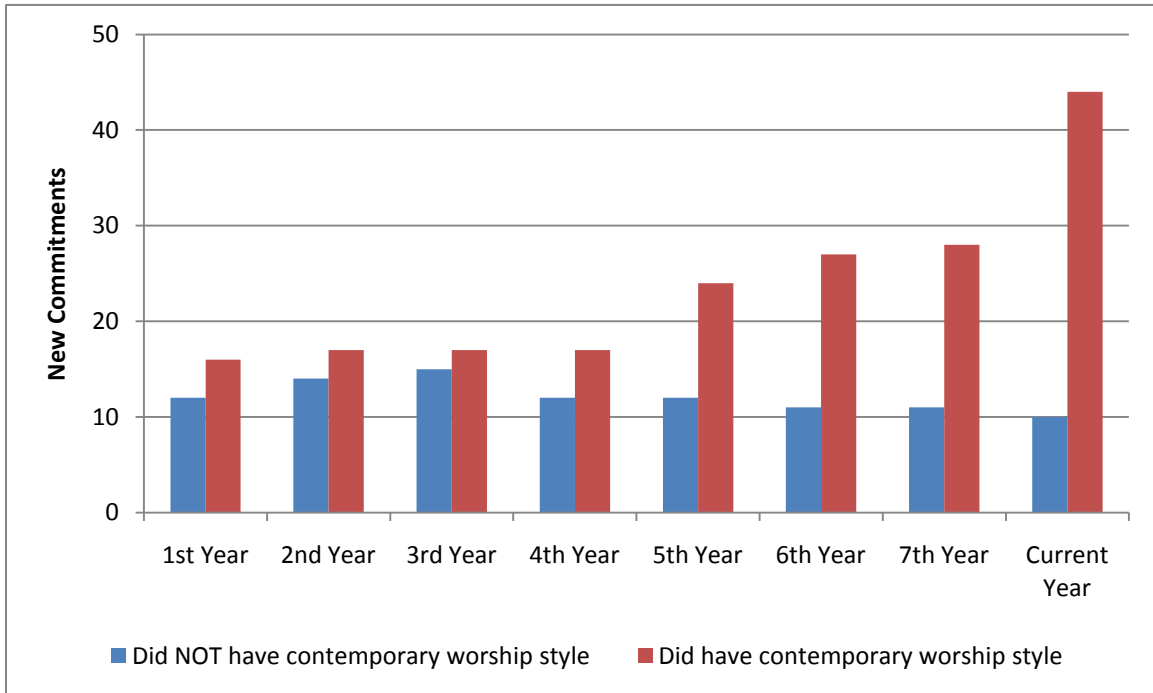


Figure B8 – Mean new commitments by year and meeting in sponsor church building

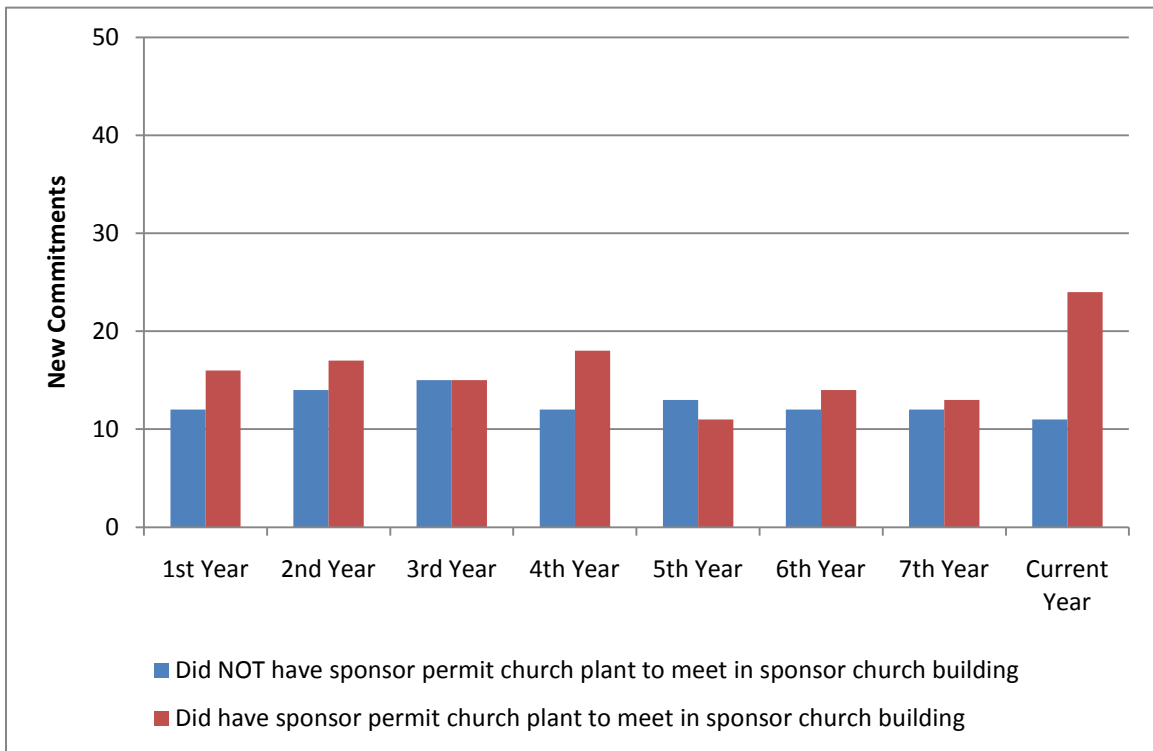


