Table of Contents

Front Cover: *The cover artwork is a stylized photo by Steve Buffington. "An image of a Christian leader is the rope braking device used in repelling. If its integrity is compromised, your life could be in danger. However, a braking device that functions as its creator intended allows risks and activities unable to be experienced in any other way."*

CHURCH SIZE, PASTORAL HUMILITY, AND MEMBER CHARACTERISTICS: WHAT PREDICTS CHURCH COMMITMENT?

David R. Dunaetz

Azusa Pacific University

Melody Cullum

TurningWest, Inc.

Edgar Barron

Azusa Pacific University

ABSTRACT: Although wavering personal commitment to a local body of believers has been a concern of Christian leaders since New Testament times, increasing individualism and other cultural changes are affecting individual Christians' commitment to their churches in new ways. This study examines church commitment using the multidimensional construct of organizational commitment to examine characteristics of churches, church leaders, and church members that may influence such commitment. Specifically, church size, perceptions of pastoral humility, church tenure (the time one has attended a church), age, and gender are considered as possible predictors of church commitment. This commitment is measured as affective commitment (one's emotional attachment to the church), continuation commitment (the felt-need to stay at the church), and normative commitment (one's belief that staying at the church is the right thing to do). In a study of evangelical Christians in the U.S. ($N = 244$), a regression analysis indicates that higher affective commitment is associated with perceptions of greater pastoral humility and member tenure. Continuation commitment decreases as church size goes up. Higher normative commitment is associated with perceptions of greater pastoral humility, smaller churches, and longer member tenure. Overall, higher church commitment is best predicted by perceptions of pastoral humility, then by tenure and church size, with larger churches having less committed attenders. No significant differences in church commitment were associated with age or gender.

Church Size, Pastoral Humility, and Member Characteristics
as Predictors of Church Commitment

In light of Jesus' mandate found in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), two of the most important cultural changes occurring in the 21st century concern the increase in individualism (Roberts & Helson, 1997; Twenge, 2014; Twenge, Campbell, & Gentile, 2013) and the rise of the megachurch, especially in North America (Loveland & Wheeler, 2003; Thumma & Bird, 2015; Twitchell, 2004). Both of these phenomena are likely to affect the nature of an individual's commitment to his or her local church (Gelade, Dobson, & Auer, 2008; von der Ruhr & Daniels, 2012). Because greater individualism is associated with greater narcissism (i.e., lower humility; Twenge & Campbell, 2009; Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008), these two phenomena may interact and amplify their impact on church commitment. A recent study found that attenders of larger churches tolerated pastoral narcissism more than did attenders of smaller churches (Dunaetz, Jung, & Lambert, 2018). This leads to the concern that the megachurch phenomena may encourage an increase in pastoral narcissism. The purpose of this study is to explore how church commitment relates to perceived pastoral humility, church size, and certain characteristics of the church attender.

CHURCH COMMITMENT

One of the most studied topics in the organizational sciences is organizational commitment (Gelade, et al., 2008; Leiter & Maslach, 1988; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; Munduate & Dorado, 1998) which can be defined as "an employee's sense of attachment and loyalty to the work organization with which the employee is associated" (A. Cohen, 2013, p. 526). Some of the antecedents of an individual's organizational commitment include having shared goals with leadership, desiring to retain one's relationship with people in the organization, and job satisfaction, while some of the consequences include a willingness to work hard for the organization, increased quality of one's work performance, greater job satisfaction, and lower turnover and absenteeism (A. Cohen). The concept of organizational commitment can be extended to a Christian's attitude toward his or her church. We define *church commitment* as "A Christian's sense of attachment and loyalty to the church that he or she attends most frequently."

Although not specifically mentioned in the New Testament, church commitment is closely associated with a number of important biblical themes. Commitment to the Lord is a core biblical value which includes loving him (Dt 6:5; Mt 22:37), even loving him more than one's family and self (Lk 14:26-27). Fitness for the Kingdom of God requires an unwavering commitment comparable to a refusal to look back when one is plowing the ground (Lk 9:62). Although the Christian is called to be committed to the Lord, Christ is considered the cornerstone of the church (Eph 2:19-22) and the church itself is considered to be Christ's body (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 3:17; Eph 2:21; 4:16; Col 1:18, 24), essentially linking commitment to Christ to commitment to his body. Similarly, meeting together as the church to promote a Christ-centered lifestyle (Heb 10:24-25) is a fundamental responsibility of the Christian. One's commitment to Christ's body, the church, may serve as a visible, yet imperfect, measure of commitment to Christ himself (Jas 2:14-26). Church leaders are called to care for the body of Christ (Acts 20:28) and to help the members live out their commitment to Christ (Eph 4:12).

DIMENSIONS OF CHURCH COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment has typically been viewed as a multidimensional construct (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, et al., 1993) consisting of affective commitment (focusing on how much one wants to stay in the organization, that is, one's emotional attachment), continuance commitment (how much one needs to stay in the organization), and normative commitment (how much one should stay in the organization, that is, one's belief that staying in the organization is the right thing to do). Each of these dimensions can also be seen in church commitment.

AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT. The positive feelings that one associates with one's church, the degree to which one sees oneself as part of the church, and the positive feelings that one experiences when serving in the church are all elements of affective commitment. It is a sign that one believes that involvement in this church is beneficial. Affective commitment depends on several factors (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Personal characteristics influence affect in general; some people have more warm, positive feelings than others, and are thus more likely to have greater affective commitment to any church they attend than would be people with fewer positive feelings. The relationships that one develops in a church, whether in ministry or fellowship contexts, also influence one's affective commitment. Similarly, experiences with the church as a whole and its leadership also influence affective commitment. The congruence between a leader's values and behaviors and between an organization's values and behaviors have been shown to be positively associated with affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Leaders' receptiveness to new ideas and equitable treatment of members (e.g., a lack of favoritism) are also predictors of greater affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). When members are made to feel competent, appreciated, respected, challenged, personally important, and able to choose how they serve in the organization, affective commitment rises (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT. In contrast to affective commitment, which is almost always viewed positively by church members and leaders, continuance commitment may or may not be appreciated by church members. Continuance commitment is the degree to which one needs to stay in an organization because of the losses that leaving would entail or because of the lack of alternatives (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In a cost/benefit analysis of church membership (Dunaetz, 2017), continuance commitment would be associated with the costs that are involved with leaving a church: loss of relationships, loss of ministry, and/or loss of status. For some people, these losses may be very important, for others, less so. Much depends on how much the person has invested in the church (Rusbult, Agnew, & Arriaga, 2011; Rusbult & Farrell, 1983). It also depends on the quality of alternative churches that exist (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998). If one can easily find and attend a satisfying church elsewhere, one's continuance commitment will be lower than if there were no other alternatives. Hence, even if one's affective commitment to the church is low (for example, if one does not especially like the church or the leadership), one's continuance commitment may be high (because one does not want to lose one's relationships or position, or because there are no other satisfactory alternatives).

NORMATIVE COMMITMENT. The degree to which one believes one has a moral or God-led duty to attend a church underlies the concept of normative commitment. Family and cultural norms (depending on one's ethnicity and local culture) may be the driving force for some people's normative commitment. But the convictions that a Christian develops from studying the bible or the teaching received in the church and other Christian organizations may make an even greater contribution to a Christian's normative commitment. If a church's leaders teach that loyalty

and commitment to the church should be high, people's normative commitment is likely to rise if they like the leaders and find them credible. Although conceptually different, affective commitment and normative commitment are positively correlated in most organizations (Allen & Meyer, 1990), perhaps due to moral norms being internalized by members, resulting in greater positive feelings the more one is committed and involved in the church.

POSSIBLE FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE CHURCH COMMITMENT

The purpose of this study is to examine several factors that may influence a Christian's church commitment. These factors include the size of the church, perceptions of the lead pastor (specifically, perception of the lead pastor's humility), tenure (length of church membership), gender, and generational differences (as millennials begin to play a dominant role in many churches). Better understanding to what degree these factors influence the various dimensions of church commitment will help church leaders respond to members' needs in order to more effectively serve the Lord.

CHURCH SIZE. Since 1980, the number of megachurches (churches with a weekly average attendance over 2000) in the U.S. has increased approximately tenfold (Stetzer, 2013). There is more variation in church size than ever before. As large churches produce more and more professional services, some fear that commitment and discipleship are waning in the larger churches (Christopherson, 2018). Yet megachurches appear to be what the modern North American desires, especially those who are millennials (Thumma & Bird, 2009; Thumma & Bird, 2015). Several aspects of commitment in megachurches have been studied. Thumma and Travis (2007) found that megachurches generally asked for little commitment of those who have recently started attending, but that as time goes on, church leadership asks participants to increase their commitment to the church. Von der Rhul and Daniels (2012) describe the typical megachurch as providing low cost, low commitment entertainment for a broad section of the region's population, but raises its expectations of commitment for those whose values and desires fit those of the church. Whereas large churches can provide opportunities for service that correspond to a person's gifting and interests, smaller churches often have a more limited array of opportunities and expect attenders to make a commitment to those available. This study will examine if there is a general relationship between church commitment and church size.

