CONGREGATIONS, CLERGY, AND COMMUNICATION: SOCIAL NETWORK SITES AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

By

William A. McCully

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ABSTRACT

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Social networking technologies have altered communication patterns. Information spreads faster, network connections can now be visualized, and anonymity has decreased as sites like Facebook have encouraged the use of real names. For religious organizations throughout the United States, many already reeling from dramatic shifts in religious practice, these changes in communication have been experienced acutely. It has been difficult for the technology to be embraced, adopted, and integrated into organizational processes. Applying the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), this dissertation explores issues surrounding adoption of social media in United Methodist churches by identifying how social media are used and what prevents these tools from being adopted.

Two studies were completed to develop a comprehensive view of technology adoption in nonprofit organizations. First, qualitative interviews (N=28) were conducted with religious organizational leaders. Results from this study identified a number of uses for social media, like sharing announcements, proselytizing, and congregational monitoring. Barriers to adoption, including insufficient manpower, lack of time, and an inability to achieve critical mass, were revealed. Second, interview data were used to develop scales measuring perceived barriers, perceived efficacy, and total social media usage. A survey instrument was sent to a national sample of United Methodist pastors (N=403). Results from this study provide empirical support for the TAM while

developing new measures for perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. When taken together, these studies present a new, practical method for applying the TAM while revealing interactive effects between unique attributes of social media and unique characteristics of religious organizations.

Findings suggest that social media, when coupled with characteristics of churches, create unique issues with which these religious, nonprofit organizations must struggle during the process of adoption. As a result of these struggles, two problems arise: additive complexity, the process of including social media means more work for office administration and higher possibility of incorrect information being spread; and digital divide, because social media rely on technologies like computers, there is a possibility that large portions of the population, like older members, are excluded from organizational conversations. The ability to adopt and integrate social media successfully into churches depends upon the organizational response to these challenges.

To the men who share my name.
May they share also in the pride of this accomplishment.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Problem

During the past three decades, communication patterns have been shifting. New Internet-based technologies have helped quickly transition information consumers from broadcast media, where content is dictated by central creators, to social media, where content can be controlled and customized to complement unique demands of each user. At the same time, content delivery has been transformed into interactive experiences where audiences are no longer passive consumers, but active creators. Each individual now has the ability to personalize media experience and contribute to broader conversations across multiple media platforms from televisions to personal computers and mobile devices.

Few forms of communication exemplify these changes more than social media. Online sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pintrest, and YouTube have made a tremendous impact on how people engage others in conversation and develop relationships. By offering a visual representation of, and facilitating interaction within, an individual's social network (boyd & Ellison, 2008), social media have changed how people perceive interaction. Where previous forms of media were limited in their ability for interaction, social media are designed to make it easy not only to share content, but to respond, spreading ideas like wildfire. Although social media have not replaced other traditional forms of communication, nor will they in the near future, they have augmented communication patterns to increase immediacy, and facilitate coordination.

Social media have altered the landscape in individual communication. Organizations, on the other hand, represent a population facing unique challenges. These

collections of individuals are complex entities often formed with sharing information as central to their purpose (Mumby & Stohl, 1996; Weick, 1995). When communication patterns outside organizations change, the organization is forced to react. Organizational change, however, can be hampered by institutional norms, traditions, and goals present at founding (Hannan & Freeman, 1977; Rogers & Larsen, 1984). In an attempt to remain relevant, many organizations have made use of social media to varying degrees; building relationships with those outside the organization (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011), reconnecting individuals who have lost touch with the organization (Smith, 2011), and even helping organizational membership feel that they are aware of what is happening in the organization (R. D. Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). The challenge for organizations using social media has been maintaining a sense of centralized organizational control through a medium designed to decentralize communication patterns.

Non-profit organizations (NPOs) have felt the sting of media in transition more acutely than their for-profit counterparts. For this subset of businesses, the drive for financial profit is replaced with a central goal, often rooted in benevolent justification. When these organizations focus too much on their goal, however, they lose sight of the need for financial support to continue their work (Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000). Instead, they must find a balance between engaging volunteers and relying on professionals to accomplish needed tasks. Social media have the ability to encourage and energize organizational members by providing connections where organizations have traditionally struggled. The problem, however, comes in democratization of information as individuals can now avoid centralized administrations and authorities to coordinate and discuss

issues on their own. Without the need for a central information hub, the purpose of the organization can be threatened. Without a recognition of authority, entire hierarchical systems can fail.

In the midst of these significant changes to communication patterns, one category of NPO, religious institutions, has been forced to confront these issues at an already tenuous period in their history. National denominations, once the mainstay of American religious practice have seen their numbers decline (Putnam & Campbell, 2010), while large, independent congregations have seen an increase in participation (Chaves, 2006). Some scholars have argued for a general decline in religious participation across the board (Hadaway & Marler, 2005). In general, the trend has been to move away from institutionalized structures, spanning regional and national boundaries, and collect in congregations rooted in the local community (Dougherty, Johnson, & Polson, 2007). The result has created an enormous challenge for established organizations as they scramble to remain relevant to a changing religious landscape.

One underlying reason for changes in religious practice comes from how people relate to each other. New forms of information and communication technologies (ICTs) have transformed interaction, merging previously disparate media into one integrated lifestyle (Baym, Zhang, & Lin, 2004). By forming relationships with people from varying perspectives, ICTs have changed the role of religious authority. Religious people expect religious experiences to take advantage of the blended communication style (Beaudoin, 1998), while clergy are no longer granted authority simply by institutional credentials. Religious people have taken more responsibility for interpreting and understanding the

role faith plays in their lives, and religious leaders are now expected to prove their worth (Campbell, 2007b; Packard, 2008).

As people adapt to new communication media, Christian denominations are faced with a daunting challenge. These institutions were created in a different time and were structured to meet the needs of a different religious community. In order to remain relevant to a new generation of Christians, mainline Protestant congregations must overhaul their methods for reaching out and connecting within (Christians, 2002). Unfortunately for these organizations, much of that change is a difficult process because their inherent structures can create inadvertent roadblocks. Religious leaders who recognize and abide by strict authority structures face grassroots demands for change from a younger generation. At the same time, older members of these religious organizations are approaching new ICTs with apprehension. Consequently, religious leaders must balance spiritual needs of their community with secular demands of a younger generation.

Within many denominational frameworks, clergy are given the power to design, implement, and oversee the process of change. Therefore, how a pastor perceives his or her congregation influences how change is addressed at the local church level (Benson & Dorsett, 1971). In some cases, pastors are motivated to focus on non-religious, or secular, aspects of the organization, like polity, finances, or general administration. In other cases, motivations are spiritual, or intrinsic. Pastors taking the former view recognize the need to address administrative or business demands in order to build and strengthen the organization. Pastors with the latter view lean much more on seminary training and attempt to deepen and strengthen congregational religiosity.

Regardless of religious or leadership orientation, the role of clergy has changed. A new generation of religious people have begun to take upon themselves the responsibility of seeking out spirituality (Beaudoin, 1998). They look to clergy more for help interpreting and understanding spirituality, and less for bureaucratic dictation. For these individuals, religion is not something that happens in church on Sunday -- it is an integral aspect of how they live.

The goal of this dissertation is to identify adoption patterns and understand barriers for churches, unique non-profit organizations, as they make use of newer forms of information and communication technologies, specifically social media. To achieve this goal, two studies will be described and discussed. Study One involves interviews with religious leaders in the United Methodist Church addressing their use of social media and perceptions about organizational integration. Study Two applies results from the first study to develop a survey instrument fielded to a sample of pastors in the United Methodist Church testing the Technology Acceptance Model and presenting a modified version. Results from the two studies will be synthesized to draw conclusions about how social media are adopted and integrated in the context of administrative structures. These conclusions will offer theoretical, methodological, and practical implications for nonprofit organizations considering adoption of new communication technologies.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation is divided into five chapters identifying and explaining uses for social media, and barriers preventing their adoption, in religious organizations. The following literature and research studies explore how religious organizations are making use of social media. Background literature will first be used to expand discussion of the

problem, explain its scientific importance, and present research questions central to this project. Building on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), qualitative interviews will be used to identify specific uses, barriers, and organizational processes present in the adoption and integration of social media in church organizations. Results from the interviews will then be used in a quantitative national survey of pastors to identify what churches find useful and challenging about social media, how these organizations have reacted, and what relationships exist between organizational characteristics and these perceptions. Conclusions will then be drawn synthesizing results of the two studies. The remainder of this chapter will explain each of the following chapters including their purposes and a brief overview of their content.

Chapter two will present a review of current literature pertaining to communication media, organizational theory, and religious organizational communication. The chapter will be divided into four sections. Section one will provide an in-depth discussion of how information technologies, including social media, have transformed communication and what these changes mean for human interaction. The second section will present a number of perspectives used to approach organizational research, including a discussion of the TAM as it pertains to analysis of organization adoption patterns. Section three will offer a more precise discussion of organizations by focusing specifically on religious organizations including denominations, churches, and religious authority structures. The final section will connect the novel elements of social media with the unique characteristics of religious organizations.

Chapter three will present qualitative data collected from interviews conducted with leaders in the United Methodist Church. The first section will describe methods used

to develop and conduct the interviews. Next, the chapter will present findings based on each of the four research questions. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of conclusions that can be drawn from the study.

Chapter four will present a quantitative survey of United Methodist pastors across the country. The first section will identify issues with qualitative results, using those issues to propose hypotheses and research questions to guide survey development. Next, methods will be discussed including pretesting procedures and subsequent scale development. Results will then be presented in relation to proposed hypotheses and research questions. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of conclusions and implications that can be drawn from the study.

Chapter five will draw conclusions from a synthesis of the two studies. The chapter will focus on three areas of interest. First, theoretical conclusions related to social media use in religious organizations will be discussed. Second, implications of the unique use of the TAM, including qualitative data collection to inform quantitative survey construction, will be offered. Finally, practical implications for individuals involved in religious organizations will be presented. The dissertation will conclude with a brief discussion of limitations and summary of findings.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Relatively new technologies have fundamentally altered the way people interact with each other. These new forms of communication add complexity to an already intricate landscape of information. Instead of replacing older media, new communication methods have been layered on top of traditional ones. One form of communication that has received significant attention is the Social Network Site (SNS). These websites provide individuals with new ways to visualize and contact others in their social networks. Use of SNSs has become ubiquitous in many contexts, from student socialization to brand loyalty. Their presence, however, has created new challenges for organizations who have been forced to adapt to a new communication landscape. Many of these challenges are unique to non-profit organizations (NPOs) and, even more so, to voluntary organizations of which religious organizations are part. Complicating the already difficult challenges for religious organizations is the fact that these groups have been experiencing a simultaneous shift in how people approach religious practice. Individuals have lost their faith in, and respect for, organized religion and the authority structures they create. Instead, religious people have turned to each other for answers about faith and spirituality. The result is faltering religious organizations looking for ways to make use of new communication technologies while maintaining their sense of order and tradition.

Changing Communication Patterns

New forms of communication, based on networked technologies, have inserted new means of interaction into communication patterns. These new technologies, however, are not replacing but augmenting traditional methods of communication. One study found

that for college students, media like Facebook and instant messaging have facilitated communication in previously difficult situations (Baym et al. 2004). These results also suggest that people have moved away from perceptions of relationships that exist either online or offline and replaced them with the idea that online interaction is best done using real names and existing relationships, a concept that founded the basis for the social network site (SNS), Facebook (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Academic research has supported this idea. As Lampe, Ellison and Steinfield (2007) found, relationships are easier to develop online when people find common ground that is more concrete, like hometowns or institutional affiliation, as opposed to far more simple concepts like preferences or favorites.

Adoption of new technologies has also been shown to address needs of older communities. A study of senior citizens in China offered similar conclusions, suggesting people adopted new forms of ICTs, specifically email, chat, and social networking, as a tool to maintain and strengthen offline ties (Xie, 2007). In-depth interviews revealed a perception of online communication as an extension of offline relationships (Xie, 2008). In both of these studies, results reinforce a perception that new forms of ICTs work to fill in gaps present in how relationships typically function. Some of these gaps or challenges include distance, time, and attention (Resnick, 2002). Individuals have discovered how these new forms of communication can alter interaction and enhance relationships.

For example, recognition and response has been found to promote subsequent interaction. In one study, people who posted a picture to Facebook were more likely to make subsequent image posts if friends offered feedback on their first contribution (Burke, Marlow, & Lento, 2009). Another study interviewed individuals who were heavy

participants in an online weightlifting forum. Results in this study suggested that interaction on the site was a significant contributor to subsequent offline practice (Ploderer, Howard, & Thomas, 2008). In other words, people who were deeply involved in the site used interaction and support from other community members to motivate and promote personal improvement. In both cases, it becomes evident that online participation does not occur in a vacuum. What is done online affects offline life. Because religious groups are voluntary organizations, the ability of SNSs to provide people with a uniting link in both online and offline contexts can be a powerful tool.

Social network sites.

Because of their perceived ubiquity, SNSs have received a significant amount of academic attention. A number of scholars have been particularly interested in their ability to promote social capital (Ellison, Lampe, Steinfield, & Vitak, 2011). SNSs are defined by three distinct characteristics (boyd & Ellison, 2008). First, they allow individuals to create a profile. Second, they allow users to see a list of others with whom they share a connection within the network. Third, SNSs provide a method through which these relationships can be seen and accessed. In short, SNSs provide a technical method through which people can visualize network connections and categorize real-life relationships.

SNSs like Facebook primarily provide people the means to continue developing relationships with those they know in offline contexts. SNSs have become ubiquitous on college campuses making colleges and universities popular testing ground for media researchers (Ellison et al. 2011). One project provided evidence that college students used Facebook primarily to augment communication in extant offline relationships (Lampe,

Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006). Participation in Facebook has also been shown to affect how an individual feels and communicates. Vergeer and Pelzer (2009), for example, found social networking sites have become integrated into communication habits. Such interaction, when taken alone however, is seen as less fulfilling than face-to-face. Facebook was also shown to have a small effect on the wellbeing of users on college campuses (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). In these cases, Facebook was a catalyst for creating and improving bridging ties, or connections with individuals outside of a tight social circle. In other cases, Facebook became a tool used to organize and promote attendance at offline activities (Barkhuus & Tashiro, 2010). These studies highlight the power of social networking sites and their prominence.

Organizational Perspectives

Although SNSs have been readily adopted by a significant number of users, they are, by their nature, individualized methods of communication. Using such an individualized tool creates challenges for organizations because organizations, by their nature, are more communal structures, thriving on information shared quickly and easily with other members. At the same time organizations often rely on hierarchical structures to develop and maintain a sense of order. Social media have, therefore, presented organizations with a number of changes to the culture in which they operate. Scholars in organizational studies have explored how organizations can adapt to these changes. One example of this explanation is the population ecology model. The concept of population ecology is an organizational perspective suggesting that the ability of an organization to adapt when ecological changes occur is a function of the environment in which the organization was developed (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). In other words, organizations

are collections of people who gather to address needs collectively identified and shared. If those needs are no longer present within society, the organization must adapt by identifying and addressing a different need, or face ecological destruction. Rogers and Larsen (1984) provided an example of population ecology by describing the explosion of interest in technical research and development found in Silicon Valley. They suggest that the growth of numerous computer industry powerhouses like Apple and Microsoft can be attributed to the collision of cultural needs, found in businesses adopting computers, raw resources (silicon), found in nearby beach sand, technical expertise, found at Stanford University, and in the presence of an established aerospace industry. If not for the convergence of these factors, Silicon Valley would likely have remained a sleepy suburb of San Francisco. At the heart of population ecology is an assumption that organizations, once developed, are unable to adapt to sweeping market changes. In other words, organizations exist because they have found a way to operate within a market addressing present, static needs.

More recent scholarship has refuted this limited perspective. According to Cohen (2007), such a concept is impossible in a world with so many variables. Instead, he suggests every action undertaken by an organization may appear ritualized, but is actually a reaction to new experiences based upon results from previous actions. Weick (1995, 2001) refers to this process as sensemaking. That is, each action is made based upon how previous experiences have been interpreted. Through this perspective, population ecology plays a role in the process of interpretation but does not inherently dictate the outcome. At the same time, external variables do play a role in how each decision is made. Often,

these variables are not within the control of organizational leadership, forcing decisions to be made for which the organization may not be prepared.

Still, external changes in culture and ecology can be a healthy experience for organizations as it forces them to adapt. If organizations are successful in adapting to changes in ecology, they often redefine or restructure their presence, returning to the appearance of ritual. In this case, Gersick (1991) suggests a different organizational perspective, punctuated equilibrium. The punctuated equilibrium model suggests two stages for an organization: Equilibrium, where operations would be characterized as normal, predictable, and reliable; and punctuation, where significant changes introduce a level of chaos to the organization. According to Haveman (1992), periods of punctuation are essential for organizations as they often provide a catalyst to effect change. It is often not until organizational existence is threatened that inefficiencies and shortcomings are brought to light. Often, these changes are witnessed most acutely by organizations tied to specific social needs.

During periods of cultural punctuation, many people attempt to address needs by shifting their energies from institutional structures to more grassroots activities. Such transitions are referred to as social movements, defined "as an uninstitutionalized collectivity that mobilizes for action to implement a program for the reconstitution of social norms or values" (Simons, 1970, p. 3). The largest challenge to social movements is finding the balance between organization and disorganization. Too much structure, and the movement is stifled by a lack of forward change. Too much disorganization and the movement is unable to accumulate necessary resources to mobilize. However, when social movements find this balance, they begin to create a collective identity that allows

people to rally around a clear goal (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Many times, social movements can become solidified into Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) that offer a distinctive position in society by maintaining many characteristics of traditional for-profit organizations while still attempting to build on the social needs forming their foundation.

NPOs exist to fill a vast array of fields and industries (DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990) and share a few attributes. First, NPOs, by their nature, have fewer financial resources with which to conduct business as profit is no longer seen as a primary goal. Second, in order for an NPO to maintain their connection to the social movement from which they are given purpose, they must rely on the energy of volunteer labor. These two differences create a wealth of complications for daily operation. Although reliance on a volunteer work force seems an appropriate method to mitigate the lack of financial resources, volunteers come with drawbacks. Individuals who are giving time freely are also free to deny their contribution in favor of more pressing issues. Moreover, it is often difficult to identify individuals with appropriate skills and qualifications. With limited labor and financial resources, innovation becomes a distinct challenge for NPOs (Corder, 2001). Those organizations capable of innovation sometimes look to alternate revenue streams, charging for some services in an attempt to strengthen others. The problem in these NPOs is convincing their donor base that income from fee-based services is not sufficient for organizational maintenance (Chetkovich & Frumkin, 2003). Central to these distinctions experienced by NPOs is the concept that voluntary membership demands a central social goal, often tied to a social movement.

Another essential distinction between NPOs and their for-profit counterparts is the concept of efficiency. While businesses are concerned with profit and can adjust

employment and investment, NPOs typically use a lean paid labor force and require enormous communication networks to develop their community. As a result, NPOs cannot be guided solely by efficiency. In order to be most effective, NPOs must develop a clear and explicit mission in order to direct people into their ranks (Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000). According to Brown and Duguid (2001), efficiency is an issue poorly addressed by many organizations. Most organizations attempt to create the most efficient system of communication, providing channels specifically for organizational information and discouraging use for personal interaction. Brown and Duguid contend that organizations would be better served by promoting interpersonal interaction, allowing a natural community to develop.

Religious organizations.

Within NPOs, religious organizations stand as a unique market. Because religious organizations cannot escape their characterization as NPOs, they are bound by secular limitations of finance and manpower. At the same time, religious organizations must address the distinctly spiritual and supernatural aspects of their existence. This dichotomy requires churches to undertake a delicate balancing act in which these organizations must negotiate between addressing secular demands while fulfilling spiritual needs. Religious organizations are differentiated from their secular counterparts first by the identification of religious authority, and second by the presence of spirituality in organizational goals (Jeavons, 1997). In order for religious organizations to create legitimacy, members must first create an identity by subscribing to tenets of the community, and second create an authority structure to provide leadership. Religious individuals who attend a religious organization share identity at multiple levels. First, they share a common membership in

a local congregation. At the same time, they often identify with other religious individuals within the same denomination. Moreover, religion naturally creates a shared identity among people who ascribe to the same faith tradition, like Christianity (Ammerman, 1997b). Religious organizations have also developed a unique structure with levels of autonomy where national denominations have created churches that operate as subunit agencies (Chaves, 1993). By developing hierarchical structures with significant organizational elements, many denominations have struggled to maintain their roots in social movements, collecting to effect social change. Because churches are both voluntary organizations, requiring commitment from their members, and institutionalized organizational structures, they face a tension created by the interaction (Harris, 1998). In other words, religious authority figures must walk a line between creating a sense of institutionalized legitimacy and allowing members to direct organizational identity based upon cultural needs.

Identification and legitimation of religious authority is not the only distinguishing factor of religious organizations. Churches also include spirituality as an essential element of their existence. According to Iannacone (1990), one of the most effective methods for distinguishing churches from other organizations is in the production of what he referred to as spiritual capital. This form of capital is unique because it is not measurable by concrete actions or objects, but evaluates the ability of a religious organization to fulfill spiritual needs. In order to maintain operation, churches must rely on volunteers. Although volunteers are unpaid, if they do not feel that their work is compensated, through spiritual experiences or rewarding interpersonal relationships, they will cease to contribute. Subsequent research provided a more specific method for

measuring spiritual capital, suggesting a church will grow if members' perception of spiritual growth is greater than the amount of perceived effort each individual contributes to the organization (Iannaccone, Olson, & Stark, 1995). The challenge with spiritual capital is that it relies on spiritual growth, a variable that is difficult even for religious people to define and describe (Gallagher & Newton, 2009). In other words, churches are a unique form of NPOs because they exist for the purpose of developing spirituality, an essential element that is difficult to identify, but distinctly present. Moreover, religious organizations are further complicated by their application of administrative authority.

Denominational Structures. Within many religions, like Christianity, multiple belief systems have developed, ushering in the creation of denominational structures. In each denomination, there is a central collection of organizational authority designed to connect and unite each local congregation to a central identity. The role this central authority plays influences the amount of power and autonomy granted to each local church (Mao & Zech, 1999). Such autonomy is further influenced by how reliant the local organization is on the larger denominational polity for financial and spiritual resources (Hougland & Wood, 1979). Although denominational reliance is one predictor of congregational autonomy, other factors exist, the strongest of which is denominational size. Larger denominations tend to grant less control to local congregations. Moreover, people within these congregations tended to prefer lower levels of control at their congregational level.

The concept of autonomy for congregations is itself challenging as it forces organizational members to find balance between individualized interpretations of spirituality and an institutionalized framework for connecting with other religious

individuals sharing similar beliefs. A comparison between congregations in the United Church of Christ (UCC) and Roman Catholic parishes highlights the extremes of this dichotomy between autonomy and institutionalization. McMullen (1994) reported that, although members of the Roman Catholic congregations were more familiar with organizational doctrine, they were less likely than UCC members to challenge or question their religious leaders in cases where such doctrine was at odds with individual beliefs. As generational culture shifts toward demanding a more relevant faith, religious organizations have become more institutionalized, giving rise to the "emergent church." The emergent church is a loose collection of individuals seeking religious and spiritual fulfillment outside boundaries of institutionalized religion. One study suggests that such an undertaking will only be successful if those in authority are seen as equals to those in the general congregation (Packard, 2008).

How members of a religious group understand and interpret their beliefs, however, has an effect on authority in organizational contexts. For example, smaller churches give more credence to theological authority while larger churches construct a more institutionalized authority structure (Bartholomew, 1981). In other words, smaller churches more frequently use scriptural references to define and legitimate authority while larger churches often seek leadership and direction from clergy. In addition to church size, authority is also influenced by religious beliefs of the congregation. Churches turn to the overall structure and organizational size, but also to the ideology that has been formed and influenced by these factors. As the ideology develops, congregants' ability to participate in decision-making processes is also influenced (Conrad, 1988). Consequently, a number of factors affect expectations of clerical roles

within the congregation. This myriad of influence has caused a great deal of confusion and ambiguity over what a pastor is supposed to do, and how their leadership affects organizational development (Monahan, 1999). Considering all local churches have some degree of autonomy, even in institutionalized denominations, it is necessary to understand the role of authority figures, specifically clergy, within these organizations.

Religious authority. The variety of demands placed on clergy takes multiple forms. In one qualitative study interviewing Roman Catholic priests serving Chicago churches, the author identified five main purposes: listening, laughing, praying, teaching, and delegating (Benedetto, 2006). Time spent on the main job purposes for Protestant clergy was also quantified in one study. A national survey of pastors in numerous denominations revealed that slightly under half of each work week was spent with administrative tasks while the other half was divided between pastoral duties, like visiting the sick, priestly duties, like preparing for a service, and instructional duties, like teaching classes (Brunette-Hill & Finke, 1999). It is difficult to synthesize the two studies, but in brief, a pastor seems to fulfill two distinct functions, administration and spiritual guidance. Benedetto's research provides five jobs, four of which, laughing, listening, praying, and teaching, focus on the spiritual development of parishioners. The fifth is more concerned with daily organizational operations. The work of Brunette-Hill and Finke offer four distinctions, three of which consume what pastors consider half of the total professional work they do.