Figure B9 – Mean new commitments by year and attractional model

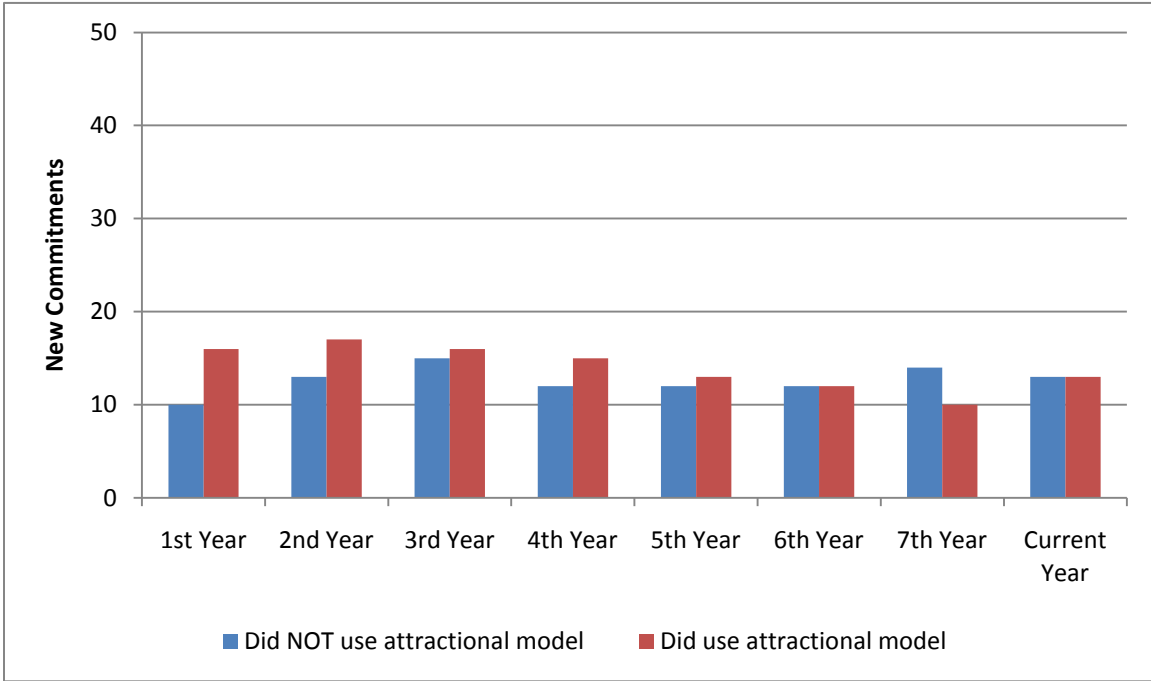


Figure B10 – Mean new commitments by year and door-to-door evangelism

