

New Church Starts 1985 – 2005

Virginia Annual Conference

**Findings from a Detailed Analysis of the New Church Starts
in the Virginia Annual Conference**

by

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Background and Scope

The Virginia Annual Conference engaged the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary in an examination of new church starts, as well as mergers and relocations. The Lewis Center developed and implemented the project with RRC, Inc., of Bryan, Texas. The two principal researchers were Dr. Donald R. House, president of RRC, Inc., and Dr. Lovett H. Weems, Jr., executive director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership.

This examination is largely based upon the completed geo-coding of all United Methodist churches in the Virginia annual conferences and with additional demographic information within the relevant geographic areas. Additional founding pastor surveys were completed. The Virginia Annual Conference provided additional details of mergers and church relocations.

It is generally understood that the purpose of a new church start is to make disciples of Jesus Christ through the United Methodist witness. It is reasonable to expect that such expanded witness will result in increased membership and attendance in these churches. It is under this understanding that this examination is designed and conducted. We assume that, while not the only expectation, there is an expectation that every new church start seeks to expand membership and attendance.

Two Ways to Measure “Success” Rates

There are two equally important ways to look at the success rates for new church starts within conferences. We report both. One is to examine all the new church starts launched by a conference and to see how many of them are still reporting worship attendance in the most recent year. These figures are shown in Appendix A. This calculation includes churches that never got off the ground sufficiently to receive a GCFA ID number and to report annual statistics. Virginia has an 88% success rate using this definition, far higher than any other conference studied. In terms of average worship attendance in 2006, Virginia is significantly higher in the percentage of churches found in the 126-349 AWA tier, resulting in smaller percentages for smaller and larger churches.

The second way is the one reflected in the numbers used in the remainder of the report. Here the new church starts are limited to those churches that did get far enough to receive a GCFA ID number and report annual statistics for at least one year. Some of these churches may have closed later. The total number of new church starts in these calculations will normally be lower for a conference since those efforts that never got off the ground are not included due to the absence of useable statistics.

New Church Starts: Virginia Annual Conference

Table 1 presents the number of new church starts with statistical information within the Virginia Annual Conference.

Table 1
Number of New Churches
Virginia Annual Conference
(for new churches progressing far enough to receive an ID number and report statistics)

Conference	Started	Continuing	Percent
Virginia	23	23	100%

In contrast to studies of new churches among other denominations and in our own research with the annual conferences in Texas with survival rates under 80%, the survival rate of 100% is remarkable.

The Four Virginias

No differences in success rate were found in the “four Virginias.” The new church starts in each region were: Capital – 5, Northern – 9, Shenandoah – 3, and Tidewater – 6.

The mere survival of a new church is not the only measure of success. For most new churches there is an expectation of worship attendance growth sufficient to reach a point at which the church is viable and without need for conference or district financial support within a reasonable time period. Table 2 presents the average worship attendance among new churches at the three-year and five-year points in their histories. Not all new churches are included since some had not yet reached the five-year point by 2005.

Table 2
Average Worship Attendance
At the End of the Third and Fifth Year

Number of Churches	3-Year	5-Year	Change
17	120.5	166.3	27.5%

In the Virginia annual conference, the average new church reached worship attendance around 121 attendees, and attendance continued to grow to about 166 by the 5th year. *Worship attendance increased by 27.5% between the 3rd and 5th years.* These findings are somewhat similar to the findings in two annual conferences in Texas (Texas and North Texas). In these conferences, worship attendance at the 3-year mark averaged around 220 with a growth between the 3rd year and 5th year of 38%. The Virginia new church starts appear to have a greater survival rate but a smaller scale compared to those in two annual conferences in Texas.

The equation in Table 3 explains the differences in worship attendance growth among the new churches. It is the basis for identifying factors that contribute to the success or failure of new churches. The following table presents the foundation equation, which is based upon data that includes the number of other United Methodist churches in the surrounding area and local demographics.

Table 3
Foundation Equation
Virginia Annual Conference

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Random-effects GLS regression           Number of obs   =       255
Group variable (i): rectype            Number of groups =        23

R-sq:  within = 0.5787                  Obs per group:  min =         1
        between = 0.1253                  avg =       11.1
        overall = 0.1809                  max =        19

Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian           Wald chi2(7)    =       300.93
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)              Prob > chi2     =        0.0000

```

attend	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
yrs_open	26.7354	4.984533	5.36	0.000	16.9659	36.50491
yrs_open2	-.9072139	.1772561	-5.12	0.000	-1.25463	-.5597983
nhs_white	.0037066	.0009376	3.95	0.000	.0018688	.0055443
asian	-.0171571	.0033439	-5.13	0.000	-.023711	-.0106032
competing_5	-151.7348	103.5859	-1.46	0.143	-354.7594	51.28981
pct_over_65	540.0117	496.4153	1.09	0.277	-432.9444	1512.968
pct_over_100	2368.147	471.0227	5.03	0.000	1444.959	3291.334
_cons	-71.75524	120.4888	-0.60	0.551	-307.9089	164.3984

sigma_u	139.15256					
sigma_e	78.573724					
rho	.75824232	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

where

- yrs_open represents the number of years a new church has been open
- yrs_open2 represents the arithmetic square of yrs_open
- nhs_white represents the size of the non-Hispanic white population within a 4-mile radius
- asian represents the size of the Asian population within a 4-mile radius
- competing_5 represents the number of UM churches within a 5-mile radius
- pct_over_65 represents the percentage of the population over the age of 65 within a 4-mile radius
- pct_over_100 represents the percentage of the population with family incomes greater than \$100K within a 4-mile radius
- _cons represents the statistical constant (intercept) term

This foundation equation is based upon the history of the 23 new church starts in the Virginia Conference. Additionally, the population surrounding the new church has been separated into multiple population groupings based upon race and ethnicity. In this equation, it is possible to measure the impact of growth in population within a racial and ethnic group.

Racial and ethnicity groupings deserve comment. The 2000 US Census introduced new racial and ethnic groupings compared to those used in the 1990 US Census. Claritas, the vendor supplying

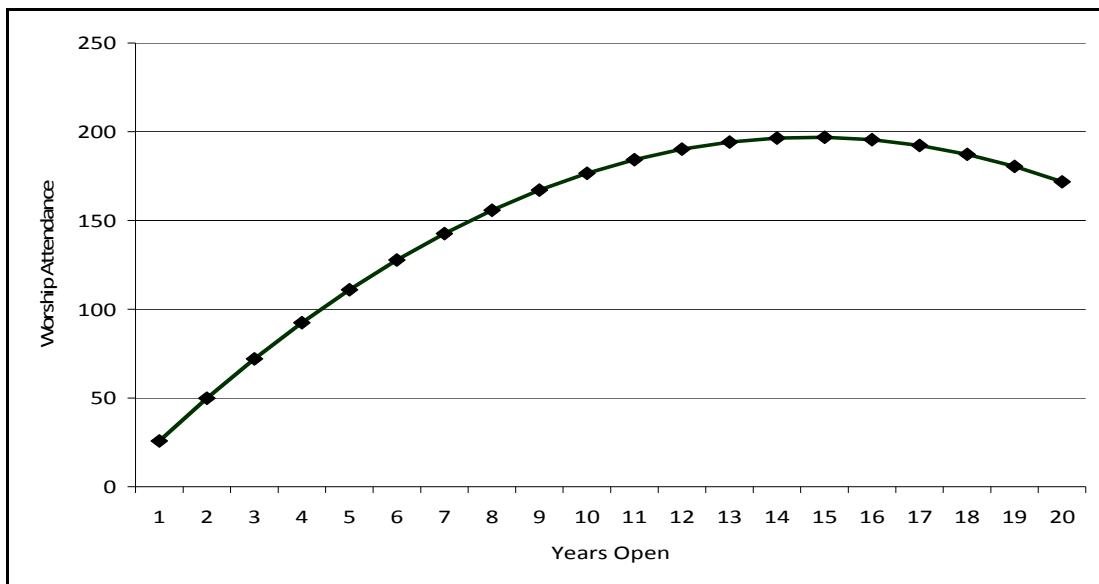
the demographic data for this study, estimates the 2000 groupings for the 1990 census year.¹ Additionally, Claritas provides an estimate of the size of these grouping for the year 2007. For our analysis, population counts for intra-census years and for years between 2000 and 2007 have been interpolated.

One should understand the definition of the groupings. Large ethnic and racial groupings in Virginia include white, non-Hispanic; white, Hispanic; black; and Asian. However, almost all of the new churches are either white or Asian. There remain several other ethnic and racial groupings, such as multi-racial, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and others. Because of the importance of the former ethnic and racial groupings, the latter groupings have not been included.

Years Open

The new church is expected, on average, to report increases in worship attendance as it matures. Figure 1 below presents a graphical description of the results from the foundation equation.

Figure 1
Average Worship Attendance
Results from the Foundation Equation



Holding all else constant, worship attendance among new churches is expected to reach peak after about fifteen years of operation. The growth rate in worship attendance is greatest during its earlier years. This growth path, however, changes if any of the remaining factors change.

¹ See the Claritas website at <http://www.claritas.com/claritas/Default.jsp>.

White, Non-Hispanic Population

Worship attendance increases with increases in the white, non-Hispanic population within a four-mile radius of a new church. As expected, the gain in worship attendance is significantly less than the increase in population. *The results suggest that for every ten percent increase in the white, non-Hispanic population surrounding the new church, worship attendance is expected to increase 7.6%.*

White, Hispanic Population

Due to the small number of new Hispanic churches in the area, the results were not statistically significant and cannot be analyzed here.

Black Population

Due to the small number of new Black churches in the area, the results were not statistically significant and cannot be analyzed here.

Asian Population

Worship attendance decreases with increases in the size of the Asian population. *These results suggest that a 10% increase in the size of the Asian population surrounding a new church results in a 3.5% decrease in worship attendance in the new church.* This is a smaller response than reflected in the results for the white, non-Hispanic population. This result does not shed light on the successes or failures of new church starts targeting a growing Asian population. Instead, it suggests that new United Methodist churches do reasonably well in areas with growing white, non-Hispanic populations. Even with new churches targeting Asian populations, our denomination does not do as well. *These results do not suggest that United Methodist churches targeting growing Asian populations are never successful.*

Other UM Churches

The presence of another United Methodist Church within a four-mile radius of a new church start limits growth in worship attendance. *The results indicate that the presence of an existing United Methodist Church within a four-mile radius of a new United Methodist Church results in a 151 reduction in expected worship attendance in the new church.*² Other examinations confirm the conclusion that the negative impact of the presence of another UM church is minimal in the larger communities.

Population over the Age of 65

This result is consistent with the findings from the Texas Annual Conference alone. An increase in the percentage of the population over the age of 65 is positively related to worship

² Although the result is not statistically significant at the 5% level of significance, it is indicative of the problem with crowding. The low level of significance may be due to the small number of new churches in the analysis. In other studies with larger sample sizes, the result is significant and larger.

attendance. *The results are not statistically significant, but of the right direction as found in other studies.* New United Methodist churches tend to prosper in areas with a larger proportion of older adults.

Population with Family Incomes over \$100,000

A higher percentage of the population within a four-mile radius of the new church with family incomes greater than \$100,000 leads to greater numbers in worship among new UM churches. The impact is relatively large. *When comparing two new churches, adjusted for all other factors, the new church surrounded by a population with 10% in the higher income categories is expected to have a larger worship attendance than a new church surrounded by a population with only 7.4% of the population in the higher income categories.*

Differences in Population Growth

It is possible to compare the characteristics of the neighborhood surrounding new churches and the neighborhood surrounding existing churches. Table 4 presents the population growth surrounding new church starts and surrounding existing churches.

**Table 4
Population Growth (Actual and Expected) Within a
4-Mile Radius: New and Existing Churches**

	Total Population Growth			Annual Population Growth		
	1990-2000	2000-2007	2007-2012	1990-2000	2000-2007	2007-2012
New	14,047	8,924	6,212	1,405	1,275	1,242
Existing	2,762	1,674	1,161	276	239	232

The typical new church was placed in a neighborhood with a population growth that was considerably greater than the growth in population surrounding existing United Methodist churches. On an annual basis, the population increased 1,405 per year surrounding new churches in the Virginia Annual Conference. During 2000 and 2007, the annual growth rate decreased. Annual growth in the existing churches from 2007-2012 is estimated to be only 232 people per year, where new churches expect to see 1,242 people in their 4-mile radii.

The race and ethnicity of population growth has been found to be important. Table 5 presents the average annual rate of growth in differing racial and ethnic populations within a four-mile radius of the new church starts.

Table 5
Racial and Ethnic Annual Population Growth³
4-Mile Radius of New Church Starts

	Total Population Growth			Annual Population Growth		
	1990-2000	2000-2007	2007-2012	1990-2000	2000-2007	2007-2012
White	2,416	2,439	214	242	348	43
Black	3,496	1,595	1,229	350	228	246
Asian	2,985	2,079	2,074	298	297	415
Hispanic	1,761	1,054	997	176	151	199
Other	3,389	1,757	1,698	339	251	340
Total	14,047	8,924	6,212	1,405	1,275	1,242
Black + White	5,912	4,034	1,443	591	576	289
Asian	2,985	2,079	2,074	298	297	415
Total	8,896	6,114	3,517	890	873	703

The differences presented in this table are remarkable. The annual rate of growth in the white population surrounding new churches between 2000 and 2007 (348) is the largest of all annual increases between 2000 and 2007. In future years, Asians are expected to represent the fastest growing segment of the population. Because United Methodist Churches have served the white, non-Hispanic, black, and Asian populations reasonably well, the table combines these three populations.⁴ Between 2000 and 2007, the Virginia Annual Conference experienced annual growth in these three populations (873). *The white, non-Hispanic population alone is currently growing rapidly, but in the projected years from 2007-2012, the white, non-Hispanic population is expected to increase at a much slower rate, only 43 people annually.*

Important Markers

The evidence can be used to explore the possibility of identifying important markers that can be used to predict future worship attendance based upon early worship attendance records. That is, can one predict future worship attendance growth based upon only the first three years of attendance history? Can this be used to consider the possibility of closing a new church start sooner rather than later?

Most annual conferences seek to start new churches that will become financially sufficient, meaning that the new congregation will provide the necessary financial resources to pay the pastor in full, cover operating expenses, and to pay any assigned apportionments in full. A new congregation that cannot meet either of these obligations is one in which the annual conference or district must financially subsidize thus using funds that could otherwise be used for other mission and ministry.

³ In the table, “hispanic” refers to the white-, Hispanic population, “white” refers to the white, non-Hispanic population. The other labels are self-explanatory.

⁴ This conclusion is confirmed in the foundation equation.

Let's look at the issue of the ability to pay the pastor's salary. For new churches that have been open only three years, a total of 19 new churches for which we have pastor pay available, 76% paid their pastor less than \$20,000 for the year (2008 dollars) — four paying nothing. At the five-year mark, 11 of 18 new churches (or 61%) paid their pastor more than \$20,000 per year (2008 dollars) — one paying nothing. The important issue here is the question of sufficient payment for the pastor, for if the congregation cannot meet the minimum salary requirement, the annual conference must use equitable compensation to subsidize the pastor or the new church must become a part of a circuit with only a part-time pastor.

With the available evidence, it is possible to establish useful markers that identify levels of worship attendance at key points in time that yield an acceptable likelihood of sufficient worship attendance growth. For example, at three years, what is the expected growth in worship attendance for new churches with average worship attendance of 75? Is this sufficient to warrant continuing the new congregation past the three-year point?

Table 6 presents the results of the estimation of annual growth rates in membership, based upon differing attendance figures at three years of operation.

Table 6
Annual Worship Attendance Growth
By Differing Worship Attendance Figures at Markers

Estimated Growth in Attendance (Churches categorized by amount of attendance at Year 3)						
Attendance (Year 3)	4	5	6	7	8	9
Less than 50	14%	12%	10%	9%	8%	7%
Less than 100	25%	21%	19%	17%	15%	14%
Less than 150	25%	18%	14%	12%	10%	8%
Less than 200	23%	17%	13%	11%	9%	7%

According to Table 6, a new church start that has less than 50 in worship attendance at the four-year mark can expect an annual growth of only 14% in the 4th. The rate of growth tapers downward with time, and by the 8th year, the growth will only be 8%. That means that predicted attendance for a church that has 32 attendance in the 3rd year will only have 36 attendance in an additional year. In contrast, a new church that has 125 in attendance at the 3rd year can expect to gain 25% in worship attendance in the 4th year. At the 8th year, this congregation would expect in worship a total of 258 attendees.

Table 6 provides reasonably strong support for using the three-year markers for determining whether the annual conference should continue a new congregation if there are to be no future financial subsidies. A gain of less than one attendee per year is essentially a worship attendance plateau. Growth is so small that it can reasonably be ignored. *These results suggest that a new church that has average worship attendance exceeding 100 after three years should reasonably expect measurable annual growth in worship attendance thereafter. With less than 50 in worship*

attendance, measurable annual growth in worship attendance in the future is doubtful. Of course, special circumstances could alter these expectations, such as a rapid growth in the segment of the population that the new church is able to reach and serve.

Race and Ethnicity: Differences among New Churches?