Distilling pastoral responsibilities into two categories defines the clerical position in two ways. On one hand, a pastor is responsible for running the church as an organization. In this capacity, the organization takes on many secular attributes and

functions in ways similar to a for-profit business. The pastor, thus, becomes a CEO and must aid in overseeing tasks like paying bills and hiring employees. On the other hand, religious organizations differ because a unique spiritual presence and motivation drives their existence. To this end, the pastor must become a spiritual expert, leaning on professional training gained through their religious education. Benson (1977) described this dichotomy as bureaucratic versus professional, a balance between running a business, or contributing to the organization for which they have been professionally trained. Benson's terms, however, seem slightly inaccurate in describing those jobs expected of a pastor. The balance is not so much between bureaucracy and professionalism, as the former represents a loaded term describing rigid hierarchical structure and the latter suggests pastoral jobs are simplistic. Instead, the balance should be between administrative, where the pastor is responsible for daily organizational operations, like that of any secular business, and spiritual, where the pastor functions more as a shepherd, to borrow from common religious metaphor, leading and teaching parishioners in ways that strengthen religious understanding and encourage spiritual growth. As new methods of communication develop, however, the role of religious leadership and authority has been called into question.

The nature of religious organizations forces clergy to take on two distinct roles. First, pastors must serve as administrators, navigating the secular demands placed upon their organization. This role requires clergy to attend to tasks like paying bills and overseeing other employees. Second, the pastor must serve as a spiritual guide, providing church members with clearly religious leadership. In this role, the pastor is often expected to ignore or abandon secular issues in an attempt to strengthen beliefs of the

faithful. Each individual clergy, however, will likely give each role varying levels of attention. These differences in leadership orientation should have an effect on the organization and its use of social or traditional media.

Clerical Leadership. Literature addressing clergy in religious organizations describe two distinct roles pastors must play: Administrator and Spiritual Guide. Benson and Dorsett (1971) describe this dichotomy as bureaucratic and professional, referring to the balance of responding to the organizational hierarchy and utilizing tools learned during professional training, or seminary. The distinction between the two roles is similar to an approach Allport (1950) described in work on psychology and religious experience, creating the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS). Allport offered two types of religious practice, extrinsic and intrinsic. For extrinsic individuals, religion is a tool for improving life in concrete ways, like gaining more organizational power, strengthening social networks, or receiving concrete benefits. Intrinsic religious individuals approach religion as an element of life necessary in seeking fulfillment. These individuals participate in religion not because they gain concrete benefits, but because they perceive a closer relationship with the divine. Subsequent work created a more specific approach to Allport's religious orientation scale. Hunt and King (1971) extended the ROS, describing five dimensions from which individuals approach religion: Universal-Parochial, Unselfish-Selfish, Relevance for All Life, Ultimate-Instrumental, and Associational-Communal. For religious individuals, spirituality takes on unique meanings based upon how they are oriented on the scale.

Ultimately, the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity was intended to describe the motivations by which an individual pursued faith. Extrinsic religiosity

motivated people to deepen their faith for personal gain. One example would be building social networks or achieving a sense of pride. Intrinsic religiosity is a more holistic motivation, driving people to deepen their faith in an attempt to increase their sense of connection with the world. Pastors with extrinsic motivation are those seeking personal gain or fame and therefore attempt to work within the administrative system for personal benefit. Intrinsic motivation manifests itself in pastors more concerned with the spiritual needs of the community.

Organizations and ICTs

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for years have been connecting people living, working, and playing at a distance. Numerous communities have adopted online networks to facilitate interaction and development. One of the earliest forms of online community was the Whole Earth 'Lectric Link (The WELL), allowing individuals to provide goods, services and advice to others through virtual connections (Rheingold, 1993). The WELL allowed people to meet in virtual space and extend relationships offline. Ten years later, some people were taking an opposing approach, developing online communities to strengthen current proximal relationships. One example was Netville, a housing development outside Toronto providing high-speed Internet wired into every home. Keith Hampton and Barry Wellman (2002, 2003) embedded themselves within the community to observe the effects of networking technology on daily interaction. Their conclusions suggested people use media to maintain contact with friendships outside the local community. Blacksburg, Virginia, also attempted to bridge social relationships through an online portal referred to as the Blacksburg Electronic Village, or BEV. One study of the BEV showed a longitudinal

increase in usage of the network to develop social ties and gain access to community resources (Kavanaugh & Patterson, 2001). Each example above highlights the power of social technologies to build and develop community resources.

Outside of informal communities, formal organizations, like businesses have also adopted ICTs to bridge distances. Olson and Olson (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of research covering distanced teams and found that the presence of distance frequently put a strain on groups. Cramton (2001) attempted to explain this problem by suggesting that groups operating at a distance failed to share mutual knowledge. In other words, physical presence created a context that was hard to communicate to those not sharing the same space. Cramton's work highlights an essential problem to ICTs, human interaction is complex, and any current form of mediation places limits on the channel, subsequently diminishing the quality of interaction. This problem has been referred to as the socio-technical gap (Ackerman, 2002), or the distance between what people are capable of doing, and limits technology places on those activities. Although balancing social needs with technological abilities will be a constant issue, Ackerman argues that many computer scientists have placed it in the forefront of their development.

ICTs have also been adopted to facilitate communication within the organization. Many organizations have experienced diminished costs and increased participation from community members (Huber, 1990). As community members were more involved, some communication within the organization created natural efficiencies that leveled traditional hierarchies, allowing people to feel more comfortable speaking with others at different levels within the organization. Subsequent research, focused on a social network site designed for use by IBM employees, provided similar results. Survey responses from

users of the site suggested that, although people are motivated to use the site for different reasons, those who are more engaged in online interaction also felt a greater sense of organizational citizenship (Steinfield, DiMicco, Ellison, & Lampe, 2009). In addition, it was concluded that use of the site allowed people to cultivate relationships with other individuals who had different areas of expertise. These weak ties have been argued as powerful tools for linking disparate social networks, thus providing access to social resources likely not available in an individual's network of close ties (Granovetter, 1973).

One strength of ICTs, as they are used in organizations, is their ability to unite and connect individuals in unique and powerful ways. Amidst the shifting communication habits, some organizations, including churches, have experienced significant declines in attendance and participation (Putnam, 2000). At the same time, new forms of ICTs have given people powerful tools for strengthening communities and uniting people. Specifically, ICTs have given people the ability to remove barriers to interaction, expand networks, restrict information, manage dependencies, maintain history, and establish group roles (Resnick, 2002). As communication becomes more integrated, people find more efficient ways to utilize the tools provided through ICTs. The result is a stronger network of interaction comprised of more heterogeneous individuals. Introducing people with a variety of expertise helps facilitate creativity and problem solving (Page, 2008). Rice (2009), worship leader for a large church, has identified a number of possibilities for ICTs in strengthening relationships specifically within religious organizations. The picture he paints suggests that ICTs have already provided significant benefits to people, and the church can experience similar connection so long as those involved are willing to create a revolution within their community.

The Technology Acceptance Model.

One challenge for researchers in organizational communication accompanies the introduction of new technologies. The central theoretical perspective taken for this study will be the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The model was originally developed by Davis (1989) and is comprised of two independent variables, perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU), both of which are used to predict the dependent variable, adoption of the technology. In early development of this perspective, Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989) presented research comparing the TAM with the previous theory from which the model was developed, the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). From the results of this study Davis and his colleagues were successful in providing evidence that behavioral intentions can be used as an appropriate measurement of future adoption thus altering the dependent variable to become behavioral intention to use (BIU). Employing only four variables, the original theoretical model was simple in its construction and, although variables have been added and relationships have been questioned, has remained relatively unchanged.

Many scholars have tested the validity of the TAM in numerous settings. Email and voicemail were some of the first forms of technology to be evaluated through this model. In two separate studies looking at email and voicemail, results concluded that the TAM was reliable as constructed (Adams, Nelson, & Todd, 1992). Another study, using an information system with a college student sample, also found results supporting the validity of the model (Hendrickson, Massey, & Cronan, 1993). More recently, the TAM was applied to mobile commerce with a sample of consumers in Singapore. The TAM was again supported as a valid tool for assessing predicted adoption of technology (Yang

& Yoo, 2004). Adding depth to the model, Kelleher and O'Malley (2006) provided a study first supporting the TAM, and second offering evidence that PEOU was a stronger factor than PU. Results presented in Kelleher and O'Malley's work ran contrary to arguments raised by other studies concluding PU providing more explanation than PEOU (Keil, Beranek, & Konsynski, 1995; Yang & Yoo, 2004). In general, however, most scholars have agreed on the validity of the model.

In an attempt to clarify weaknesses in the theory, a number of scholars have provided new variables separating PEOU and PU. For example, Szanja (1996) described an experiential component to the model, suggesting people are more likely to adopt a new technology if they have experience with the new technology. Other scholars offered evidence that new technologies need to have a playful element to them in order to attract new users in webpage contexts (Moon & Kim, 2001). In addition to playfulness and experience, a simpler argument has been made that organizations need to be ready for the new technology. Adding this variable to the model created a new model, referred to as the Technology Readiness and Acceptance Model, or TRAM (Lin, Shih, & Sher, 2007). Although each of these variables have proven significant in the process, the original model still remains, assuming a number of external variables influence both PEOU and PU.

Beyond offering new variables to the model, some scholars have attempted to revise and update the theoretical perspective. The first major contribution to the model was the addition of a longitudinal aspect. By including adoption over time, a new perspective, TAM2, was created arguing that some technologies may be adopted initially but neglected over time (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). One criticism of the TAM centered

on its organizational focus. As a result, applying the model to individuals, specifically in consumer roles, was difficult because the consumer market operated outside of organizational structures. In response, the TAM was modified to create the Consumer Acceptance of Technology (CAT) model. The original TAM, however, has remained a highly regarded foundation for theoretical relationships and assumptions.

Although numerous attempts have been made to improve the TAM, some legitimate criticism remains. For example, adaptability in multiple contexts is one weakness. Adoption of technology in website contexts has been an important variable of interest for a number of individuals. As a result, a new scale was developed modifying the TAM and tested on website users (Lederer, Maupin, Sena, & Zhuang, 2000). Later research suggested that people using websites were actually making use of two technologies, the website and the computer (Koufaris, 2002). More recently, researchers have applied similar techniques to social networking sites concluding that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness were both predictive of behavioral intention to use, but perceived usefulness was weaker (Pinho & Soares, 2011). The authors rationalized the weakness because using social networking sites provides benefits, like closer friendships, not seen or measured in usefulness scales.

In summary, the TAM provides a solid foundation on which to build theory. Despite modifications and revisions to the model, the structure created in the original perspective provides appropriate building blocks for theoretical inquiry. Therefore, this study will employ such theoretically justified variables in model development.

Religion and Communication Media

Applying the TAM to the current research means embracing the concept that media adoption has become more integrated, reaching all aspects of life and crossing multiple communication platforms. That is to say, interactions can seamlessly transition from face-to-face to telephone; from telephone to online chat; and from online chat to video chat on smartphones or tablets. Amidst the changes in communication patterns, religious individuals have turned to many online sources to find a sense of shared religious identity (Helland, 2007; Hiller & Franz, 2004; McAuliffe, 2007), to fulfill spiritual needs (Campbell, 2005a; Karaflogka, 2002), and simply to find answers to questions not adequately provided by religious organizations (Helland, 2002). Although religious activity online has received attention, little work has focused on religious organizations and their attempts to adapt to a new communication landscape. Religious organizations are struggling to make sense of these new technologies in ways that compliment current beliefs and practices. In other words, just as younger religious individuals have begun to reject the assertion that religion is an activity occurring only on Sunday mornings (Campbell, 2005b; Orsi, 1997), both religious and non-religious individuals have found ways to integrate multiple forms of communication technologies.

According to Helland (2002) and Karaflogka (2002), the relationship between religion and online interaction can be approached from two different directions: Online religion, and religion online. Online religion refers to the activities and practices of religious people in online space. This behavior occurs outside of traditional religious frameworks and without face-to-face interaction. Online religion can take many forms from forums allowing discussion of religious issues to complete virtual worlds hosting

online services for people to attend. Religion online refers to traditional religious organizations, with a physical presence, attempting to integrate online technologies into their operations. Instead of online spaces separating from authority structures, religion online is an organization making an entrée into virtual space in an attempt to either reach new members or connect those already present.

A number of scholars have explored the world of online religion. One study, a rhetorical analysis of religious spaces in which people congregate to conduct both synchronous and asynchronous religious activities, revealed that many people clearly expressed a spiritual experience through religious ritual in online space (Campbell, 2005a). Moreover, these religious experiences in sacred space allow people to feel spiritually connected to other people who share similar perceptions of religious interaction (Lombaard, 2007). Although interaction through online space lacks the physical presence of other individuals, the ethereal nature of the medium can often allow people to sense a closer connection to God because the interaction with others shares many similarities. These similarities and attributes of online religious communication can also, it has been argued, lead to a stronger sense of understanding and a broader connection between those of differing faith perspectives (Dawson, 2004; Maxwell, 2002). In response to these perspectives, a number of religious organizations have attempted to make use of multiple forms of media as a way to connect religious people.

Research in the field of religion online comes from a history of traditional media use. For example, Pat Robertson has developed a large following through his daily television program, The 700 Club (Abelman & Neuendorf, 1987; Gormly, 2004). Highly critical of religious leaders adopting television to expand the audience of their religious

services, Postman (1985) contends that absent physical place, religious practice cannot possibly replicate the original context of religion. He says,

> If the delivery is not the same, then the message, quite likely, is not the same. And if the context in which the message is experienced is altogether different from what it was in Jesus' time, we may assume that its social and psychological meaning is different as well" (p. 118).

Postman would likely also be skeptical of religion and social media as their interaction redefines religious experience. Despite Campbell's (2005a) assertion that online interaction can indeed create spiritual spaces, Postman's position would suggest such spirituality as fundamentally different from that which the church has offered for centuries. O'Leary (2005) shares a similar perspective arguing that an online world heavily based in textual interaction will never replace vital aspects of religion. Both O'Leary and Postman contend that sacred physical space is essential to religious rituals. Translating religious practice into electronically mediated environments, like television or the Internet, damages interaction fundamental to traditional definitions of religion.

Other religious businesses and organizations, like radio stations, have made a transition into online space. The past decade has seen a dramatic increase in the presence of streaming radio stations devoted to providing Christian rock to a broader audience (Kridel, 2007). At the same time, many religious organizations have continued to produce traditional print media. One study suggested that over 4,000 publications are in print aimed at religious audiences (K. Waters, 2001). The problem with these publications is that they often fail to reach a broader audience. Those who read them typically agree with what is printed and use the content to confirm and strengthen personal convictions. It

should be noted, however, that the publications studied came from larger religious organizations, not local congregations. When local church publications are analyzed, a similar effect is found, but there is also a correlation between the amount of time an individual spends reading the church newsletter and how much money they are willing to give to the congregation (Cannon, 2007).

Religious organizations have made attempts to integrate new ICTs into their operations. Aside from email, a technology that has been adopted to varying degrees in most congregations (Thumma, 2002), websites are one of the easiest ways for churches to engage new forms of ICTs. Early work on church websites was somewhat mixed in tone. As the medium was quickly developing in multiple forms and for multiple purposes across American culture, it was noted that many churches were attempting to adopt the new method of communication, but they were failing to invest in means that would make the site appear professional, creating sites of poor quality (Dart, 2001; Thumma, 2002). Sites that were created rarely offered viewers an opportunity to engage in much more than one-way communication (Sturgill, 2004). Churches tended to view the site as another means of announcing upcoming events. Like their print publication counterparts, websites were aimed at an in-group audience. Some sites, however, were able to find ways to engage visitors through spiritual elements, like prayer requests and suggestions (Young, 2005). Even with the numerous attempts to provide more relevant media experiences, religious organizations are still struggling to make effective use of new technologies.

People in positions of religious authority are currently facing barriers to effective leadership as religious culture shifts. Specifically, the use of ICTs provides people with a

broad array of views. Campbell (2007b) argues that when religious authority is moved into online contexts, where the playing field of religious intercourse is made level, individuals naturally become more open to ideas of others. Plurality of ideas, however, opens the door to a stronger and broader view of issues (Page, 2008). On the other hand, Kinney (1995) argued that such open interaction will strip religious authority of power, a move that threatens the very nature of religion itself. The question then turns to how those in positions of religious leadership, particularly clergy, will react to these changes.

More traditional religious authority structures have found ways to interpret and interact with changing media. Some religious leaders have embraced ICTs as a new tool for developing and maintaining religious ties with individuals seeking answers. For example, interviews with religious leaders in Singapore revealed an attitude that these new methods of interaction open doors allowing religious leaders to encourage individuals to pursue faith at deeper levels (Kluver & Cheong, 2007). Canadian religious leaders from Buddhist and Christian organizations described approaches to technology that fell into three distinct perspectives (Cheong & Poon, 2008). Some leaders found new ICTs to be complementary to religious goals, allowing the organization to reach new audiences in more relevant ways. Other religious leaders found new forms of communication to be transformative, fundamentally altering how religious organizations function. A third group of religious leaders described new communication technologies as perverse, hindering or destroying traditional religious structures. These perspectives, however, differ from those taken by individuals using media to understand and grow in their faith.

As religious individuals transition to more open methods of interaction, religious organizations are forced to alter how they connect with those they are trying to reach. Although new forms of media are capable of stripping power from traditional authority structures, those who utilize the new forms of interaction often find ways to legitimize its presence. One strength of a more fractured system of communication is connection created through tribalization (George, 2005). As individuals discover others who share similar beliefs, they can create a community. Religious community development is often followed quickly by a recognition that clerical authority figures are a necessary ingredient (Martin-Barbero, 1997). Individuals involved in these communities often legitimate their conversations through references to religious authority figures who may or may not be a part of the community. Moreover, when religious authority figures are mentioned in posts by bloggers, it is often in a confirming context, suggesting that online interaction does not have traditionally assumed powers of flattening or weakening authority structures (Campbell, 2009). A recent religious movement in Japan provided further evidence that online interaction could aid the development of religious authority by using numerous forms of mass media to strengthen and legitimize those in positions of leadership (Baffelli, 2007). Results from this study reinforce what Baym et al. (2004) reported, that new media have been integrated into traditional communication patterns, creating a complex environment in which content must come through multiple forms of media to be most effective. Media usage must be approached from a deeply integrated perspective. Additionally, the cultural changes in perceptions of religious authority and political structures mean this new generation of religious individuals are demanding a change in how churches connect with those they are trying to reach.

The two perspectives describe religious organizational media in two forms. Many religious organizations rely on traditional media, like newsletters and other print publications. Content in these traditional media is tightly controlled by individuals in church administration. Additionally, those receiving information from these media are typically unable to either respond or provide interactive content. Some churches have begun to adopt new styles of social media, utilizing Internet software and allowing their members to contribute and respond. Given the drastic cultural changes, religious organizations must overhaul their communication paradigms or face becoming irrelevant to a culture looking for meaning.

Changing American religion.

Challenges with adoption and integration of new communication technologies have come at a difficult time for many churches throughout the country. The past century of American history has brought significant change to American churches. In the first quarter of the 20th century, community churches were becoming a popular movement, providing significant opportunities for religious people to legitimize the organization through interaction and identity with the surrounding community (Jordan, 1926). As these small churches grew, so did connections between congregations, giving rise to a pattern of centralization through national denominations (Holt, 1929). These large, nationwide collections of religious individuals, like Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Methodists, reached their peak of membership and attendance in the 1950s and 1960s (Putnam & Campbell, 2010). As they declined, it became evident that a new trend was emerging, returning to congregations based more in their own communities. Large denominations primarily comprised of small churches are being replaced with large,

independent congregations more interested in connecting people locally (Roof & Hoge, 1980), resulting in changes to how people perceive their relationship with church, and how they experience this relationship.

Recent research has reflected these changes in religious practice and identity. The Pew Religious Landscape Survey (2008) reported a transition from communal identity, or agreement with spiritual practices of a large group, to faith that has become more individualized, not bound by the tenets of a specific denomination. Moreover, religious identity has shifted. Individuals who contributed to the rise in denominations in the middle part of the 20th century reported strong ties to the denominational organization. Two generations later, however, religious individuals report a much weaker identity with the denomination, favoring the local congregation of which they are a part (Dougherty et al. 2007). Moreover, Chaves (2006) describes a growing concentration of religious attendees in the largest congregations. As a result, larger denominations face the challenge of maintaining small populations, as members are continuously interested in larger ones. Chaves contends that economic forces, increases in costs like wages and health care, have made small churches challenging to maintain. A report from the United Methodist Church highlights this issue, suggesting a large collection of individuals in a small percentage of churches while the majority of congregations have less than 200 members (General Council on Finance and Administration, 2008). These numbers have caused some to describe the current American religious landscape as in decline (Hadaway & Marler, 2005), but others have challenged that perspective, suggesting a different approach to American religiosity.

Scholars describing a decline in American religiosity often turn to decreasing rates of church attendance (Hadaway & Marler, 2005; Putnam, 2000; Putnam & Campbell, 2010). Others, however, have argued for a more complex picture of the religious landscape, describing religion as an inextricable aspect of culture (Orsi, 1997). For example, Glendinning (2006) suggested that people who may not attend or connect with a specific church still consider themselves Christians. In other words, to many people, participation in a religious organization is not a prerequisite to identify with the faith tradition. Orsi (2005) contends that so many elements of religious practice permeate every facet of culture, that it is impossible to define religious behavior. Chidester (2005) seems to oppose Orsi's perspective of "lived religion" stating:

> What counts as religion, therefore, is the focus of the problem of authenticity in religion and American popular culture. Making the problem worse, some religious activity appears transparently fake, including the proliferation of invented religions on the Internet… (p. 9)

Chidester goes on, however, to separate the practice of religion from the perception that religion itself is limited to the confines of a specific faith tradition. "…but even fake religions can be doing a kind of symbolic, cultural, and religious work that is real" (p.9). The lifestyle Chidester and Orsi describe gives religious value to most elements of culture.

The two perspectives offer distinct measurements for the quality of a church. The first perspective suggests church success is tied to membership numbers. In this perspective, the church is viewed strictly as a secular organization and its ability to function should be measured through completely objective means. In the second

perspective, scholars have conceded that spirituality, or the measurement of church success can only be measured through subjective means, like asking people about their perceptions of religious life. Regardless of the perspective taken, it is impossible to escape the argument that churches face a different audience than they did one hundred years ago.

Like new forms of communication media, religion has become a more integrated element of culture. Some individuals, referred to as "Golden Rule Christians" are criticized for their application of religious practices only when seen as beneficial. Ammerman (1997a) has responded to this criticism suggesting that these individuals have not secularized or diluted the faith. Instead, they are merely responding to changes in culture, challenging traditional religious practice, and demanding a more relevant religious experience. Moreover, those considered part of Generation X, individuals born between about 1960 and 1980, have been raised in a society constantly melding sacred and secular, virtual and real (Beaudoin, 1998). Consequently, people under age 40 have not abandoned faith, but are demanding a spiritual connection more personalized and disconnected from organizational frameworks. They want to know that religious practice is relevant and rewarding.

In the process of seeking a newly defined faith, religious individuals have embraced new forms of technology that redefine traditional religious authority and communication structures. These religious seekers who avoid institutionalized religious organizations, however, receive similar social and self benefits, like faith in people and a general sense of purpose in life, with those currently attending services in traditional church structures (McKenna & West, 2007). Online religious communities, websites, and

forums have also provided individuals, alienated by religious polities, to find a new source of spiritual fulfillment (Helland, 2004). Campbell (2004) has described an environment in which people have left traditional religious organizations citing negative experiences. These individuals, however, have begun to embrace a faith more individualized and tailored to fit personal experiences and needs. Evidence for spiritual individuation is evidenced by a declining confidence in religious institutions. Hoffman (1998) reported longitudinal survey results suggesting that people had lost confidence in these institutions, a trend especially present in younger individuals.

As young people seek a merger between sacred and secular, they also expect religious institutions to follow suit. In the absence of relevant forms of communication from established religious communities, some religious individuals have turned to other media, like blogs. By discussing beliefs through a medium mostly unused by organized religion, spiritual ideas are left open for in-depth discussion from people who may hold differing perspectives (Cheong, Halavais, & Kwon, 2008). Through this dialog, religious individuals are capable of judging faith for themselves, and thus aligning their daily experiences with their perception of religious tradition. Even though these methods of spiritual connection are finding traction in a changing landscape, religious organizations are reluctant to embrace them (Christians, 2002). Many churches are, therefore, struggling to identify ways to meld sacred traditions with secular experiences while maintaining what many perceive as essential traditions.

The changing landscape for communication has also changed the religious landscape. Effects of these changes are made more salient when they are considered in the two distinct contexts of religious interaction. On one hand, religious people are

attempting to make use of new ICTs to make up for what they feel is lacking in institutionalized religion. On the other hand, religious organizations are making attempts to address such newfound needs. The central focus of this research is to identify what attempts religious organizations are making, how those attempts are received by current members, and what affect those attempts have on participation from the new generation of spiritual individuals.

