



PROMISE AND CHANGE

STRENGTHENING PASTORS AND CHURCHES
THROUGH THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
IN CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP (CECL)

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TOM WATKINS, PH.D.
CECL PROGRAM EVALUATOR
KINGDOM MATHEMATICS
633 IONA LANE
ROSEVILLE, MN 55113
tom@kingdommathematics.org
651-765-2449

PREFACE

The Center for Excellence in Congregational LeadershipSM (CECL) results from a convergence of faith, passion, vision, humility, and persistence. We would not be able to continue in our work without partnering to hold one another up in prayer, offering encouragement, and taking the time to wait for God's direction. Fortunately, Lilly Endowment funding enabled us to conduct the highest level of professional evaluation to enable us to learn from ourselves and determine if we are realizing our vision for the program. Dr. Tom Watkins was recruited to lead this evaluation work because of his professionalism in conducting program evaluation in educational settings and his commitment to follow Christ. He holds a doctorate in Educational Psychology from the University of Illinois, and has conducted and supervised evaluations in educational and church settings over the past fifteen years. He has been careful to incorporate the feedback and experiences of pastors, coaches and other key stakeholders in developing and implementing a meaningful evaluation strategy.

The following report summarizes Tom's quantitative and qualitative findings for the first three classes of CECL. During CECL, we have witnessed how God has transformed pastors, coaches, church teams, families, and entire congregations. Some church teams have learned how to say no to anything that distracts them from the church's purpose. Pastors have set aside the past, and taken on habits of prayer, delegation and leadership that will prevent them from burning out. Pastor families have found new support from church leaders. Congregations have seen increases in investment for Kingdom work. Churches have become outward-focused, and reached further into the community. We deeply appreciate Tom's contribution to help us identify and communicate how CECL has impacted pastors, their families and their churches. His findings have also made a tremendous contribution to the improvements we have made over time to optimize CECL. We encourage your input on this report so that God's work will continue to be done through CECL, partner churches, and elsewhere in the Kingdom.

In Christ,

Ken Giacoletto
CECL Co-Director
President
Green Lake Conference Center

Ben Mott
CECL Co-Director
Vice President for Marketing and Program
Green Lake Conference Center

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ben Mott and Ken Giacoletto, CECL Co-Directors at GLCC, are dedicated to pastor and church team health and effectiveness, and have consistently and faithfully provided insights and support for this evaluation work. I offer sincere appreciation to the Lilly Endowment for making the original and supplemental grants to the Green Lake Conference Center (GLCC) that made CECL possible. Joe Gaunt served as the CECL grant writer, invited my involvement in the evaluation, conducted a large amount of evaluation work for classes 1-2, and has provided a steady stream of prayer, encouragement and wisdom. Several current and previous CECL staff maintained communication lines with the pastors and other church staff to ensure that evaluation expectations were understood and documents were submitted on time: Pat Zimmer, Robin Scott, and Russann Devine. CECL pastors, coaches, church teams and families took on the many personal and professional challenges presented through this program, and responded in faith. Mark McCloskey, Director of Transformational Leadership at Bethel University offered key counsel to the CECL evaluation that has changed the way in which we look at leadership and has improved the evaluation and the program. The CECL Vision Team played a critical role in the needs assessment for CECL and in helping to establish the data collection procedures. Finally and most importantly, without Jesus, none of this would have meaning.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROMISE AND CHANGE

What pastors and church leaders should know about the Center for Excellence in Congregational Leadership (CECL):

1. “CECL is a two year voyage, powered by the winds of the Holy Spirit, to help pastors increase joy in ministry and help churches reach communities for Christ through health and outward focus.” (CECL Mission). Over the past five years, 135 pastors and churches have completed this voyage.
2. The demographics of CECL pastors are similar to (but not necessarily representative of) many Baptist pastors in the Midwest, as well as many Protestant pastors in America. The typical CECL pastor in Classes 1-3 was most likely to be each (but not necessarily all) of the following: 50+ years old, Caucasian, male, Baptist, from the Midwest, holding an M.Div or other Master’s degree, and married with two or more children and a spouse working outside the home. However, other CECL pastors come from very different backgrounds, and this diversity appears to be increasing.
3. It is clear that church members have detected an improvement in church health during CECL. Experienced individuals in participating congregations reported statistically significant increases in four of the Natural Church Development survey scales: *Need-Oriented Evangelism*, *Holistic Small Groups*, *Goal-Oriented Ministry*, and *Functional Structures*. Scores on the other scales held steady.
4. CECL churches produced an excellent return on the grant investment. The 107 churches in CECL classes 1-3 with complete data experienced a 7.9% annual increase in giving during the program. Adjusting for inflation, which averaged 3.2% over this period, we can use a conservative inflation adjusted average annual increase level of 4.7% in offerings during the program. This amounted to a \$2.4 million increase above inflation in offerings just during the 2 year period in which the churches were in the program. This is \$900,000 (or 60%) more than the \$1.5 million in grant funds allocated to the 150 churches in the first three classes – what a kingdom impact!
5. Most CECL churches experienced an increase or held steady in attendance, during a time when comparable churches were shrinking.
6. Pastor engagement and endurance in CECL has increased significantly for each Class of CECL. All pastors in Class 3 participated in most of the five CECL sessions, compared to 92% for Class 2 and 71% of Class 1 pastors.
7. We found statistically significant increases on all five scales of the CECL pastor survey: *Leadership Tools*, *Accountability*, *Visioning and Strategic Planning*, *Family and Ministry Balance*, and *Spiritual Growth*.
8. The percent of pastors rated by their coach as demonstrating “consistency, vision and success with one or more teams” increased from five percent before CECL to 55% after CECL.
9. The percentage of churches rated by CECL coaches as “experiencing good health and growth or multiplication” increased from six percent before CECL to 53 percent after CECL.
10. Pastor self-reported risk for burnout decreased significantly during CECL. Sixty-five percent expressed moderate to high risk of burnout prior to CECL, and only 30% expressed this level of risk after CECL.
11. Peer teams, speakers, visioning and strategic planning, books, preaching training, rest/health benefits, and coaching or mentoring were most often listed by pastors as being the most helpful components of the CECL program.
12. Pastors were most likely to report that their churches benefited from a new church vision and/or better leadership. In terms of benefits to the community, pastors were most likely to list services, goods (food, clothing, etc.), or personal contact.

PROMISE AND CHANGE

STRENGTHENING PASTORS AND CHURCHES THROUGH THE CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP (CECL)

“Any fool can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count all the apples in one seed.”

Rev. Robert Schuller

Over the past five years, 255 pastors have begun a journey to take stock of their personal and professional promise, to expand their leadership toolbox, and to engage their churches in productive change. They have traveled to Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin to participate in the Center for Excellence in Congregational Leadership(CECL)¹, sometimes on their own, and other times with family or their church teams. Of these 255 pastors, 135 have completed the CECL voyage, 90 are continuing in the program, and 30 did not complete the program due to a job change or other reason. Almost all of them could describe serious challenges in ministry, and concrete ways in which they and their churches have been impacted and improved during CECL. Some of them described CECL as follows:

CECL has been good for my soul. Ministry was tough before I came because of lack of clarity in my life as to what I should do as a pastor. Ministry has remained just as tough but with tools gained there has been renewal in my life. Falling in love with the One who loved me all along has been life changing. Discovering a deep passion within to be a spiritual guide and friend has opened up many doors. Encouraging the congregation to pursue personal and spiritual transformation has been powerful as people have been in the Word. Life has become so much better as I have become more detached in some areas and totally engaged in areas where I operate out of God's calling for my life at this time.

CECL has "lit a fire" in me concerning vision and organizational thinking.

This has been a powerful experience of strengthening and equipping me for ministry - and a part of our church's movement towards greater passion and growth in ministry.

CECL has been a wonderful experience - for me, for my family, and for the leaders of our church. I have been exposed to some wonderful material and have made some great friends.

Since [I started in CECL], many changes have been made in my spiritual life and the life of my church. These changes can be directly related to CECL and my peer group meetings. I have gained more confidence in how God is leading me.

These are encouraging and hopeful statements that capture some of the “mountain top” experiences that many CECL pastors and church teams have during their CECL experience. There is also some diversity evident in these words – it is clear that each pastor has unique convictions, challenges, lessons learned and routes to improvement. Pastors were also not alone on this journey. They had a peer team and a coach to learn, laugh and to grow with. Here is how some of the coaches described pastor experiences at various stages of improving their practice:

This is a pastor who is frustrated wanting to bring about change. He is coachable. He has been in ministry 33 years, and yet he is still looking to advance. When he was getting so much pushback, I remember having to tell him many times “you’re not crazy”.

¹ CECL was originally funded through the Lilly Endowment's Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) grant program. The SPE initiative was a part of Lilly's long-term commitment to support Christian programs in America, and it was significantly informed by a needs assessment process through which experienced pastors were consulted regarding sustaining high-quality ministry.