There are a total of 22 new churches from the Virginia Annual Conference with sufficient information for inclusion in the data analysis with one church of unknown racial composition. The racial and ethnic composition of the membership of these churches differ as several new churches were established for the purpose of ministering to particular racial and ethnic communities—particularly Hispanics and Asians. Using the composition of the membership of each of these new churches, it is possible to classify each church on the basis of the racial and ethnic composition of membership. For our purposes, a church is classified on the basis of the majority (over 50%) of the membership. For example, a new church is classified as Hispanic if over 50% of its members are classified as Hispanic, as recorded in the church’s year-end statistical report.

From our 23 churches, the racial and ethnic composition of membership yields the following classifications:

Table 7
Racial and Ethnic Composition of Membership
Among New Churches

	Number of	
	Churches	Percent
White	16	70%
Black	1	4%
Asian	3	13%
Hispanic	2	9%
Unknown	1	4%
Total	23	100%

Our church history has demonstrated our relative successes in attracting members from white and black communities and our difficulties in attracting members from Hispanic communities. The composition of these new churches appears to reflect this history.

There is a common observation that the membership of new churches tend to reflect the racial and ethnic composition of the populations surrounding the selected location. A successful Asian United Methodist Church is best located in a neighborhood with a relatively large concentration of Asians. If this is correct, one would expect the new churches to reflect the race and ethnicity of the surrounding populations. Table 8 illustrates the racial and ethnic composition of the neighborhoods surrounding each new church start.

Table 8
Racial and Ethnic Composition of Population
Within a 4-Mile Radius of the New Church

Predominant Membership	Racial Composition of 4-Mile Radius				
	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Other
White	73.1%	12.2%	3.2%	6.1%	5.5%
Black	48.5%	43.5%	1.1%	0.2%	6.6%
Asian	63.9%	10.0%	6.9%	8.2%	11.1%
Hispanic	61.2%	18.5%	4.2%	8.1%	8.0%

The table presents the composition of the population surrounding each classification of new churches. For example, among the new, predominately black churches, 43.5% of the surrounding population was black, 48.5% of the surrounding population was white, non-Hispanic, 0.2% of the surrounding population was white, Hispanic, 1.1% of the surrounding population was Asian, and 6.6% of the surrounding population was other racial and mixed racial groups.

The growth rates in worship attendance among racial and ethnic minority churches differ. Table 9 presents the 3-year and 5-year average worship attendance figures among the racial and ethnic groups.

Table 9
Average Worship Attendance at the End of Three
And Five Years of Operation

Predominant Membership	3 Years	5 Years	Change
White	134.5	186.0	27.7%
Black	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asian	55.3	87.0	36.4%
Hispanic	N/A	30.0	N/A

These figures are based upon only those new churches that reached the five-year mark so that useful comparisons can be made between the three-year and five-year marks. Because there are so few Hispanic and Black churches, the attendance data were not available for analysis. Among predominately white churches, worship attendance figures increased 27.7% on average. Asian churches also experienced growth. From the third to the fifth year, Asian churches increased 36.4% on average.

New Church Compared to Existing Church

There is no doubt that our churches fail to keep pace with population growth. United Methodists represent a declining percentage of the population in the US. Not only is our denomination failing to keep pace with population growth, membership is declining in the presence of population growth. In spite of these facts, it is important to measure the responsiveness of existing versus new churches to population growth. These findings will help form the conversation around transforming existing churches versus establishing new churches.

Overall, existing churches and new churches both positively respond to population growth. Table 10 presents the general findings, without separation into racial and ethnic groups.

Table 10
Foundation Equation Comparing
Existing and New Churches
Total Population With a 4-Mile Radius

Random-effects GLS regression	Number of obs	=	22407
Group variable (i): rectype	Number of groups	=	1189
R-sq: within = 0.0767	Obs per group: min =		1
between = 0.1252	avg =		18.8
overall = 0.1509	max =		19
Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian	Wald chi2(4)	=	1422.71
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)	Prob > chi2	=	0.0000

attend	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]
pop	.0011622	.0000377	30.85	0.000	.0010883 .001236
inter_0	.0015511	.0001461	10.62	0.000	.0012648 .0018374
Pct_Prime_Age	90.89249	13.29896	6.83	0.000	64.82701 116.958
competing_5	-8.218397	4.357183	-1.89	0.059	-16.75832 .3215243
_cons	42.45424	7.381176	5.75	0.000	27.9874 56.92108
sigma_u	103.02243				
sigma_e	35.279398				
rho	.89504056	(fraction of variance due to u_i)			

where

inter_0 represents an interaction term designed to measure the difference in responses to population growth between existing and new churches.

Pct_prime_age is the percentage of the population between the ages of 35 and 54.

Competing 5 is the number of churches within a five mile radius.

This evidence supports the notion that existing churches expand worship attendance in response to population growth. The existing church increases worship attendance by 0.8 persons in response to an increase of 1,000 in population within a four-mile radius of the church. The new church, in contrast, increases worship attendance by 2.3 persons for every 1,000 increase in the surrounding

population. *In general, the new United Methodist church more than doubles the growth in worship attendance compared to the existing United Methodist church.*⁵

The same examination is possible among churches that are predominately white by examining the white, non-Hispanic population growth within a four-mile radius. Table 11 presents these results.

Table 11
Foundation Equation Comparing
Existing and New Churches
Predominately White, Non-Hispanic Congregations

Random-effects GLS regression		Number of obs	=	20081
Group variable (i): rectype		Number of groups	=	1167
R-sq: within	= 0.1045	Obs per group: min	=	1
between	= 0.2182	avg	=	17.2
overall	= 0.2184	max	=	18
Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian		Wald chi2(5)	=	2262.27
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)		Prob > chi2	=	0.0000

attend	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
nhs_white	.0021106	.0000658	32.09	0.000	.0019817	.0022395
inter_1	.004975	.0003377	14.73	0.000	.004313	.005637
asian	-.0005924	.0002154	-2.75	0.006	-.0010146	-.0001702
pct_over_65	-34.67524	27.34073	-1.27	0.205	-88.26208	18.9116
pct_over_100	405.5067	20.74104	19.55	0.000	364.855	446.1584
_cons	49.75441	5.952463	8.36	0.000	38.0878	61.42103

sigma_u	99.441286	
sigma_e	33.087153	
rho	.90032533	(fraction of variance due to u_i)

where

inter_1 represents an interaction term designed to measure the difference in worship attendance in response to a change in the white, non-Hispanic population between new and existing churches.

The result confirms the expectation. A new, predominately white church increases worship attendance by more than an existing church, given the same increase in the white, non-Hispanic surrounding population. *With a 1,000 increase in the white, non-Hispanic population, a new church is expected to report, on average, a 3.3 person increase in worship attendance. Without a new church, the existing church is expected to report, on average, a 0.7 person increase in attendance.*

The calculated elasticities are as follows:

Existing	0.446
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⁵ There is a cannibalization process that is excluded in this simple comparison. Worship attendance decreases among existing churches in the neighborhood of the new church, but the net effect is still positive.

New

0.763

These statistics indicate that a 10% increase in the white, non-Hispanic population yields a 4.46% increase in worship attendance among predominately white, existing congregations. A 10% increase in the white, non-Hispanic population yields a 7.63% increase in worship attendance among predominately white, new congregations.

Table 12 below provides the results from an examination of all congregations.

Table 12
Foundation Equation Comparing
Existing and New Churches
Predominately Black Congregations

Random-effects GLS regression	Number of obs	=	824
Group variable (i): rectype	Number of groups	=	57
R-sq: within = 0.0248	Obs per group: min =		1
between = 0.2217	avg =		14.5
overall = 0.2076	max =		17
Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian	Wald chi2(6)	=	29.16
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)	Prob > chi2	=	0.0001

attend	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
nhs_white	.0000982	.0001657	0.59	0.553	-.0002265	.000423
black	.0008805	.0002377	3.71	0.000	.0004148	.0013463
inter_2	-.0091944	.0128488	-0.72	0.474	-.0343776	.0159888
asian	-.0000413	.0007197	-0.06	0.954	-.0014518	.0013693
pct_over_65	-36.17276	81.37068	-0.44	0.657	-195.6564	123.3108
pct_over_100	-120.5215	49.62869	-2.43	0.015	-217.7919	-23.251
_cons	59.39119	17.08927	3.48	0.001	25.89685	92.88554
sigma_u	40.613839					
sigma_e	21.290713					
rho	.78443071	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

where

inter_2 represents the interaction term.

The results are suggestive but do not confirm the expectation that predominately black church experiences a larger growth in worship attendance than the predominately white church. The calculated elasticities are as follows:

Existing	0.040
New	Not Available

This is perhaps a surprising result in that it indicates that existing, predominately black churches respond significantly to growth in the black population surrounding the church, but the response is relatively small. A 10% increase in the black population within a four-mile radius results

in a 0.4% increase in worship attendance. Among the annual conferences in Texas, the attendance response to an increase in the surrounding black population was considerably larger—an elasticity of 1.41. There is insufficient data to measure the responsiveness of new, predominately black churches to black population growth.

An analysis of predominately Asian United Methodist congregations in Virginia failed to provide useful results, largely due to the relatively small numbers of Asian congregations in the available data. Among the annual conferences included in the Texas study, new Asian congregations responded positively to increasing Asian population surrounding the new church.

Table 13 presents the annual population growth among racial and ethnic populations within four miles of existing churches.

Table 13
Racial and Ethnic Annual Population Growth
4-Mile Radius of Existing Churches

	Total Population Growth			Annual Population Growth		
	1990-2000	2000-2007	2007-2012	1990-2000	2000-2007	2007-2012
White	-452	224	-77	-45	32	-15
Black	1030	357	272	103	51	54
Asian	755	398	353	75	57	71
Hispanic	455	245	218	46	35	44
Other	971	448	395	97	64	79
Total	2,759	1,672	1,160	276	239	232

Notice the difference in the annual growth in the total population during the 2000-2007 period for existing churches is 239 people per year and is projected to be 232. In Table 5, the corresponding figure is 1,275 and 1,242 respectively. *This strongly suggests that our existing churches are not well located to fully benefit from the growth in population.*

In summary, the results confirm the expectation that new churches enable our denomination to respond more effectively to population growth than existing churches. This is true generally and true among at least two racial and ethnic groupings: white, non-Hispanic; and black. The evidence further underscores the fact that our new churches are best located to benefit from population growth. Existing churches are, on average, poorly located to effectively respond to population growth.

Additional Findings from the Founding Pastors

The study entailed surveys of founding pastors of new church starts. A total of 23 founding pastors were surveyed, but not all information was completed for each pastor. These surveys were difficult to complete in that many of the questions focus upon the start of the church, and some of these churches began before 1990. In the future, it is important to survey founding pastors soon after the first worship service and repeatedly during the first several years of operation.

Although the information collected was broad, this report focuses only upon a few key questions.

Founding Pastor Age

There has been a general belief that new church starts are more likely to achieve greater worship attendance levels if the founding pastor is relatively young. Without more data, it is not possible to identify the most productive age for the founding pastor. However, simple averages tend to suggest some support for the general understanding that the older pastors are not best suited to establish a new church. Table 14 below presents the mean worship attendance at the two marks in time with differing ranges of age of the founding pastor.

Table 14
Worship Attendance and the
Age of the Founding Pastor

Age Range	Attendance		Change
	3-Year	5-Year	
Under 35	148.0	209.6	41.6%
35-49	109.6	124.7	13.8%
50 and Over	66.0	76.0	15.2%

The founding pastor under the age of 35 appears to establish new churches with the higher levels of worship attendance than pastors 35 years of age and older. The evidence does not present significant differences for the pastors over the age of 50 and pastors between the ages of 35 and 49.

Time between Pastor Assignment and Beginning Worship

The number of months between the time the founding pastor was assigned and the beginning worship service varied—between zero months through 16 months. The average number of months was 4.6 months. The founding equation suggests that the longer time between assignment and the first worship service does not contribute to average worship attendance. Table 15 illustrates this result:

Table 15
Time Delay between Assignment and
The First Worship Service