Addressing these issues will require two methods informed by the TAM and applying a results-driven approach to survey construction. The first method will be interviews with religious leaders, discussing how they perceive and use social media in their organization. Results from these conversations will be used to develop a survey sent to a national sample of pastors to understand how widespread these perceptions and uses are. The ultimate goal will be to extend current research and theory by identifying unique characteristics of social media and explaining how those unique characteristics interact with aspects of religious organizations that set them apart from their secular and non-profit counterparts. Moreover, this research will attempt to describe how churches have responded to such interaction and what effects those responses create.

CHAPTER III: INTERVIEW STUDY

Overview

It is evident from the literature that little is known about use of social media in religious organizations. In order to test the validity of the TAM in religious organizational contexts and at a broader level, data was collected identifying how churches have used social media, and what issues prevented adoption. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with pastors and youth directors in United Methodist churches throughout Michigan (N=27). An interview protocol was developed, including questions designed to understand how respondents perceived social media, how social media were used, and what processes were in place to facilitate or prevent adoption of social media. In addition, subjects were asked about any specific situations they or their colleagues had experienced representing either benefits or harms from the use of social media. Each interview was transcribed and coded using qualitative data analysis software. Themes in the coded responses were identified and aligned with appropriate research questions. This chapter will explain each research question, define the study population, describe data collection and analysis methods, present results for each research question, and draw conclusions based upon those results.

Research Questions

This specific study has four research questions. First, to describe how social media are used in religious organizations. Second, to identify specific uses for social media. Third, ascertain specific barriers preventing adoption or integration of social media. Finally, to understand what administrative processes are present in relation to social media.

The first research question is a general approach to the use of social media in the study population. To date, little research has provided an accurate picture of social media usage and perception in religious organizations. Extant research is relatively out of date and not reflective of recent trends. More than a decade ago, research reported a significant number of churches developing websites without sufficient investment in quality (Dart, 2001; Thumma, 2002). Later work explained that use of online communication was minimal, focusing on one-way interaction, and neglecting interactive qualities (Sturgill, 2004). To date, no research exists providing a complete picture of religious organizational social media use. Therefore,

RQ_1: How are social media perceived and used in United Methodist Churches?

Although many churches may be using social media, others are not. Moreover, these organizations have likely been making minimal effort to make use of these new technologies for their interactive purposes (Sturgill, 2004). Hovey (2010) presented a study of voluntary organizational use of social media, finding that social media were often neglected or overlooked because individuals were more interested in face-to-face relationships. Organizations face distinct challenges adopting new forms of communication as changes in these processes alter how members interpret their world (Weick, 2001). As a second research question, this research focused on what has been preventing churches from fully taking advantage of what social media have to offer.

RQ_2: What specific barriers have prevented churches from adopting or integrating social media successfully in their organizations?

Next, these interviews were designed to dig into a more specific focus on how social media are perceived to benefit and harm the organization. New media have democratized

interpretations of spiritual experiences, challenging the role of religious authority (Campbell, 2007b). In response, religious leaders have shared unique perspectives about possible directions new media can take their respective faiths (Cheong & Poon, 2008). Questions remain, however, about how social media are perceived. Specifically, what social media can do for and to an organization.

RQ_3: What are the perceived benefits and harms to social media adoption in United Methodist churches?

Finally, one distinction religious organizations claim from their secular counterparts is a reliance on religious authority (DiMaggio, 1998). Moreover, these organizations rely on unique structures granting varying levels of autonomy to local organizations (Chaves, 1993). Therefore, in order to understand how social media are used in these organizations, it is also necessary to understand what administrative processes are at work, and how these processes affect adoption.

RQ_4: What administrative processes are present as churches make decisions about adopting or integrating social media?

Method

Telephone interviews were conducted with pastors and youth directors from United Methodist churches in two conferences comprising the state of Michigan. Respondents were theoretically sampled (Charmaz, 2006) at three stages to provide a targeted pool of subjects offering the most relevant responses to the research questions.

The United Methodist Church

The UMC has been chosen for this study based upon its size, relatively strong political structure, and the fact that the researcher has access to the organization.

Focusing on one denomination provides internal validity by controlling for effects of structural differences, an issue present in previous research (Genia, 1993). According to statistics and reports from the Pew Religious Landscape Survey (Pew, 2008), and the United Methodist General Counsel on Finance and Administration (2008), the UMC represents the largest Protestant Christian denomination with a hierarchical structure in the United States. Almost 8 million people are listed on membership roles of over 35,000 United Methodist congregations throughout the United States. Of those churches, 68.7% have congregations under 200 people while 70% of church members belong to churches with more than 200 people, a trend reflected in the work of Chaves (2006). Churches are connected to the national denomination office through a hierarchy of regional jurisdictions, state-sized conferences, smaller districts, and local congregations (The United Methodist Publishing House, 2008). Every four years, the denomination gathers at General Conference to revise guidelines describing how churches should be run and statements explaining the official denominational stance on important social issues. Results of this gathering are published in the United Methodist Discipline, the governing document of the organization.

Each church in the denomination is semi-autonomous. Although the Discipline describes explicit processes for structuring and administering the church as an organization, individual congregations are given some flexibility in developing the most effective system. Churches, for example, are responsible for staffing decisions outside of clerical positions. Clergy are appointed to each congregation on the basis of decisions made by the board of district superintendents in consultation with the conference bishop. Local churches have the ability to reject conference appointments, but such action is

rarely taken. Churches are also responsible for their own financial welfare. Each church is expected to pay an apportionment to the conference based upon membership numbers. Beyond apportionment expenses, each church maintains an individual budget. In some cases, like congregations serving poor populations, the district or conference may elect to subsidize an individual organization. However, these decisions are often accompanied with an expectation that the church will become independent in the future.

Because the UMC is a large, well-established congregation with a clear hierarchical connection, it is an appropriate research site. The size provides a significant pool from which to draw a sample. As it is a national community, there is a built-in opportunity to collect information from numerous cultures across the United States. Connection to a central headquarters allows for a more coordinated effort in contacting the large population. Finally, the UMC has specific expectations for credentialing clergy members and therefore provides a more clearly defined population.

Data collection procedures.

Prior to identifying subjects, an interview protocol was developed to guide conversation in areas deemed relevant to the present research. The script was tested on three current pastors with whom the researcher had previous relationships, facilitating further development and clarification. Pilot participants were also asked to provide feedback about interview questions that may have lacked clarity, and suggestions for additional interview considerations. Each pilot interview was transcribed and coded, but results were not included in the final sample.

Theoretical sampling was used to identify subjects for this study. In grounded theory, theoretical sampling is “a means to gather data in a logical manner based on

earlier data and the researcher's analytical thinking" (O'Reilly, Paper, & Marx, 2012, pp. 252-253). Although random sampling provides a cross-section of the population, many of those cases are likely irrelevant to the central inquiry. Theoretical sampling, therefore, uses intentional case selection to identify subjects most likely to provide additional relevant data. For this project, statisticians reports from conference journals (Detroit Annual Conference, 2011 ; West Michigan Annual Conference, 2010) were used to identify churches representing a cross-section of organizations. Selection criteria included congregation size and church location. Therefore, both large and small churches were selected, as were congregations in rural, suburban, and urban areas. After approximately ten interviews, transcripts were reviewed, and new churches were selected. Based upon this review, it was noted that churches with between 250 and 750 members provided the most in-depth experiences and knowledge of social media. Therefore, 1-3 churches from each district (subdivision of conferences) were identified using statistical information collected by each conference and reported in their respective conference journals. In total, 27 interviews were conducted. 19 subjects were ordained clergy, 6 were youth directors, and 4 were ordained clergy who worked with youth. 19 were men, and 8 were women. The average tenure at the current church was 4.5 years, with an average professional ministry experience of 12 years. Church size averaged 435 with a median of 250. The average age of all subjects was 46 (See Table 1).

Interviews were transcribed and coded using qualitative data analysis software (MaxQDA). Guided by grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), preliminary themes were identified prior to coding. Codes were then assigned to sections of text in each interview. During the coding process, new themes were identified.

Table 1. Interview Subjects and Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Position	Sex	Age	Tenure	Experience	Members
Adam	Youth	M	29	2.5	5	580
Andrew	Pastor	M	51	9	8.5	191
Daniel	Pastor	M	58	6	21	223
Diana	Youth	F	40	8	8	862
Enoch	Pastor	M	41	1.5	10	497
Eve	Pastor	F	51	7.5	26	231
Ezra	Youth	M	28	4.5	5.5	770
George	Pastor	M	64	4.5	4.5	62
James	Youth	M	38	8.5	8.5	692
Jessica	Pastor/ Youth	F	45	6	16	929
John	Youth	M	23	1.25	2	596
Joseph	Pastor	M	41	4.5	14	153
Joshua	Pastor	M	53	1.5	22	580
Luke	Pastor	M	42	1.5	12	197
Lydia	Pastor/ Youth	F	43	2.5	18	550
Maggie	Pastor	F	48	6	12	172
Mark	Youth	M	24	1.5	1.5	153
Matthew	Pastor	M	30	1.5	10	137
Miah	Pastor	M	52	0.5	12	250
Paul	Pastor	M	50	0.5	22	341
Peter	Pastor	M	58	2.5	2.5	106
Rebekah	Pastor/ Youth	F	30	1.5	7	1920
Ruth	Pastor	F	71	8.5	11	88
Sarah	Pastor/ Youth	F	61	1.5	6	373
Stephen	Pastor	M	59	3.5	5	663
Thomas	Pastor	M	59	5.5	23	191
Zach	Pastor	M	54	17	28	240

All documents received a second round of coding to ensure that all sections were coded appropriately and all themes had been identified. Coding each line of the transcript allowed specific themes to be recalled and compared across respondents. After transcripts were coded, responses were reviewed, and specific themes were identified in relation to the central research questions.

Results

RQ_1: Uses of social media

Research question one was concerned with uses of social media in church contexts. The interview protocol was focused on four general topics: 1) Information Routing, using social media to inform congregants of upcoming events and activities; 2) Distanced Communication, helping connect people who could not be physically present share a sense of community and fellowship with others; 3) Behavioral Monitoring, following items in the news feed from youth or other congregants with the intent of reaction when concerning information was seen; and 4) Proselytizing, sharing faith-based messages with the intent of attracting new people to the organization, or helping people within the church strengthen their faith. Most respondents described using social media as one-way communication, sending messages from the office to the congregation. For each of the four categories, however, some respondents identified methods for achieving interactivity.

Information Routing. Participants spoke most frequently about using social media for information routing purposes. Specifically, they found social media well-suited for sharing announcements about upcoming events or activities. Subjects varied in how social media were used for information sharing, but agreed that new communication

technologies were a cost-effective method to reach a large group of people. Lydia summed up the general tone of respondents when she said:

> Social media is the way that most people are communicating right now. People are taking time on Twitter, they're spending time on Facebook, they are instant messaging and texting back and forth, and it just seems like that instant kind of communication is a way that we can keep in contact with people, or reach out to people just the way that we used to hang up posters and send out messages.

Typically, when ministers described sharing announcements through social media and other technologies, the focus was on message transmission. For example, Andrew described how his church employed multiple means of electronic media to remind people about an upcoming event:

> They can also be a way of marketing something we're doing. For instance, we're showing a movie Saturday night and so we can use our Facebook page to remind people. We will send out an email today and maybe I'll send one out Friday reminding people of the movie.

In organizations, like churches, where strong community is important, promoting upcoming activities becomes essential. Regardless of whether or not the church used these media, ministers were positive about their prospect for providing fast, inexpensive means for informing a large portion of the congregation.

For a few of the religious leaders interviewed, social media have become a tool to promote organizational interactivity. This effect was most prominently seen in youth ministry. As John, a youth director describes it, "working in youth ministry, it's a very, I guess, flexible ministry. A lot of things will change quickly." Some ministers recognized

the potential for sharing these changes quickly and effectively. Building on the sense of immediacy, ministers also identified the ability to coordinate events either in the planning stages or when last-minute changes are necessary. The ability of immediate response has been beneficial to the youth ministry at Sarah's church. She said:

> The adults are all of a sudden more involved. It doesn't seem to be as big a chore as it was last year to contact the youth and their parents about an upcoming idea. Often things seem to happen up here at the last minute… And so I could understand why people would say, oh, I don't want to get involved in that. You know, we're a week out and we don't have the time. But now, people are just saying, I think we can do this. We can get a hold of the kids. We can handle this… The fact that they can sit down and write one note on Facebook and ask the kids to respond like they do on a Facebook message. Great things are happening and adults are feeling more encouraged that we can all do this.

This quote highlights a number of issues. First, Sarah found that social media can compensate for poor planning. Second, she also noted that demands on volunteers as a result of poor planning is often a deterrent because of the stress it can create. Social media can alleviate this stress by creating a natural network through which information can be sent quickly. Finally, Sarah noted a significant increase in the quantity and quality of offline interaction. Adult volunteers appeared more involved in the lives of youth. This perception can explained in two ways. First, adults find a simplicity in accessing youth through online media. Second, this access occurs through a medium that can be considered more natural to the youth with whom volunteers interact. Stephen offered a more specific example from their church, describing social media use during a local

festival. The church is located in the middle of the festival grounds and "offer[s] an outdoor worship service on one of the stages, and we're able to utilize the Facebook page to get the word out to people in the church to participate as volunteers." On the other hand, Rebekah was forced to cancel an event and, as she explains, "we finally made a decision three hours before the event. I got on Facebook, I have student cell phone numbers and I was texting them right away. Within an hour, I believe, I had connected to everyone." In each case, last-minute plans were facilitated. The result is a more agile organization that can negotiate the challenges posed by individuals' changing lives.

Distanced Communication. In addition to using social media to share announcements and coordinate events, the tools were also used to connect individuals unable to be physically present for organizational meetings. The best example of this use is in churches where members have gone on mission trips. A few ministers described blogs they maintained while on mission trips.

> The senior pastor just led a Volunteers in Mission team down to Haiti. And while they were there they had a blog and they were getting about 900 hits every day… It was a buzz all around the church… We formed another kind of a community like a whole lot of us who were following them and it just brought their work closer to us (Lydia).

Adam explained that he saw the potential to strengthen relationships in the church by making people aware of what his youth were doing outside the walls. He said of a mission trip using Facebook, "the church is more connected to the students while they were kind of away from the church." In his opinion, when youth are not seen in the church, they are "out of sight, out of mind." But when the church has that ability to

connect with them, the mission they are undertaking becomes more real for the entire organization.

Facilitating distanced communication was the second affordance social media provided. In one church, the minister described their use of YouVersion.com, a social media site designed to help people connect with others while reading the Bible. Allowing people to take part in an interactive Bible study has removed the barrier of time that, according to Joseph,

> I think social media breaks down the barrier of time. People's time is becoming harder and harder to pull together… So social media removes the barrier of all having to be in the same place and the same time while still receiving the benefit of getting people together.

Other ministers saw the benefit in social media beyond busy schedules. For some, it was a lifeline to individuals unable to be physically present in worship services or at church events. Maggie saw promise in new technologies when she said,

> We live in a community where we have a great number of senior citizens who cannot physically make it to church anymore… I think finding different ways to stream [worship services], whether that be to the Internet or even getting on cable, those kind of things to get the life of the church out in the hands of other people who are feeling disconnected from the church that they've always been a part of.

The topic of shut-ins, or people with health problems that prevent them from attending services, was frequently cited as a possibility for the new technology, but none of the ministers interviewed used any form of Internet streaming for their services. Health problems were not the only reason people were unable to participate in the community.

Luke described his congregation as a "fairly mobile community," and "half to two-thirds of our congregation lives in two different places throughout the year." Many churches throughout Michigan have members referred to as "snow birds" for their propensity to fly south for the winter. For people in Luke's church, "those who are mobile like that use things like Facebook." In situations like this, social networking provides an inexpensive method for the organization to maintain relational ties despite the disparate nature of their community members.

Behavioral Monitoring. The third purpose for which religious leaders used social media was to maintain a connection to the spiritual needs of the faith community. The spiritual mission of a church creates a unique atmosphere where people are interested in the lives of their fellow parishioners. When lives change, church members want to be informed quickly so action can be taken. In other words, "Social media goes 24/7. And so there's always a wealth of knowledge about people's personal lives. Who is sick, who just came back from a band concert, and whose grandma is going to Florida" (Daniel). This quote suggests a constant flow of information. Compared to previous communication methods, like the telephone, social media are constantly fed with new information. The result is that people in faith communities are no longer required to wait until an appropriate time to share their concerns. Although email removed some of those time barriers, sharing information with such a large group of people was not as accepted. One youth director, Jessica, described the immediacy of Facebook compared with email saying:

> I know that for my use, that email is pretty much old school now and that they would check their Facebook and their text way sooner than they will check an

> email account. And so… if I have something that I really need to communicate with the kids and not necessarily with a parent, I would use their Facebook account.

For Jessica, the choice to use social media over other forms of communication was practical. She described adjusting to a generation no longer interested in "old school" methods.

In some churches, respondents identified specific opportunities in which they were given the opportunity to respond when disconcerting situations were raised. The ability to see and interact with a social network of like-minded individuals in a faith community, like a church, further benefits individuals through personal religious needs. Many churches rely on complex systems for prayer concerns. Subjects in this study, however, attributed democratizing power to social media. Issues demanding immediate community attention could easily and quickly be shared with a broad array of parishioners. As Daniel explains,

> I often look [on Facebook] that a parishioner was to go into a hospital, or is sick and not feeling well, or they have a child who is going through divorce, those type of things. That's very helpful information for me to know. And then when I see that person in person and I will know a little bit about the situation and can engage in conversation.

Zach agreed, suggesting "the majority of pastoral care I'm able to give today comes as a result of somebody being in a Facebook group of some kind." He went on to explain that he uses the social networking site in similar fashion to Daniel. In both cases, social media became a vehicle for facilitating interaction and response. In a more specific example,

Matthew described a situation in which his friend, another clergy, "encountered this homeless family that were in need of some help. He put something out on Facebook and… lot of folk were able to offer the family shelter, and meet other basic needs." Eventually, because of this contact on Facebook, the father was able to secure employment. As people become more aware of other individuals in their congregation, churches become more effective at matching their own personal strengths to specific needs arising within the community.

Proselytizing. Finally, respondents described employing social media for evangelism, or attempting to attract new members to their organization. Religious leaders in this study saw SNSs as a method for sharing religious messages with a large group of people outside their own faith community. Enoch explained that when he started on Facebook, his friends shared comments posted during the Christian season of Lent, and he began receiving friend requests from his friends' friends who wanted to read his blog. Later, his church started to take advantage of social media and "once [my church] started using videos and sharing on Facebook, I have folks sharing around bits of my sermons." Miah described a similar experience with their Christmas service,

> we noticed that our Christmas Eve and Christmas day worship attendance doubled over what it did last year and I think a big part of that was some of the hype that we did through social media and targeting people that we have as friends on Facebook.

Another pastor, Maggie, took the use of social media a step further and suggested that it helped her create strong relationships with individuals outside the church membership. She said,

> For me, social networking is a great way to be in relationships with people other than those in my congregation… I meet new people on there because they see something I said, or something I posted on a comment on it, then I started a conversation back with them.

In each of these cases, the pastor describes using social media as a means for sharing information about their beliefs, and inviting conversation to discuss those tenets. Moreover, by posting information about church activities or religious ideas, respondents in this study perceived social media as a tool for bringing people into the church. It appeared that they saw social media as a stronger tool than paper newsletters because it was a method of developing relationships with other people outside of the church organization.

In addition to building relationships with others outside the organization, social media were also used to build a sense of comfort for people who were considering attendance or participation. For those in John's youth group, Facebook was a method of helping teens build social awareness.

> I think a big thing, whether we like it or not, pressure is a huge influence on effectiveness of a youth program… Most of my students are on Facebook every single day, if not every single class… so it's just a really easy and beneficial way for them to always know what's going on, who's going to be there, what they can expect, if there is any surprise in store.

John pointed out a major issue for youth was the idea of participation with others. They want to know who else will be there to ensure that they would have a friend. By using event coordination, John could help his youth feel more comfortable about attending

because they could confirm who would also be attending. As Ezra described, "Showing them, hey I know that kid goes to youth group because they're part of the youth ministry page. Hopefully it's less intimidating the first time because you know the people there." Although only the youth directors identified this purpose, some pastors described using their church website in the same manner, suggesting that people might be more inclined to attend a church service if they knew what to expect.

Religious leaders described four significant purposes for social media in the context of their church organization: Announcements, distanced communication, prayer needs, and evangelism. Most respondents described using social media for one-way communication as a tool to replicate what was being done through more traditional means of communication like newsletters. Some subjects, however, described using social media for a more interactive purpose. Simple announcements became a tool for coordinating events. Sharing information with people at a distance became bulletin boards for interaction in an attempt to work around busy calendars. Posts sharing prayer needs became a means for pastoral intervention and community support. Bible verses in a news feed became a tool for helping people prepare for attendance at a church service. In each case, religious leaders interviewed in this study identified reported a number of situations in which social media were tools to improve the quality of their organization.

RQ_2: Barriers to social media usage.

The second research question asked what prevented churches from adopting or taking full advantage of social media in their organization. Underlying all of the barriers discussed was the perception that a large portion of the congregation would be unwilling or unable to participate. This larger barrier can be divided into three specific themes: 1)

Time, 2) Manpower, and 3) Access to technology. First, subjects expressed concern that adopting and maintaining social media was a time-consuming process that would place significant strain on organizational resources. Second, religious leaders suggested that they did not have enough skilled manpower to develop or maintain a social media agenda. Third, some respondents were concerned that a significant part of their congregation either lacked computers or lacked Internet access, and adopting social media would prevent them from being full participants in the church. Each of the three themes was spoken with tacit recognition that social media required a large base of support both in development and participation.

Time. The first barrier respondents identified was that of time. Specifically, finding people with adequate time was one of the most prominent barriers. Peter explained,

> Because we are a smaller church, we end up doing three or four jobs for each person that will volunteer. I'm sure you've heard the old saying that twenty percent of the people do eighty percent of the work. In this church, it's probably more like ten percent of the people do ninety percent of the work and so I just don't have enough people who have the time and the willingness to do stuff.

Peter's description offered a broad overview of organizational labor needs. When the church is unable to fill specific positions, some needs are neglected as other, more important demands are addressed. Daniel, another pastor, claimed most of the responsibility for his church struggling with adoption. He said,

> I always have so many plates spinning at any one time. And so, in my thinking, because I'm not a computer geek, in my thinking it is okay now, I think, to keep

> up with a whole other aspect means another investment of time every day. And it would be some benefit from it, but I have to weigh it off with do I have time to do that or the desire to do it?"

For both Peter and Daniel, the barrier to social media is a combination of finding the right people with the time to deal with the technology. The issue is twofold. First, social media require time to both develop and maintain. In an organization like a church, time becomes a valuable commodity. Once developed, it requires commitment from individuals in the organization to continuously send messages while monitoring online behavior. Respondents suggested that both of these time-related issues were cause for concern because of limited organizational resources. The second issue relates to finding skilled individuals with time to address social media. According to the pastors interviewed, finding volunteers was not as difficult as finding individuals with appropriate skills. A few pastors described situations in which social media, typically Facebook Groups, were adopted, only to fall dormant when the volunteer in charge no longer had time to maintain the site. For example, Luke explained that the Facebook page for his church was started by an individual who eventually left the organization. It was difficult for Luke to find another individual willing to commit the time to maintain the page. In brief, time was a significant problem from the organizational perspective. What is shown here is that characteristics of social media that facilitate individual usage may impede organizational adoption. Underlying the responses, subjects seemed to recognize that social media are unable to gain sufficient support without significant investment of time, despite the fact that many people in the organization participate in the technology.

Manpower. As a voluntary organization, lacking professional resources seems to be a significant problem. In one rural congregation, "I would say that we have approximately twenty percent of the congregation that does not use the Internet and nor do they have any intentions of ever owning a computer" (Miah). For some congregations, it was difficult to reconcile the potential benefits of reaching a younger generation with the minimal participation from current organizational members. Zach explained that his church has changed how they approach finding people to do necessary work. He said,

> Well the old model [was], we've got this [task] and you go and twist arms and finally find somebody to do it. But that's not necessarily something that person wanted to do… [Now we] take a little bit more time in helping people understand if you want something more in a particular area, we're waiting for the right person to step forward.

Zach identified an issue facing many NPOs: in the absence of professional labor, many tasks may need to remain undone or risk being done poorly. Instead, the model proposed in this example is one that waits for members to identify needs and step forward when they are passionate about filling a specific need. In addition to technological literacy, however, social media adoption is complicated by a demand for the addition of a theological literacy. "We haven't had somebody who is hired who has necessarily the technical and the theological expertise to do some of the theological things" (Jessica). In this church, a webmaster has been hired with minimal maintenance expectations. The problem for this church, however, is finding the combination of technical expertise and the ability to develop appropriate religious content for the organization. For respondents

in this study, finding the right people was a significant barrier both to adopting the new technology and maintaining a presence following adoption.