CECL has breathed life into his ministry. About half way through the program, I wasn't sure he was going to finish the program – he was very discouraged and depressed. The Transitioning piece was important, but the main thing was bringing lay leaders here, and getting perspective on the situation. They felt a sense of empowerment by what they experienced at Green Lake.

From a pastor's meeting, you get all jazzed up about something, and then you present it, and it only takes one or two of the old guard to shoot a hole in your balloon, but when you bring in an external expert, you can't explain it away.

She had a vision team prior to CECL, but what CECL has done for her is to empower her to give not only leadership but ownership at a higher level. She was still doing a lot of the work herself, driving/riding people. Having them here has broadened the ownership. There has been some increase in attendance. She has also taken care of some personal health issues.

He has been actively taking what he learns and applying it. He has partially turned a dying church, and most of the protagonists have gone – a few remain.

He very seldom has a crisis that he is wrestling with. It is always problem-solved. Here is the gap – when he started, he talked about being bored. Last night at the update, he said ministry was fun – this is the way it should be.

She is now a dynamo that got plugged in. This is an old downtown church in a smaller town. This is her first full time pastorate. She has been there about three years. CECL has strengthened her confidence. She is stronger in leadership and bringing about stewardship.

He is doing some tremendous things in his church. He is working with a consultant to go through change. He has taken some CECL concepts and figured out how to apply them. He is willing to take whatever time it takes to get change. I see him as a long term pastor.

He is almost a clean slate – there is nothing to contest from prior experience. Harmony is really big for him – he struggles with opposition.

The guys are still all workaholics, but they have a better handle on personal devotions, family, and getting better balance.

She has had an issue with one of the staff members contesting everything that she does, and it is coming to a head, and now the church board is helping to confront this man.

These brief statements capture some of the promise and real change for pastors, church leaders and churches. It is safe to say that a two-year experience, no matter how well-designed, will not completely transform all chaplains into leaders, or remove all personal and institutional barriers that leaders face. This is messy work, and it requires faith, love and determination over many years. CECL hopes to help pastors and churches acquire some new tools for change while committing to positive and productive relationships over the long run.

This report will make the case that almost all CECL pastors clearly benefitted from the peer team and coaching. Most attempted to implement strategies in their church based upon their experience in the program. Some of them became a part of a productive church team. A few have the opportunity to see this change already result in improved church health and growth. Some will see even richer blessings three or five years from now. This report describes some of the lessons learned from this program, with the hope that it will inform the way we support pastors and improve churches.

CECL MISSION AND PROGRAM MODEL

Mission:

CECL is a two year voyage, powered by the winds of the Holy Spirit, to help pastors increase joy in ministry and help churches reach communities for Christ through health and outward focus.



This model was developed in 2007 to describe the major outcomes and program components of the most current vision of CECL. Earlier articulations of the program outcomes can be found in the earlier CECL evaluation reports (Watkins, 2006; Watkins, 2007). CECL monitored the progress of pastors and churches on these outcomes in several ways. The pastoral outcomes were measured through pre and post surveys of pastors and coaches and coach interviews. Congregational health was measured through Natural Church Development surveys (a widely-used and research-based survey of church health) as well as quarterly church reports of attendance, giving, baptisms and new members.

CECL LOGIC MODEL

Logic models are frequently used in program evaluation to make program expectations explicit, and to explore connections between various program components (e.g., MacNamara, 2000). The CECL Logic Model (next page) was developed in September 2006 after the completion of CECL class 1 with the goal of incorporating more of the CECL partners and extending the sphere of CECL influence to multiple aspects of the church and its broader community. This model provides an overview of most of the relevant program components in CECL, and offers a simple circular relationship among the four major components.

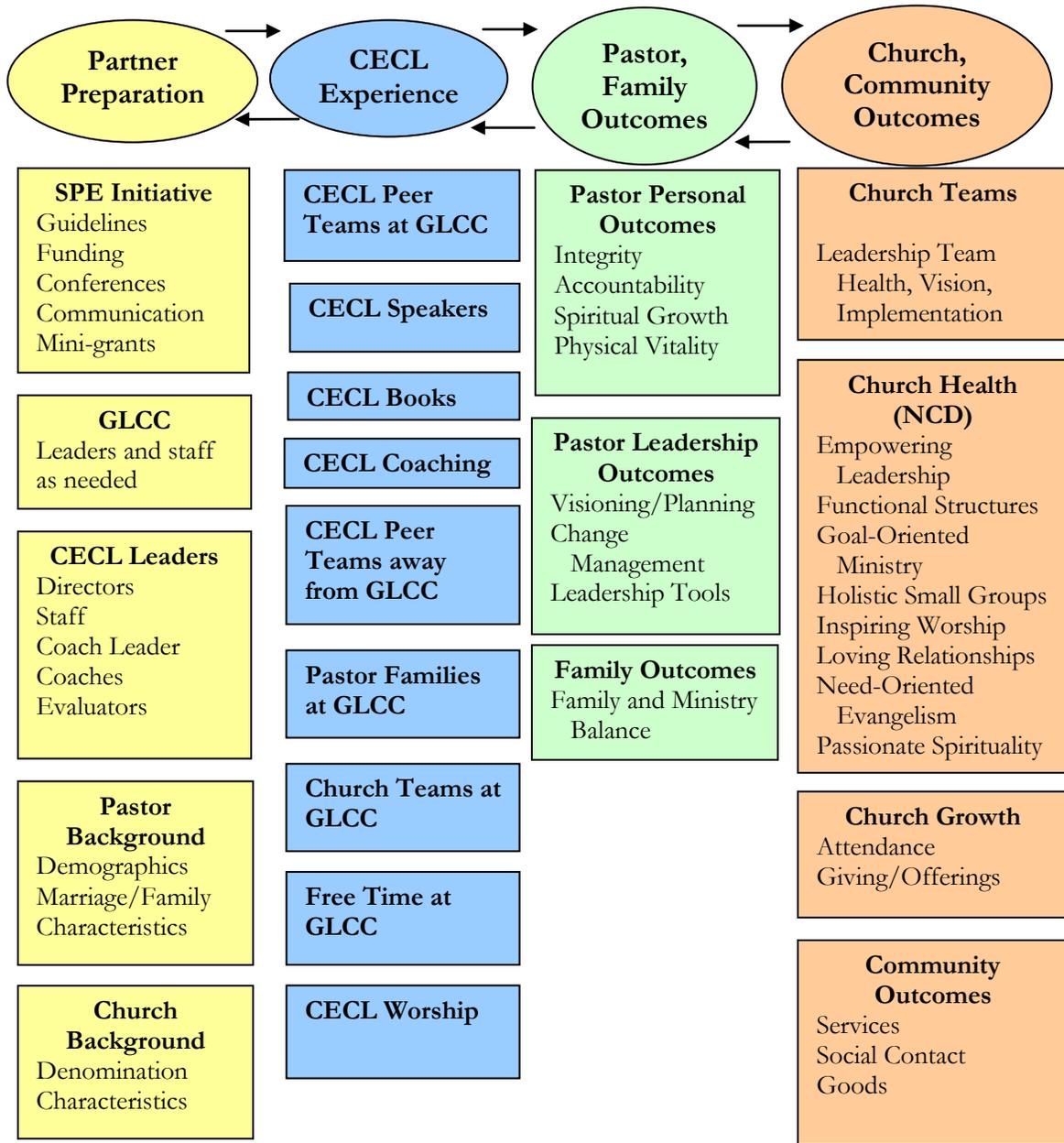
The **Partner Preparation** column summarizes the preparation that was required before CECL could become a reality, and the characteristics of the pastors and churches prior to CECL involvement:

- The Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) funding initiative of the Lilly Endowment established the guidelines and administrative structure for the program and provided funding (for the original grant, an extension grant, and two mini-grants for collaborative projects with other SPE grant recipients).
- The Green Lake Conference Center (GLCC) is the location for most of the CECL activities.
- GLCC provided the co-directors and coordinator of CECL, facilitated a Vision Team, and maintained contact with the coach leader, coaches, pastors and evaluation team.
- The background of the pastors and the churches participating in CECL were important components for understanding the program.

The **CECL Experience** column includes the various components of the program.

- Even before CECL began, GLCC staff, Vision Team members, and many volunteers invested a substantial amount of prayer time to CECL, and this has remained a central component of CECL in peer teams, training, coaching, mentoring and of course, meals.
- While at GLCC, pastors spent up to six weeks with their peer team over the two and a half years of the program. They were also expected to have “bridge meetings” nearer to home with their coach and peers between sessions at GLCC.
- Pastors were also invited to bring their family for portions of one or two of the CECL sessions, and expected to bring a team from their church to GLCC for two of the other CECL sessions (for two of the sessions, pastors came on their own).
- A variety of speakers presented content to the pastors, families and church teams. Pastors were also expected to read books prior to the CECL sessions. Some of the books were authored by the speakers, but all were selected to impart principles of leadership, church change, preaching, or related topics.
- Pastors, families and church teams also participated in worship time, and enjoyed free time (during which water activities, golf and other recreational opportunities were available).