```

Random-effects GLS regression           Number of obs   =       223
Group variable (i): rectype            Number of groups =        18

R-sq:  within = 0.5222                  Obs per group:  min =         3
      between = 0.2467                    avg =       12.4
      overall = 0.2478                    max =        19

Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian           Wald chi2(7)    =    224.51
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)              Prob > chi2     =     0.0000

```

attend	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
yrs_open	37.38267	6.095116	6.13	0.000	25.43646	49.32888
yrs_open2	-1.207599	.2112566	-5.72	0.000	-1.621654	-.7935438
nhs_white	.0015828	.0011887	1.33	0.183	-.000747	.0039126
competing_5	-235.7148	136.7752	-1.72	0.085	-503.7893	32.35976
pct_over_65	94.37339	568.8403	0.17	0.868	-1020.533	1209.28
pct_over_100	1034.618	503.6479	2.05	0.040	47.48632	2021.75
gap	-7.812461	12.08816	-0.65	0.518	-31.50481	15.87989
_cons	168.3663	172.886	0.97	0.330	-170.4841	507.2167
sigma_u	161.60927					
sigma_e	91.818879					
rho	.75597307	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

where

gap represents the number of months between the assignment of the pastor and the first worship service.

This result is not a strong result but suggestive. Long delays between the assignment of the founding pastor and the first worship service may be a good indicator of trouble ahead.

The First Facility

Among the founding pastor surveys, most new church starts began either in a school (11) or retail space (3). Only one started in a community center, one started in a church facility of an existing church, one started in a home, and one started in a temporary structure. There were eighteen founding pastors completing this specific question. These responses were sufficient to conclude that new churches beginning in a school average more in worship attendance than new churches beginning in a retail space. No other conclusions could be drawn from these data.

Among the responding founding pastors, only one of these new churches at the time of the interview had remained in its first facility. The average time in the first facility equals 37 months, with a range of 3 to 99 months (and continuing). With the number of surveys completed for this question, it was not possible to determine if the time spent in the first facility affected average worship attendance.

As expected, a larger seating capacity in the first facility is associated with greater growth in worship attendance. This may reflect a pastor's expectations of potential rather than a cause-and-effect. There remains the possibility that too little seating capacity in the first facility may in fact restrict worship attendance growth, but this evidence neither confirms nor rejects this notion.

Beginning Staff

There were several non-clergy employment positions filled in the new churches. The following table presents the types of positions for the 1st and 2nd non-clergy employees in the new churches.

Table 16
Non-Clergy Employment Positions Filled

	1st Position	2nd Position
Music Director	4	5
Secretary	8	3
Worship Leader	1	0
Youth Leader	0	1
Program	3	3

Among the founding pastors that completed the surveys, there were some common patterns in the order in which non-clergy staff were employed. For those that listed their first two hires, Table 17 presents the most common patterns.

Table 17
Order of Non-Clergy Staff Employed

Order of Staff Hires (1st → 2nd)	Number of Churches
Music Director → Secretary	3
Secretary → Music Director	4
Secretary → Program	3
Program → Youth Leader	2

The most common order of employment was the secretary position being filled first, and the music director position being filled second. For ten of the twelve that responded, the secretary was one of the first two hires.

An analysis of the order of employment presents interesting findings. Table 18 displays the results when the order of employment is entered into the foundation equation.

Table 18
Foundation Equation With

Order of Employment of Non-Clergy Staff

Random-effects GLS regression	Number of obs	=	146
Group variable (i): rectype	Number of groups	=	10
R-sq: within = 0.4708	Obs per group: min	=	6
between = 0.9388	avg	=	14.6
overall = 0.7605	max	=	19
Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian	Wald chi2(9)	=	431.93
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)	Prob > chi2	=	0.0000

attend	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
yrs_open	42.24156	8.774682	4.81	0.000	25.04349	59.43962
yrs_open2	-1.040938	.3728061	-2.79	0.005	-1.771624	-.3102512
nhs_white	-.0073166	.0005556	-13.17	0.000	-.0084056	-.0062277
competing_5	146.6358	55.82262	2.63	0.009	37.22545	256.0461
pct_over_65	-615.0815	304.7885	-2.02	0.044	-1212.456	-17.707
pct_over_100	1804.437	372.5852	4.84	0.000	1074.183	2534.69
_Iorder_2	-156.549	30.15098	-5.19	0.000	-215.6438	-97.45415
_Iorder_3	-320.4146	37.87827	-8.46	0.000	-394.6547	-246.1746
_Iorder_4	-483.4729	56.82552	-8.51	0.000	-594.8489	-372.097
_cons	270.0303	73.634	3.67	0.000	125.7103	414.3503
sigma_u	0					
sigma_e	107.62836					
rho	0	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

where $_Iorder$ represents the groupings of churches with differing orders of employment.

The new churches that retained a youth director as its first staff member recorded higher numbers in worship than churches that retained a secretary first, followed by a music director or churches that retained a secretary first, followed by a program director. *This evidence underscores the importance of the youth director as the first non-clergy staff.*

Marketing

The interviews with founding pastors sought histories concerning the new church's marketing efforts—efforts seeking people to attend worship. Several alternatives were available:

- Telemarketing
- Direct mail
- Door-to-door visits
- TV and radio advertisements
- Print media
- Contact with non-profits, para-churches, and other agencies, etc.
- Personal contacts in restaurants and shopping malls
- Community service
- Small groups and Bible study
- Informational meetings

Preview events
Prayer groups

The number of surveys was relatively small, so the results from any analysis of these marketing efforts must be viewed with caution. Nevertheless, worship attendance was significantly greater among new churches that relied upon contacts with non-profits, para-churches, and other agencies. Worship attendance was reduced with frequent use of TV, radio, and printed media advertising.

Style of Worship

The surveys included several questions regarding the style of worship during worship services. Most of these questions focused upon a differentiation between and among traditional, praise, and blended services. However, the surveys are limited in number so the results from these data must also be viewed with caution.

It was not possible to clearly determine a relation between some of the survey responses and growth in worship attendance. For some questions, there was little variation in responses, which eliminates the possibility of measuring their impact upon attendance. Responses to the following questions were found to be unrelated to worship attendance for a variety of possible reasons:

1. Do people call out “amen” or other expressions of approval?
2. Do people applaud during the service?
3. Do people laugh during the service?
4. Is there a written order of worship for people to follow?
5. Is a hymnal used during worship?
6. Do people read or recite something in unison?
7. Do people raise hands during the service?
8. Is a piano used?
9. Is an organ used?
10. Are electric guitars used?
11. Was the Lord’s Supper celebrated?
12. Was dance performed by teens or adults?
13. Were skits used?
14. Were hired singers or musicians used?
15. Was time given for leaders to testify or speak about their own experiences?
16. Were sermons longer than 20 minutes?
17. Were services longer than one hour?

A few questions regarding style of worship did lead to some useful conclusions. Worship attendance was greater in new churches that used visual equipment during worship. Attendance was greater in new churches that used drums. With more surveys completed in the future, it is hoped that the impact of the style of worship upon attendance can be more effectively explored.

Church Relocations

The Virginia Annual Conference provided records of eight church relocations over the 1985-2006 period. The churches that relocated during the period are as follows:

Table 19
Church Relocations
1985-2005

Name of Church	GCFA ID #	Year of Move
Herndon	471042	1987
St. Mark's	481655	1987
Centreville	470925	1991
Ebenezer	471430	1992
Grace, Manassas	471144	1995
Belmont (3Oaks Fell)	482648	2003
Mt. Sinai/New Hope Comm	483905	2004
Norfolk	967196	2005

It is widely assumed that a church is relocated in order to improve its opportunities to grow. For our purposes, it is useful to measure the “success” of a church relocation by a change in its worship attendance growth path. A successful relocation would be observed by a change from declining worship attendance to increasing worship attendance. An unsuccessful relocation would be observed by the continuation of a declining worship attendance.

Overall, it is possible to examine the average response to a relocation. Seven of the eight churches listed in Table 19 provide sufficient post-relocation evidence to be included in the analysis. Table 20 presents the results of the regression analysis, designed to measure the change in the path of worship attendance.

Table 20
Regression Results
Worship Attendance and Church Relocation

Random-effects GLS regression	Number of obs	=	264
Group variable (i): rectype	Number of groups	=	8
R-sq: within = 0.4489			
	between = 0.5293	Obs per group: min =	33
	overall = 0.4194	avg =	33.0
		max =	33
Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian			
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)	Wald chi2(2)	=	210.48
	Prob > chi2	=	0.0000

attend	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
year	3.010023	1.211287	2.48	0.013	.6359449	5.384101
post	211.904	26.94066	7.87	0.000	159.1013	264.7068
_cons	-5796.496	2403.909	-2.41	0.016	-10508.07	-1084.92
sigma_u	112.10837					
sigma_e	126.77212					
rho	.43884513 (fraction of variance due to u_i)					

where

- post represents a binary variable registering each year after relocation
- year represents the year of record
- _cons represents the constant term in the regression equation

The results confirm the expectation that a relocation changes worship attendance. On average, worship attendance increases by 211.9 individuals after the relocation. The coefficient of post is positive and statistically significant. Average attendance in the sample of churches before a relocation equals 160.8, so the improvement in attendance of 211.9 is substantial—more than doubling worship attendance after the relocation. This represents an increase in worship attendance of over 100%.

Church Mergers with Relocation to a New Site

Mergers of churches are often used to establish a single, larger congregation from existing smaller congregations in hopes that the new church will acquire the scale necessary to improve the potential for growth. In some instances, a merger represents a form of relocation for only one church involved in the merger. In the instances reported in Virginia, all merges involved a new location for the newly established church. Table 21 presents the listing of churches that merged in Virginia during the 1985-2005 period.

Table 21
Merged Churches

Year	Merged Churches			New Church
1985	Paran	Mountain Chapel		Grace
1985	Memorial	Brookville		Heritage
1988	Calvary	Sledd Memorial	Piney Forest	St. Lukes
1992	Asbury	Memorial		Asbury Memorial
1996	Bailey's Chapel	Madison Heights		Amelon

Each of these merges was examined. The pre-merger experience consists of the combination of the churches to be merged. For our purposes, the worship attendance figures among the churches to be merged were merely totaled. Post merger, the attendance of the new church was recorded. The growth path of attendance pre-merger was compared to the path of attendance post-merger.

Table 22 presents the regression results from the analysis of the five mergers in Virginia.

Table 22
Regression Results
Mergers: Worship Attendance