Access to Technology. The third theme arising out of barriers to adoption and integration was that of hardware and software issues. For many religious leaders in this study, adopting social media was difficult because a significant portion of the membership either did not own computers, or lacked reliable access to the Internet. Many of those who had computers with Internet access were limited to basic skills like sending and receiving email. Subjects suggested that social media had the power to facilitate some communication processes, like contacting large groups of people with instant information. At the same time, social media had the potential to complicate other communication processes, specifically by creating another channel with which office staff must be concerned. In the quotation above, Miah suggested that only about twenty percent of the members in his congregation had access to computers. He referred to the location of his church as "Internet purgatory" because the community was not served by any high-speed Internet provider. Ruth had a similar experience, suggesting that some people in her congregation used computers, but not in regular enough patterns to make adoption worthwhile. She said, "when I first came up here…. I sent email and people tell me 'oh, I don't look at email more than two or three times a month.'" For both Ruth and Miah, the issue seemed to be a lack of hardware access, preventing enough people from participating to justify adoption. In an opposing example, George explained that his community was provided free wireless Internet access, but the members of his congregation refused to take advantage. His perspective was, "my people aren't computer literate, but at the same time I realize that it's not necessarily the people that are already

in the pews that we need to reach out to." The problem in George's church was slightly different. He recognized that his own congregation may be unwilling or unable to fully participate, but adopting the media held potential for broadening their community base. For both Miah and George, the challenge has been adopting new technologies with faith that the community, both inside and outside the church, will eventually follow suit.

Respondents described three barriers to adoption of social media all thematically related to critical mass. Originating in chemistry, critical mass refers to the point at which radioactive material creates an explosion. In adoption literature, the reference is made when discussing collective action. It has been defined as "a small segment of the population that chooses to make big contributions to the collective action while the majority do little or nothing" (Oliver, Marwell, & Teixeira, 1985, p. 524). As organizations consider adopting new methods of communication, "some 'implementations' of interactive media should fail to attract 'enough' users. However, once a certain number or proportion of users (critical mass) have been attracted, use should spread rapidly throughout the community" (Markus, 1987). In short, the theory of critical mass predicts successful adoption by evaluating how many individuals in an organization are willing to assume additional investment until a broader population is willing to share in the responsibility of a new technology.

Many religious leaders interviewed identified time as a significant barrier, claiming that it was difficult to find the right combination of skill, theology, and availability in one individual. As a result, participants found it difficult to adopt or fully utilize social media because they recognized that in order to make the technology worthwhile, significant time would need to be invested by the right individual. In this

instance, critical mass was important because respondents were unwilling to invest additional resources in social media. The second barrier was manpower. Respondents suggested that it was difficult to find enough people from the congregation willing to commit to maintaining their online social media presence. This issue was beyond that of time because it often relied upon pastoral approval before forward motion could be made. Placing an authority figure, in this case the pastor, as a gatekeeper highlighted the inherent conflict in organizational adoption of social media. The strength of these media come from a grassroots nature, unfettered participation by individuals at all levels. By injecting authority into the process, it can be difficult for social media to feel natural because monitoring can be perceived as limiting. The final barrier was that of hardware. In many churches, a large percentage of members were unwilling or unable to make use of computers. In these cases, investing time and energy into social media seemed futile because transforming organizational communication processes meant creating newer and deeper layers of complexity to avoid neglecting certain populations. It was difficult to adopt social media in the absence of a critical mass in the membership.

RQ_3: Benefits and harms.

The third research question was concerned with what was perceived as beneficial and harmful in the process of social media adoption. Through interviews with religious leaders, three dialectic tensions were revealed. When asked about how they perceived social media as benefitting and harming their organization, respondents offered conflicting answers. First, religious leaders interviewed expressed a tension between information and misinformation. One of the greatest strengths of social media, as perceived by respondents, was the ability to share information quickly with a large group

of people. At the same time, ministers were concerned with the same ability to spread inaccurate or heretical information to the same audience at the same rate. Second, respondents were conflicted about the concept of connection versus disconnection. Social media had the power to connect people across distances and bring the church into homes of those who were unable to physically participate. Subjects were concerned, however, that social media could be used to replace face-to-face communication. Third, respondents expressed a conflict between relevance and marginalization. There was a recognition that communication patterns need to adapt in order to remain culturally and generationally relevant, but there was also fear that the process of adaptation would marginalize or alienate longtime organizational members unwilling or unable to participate in the new forms of technology.

The concept of dialectical tensions comes from critical organizational research. Drawing on numerous perspectives including Marxism and Feminism, the dialectical approach to organizations is designed to examine organizational politics through an in-depth understanding of the multiple forces at work (Mumby, 2005). The term dialectic comes from classical Greek philosophy and, in organizational studies, is understood as a process through which organizational change arises out of dialogue and interaction and driven by conflicting viewpoints (Nielsen, 1996). In short, a dialectic refers to "the ways in which human social order is premised on tensions and contradictions that underlie apparent cohesion and that point to potential social change and transformation" (Mumby, 2005, p. 22). Organizational dialectics, then, form the backbone through which discourse and interaction allow for organizations to make sense of information and guide the change process.

Within organizational processes, dialectics are framed in four principles. According to Benson (1977), dialectical analysis in organizational context should be concerned with social construction, totality, contradiction, and praxis. First, as Weick (2001) suggested, organizations are complex entities that create and rely on socially constructed perceptions of reality. Dialectical tensions arise out of the complex interaction when social constructions of realities differ between multiple individuals. Second, it must be recognized that the complex nature of organizations requires an investigation to explore the organization in its totality. Third, the central perspective of dialectic tension is conflicting viewpoints. These perspectives must be contradictory in nature in order to maintain the presence of tension. Finally, and arguably most important, exploring dialectic tensions must focus on praxis, or how the organization reacts to situational changes.

For the purpose of this study, responses revealed three distinct dialectic tensions with which organizational decision-makers struggled. Because most churches in this study reported using social media for organizational purposes, the process of weighing benefits and harms was not seen as determining usage, but influencing it. In other words, struggling with these tensions was not seen as reason to reject the technology. Instead, the dialectic process of evaluating benefits and harms influenced how social media were used. First, respondents described a tension between information and misinformation; harnessing the power of social media to share large amounts of information to a broad audience quickly while recognizing the same power to share inaccurate or damaging information. Resolving this tension resulted in decisions about organizational control over the medium. Second, respondents discussed the idea of connection and

disconnection; providing individuals with tools to reify interpersonal and organizational relationships, promoting a healthy community while preventing those relationships from being replaced with solely online interaction. Resolving this tension resulted in augmented media use. Subjects described social media as a form of communication used in addition to traditional methods, adding richness, depth, and complexity to organizational interaction. Third, respondents suggested a tension between relevance and marginalization; balancing the needs of a younger generation to communicate through channels with which they are comfortable, and the demands of current congregants who are satisfied with traditional communication methods and are unwilling, or unable, to adopt these new means. Resolving this tension resulted in a multi-layered organization, complicating administrative processes, and creating a heavier workload for volunteers and paid staff charged with maintaining communication.

Information vs. misinformation. As mentioned in the response to the first research question, interviewees identified social media as a tool to facilitate sharing information rapidly. The ability to provide a large audience with information about upcoming events and prayer concerns also came with the potential to do great harm. As evidenced by responses cited in the first research question, many churches have adopted social media to augment and strengthen current organizational communication processes. Other churches, however, have avoided social media out of concern for the privacy and safety of members in their congregations. The central issue for some respondents was the ability of social media to share inaccurate, damaging, or heretical information as quickly as it could share positive messages. In addressing this tension, churches have placed varying levels of organizational control over sponsorship of and content on social media.

The most common use of social media by ministers in this survey was as an outlet for organizational communication. For some ministers, this meant simple announcements sent from a church account. For other ministers, it meant a reaction to prayer concerns and spiritual needs of individual members. In general, respondents described social media as a tool for reaching a large audience quickly and for little to no cost. When asked to detail the harms of social media, however, interviewees described the same characteristics of the medium as potentially detrimental to the organization. Such harmful information took the form of gossip, heretical information, and misinformation.

For churches, gossip can become a significant issue as individuals share and respond to personal issues of others in the community. Most respondents were quick to explain that social media were not responsible for gossip in the organization, but was capable of moving the information through the organization more quickly.

> I think social media exacerbate that problem… Other forms of technology like telephone and paper can do the same, but I think social media just speeds all of that up… It's real time. You know, the phone, it's a message that needs to be relayed hundreds of times before we reach the radius that one [Facebook] post could make (Joseph).

The harm, then, is not the presence of rumors or gossip, but the acceleration of subsequent harm attributed to the new technology. In some churches the issue had become a reality. For example, Jessica, a youth director, provided this example:

> We have one girl in particular who has wrestled with a lot of depression, and she is so sensitive to anything that is said to her that she has had times with different comments that have been made and then.. you've watched her backpedal on

things that she had put out there… And then she has had to have follow-up conversations with various adults to try and help her recuperate from all of that.

She added further, "I've watched several different relationships, when people have broken up with one another and then all of a sudden it seems that it becomes so much easier to be hurtful… then also friends jump in and start to say sort of hurtful things…" Again, the problem is not that students have broken up, that would have happened anyway. Instead, the issue is the speed at which these conversations can deteriorate, and the size of the audience the comments reach. Such infighting can have significant effects on the wellbeing of an organization designed to strengthen social ties. As Stephen explained,

> [Social media] can present [a derogatory] face to the public, which may suggest to somebody who might be considering visiting the church that this is a conflicting place. Not a place that I really want to go. And the entry of one person has the potential of presenting the whole organization.

Stephen used this perception as justification for investing significant organizational resources into monitoring the organization's page and ensuring the conversation was healthy. There was a recognition in his comment that people used social media to gather information about organizations in the same way they gather information about other people. If a church were to lose control over the content of their social media, they make themselves vulnerable to inaccurate or false online representations.

Respondents were also concerned about heretical information. In other words, they were concerned that social media had the ability to share information with people that represents ideas contrary to church teaching. Enoch described a situation in his

church where the Christian education director was photographed with another adult making funny faces next to a sign that read "slow children." Although no harm was intended by the act, the image was seen on social media, and "a firestorm ensued." In this situation, the church was embarrassed by content connected with the organization that in no way represented what the church intended to share. In another church, "a group of kids at the high school were playing off of the idea of being Christian, but they were doing it in a very sarcastic way and it was not meant to build [people] up. And it had a very negative effect" (Miah). In both cases, social media is the tool by which harmful information misrepresents what the church stands for. The concern was that the information would harm perceptions individuals had about the church organization and the religion as a whole.

A few ministers suggested that social media had the potential to misinform people. Again, as seen in how they approached gossip and heretical content, the problem was not about misinformation getting out, but the speed at which people would receive the information. As Joshua explains,

> [errors are] always going to happen, you know. We're human… But getting the person's email address wrong as far as connecting with them, or getting a time or a date wrong. Once you do it like that, I know you can go back and fix it, but how many people have already read the wrong date? How many people have read the wrong time and set their calendars by it?

The benefits of reaching a broad audience quickly comes with the possibility of sharing the wrong information. In Miah's church, the youth group experienced this harm when a few youth only tangentially connected with the group thought it would be funny to post

that an upcoming event had been cancelled. Beyond hurting the success of the event, "the overall effect of it was it created an atmosphere of mistrust and doubt." Youth leaders in Miah's church tried to use the situation to teach kids about accountability and integrity, but the damage had been done.

Although respondents recognized the ability of social media to quickly and inexpensively provide information, they also voiced concern that a lack of control over content could result in ineffective or inappropriate messaging. Churches are placed in an awkward position because they may be able to control the content they create, but they cannot control how their membership may make use of communication technologies. If the organization avoids formal adoption of social media, little prevents individual members from using social media either interpersonally or organizationally. As a result of this dialectic tension, churches have responded by asserting varying degrees of authority. For example, Lydia's church uses Facebook for individual communication while the organization has not made any official adoption. Ruth described a negative experience with her personal use of Facebook and therefore refuses to adopt the technology in her congregation. On the other hand, Paul and Rebekah explained that their churches had undergone significant committee discussions to create an organizational policy for appropriate use of social media. Other respondents described multiple perspectives and reactions to social media in organizational contexts. From an organizational perspective, social media adoption is approached from numerous points of view, many of which focus on the extent to which organizational authority should maintain control over online content.

Connection vs. disconnection. According to religious leaders interviewed for this project, social media have provided a tool for connecting individuals who are unable to be physically present in organizational meetings. Respondents, however, voiced a tension between social media as tools for individuals with valid reasons for nonparticipation and social media as an excuse for those seeking a more simplistic form of involvement. Many ministers recognized that significant populations in their congregation were unable to attend church for various reasons. There was a sense that social media helped bridge physical distance for those individuals. At the same time, many respondents voiced concern that individuals who could be physically present would elect to participate from a distance, replacing face-to-face communication with online interaction. It was difficult for most respondents to explain why they felt face-to-face interaction was essential, but it was a common theme among most subjects. Dealing with this tension has meant many pastors and youth directors interviewed have adopted social media to augment physical interaction.

For many of the churches interviewed in this project, distanced communication was an important element for maintaining community. Seasonal fluctuations in attendance were often attributed to members who were only present during spring and summer months. These members, although living at a distance, still considered themselves important members of the community and remained in communication with the church while living away. Social media have become a corollary to email and telephone as a method for constant communication. People who once only received a newsletter through mail once each month can now be informed and interact with other organization members at any time. In addition, churches are designed to be communities

that serve individuals throughout their lives, including when it is impossible to continue physical participation for health reasons. Respondents often identified the ability to connect with shut-ins as a benefit of social media. By providing individuals with computer-mediated connections, subjects implied that those who could not attend church would still be willing to have spiritual experiences. The problem for many ministers comes when individuals begin using the technology simply for convenience. There was a tacit assumption that face-to-face communication was the most effective means for sharing religious experiences. No specific justification was given for this assumption, but many respondents mentioned haptic interaction as an essential element of community, a topic which will be discussed in more detail later.

According to respondents, social media brought people in the organization closer together. Church members used the tools to encourage each other and develop networks for responding to spiritual needs of others in the community. One respondent described the relationship between social media and the church in this way:

> The church itself is a kind of the social network. And so, you know, when we are doing our jobs, we are connecting and making connections. Social networking between God and between individuals… I still see social networking as the latest incarnation of that same kind of work… Facebook is that place where people can gather to exchange ideas, exchange thoughts, share pictures, stories. And so it is another mission field the church ought to be engaged in" (Enoch).

This quote represents the perspective that churches must function as healthy social communities in order to be successful. Social media provided, at least for this church, another way to reify relationships that had already been developing. Lydia explained that

she could see the technology opening doors to relationships that might not have existed otherwise. She said,

> I've gotten to know… people who correspond with my sister, and I see those folks, and I'm kind of getting to know people like that. So the circle expands. And I think that could be translated in a church fellowship, too. If you got a discussion going on angels, or spiritual warfare, or whatever issue it might be… [friends of friends could] see a posting… and get drawn into the discussion and might help expand the circle to new people… who are trying to know more about faith, know more about God. It might be another doorway into the church.

Social media then becomes a tool to enhance the work that is already being done in the organization. Because churches function as social networks, the presence of computer software that allows people to see and interact with their connections offers unique opportunities for strengthening interpersonal relationships.

Despite excitement for potential benefits and the possibility of connecting people in new and powerful ways, ministers were deeply concerned that online interaction threatened the essential nature of religious practice. From the individual perspective, many ministers were concerned that social media were deteriorating people's ability to interact face-to-face. At an organizational level, the tools were seen for their potential to replace traditional ritual with an inferior substitute for activities requiring shared physical space.

The ability of social media to connect people stood in stark contrast to a similar ability to harm those same relationships. Ministers seemed more concerned about adoption of the new communication technology than opposed to it. They expressed a

danger in replacing real human interaction with virtual, or online contact. Miah explained:

> I think within all of us is the desire to connect personally with someone else… I think you have great conversation through the phone or listening to someone do a live stream over the Internet, but you don't really feel connected until you get a handshake or a hug, and you're sitting down, you've shared with one another.

Ezra had similar concerns as he explained the struggles his church was experiencing during the adoption and maintenance process. He said,

> I think sometimes technology can be a great enhancement, but sometimes it gets used as a crutch and I fear that… kids will just do everything online and you lose that personal touch and you lose that real relationship that can only come from sitting down in the same room together.

Ezra also described online interaction through Facebook as "superficial," and explained that such superficial interaction seemed a waste of time to him. In most of the responses was a struggle to make sense of where the church should place itself as communication patterns shifted. "I guess that I am still on the wait-and-hold pattern to see if the community that is happening on social media real community?" (Joseph). For people who work in a profession where one of the greatest assets is the ability to connect with others, the introduction of technology that alters the breadth and depth of that contact can create significant challenges. Ministers are being forced to re-evaluate their own roles within the organization. "I think as pastors, we all are struggling to figure that out" (Matthew). Central to conversations was the idea of a fine line between the real and the virtual.

On an organizational level, social media have also created unique problems. Given that ministers saw benefit in social media for maintaining connections with individuals residing at a distance, concern quickly followed that use for this purpose would diminish or compromise the need for and purpose of ritual activities, like worship services. Enoch describes the issue in this way, "I think the persistent threat of disembodied relationships is always present in social media." The sense of replacement was most acute in ritual activities, like worship services. "I think there's something about communal worship that doesn't happen when you are trying to worship individually… Streaming [the service] online, if you're singing along, you're singing by yourself. You're not lifting your voices and raising them together" (Jessica). Other ministers took the concern to another level, suggesting that parishioners might be inclined to completely replace experiences for which many people participate in the faith community. "My concern would be is that when that becomes a substitute for the community, and for the gathering space on Sunday mornings, or whatever date and time that church needs" (Luke). Youth directors shared similar concerns. John articulated a slightly different perspective about the purpose of youth group gatherings. He said:

> I think a lot of [the purpose of youth gathering] is just fellowship and interaction… I think it's really important for a lot of our students actually to come and see us live out what we try to teach rather than just listen to it.

For every minister, the issue was the same: Connecting online interaction was beneficial in a pinch, but the process would never replace physical human contact.

Despite their descriptions of online technology replacing face-to-face shared experience, most of the interviews also had a tone that such concerns were mostly

unfounded because "my sense is [parishioners] still want to come if they can" (Thomas). As technology shifts both religious practice and religious experience, ministers are holding to firmly held beliefs that people are most interested in physical experiences. Methodists have a rich tradition of music in the worship service, so the theme of sharing songs together was mentioned frequently. Other ministers offered concerns about being unable to give or receive handshakes or hugs. To summarize, the concern pastors expressed about using social media was primarily focused on the potential for abuse by people who "would find it easier to just use the computer and not show up" (Eve). At a deeper level, however, ministers shared a similar perspective that physical meetings are a necessary part of community as people seek real, complex, in-depth relationships with others.

Respondents described a tension between the ability of social media to create and maintain strong interpersonal relationships and the perception that relationships through social media were in some way less fulfilling than those made face-to-face. In negotiating a response to this tension, pastors and youth directors described using social media to augment other forms of communication. Traditional methods, like newsletters and phone calls, have not been abandoned. Instead, ministers have begun including social media along with text messages and other forms of communication to create a stronger information network. One youth director even said that his youth found the most value in handwritten postcards sent weekly. Ministers were concerned that relationships were becoming shallower, but some acknowledged that interaction was changing. Even though some face-to-face interaction has been replaced or minimized by social media, new

prospects for strengthening and maintaining relationships were noted. Respondents expressed varying perspectives on how the church should react.

Relevance vs. marginalization. Many respondents described social media adoption as an essential step in organizational development to maintain relevance for a new generation of religious individuals. The process of adopting social media was more difficult. On one hand, many respondents recognized that people in the younger generation are constantly connected through social media. They are demanding that the organizations with which they align themselves communicate through more contemporary means. Drawing these younger individuals into the church requires some form of accommodation by considering new methods of interaction. On the other hand, adopting these forms of communication means older members, who are deeply invested in the organization, must either change their own communication patterns and adopt new technology, or face marginalization. It is also possible for churches to adopt social media as a secondary layer of communication, but such a step often complicates communication processes, adding unnecessary strain to already meager resources. This tension often created an atmosphere revealing that apathy is more harmful than outright resistance.

The idea that churches needed to make a more concerted effort to connect with younger individuals was quite common throughout the interviews. One pastor discussed the challenge as helping his congregation recognize that the purpose of their organization was to reach beyond the congregants in the pews. He said, “My people aren’t computer literate, but at the same time I realize it’s not necessarily the people that are already in the pews we need to reach out to” (George). Because Christianity actively proselytizes, churches often state conversion, or organizational growth, as a central goal. At the same

time, people are often comfortable with like-minded individuals. The conversation with George highlighted challenges he experienced as a pastor of an aging congregation. On one hand, his parishioners were satisfied with the current state of affairs. On the other hand, George recognized that the organization was dying and would require an influx of a new generation to rebuild. Ministers perceived social media as a useful tool for their church because they provided a generational link between members of the congregation and those in the broader community.

Given that ministers saw potential in social media while parishioners were unlikely to adopt the new technology, it should follow that church leaders would experience resistance to adoption. Such was not the case. Instead, ministers reported little to no resistance from members of the congregation while some ministers even reported clearly voiced support for the move. While members did not voice resistance specifically directed at social media, ministers described the process of adoption in more complicated terms. For example,

> The only resistance I experience is people's technology savviness… Even simple things like being able to take what's been a snail mail newsletter for decades and taking it and mailing it as a PDF file… We've got tons of older people that are not yet computerized and those are the people that you're serving so it's been frustrating. Any resistance has just been in the demographics of the ages that I often serve (Zach).

Miah offered a similar sentiment when asked how he saw the congregational reaction to using Facebook. "They could care less one way or the other as long as they continue to get their hardcopy newsletter." Miah and Zach described a distinct challenge to church

leaders in that the adoption of new technologies, like social media, are often met with tacit approval as long as their presence has little to no effect on how the organization currently operates.

Ambivalence was often discussed as a frustration ministers had in their consideration of new media adoption. From these conversations, it could be concluded that ambivalence was more harmful than outright resistance. Ministers described committee meetings and discussions with decision-makers in the church where adoption of social media was encouraged, often as an attempt to make the organization more relevant to a younger generation. Organizational adoption, however, was limited to small social circles, or generational groups. Subsequent conversations about adoption revealed that individual church members were unwilling to change their communication patterns to accommodate new methods of information sharing. If these same ministers had experienced outright resistance, it would have been possible to host conversations about specific barriers, discuss organizational costs, and consider possible solutions. Instead, the ambivalence has led to ambiguity in the organization, placing significant strain on administration.

RQ_4: Administrative processes.

Central to the question of social media adoption was the locus of control within church organizations. When questioned about how the church either made the decision, or how the decision would be made, respondents described distinct relationships between clergy and laity. Perceptions of the role and authority of clergy and laity in an organization created four distinct administrative styles. These relationships were tempered by the level of participation from others in the organization. Some churches

were heavily led by a pastor perceiving complete authority over organizational decisions. Other churches allowed the pastor to maintain a high level of authority, but the pastor described a more democratic leadership style in which decisions were made following a period of soliciting ideas form the congregation. On the other end of the spectrum, pastors claimed minimal authority, placing it, instead, in the hands of either committees or individuals. Each of these descriptions created four distinct styles of organizational administration: 1) Clerical Authority, where all decisions are made unilaterally by the senior pastor; 2) Professionally Programmed, where community members elect to hire trained professionals to make decisions and oversee activities; 3) Committee Conversation, where organizational decisions work through a bureaucratic process that involves significant participation from many organizational members; and 4) Passionate Proposal, where one individual offers an idea, either to a committee or to the pastor, and receives tacit approval and minimal support.

Clerical Authority. In a church with a clerical authority administrative style, the pastor is given complete control over the church and its operations. This is not necessarily a situation in which the pastor rules with an iron fist, but that the congregation recognizes the professional qualities of their clerical leader. For example, when Joseph felt that his church should experiment with Facebook he took it upon himself to develop the site presence. “We don’t have a structure where I go and ask permission to do something like this.” Eve also held this form of power. When asked who would be in charge of developing social media presence she said, “It would be me if it were to happen. I mean the current configuration of how we do things, it would be me if it were ever going to happen.” In both situations, the pastor takes responsibility for making changes in

the church. Often pastoral decisions move through committees, but ultimate responsibility for church programs rest in the hands of hired clerics.

Professionally Programmed. In a professionally programmed church, decisions are made by multiple people in the church office without specific approval from other parishioners. Although the pastor is frequently involved in these decisions, clergy often give or receive input during conversations with other staff members. Often this could be an administrative assistant, but also may include program staff, like a youth director. Thomas described his adoption process as a suggestion from the office administrator, who has teenage children at home. In the end, adopting Facebook was "an interoffice decision." Some churches, like Ezra's, responded to the significant time demands social media required by hiring a staff person to update the online presence. Members of these communities either recognize the benefits of hiring a trained professional, or struggle significantly with labor. In both cases, the response is to budget for staff to address the problem.

Committee Conversation. Churches with a Committee Conversation administrative process were heavily reliant upon input and discussions from a bureaucratic structure where power was more evenly dispersed among parishioners. These organizations develop complex structures comprised of committees filled with lay members. Decisions are made by groups of laity who exercise stronger control over decision-making than the pastor. Clergy often feel compelled, in these organizations, to approve all decisions through proper channels in order to ensure proper organizational function.