CECL Logic Model



The **Pastor and Family Outcomes** column represents the pastoral outcomes of CECL (see above), organized according to the context in which the outcomes were likely to be observed.

Finally, the **Church and Community Outcomes** column includes the church health outcomes that were explicitly mentioned in the CECL proposal, as well as some church team and community outcomes that were observed in many cases.

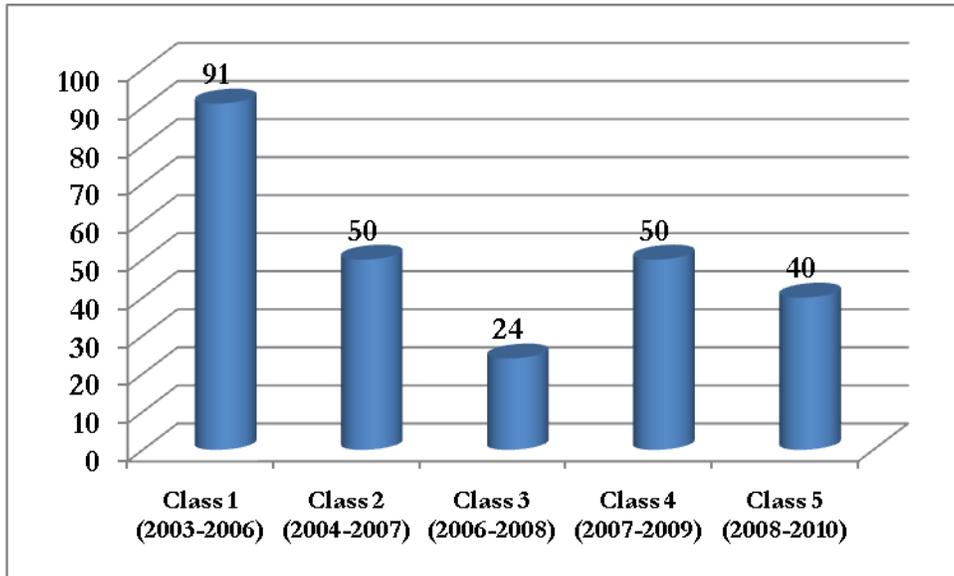
- In order to support pastoral leadership and congregational health, church teams were expected to attend two of the CECL sessions with the pastor. Church teams were generally comprised of church council members and/or elders plus potential future leaders. Church team health, vision and vision implementation were rated by the coach.
- The Natural Church Development (NCD) survey includes measures of eight “quality characteristics” that have been found to be important components of church health in a large international research study (Schwartz, 1999).
- At the outset of the program, pastors agreed to regularly report average weekly attendance, offering/giving, new members and baptisms. Attendance and offerings turned out to be the indicators that were most consistently reported and sensitive to change. Using new members and baptisms as outcome indicators would likely require longer reporting periods and greater specificity in reporting (for example, distinguishing infant and adult baptism, dedications, and other similar ceremonies). Later in the program, it became clear that several churches had begun or completed building projects during CECL (expansion), or had “birthed” one or more new churches (multiplication). Expansion and multiplication are not explicit goals of CECL, nor are they typically attributable evidence of CECL’s impact, yet they are important in the participating churches, and are addressed in a more qualitative manner later in this evaluation report.
- One of the common threads in many of the change models advocated by CECL speakers was the concept of an “outward focus” of the congregation, which includes regular engagement of the community, in the form of social contacts, or the provision of services or goods (such as food, clothing, etc).

Most of the remainder of this report will be dedicated to describing the relationships between the components in the Logic Model, towards the development of a CECL Benefit Model that may inform further refinements of CECL and other similar programs.

PASTOR PARTICIPATION IN CECL

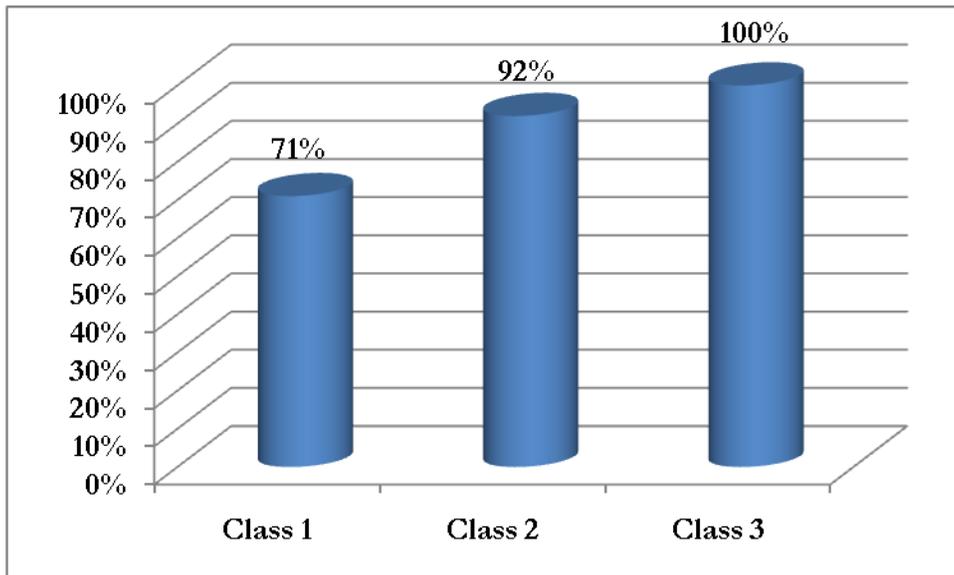
The following graphs report the number of pastors beginning each of the five CECL classes that have been launched thus far. The second chart reports the percent of pastors in the first three classes who attended most or all CECL sessions.

Number of Pastors Beginning Each CECL Class



Class 1 of CECL was by far the largest, and the number of participating pastors was greatly reduced for the two subsequent classes. The largest factor in this reduction was the decision on the part of Green Lake to support smaller classes of pastors (ideally 40-50). There was also a change in management of CECL prior to the launch of Class 3, which resulted in a scaled-down recruitment effort, and a re-tooling of CECL to better meet the needs of pastors.

**Percent of Pastors Participating in Most or All CECL Sessions
(Classes 4 and 5 are still in progress)**



The chart above indicates the percent of CECL pastors who participated in most or all sessions. For Classes 1 and 2, this meant at least four out of six sessions. For Class 3, this meant at least three out of five sessions. All 24 pastors in Class 3 participated in most or all CECL sessions, compared to 71% of Class 1 (65 pastors) and 92% of Class 2 (46 pastors). All together, 135 pastors and churches have participated in CECL at a level where we could expect impact. For Classes 2 and 3, there appears to have been a greater awareness among

pastors and coaches of what the program required. There were also many lessons learned during Class 1 that led to a more consistent implementation of the program. Examples of this were: (a) peer teams led by trained coaches instead of facilitators, (b) coaches had the support of a lead coach, (c) a coach retreat before each CECL session, (d) “bridge” meetings of peer teams between CECL sessions, (e) shortening the program from six weeks to five weeks.

PASTOR AND CHURCH DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic information is currently collected at the start of the CECL program to help coaches and staff meet the needs of pastors. It can also be used to characterize the participants as a group (see the tables below) and to determine where the program has been most effective (a later section of this report). Except as noted below, data are based upon responses from 120 pastors either at the start or the end of CECL.

Demographics of Pastors and Churches in Classes 1-3

<i>State²</i>		<i>Highest Degree</i>	
Wisconsin	32%	High School	3%
Illinois	18%	Bachelor's/AA	9%
Indiana	13%	Master's	81%
Minnesota	11%	Doctoral	8%
Michigan	10%		
Other	16%	<i>Marital Status</i>	
<i>Denomination²</i>		Married	97%
Baptist	75%	Single	3%
Independent	11%	<i>Spouse Employment Status Outside Home</i>	
Evangelical Free	8%	Employed	63%
Methodist	5%	Not Employed	37%
<i>Pastor Gender²</i>		<i>Children</i>	
Male	92%	0	11%
Female	8%	1	7%
<i>Age of Pastor</i>		2	38%
< 40	14%	3	28%
40-49	31%	4+	16%
50+	55%	<i>Ethnicity</i>	
		Caucasian	95%
		African-American	3%
		Hispanic	2%

² Based on data at start of CECL for 162 pastors and churches.

