

ANDERSON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

**BECOMING A MISSIONAL CHURCH IN AN
ATTRACTIVE WORLD:
A STRATEGY FOR REACHING UNCHURCHED PEOPLE
THROUGH THE SOUTH TRACY COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**A PROFESSIONAL PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY STUDIES PROGRAM
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

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ABSTRACT

BECOMING A MISSIONAL CHURCH IN AN ATTRACTIVE WORLD: A Comprehensive Strategy to Reach Unchurched People Through South Tracy Community Church

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This project was born out of a passion to see unchurched people come into the church of God. Throughout our nation, while megachurches are getting larger, we are still closing many churches as they continue to decline in numbers. In America, the church overall is in decline. This is especially true here on the West Coast. Here in Tracy, CA, less than half of the population can be thought of as “churched” by any reasonable methods of accounting. The concern of this project was to find out why people, especially those who are postmodern and those who are hard-to-reach do not come to churches. This project looks at this primarily from a missional perspective while also looking at the attractional model of church growth.

Research takes the form of three components. First, there is the literature of both the attractional and missional models of church, as well as understanding the unchurched. Second, there are thirty plus interviews I conducted with local unchurched people. By this, I attempted to find out their possible church backgrounds, if any, and to discern why they do not go to church. I also look at what might bring them into a church. The third component comprises the activities of South Tracy Community Church, as we evaluate our own efforts at reaching postmodern, hard-to-reach people over the last six years.

The project is divided into four parts. The first part in three chapters, brings context to the issue of the unchurched. Chapter 1 brings to light the biblical and theological context to our missional endeavor. Chapter 2 shares our environmental context, especially the local contour. Chapter 3 defines the differences between the attractional and the missional models of reaching unchurched people. Part II is an overview of the literature in this genre. Chapter 4 shares the attractional literature of the church growth and church health models, while Chapter 5 brings us an awareness of the available missional literature. Part III is an attempt to understand the unchurched. Chapter 6 introduces us to the unchurched, how they feel, what they think and who they are. Chapter 7 brings insight into why they will not come into our churches, how they see the church. Part IV brings us to the task of how to reach the unchurched. Chapter 8 gives us an insight into how to find and reach the unchurched, while Chapter 9 provides the strategy we are using and developing at South Tracy Community Church.

In addition, suggestions for further research can be found in the final chapter, as well as recommendations for the church at large. While this project in no way means to denigrate the attractional church, it is primarily founded upon a more missional approach.