Passionate Proposal. This administrative style depends upon individuals openly taking on specific projects. Instead of power resting in the hands of committees or paid staff, the church is run by people who are passionate about specific ideas and propose them either to a pastor or a committee. Although these propositions are made to governing bodies, the proposal is often viewed as a formality as their ideas are typically approved. These organizations are differentiated from other styles by ceding power over the proposed project to the individual originally suggesting the idea. Many times, lack of action on an idea or a process is attributed to the inability to "find the right person."

Conclusions

The present study focused on four research questions related to how pastors and youth directors used, perceived, and adopted, social media. Respondents identified four ways social media were used in the organization. Most applied the tools for one-way communication sharing announcements or other information with those outside the organization. Others attempted to use social media more interactively. For many churches, however, adopting social media was hindered by the inability to secure a critical mass of participation from members of the congregation. Reasons for the struggle to find this participation ranged from problems finding capable individuals willing to give time, to a membership lacking computer or Internet access. Regardless, many pastors avoided social media because they saw little benefit in adoption. Pastors and youth directors interviewed in this study also described three dialectic tensions complicating the process of adoption. In each argument, reactions influenced organizational processes and dictated how members in the church made use of the new tools. All of these responses, however, were influenced by the administrative style adopted for decision-making.

Adopting social media was a simple process in some churches and a challenge in others. In both cases, ministers identified forces that facilitated or hindered adoption. In some churches, there was a sense that adoption was necessary in order to maintain relevance to a younger generation. Other churches described hurdles of skill or labor that prevented successful adoption. In both cases, adoption and use was likely influenced by the presence or absence of these antecedents.

Once social media had been adopted, they were put to many different uses from announcements to distanced communication. In many conversations, there was a recognition that these new tools were not being utilized to their potential. Most concern focused on the inability to use the media for interactive purposes. While social media were an inexpensive form of announcements or broadcast connection, they also have the potential to connect people distanced from the organization. The former represents a basic integration of the medium while the latter requires far more participation, oversight, and maintenance. Respondents felt that broadcast was relatively affordable while interaction often required resources unavailable to the organization.

Adopting and using social media led to questions of legitimacy for both the organization and the media itself. Ministers were concerned that people would begin to replace face-to-face interaction with online communication. There was an ironic debate in that social media were described as a powerful connective force that could also potentially tear a community apart. Because churches are dependent upon a strong community, ministers were concerned that this new technology could threaten the quality of organizational functions. Some ministers, however, were not as concerned, suggesting that people would always be interested in physical human contact.

Underlying the process of adoption and results of integration were administrative styles. Churches fell into four categories of administration influencing how decisions were made in the organization. Each of the four styles represented the extreme of two continua: Power Concentration and Communality. One continuum is that of Power Concentration, referring to how many people participate in decision-making for the organization. On one end of the Power Concentration continuum are organizations giving one person, or a small handful of individuals, control over decisions, like a pastor or passionate individual. At the other end of the Power Concentration continuum are organizations where members feel that they have an equal and adequate say in how these decisions are made. The Communality continuum refers to the extent to which an organization invests in professionals, or relies on communal voluntary labor, to complete tasks. On one end are churches where a small handful of individuals, often staff members, are involved in facilitating the work of the church. The other end of the continuum represents churches where most church members take their turn doing necessary jobs.

Given the unique attributes of social media, it should follow that church administrative style influences quantity and quality of usage. Specifically, two propositions can be offered based upon the results of this research and previous literature predicting the relationship between administrative style and social media use. First, social media are inherently user-driven providing individuals with a visual articulation of social networks (boyd & Ellison, 2008), and thriving on user-generated content. For example, a few pastors explained that members of their congregation used Facebook specifically to see pictures of their grandchildren. As a result, organizational adoption can challenge current authority structures and should, therefore, indicate more limited use in

organizations with an administrative structure more heavily dependent upon professional labor. Moreover, organizational authority structures are designed to maintain organizational control. Many tools provided by social media, like the ability to circumvent established organizational channels and threaten traditional power structures could be considered threatening to organizations with more investment in a professional staff. Contrarily, churches relying more on communal work should find social media an effective method of interaction. Therefore:

> Proposition 1: Churches with a higher level of communality, shown by more voluntary membership participation, will be more likely to use social media for interactive purposes and less for broadcast purposes.

Second, social media have been used effectively to facilitate offline interaction and develop a sense of community (McCully, Lampe, Sreenivasan, Velasquez, & Sarkar, 2011; Sessions, 2010). Therefore, churches with a strong sense of community should find social media easy to adopt and integrate into traditional interaction patterns. Likewise, those interactive patterns should make use of social media in clearly interactive ways.

> Proposition 2: Churches with a higher level of power concentration, shown by a perception of fewer individuals involved in decision-making, will use social media more for broadcast purposes and less for interactive purposes.

Data presented in this chapter were intended to provide specific uses for social media and barriers to their adoption. The second stage of this study will focus on results from these qualitative interviews employed in a national survey of pastors in the United Methodist Church. Scales will be developed using qualitative data from interview

responses, and a comprehensive model of social media usage in church organizations will be proposed.

CHAPTER IV: ONLINE SURVEY STUDY

Introduction

Qualitative interview research discussed in the previous chapter revealed significant barriers as churches adopted and integrated social media into their typical operations. In most cases, interviewees described using social media for various purposes and with varying levels of success; integrating them similarly to traditional forms of print media, sharing textual messages with a broad audience. Some pastors, however, described using social media to monitor their members. Other subjects saw social media as a tool for overcoming issues like time constraints. In either case, pastors saw social media as an important tool for connecting with a new generation of religious individuals.

Data from the qualitative study provided a rich and in-depth image of social media use in a few churches. Interview data guided development of propositions to be tested in survey analysis. Interviewee statements also informed the development of survey items to assess the theoretical constructs presented in the propositions. Building on previous literature and results from that study, the present chapter will present results from a quantitative survey further exploring themes arising from the previous interviews,

Three goals guided this portion of research. First, this survey was intended to measure the extent to which interview responses reflect practices in United Methodist churches across the country. Second, to date little research exists to describe current use of social media by religious organizations. Therefore data were collected from a national sample in an attempt to fill this gap in the literature. Third, this study attempted to assess the TAM using scales tailored to the organization and technology in question. As a result,

one goal was to identify specific barriers affecting ease of use, and specific uses affecting usefulness.

This chapter is organized in six sections. First, hypotheses and research questions will be presented, describing how the research was guided including background literature on the TAM. Next, study methods for the pretest will be described along with the methodological rationale underlying study decisions. Third, pretest results will be presented. Fourth, methods for a national survey of United Methodist pastors will be described followed by results of the survey. Finally, brief conclusions will be drawn as they relate to the results of the analyses presented here.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Results from qualitative interviews pointed to a number of unaddressed issues in the literature concerning social media usage in United Methodist churches. These issues fall into three distinct categories: 1) A general understanding of social media usage patterns in religious organizations; 2) Application of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to these patterns of social media usage in churches; and 3) How organizational characteristics affect social media usage. The first category of hypotheses and research questions focuses on how United Methodist churches are making use of social media. The second category focuses on extending the TAM through a multi-method approach. The final category focuses specifically on relationships between organizational characteristics and how that organization makes use of social media, drawing connections between organizational community and power distribution.

General Media Use in the United Methodist Church

Because the previous study was of a qualitative nature and relied on a small sample, it was unclear how many religious organizations were actually making use of social media, and to what extent such social media were being employed in organizations that had adopted the technology. Furthermore, current literature fails to describe these habits at a broader level. Therefore, the first goal of this research will be to offer the first steps in developing an accurate portrait of social media usage in churches across the country.

RQ_1: How many United Methodist churches are making use of social media?

RQ_2: For what purposes are United Methodist churches using social media?

RQ_3: What are the most significant barriers to social media usage in United Methodist churches?

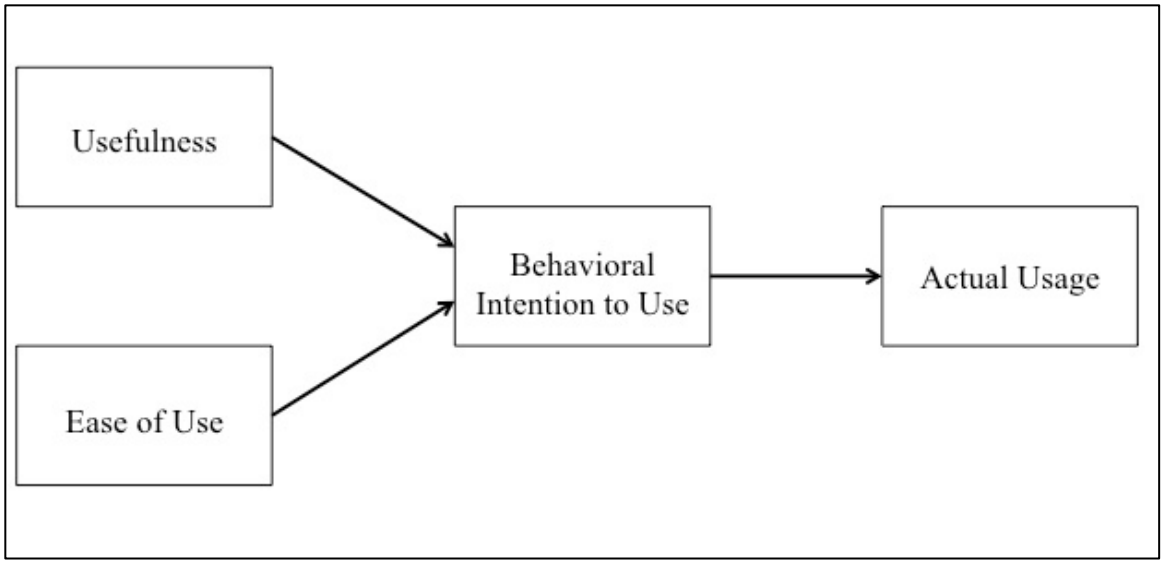
To address these questions, data about social media usage and demographic variables were collected. Once collected, these data created a portrait of social media use in United Methodist churches. Collecting data like this allows scholars to compare usage patterns in religious organizations to usage patterns in the broader population of organizations. These results were also be analyzed along with results from the previous qualitative study to gain both depth and breadth in conclusions.

The Technology Acceptance Model

The second category of hypotheses is concerned with the TAM. This study is designed to empirically test the TAM while applying its theoretical relationships to organizational communication research through a newly developed method. Originally,

Davis (1986) offered the TAM as a valid tool for predicting user adoption of a new technology. His proposed model described relationships between four variables, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Behavioral Intention to Use, and Actual Usage (See Figure 1). Specifically, Davis suggested that Ease of Use and Usefulness will predict an individual's behavioral intention to use the new technology. Turning to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), planned adoption would translate into actual adoption.

Figure 1: The Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989)



The present study is designed to empirically test relationships in the original model. For this survey, however, Behavioral Intention to Use is replaced with a scale measuring Actual Usage. First, it is predicted that Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use will both predict Actual Usage. Moreover, multiple studies have repeatedly found a positive relationship between Ease of Use and Usefulness. Thus:

H_1: Usefulness will be positively related to Actual Usage.

H_2: Perceived Ease of Use will be positively related to Actual Usage.

H_3: Perceived Ease of Use will be positively related to Usefulness.

H_4: Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use will be significant predictors of Actual Usage.

H_5: Perceived Usefulness will be a stronger predictor of Actual Usage than Perceived Ease of Use.

In addition to testing proposed relationships in the TAM, this study also provides a new perspective for approaching technology adoption in organizations. Where the TAM measures perceptions about a given technology in general terms, it is proposed that more useful results can be obtained by first identifying specific barriers and applications the organization has found to impede or promote adoption. In other words, the TAM, as originally constructed, is focused on the technology. Because organizations are complex entities (Weick, 1995, 2001), influenced heavily by changes in their surrounding environment (Hannan & Freeman, 1977; Rogers & Larsen, 1984), the perspective offered here contends instead that placing the focus on the organization is more effective. In other words, predicting technology adoption is less a function of how the technology itself is perceived, than how the organization views the unique attributes of a technology in relation to its own unique characteristics as an organization.

Results from qualitative interviews provide rich insight into perceptions about how social media are being used, and what prevents their adoption or integration. Such insight enables creation of new scales designed to parallel those of the TAM. First,

instead of measuring general perceptions about ease of use for social media, specific barriers were identified from interview results. Therefore, if individuals perceive barriers to adoption or use of social media, they will simultaneously find social media difficult to use. Second, the TAM relies on general perceptions of technology to measure usefulness. Drawing on interview data, specific uses for social media were identified as most effective in this organization. Thus, if individuals perceive social media as useful, they should also find it effective at addressing multiple specific tasks. Consequently:

H_6: Perceived Ease of Use will be negatively related to Perceived Barriers.

H_7: Perceived Usefulness will be positively related to Perceived Efficacy.

Hypotheses proposed above present a new model for predicting technology adoption based upon the TAM (See Figure 2). By replacing generic scales from the TAM with scales measuring specific barriers and application as gathered from interview data (See Table 2), it is possible to create a new model for adoption of technology, in this case social media, in a specific organization, in this case the United Methodist Church. Returning to the originally proposed hypotheses from the TAM, the following relationships should hold:

H_8: Perceived Efficacy will be positively related to Actual Usage.

H_9: Perceived Barriers will be negatively related to Actual Usage.

H_{10}: Perceived Efficacy will be negatively related to Perceived Barriers.

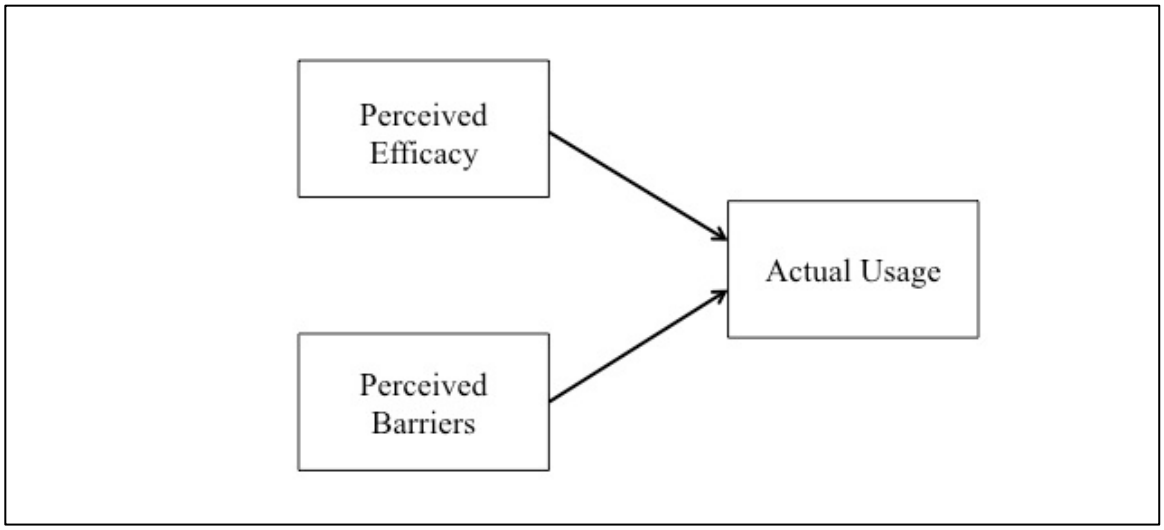
H_{11}: Perceived Efficacy and Perceived Barriers will be significant predictors of Actual Usage.

H_{12}: Perceived Efficacy will be a stronger predictor of Actual Use than Perceived Barriers.

Table 2. Original TAM Variables and Corresponding Proposed New Variables

Original TAM Variable	Proposed New Variable
Perceived Usefulness	Perceived Efficacy
Perceived Ease of Use	Perceived Barriers
Behavioral Intention to Use	NOT USED
Actual Usage	Actual Usage

Figure 2: Proposed Modifications to the Technology Acceptance Model



Organizational Characteristics and Media Usage

Communication technologies are often defined by affordances given the user. Resnick (2002) outlined a number of these affordances, suggesting that new forms of communication technology have provided individuals with unique opportunities to strengthen their relationships with others while subsequently strengthening the community. As an information technology, social media provide three unique opportunities for users, creating a profile, viewing their social network, and interacting with that visual representation (boyd & Ellison, 2008). Recognizing profile creation as a first step in the adoption process, two main purposes of social media remain: receiving information from others, and interacting with that information.

Like social media, religious organizations also have unique attributes. As organizations, they function as complicated interconnections of groups of individuals (Weick, 1995). As nonprofit organizations, churches are forced to balance the quality of a paid, professional workforce with the benefits of an engaged, invested volunteer labor force (Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000; Simons, 1970). Finally, as religious organizations, they are subject to unique forces manipulating their perception of autonomy as a community (Chaves, 1993), and encouraging submission to a spiritual authority (DiMaggio, 1998; DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990). As a result, churches must maintain a sense of community while simultaneously addressing congregational concerns relating to perceived spiritual expectations. In other words, churches must create an identity influenced by communality and power concentration. Churches with high communality will be more likely to find voluntary participation and share the work with an engaged labor force. Churches with low communality will be more likely to struggle finding

individuals to participate in the work of the church. Power concentration refers to how many people are involved in the decision-making processes. Churches with high power concentration allow only a small group of people to participate in decision-making processes. This small group could be composed of congregational "movers and shakers," or may simply be a staff either given or maintaining centralized power.

Given the attributes of social media and characteristics of churches that make both unique, it is possible to consider relationships between the two. Using the two characteristics of churches, communality and power concentration, a typology can be developed, dividing churches into four types. Social media use can also be divided into two applications: Broadcast, messages sent from the organization with the intent that individuals will receive but may not respond, corresponding to the information reception purpose of social media; and Interactive, channels open in both directions, allowing members to respond to messages sent from the church office, or facilitating contact with the church office. These channels correspond to the second mentioned purpose of social media. It should also be possible to predict how characteristics of churches would subsequently affect how much social media were used for those two purposes as well as overall social media usage.

First, differences in social media usage should be evident when comparing churches with high versus low communality. When individuals are given access to media facilitating interaction, their discussions have been shown to encourage community participation and ignite passion about community events (Barkhuus & Tashiro, 2010; Hampton & Wellman, 2003). Therefore, social media use should correlate with a sense that people in the organization are actively participating in community-building. Or:

H_{13}: Churches with high communality will use social media more than churches with low communality.

H_{14}: Churches with high communality will use social media for interactive purposes more than churches with low communality.

Second, differences in social media usage should also be evident when comparing churches with high versus low professionalism, referring the tendency of a congregation to rely on paid staff to address organizational issues. When religious organizations have been given the option of adopting new technology, it can often be met with concern for the health of the organization (Campbell, 2007a). Problems can be further complicated when, like online communication, individuals forego traditional authority channels in favor of a more egalitarian approach to finding answer for their questions (Campbell, 2007b). Religious leaders desiring to maintain their power can respond to these changes either by restricting access, in the form of avoiding adoption, or by adopting the technology and controlling content. Therefore:

H_{15}: Churches with high professionalism will use social media less than churches with low power concentration.

H_{16}: Churches with high professionalism will use social media more for broadcast purposes than churches with low power concentration.

Finally, based upon presented hypotheses, total social media usage should also be predictable. Specifically, churches with high power concentration and high communality would likely have both high broadcast and interactive usage. Therefore,

H_{17}: Churches identified as high professionalism and high communality will use social media most out of the four groups.

Likewise, churches with low power concentration and low communality would likely have low broadcast and interactive usage in comparison with other groups. Therefore,

H_{18}: Churches identified as low professionalism and low communality will use social media least out of the four groups.

Pretest Methods

The Presbyterian Church (USA) was identified as an appropriate population for pretesting because, although smaller, the denomination has a similar political structure to that of the United Methodist Church. Approximately 20 Presbyteries in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois were contacted by telephone and asked to participate. All but one agreed, and an email was sent to the main office with an invitation and link to the survey. Each office sent the link and invitation email to all pastors in their Presbytery. Each Presbytery is comprised of approximately 70 churches. The potential population for this pretest was approximately 1500 clergy. The survey was live for approximately three weeks in late May and early June, 2012. In total 73 responses were collected and, after cleaning data, the study yielded 60 valid responses.

Pretest Measures

To test the study's hypotheses, five scales corresponding to the most important variables were developed and pretested. Interview data were used to inform scale construction as common themes from these conversations were translated into scale items. Two scales were developed to measure communality and professionalism. Three scales were developed to measure perceived social media effectiveness, perceived traditional

media effectiveness, and perceived barriers to media usage. An additional scale was developed to measure the actual usage of social media. Each scale was then pretested with a population of Presbyterian pastors in the Midwest. Factor analysis was conducted to determine the dimensionality of the scale items.

Communalism. Communalism was defined as the extent to which multiple individuals participated in decision-making processes and labor of the church. These individuals could be either volunteers or professionals. Originally, three dimensions were proposed and scale items were developed to address each individual dimension. The first dimension was Power Concentration, a measure of what percentage of individuals were perceived as having power within the organization. The second dimension was Labor Concentration, which assessed the percentage of individuals participating in the physical work of the church. The third dimension was Consensus-Building, a measure of how much input was sought by multiple individuals prior to making a decision. Five items were created for Power Concentration including statements like, "Most people would say that power in this church is widely dispersed." Labor concentration used three items including, "Most of the work in this church is done by a handful of individuals." Consensus Building was measured with six items including, "Adopting a new idea in my church requires gaining support of many people" (See Table 3 for a listing of all Communalism scale items). All items used a five-point Likert scale where 1="Strongly Disagree" and 5="Strongly Agree."

Professionalism scale. Professionalism was defined as the extent to which a congregation relied on professionally-trained individuals to lead the organization and complete appropriate tasks. Two dimensions were proposed for this scale. The first

dimension was Pastoral Leadership, or the extent to which the pastor perceived they had the most power within the organization. The second dimension was staff reliance, or the propensity of a congregation to hire individuals to complete necessary tasks. Pastoral Leadership was measured using six items including statements like, "My church would function effectively without strong pastoral leadership." Staff Reliance used five scale items including, "People in my church rely heavily on the staff to make sure the church is running effectively." Items for the Professionalism scale are reported in Table 4.

Social Media Use. Social Media Use was measured by asking individuals "how many times each month you or other church leaders" use social media for ten tasks identified from common themes in interview responses. Skip logic was used in the online survey so this scale was only administered to subjects indicating use of social media for organizational purposes. As presented in Table 5, the scale was comprised of nine items intended to fall into two dimensions, broadcast purposes (five items), like "Posting announcements on Facebook (or other social networking site) about upcoming events or activities," and interactive purposes (four items), like "Discussing spiritual or religious issues with parishioners on Facebook (or other social networking site)."

Perceived Social Media Efficacy. Another scale was designed to measure perceived efficacy of social media. Nine tasks for which pastors found social media useful were identified based upon interview responses (See Table 6). Respondents were asked how effective they thought social media were at "helping ANY church accomplish" listed tasks. Using themes drawn from qualitative analysis, statements were created to represent each theme. For example, qualitative data suggested pastors used social media to monitor issues in parishioners' lives. The item "Alerting clergy or other religious

leaders to problems in people's lives" was used to measure social media's perceived efficacy at accomplishing this task. Respondents were asked to indicate the "extent to which you feel social media" were "effective at helping ANY church accomplish" each task. Responses were collected using a five-point scale ranging from 1="Not at all effective" to 5="Very effective," with 3="Neither effective nor ineffective" as a neutral option.

Perceived Social Media Barriers. The final scale was intended to measure the extent to which pastors perceived different issues as creating barriers to the adoption or successful integration of social media. Again using interview data, eleven themes were identified as problems experienced by pastors or churches in the process of using social media. Each theme was translated into a statement about social media use. For example, the idea that the congregation lacked skilled manpower to run social media was represented by the statement, "Individuals willing to take responsibility for updating social media in my church lack sufficient computer literacy." Responses were collected using a five-point Likert scale, with 1="Strongly Disagree" and 5="Strongly Disagree." Scale items can be viewed in Table 7.

Pretest Results

Following data collection, separate exploratory factor analyses (principal components, varimax rotation) were completed for communalism, professionalism, and media usage scales.

Communalism. Originally, communalism was predicted to load on three dimensions. Factor analysis accounted for 65% of the variance, but revealed four dimensions with multiple items failing to load in predicted patterns (See Table 3). From

Table 3. Pretest Communalism Scales Factor Analysis Results.