Age When Pastor Came to Christ

< 10	41%
10-19	50%
20+	10%

Church Plant/Restart

No	90%
Yes	10%

Age at Start of First Pastorate

< 20	4%
20-29	51%
30-39	30%
40+	16%

Age of Current Church

< 10 years	7%
10 - 49	19%
50 - 99	23%
100 – 149	27%
150+	25%

Number of Churches Pastored in Career

1	17%
2	27%
3	24%
4	24%
5	5%
6+	4%

Urbanicity of Church Community

Rural	47%
Suburban	35%
Urban	18%

Years in Current Church

1-5	42%
6-10	29%
11-15	19%
16+	14%

Church Building Project During CECL

No	70%
Yes	30%

Number of Churches Currently Pastoring

1	93%
2+	7%

Church Birthed a New Church During CECL

No	95%
Yes	5%

Summary

The typical CECL pastor in Classes 1-3 was most likely to be each (but not necessarily all) of the following: 50+ years old, Caucasian, male, Baptist, from the Midwest, holding a Masters of Divinity (M.Div) or other master's degree, and married with two or more children and a spouse working outside the home. They most likely had 20+ years experience as a pastor, and had served in two or more churches. Most were serving a rural church that is 50+ years old, with 1 or 2 other staff.

Baptists are the largest single denomination among Protestants in the U.S. They comprise 31.6% of Protestants, and about 11% of the total population, in America (ARDA, 2007a; ARDA, 2007b). Men who are married, have children, and have a M.Div and ten years or more experience as a pastor are also more likely than other candidates to be selected by pastoral search committees in Protestant churches (Lummis, 2003). With this in mind, it is safe to say that CECL pastors are typical of Baptist pastors in the Midwest, and may be reflective of many Protestant pastors in America.

However, there were also many pastors from different backgrounds, and their numbers appear to be increasing in CECL. For example, Classes 4 and 5 include several Asian American pastors, and many pastors from outside of the Midwest. As more pastors participate in CECL, it will be more likely that we will be able to reliably detect patterns of needs and supports for pastors from different cultural and experiential

backgrounds. This will enable CECL to provide an experience that better meets pastor needs and helps bring about congregational change more efficiently and effectively.

PASTOR SURVEY

A survey that was aligned to the CECL outcomes was administered to pastors at the first and last sessions of CECL. Pastors responded to all statements in the survey on a scale from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” Originally, there were three or more survey questions designed to measure responses from pastors on scales that were aligned to eight of the ten CECL outcomes (all outcomes except congregational health and physical vitality). After conducting internal consistency and factor analysis on these scales, it was determined that six scales would be most appropriate to report.³ This meant that there would not be separate scales for Mentorship and Change Management.

Accountability (3 questions, $\alpha = .77$) sample: “There are several people I know I can be honest with who will hold me accountable in a loving manner.”

Family and Ministry Balance (4 questions, $\alpha = .75$) sample: “I am very effective at prioritizing and balancing family and ministry demands on me.”

Leadership Tools (3 questions, $\alpha = .72$): “I have identified some excellent resources on leadership that I can apply in my work.”

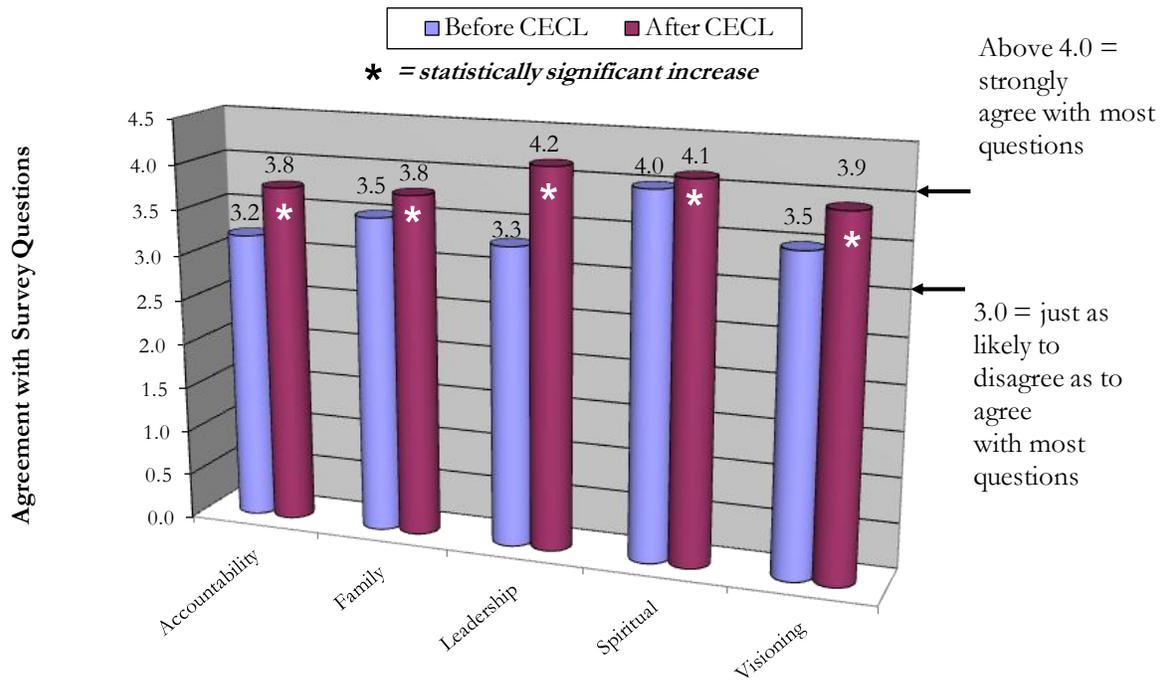
Spiritual Growth (3 questions, $\alpha = .74$): “I often feel a powerful sense of God’s calling in my life.”

Visioning and Strategic Planning (3 questions, $\alpha = .75$): “I successfully conduct strategic planning in a way that reflects the identified vision and needs.”

The results from the pre- and post surveys are summarized in the following chart.

³ A basic factor analysis approach described by Thapalia (2006) was used to examine the scale coherence. A principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation identified the six revised scales which each had eigenvalues greater than 1, and as a group accounted for 68% of the variance in item responses.

**CECL Pastor Survey Scales Before and After CECL
Classes 1-3 Combined - 97 Pastors**



Paired Sample T-Test of Pastor Survey Scale Increases from First to Second Survey

<i>Pastor Survey Scale</i>	<i>Number of Pastors</i>	<i>Mean Difference (Post - Pre)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>Percent Gaining</i>
Accountability	97	0.55	0.87	6.3**	61%
Family and Ministry Balance	97	0.27	0.68	3.9**	54%
Leadership Tools	97	0.91	0.79	11.3**	88%
Spiritual Growth	96	0.19	0.72	2.6*	47%
Visioning and Strategic Planning	97	0.43	0.55	7.8**	70%

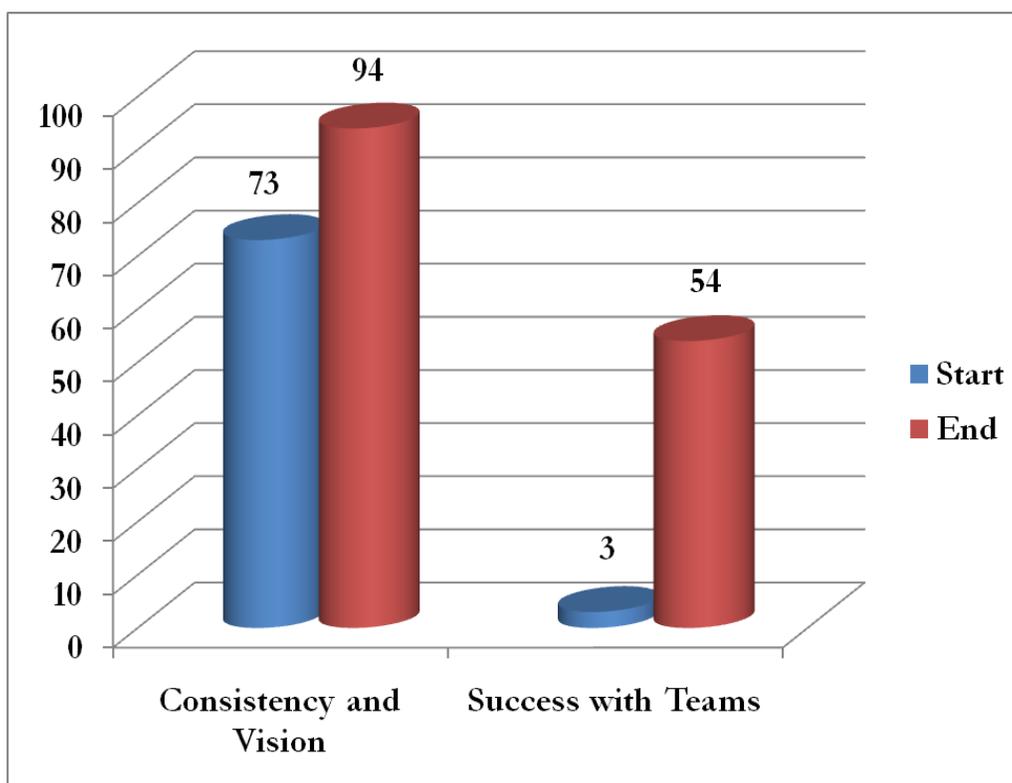
* p < .05, ** p < .01.