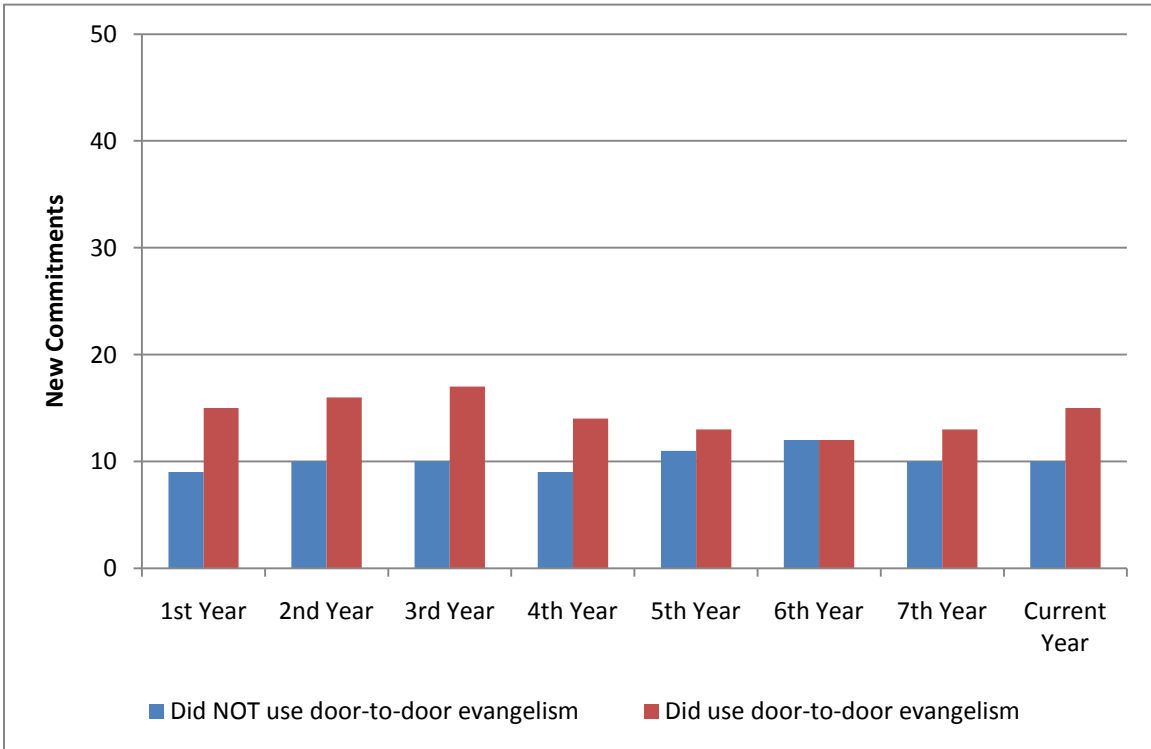


Figure B11 – Mean new commitments by year and loaning lay people

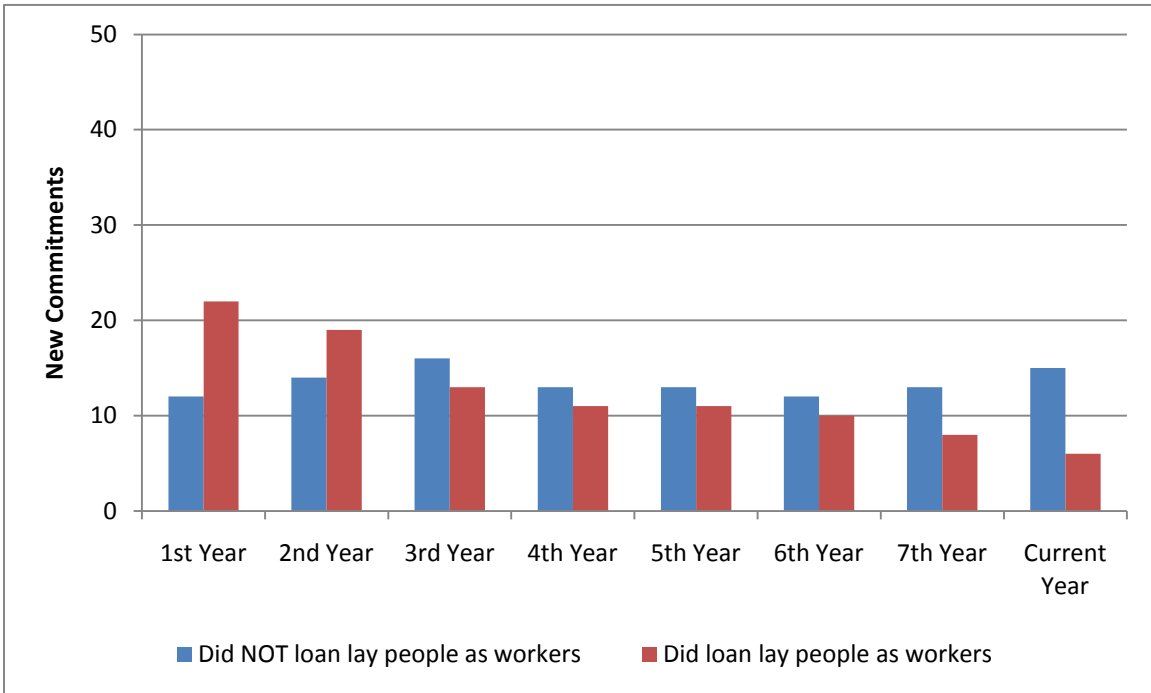