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Power Concentration[a] (α =-.283)				
Most of the decisions in this church are made by only a few individuals.	.887	-.166	.077	.003
Most people would say that power in this church is widely distributed.	-.289	.799	-.109	.128
Most of the leadership roles are held by only a small handful of individuals.	.710	-.449	.002	-.066
Many new individuals are given leadership roles every year.	-.280	.479	.485	-.324
Every member has an equal say in all organizational decisions.	-.246	.235	.025	.715
Leadership Concentration[a] (α =.078)				
Most of the work in this church is done by a small handful of individuals.	.827	-.150	-.082	-.016
Everyone in this church chips in to do their fair share of the work.	.027	.731	-.037	.199
Activities in this church are often directed by one or two people.	.583	-.328	-.047	.278
Consensus Building[a] (α =.212)				
Making decisions in my church involves numerous staff and/or volunteers.	-.726	-.273	.285	-.131
Adopting a new idea in my church requires gaining support from many people.	.049	-.244	.738	-.036
In my church, we make decisions first and build support afterwards.	.203	-.414	-.423	-.386
Leaders in my church make sure that a significant number of members support an idea before we make changes.	.079	.167	.678	.523
Decisions in this church are typically made by an individual, like a pastor or committee chair.	.667	-.062	.307	-.307
We spend a significant amount of time in staff or committee meetings discussing new ideas.	-.384	-.038	-.027	-.565

[a]*Theoretical, predicted construct.*

these results, three new dimensions were identified: Community Involvement, Labor Involvement, and Power Concentration. Community involvement referred to participation in decision-making from many members. Labor involvement measured the extent to which a broad base of individuals participate in work necessary for maintaining the organization. Power Concentration referred to the number of people in positions of power.

Professionalism. The Professionalism scale was predicted to load on two dimensions. Instead, factor analysis results, accounting for 73% of the variance, revealed five dimensions with eigenvalues over 1.0 (See Table 4). Of these five, three were identified as strong enough for further development: Reliance on Staff, Training, and Power Dispersion. Reliance on staff is the tendency of a church to assign work to paid staff over finding volunteers to take responsibility. Training referred to the value placed upon professional training in hiring and respecting staff members. Power dispersion was a measurement of how easy it was for individuals to become involved in the deeper workings of the church, should they be interested. Two additional factors, one with two items and one item, respectively, were dropped from the analysis.

Social Media Use. The nine-item Social Media Use scale (See Table 5) was designed to assess the broadcast and interactive dimensions of usage. Results of factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation) accounted for 73% of the variance and revealed three factorial dimension: Passive, active, and interactive purposes. As scale items represent some form of social media use, this multi-dimensional scale was deemed of value for the final survey.

Table 4. Pretest Professionalism Scales Factor Analysis Results.

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Pastoral Leadership[a] (α =.068)					
My church would function effectively without strong pastoral leadership.	-.001	-.001	-.718	-.042	.334
My church relies heavily on pastoral leadership.	.026	.333	.767	.030	.309
Most of my church members recognize the value of my seminary education.	.703	-.307	.304	.148	.013
As a pastor, I feel more like a follower than a leader.	-.152	.110	-.380	.726	.402
Lay leaders in this church have more power than the pastor.	-.090	-.097	-.030	-.022	.879
Most people in my church are uncomfortable with tasks like teaching a Bible study.	.046	.028	.378	.809	-.229
Staff Reliance[a] (α = -.567)					
This church typically response to organizational needs by hiring someone to do the job.	.312	.500	-.003	.396	-.068
My church has what I would consider to be a large paid staff.	.761	.281	-.041	.075	-.247
My church relies more on the efforts of volunteers than paid staff.	-.819	-.232	.072	.172	-.039
People in my church rely heavily on the staff to make sure the church is running effectively.	.288	.620	.409	.172	.173
It is always easy to find volunteers for the jobs that need to be done around my church.	-.006	-.824	-.080	.033	.137

[a]*Theoretical, predicted construct.*

Table 5. Pretest Social Media Use Scales Factor Analysis Results.

	Component		
	1	2	3
Broadcast Uses[a] (α =.511)			
Using Facebook (or other social networking site) to keep individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities up to date about church news.	.635	.017	.620
Reading parishioners' Facebook (or other social networking site) statuses for information about what is happening in their life.	.910	-.005	.125
Posting announcements on Facebook (or other social networking site) about upcoming church events or activities.	.806	.246	.370
Using Facebook (or other social networking site) to post religious thoughts or information to encourage spiritual growth in the church.	.158	.080	-.007
Sharing information about parishioners on Facebook (or other social networking site) so others can pray for the situation.	.031	.145	.836
Interactive Uses[a] (α =.618)			
Using Facebook (or other social networking site) to interact with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.	.844	.242	.019
Coordinating attendance, volunteers, or participation for church activities using Facebook (or other social networking site).	.403	.580	.409
Responding to a parishioner because of something posted on Facebook (or other social networking site).	.612	.386	-.322
Discussing spiritual or religious issues with parishioners on Facebook (or other social networking site).	.251	.833	.056
Participating in discussions through Facebook (or other social networking site) to interact with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.	-.031	.819	.150

[a] *Theoretical, predicted construct.*

Perceived Social Media Efficacy. This scale was originally designed with nine items measuring perception that social media is effective at accomplishing specific tasks, intended to load on two dimensions, broadcast and interactive. Results of exploratory factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation), explaining 69% of the variance, revealed three dimensions: Congregational monitoring, spiritual activities, and community building (See Table 6). Congregational monitoring refers to pastoral identification and intervention of problems with parishioners based upon online posts. Spiritual activities refers to use of social media for presenting or discussing information related to religious practice or theology. Community building refers to uses of social media to connect or strengthen organizational goals.

Perceived Barriers. The nine-item Social Media Barriers scale was intended to measure the extent to which pastors perceived different issues as creating barriers to the adoption or successful integration of social media. Initial analyses revealed three factors with several items crossloading. Subsequent removal of those items and subjecting the remaining the remaining six items to exploratory factor analysis resulted in two factors, accounting for 65% of the variance (See Table 7). The first factor was named Internet Concerns with the second factor named Time Challenges. Based on the intent of the scale and low factor loadings on the second factor, the first factor was retained for the final survey. This scale had a reliability of α=.737.

Table 6. Pretest Social Media Efficacy Scales Factor Analysis Results.

	Components		
	1	2	3
Broadcast Purposes[a]			
Alerting clergy or other religious leaders to problems in people's lives.	.017	.820	.242
Providing church members with Bible verses or thoughts about religious practice.	.246	.025	.758
Alerting people in the congregation to needs or issues in individuals' lives.	.335	.660	-.115
Informing community members about upcoming church events or activities.	.725	-.021	.257
Interactive Purposes[a]			
Giving pastors an opportunity to respond when problems arise.	.050	.862	.242
Discuss spiritual matters.	.080	.234	.839
Providing a tool for individuals who cannot be physically present at church activities to find out what's happening at the church.	.860	.161	.020
Allowing individuals who cannot be physically present to actively participate in church events.	.739	.311	.024
Allowing volunteers and/or staff to coordinate details about upcoming church events or activities.	.816	.019	.247

[a]*Theoretical, predicted constructs.*

Table 7. Pretest Barriers Scale Factor Analysis Results.

	Component		
	1	2	3
When I consider social media use in my church, I have concerns for the privacy of people in my congregation.	-.068	.097	.881
Too many members of my congregation lack access to the Internet to make social media use worthwhile.	.375	.755	.266
Not enough people in my congregation own or use computers to make using social media worthwhile.	.428	.712	.074
It is my personal preference not to use social media in my church.	-.017	.722	-.053
Individuals willing to take responsibility for updating social media in my church lack sufficient computer literacy.	.575	.398	-.129
It has been difficult to find someone in the church with enough time to maintain or develop social media for our church.	.797	.225	-.242
We have not yet found the right person to develop social media for our church.	.692	.347	-.317
Not enough people in my church are interested in using social media for church purposes.	.612	.405	.224
My church has not yet developed an appropriate policy for organizational Internet use.	.664	.167	.304
My church has struggled to maintain consistent updating of our social media.	.812	-.088	.009

Note: $\alpha = .850$

Pretest Discussion

Six scales were pretested and analyzed using exploratory factor analysis in order to develop eleven scales for an instrument for a national survey. Exploratory factor analysis revealed complexities in the communalism and professionalism scales, but supported inclusion of most items in both the social media usage and efficacy scales. Factor analysis identified the Social Media Barriers scale as partially following the theoretical model. Based on the pretest results and again reviewing the literature, scale items were revised and new items were developed to strengthen each theoretical construct. Table 8 presents the newly formed scales to be tested in the national sample.

National Survey Methods

National Survey Sample

The United Methodist Church (UMC) is a national Protestant Christian denomination, representing more than 3.1 million individuals. According to the most recent data published by the General Council on Finance and Administration of the United Methodist Church (2009) 45,189 individuals were registered as clergy in the denomination. This number included 37,971 fully ordained elders and 7,218 local pastors. These numbers rank the UMC as the second largest Protestant denomination in the United States.

The church is divided into five regions, referred to as jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction is separated into conferences, and conferences into districts. Jurisdictions are responsible for assigning bishops to conferences on a quadrennial basis. Conferences are semi-autonomous organizations designed to facilitate interaction among churches in a

Table 8. Scales Used in National Survey.

Communalism

Community Involvement

I make a point of soliciting input from as many members as possible before making a decision.

Leaders in my church make sure that a significant number of members support an idea before they make changes.

Decisions in my church tend to be made by consensus, regardless of how long the process takes.

Every member of this congregation has an equal say in all organizational decisions.

Labor Involvement

In this church, every member plays an important role in keeping the church running.

People would say the work of this church is done by a few rather than by many.

Everyone in this church chips in to do their fair share.

My church would function effectively without strong pastoral leadership.

Power Concentration

Most of the decisions in this church are made by only a few individuals.

Most of the leadership roles in this church are held by only a small handful of individuals.

Activities in this church are often directed by one or two people.

Decisions in this church are typically made by an individual, like a pastor or committee chair.

Professionalism

Reliance on Staff

People in my church allow staff members to make most of the important decisions.

Paid staff perform the most important jobs in the church.

Adopting a new idea in my church requires gaining support from many people.

Training

When we hire new staff members, their professional training is very important.

My church has what I would consider to be a large paid staff.

A large number of volunteers are involved in the work of this church.

Most of the church members recognize the value of my seminary training.

Church members recognize that professionally trained staff members have unique skills.

Power Dispersion

Most people would say that power in this church is widely distributed.

It is always easy to find volunteers for the jobs that need to be done around my church.

It is usually easy for people in my church to find leadership roles when they want to participate.

Table 8 (Cont'd).

Social Media Use

- Keeping individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities up to date about church events.
- Reading parishioners' statuses for information about what is happening in their lives.
- Posting announcements about upcoming church events or activities.
- Posting religious thoughts or information to encourage spiritual growth in the church.
- Interacting with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.
- Coordinating attendance, volunteers, or participation for church activities.
- Responding to a parishioner because of something posted on Facebook (or other social networking site).
- Participating in discussions with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.

Perceived Social Media Barriers

- When I consider social media use in my church, I have concerns for the privacy of people in my congregation.
- Too many members of my congregation lack access to the Internet to make social media use worthwhile.
- Individuals willing to take responsibility for updating social media in my church lack sufficient computer literacy.
- It has been difficult to find someone in the church with enough time to maintain or develop social media for church purposes.
- Not enough people in my church are interested in using social media for church purposes.
- My church has struggled to maintain consistent updating of our social media.

Perceived Social Media Efficacy

Administrative Purposes

- Informing community members about upcoming church events or activities.
- Providing a tool for individuals who cannot be physically present at church activities to find out what's happening at the church.
- Allowing individuals who cannot be physically present to actively participate in church events.
- Allowing volunteers and/or staff to coordinate details about upcoming church events or activities.

Community Building

- Alerting clergy or other religious leaders to problems in people's lives.
- Alerting people in the congregation to needs or issues in individuals' lives.
- Giving pastors an opportunity to respond when problems arise.

Spiritual Purposes

- Discuss spiritual matters.
- Providing church members with Bible verses or thoughts about religious practice.

relatively large geographic area. Districts are led by superintendents and provide supervisory services to local congregations. Although the UMC maintains a presence outside the United States, their international conferences have a different political relationship with the greater church than do domestic conferences.

Data collection occurred for approximately six weeks throughout the months of July and August, 2012. Originally all 56 conferences in the United Methodist Church were contacted by telephone and a request was made for assistance. Conferences willing to assist were sent an email with an invitation and link to the online survey. In instances where no contact was made, an email was sent to the email address listed online as the primary conference contact. Approximately two weeks following initial contact, an email was sent to the district superintendent of each district willing to participate or with which no contact had been made. All respondents were offered the opportunity to participate in a drawing for one of five $20 gift cards to Amazon.com by providing their email address.

An invitation was sent to 482 addresses through email to conference and district offices and pastors to participate in an online survey. The national web-based survey of United Methodist pastors was live for approximately six weeks, and respondents were offered the opportunity to participate in a drawing for one of five $20 gift cards to Amazon.com. After removing incomplete or invalid responses, the final sample was N=403, representing an 84% response rate per conference or district contact. Overall, this sample represents 1% of the targeted population.

National Survey Measures

The final survey originally included thirteen scales. Two scales, excluded from the pretest, measured Ease of Use and Usefulness by Davis et al. (1989), and further

developed by Stern, Royen, and Stafford (2008). In addition and following pretest results, communalism was measured with three scales including Community Involvement, Labor Involvement, and Power Concentration (See Table 9). Professionalism was also measured with three scales, Reliance on Staff, Training, and Power Dispersion. Social Media Usage and Social Media Barriers were both measured on one dimension. Social Media Efficacy included three scales; Administrative, Spiritual, and Community-Building purposes. All scales were subjected to an exploratory factory analysis including all items. Eight factors emerged, and their reliabilities are reported below (See Table 9). These factors accounted for 65% of the variance.

Perceived Ease of Use. Stern et al. (2008) developed a four-item ease of use scale measuring the perception that a new technology is easy to use. The reliability of this scale was α=.815. Factor analysis revealed these items as unidimensional.

Perceived Usefulness. This scale was Stern et al.'s (2008) four-item application of the TAM measuring perceptions that an individual perceives a new technology as useful. Factor analysis revealed these items as unidimensional and the scale had an α=.798.

Communalism. Originally, Communalism was predicted to load on three dimensions: Community Involvement, Labor Involvement, and Power Concentration. Factor analysis revealed that few items from these scales loaded on corresponding factors. Exploratory factor analysis was used to identify items loading on similar dimensions. After multiple analyses, three items were identified as unidemensional and yielding a reliability of α=.687.

Table 9. Factor Loadings and Reliability for Survey Measures.

Perceived Ease of Use (α=.815)	
Using social media requires a lot of mental effort for most people in my church.	.781
Interacting through social media is often frustrating to members of my church.	.730
Overall, social media is easy for most people in my church to use.	.804
Most people in my church feel comfortable using multiple forms of social media.	.633
Perceived Usefulness (α=.798)	
My church would have a hard time functioning without social media.	.757
Using social media give my church greater control over its ministry.	.739
My church is more effective because we use social media.	.681
Overall, social media are useful to my church.	.660
Communalism (α=.775)	
Everyone in this church chips in to do their fair share.	.779
In this church, every member plays an important role in keeping the church running.	.653
It is always easy to find volunteers for the jobs that need to be done around my church.	.634
Power Concentration (α=.687)	
Most of the decisions in this church are made by only a few individuals.	.754
Most of the leadership roles in this church are held by only a small handful of individuals.	.781
People would say the work of this church is done by a few rather than by many.	.755
Most people would say power in this church is widely dispersed. (R)	.516
Social Media Usage (α=.863)	
Keeping individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities up to date about church events.	.645
Reading parishioners' statuses for information about what is happening in their lives.	.636
Posting announcements about upcoming church events or activities.	.644
Posting religious thoughts or information to encourage spiritual growth in the church.	.661
Interacting with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.	.775
Coordinating attendance, volunteers, or participation for church activities.	.673
Responding to a parishioner because of something posted on Facebook (or other social networking site).	.688
Participating in discussions with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.	.705

Table 9 (Cont'd).

Social Media Barriers (α=.633)	
When I consider social media use in my church, I have concerns for the privacy of people in my congregation.	.509
Individuals willing to take responsibility for updating social media in my church lack sufficient computer literacy.	.616
It has been difficult to find someone in the church with enough time to maintain or develop social media for our church.	.793
My church has struggled to maintain or develop social media for our church.	.660
Perceived Spiritual Efficacy (α=.815)	
Alerting clergy or other religious leaders to problems in people's lives.	.798
Giving pastors an opportunity to respond when problems arise.	.759
Alerting people in the congregation to needs or issues in individuals' lives.	.709
Perceived Administrative Efficacy (α=.825)	
Allowing individuals who cannot be physically present to actively participate in church events.	.742
Informing community members about upcoming church events or activities.	.761
Allowing volunteers and/or staff to coordinate details about upcoming church events or activities.	.751
Providing a tool for individuals who cannot be physically present at church activities to find out what's happening at the church.	.753

Professionalism. Originally, three dimensions were predicted to measure professionalism: Reliance on Staff, Training, and Power Concentration. Subsequent factor analysis revealed, however, that few items loaded as predicted. Exploratory factor analysis was subsequently used to identify items loading on the same factor. After multiple analyses, four items were identified as loading on a single dimension and representing a singular concept. This new scale was referred to as the Power Concentration scale and had an α=.775. This single scale replaced the three dimensions predicted to measure professionalism.

Social Media Usage. The amount of social media a church used was measured with a nine-item scale asking respondents to indicate the frequency they used social media for tasks identified from the interview study (e.g. Reading posts from parishioners, posting announcements about upcoming events, or discussing spiritual matters with others). Results of the factor analysis suggested removing two items. The resulting eight-item scale loaded on one factor and had an acceptable reliability (α=.863).

Social Media Efficacy Scales. Whereas pretest results suggested three dimensions for measuring perceived social media efficacy (or the perception that social media were useful for accomplishing specific tasks), the factor analysis revealed that scale items in this sample fell into two dimensions: a three-item scale measuring Spiritual Efficacy (α=.815), and a four-item scale measuring Administrative Efficacy (α=.825). The former measured perceptions that social media were effective at helping community members and clergy identify and address needs in the organization. The latter measured perceptions that social media were effective at informing individuals or aiding in organization of upcoming events.

Social Media Barriers. This scale was designed as a six-item measure of challenges preventing adoption or integration of social media in religious organizations. When these six items were included in a factor analysis of all survey items, two did not load on the same dimension as predicted and were removed. Remaining items formed a undimensional four-item scale (α=.633).

National Survey Design

The three research questions and eighteen hypotheses proposed in this study can be divided into three analytical sections. First, three research questions related to overall social media use, along with their uses and the barriers preventing their adoption and integration. Second, hypotheses one through twelve proposed replication of theoretical relationships between variables in the TAM and development of a similar model employing scales designed to run parallel to the original. Third, hypotheses thirteen through eighteen asserted relationships between organizational characteristics and social media usage.

Organizational Application of Social Media. Three research questions were proposed for this research. Research question one was concerned with the rate at which social media had been used in United Methodist churches. A single question was included in the survey, asking respondents if their church "used social media (Like Facebook) for organizational purposes." The second question referred to specific uses for social media in these organizations. Means from items on the Perceived Social Media Use scale were compared to identify those uses indicated as most or least frequent. The third question was interested in barriers preventing religious organizational adoption or integration of social media. Means from items in the Perceived Barriers Scale were

compared to identify those issues indicated as most and least prevalent throughout the sample.

The Technology Acceptance Model. Twelve hypotheses were proposed asserting relationships between variables original to the TAM and newly developed scales measuring similar constructs. Hypotheses one through five replicated relationships proposed in the original model. First, Pearson correlation coefficients was used to assess relationships between variables including Usefulness, Ease of Use, and Actual Usage. Second, linear regression was used to test the ability of the Usefulness and Ease of Use scales to predict Social Media Usage.

Hypotheses six and seven used Pearson correlation coefficients to test relationships between newly developed scales and their corresponding counterparts original to the TAM. Specifically, Ease of Use was hypothesized to negatively correlate with Barriers while Usefulness was hypothesized to correlate with Social Media Efficacy. Because Social Media Efficacy was divided into two dimensions, each scale will be correlated individually with Perceived Usefulness.

Hypotheses eight through twelve asserted relationships between Social Media Efficacy and Social Media Barriers scales (informed by interview data), and Ease of Use and Usefulness (from the TAM). Pearson correlation was used to confirm that both dimensions of perceived efficacy would be positively related to Social Media Usage, and that Perceived Barriers would be negatively related to Social Media Usage. Linear regression was then used to confirm that Perceived Barriers and Perceived Social Media Efficacy predict Social Media Usage similarly to the relationship between Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use.

Organizational Characteristics and Social Media Use. The final six hypotheses, thirteen through eighteen, proposed patterns of social media usage based upon organizational characteristics. Originally, churches were defined by their communalism and professionalism. Scale development allowed for measurement of the former but results did not allow for development of a scale to measure professionalism. Therefore, to test these hypotheses churches were divided into four categories based upon their Communalism and Power Concentration scores. Development of Professionalism scales was based on the assumption that churches relying more on staff to complete work would find a more effective use for social media in its broadcast purposes. Because a church staff is often represented by a small number of individuals, it should follow that churches with high Power Concentration would experience similar social media usage patterns. Therefore, Power Concentration was used as a replacement for Professionalism in these hypotheses. These hypotheses thus claim that Power Concentration and Communalism will effectively predict Social Media Usage. Because scales for Social Media Usage failed to load on multiple dimensions, hypotheses fourteen and sixteen were unable to be tested in this study.

The remaining hypotheses were tested using ANOVA. Respondents were divided into four categories based upon their Communalism and Power Concentration scores. Using the median for each scale, churches above were categorized as high while churches below the median were categorized as low. Thus four categories were created; high communalism/high power concentration, high communalism/low power concentration, low communalism/high power concentration, and low communalism/low power concentration. T-tests were run for hypotheses 13 and 15, asserting that high and low

churches will be different in their Social Media Usage. while an ANOVA was run for hypotheses 14 and 16. The assertion was that church type will effectively predict Social Media Usage.

National Survey Results

Prior to analysis the research questions and hypotheses, tests of correlation, and stepwise regression were conducted and variable means and standard deviations were calculated. Results of the variable correlation matrix, means and standard deviations are reported in Table 10. Results of the stepwise regression are reported in Table 11. These results revealed four variables as significant predictors of Social Media Usage in United Methodist churches ($F(276)=34.023$, $p<.01$, $R^2=.333$): Usefulness, Spiritual Efficacy, Ease of Use, and Barriers. Three other variables, Communality, Power Concentration, and Administrative Efficacy were not included as significant in the final model.

Social Media in the United Methodist Church. The first three research questions asked about prevalence, application, and challenges surrounding use of social media in United Methodist churches. The questions were designed to fill a gap in the literature describing how churches were making use of social media, and what barriers were most significant to adoption and integration. The first question was concerned with the rate at which social media have been adopted in religious organizations. According to the survey, slightly over three quarters (77%, n=312) of churches make use of social media for organizational purposes. Research questions two and three require a more in-depth discussion and will be presented separately below.

Table 10. Correlation Matrix With Variable Means and Standard Deviations.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
(1) TAM Usefulness	Pearson Correlation	1.00							
Mean=3.284; SD=.719	Sig. (2-tailed)	--							
(2) TAM Ease of Use	Pearson Correlation	.471*	1.00						
Mean=3.072; SD=.806	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.01	--						
(3) Spiritual Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.338*	.167*	1.00					
Mean=.453; SD=1.085	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.01	<.01	--					
(4) Administrative Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.299*	.205*	.550*	1.00				
Mean=.444; SD=1.052	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.01	<.01	<.01	--				
(5) Perceived Barriers	Pearson Correlation	-.318*	-.406*	-.123*	-.140*	1.00			
Mean=3.213; SD=.774	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01	--			
(6) Total Usage	Pearson Correlation	.448*	.397*	.419*	.338*	-.307*	1.00		
Mean=3.205; SD=1.175	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01	--		
(7) Power Concentration	Pearson Correlation	-.239*	-.314*	-.121*	-.156*	-.273*	-.243*	1.00	
Mean=3.089; SD=.782	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01	<.01	--	
(8) Communality	Pearson Correlation	.169*	.301*	.068	.113	-.218*	.187*	-.483*	1.00
Mean=2.973; SD=.794	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.01	<.01	.221	.038	.074	<.01	<.01	--

**Correlation is significant at .01 (2-tailed).*

Table 11. Stepwise Linear Regression of all Independent Variables.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	S.E.	β	t	*p*
TAM Usefulness	.352	.097	.215	3.623	<.01
Social Media Spiritual Efficacy	.346	.059	.307	5.846	<.01
TAM Ease of Use	.280	.085	.191	3.283	<.01
Social Media Barriers	-.161	.081	-.109	-1.981	<.05

Dependent variable: Social Media Usage. R^2 *=.333.*

Uses for social media. Research question two focused on how churches using social media for organizational purposes were making use of the technology. To answer this question, respondents were asked how frequently they "or other church leaders" engaged in a list of the most common social media activities discussed during interviews. Skip logic was used in the survey so only subjects indicating that they used social media for organizational purposes were given these scales.