```

Random-effects GLS regression           Number of obs   =       165
Group variable (i): rectype            Number of groups =         5

R-sq:  within = 0.0358                  Obs per group:  min =        33
        between = 0.0249                  avg =       33.0
        overall = 0.0030                  max =        33

Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian           Wald chi2(2)    =         5.86
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)              Prob > chi2     =        0.0535

```

attend	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
year	-2.282607	.9637336	-2.37	0.018	-4.17149	-.3937237
post	32.4244	19.05578	1.70	0.089	-4.924239	69.77305
_cons	4758.45	1910.116	2.49	0.013	1014.692	8502.208
sigma_u	127.23234					
sigma_e	65.215692					
rho	.79193512	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

where

attend represents the average annual worship attendance
post represents a binary variable reflecting the years before and after the merger
year represents the year of record
cons represents the constant term in the regression equation

The results from the regression equation are weak. The coefficient of the merger variable, *post*, is small but positive and statistically significant at only the 90% level of confidence. At best, one can conclude that a merger yields an increase in worship attendance of only 32 individuals. The mean attendance before merger equals 240.5, so the percentage impact upon worship attendance is, at best, 13.3%. The relatively low level of confidence indicates that there is a significant chance that we failed to detect any impact upon worship attendance from mergers.

There is, however, a more encouraging result from the analysis of mergers. A separate regression analysis was conducted in which the number of members received by profession of faith was compared before and after the mergers. The regression results from this analysis are presented in Table 23 below:

Table 23
Regression Results
Mergers: Professions of Faith

Random-effects GLS regression		Number of obs	=	165
Group variable (i): rectype		Number of groups	=	5
R-sq: within	= 0.0981	Obs per group: min	=	33
between	= 0.0542	avg	=	33.0
overall	= 0.0454	max	=	33
Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian		Wald chi2(2)	=	16.69
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)		Prob > chi2	=	0.0002

rcvconf	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
year	-.485683	.1189223	-4.08	0.000	-.7187665	-.2525995
post	8.112231	2.34684	3.46	0.001	3.512509	12.71195
_cons	973.0062	235.6162	4.13	0.000	511.2069	1434.805
sigma_u	5.443784					
sigma_e	8.0688026					
rho	.3128 (fraction of variance due to u_i)					

where

- rcvconf is the number of members received by profession of faith during the year
- post represents a binary variable reflecting the years before and after the merger
- year represents the year of record
- _cons represents the constant term in the regression equation

These results are relatively strong. The coefficient of the merger variable, *post*, is positive and statistically significant. The mean value of the number of persons received by profession of faith equals 11.1 members, so the additional 8.1 members related to the merger is substantial—an increase of 73%. These results suggest that the merger *may* have a positive impact upon worship attendance, but there is a significant, positive impact upon the number of new members received through profession of faith.

Church Mergers Using an Existing Site

The most common mergers in the Virginia Annual Conference during recent years is the merger between two churches but one of the existing churches becomes the merged church. That is, one of the merged churches does not relocate to another site. Between 1985 and 2006, there were 23 mergers of this type. Table 24 presents these mergers.

Table 24
Church Mergers without Relocations

Year	Merged Churches		New Church
1985	Le Kies	Wesleyan Acres	Heritage
1990	Manassas	St. Thomas	Manassas-St. Thomas
1985	Grace	Design	Grace-Design
1986	Elm Ave	Wright Memorial	King Memorial
1987	Haven's	Smith	Haven's Chapel
1988	Hume	Orleans	Orleans
1988	Waterlick	Bethel (Front Royal)	Bethel
1989	Bethany	Pleasant Grove	Bethany
1989	Buckroe Beach	First Church	First Church Fox Hill
1990	Tyler Memorial	Bethany	Bethany
1992	Epworth	Sleepy Hollow	Sleepy Hollow
1995	Centreville	Mt Solon	Bridgewater
1995	Reid Chapel	Calvary	Calvary
1995	First	Chestnut Hill	Chestnut Hill
1996	Barker Mem	Ward's Chapel	Ward's Chapel
1996	Brosville	Providence	Brosville
1997	Christ	Crossman	Christ-Crossman
1997	Diamond Hill	Emmaus	Emmaus
1997	Good Shepard	Wistar Hgts	Good Shepard
1999	St Mark's	Korean Wesley (BWC Conf)	St Marks
2000	New London	Lebanon	Lebanon

These mergers occurred between 1985 and 2000. One of the mergers involved a church (Korean Wesley) from the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference. The Bridgewater merger involved three existing churches.

Table 25 presents the regression results from the analysis of these mergers.

Table 25
Regression Results
Worship Attendance
Mergers: No Relocation

Random-effects GLS regression	Number of obs	=	759
Group variable (i): rectype	Number of groups	=	23
R-sq: within = 0.0060			
	between = 0.0062		Obs per group: min = 33
	overall = 0.0000		avg = 33.0
			max = 33
Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian	Wald chi2(2)	=	4.33
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)	Prob > chi2	=	0.1149

attend	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
year	-.9382608	.4591379	-2.04	0.041	-1.838155	-.038367
post	17.46021	9.130793	1.91	0.056	-.4358109	35.35624
_cons	2018.201	910.6217	2.22	0.027	233.4154	3802.987

sigma_u	124.89824					
sigma_e	67.376271					
rho	.77459	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

where