Figure B12 – Mean new commitments by year and boot camp

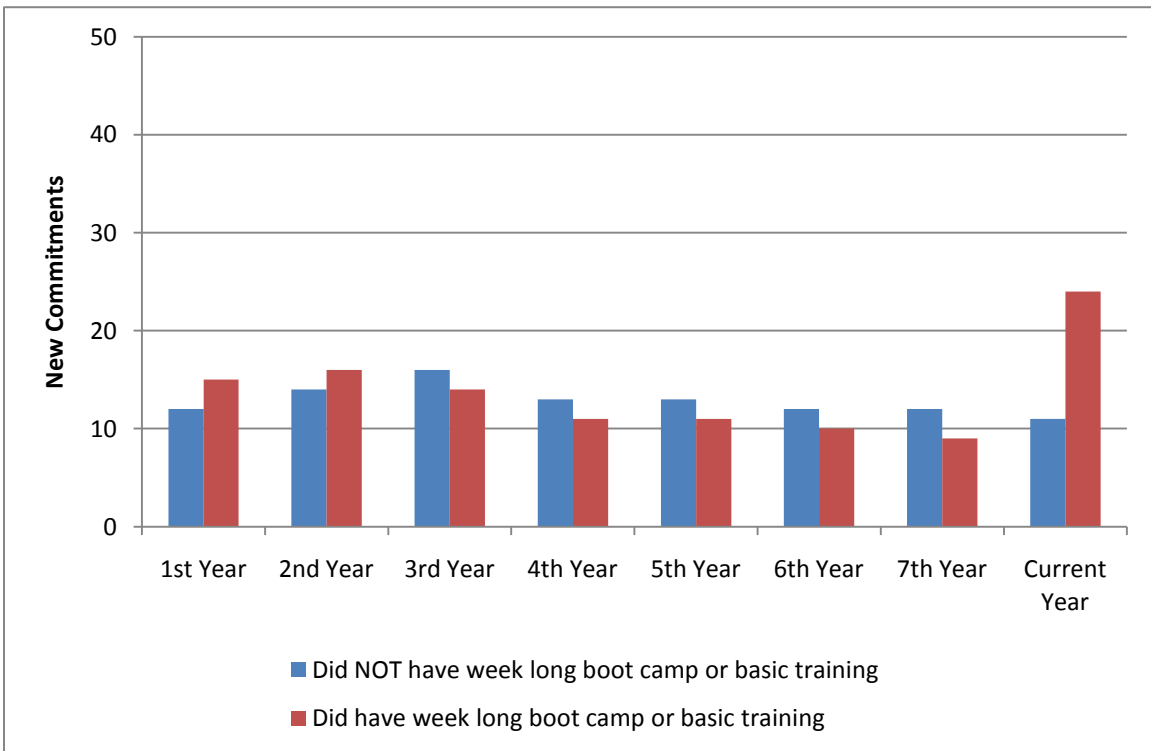


Figure B13 – Mean new commitments by year and door hangers