There were statistically significant increases on each of the five pastor survey scales. Pastors made the most growth on the Leadership Tools scale (developed to reflect the “Team Leadership” outcome), which may reflect the emphasis given to this area during multiple CECL weeks. Almost 90% of pastors reported improvement on this scale during CECL. Increases in Visioning and Strategic Planning and Accountability were also large. Peer teams and coaching appear to have been an important catalyst for change on each of these scales, especially Accountability.

PASTOR AND COACH EXIT INTERVIEWS

During the coach retreats and other coach meetings at each CECL session, coaches would share the challenges faced by pastors, and resourced one another in search of potential solutions. Based on the language and patterns articulated by the coaches, the author developed rating systems to describe the status of pastors in leadership, and the overall health of churches. At the final CECL session, coaches and pastors were asked to rate the churches the pastors served, and coaches were also asked to rate the pastors. Pastors with “Consistency and Vision” were not struggling with one or more significant challenges in capacity or competence, and had moved beyond “survival” as a pastor into pursuing a vision for the church. Pastors with “Consistency, Vision and Success with One or More Teams” had not only cast a vision, but had developed a positive working relationship with the congregational leadership team and had turned the vision into reality in the church.

**Percent of Pastors Demonstrating “Consistency and Vision” and “Success with Teams”
(Coach ratings of 132 pastors in Classes 1-3)**

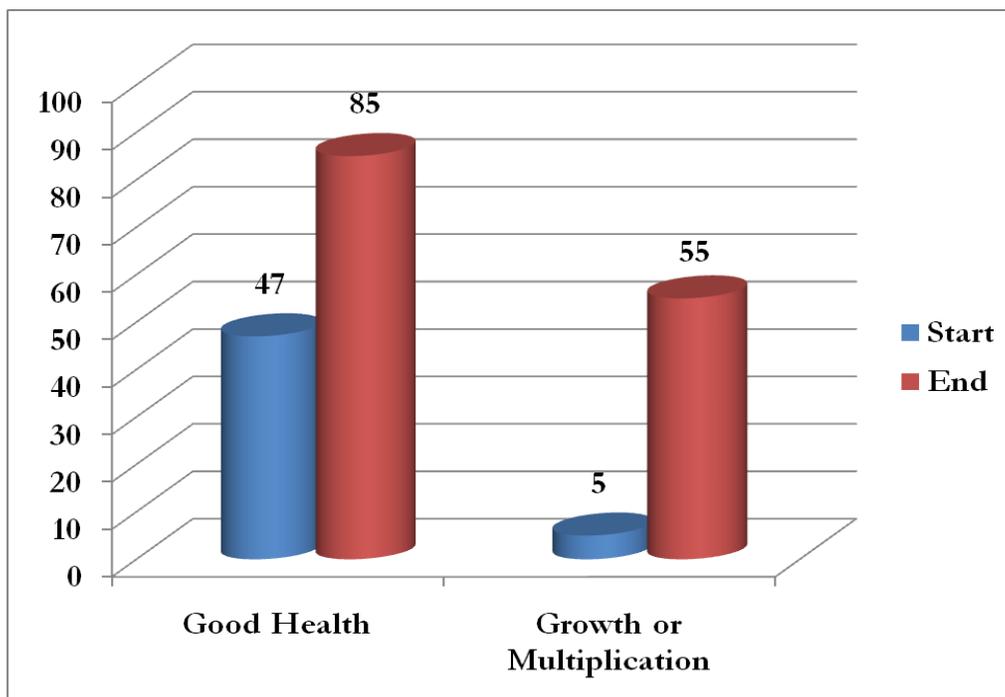


The coach ratings of pastoral leadership development are remarkable for at least three reasons. First, over a quarter of CECL pastors (27%) had not established consistency and vision in their leadership work prior to CECL, suggesting that some foundational work was needed in many cases. Second, only three percent of pastors had experienced success with one or more church teams prior to CECL (blue bar on the right), but 55% had experienced success with church teams after CECL (red bar on the right), indicating that many “maintenance mode” pastors had reached a new level of leadership. Third, only 6% of pastors (100-94) still face significant challenges even after CECL, so it appears that most of the pastors with the greatest need

for leadership development did benefit from CECL (and some pastors have now taken different positions that do not require the same level of leadership).

The following chart summarizes coaches' ratings of church health at the start and end of CECL. One of the assumptions implicit in this rating system is that good health precedes growth. This is supported by research conducted on Natural Church Development (Schwarz, 1996), which was the primary measure of congregational health in CECL. Churches experiencing "Good Health" are not in unhealthy conflict, nor are they simply going through the motions of church, accepting the status quo. They have begun to recognize vision and are taking important steps in that direction. According to the CECL coaches, churches experiencing "Good Health and Growth or Multiplication" have maintained health as well as experienced a pattern of growth and/or have "birthed" one or more new churches.

Churches Experiencing "Good Health" and "Growth or Multiplication" (Coach ratings of 127 churches in Classes 1-3)



The coach ratings of churches show a large variation at the start of CECL, and even larger variation at the end. As with the ratings of pastors, coaches report tremendous improvement in churches. Only 5 percent of churches were rated as having reached a point of growth or multiplication prior to CECL, which increased almost tenfold to 55% after CECL. These ratings from coaches will be contrasted with results from NCD surveys and Quarterly Church Reports later in this report.

The following retrospective ratings from pastors and coaches at the final session of Class 1 were in response to survey statements that were based on desired benefits articulated in the grant proposal for this program. These desired benefits overlap to some degree with the ten outcomes, but are generally more specific. Pastors rated themselves, and coaches independently rated the pastors in their team.

Class 1-3 Pastor and Coach Retrospective Ratings After CECL

All ratings were on a scale from zero to ten (ten being the highest), combining results for the two classes.

Pastor Self-Ratings	N	Before CECL	After CECL	Difference
I have become an integral part of a congregational leadership team collaborating in ministry, rather than functioning as a solo leader	98	4.7	7.5	2.9*
I have become equipped to sustain pastoral excellence and help the congregation achieve corporate excellence	102	5.0	8.0	3.0*
I am doing my part to cooperate with the congregational leadership team to bring about change	100	5.8	8.3	2.6*
The congregational leadership team is doing their part to cooperate with me to bring about change	100	4.7	7.4	2.7*
My relationship with my spouse (if applicable)	93	7.4	8.5	1.0*
My relationships with my children (in general – if applicable)	77	7.6	8.4	0.8*
My health, strength and vitality	97	6.4	7.6	1.2*
My potential for burnout	98	6.7	4.6	-2.1*
A congregational change model has been adopted by me and the congregational team in my current church.	65	2.9	6.9	4.0*
A congregational change model was productively implemented (at least in part) by me and the congregational team in my current church.	59	2.6	6.9	4.3*
<hr/>				
Coach Ratings of Pastors	N	Before CECL	After CECL	Difference
Pastor has become an integral part of a congregational leadership team collaborating in ministry, rather than functioning as a solo leader	118	4.4	7.3	2.9*
Pastor has become equipped to sustain pastoral excellence and help the congregation achieve corporate excellence	117	4.7	7.4	2.7*
Pastor is doing his/her part to cooperate with the congregational leadership to bring about change	117	5.3	7.8	2.6*
The congregational leadership team is doing their part to cooperate with the pastor to bring about change	116	4.1	6.8	2.7*
Pastor's health, strength and vitality	121	5.7	7.3	1.6*
Pastor's potential for burnout	112	6.0	4.3	-1.6*
A congregational change model has been adopted by this pastor and the congregational team in the pastor's current church	114	3.3	6.5	3.3*
A congregational change model was productively implemented (at least in part) by the pastor and the team in the current church.	105	3.0	6.5	3.4*

* $p < .001$ from paired-samples T-Test.

The results clearly indicate a statistically significant perceived benefit from CECL overall. Pastors and coaches indicated that the greatest initial need and the greatest benefits were in the pastors and church teams adopting and implementing a change model. It appears that the improvement in the common understanding and working relationships between pastors and church teams (see the first three common items above) contributed to this larger goal. Pastors and coaches reported fewer initial challenges regarding health, and less benefit during CECL, yet this was still statistically significant. With regard to the risk for burnout, pastors and coaches both felt that the risk had been reduced significantly during CECL. The percentage of pastors rating themselves at six or higher on their risk for burnout (not shown) decreased from 65 to 30 during CECL. This is a large improvement, yet a significant challenge remains for 30% of the pastors.