PASTORAL HUMILITY. Christ calls church leaders to a life of service and humility (Titus 1:7; I Pet 5:3). However, as churches become larger, pastors often take on a larger-than-life role and essentially become the brand name of the church (Thumma & Travis, 2007). The popular press often portrays megachurch pastors as narcissistic, in contrast to the biblical calling of humility (Dyer, 2012; Patrick, 2010). A recent study found that larger churches tolerate narcissistic behavior in pastors more than smaller churches, perhaps due to their members' desire to have a superstar as pastor (Dunaetz, et al., 2018). Research in personality psychology has found that humility (often called honesty-humility because the two traits are so strongly correlated) is one of the six best personality traits to describe and predict behavior in people across cultures (Ashton & Lee, 2007). This humility is very strongly negatively correlated with various measures of narcissism (Lee & Ashton, 2005), and thus can be considered its opposite. High trait humility is the best personality trait for predicting sexual fidelity, honesty, and the non-abusive use of power (Lee & Ashton, 2012; Lee et al., 2013). From a theological perspective, humility is among the most important personality traits for leaders to possess, but systemic forces and personal desire often lead narcissists into positions of leadership. This study will examine if a church attender's perceptions of pastoral narcissism are associated with higher or lower church commitment.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES. Millennials and Generation Z are often portrayed as being very different from Baby Boomers and Generation X (Twenge, 2014), especially concerning religious beliefs (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2007). The popular press frequently presents more differences than can be supported by empirical research (Twenge, 2010), partly because generational differences are easily confused with developmental differences (e.g., young people of all generations tend to be more relational and idealistic than old people). However, individualism appears to be increasing across each succeeding generation (Roberts & Helson, 1997; Twenge, 2014; Twenge, et al., 2013). Greater individualism may lead to a decrease in church commitment as the community becomes less important for younger generations. However, generational studies have failed to consistently find a generational difference in organizational commitment in work settings (Twenge, 2010). This study will seek to discover any relationship between age and church commitment.

TENURE. Tenure is a measure of how long a person has attended his or her church. The longer people attend a church, the more opportunity they have to develop relationships with others. These strengthened relationships are likely to influence people's church commitment, although the relationship between tenure and organizational commitment in employment tends to be weak (A. Cohen, 1993).

GENDER. Churches tend to have a higher fraction of females attending than males (Dunaetz, 2011; Dym & Hutson, 2005). Although gender differences in organizational commitment tend to be small or non-existent (Marsden, Kalleberg, & Cook, 1993), it is possible that church commitment may vary by sex due to gender expectations or values commonly held in evangelical churches. This study will examine whether such differences exist for the various dimensions of church commitment.

HYPOTHESES. To better understand demographic and structural factors that influence church commitment, we hypothesize that the three dimensions of church commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) will be predicted by church size, perceptions of pastoral humility, age, tenure, and gender. This is an exploratory study so the direction of these relationships will not be hypothesized. Understanding which factors are associated with church commitment will enable church leaders to better understand the needs of their church as a whole and to better understand what individual Christians may experience and expect in various contexts.

METHOD

To test the hypotheses that church, pastoral, and individual characteristics predict the various dimensions of church commitment, church attenders were invited to complete an electronic survey which measured the relevant constructs. The participants were also encouraged to distribute the survey to others in their social network.

PARTICIPANTS

People who self-identified as attenders of evangelical churches, 18 years or older, from the social network of two of the researchers were electronically invited to complete a survey entitled "You and Your Church." After providing their informed consent, completing the survey, and being thanked for their participation, they were given a link to send to their own social network of church attenders.

In order to detect at least 80% of the correlations $r \geq .15$, a target sample size of 274 was chosen. Of the 275 participants who began the survey, 244 provided usable data. Data was excluded from participants who answered questions with consistent extreme scores (e.g., those who might be speeding through the survey without reading it), participants with little or no variation in their responses, even when presented reversed and non-reversed scored items, and participants with composite scores of any of the constructs more than 3.5 SDs above or below the mean.

The average age of the participants was 49.17 years ($SD = 11.87$), ranging from 15 years to 90 years. Most participants (78.2%) were female. Although females are in the majority in most churches (Dunaetz, 2011), this overrepresentation of female participants is unlikely to have affected the results because there was no significant difference between men and women in any of the key measures examined in this study. The participants' median church size was $501 - 1,000$ attenders; approximately half the churches studied were larger than this and half smaller.

MEASURES

Each psychological variable was measured with a series of items tapping differing aspects of the concept being measured. Participants responded to these items by indicating the degree to which they agreed to the various statements, using a five point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

CHURCH COMMITMENT. Meyer, Allen, and Smith's (1993) organizational commitment scales were modified to apply to one's church rather than one's place of employment.

Affective commitment, one's emotional attachment to the church, was measured with six items such as "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my life with this church" and "I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my church" (reverse scored). The coefficient of reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was excellent ($\alpha = .89$).

Continuance commitment, the felt-need to stay at one's church, was measured with six items such as "It would be very hard for me to leave my church right now, even if I wanted to" and "I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this church." The coefficient of reliability was good ($\alpha = .74$).

Normative commitment, one's belief that staying at one's church is the right thing to do, was measured with six items such as "I would feel guilty if I left my church now" and "I owe a great deal to my church." The coefficient of reliability was very good ($\alpha = .83$).

Overall commitment was measured as the average of the 18 items used in the three subscales. The coefficient of reliability was excellent ($\alpha = .86$).