- attend represents average worship attendance
- year represents the year in which worship attendance is reported
- post represents the years after the merger
- _cons represents the constant term in the regression equation

These results indicate that the merger yielded a gain in worship attendance of about 17.5 individuals. Average worship attendance before merger among the 23 churches equals 160, so the gain in worship attendance represents slightly more than a 10% gain. However, on average, there was a one-time adjustment upward at the time of the merger followed by a gentle, continuing decline in which average worship attendance decreased at a rate of one individual per year. This trend appears to continue regardless of the timing of a merger. Overall, this result suggests that these mergers, in terms of worship attendance, were productive in that average worship attendance was greater after the merger than before. Yet the downward trend continues, even after the merger. This, of course, represents the average path – there are exceptions.

Table 26 presents the analysis of the impact of mergers upon professions of faith.

Table 26
Regression Results
Worship Attendance
Mergers: No Relocation

Random-effects GLS regression	Number of obs	=	759
Group variable (i): rectype	Number of groups	=	23
R-sq: within = 0.0416			
	between = 0.0000	Obs per group: min =	33
	overall = 0.0156	avg =	33.0
		max =	33
Random effects u_i ~ Gaussian	Wald chi2(2)	=	31.88
corr(u_i, X) = 0 (assumed)	Prob > chi2	=	0.0000

rcvconf	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
year	-.2301747	.0467843	-4.92	0.000	-.3218702	-.1384792
post	2.350889	.9300248	2.53	0.011	.5280738	4.173704
_cons	466.0054	92.76896	5.02	0.000	284.1815	647.8292
sigma_u	8.7587546					
sigma_e	6.8720566					
rho	.61897045 (fraction of variance due to u_i)					

where

rcvconf represents total new members who joined by profession of faith
year represents the year in which worship attendance is reported
post represents the years after the merger
_cons represents the constant term in the regression equation

These results indicate that the number of professions of faith increased by 2.3 individuals per year after the merger. The average number of professions of faith before mergers equals 9.6 individuals, which implies that professions of faith increased by about 24%. In terms of professions of faith, the mergers were productive. However, on average, there was a one-time adjustment upward at the time of the merger followed by a gentle, continuing decline in which professions of faith decreased by about 1 individual every four years. This trend, too, appears to exist, regardless of the timing of a merger. The merger increases the number of professions of faith but the gradual decline appears to continue. This, of course, represents the average path – there are exceptions.

Comparing the two types of mergers is informative. Mergers in which the new church is a new location yield an average increase in worship attendance of 32 compared to only 17 with no relocation. That is, the gains are greater if a new location is involved. However, as a percentage, they are comparable—about a 13% average gain among mergers with new locations and a 10% average gain among mergers with no new locations. The larger gains when a new location is involved has more to do with the original sizes of the churches rather than the involvement of a new location.

The impact of mergers upon professions of faith is more significant. Mergers with new locations yield an increase in professions of faith of 8.1 individuals compared to only 2.3 individuals with no relocation. The percentage increase is 73% for mergers with new locations and 24% for mergers without new locations. Mergers with new locations appear to yield a percentage increase in professions of faith that is three times that of mergers with no new location. Given the fact that most existing churches are not located in the best locations, the merger with relocation likely forces two (or more) churches to find an improved location.

Summary

The presence of an existing United Methodist church in the neighborhood of a new church significantly affects its growth.

Worship attendance is a critical part of maintaining and growing the health of the church. In terms of average worship attendance, the degrees of success differ among churches and across the annual conferences we have studied.

Average worship attendance among new churches responds positively to surrounding population growth. Yet, the degree of response depends upon the composition of the population growth. New churches, on average, report increases in worship attendance with increases in the white, non-Hispanic, and Asian populations. Average worship attendance is greater if the surrounding population consists of a relatively high proportion of individuals over the age of 65 and with family incomes over \$100,000 per year.

Average worship attendance after three and five years of operation provides a reasonable basis for projecting future growth. On average, new churches that report average worship attendance of less than 50 after the first three years are unlikely to experience measurable growth thereafter. New churches reporting average worship attendance of over 100 or more after three years are likely to report significant gains in average worship attendance thereafter.

Seventy percent of the new churches for which year-end statistical reports were available had congregations that were predominately white. Although Asian churches showed the largest percentage growth from three to five years, predominately white congregations reported the largest average worship attendance after 3 years and the largest growth between three and five years.

A new church responds more effectively to population growth than an existing church. On average, the gain in average worship attendance in a new church is about twice that of an existing church.