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Natural Church Development (NCD) is a system of surveys and improvement tools for churches, based on international research conducted at more than 1000 churches in 32 countries by Christian Schwarz in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Dr. Schwarz found that eight quality characteristics were important for church health and growth, and these characteristics are measured with the NCD survey, which is available in the United States through ChurchSmart Resources. The following is a description of what the NCD survey measures within each characteristic (Litzenberger & Litzenberger, 2006):

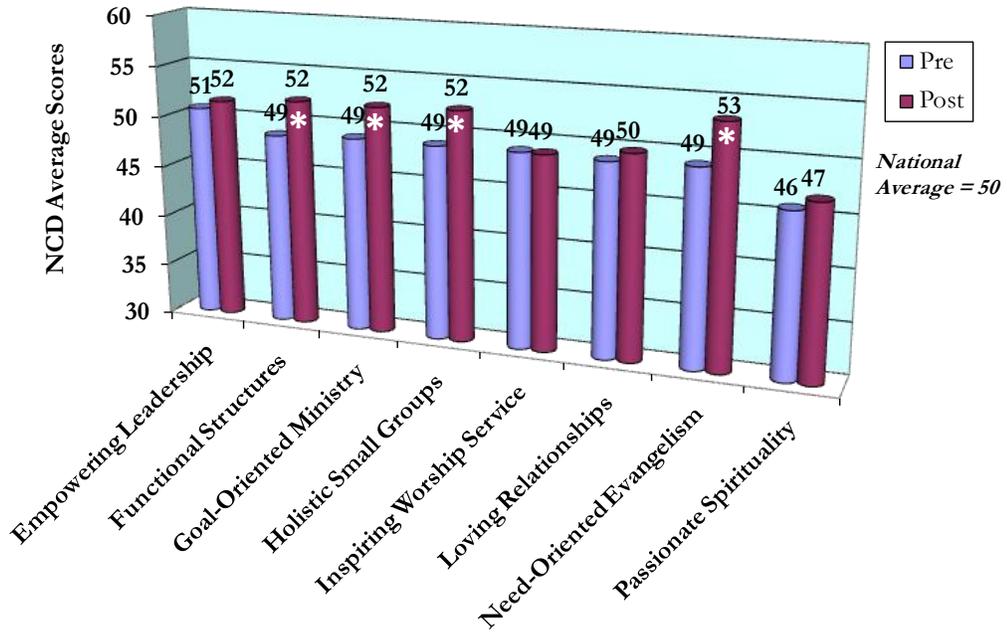
- Empowering Leadership: Match of pastor and congregation, delegation and sharing of ministry, leadership through vision, leadership through mentoring and equipping, and leading change.
- Functional Structures: Organizational structures and systems, leadership oversight, vision, goals, and planning, and creativity and managing change.
- Gift-Oriented Ministry: Understanding your gifts, matching gifts to task, significance of service, and coaching that is supported, trained and challenged.
- Holistic Small Groups: Atmosphere of transparency, sharing, and trust, spiritually oriented, meeting felt needs, relevance to daily life, guest sensitive, multiplication of disciples, leaders, and groups, and active participation of group members.
- Inspiring Worship: Feelings of being inspired, care for children, life transforming preaching, visitor friendly, God-centered and celebration music.
- Loving Relationships: Atmosphere of joy and trust, interdependent relationships, affirmation and encouragement, and intentional conflict resolution.
- Need-Oriented Evangelism: Personal evangelism, corporate evangelistic strategies, seeker awareness, and assimilation of new Christians.
- Passionate Spirituality: Personal spiritual disciplines, corporate spiritual disciplines, and contagious faith.

The NCD survey was selected by the CECL Visioning Team because of its status as a research-based tool, its successful use in a wide variety of denominations and contexts, and the fact that implementation costs could be kept within the scope of the evaluation budget by scanning surveys and generating reports on site at Green Lake. Moreover, CECL wanted to ensure that any program evaluation investment would have a good chance of engaging church teams and pastors in productive improvement efforts.

The following chart and table show the average scores for the 85 churches in Classes 1-3 in which pre and post NCD surveys were completed. The North American average is based upon research conducted using the NCD measure (Schwarz, 1996; and NCD International, 2004).

Natural Church Development (NCD) Average Scores Before and After CECL for 85 Churches in Classes 1-3 with Pre- and Post-Surveys

* = Statistically Significant Increase (p < .01)



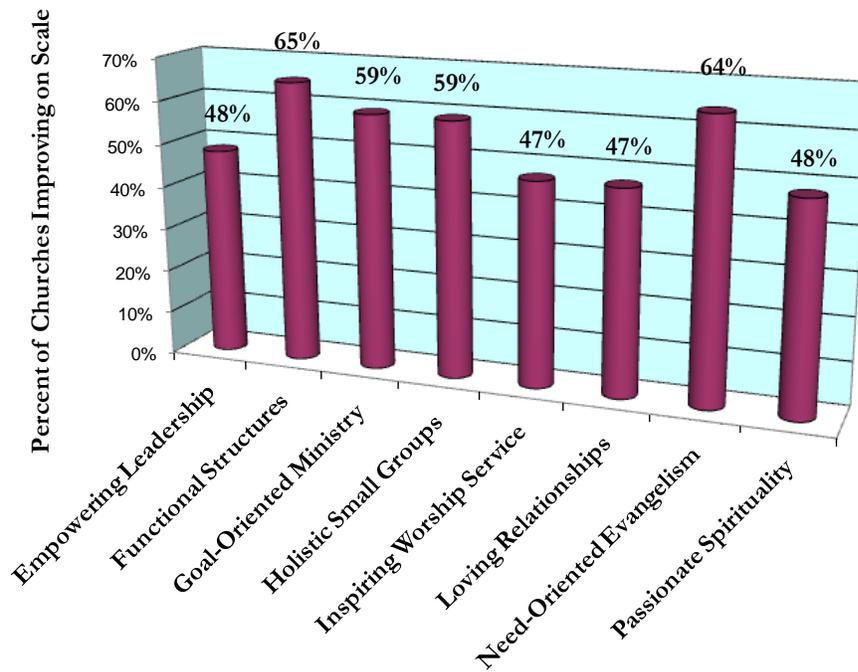
Paired Samples T-Test of Change in NCD Quality Characteristics from Start to End of CECL

<i>NCD Quality Characteristic</i>	<i>Mean Difference (Post – Pre)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>
Classes 1-3 (n = 85)			
Empowering Leadership	0.85	11.32	0.69
Goal-Oriented Ministry	3.21	12.23	2.42 **
Passionate Spirituality	0.98	9.75	0.92
Functional Structures	3.52	9.68	3.35 **
Inspiring Worship Service	-0.04	10.19	-0.03
Holistic Small Groups	3.51	10.47	3.09 **
Need-Oriented Evangelism	4.24	9.52	4.10 **
Loving Relationships	0.94	11.30	0.77
Class 3 Only (n = 20)			
Empowering Leadership	5.65	10.16	2.49 *
Goal-Oriented Ministry	3.95	13.40	1.32
Passionate Spirituality	-1.75	10.38	-0.75
Functional Structures	6.20	13.25	2.09 *
Inspiring Worship Service	-1.20	12.10	-0.44
Holistic Small Groups	5.10	11.62	1.96 *
Need-Oriented Evangelism	3.35	10.71	1.40
Loving Relationships	1.45	11.75	0.55

** p < .01, * p < .05 (one tailed).

Four points are evident in the chart and table on the preceding page. First, when averaging results for classes 1-3, there was a statistically significant increase in Functional Structures, Goal-Oriented Ministry, Holistic Small Groups, and Need-Oriented Evangelism scores from the first to the second survey. Second, in each of these cases, the average increased from slightly below the national average to slightly above it. Third, all of the other scores either remained at the same level or increased slightly. Fourth, although no significant change was observed in Empowering Leadership for classes 1-3 together, a significant change was observed for class 3, the most recent group of pastors to complete the voyage. This may reflect this particular group of pastors, churches or coaches, or perhaps a change in program emphasis. If the improvement in Empowering Leadership is observed in future classes of CECL pastors, we can attribute more to the change in program emphasis.

Percent of CECL Churches Improving on NCD Scales - 85 Churches in Classes 1-3 with Pre- and Post-Surveys



Another way to represent the change in NCD scores is to examine the percent of churches that improved their NCD scale score (see chart above). This yields a picture similar to the earlier chart, but is easier to comprehend and explain. Most CECL churches improved on Functional Structures, Goal-Oriented Ministry, Holistic Small Groups and Need-Oriented Evangelism, and remained stable in the other areas.

QUARTERLY CHURCH REPORTS

Each quarter of each year, pastors sent a report to GLCC of their church’s average weekly attendance, giving, baptisms and new members. The tables below describe the changes in weekly attendance and offerings during CECL. Baptisms and new members were not reported consistently by enough churches to enable reporting. For each indicator, averages for the same quarter were compared across years (e.g., spring 2006 to spring 2008). The annual change is calculated based upon the number of years between the first

quarter and the last quarter reported by the church. In some cases, only one year comparisons were possible. In others, two or three year comparisons were possible.