PERCEPTIONS OF PASTORAL HUMILITY. The Honesty-Humility scale from the HEXACO-PI-Revised Observer Report (Lee & Ashton, 2012; Lee et al., 2009) measures the degree to which a person is honest and humble. High scores indicate sincerity, a desire to avoid using fraud and deception, greed avoidance, and a tendency to be modest and unassuming. Low scores indicate a willingness to manipulate others for personal gain, an interest in demonstrating superior social status, a sense of entitlement, and a belief that cheating and stealing may be justified. This scale was modified for this study to measure an individual's perception of his or her pastor's humility, which is conceptually similar to the opposite of pastoral narcissism. Items included "My pastor thinks that

he/she is entitled to more respect than the average person is" (reverse scored), "My pastor would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods" (reverse scored), and "My pastor would not pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for him/her". The coefficient of reliability for these ten items was excellent ($\alpha = .85$).

CHURCH SIZE. Participants subjectively indicated how many people they believed attend their church by choosing an attendance range on an 8 point logarithmic scale, 1 = Less than 50 attenders, 2 = 51 - 100 attenders, and continuing up to 7 = 2,001 – 10,000 attenders and 8 = More than 10,000 attenders.

TENURE. Participants indicated their tenure by responding to one item which asked them how long (in years) they have attended their church.

GENDER. Participants were asked to indicate their gender as either male (= 1) or female (= 2).

AGE. Participants indicated their age in years.

The descriptive statistics for these variables are found in Table 1. Table 2 reports how strongly they are related to one another.

RESULTS

To determine which variables were driving church commitment, we used a multiple regression analysis (J. Cohen, 2003), a standard statistical technique to remove overlap between variables that might potentially contribute to the dependent variable in question, in this case, church commitment. A common illustration used to explain multiple regression describes the relationship between temperature, ice cream consumption, and crime rate. A table of correlations (such as Table 2) would indicate that all three are positively correlated. But correlation does not imply causation. Although ice cream consumption and crime rates are correlated throughout a calendar year, it is difficult to understand how ice cream consumption could affect the crime rate. Multiple regression can help us detect which correlations have no influence on our dependent variable but exist only because they are correlated to the actual causal variable. In this example, if both temperature and ice cream consumption were entered into a multiple regression analysis predicting crime rates, only temperature would be a *significant* predictor of crime; ice cream consumption would most likely be identified by such an analysis to be a *non-significant* predictor. This is because higher temperatures in the summer cause people to be irritable and more likely to commit crimes (and the rise in temperature also causes people to eat more ice cream). Multiple regression removes the overlap in the relationship between the possible predictors (temperature and ice cream consumption) of the dependent variable (crime) to indicate what is likely to be actually driving the dependent variable.

In our multiple regression analysis, the dependent variables are the four types of church commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, and total commitment. The predictor variables are perceptions of pastoral humility, church size, tenure, gender, and age. The results are presented in Table 3. Perceptions of pastoral humility and tenure are both positive predictors of affective commitment (The more people perceive their pastor to be humble, the higher their affective commitment; similarly, the longer people have attended the church, the higher their affective commitment). Church size negatively predicts continuance commitment (continuance commitment is higher in smaller churches than in larger churches).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Measure	N	M	SD	Range
Affective Commitment	244	3.64	0.94	1.00 – 5.00
Continuance Commitment	244	2.67	0.80	1.00 – 4.83
Normative Commitment	244	3.18	0.84	1.00 – 5.00
Total Church Commitment	244	3.16	0.64	1.22 – 4.72
Perceptions of Pastoral Humility	244	4.13	0.66	1.50 – 5.00
Church Size	238	5.12	1.75	1 – 8
Tenure at Church (years)	238	11.65	10.91	0 – 62
Age (years)	242	49.17	11.87	15 – 90

Table 2: Table of Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Affective Commitment	--								
2. Continuance Commitment	.06	--							
3. Normative Commitment	.52***	.43***	--						
4. Total Church Commitment	.74***	.63***	.87***	--					
5. Pastoral Humility Perceptions	.48***	-.06	.20**	.30***	--				
6. Church Size	-.05	-.10	-.26***	-.18**	-.04	--			
7. Tenure at Church (years)	.17**	.05	.18**	.18**	.08	.19**	--		
8. Age (years)	.05	.04	.06	.06	.15*	.00	.22***	--	
9. Gender	-.06	-.04	-.11	-.10	.01	.06	-.08	-.16*	--

Note: $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$, two-tailed. For gender, 1 = male, 2 = female.