New churches tend to be located where there is significant population growth. New churches with predominately white membership tend to be planted where there is significant growth in white, non-Hispanic populations. On the other hand, existing churches, on average, are poorly located for the purpose of capturing new members from significant population growth.

These data suggest that average worship attendance is greater when the first non-clergy employee of a new church is a youth director.

These findings are based upon a total of 23 new churches in the Virginia Annual Conference. Much has been learned. With additional information from other annual conferences, the scope of our understanding can be significantly broadened.

The analysis of mergers and relocations yielded largely positive results. There were eight church relocations observed, and there was a large, positive gain in worship attendance related to the relocation. On average, a church relocation resulted in an increase in worship attendance of over 100%.

There were 28 mergers observed—five involving new locations and twenty-three without a new location. The effect of a merger/relocation upon average worship attendance was, at most, relatively small—about a 10% increase in average worship attendance. There was little difference between mergers involving a new location and those that did not. The impacts of mergers upon professions of faith were more remarkable. There was a 73% increase in professions of faith among mergers with new church locations and a 24% increase in professions of faith among mergers without a new church location.

The overall results suggest that relocations of churches are productive in that one observes increases in worship attendance and increases in professions of faith. These results hold true for mere relocations of existing churches or new locations post mergers.

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Appendix A

New Church Starts Research Project

Churches Still Active by Annual Conference

Conference	*New Church Starts from 1985 - 2005	Reporting AWA in 2006	Not Active or 0 AWA in 2006	Active in 2006	AWA 125 or fewer	AWA 126-349	AWA 350-499	AWA 500-749	AWA 750-999	AWA 1,000+	Avg AWA in 2006	Median AWA in 2006
Northwest TX	12	5	7	5	3	1	0	1	0	0	199	70
		42%	58%		60%	20%	0%	20%	0%	0%		
Southwest TX	19	14	5	14	10	3	1	0	0	0	114	96
		74%	26%		71%	21%	7%	0%	0%	0%		
North Texas	40	29	11	29	12	8	3	3	0	3	317	152
		73%	28%		41%	28%	10%	10%	0%	10%		
Texas	44	29	15	29	12	6	3	3	0	5	432	230
		66%	34%		41%	21%	10%	10%	0%	17%		
Central TX	28	16	12	16	11	4	1	0	0	0	140	78
		57%	43%		69%	25%	6%	0%	0%	0%		
Virginia	26	23	3	23	9	10	0	3	1	0	233	146
		88%	12%		39%	43%	0%	13%	4%	0%		
Totals	169	116	53	116	57	32	8	10	1	8	275	119
Percentages		69%	31%		49%	28%	7%	9%	1%	7%		

*The total new church starts number in this column will nearly always be higher than the number of new starts used for the more detailed report analysis since only churches surviving long enough to report statistics can be studied in detail. This

APPENDIX B – Virginia Conference New Church Starts 1985 – 2005

New Church Starts - Virginia Conference - 1985 to 2005					
GCFA ID #	Name of Church	District	Four VAs	Year	Founding Pastor (FP)
470572	Community of Faith (originally Franklin Farm)	Arlington	NOVA	1986	Roy White
477163	Messiah	Norfolk	Tidewater	1986	Wayne Snead
477152	Courthouse Community (originally Redeemer)	Norfolk	Tidewater	1986	Bruce Tuttle
481154	Woodlake	Richmond	Capital	1986	Dennis Perry
470754	Old Bridge	Alexandria	NOVA	1987	Milton Marks
480412	Susanna Wesley	Rapp	Tidewater	1988	Alan Rock
471532	Christ	Alexandria	NOVA	1988	Charles Hubbard
470798	Crossroads	Arlington	NOVA	1989	Dave Norman
475368	Mountain View	Lynchburg	Shenandoah	1992	Will White
477538	Open Door Kor UMC	Peninsula	Tidewater	1994	Paul Song
481473	Korean Emmaus	Richmond (orig Ashland)	Capital	1994	Yunho Eo
481028	New Life	Richmond	Capital	1997	David Bonney
480822	New Song	Ashland	Capital	1997	Jim Chandler
477835	New Town	Peninsula	Tidewater	1999	David Ford
485312	Evergreen	Winchester	Shenandoah	1999	Chip Giessler
484693	Fieldstone	Roanoke	Shenandoah	2000	Lynne Alley-Grant
470311	Rising Hope	Alexandria	NOVA	1995	Kerry Kincannon
480228	Wilderness	Ashland	Capital	1998	Keith Boyette
473952	New Mission	Eastern Shore	Tidewater	1998	Vernell Carter
	Mision La Esperanza	Alexandria	NOVA	1999	Luz Carballo-Lugo
NO #	New Hope Community	Richmond	Capital	2000	Marilyn Heckstall
410966	Amor y Paz IMU	Winchester	Shenandoah	2000	Martha de la Rosa
476567	New Light Korean	Alexandria	NOVA	2001	Yong Hwan Joseph Kim
	New Season	Ashland	Capital	2004	Robb Almy
470377	Iglesia Metodista Unide Gracia	Arlington	NOVA	2001	Ileana Rosas
410842	Vietnamese	Arlington	NOVA	2002	Charles Tran

APPENDIX C – Virginia Conference Relocations 1985 – 2005

Relocations - Virginia Conference - 1985 to 2005					
Name of Church	District	GCFA ID #	Original Location	Yr of Move	Relocating Pastor
Herndon	Arlington	471042	655 Spring St, Herndon 20170	1987	Albert Sikkellee
St. Mark's	Richmond	481655	9529 Midlothian Pike, Richmond 23235	1987	Glen C. Evans
Centreville	Arlington	470925	14040 Braddock Road, Centreville 22020	1991	Robert L. Parsons
Ebenezer	Ashland	471430	168 Onville Rd., Stafford 22556	1992	Kathryn F. Talley
Grace, Manassas	Alexandria	471144	9400 Main Street, Manassas 20110	1995	Jack Martin
Belmont (3Oaks Fell)	Roanoke	482648	806 Jamieson Ave SE, Roanoke 24013	2003	Debra Lucas
Mt. Sinai/New Hope Comm	Harrisonburg	483905	1723 Port Republic Rd, Harrisonburg 22801	2004	David Lagerveld
Norfolk	Norfolk	967196	2729 Bowden Ferry Rd., Norfolk 23508	2005	Sherry Daniels
Name of Church	District	GCFA ID #	New Location	Yr of Move	Relocating Pastor
Herndon	Arlington	471042	701 Bennett St, Herndon 20170	1987	Albert Sikkellee