Change in Average Weekly Attendance and Offerings During CECL

	<i>Churches Reporting</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Annual Change</i>	<i>Percent Gaining</i>
Attendance	109	166.0	166.5	167.0	0.0%	52.3%
Offerings	107	\$4,496	\$4,851	\$5,234	7.9%	71.0%

After combining results for Classes 1-3, 52 percent of CECL churches experienced an increase in weekly attendance during CECL, and 71 percent experienced an increase in weekly offerings. The large increase in offerings is a tremendous return on investment of the first \$1.5 million of the \$2 million grant (CECL has served three of the four classes of pastors and churches to benefit from the initial grant). We can begin with the \$4,496 per week that was collected in the average CECL church at the start of the program, the 7.9% annual increase, and the 3.2% average annual consumer price index change from 2003 to 2008 (using the dollar value calculator on the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis website - <http://woodrow.mpls.frb.fed.us/index.cfm>). If we consider the CECL effect to be a 4.7% increase (7.9% minus 3.2%), it resulted in \$211 more entering the offering plate in the average church every week during the first year of CECL, and \$10,988 more per year, totaling \$1,175,740 across all 107 churches. The increase for year 2 averaged \$221 per week, and \$11,505 for the year, totaling \$1,231,000 across all churches. Adding up the total increases for the two years, we have \$2,406,740. This means that only on this one indicator, CECL churches generated \$906,740 more in offerings than Lilly invested in the program for Classes 1-3.

As for attendance, there are several theories and research findings that may be playing out in CECL churches: (1) **Gradual Change:** increased offerings may be a sign of greater faith that God will work through the pastor's and church team's vision, and may enable improvements in church health and services, which have potential to increase attendance and other indicators for all churches in the long run. (2) **Church Size:** Dave T. Olson (2004) reports that churches with attendance from 50-299 are shrinking, while smaller and larger churches are growing. (3) **Church Age:** Dave T. Olson (2004) reports that established churches that are 40-180 years old are declining in attendance. (4) **Cell and House Churches:** Part of the impact of church size, research indicates that Americans are rapidly increasing their involvement in cell churches or groups (NCD International, 2004; Warren, 2008) and house churches (Barna, 2006).

Of these four theories, Church Size and Church Age can be explored with existing CECL data. The Gradual Change theory will be the subject of future CECL research, and Cell and House Church impact may be evaluated through CECL partnerships with other organizations. The following two charts report the attendance change for churches in the sizes and ages relevant for testing these theories.

Testing the "Church Size" Theory in CECL

<i>Starting Attendance</i>	<i>Annual Change in Attendance</i>	<i>Number of Churches</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Less than 50	-2.7%	9	.15
50 to 299	+0.4%	84	.10
300+	+2.4%	15	.08

The Church Size theory would suggest that churches with an attendance of 50 to 299 (78% of CECL churches) would be in decline, yet this group of CECL churches are on average unchanged in attendance. Conversely, the smallest CECL churches (which are not cell churches or house churches) experienced a slight decrease in attendance. The largest CECL churches experienced the predicted increase in attendance.

Testing the “Church Age” Theory in CECL

<i>Age of Church</i>	<i>Annual Change in Attendance</i>	<i>Number of Churches</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
< 30 years	-3.9%	15	.15
30 to 180 years	+0.6%	74	.09
181+ years	-3.7%	4	.02

Similarly, the Church Age theory indicates that churches that are from 30 to 180 years old (about 80% of CECL churches) should be shrinking, yet CECL churches in this range have stable attendance. CECL churches outside of this age range experienced a decrease rather than the expected increase in attendance. However, taking the results from these two brief analyses together, what may at first appear to be a discouraging lack of an increase for the largest group of CECL churches is actually somewhat better than what most comparable churches are experiencing nationally.

MOST IMPROVED CHURCHES FROM EACH CLASS

In order to obtain a better understanding of how churches improve, and a pastor’s role in this improvement, CECL churches were identified that experienced substantial improvement on multiple indicators of church change:

- Ten percent or greater annual increase in attendance
- Ten percent or greater annual increase in offerings
- Five stage or greater improvement in coach rating of church health (see above)
- Improvement of eight points or more on Natural Church Development survey average.

The following table summarizes the number and percent of churches from each class that were classified as “most improved” compared to the total number of churches that began in CECL.

Number and Percent of Churches in Each Class That Were “Most Improved”

<i>Class</i>	<i># Most Improved</i>	<i>Total Churches</i>	<i>% Most Improved</i>
1	8	91	9%
2	7	50	14%
3	4	24	17%

There were some similarities and many differences across the classes in terms of the characteristics of the most improved churches:

Pastor Demographics

- In all three classes, the most improved pastors were similar to the other pastors in terms of their age, the age when they first served as pastor, and the span of time they had been at their current church.
- In Classes 1 and 2, the most improved churches did not differ from other churches in terms of the number of churches in which the pastor previously served. The most improved pastors in Class 3 had served two churches on average, while the other pastors in Class 3 had served three.
- In Classes 1 and 2, the churches that gained the most were approximately the same size as the other CECL churches and had pre-CECL NCD results that were comparable to other churches. In Class 3, the most improved churches were smaller at the outset (about 100 in attendance, compared to 200 in other churches), with a much smaller weekly offering, and lower NCD averages at the start.

Age and Community of Church

- The most improved in Class 1 were more likely to be younger, urban churches and the most improved in Class 2 were more likely to be somewhat older, and rural. For Class 3, these two variables did not differ between the most improved and other churches.

Church Change Models

- In Class 1, five of the churches had implemented a congregational change model, but they each used a different model (NCD, Transitioning (Southerland), Purpose-Driven, and two home-grown models). In Class 2, only three of the seven churches implemented a church change model, and these were all home-grown. In Class 3, two of the churches had at least partially implemented the Kaiser governance model, and two had implemented home-grown approaches.

Impact of CECL, Pastor and Other Factors

- From interviews with Class 1 coaches, four of the churches in Class 1 had improved largely due to the pastor's and church team's involvement in CECL. Three of the churches improved primarily due to the pastor. In one case, the church improved without extensive leadership of the pastor or CECL.
- Similarly, for four of the churches in Class 2, coaches indicated that the pastors and churches had improved primarily due to CECL. Two of the churches improved primarily due to the pastor, and in one case, the church improved without extensive leadership of the pastor or CECL.
- Three of the four most improved churches in Class 3 improved primarily due to CECL. The fourth was more attributed to the pastor.

Summary

These findings are encouraging in that significant improvement in churches can happen in almost any demographic context, with a variety of pastors. They are also perplexing because there does not appear to be a simple recipe for success. However, most cases of significant change in CECL churches can be attributed in large part to the CECL program, as opposed to the pastor or other factors, and this is especially true for Class 3. The percentage of all CECL churches that are “most improved” has increased for each of the classes, reflecting the increased program participation rates (decreased attrition), meaning that more pastors and churches are benefitting from CECL instead of withdrawing.

CECL BENEFIT MODEL

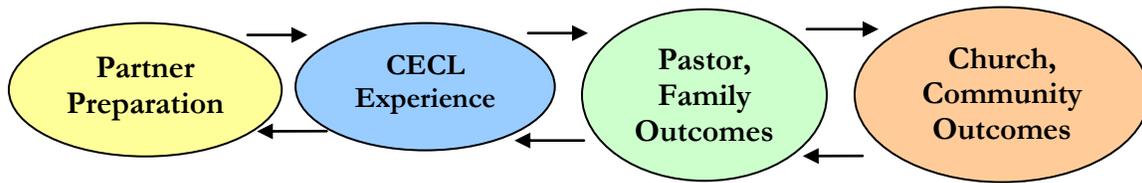
There are several ways in which this evaluation could potentially make valuable contributions to knowledge about pastors and churches. First, this is a multi-method program evaluation - we are using quantitative surveys, open-ended surveys, interviews and observations to try to make sense of the results. Second, multiple stakeholders have been included – going beyond the pastors as primary beneficiaries of the program. Third, this is a longitudinal study – we are tracking pastors over the two years or more in which they were involved. Fourth, we are using research-based tools: the Natural Church Development survey has an international research base and the CECL Pastor Survey was developed for this program, and is based upon the program needs assessment, and a professional survey scale development process. Finally, CECL is not conducted under the direction of any one denomination – this is a partnership among several denominations with common goals.