Perceptions of pastoral humility and tenure are positive predictors of normative commitment while church size is a negative predictor of normative commitment. Overall commitment is predicted by greater perceptions of pastoral humility, longer tenure, and smaller church size.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Predicting Church Commitment

	Type of Church Commitment			
	Affective	Continuance	Normative	Total
Predictor	β	β	β	β
Pastoral Humility Perceptions	.47***	-.08	.19**	.28***
Church Size	-.06	-.15*	-.29***	-.22***
Tenure	.16**	.07	.22***	.20**
Age	-.07	.03	-.03	-.04
Gender	-.06	-.03	-.07	-.07
R^2	.26***	.03	.16***	.17***

Note: N = 233. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. For gender, 1 = male, 2 = female.

DISCUSSION

This correlational study has examined the relationship between church commitment, perceptions of pastoral humility, church size, and member characteristics (tenure, age, and gender). Affective church commitment was predicted by greater perceptions of pastoral humility and longer tenure. Continuance commitment was only predicted by smaller church size. Normative commitment was predicted by greater perceptions of pastoral humility, smaller church size, and longer tenure. Total church commitment was predicted by the same factors as normative church commitment. What does all of this mean for church leaders?

AFFECTIVE CHURCH COMMITMENT. The first type of church commitment examined, affective commitment, is the desire to stay in a specific church because one likes the church. Most leaders would agree that affective church commitment is a good thing and that it makes fulfilling Jesus' command to love one another and be his witness easier (Jn 13:34-35). In this study, perceived pastoral humility is, by far, the strongest predictor of affective commitment. The pastor is often strongly associated with a church's identity. When the pastor is perceived as humble (and hence honest; Ashton & Lee, 2007; Lee & Ashton, 2005, 2012), church members enjoy the church more and have warmer feelings toward it. Perhaps one reason for this is that humble (vs. narcissistic) leaders are less likely to deceive or exploit those they are leading (Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2011; Cooper, Pullig, & Dickens, 2016; Lee & Ashton, 2005). Another possible reason is that humility is a foundational Christian characteristic (Mt 23:12; Phil 2:3; Js 4:6), especially for leaders (Mt 20:25-26; I Pt 5:1-5). Any signs of narcissism or deception negate the message and impede a leader's ability to model the Christian life.

Unsurprisingly, longer member tenure also predicts affective church commitment. Those who are unsure of a church (and hence have lower affective commitment) are likely to leave within the first few years, raising the level of affective commitment of those who remain (i.e., those with longer tenure). However, this indicates that helping newcomers develop affective bonds within the church quickly (e.g., through small groups, getting to know the leaders, serving together on a team) needs to be a very high priority for church leaders (Gailliard, Myers, & Seibold, 2010).

CONTINUANCE CHURCH COMMITMENT. The second type of church commitment examined, continuance commitment, is the felt need to stay in a church because of the lack of other options or because of the cost of leaving one's present church. From the church members' perspective, it is not especially desirable because it limits their freedom to choose alternatives that might be more pleasing. However, from the leaders' perspective, it adds stability to the church because there is less coming and going of members. Only church size predicted continuance commitment, which was higher is smaller churches. Lower continuance commitment in larger churches is probably due to the perception that there are many other church options. In the North American context, the typical attender of a large church may drive 15-20 minutes to get to his or her church (Thumma & Travis, 2007), passing many other churches on the way. In smaller churches, people may be so embedded in the community that leaving would be very costly.

NORMATIVE CHURCH COMMITMENT. The third type of commitment examined, normative commitment, is the belief that one should be committed to one's church. This facet of church commitment was the facet most strongly associated with overall commitment, having the exact same predictors.

Perceptions of pastoral humility predicted greater normative commitment. Although narcissistic leaders are known for demanding loyalty from their followers (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), humble leaders (at least in evangelical churches) are more likely to receive their loyalty. Humility most likely makes pastors seem credible rather than hypocritical. This in turn makes their messages more persuasive, including the message that one should be committed to a Christian community.

Church tenure, but not age, also predicts greater normative church commitment. This means that the longer one attends the church (but not necessarily the older one is), the more one is likely to believe that attending the church is the right thing to do. This phenomenon is perhaps due to doubt concerning God's will when one first starts attending a church, but with time, one develops the conviction that this church is where God wants them to be. However, and quite interestingly, the size of the church was the best predictor of normative commitment; people in larger churches were less sure that they needed to be committed to the church than did people in smaller churches. This can be due to the beliefs of either the leadership or the individual church attender. Leaders of large churches may place less of an emphasis in their teaching on the need to be committed to a local body of believers. At the same time, attenders of large churches may not feel as needed as attenders of small churches; with less perceived evidence that they need to be committed to their church, normative commitment may lessen. This may indicate that leaders of larger churches need to place a greater emphasis on the need to be committed to a church and on the needs to which individual members can respond.

AGE AND GENDER. It is interesting to note that no facet of commitment was associated with gender or age. Both male and female, millennials and boomers, indicated equal commitment to their church along all three dimensions. If a church has a deficit of committed attenders in one of these domains (e.g., many boomers and fewer millennials), it does not appear to

be the fault of the demographic in question. Rather, it appears that the church's strategy or ability to reach this group is deficient since other churches are able to do it satisfactorily (regardless of church size).