St. Mark's	Richmond	481655	11551 Lucks Ln, Midlothian 23114	1987	Glen C. Evans
Centreville	Arlington	470925	6400 Old Centreville Rd, Centreville 20121	1991	Robert L. Parsons
Ebenezer	Ashland	471430	161 Embrey Mill Rd, Stafford 22554	1992	Kathryn F. Talley
Grace, Manassas	Alexandria	471144	9750 Wellington Rd, Manassas 20110	1995	Jack Martin
Belmont (3Oaks Fell)	Roanoke	482648	12392 Hardy Rd, Hardy 24101	2003	Debra Lucas
Mt. Sinai/New Hope Comm	Harrisonburg	483905	55 Round Hill School Rd, New Hope 24469	2004	David Lagerveld
Norfolk	Norfolk	967196	500 W 34th St, Norfolk 23508	2005	Sherry Daniels

APPENDIX D – Virginia Conference Mergers with Relocation to a New Site 1985 – 2005

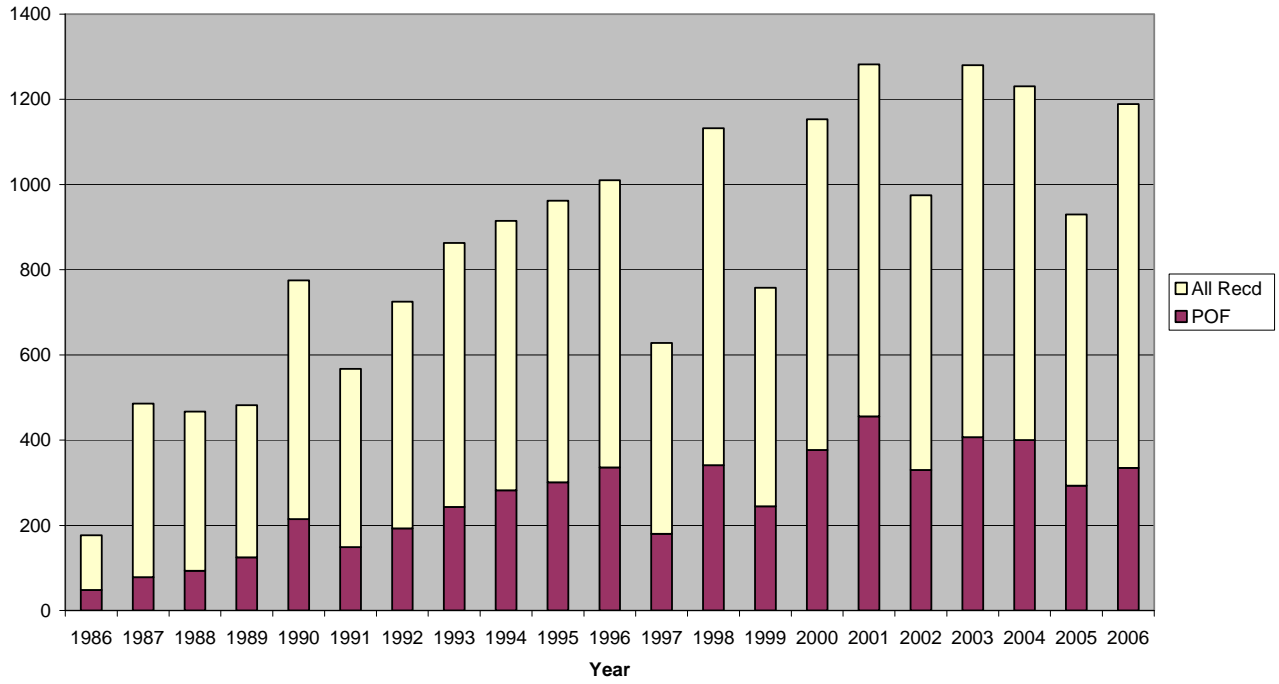
Mergers and Relocation - Virginia Conference - 1985 - 2005											
Dist	Year	Church 1	Location Church 1	ID for Church 1	Church 2	Location Church 2	ID for Church 2	Church 3	Location Church 3	ID for Church 3	Name of Merged Church
C	1985	Paran	unable to find	47221	Mountain Chapel	unable to find	47187				Grace
L	1985	Memorial	Ninth and Floyd, Lynchburg	47578	Brookville	7619 Timberlake Rd, Lynchburg	47541				Heritage
D	1988	Calvary	924 N. Main St., Danville	471725	Sledd Memorial	356 Lindhurst Dr., Danville	472968	Piney Forest	494 Piney Forest Rd., Danville, VA	472924	Saint Luke's
RD	1992	Asbury (South Richmond)	609 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Richmond	481165	Memorial	30 East Broad Rock Rd., Richmond	481542				Asbury Memorial
L	1996	Bailey's Chapel	Galts Mill Road, Madison Heights	47181	Madison Heights	Main Street, Madison Heights	47586				Amelon
Dist	Year	Name of Merged Church	Location Merged Church	ID for Merged Church	Notes						
C	1985	Grace	5143 Dickerson Rd, Charlottesville 22911	472217	Closed June 2007						
L	1985	Heritage	582 Leesville Rd., Lynchburg 24502	475780	Memorial burned in 12/03 speeding up conversations already underway						
D	1988	Saint Luke's	3090 N Main St, Danville 24540	471725							
RD	1992	Asbury Memorial	7151 Belmont Rd, Chesterfield 23832	481165							
L	1996	Amelon	220 Amelon Rd, Madison Heights 24572	475860							

APPENDIX E – Virginia Conference Mergers Using an Existing Site 1985 – 2005

Mergers and Stayed at One of the Locations - Virginia Conference - 1985 - 2005									
Dist	Year	Name of Church 1	GCFA ID Church 1	Name of Church 2	GCFA ID Church 2	Church 3 and ID	Name of Merged Church	GCFA ID Merged Church	Address of Merged Church
N	1985	Le Kies	47674	Wesleyan Acres	47707		Heritage	477072	815 Baker Rd, Virginia Beach 23462
A	1990	Manassas	412201	St. Thomas	471097		Manassas-St. Thomas	471097	8899 Sudley Rd, Manassas 20110
D	1985	Grace	47284	Design	47121		Grace-Design	471213	1064 Franklin Tpke, Danville 24540
PT	1986	Elm Ave	479468	Wright Memorial	479628		Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial	479468	1701 Elm Ave, Portsmouth 23704
RN	1987	Haven's	482615	Smith	48267		Haven's Chapel*	482615	3375 Daniels Run Rd NE, Check 24072
W	1988	Hume	485037	Orleans	485072		Orleans	485072	7029 Leeds Manor Rd, Marshall 20115
W	1988	Waterlick	485447	Bethel (Front Royal)	482078		Bethel	421594	49 Kendrick Ford Rd, Front Royal 22630
H	1989	Bethany	48552	Pleasant Grove	42097		Bethany	485527	3700 Lee Hwy, Weyers Cave 24486
PN	1989	Buckroe Beach	477345	First Church	477380		First Church Fox Hill	477380	1 Salt Pond Rd, Hampton 23664
H	1990	Bethany	9589	Mt. Carmel	9593		Mt. Carmel	95935	13375 Third Hill Road, Fulks Run 22830
PN	1990	Tyler Memorial	477505	Bethany	47742		Bethany	477425	1509 Todds Ln, Hampton 23666
RN	1990	St John's	48221	Price's Fork	482193		Price's Fork	482193	4236 Prices Fork Rd, Blacksburg 24060
A	1992	Epworth	47089	Sleepy Hollow	411948		Sleepy Hollow	411948	3435 Sleepy Hollow Rd, Falls Church 22040
H	1995	Centreville	47092	Mt Solon	484831	Bridgewater (484567)	Bridgewater	484567	219 N Main St, Bridgewater 22812
S	1995	Reid Chapel	968794	Calvary	48338		Calvary	483381	2179 Stuarts Draft Hwy, Stuarts Draft 24477
L	1995	First	47574	Chestnut Hill	475665		Chestnut Hill	475665	4660 Fort Ave, Lynchburg 24502
F	1996	Barker Mem	474912	Ward's Chapel	47493		Ward's Chapel	474934	Burkeville 23922
D	1996	Brosville	472401	Providence	473622		Brosville**	472401	120 Long Circle, Danville 24541
AR	1997	Christ	474912	Crossman	470845		Christ-Crossman	470845	384 N Washington St, Falls Church 22046
L	1997	Diamond Hill	476578	Emmaus	475916		Emmaus	475916	2282 Meadors Spur Rd, Moneta 24121
RD	1997	Good Shepherd	481597	Wistar Hgts	481600		Good Shepherd	481597	9155 Hungary Rd, Richmond 23294
AR	1999	St Mark's	471166	Korean Wesley (BWC Conf)	169375		St Mark's	411870	2425 N Glebe Rd, Arlington 22207
L	2000	New London	970354	Lebanon	47620		Lebanon	476204	4565 New London Rd, Forest 24551
*Floyd was another church listed as part of this merger but no statistical records or ID number could be located.									
**In 1996 Providence and Brosville comprised the Asbury Memorial Charge, Danville District. The two churches merged into Brosville.									

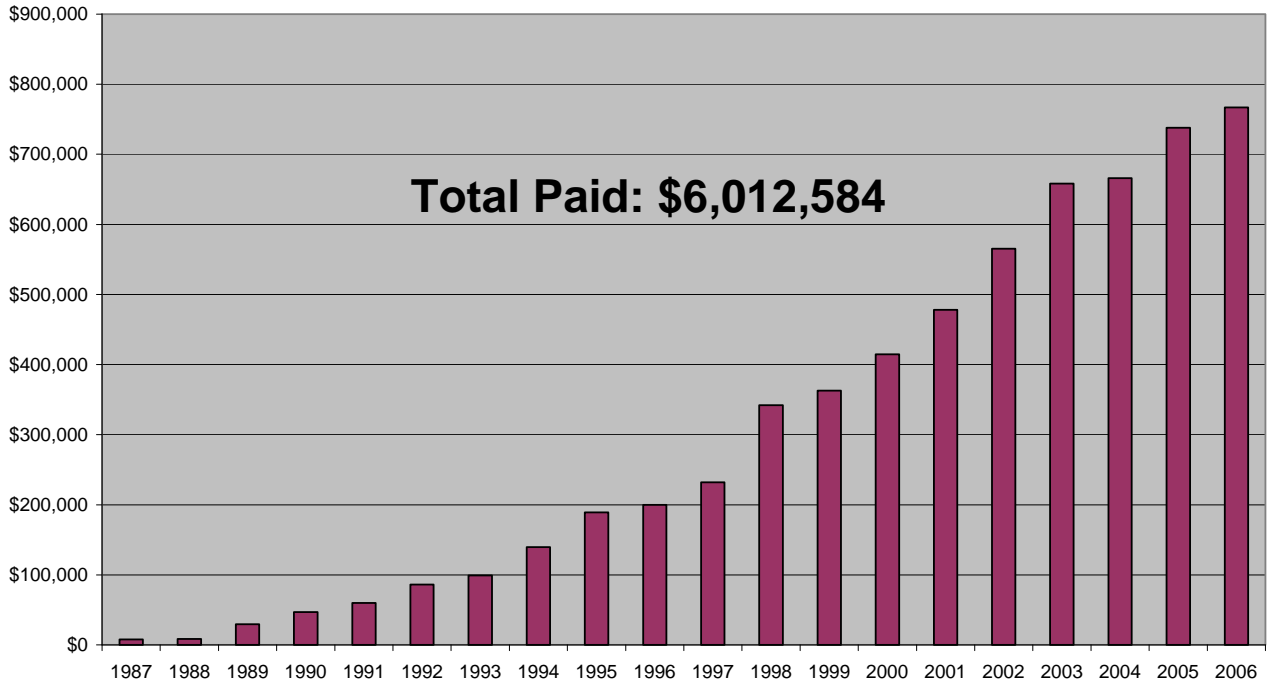
APPENDIX F – Members Received from New Church Starts

**Virginia Conference
Members Received from 23 New Churches
Established 1985-2005**



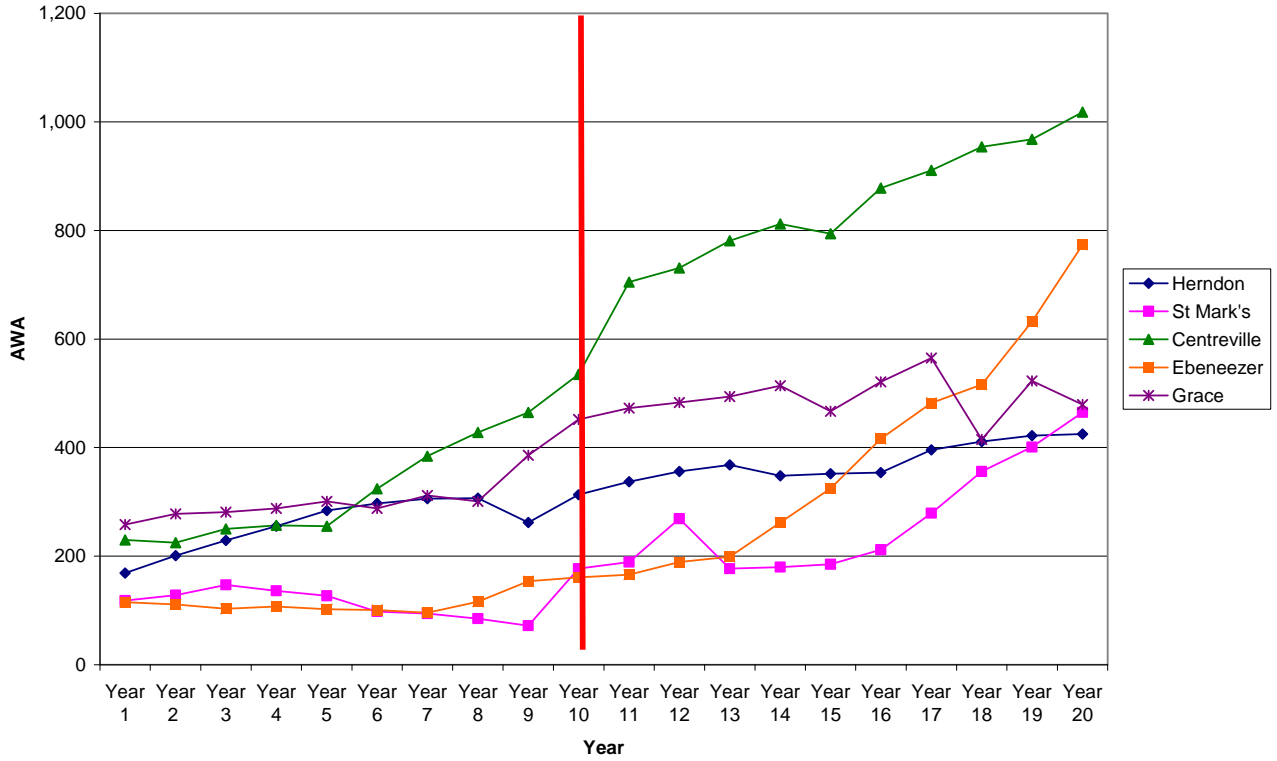
APPENDIX G – Apportionments Paid by New Church Starts

**Virginia Conference
Apportionments Paid by 23 New Churches
Established 1985-2005**



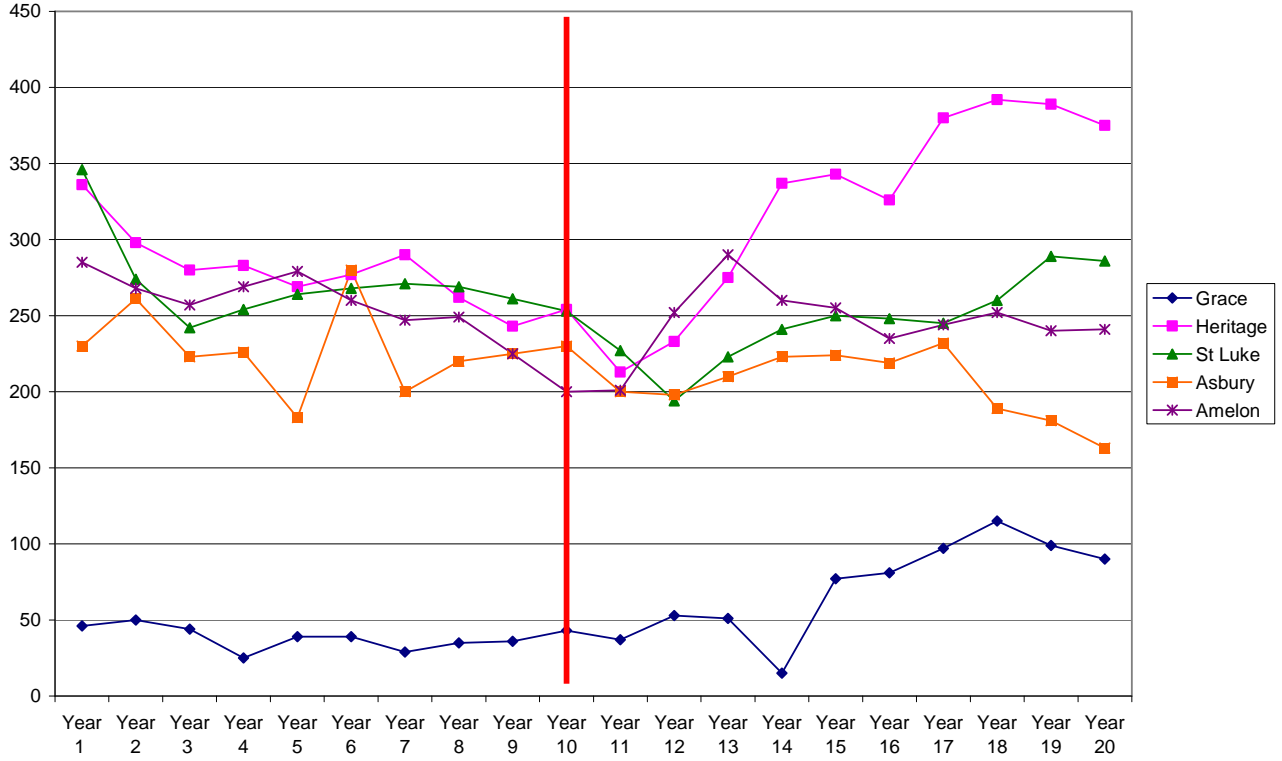
APPENDIX H – Average Worship Attendance Changes in Relocated Churches

Relocated Congregations Average Worship Attn 10 yrs Before and After Move



APPENDIX I - Average Worship Attendance Changes in Mergers that Relocated to a New Site

Average Worship Attendance 10 Years Before and After Merger & Move to New Site



APPENDIX J - Average Worship Attendance Changes in Mergers Using an Existing Site

Average Worship Attendance 5 Years Before and After Merger