There are also some important limitations of this evaluation. First, although a large amount of data was collected, the number of pastors and churches was not large. A much larger sample would have enabled us to better examine the stability of the findings, especially for special populations. Second, although the demographics of these pastors are typical of many Baptist pastors in the Midwest and Protestant pastors nationally, these results cannot be considered representative of these large populations. Third, the pastors included in CECL have each chosen this program - they were not randomly assigned to it. We don't know if this program would benefit all pastors, or simply those who are inclined to apply. Finally, when multiple indicators and multiple methods are used, it is challenging to fairly identify and articulate the many trends and perspectives. Dialog is not only welcome, but necessary to enable knowledge to be generated.

With these strengths and limitations in mind, we are in a better position to attempt to synthesize the separate analyses reported above. In the CECL Benefit Model (next page), the CECL Logic Model has been modified for this purpose. The first column lists the number of individuals serving in various roles in CECL, as well as some of the demographics of the pastors and churches. Where appropriate, the range in the number of individuals serving in the various positions is shown. For example, there were 11 coaches in Class 1, and three in Class 3. The typical CECL pastor was a married Caucasian man with an M.Div or other Master's degree. The second column provides the percent of pastors indicating that the CECL component had a significant impact on them. The starred items were collected from Class 2 pastors only, and the others were for all classes (the range on these percentages is between pastor report and coach report of pastor). Most of the CECL components significantly impacted 80% or more of Class 2 pastors.

The third and fourth columns contain the percentage of pastors, families, churches and communities that have experienced a change or benefit from CECL (reported by pastors, coaches and/or congregation members). Most pastors in Classes 1-3 reported improvement in accountability. In classes 1 and 2, pastor physical vitality was supported by on-site physical exams and health goal setting, and periodic check-ups. This resulted in 78% of these pastors making progress on or meeting their health goals. In Class 3, these supports were not made available, and just under half (49%) of Class 3 pastors and coaches agreed that the pastor had made progress in physical vitality. Spiritual growth increased significantly (see pastor survey section above), but most pastors remained stable. Most pastors in Classes 1-3 reported improvements in family and ministry balance. More than two-thirds of pastors improved in leadership tools and visioning and planning. In addition, 90% of pastors reported that they were better at cooperating with their church team, and 83% of the time, their coach agreed with them. Similarly, in the last column, we can see that church teams also made large improvements in their cooperation with pastors. Congregants in most CECL churches reported higher levels of functional structures, goal-oriented ministry, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism and passionate spirituality on the NCD survey after CECL than before. Pastors also reported a substantial amount of services, social contact and goods for the community that they attributed in part to their participation in CECL (the range is between the classes – the highest percentages came from Class 3).

CECL Benefit Model



(N), % Participating	% Reporting Impact	% Improving – based on one or more sources	
<u>SPE Initiative</u> Guidelines Funding Conferences Communication Mini-Grant	Peer Teams at GLCC: 96-100% *Speakers: 97%	<u>Pastor Personal Outcomes</u> Accountability: 61% Physical Vitality: 49-78% Spiritual Growth: 47%	<u>Church Teams</u> Cooperate with Pastor: 84-85% Vision/Model: 83-85% Implementation: 81-86% <u>Church Health (NCD)</u> Empowering Leadership: 48% Functional Structures: 65% Goal-Oriented Ministry: 59% Holistic Small Groups: 59% Inspiring Worship: 47% Loving Relationships: 47% Need-Oriented Evangelism: 64% Passionate Spirituality: 48% <u>Church Growth</u> Attendance: 52% Giving/Offerings: 71%
<u>GLCC</u> Leaders & staff as needed	*Books: 91% *Coaching: 97%	<u>Family Outcomes</u> Family-Ministry Balance: 54%	
<u>CECL Leaders</u> Directors (2) Staff (1) Coach Leader (1) Coaches (3-11) Evaluators (1-2)	Peer Teams away from GLCC: 87-89% Pastor Families at GLCC: 50-82%	<u>Pastor Leadership Outcomes</u> Leader Tools: 88% Visioning and Planning skills: 70% Cooperate with Team: 83-90%	
<u>Pastor Background</u> Male: 92% Caucasian: 95% Age 50+: 55% Master's +: 89% Married: 97% Spouse Employed: 63%	*Church Teams at GLCC: 85% *Free Time at GLCC: 76% *Worship: 47%		
<u>Church Background</u> Baptist: 75% Age 100+: 52% Midwest: 84% Rural: 47% Bldg. Project: 30%			<u>Community Benefits#</u> Services: 44-70% Social Contact: 26-40% Goods: 19-35%

* Percent of pastors indicating that this component of the CECL experience had a moderate to strong impact (Class 2 pastors only).

Partially attributed to CECL - Services included tutoring, health services, financial counseling. Social contact included more intentional invitations, canvassing and interfaith activities. Goods included food, clothing and school supplies.

CONCLUSIONS

The first step [in the rejuvenation of rural churches] is to move away from viewing small-membership churches as liabilities and drains on denominational resources. Preoccupation with statistical measures of vitality and our culture's fixation on size as the test of value sabotage the morale of rural churches and their leaders. They blind us to the gifts and opportunities for imagination and creativity inherent in rural ministry. If we open our eyes, honestly assessing the assets of small rural churches, we just might see an economy of abundance rather than an economy of scarcity.

Kenneth Carder (2008)

So, what amount of pastor and church change is worth the cost of the program? How much is it worth for a pastor to fully engage in a peer team, re-discover the value of ministry, or develop skills in team building? What if they achieve these things and still increase their family and ministry balance? If a church is in conflict or stagnation, how many resources should be expended before it is abandoned to change or die?

The evaluation supports the following findings regarding the CECL Program:

1. The demographics of CECL pastors are similar to (yet not necessarily representative of) many Baptist pastors in the Midwest, as well as many Protestant pastors in America. The typical CECL pastor in Classes 1-3 was most likely to be each (but not necessarily all) of the following: 50+ years old, Caucasian, male, Baptist, from the Midwest, holding an M.Div or other Master's degree, and married with two or more children and a spouse working outside the home. However, other CECL pastors come from very different backgrounds, and this diversity appears to be increasing.
2. It is clear that church members have detected an improvement in church health during CECL. Experienced individuals in participating congregations reported statistically significant increases in four of the Natural Church Development survey scales: *Need-Oriented Evangelism*, *Holistic Small Groups*, *Goal-Oriented Ministry*, and *Functional Structures*. Scores on the other scales held steady.
3. CECL churches produced an excellent return on the grant investment. The 107 churches in CECL classes 1-3 with complete data experienced a 7.9% annual increase in giving during the program. Adjusting for inflation, which averaged 3.2% over this period, we can use a conservative inflation adjusted average annual increase level of 4.7% in **offerings** during the program. This amounted to a \$2.4 million increase above inflation in offerings just during the 2 year period in which the churches were in the program. This is \$900,000 (or 60%) more than the \$1.5 million in grant funds allocated to the 150 churches in the first three classes – what a kingdom impact!
4. Most CECL churches experienced an increase or held steady in **attendance**, during a time when comparable churches were shrinking.
5. Pastor engagement and endurance in CECL has increased significantly for each Class of CECL. All pastors in Class 3 participated in most of the five CECL sessions, compared to 92% for Class 2 and 71% of Class 1 pastors.
6. Pastors clearly perceive benefits on key personal and professional outcomes. We found statistically significant increases on all five scales of the CECL pastor survey: *Leadership Tools*, *Accountability*, *Visioning and Strategic Planning*, *Family and Ministry Balance*, and *Spiritual Growth*.
7. Coaches report that pastors have made significant improvement in leadership skills. The percent of pastors rated by their coach as demonstrating “consistency, vision and success with one or more teams” increased from five percent before CECL to 55% after CECL.
8. Coaches have also reported that churches have improved in important ways during CECL. The percentage of churches rated by CECL coaches as “experiencing good health and growth or multiplication” increased from six percent before CECL to 53 percent after CECL.

9. Pastor's self-reported risk for burnout decreased significantly during CECL. Sixty-five percent expressed moderate to high risk of burnout prior to CECL, and only 30% expressed this level of risk after CECL.
10. Peer teams, speakers, visioning and strategic planning, books, preaching training, rest/health benefits, and coaching or mentoring were most often listed by pastors as being the most important components of the CECL program.
11. Pastors were most likely to report that their churches benefited from a new church vision and/or better leadership. In terms of benefits to the community, pastors were most likely to list services, goods, or personal contact.
12. Among pastors and churches that experienced the most improvement, the growth was typically attributed in large part to the CECL program (as opposed to the pastor's pre-existing skills, or other factors). Further work is needed to attempt to identify the most active ingredients in the change process for pastors, church teams, and congregations.
13. Each of the major components of the CECL program appears to be connecting with pastors, and helping to bear fruit in churches: long-term involvement, peer team, coach, family participation, and church team participation. The worship component is clearly a vital element for the program, yet it could be strengthened by clarifying quality criteria, allocating sufficient resources, and obtaining ongoing expertise. Strategically selecting and improving the worship component has been a key focus for Classes 4 and 5, addressing this learning.

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