APPLICATIONS FOR LARGER CHURCHES. As noted, total church commitment in larger churches (e.g., megachurches) tends to be lower than in smaller churches. This is especially due to lower continuance commitment and lower normative commitment in larger churches. This is congruent with Von der Rhul and Daniels' (2012) description of the typical megachurch as providing low cost, low commitment entertainment for a broad section of the region's population, while raising its expectations of commitment for those whose values fit those of the church. If this is true, megachurches need first to make sure that the values of the church are communicated clearly and that means of expressing one's commitment to these values are clearly presented regularly to those wishing to raise their level of involvement. This application is most likely already practiced by the majority of megachurches. But a second application, perhaps less practiced, concerns the importance of persuading attenders of the need to be committed to Christ and his church (i.e., increased normative commitment). If church leaders want to increase church commitment, then commitment to the church needs to be persuasively presented as the biblical norm. However, this may disappoint attenders who primarily value the entertainment that megachurches provide, perhaps demotivating them from continued attendance (Jn 6:66-69).

Church leaders also must give great care to leadership selection and succession. Because pastoral narcissism is so detrimental to members' commitment and because it is fundamentally in opposition to the concept of biblical leadership, special care must be taken to avoid the selection of leaders who tend toward narcissism. This is especially true in larger churches because narcissistic pastors are attracted to such churches and are tolerated by them more than in smaller churches (Dunaetz, Jung, & Lambert, 2018). Various strategies for avoiding such leadership selection have been described (Dunaetz, Jung, & Lambert). These include asking careful interview questions concerning the limits to which the candidates will go in order to achieve their goals. Selection committees can also ask about weaknesses and lessons learned from failures in order to see if the candidates are willing to admit to true limitations or weaknesses.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH. Although the data collected from this study provides many insights about church commitment, several limitations must be kept in mind. Because the data was self-reported, personal biases may have influenced responses in a way that does not reflect reality. However, since participants generally valued their church, it is likely that most tried to be as honest as they could be. In addition, this was a correlational study, unable to determine causal direction. We assumed that the various factors (e.g., perceptions of pastoral humility) that were associated with church commitment were the cause of this commitment. However, it is possible, and even probable, that some of the relationships were partially due to reverse causation (e.g., people are committed to the church, therefore they think their pastor is humble).

Future studies should examine other individual differences in both church members and church leaders (e.g., personality, education, ethnicity, and level of church involvement) as possible factors that may influence church commitment. Similarly, the effects of church structures and programs on church commitment needs be more thoroughly examined.

REFERENCES

Allen, N. J. & Meyer, J. P. (1990). "The Measurement and Antecedents of Affective, Continuance and Normative Commitment to the Organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 63*, 1-18.

Ashton, M. C. & Lee, K. (2007). "Empirical, Theoretical, and Practical Advantages of the HEXACO Model of Personality Structure." *Personality and social psychology review, 11*, 150-166.

Campbell, W. K., Hoffman, B. J., Campbell, S. M. & Marchisio, G. (2011). "Narcissism in Organizational Contexts." *Human Resource Management Review, 21*, 268-284.

Cohen, A. (1993). "Age and Tenure in Relation to Organizational Commitment: A Meta-Analysis." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 14*, 143-159.

Cohen, A. (2013). "Organizational Commitment Theory." In E. H. Kessler (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Management Theory* (vol. 2, pp. 526-529). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Cohen, J. (2003). *Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cooper, M. J., Pullig, C.,& Dickens, C. (2016). "Effects of Narcissism and Religiosity on Church Ministers with Respect to Ethical Judgment, Confidence, and Forgiveness." *Journal of Psychology & Theology, 44*, 42-54.

Dunaetz, D. R. (2011). *Personality and Conflict Style: Effects on Membership Duration in Voluntary Associations.* Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic Press.

Dunaetz, D. R., Jung, H. L. & Lambert, S. S. (2018). "Do Larger Churches Tolerate Pastoral Narcissism More than Smaller Churches?" *Great Commission Research Journal, 10*, 69-89.

Dyer, J. E. (2012). "Loving Thyself: A Kohutian Interpretation of a 'limited' Mature Narcissism in Evangelical Megachurches." *Journal of Religion and Health, 51*, 241-255.

Dym, B. & Hutson, H. (2005). *Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Gailliard, B. M., Myers, K. K. & Seibold, D. R. (2010). "Organizational Assimilation: A Multidimensional Reconceptualization and Measure." *Management Communication Quarterly, 24*, 552-578.

Gelade, G. A., Dobson, P. & Auer, K. (2008). "Individualism, Masculinity, and the Sources of Organizational Commitment." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 39*, 599-617.

Kinnaman, D. & Lyons, G. (2007). *Unchristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity... And Why It Matters.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Lee, K. & Ashton, M. C. (2005). "Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and Narcissism in the Five-Factor Model and the HEXACO Model of Personality Structure." *Personality and Individual Differences, 38*, 1571-1582.