Means for all ten items were processed revealing three categories of usage frequency, weekly, slightly less than once a week, and monthly. As reported in Table 12, only one item, "Reading parishioners' statuses for information about what is happening in their lives," had a mean above 4 (M=4.37, SD=1.91), representing that, on average, this task was done more than once per week. Five items had means above 3, representing that, on average, these tasks were done 2-3 times per month or slightly less than once per week. The four remaining items had means between 2.23 (SD=1.52), "Participating in discussions with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities," and M=2.77 (SD=1.82), "Sharing information about parishioners so others can pray for the situation." A mean of 2 represents the task is done monthly.

Social Media Barriers. Research question three was concerned with the extent to which barriers were present in the adoption and integration of social media into organizational processes. Participants were given a list of statements representing problems discussed in interviews. Responses were collected using a five-point Likert scale meaning higher numbers represent a stronger presence of the specific barrier. Means for each item were analyzed (See Table 13). Time was the barrier with the highest

Table 12. Means and Standard Deviations Individual Uses of Social Media.

Social Media Use	Mean	SD
Reading parishioners' statuses for information about what is happening in their lives.	4.37	1.59
Posting announcements about upcoming church events or activities.	3.67	1.24
Responding to a parishioner because of something posted on Facebook (or other social networking site).	3.38	1.75
Posting religious thoughts or information to encourage spiritual growth in the church.	3.28	1.70
Keeping individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities up to date about church news.	3.21	1.59
Interacting with individuals ho are unable to be physically present at church activities.	3.01	1.72
Sharing information about parishioners so others can pray for the situation.	2.78	1.82
Coordinating attendance, volunteers, or participation for church activities.	2.59	1.57
Discussing spiritual or religious issues with parishioners.	2.33	1.56
Participating in discussions with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.	2.23	1.52

Table 13. Means and Standard Deviations for Individual Social Media Barriers.

Item	Barrier	Mean	SD
It has been difficult to find someone in the church with enough time to maintain or develop social media for our church.	Time	3.426	1.147
When I consider social media use in my church, I have concerns for the privacy of my congregation.	Privacy	3.369	1.117
My church has struggled to maintain consistent updating of our social media.	Consistency	3.253	1.089
Not enough people in my church are interested in using social media for church purposes.	Critical Mass	3.132	1.190
Too many members of my congregation lack access to the Internet to make social media use worthwhile.	Access	2.830	1.199
Individuals willing to take responsibility for updating social media in my church lack sufficient computer literacy.	Skill	2.798	1.134

average (M=3.426), while skill had the lowest (M=2.798). Most items, however, averaged close to the midpoint of 3 suggesting a weak perception of presence.

The Technology Acceptance Model. The first set of hypotheses was developed to replicate empirical studies using the TAM. Hypotheses one through five were drawn from previous literature employing the TAM and predicted previously seen relationships between variables. Testing these five hypotheses made use of the previously described actual usage scale along with eight items drawn from scales originally developed for the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) and adapted for use in this specific context.

Hypotheses one, two, and three asserted relationships between actual usage, usefulness, and Ease of Use. Using a Pearson correlation, support was found for all three hypotheses. Usefulness was positively related to Social Media Usage ($r(288)=.448$, $p<.01$), supporting hypothesis one, and Ease of Use was positively related to Social Media Usage ($r(291)=.397$, $p<.01$), supporting Hypothesis two. Support was also found for hypothesis three, that Ease of Use was positively related to Usefulness ($r(303)=.471$, $p<.01$).

Hypotheses four and five described outcomes for a model suggesting that Ease of Use and Usefulness would effectively predict Social Media Usage. Support was found for both hypotheses. Regression analysis using the enter method found that Usefulness and Ease of Use significantly predicted Social Media Usage, $F(284)=44.121$, $p<.01$, $R^2=.238$, and supporting Hypothesis four. Moreover, as discussed by previous literature, Usefulness explained a larger amount of the variance ($R^2=.196$) than Ease of Use

(R^2=.042), supporting H_5 (p<.01). Adding Ease of Use to the model, however, did explain a significantly larger percentage of variance (See Table 14).

Table 14. Linear Regression (Enter Method) of TAM Variables

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	S.E.	β	t	*p*
TAM Usefulness	543	.086	.333	5.635	<.01
TAM Ease of Use	.339	.096	.233	3.941	<.01

Dependent variable: Social Media Usage. R^2=.238.

Parallel Model Variables. Hypotheses six and seven predicted parallel relationships between original TAM and newly developed variables. Both hypotheses were supported using Pearson correlation. Perceived Ease of Use was negatively correlated with Social Media Barriers (r(305)=-.406, p<.01), supporting hypothesis six. Perceived Usefulness was positively correlated with Spiritual Efficacy (r(301)=.338, p<.01) and perceived Administrative Efficacy (r(300)=.299, p<.01), supporting hypothesis seven. Because both hypotheses were supported, it can be assumed that similar success should be seen in a model designed to run parallel to the TAM.

The next three hypotheses, eight, nine, and ten, tested relationships between newly developed variables to ensure their interactions parallel that of the TAM. Pearson correlation provided support for all three hypotheses. Perceived Administrative Efficacy was positively related to Social Media Usage (r(292)=.338, p<.01) and perceived

Spiritual Efficacy was also positively related to Social Media Usage (r(292)=.419, p<.01), supporting hypothesis eight. Perceived Social Media Barriers were negatively correlated with Social Media Usage (r(292)=-.307, p<.01), supporting hypothesis nine. Additionally, Social Media Barriers and Administrative Efficacy (r(381)=-.140, p<.01) and perceived Spiritual Efficacy (r(384)=-.123, p<.01) were negatively related, supporting hypothesis ten. As all hypotheses were supported, the data suggest that these newly developed variables have similar relationships to each other and may be successful in creating a more accurate linear model.

The final two hypotheses in this set created a model predicting social media usage similar to that of the TAM but replacing Usefulness and Ease of Use with Efficacy and Barriers, respectively. Linear regression was run on the predicted model using the enter method and the results are reported in Table 15. Regression analysis found that Efficacy and Barriers predicted Social Media Usage, F(287)=33.113, p<.01, R^2=.259, and adjusted R^2=.251, supporting hypothesis eleven. Additionally, hypothesis twelve was supported as spiritual and administrative efficacy combined explained 16% of the variance while barriers explained only 9%. The change in R^2 when barriers was added to the model was significant (F(284)=30.972, p<.01). Comparing the two scales, however, shows minimal increase in variance explained when using the newly developed scales over those originally proposed in the TAM.

Organizational Characteristics and Social Media Use. Hypotheses thirteen through sixteen asserted patterns of social media usage when levels of communality and power concentration were controlled. Hypothesis thirteen suggested that churches with

Table 15. Linear Regression (Enter Method) of Parallel Model Variables

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	S.E.	β	t	*p*
Social Media Efficacy					
Administrative	.186	.069	.159	2.687	<.01
Spiritual	.342	.066	.304	5.151	<.01
Perceived Barriers	-.370	.076	-.31	-4.842	<.01

Dependent variable: Social Media Usage. R^2 *=.259, Adjusted* R^2 *=.251.*

high communality would use social media more than churches with low communality. Results from an independent samples t-test supported this assertion ($t(291)=-2.630$, $p<.01$, Cohen's d=.317). Churches with high communality had a mean for media usage of M=3.052 while churches with low communality had a mean of M=3.416. Hypothesis fourteen, asserting a difference in use for social media between broadcast and interactive purposes, was not tested as social media usage did not produce two dimensions as predicted.

Hypotheses fifteen and sixteen were concerned with relationships between power concentration and social media use. Like communality, an independent t-test revealed significant differences in social media use between the two groups ($t(289)=2.716$, $p<.01$, Cohen's d=.319). Churches with high power concentration used social media less (M=2.999) than churches with low power concentration (M=3.371), supporting

hypothesis fourteen. Hypothesis sixteen was not tested because social media usage did not fall into two dimensions as predicted.

The final two hypotheses were concerned with comparisons between the four different groups of churches, categorized based upon their communality and power concentration scores. Hypotheses seventeen and eighteen predicted that churches with different combinations of high Communalism and high Power Concentration would use social media most while churches with low Communality and low Power Concentration would use social media least. Results from a one-way ANOVA failed to support these hypotheses. However, differences were found between the four groups and the α=.05 level (See Table 16). A post hoc Tukey HSD test revealed that churches with high Power Concentration and low Communality had significantly lower Social Media Usage (M=2.949, SD=1.700) than churches with high Communality and low Power Concentration (M=3.520, SD=1.142). The other two groups were not significantly different.

Table 16. Church Type Scores for Social Media Usage and Efficacy ANOVA.

	Church Type						
Tested Variable	Low Com Low Pro	High Com Low Pro	Low Com High Pro	High Com High Pro	*F*	*p*	η^2
SM Usage	3.195 (1.123)	3.520 (1.142)	2.949 (1.170)	3.161 (1.256)	3.379	.019	.038

Note. Standard deviations shown in parenthesis below means.

Conclusions and Limitations

The present study offered 18 hypotheses, developed scales, and tested 16 of them. Results of each hypothesis can be found in Table 18. Data from this study reveal distinct and interesting patterns of social media usage in religious organizations and provide explanation for perceptions held by these organizations, and how perceptions have influenced adoption and integration of social media. Moreover, this study offers a new method for applying the TAM in organizational contexts, altering how ease of use and usefulness are approached in practical application. These conclusions will be discussed in the following four points: (1) contribution to the TAM, (2) general use of social media by religious organizations, (3) how religious organizations perceive the efficacy of, and barriers to, social media use, and (4) relationships between church type and social media perceptions.

From a theoretical standpoint, this project provides a new approach to the TAM. Traditionally the TAM has used generic scales intended to maintain accuracy regardless of the technology in question. The end result is an equation predicting generic technology adoption based upon a generic sense of usefulness and a generic sense of ease of use. One goal of the present work is to empirically test theoretical relationships that have received much academic attention. Like previous studies, the theoretical relationships in the TAM are seen as effective and accurate. A second goal was to identify a stronger method for testing and applying the TAM. As mentioned, using generic scales yields generic results about technology adoption. One weakness of the TAM is that it fails to take into account

Table 17. List of hypotheses and results

Hypothesis	**Result**
H_1: Usefulness will be positively related to Actual Usage.	*Supported:* r(288)=.448, *p*<.01.
H_2: Perceived Ease of Use will be positively related to Actual Usage.	*Supported:* r(291)=.397, *p*<.01.
H_3: Perceived Ease of Use will be positively related to Usefulness.	*Supported:* r(303)=.471, *p*<.01.
H_4: Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use will be significant predictors of Actual Usage.	*Supported:* F(284)=44.121, *p*<.01, R^2=.238, adjusted R^2=.233.
H_5: Perceived Usefulness will be a stronger predictor of Actual Usage than Perceived Ease of Use.	*Supported:* F(284)=44.121, *p*<.01, R^2=.196>R^2=.042.
H_6: Perceived Ease of Use will be negatively related to Perceived Barriers.	*Supported:* r(305)=-.406, *p*<.01.
H_7: Perceived Usefulness will be positively related to Perceived Efficacy.	*Supported:* r(301)=.338, *p*<.01 and r(300)=.299, *p*<.01.
H_8: Perceived Efficacy will be positively related to Actual Usage.	*Supported:* r(292)=.338, *p*<.01 and r(292)=.419, *p*<.01.
H_9: Perceived Barriers will be negatively related to Actual Usage.	*Supported:* r(292)=-.307, *p*<.01.
H_{10}: Perceived Efficacy will be negatively related to Perceived Barriers.	*Supported:* r(381)=-.140, *p*<.01 and r(384)=-.123, *p*<.01.
H_{11}: Perceived Efficacy and Perceived Barriers will be significant predictors of Actual Usage.	*Supported:* F(287)=33.113, *p*<.01, R^2=.259, adjusted R^2=.251.
H_{12}: Perceived Efficacy will be a stronger predictor of Actual Use than Perceived Barriers.	*Supported:* F(284)=30.972, *p*<.01, R^2=.16>R^2=.09.
H_{13}: Churches with high communality will use social media more than churches with low communality.	*Supported: t*(291)=-2.630, *p*<.01, Cohen's d=.317.
H_{14}: Churches with high communality will use social media for interactive purposes more than churches with low communality.	*Not Tested.*
H_{15}: Churches with high power concentration will use social media less than churches with low power concentration.	*Supported: t*(289)=2.716, *p*<.01, Cohen's d=.319.
H_{16}: Churches with high power concentration will use social media more for broadcast purposes than churches with low power concentration.	*Not Tested.*
H_{17}: Churches identified as high power concentration and high communality will use social media most out of the four groups.	*Not Supported.*
H_{18}: Churches identified as low power concentration and low communality will use social media least out of the four groups.	*Not Supported.*

unique attributes of both the technology and organization in question. Results from this study have shown, however, that if specific barriers and tasks are identified as issues for the specific organization, a similar prediction can be developed. Therefore, using a multi-method approach beginning with qualitative interviews with decision-makers in the organization can strengthen quantitative results by providing a comprehensive perspective of technology adoption. Moreover, by collecting data about specific barriers and uses for the technology, researchers are given data with which they can approach the organization for further inquiry or to provide suggestions.

Results of a stepwise linear regression also provided interesting results, strengthening the TAM. Adding Spiritual Efficacy and Social Media Barriers to the model accounted for 33% of the variance, compared to 23% in the model including only Ease of Use and Usefulness. It should be noted that Administrative Efficacy did not contribute significantly to the model while Spiritual Efficacy did. It is possible that pastors who perceive social media as effective for only administrative purposes find little value in the additional time required to develop and maintain the media. It is also possible that those uses falling into the Spiritual Efficacy scale, like alerting people to problems, naturally demanded more use of social media while administrative purposes, like posting information about events, were seen as less time-intensive.

This research has also provided an understanding of social media use in the United Methodist Church. Most churches have adopted social media in some way. On average, in churches that have adopted social media, they are used about 2-3 times per month, or slightly less than once each week. Although most churches have adopted social media in some form, their use, on average, is less than that of weekly newsletters or

bulletins despite the low financial cost of content production and dissemination that social media bring. The most salient barriers could explain this issue as they involve manpower and maintenance. It would appear that social media may not have significant financial costs to adopt, but do require significant investment from either staff or volunteer labor. Given that voluntary organizations struggle with this balance (Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000), social media may come with significant organizational costs that might make the technology prohibitive to many churches. It would appear that many of these organizations are overlooking the ability of the community to update and maintain the online presence.

Despite the ability of social media to facilitate communication and networking in organizations, the lowest ranking tasks in the Social Media Usage scale were those requiring interaction, like coordinating events or discussing concerns. In contrast, the highest ranking items were those indicating one-way communication, like posting events or reading statuses. This discrepancy shows that churches have identified uses for social media that extend that which they have traditionally done, but are still adjusting to what social media are, and how they fundamentally alter organizational interactions. In other words, Facebook has simply become a cheaper method of broadcasting information to a broader population. Social media have augmented traditional methods of sharing information, like newsletters, by providing an inexpensive method for organizations to reach a broad base of members quickly and efficiently. At the same time, many churches have ignored the possibilities provided by social media to connect and strengthen offline ties by maintaining online relationships throughout the week.

The final conclusions of this study can be drawn in relation to how the church is organized. Originally a typology of churches was proposed, offering relationships between where the church fell in this typology and how much social media were used. Analysis of results revealed little evidence to support the relationship between this typology and overall social media usage. Although significant differences were found between churches with high and low Communality, and high and low Power Concentration, these differences were found to have small effect sizes. Moreover, when all four church types were compared in an ANOVA, only two types, high Power Concentration and low Communality, and high Communality and low Power Concentration, were found to have significant differences, but the effect size of this difference was minimal. Therefore, it can be concluded that these variables play only a minimal role in social media adoption. More work should be done to identify other organizational characteristics that may play a more significant role in the process of social media adoption.

This study has provided conclusions related to the TAM, the United Methodist Church, and perceptions of social media use in these non-profit, voluntary, religious organizations. Although results were drawn from a national sample of United Methodist clergy, there are some limitations to this survey. First, it only studied one denomination of Christianity. It is unclear how these results compare to other churches in other denominations. The UMC is a unique organization comprising the second largest denomination and the largest strictly hierarchical Protestant denomination in the country. Baptists, for example, claim more followers but allow local churches more independence. It is possible that social media use is not the same in these organizations as demographics,

church size, and organizational culture all differ. Likewise for smaller denominations like the Church of Christ, or larger, more strictly hierarchical groups like the Roman Catholic Church. Additionally, this sample drew from across the country but some districts and conferences were unwilling or unable to participate, limiting the possible breadth of participation. Moreover, churches in the west and the Northeast are underrepresented. It is unclear whether these regions use social media differently or if their inclusion would have altered the results. These limitations affect the generalizability of this data. Also, because only a limited number of churches did not use social media, it was difficult to conduct reliable tests on this population. More work should be done to understand how these organizations differ, and why they choose not to adopt social media. Finally, once data were collected and analyzed, proposed scale relationships were not as effective as designed. Some analysis in this study necessitated post hoc considerations. Subsequent research, therefore, should consider more detailed scale development, a larger cross-section of population, and inclusion of other denominations and even faith traditions.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Study Synthesis

The purpose of this dissertation was to collect information from religious leaders identifying unique characteristics of social media and religious organizations, and to describe how the interplay between these unique attributes affects adoption and integration into organizational practices. The goal was to extend research on both social media and religious organizations providing a deeper understanding of forces at work during technology adoption processes. Two studies were used to achieve this goal, qualitative interviews followed by a quantitative survey. Interview results were used to inform and develop survey items influenced by the Technology Acceptance Model. When taken together, the two studies provided details of a denomination attempting to respond to the needs of a new generation of worshippers by adopting new methods of communication, but refusing to embrace fully unique attributes of the technology.

First, qualitative interviews with religious leaders were conducted discussing their perceptions and use of social media in their organization. Results suggested that religious leaders were interested in making use of social media in their organization, indeed most already did, but had concerns and frustrations about how these tools were being used. Respondents mostly used social media for broadcast purposes despite recognizing more significant opportunities. When asked about why these media were not being used in more significant contexts, religious leaders described barriers of time, labor, and critical mass. It was difficult to find the right person willing to volunteer significant personal time for a communication medium that was perceived to be underutilized by members of the congregation. In addition, subjects also noted the presence of dialectic tensions,

raising concerns about the potential benefits and harms of social media. Many of these tensions influenced subsequent administrative discussions about adoption.

Results from the interviews informed construction of a survey sent to a national population of United Methodist pastors. Analysis revealed similar trends in churches across the country. Most churches reported using social media for organizational purposes, but the extent of use was primarily one-way communication. Although this survey was designed to identify organizational characteristics capable of predicting social media use, results showed no such relationship. Other than a weak correlation between power concentration and perceived barriers, organizational characteristics measured in this study were unable to be significantly connected to use of social media in organizational contexts.

In the face of changing communication patterns and practices, large religious organizations have experienced declining membership and participation. Much of this decline comes from a younger generation seeking a more relevant religious experience. Churches have tried to make themselves appear more relevant and current by adopting new communication technologies like social media, but have failed to take advantage of the characteristics of these channels that made them popular in the first place. Adopting social media for organizational use fundamentally changes how the organization operates. Challenges arise because of the interplay between the unique organizational characteristics of churches and the unique characteristics of social media. These challenges can be approached from three perspectives, cultural, financial, and relational. Moreover, responses to these challenges cause further problems as churches negotiate what they consider to be appropriate application of social media in organizational

contexts. First, using social media in such limited capacity adds a level of complexity to administrative tasks. Second, the added complexity can alienate and distance certain audiences within the organization. What results appears to be a half-hearted attempt at relevance to an audience demanding faith that they can see in their daily interactions.

Interactional Challenges

Both churches and social media have unique characteristics that differentiate them from other organizations and forms of media, respectively (DiMaggio, 1998; DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990; Resnick, 2002). Churches are unique because they function first as nonprofit organizations. NPOs typically have tight financial expectations and a benevolent, goal-driven perspective. Using this goal-driven perspective, churches function as voluntary organizations, relying on the efforts of individuals passionate about the organization's central purpose. Complicating issues further, the proselytic nature of the Christian faith charges churches with increasing their numbers with more urgency than their secular counterparts. As a result, churches are forced to actively engage two audiences, those already participating, and potential converts. Social media also bring with them unique affordances. First, social media have both synchronous and asynchronous characteristics. Sending messages through social media allows for instant response if both individuals are online simultaneously. At the same time, message response can be delayed until an appropriate response opportunity. Second, social media create a natural sense of immediacy and informality. Because social media allow for synchronous communication, they encourage expectations that issues can be discussed quickly and at convenient times. Moreover, because social media move so quickly, interaction tends to be more informal, requiring a natural voice and tone. Finally, social

media provide constant visibility for either a broad, or more controlled audience. Privacy settings allow users to control the audience with which they communicate, selecting between an open invitation, or varying levels of control over who has access to content.

These unique characteristics of religious organizations and affordances of social media create unique challenges when they interact during organizational adoption and integration processes. Financially, limited funds make it difficult for churches to take advantage of the synchronous and asynchronous affordances of social media. Culturally, churches must rely more on untrained volunteers to encourage a sense of immediacy online by creating, policing, and controlling social media content. Relationally, churches must balance message creation tailored for an already religious audience with an inviting tone that appeals to individuals within social networks of church members. Data from both studies have revealed organizational coping mechanisms attempting to embrace the new technology while minimizing changes to organizational structure.

Financial limitations. The first challenge created by the interplay between characteristics and affordances stems from the nonprofit status of a church and the synchronous/asynchronous nature of social media. Churches, as NPOs, are often limited financially. They typically run on a small staff and attempt to take advantage of costs savings wherever possible (DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990). From this perspective, social media are a potentially appealing technology because they come with little or no apparent financial cost, but reach a sizeable audience with minimal limitations. The problem for these organizations is that social media function differently than more traditional communication methods.

Churches are used to sharing information through print or broadcast media where audiences can often attend to content at convenient times. Newsletters appear in mail or email inboxes, bulletins are handed out before the service, websites change only when deemed appropriate by organizational administration. Social media, in contrast, are dynamic. Content posted during normal business hours may be buried or upstaged by more relevant, interesting, or current information. Delay in response, or lack of interactivity may be seen as a sign the organization is out-of-touch. In other words, social media thrive on a constant synchronous and asynchronous communication flow. Creating content designed for this method of interaction requires an investment in labor and time. Posting an announcement about an upcoming activity on Monday morning may fit comfortably into an office administrator's schedule, but individuals using social media may not access the site until later in the day or even week at which point the announcement has been overshadowed by subsequent posts.

The challenge for churches is reconciling the need for investment in this new media with their tight budgets. Although many organizations have successfully hired full-time social media administrators, churches are unique because their financial limitations often force them to run lean financial operations. Results from both studies seem to suggest that social media require an awkward time commitment for these small organizations. On one hand, it requires too much time to be expected of a volunteer. On the other hand, not enough time is required to justify the expense of hiring another staff member. Giving additional responsibilities to the staff is also a challenge as many of them are either too individualized, as in the case of youth directors, or too generalized, as in the case of pastors. As Baym et al. (2004) pointed out, communication through

methods like texting or social media are being used in integrated interaction patterns, where conversations seamlessly move from one channel to another. From an individual perspective, such transitions would seem natural as contacting other individuals is a function of finding the easiest method. From an organizational perspective, however, such transitions can be far more difficult because it requires investing in individuals willing to oversee each channel.

In response to this challenge, churches have attempted to make use of the free elements of social media while minimizing labor costs. In interviews, respondents were quick to point out their use of social media to announce upcoming events or activities, findings echoed in survey responses. Survey data also detailed the limited frequency of updates to social media from the organizational perspective. In short, churches have been willing to adopt social media, but find it difficult to move beyond use as an additional form of broadcast communication, and a limited form at that. It is possible that the difficulty for this more in-depth integration could be rooted in an inability to provide financial investment in the new technology. Although social media are considered free to use, for organizations they come with hidden costs as they add a new layer of complexity to organizational communication channels and demand attention outside the traditional business framework.

Cultural changes. A second challenge created by the interplay between social media and religious organizations is that of culture. As voluntary organizations, churches must rely on the efforts of passionate individuals who identify a need and respond without the expectation of payment. The synchronous/asynchronous nature of social media creates an expectation of immediacy and informality. Churches have difficulty

adopting and integrating social media because it requires altering current organizational practices as to create a natural, unified voice and expedite online response time. Churches, especially those in strong denominational structures like the United Methodist Church, have developed hierarchies relying on trained professionals to address organizational needs. When these responsibilities move online, users tend to expect a more egalitarian environment (Campbell, 2007b). Adopting social media requires significant cultural changes of which many religious leaders are somewhat wary. During interviews, respondents identified concerns with providing an open forum. Some cited specific examples of situations in which efforts of the church were impaired by online posts. Others were unable to describe personal experiences but still expressed concern. Likewise, survey results highlighted a concern for the privacy of congregational members as well as a lower level of perceived efficacy for social media in the more interactive tasks.

This cultural challenge takes two forms. First, churches need to redevelop their organizational culture by diminishing the role of professional staff and opening communication channels to a broader audience. Second, church members need to change their cultural perspective of the church and share responsibility for providing and maintaining content to create a more vibrant online community in support of offline interaction. It is possible that churches have shied away from engaging the high-immediacy tasks of social media because they see potential for ineffective communication. Being that it is difficult for these organizations to identify individuals, volunteer or paid, to maintain, police, and control online content, churches may be approaching these challenges by preventing their use.