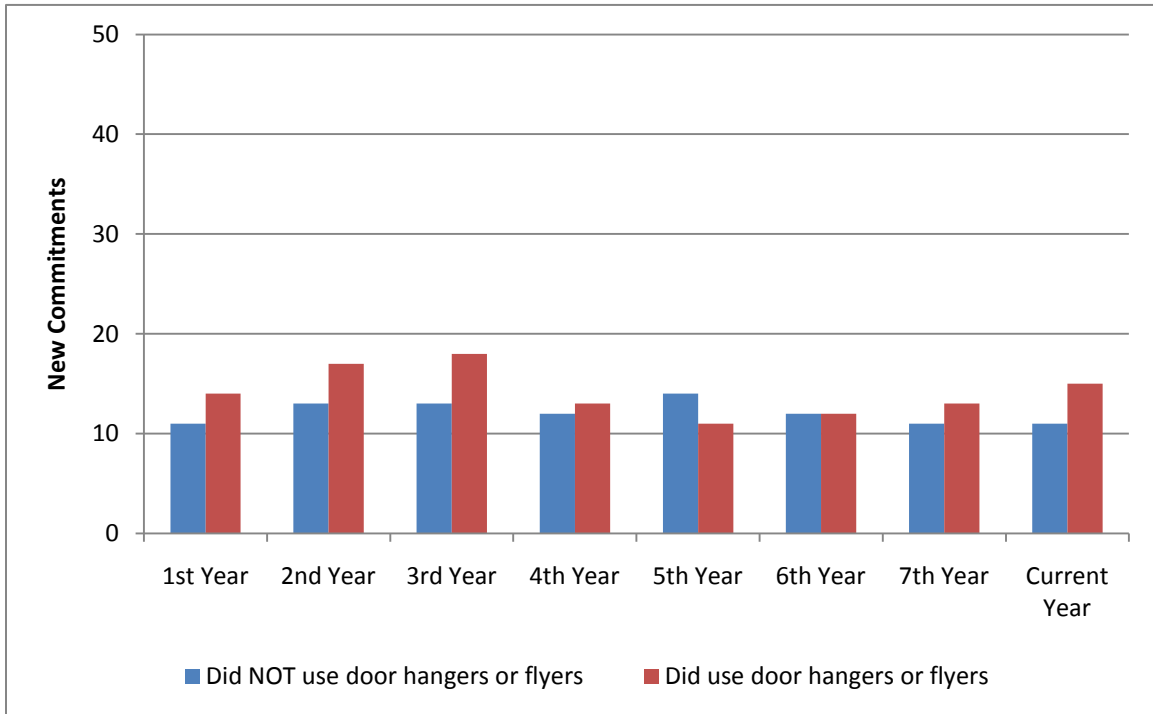


Figure B14 – Mean new commitments by year and revival meetings

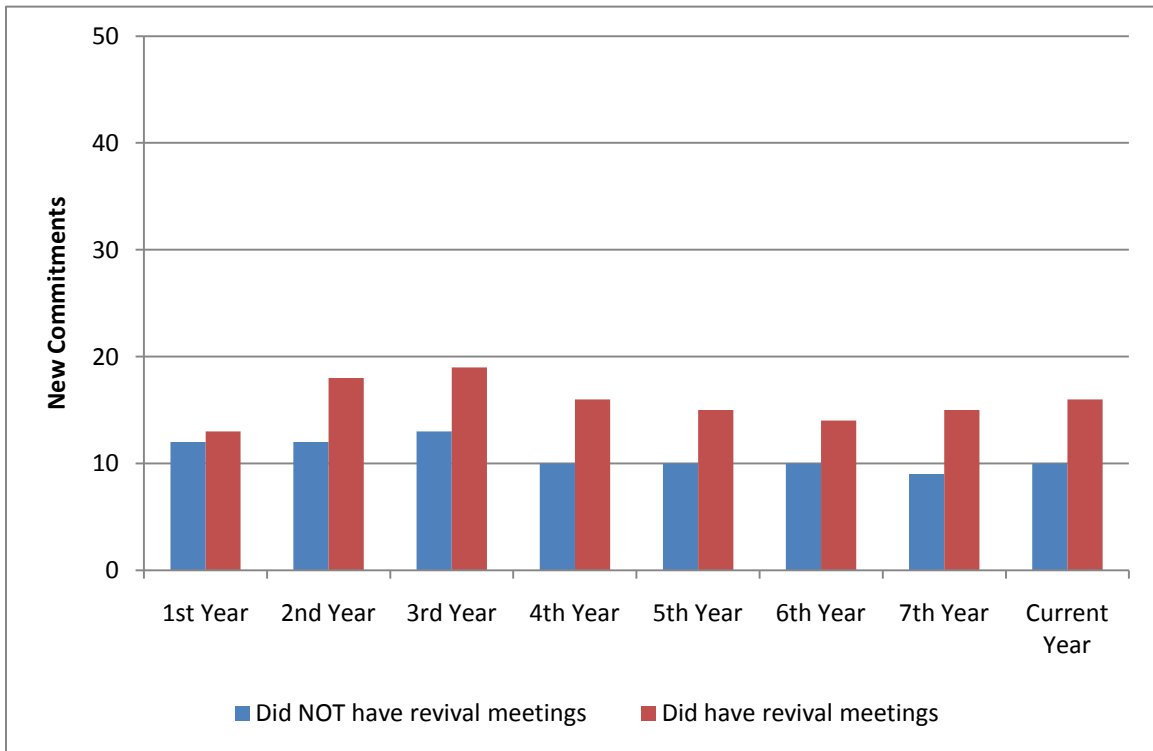


Figure B15 – Mean new