Lee, K. & Ashton, M. C. (2012). *The H Factor of Personality: Why Some People Are Manipulative, Self-Entitled, Materialistic, and Exploitive—And Why It Matters For Everyone.* Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Lee, K., Ashton, M. C., Pozzebon, J. A., Visser, B. A., Bourdage, J. S. & Ogunfowora, B. (2009). "Similarity and Assumed Similarity in Personality Reports of Well-Acquainted Persons." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 96*, 460-472.

Lee, K., Ashton, M. C., Wiltshire, J., Bourdage, J. S., Visser, B. A. & Gallucci, A. (2013). "Sex, Power, and Money: Prediction from the Dark Triad and Honesty–Humility." *European Journal of Personality, 27*, 169-184.

Leiter, M. P. & Maslach, C. (1988). "The Impact of Interpersonal Environment on Burnout and Organizational Commitment." *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 9*, 297-308.

Loveland, A. C. & Wheeler, O. B. (2003). *From Meetinghouse to Megachurch: A Material and Cultural History.* Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press.

Marsden, P. V., Kalleberg, A. L. & Cook, C. R. (1993). "Gender Differences in Organizational Commitment: Influences of Work Positions and Family Roles." *Work and Occupations, 20*, 368-390.

Meyer, J. P. & Allen, N. J. (1991). "A Three-Component Conceptualization of Organizational Commitment." *Human Resource Management Review, 1*, 61-89.

Meyer, J. P. & Allen, N. J. (1997). *Commitment in the Workplace: Theory, Research, and Application.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Meyer, J. P., Allen, N. J. & Smith, C. A. (1993). "Commitment to Organizations and Occupations: Extension and Test of a Three-Component Conceptualization." *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*, 538-551.

Munduate, L. & Dorado, M. A. (1998). "Supervisor Power Bases, Co-Operative Behaviour, and Organizational Commitment." *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 7*, 163-177.

Patrick, J. (2010, November). "Working With a Narcissistic Leader." Retrieved from http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2010/november-online-only/workingnarcissisticleader.html

Roberts, B. W. & Helson, R. (1997). "Changes in Culture, Changes in Personality: The Influence of Individualism in a Longitudinal Study of Women." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72*, 641-651.

Rosenthal, S. A. & Pittinsky, T. L. (2006). "Narcissistic Leadership." *The Leadership Quarterly, 17*, 617-633.

Rusbult, C. E., Agnew, C. R. & Arriaga, X. B. (2011). "The Investment Model of Commitment Processes." In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology* (vol. 2, pp. 218-231). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rusbult, C. E. & Farrell, D. (1983). "A Longitudinal Test of the Investment Model: The Impact on Job Satisfaction, Job Commitment, and Turnover of Variations in Rewards, Costs, Alternatives, and Investments." *Journal of Applied Psychology, 68*, 429-438.

Rusbult, C. E., Martz, J. M. & Agnew, C. R. (1998). "The Investment Model Scale: Measuring Commitment Level, Satisfaction Level, Quality of Alternatives, and Investment Size." *Personal Relationships, 5*, 357-387.

Stetzer, E. (2013, February 19). "The Explosive Growth of U.S. Megachurches, Even While Many Say Their Day is Done. *Christianity Today.*

Thumma, S. L. & Bird, W. (2009). *Not Who You Think They Are: The Real Story of People Who Attend America's Megachurches.* Hartford, CT: Hartford Institute for Religion Research.

Thumma, S. L. & Bird, W. (2015). "Megafaith For The Megacity: The Global Megachurch Phenomenon." *The Changing World Religion Map* (pp. 2331-2352). Dordrecht, NL: Springer.

Thumma, S. L. & Travis, D. (2007). *Beyond Megachurch Myths: What We Can Learn from America's Largest Churches (vol. 21).* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Twenge, J. M. (2010). "A Review of the Empirical Evidence on Generational Differences in Work Attitudes." *Journal of Business and Psychology, 25*, 201-210.

Twenge, J. M. (2014). *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled–And More Miserable Than Ever Before (Rev. ed.)*. New York, NY: Atria.

Twenge, J. M. & Campbell, W. K. (2009). *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in The Age of Entitlement*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Twenge, J. M., Campbell, W. K. & Gentile, B. (2013). "Changes in Pronoun Use in American Books and The Rise of Individualism, 1960-2008." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 44*, 406-415.

Twenge, J. M., Konrath, S., Foster, J. D., Campbell, W. K. & Bushman, B. J. (2008). "Egos Inflating Over Time: A Cross-Temporal Meta-Analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory." *Journal of Personality, 76*, 875-902.

Twitchell, J. B. (2004). *Branded Nation: The Marketing of Megachurch, College Inc., And Museumworld*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

von der Ruhr, M. & Daniels, J. P. (2012). "Examining Megachurch Growth: Free Riding, Fit, and Faith. *International Journal of Social Economics, 39*, 357-372.

CONTRIBUTORS

Edgar D. Barron (Ed.D., University of Southern California) is an Assistant Professor of Leadership and Organizational Psychology at Azusa Pacific University. His research interests focus on the academic outcomes and social experiences of underrepresented students at historically White institutions. He spent 16 years in the Aerospace industry as an industrial engineer and he was the vice president of Communications and U.S. Ministries for Promise Keepers for 6 years. *Email: ebarron@apu.edu*

R. Mark Bell currently works as an independent researcher and serves as an adjunct professor. Mark holds an M.B.A. and a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership. Mark's research interests include effective followership and ineffective leadership. *Email: rmarkbell@gmail.com*

Andrew Levi Cavins is a U.S. Navy submarine veteran and active duty U.S. Coast Guard member. He is currently an instructor in advanced electronic systems in Northern California. He holds a B.A. in Government from Regent University and a M.A. in Public Policy from Liberty University. He is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Strategic Leadership at Regent University. *Email: andrcav@mail.regent.edu*

Melody Cullum (M.S., Azusa Pacific University, CLI-CA) is an Organizational Development Specialist at TurningWest, Inc. She has spent nearly 15 years researching curriculum and developing educational plans. She is passionate about helping organizations become healthier with practical tools and assessments to facilitate change and growth. *Email: mcullum@turningwest.com*

David S. Fowler, Ph.D., M.B.A.is an assistant professor of business management at Newberry College in South Carolina. He also instructs culinary, hotel, and restaurant management classes at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh Online Division and is a ten-year veteran of managing organizational transitions and deployments in a global corporate environment. He holds a Ph.D. in Human Resource Development: Organizational Development and Change from the University of Texas at Tyler, and an M.B.A. from Mississippi State University. Current research interests include religious leadership, organizational transitions, human resource development, and religious organizational shifts. *Email: david.fowler@newberry.edu*

David R. Dunaetz (Ph.D., Claremont Graduate University) is an Associate Professor of Leadership and Organizational Psychology at Azusa Pacific University. His research program focuses on interpersonal processes in Christian organizations, especially churches and mission agencies. He was a church planter in the eastern suburbs of Paris, France, for 17 years with WorldVenture where he and his wife started two churches and helped a third move beyond missionary dependence. *Email: ddunaetz@apu.edu*

Joe Easterling completed an M.A. in Christian Education, an M.Div., and an Ed.D. at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Theology and Apologetics from Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. He has served as a pastor since 1995, currently serving at Northside Church in Wilmington, NC. Aside from pastoring, Joe also teaches at a local community college and at Liberty University. He and his bride have been married for 23 years, and they have two girls who all live in Wilmington. *Email: jeasterling2@liberty.edu*

Jon Halverson is Partner at Talanton Advisors and the Talanton Impact Fund. The impact investment and advisory services firm focuses on Kingdom impact investing, strategy development and leadership development. Having spent more than 20 years at two of the world's leading food and agricultural multinationals, and four years living and working in Africa, Jon possesses a deep understanding of international business investment and development. At Cargill, Inc. Jon served as a Director of Mergers & Acquisitions in the Strategy & Business Development group In addition, Jon served as a Regional Investment Advisor for the United States Africa Development Foundation (USADF). He has also served at Land O'Lakes as the Vice President - International Development. Over the course of multiple moves around the world, Jon and his family have had the privilege of assisting in the launch and establishment of four start-up churches, including The Fellowship of the Woodlands in Texas and the Ocean Church in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Jon has a B.A. from Wheaton College and an MBA from Regis University. Currently, in addition to serving clients and organizations with a deep commitment to financial inclusion, leadership development and impact investing, Jon is pursuing a D. Min. with a focus on Transformational Leadership at Bethel University. Jon is based in Minnesota. His wife of 25 years is Kara and they have 4 wonderful children. *Email: Jon@Talantonllc.com*

Joy Jones-Carmack, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Business Studies-Management at Stockton University. Her recent publications include "Relational Demography in John 4: Jesus Crossing Cultural Boundaries as Praxis for Christian Leadership," published in *Feminist Theology*. Her work and current research focus on diversity and inclusion, leadership in the context of feminist and liberation theology, organizational communication, and political communication apprehension. *Email: joy.jones@stockton.edu.*

Sarah Rolle serves as a police officer in local law enforcement. Sarah has had tremendous support from her family as she obtained a M.A. in Management and Leadership from Liberty University and is currently seeking a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership at Regent University. Sarah hopes that her research can benefit the law enforcement community. Sarah would like to dedicate this article to her parents who were her first exemplars of Courageous Followers. *Email: sararol@mail.regent.edu*

Carlo Serrano has a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Regent University. He is currently the teaching pastor for oneChurch.tv in Clarksville, TN and an adjunct professor for Regent University and Grace College of Divinity. *Email: carlo@onechurch.tv*