commitments by year and direct funding from church planter

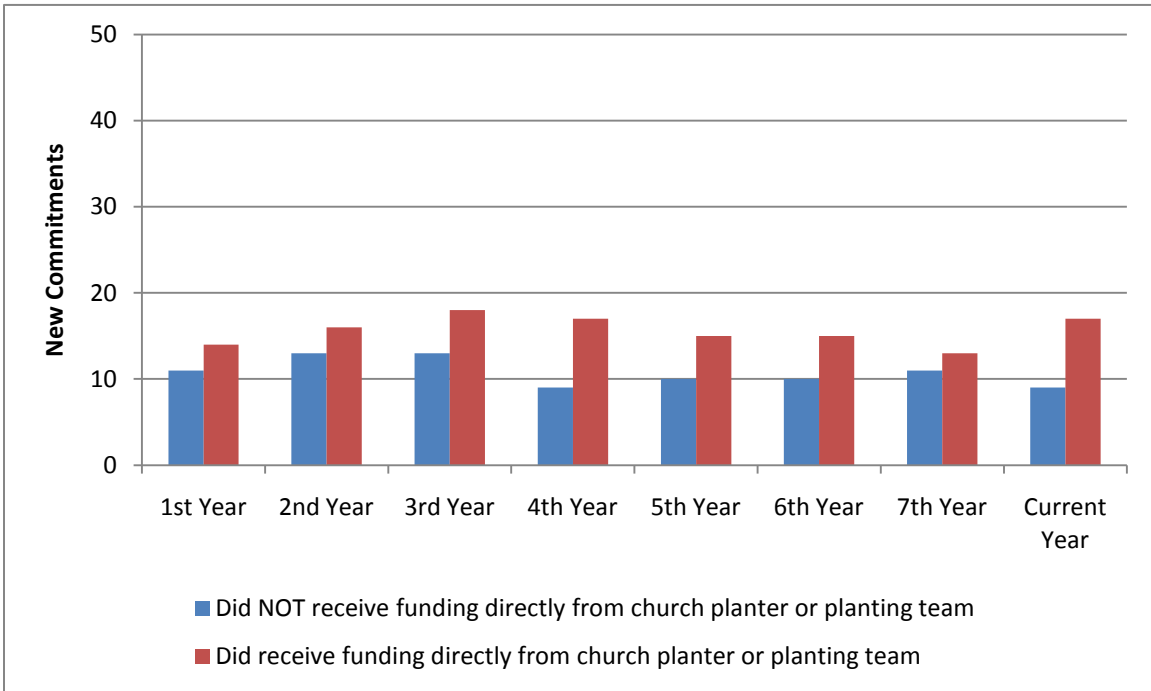


Figure B16 – Mean new commitments by year and ministry based model