Voluntary organizations represent an offline embodiment of online communities. These offline groups thrive by the combined effort of individuals who notice a need corresponding to their strength and react. Similarly, online communities, like Wikipedia, SlashDot, or Everything2, function because a core group of users is willing to take responsibility for organizational needs (Ganley & Lampe, 2009). Given the similarities between the two types of organizations, it should follow that tools like Facebook would facilitate the work of offline communities by providing a visual representation of the social network and increasing immediacy. The difference between these two organizations falls in the culture of authority. Both online and offline communities rely on some governance structure to facilitate decision-making. For offline communities, like churches, these authority structures have become far more formalized and defined.

Relational barriers. The third barrier caused by the interaction between social media affordances and religious organizational characteristics is connected to perspectives of relationships. As religious organizations, especially in the Christian tradition, churches feel compelled to grow their membership numbers. Although most organizations, including voluntary nonprofits, seek to increase in size, for churches it is a matter distinctly tied to foundational principles. As a result, churches have a unique problem in that they must actively communicate with two audiences, an internal community and an external potential membership. Where most other organizations can accomplish this task with an "About us" section of their website, churches often feel compelled to engage those individuals. With print media, like newsletters or flyers, churches could mail content to a broad audience but often did so at great expense.

Websites provide a more inexpensive method, but potential members were forced to actively seek the church out.

Social media provide an opportunity to be visible to a broad audience but with more complexity than other media forms. When information is shared through social media, it is sent to individuals who have previously sought out the organization and intentionally subscribed to their content. Once the information has been shared, responsibility then shifts to individuals to further share that information with their friends. Interview respondents seemed to have a skewed perception of social media, describing the tools as an effective way to reach an external audience as well as the internal one. These perceptions may also be seen in survey results where posting announcements is the most common use.

The challenge for churches is in how they approach relationships with their members as well as those outside the organization. Religious organizations like churches seem to find it difficult to capitalize on the viral abilities of social media. Social media thrive on informal relationships and weak ties between users to expand the audience for content. Posting an event or invitation may reach a small audience of members who have already committed to the organization, but fails to spread that message further, despite what some pastors may have perceived. The complexity in audiences for social media mean that churches must adapt their content construction so it appeals to current members while offering information that those current members would be willing to share with their friends.

When unique characteristics of churches are combined with unique affordances of social media, problems are created. The two studies presented here have shown that

churches have attempted to navigate these differences. In the process of working through these problems, these organizations have created coping mechanisms designed to embrace what they can about these new technologies while mitigating potential changes to organizational communication patterns. Although these coping mechanisms have allowed social media an entree into churches, they have also created other problems that must be addressed.

Organizational Challenges

Despite adopting social media in reaction to demands of a younger generation, churches have only embraced the elements that replicate what media are already doing in their organizations. Approaching social media in this way has created other problems for these organizations. First, social media have created an added layer of complexity to organizational communication policies. Although much of the information shared through social media is similar to that in more traditional methods, the format is different, requiring redundancy to create content. In other words, where some forms of print media allowed identical stories or announcements, and could often be controlled by one individual, social media often demand unique content, created and maintained by multiple individuals. Second, use of social media has created a digital divide in some congregations. Members without access to this form of communication, either by choice or by a lack of means, can be left out of conversations and alienated from the organization. In both cases, it seems that churches have attempted to cope with challenges created through the interplay of unique characteristics and unique affordances.

Additive Complexity. Social media add significant complexity to a communication system based primarily in print media. Many communication patterns

currently in use by religious organizations were developed as a response to the need for effective channels to share information with the broader membership. At the time these methods were developed, print was the most cost-effective method for reaching a selective audience. Offices therefore developed processes through which a secretary became the gatekeeper, creating newsletters and other text-based content, and controlling the final audience. Social media disrupt this flow for three reasons: Time, content, and audience. First, social media disrupt information flow because they are an always-on form of communication. Second, social media thrive on contribution from multiple individuals, demanding unique modifications to content, like control. Third, social media makes it simultaneously easier and more difficult to identify and reach your target audience. Each of these problems is rooted in a coping mechanism developed to facilitate adoption of the technology.

First, social media complicate the flow of time in the church office. Using newsletters, websites, or other forms of media that can effectively be updated on a regular schedule, church offices have the ability to develop weekly workflow patterns. Newsletters are written on Monday, folded on Tuesday, and mailed on Wednesday. Websites are updated on Monday by copying and pasting articles from the newsletter. As mentioned, when churches adopted social media, they have difficulty delegating responsibility and often place it in the office. Consequently, social media complicate the efficient workflow that has developed. Secretaries can no longer copy and paste newsletter-style stories into Facebook posts. Nor does a single blast of information suffice. Instead, church offices must either overhaul their communication patterns, or limit the extent to which social media are used. Moreover, processes used to create and

transmit information are formed through bureaucratic channels. For example, the pastor must approve all outgoing media, adding an extra day to newsletter publication. The secretary is unable to print the bulletin without the title of the choir piece which is not submitted until Wednesday. Modifying these processes often requires changes to entire bureaucratic systems including approval from multiple individuals.

Second, social media complicate control of information in the church. In addition to creating efficient workflows in a church office, some churches have also attempted to control the flow of information. Creating a central office gatekeeper was typically done to facilitate sharing information and ensure that only appropriate information was dispensed. If an individual member has an announcement, he knows to share it with the secretary. The secretary, in turn, controls the calendar and proofreads outgoing information so members have confidence in what they receive. Social media complicates the issue of organizational information by facilitating event coordination without a central information hub. Although individuals may find it easier to coordinate with each other, churches may find it more difficult to keep track of what is happening when.

Third, social media complicate the issue of audience. When a church office deals specifically with print media, it is easy to identify specifically where the content should be sent. Churches will develop a mailing list, either home or email, and print a few extra copies for individuals not on the list. In rare cases, effort would be made to invite a broader community. Social media complicate the audience issue because on one hand, they simplify the process of audience identity by allowing people to connect with the organization online. On the other hand, social media complicate the issue because they require participation in order to be effective. While an organization can keep track of

what individuals have connected online, it is more difficult to keep track of how frequently those individuals access their account. Moreover, if an individual is unwilling to participate in social media, the church must use additional means for sharing information, almost negating the purpose of social media adoption.

Digital Divide. In addition to complicating communication patterns, social media also create a digital divide in religious organizations. Social media require connected, proficient users. Many churches have significant membership without computer access or skills. As a result, adopting social media can cause a rift in congregations as connected members have access to more or different information than non-connected members, creating information chasms between individuals involved in online interaction and individuals for whom such contact is impossible. During interviews, pastors articulated concern that their congregation would become a community of disparate factions.

Sessions (2010) and McCully et al. (2011) described similar phenomena in their study of online communities. Sessions suggested that offline gatherings created factions in online communities. Similarly, McCully et al. described a decline in participation in the greater online community following offline interaction. For churches, the pattern appears to be opposing; once online interaction is added to an offline community, individuals find themselves distanced from those not online. Perhaps online connection prevents effective organizational integration for individuals unable to share the common experience of computer-mediation.

Theoretical Implications

Communication technologies fundamentally alter processes through which information is interpreted in organizations. This dissertation has analyzed the effects of

social media on United Methodist churches as one case in which adoption of new communication tools created unique challenges while organizations adjusted to new interactive methods. Results from the present research offer theoretical implications for organizational perspectives and scholarship in social media.

By adopting social media and providing evidence of organizational change, results from the present study have contradicted claims made by population ecologists. According to the population ecologist perspective (Hannan & Freeman, 1977), large, national denominations as models for American Christianity are declining because the market for which they were created has changed. Following the population ecology perspective to its logical conclusion, as the market for nationally-linked religious individuals declines and dies, so too will denominational Christianity.

In both interview and survey data, a majority of churches made attempts to adopt social media with varying rates of success, a result that points toward a punctuated equilibrium perspective (Gersick, 1991). As outside expectations and demands shift, organizations have the opportunity to react. In this study, many organizations were reacting, but they were doing so using only the tools with which they were familiar. For example, the most common uses of social media were for administrative purposes, aping extant communication channels.

Integrating social media into religious organizational contexts creates problems similar to those introduced by Gutenberg's printing press. Gutenberg's invention, and Luther's subsequent mass publication of the Bible in common language, offered a broad population access to religious texts previously the purview of priests and scholars (Holborn, 1942). No longer were religious leaders gatekeepers of sacred writings. Once

the Bible had been translated and published, common people were given unfiltered access to the texts undergirding their beliefs and practices.

Social media have a similar effect, opening access to unedited and uncontrolled interpretation. Prior to social media, access to religious scriptures was not heavily limited, but interpretations of those scriptures was limited to religious leaders and religious publications. Seminaries were gatekeepers of the former while publishers protected the latter. Social media, and other forms of online communication, allow anyone, regardless of education, to offer their interpretations of scripture. Such change shifts the priestly role away from one of administrator to referee. As Campbell (2007b) explained, religious leaders are no longer central figures in discussion of theological interpretation. Religious individuals feel increasingly comfortable discussing spiritual experiences in open forums. Religious leaders are granted an organic form of respect stemming from their professional and educational background, but are not viewed as exceptional members in the conversation. In other words, Gutenberg and Luther gave us access to the text, Zuckerberg gave us access to each other.

Interview respondents expressed a dialectic tension between connection and disconnection due to the introduction of social media in their church. This tension is symptomatic of the challenge religious leaders face as they renegotiate their roles. Although religious leaders expressed concern that digital communication had the potential to replace face-to-face, physical interaction, most respondents were also confident in the natural demand for shared physical experiences. According to subjects in this study, churches will never be replaced by technology because individuals, especially those seeking spiritual community, will always crave the physical presence of others.

Social media, like the printing press, may alter how we interpret religious experience, but the fundamental human connection, central to many people's perception of religious practice, remains unchanged.

In some ways, the organizational and technological implications of this project seem at odds. On one hand, the church is adapting to changes in communication patterns by adopting interactive tools like social media. On the other hand, religious leaders have expressed reluctance or hesitance at the redefinition of their role in helping people understand religious experience. It may be that churches are only capable of reacting based upon their previous experiences, including centralized authority and a clearly defined pastoral office. In some ways, population ecology is accurate in that the market forces which have influenced how churches are organized and the processes they use are hindering the ability to adapt during the period of punctuation. To be sure, some churches will die; a result of declining small town populations, an inability to welcome new members, or a sense that what they have is good enough and change isn't necessary. In most of these cases, market forces have less influence than the individuals who have been unwilling to put the effort forward to grow their organization. Those churches that survive will react to punctuation by creating new paths for organizational communication processes.

The timing for this research offered a unique perspective on the organizational technology adoption process. Most churches had adopted the technology but were still in the process of assessing the role it should play in daily operations. Conversations with religious leaders coupled with a survey of pastors highlighted the struggle many churches

face as they attempt to make sense of what place this new technology should take in their organization.

Methodological Contributions

In addition to the research questions, this study also has methodological implications for the Technology Acceptance Model. First, it supports the basic theoretical propositions of the model, claiming that ease of use and usefulness are strong predictors of actual use. This structure is supported, even when replacing ease of use with barriers, and usefulness with efficacy. The work here also extends TAM methodologically by offering a new process through which TAM can be applied, and a new population to with which TAM can be used. By using a two-step process of qualitative interviews followed by a quantitative survey, the TAM can be used to gain richer insight into specifically what it is that prevents organizations from adopting a new technology, and what that new technology is perceived as most effective at accomplishing. Furthermore, the work presented here offers an effective method for using the TAM in large organizations with subunit agencies, like a religious denomination.

For most researchers, the appeal of the TAM is in its simplicity. By measuring only a few variables, the model provides a reasonably accurate prediction for subsequent adoption of new technology. This study joins a long line of research supporting the underlying theoretical assumptions of the TAM (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996; Lederer et al. 2000; Moon & Kim, 2001; Zhang & Mao, 2008). Specifically, the present research supports, through both qualitative and quantitative means, that actual usage of a new technology can be predicted by considering perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. Moreover, this project has shown that similar results can be obtained by

focusing on specific perceived barriers to use in addition to ease of use, and perceived efficacy in addition to usefulness. In short, results from this study show that adoption of a new technology depends on our perceptions about how it will benefit us weighed against that which holds us back.

One drawback of the TAM is that it functions reflexively. The present research has proposed a method by which specific barriers to adoption and perceptions of efficacy can be identified and measured. By combining qualitative conversations with quantitative surveys, a clearer understanding of the technology can be reached and more specific issues can be identified.

This study intentionally began with qualitative interviews designed as formal conversations with religious leaders to understand how social media were being used in churches. These conversations focused on ease of use and usefulness issues, referred to as barriers and uses. By interviewing a clearly defined population to the point of saturation, it was possible to identify themes related to specific uses of the technology, and barriers preventing adoption or integration. These themes were then used effectively as scales in a broader survey of a similar population. Replacing generic ease of use and usefulness scales from the TAM provides researchers with the opportunity to understand more fully not just if the new tools will be adopted, but why. From this perspective, it is possible to identify specific variables that can be addressed and controlled. For example, in this study, it was revealed that manpower was a significant barrier to adoption and integration. Being aware of this as an issue, more research can be done to identify how religious organizations have successfully dealt with the problem.

The final contribution this paper makes to the TAM is that of population. Although the TAM was originally designed for use in traditional organizations (Davis, 1986, 1989; Davis et al. 1989), more recent research has attempted to test the model with consumers (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003; Muk, 2007; Stern, Royne, Stafford, & Bienstock, 2008). In both cases, hierarchical organizations with independent subunits, like denominations, the Boy Scouts, or the YMCA, are somewhat ignored because it is difficult to differentiate between what is considered organizational administration, and what is considered local administration.

Practical Implications

In addition to the theoretical and methodological implications of these studies, this work can provide beneficial suggestions for churches struggling with social media in organizational contexts. Religious institutions have strength in their ability to bridge centuries of tradition with contemporary thought and action. Embracing new technologies is simply a means by which rich history can be translated into relative terms. Results presented in this dissertation point to three specific actions churches can take in their attempt to share their deep and rich history with a new generation of spiritual seekers. First, churches must invest in the new technology. Second, responsibility for effectively integrating social media must be borne by all in the organization. Third, those utilizing social media must take advantage of the combined affordances which make the technology unique.

Investment

One of the most common themes arising from both studies is how many resources social media demand for successful adoption and integration. In truth, it is not that social

media demand so much more time or money, but that they require fundamental changes in organizational operation. As an institution, Christianity has a long recorded history of embracing new technologies to strengthen their numbers. Lutheran Reformers found aid in Gutenberg's printing press. Railroads, cars, and, eventually, airplanes accelerated the pace with which evangelists of the Second Great Awakening could spread the Gospel. Radios filled the airwaves with messages of fire, brimstone, and hope. Televisions were quickly adopted as well giving rise to names like Billy Graham. Still, as each new technology was adopted, former methods of message transmission were not abandoned. New media were layered upon old allowing the central religious messages to permeate culture. To this day, it is difficult to find a vibrant church without a copy machine. Many churches have even purchased vans, buses, or even private jets. Christian radio emanating from larger church campuses still fills the airwaves, as does Sunday morning television programs broadcast from places like the Crystal Cathedral. The Catholic Church even owns and operates a 24-hour religious programming station. None of these new technologies were cheap, however. Each required significant investment in order to be effective. Such is also the case with social media.

Despite requiring little or no cost to create a page on Facebook or open a Twitter account, social media does not come free. One centerpiece of social media in American culture is its "always on" characteristic. Social media is dynamic, fast-paced, and cluttered. It is impossible to reap the benefits of social media with rare, random, and intermittent updates. If churches wish to find value in social media as a communication tool, they must invest in their use of it. Investment can come through money, people, or both, but it must be significant. Just as churches invested in microphones, video cameras,

and broadcast towers, they must also invest in an equipped congregation capable of constantly, effectively, and enthusiastically sharing the excitement of participation in the organization.

Crowdsourcing

Investment in social media is not limited to financial resources. One of the most powerful attributes of social media is the ability to connect large numbers of people through an online social network. Although organizations can invest financially by hiring a full- or part-time employee to oversee and develop social media, it is possible that more benefit will be seen when the tool is adopted organically. Many respondents described difficulty in finding individuals willing to take responsibility for maintaining social media. By taking advantage of the networked nature of social media, many organizations could benefit from spreading the work across many people. Such an approach comes with the additional benefit of engagement. When people feel that their online presence is affirmed, they are more likely to continue participation (Burke et al. 2009). Moreover, unlike more traditional forms of media, like print or broadcast, audience size grows exponentially as more individuals are engaged.

Churches stand to gain from social media if they are willing to recognize the power in the crowd. Although some pastors expressed concern that online communication is subject to expediting dispersal of inaccurate or harmful information, those same forces can be harnessed to share accurate and beneficial information. The challenge for religious organizations comes in trusting the congregation to police itself and provide adequate oversight, a jarring paradigm shift for organizations that have traditionally functioned as top-down bureaucracies granting some level of local autonomy

to individual congregations. Social media offers a hyper-local autonomy, granting parishioners ultimate power. Such a paradigm shift challenges the role of clergy by forcing pastors to trust their congregations with unfamiliar levels of power and control.

Unique Affordances

Granting autonomy and power to individual members of the congregation opens doors to even more powerful means of community interaction. Social media bring with them unique affordances allowing religious practice to pour out of the doors of the church and engage people on multiple levels throughout their lives. Traditional media, like print or broadcast, are limited in their ability to reach individuals at multiple times throughout the week while engaging their responses. Social media give religious individuals the ability to engage in conversations with others at convenient times and places, providing opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous interaction. Individuals who have previously been unable to participate in religious activities, perhaps because of distance or time constraints, can now give similar time throughout the week to discuss spiritual issues or provide support to others in the community.

Despite these unique affordances of social media, it was exactly these uses with which pastors were most concerned, and in which they were least engaged. The religious landscape is changing. It is becoming dominated by people who are seeking a relevant connection between faith and their daily interactions (Beaudoin, 1998). Pastors in this study expressed concern that online interaction will eventually replace face-to-face religious experiences. It is perhaps this perspective that hinders adoption of social media for interactive purposes. Given changes in perception of spirituality, however, churches must recognize that people want more than an hour on Sunday morning. Historian Robert

Orsi (1997) describes religion as a complex human enterprise that fills every aspect of life. His perspective of "lived religion" contends that legitimate faith cannot be found in the ritual and organizational practices that often assume the role of describing spirituality. Instead, Orsi suggests that religious practice is lived out in every part of life. Likewise, tools like social media and text messaging are creating integrated interactive patterns (Baym et al. 2004). As individuals seek to connect across media, so too should religious organizations recognize the need for a diverse approach to communication (Rice, 2009). Social media provide religious organizations with unique opportunities to reach a broader, more diverse population. Churches have primarily found broadcast or administrative purpose in these new forms of communication. Instead, they should recognize that these tools bring with them unique purposes and unique promise.

Conclusions and Limitations

The present pair of studies were designed to be a comprehensive examination of social media use in the United Methodist Church. Still, results are limited by study design and data collection. First, the interview study was used to develop a broader survey. Although interview data were collected until saturation was achieved, the population was limited to churches in Michigan. It is possible that more interviews would have revealed regional differences in perceived barriers or uses of social media. Second, the national survey was successful in collecting data from every region of the United States, but two regions, the West and the Northeast were underrepresented in the final survey population. It is possible that data from these two regions could have changed results by including large population centers like Los Angeles, and large rural swaths, like Wyoming. Third, both studies presented in this dissertation focused only on the United Methodist Church.

As previous research has shown, denominational structure plays a significant role in how churches function. More work should be done to identify what differences, if any, exist between denominations in terms of their adoption and use of social media. Finally, this study focused primarily on the adoption and integration of social media from an administrative perspective. No attention was paid to actual social media content from these organizations. More work should be done to understand how churches actually use social media, and how their use differs from that of individuals. Finally, both studies took an organizational perspective, enlisting individuals in positions of leadership. Subsequent work should consider perceptions of church members. It is possible that individuals involved in the organization perceive social media differently than those running the organization.

Results have shown that adoption of social media in this organization is a popular practice with a large majority of churches making use of sites like Facebook. Integration, in contrast, is remarkably lacking with most churches making use of social media for little more than a redundant method of broadcasting announcements. Few churches have taken advantage of the interactive qualities present in these new forms of communication. What remains is an interplay between the elements of social media making them unique forms of communication and the characteristics of churches that make them exceptional forms of organizations. When the time-consuming nature of social media is confronted by the voluntary nature of religious organizations, churches are often forced to compromise on quality. When the traditionally-based, hierarchical authority structures of churches are confronted with an egalitarian, democratic communication model, religious leaders are placed in a precarious position where they must balance the needs of message

control with the desire of open communication. Social media may have made only small changes in how people communicate and interact, but their presence in organizations have created a number of issues that must be addressed.

The present study focused on the United Methodist Church but offers implications for other similar organizations. Although the UMC is unique in its size, other congregations have similar structures and similar struggles. For example, Presbyterians have experienced similar declines in membership over the past few decades (Putnam & Campbell, 2012). Their similar structure, with moderate levels of autonomy at the local church, likely means similar approaches and perceptions of social media. Other churches, like Roman Catholic congregations, who have far less local autonomy may have different experiences with social media. Likewise, congregations connected with the Baptist church in its many forms may perceive and use social media differently as these local congregations are granted greater levels of autonomy. More work should be done investigating the external validity of these results beyond United Methodists. Moreover, other faith traditions approach proselytizing differently. Problems seen as grave in Christian churches may be ignored or even embraced by other organizations like Hindu temples.

Social media have proven to create changes in how people share information and interact with religious organizations. The ubiquity of sites like Facebook and Twitter has all but forced churches to do more than simply acknowledge their presence. In the face of declining membership numbers, churches have adopted social media as an outreach to younger individuals. For most of these organizations, however, response to adoption has been tepid at best. As a result, churches have minimized their reaction to social media by

limiting their organizational integration. While social media find their greatest strength in reifying social network connections through online interaction, religious organizations have relegated this new form of communication to little more than an online loudspeaker, repeating messages that have already been sent through more traditional channels. Decisions to adopt social media in this limited capacity have been influenced by a number of challenges the unique affordances of social media pose to religious organizations. It remains to be seen if adopting social media in this limited capacity represents an effective coping mechanism for churches struggling to make sense of these new technologies, or if these technologies will prove problematic as they continue to separate religious organizations from common communication patterns.

APPENDICIES

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for your willingness to participate. This interview is intended to learn about how pastors and youth directors use social media in their church. The interview will include questions about how your church makes use of these tools, the role you play in working with them, and your own perceptions about the use of social media in church. You were selected for this study because pastors and youth directors have a unique perspective on how technology is used in congregations.

Should you agree to participate, the interview will take approximately one hour and focus on your knowledge and use of social networking and websites in both personal and professional contexts. Your involvement in this study will not result in any direct benefits to you or your church and there are no known harms from participation.

Your participation in this interview is strictly voluntary and you may end the conversation at any time. Furthermore, you may refuse to answer any question asked.

The interview will be recorded using digital recording equipment. All information collected through this study that can be connected with you will remain in confidence and will be disclosed only upon your written permission or as required by law. Should this research be published, some of your quotations may be used without information identifying you or your church. If you choose to withdraw your participation, digital records of this conversation will be deleted.

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Michigan State University. Should you have any questions or concerns about the treatment of human subjects in this research, please do not hesitate to contact myself, Wyl McCully at mccullyw@msu.edu, my advisor, Nicole Ellison at nellison@msu.edu, or the Institutional Review Board at irb@msu.edu.

Should you desire, a written copy of this consent form can be sent to you through email. By continuing with the interview you are giving your consent to participate. Do you understand the implications of your consent?

Great! The primary focus of this interview will be the use of technologies including social media and websites. For our purposes, social media refers to sites like Facebook, Google+, or Twitter. Are you familiar with these forms of communication?

Ok, then I'd like to get some background information about you and your church.

1.) Icebreaker Questions
    a. The primary focus of this research is about the use of technologies including social media and websites. Before talking about your church, I need to understand your own use of these tools.
        i. Do you use any social networking sites like Facebook, Google+, or Twitter for personal activities?
            1. Which ones?
            2. How do you use them? How frequently do you use them?
        ii. Do you maintain a website or blog for personal uses?
            1. How long have you been working on it?

2. Why do you take the time to work on it?

b. Tell me a little bit about your church.
    i. How many members do you have?
    ii. What is the attendance like?
        1. How many services do you have?
        2. What kinds of services do you host?
    iii. What kinds of people attend your church?
        1. Ethnicity (diverse or not)
        2. Age
        3. Technical acumen
c. Is there anything unique about your church/youth group?

Ok, that background helps out a lot. Now I'd like to talk a little about your knowledge and experience with social media.

2.) Benefits of social media
    a. What benefits, IF ANY, do you think social media like Facebook can bring to a church?
    b. In what ways, IF ANY, can Facebook help to foster or develop spiritual growth in the church?
    c. Can you think of a specific situation in your church/youth group where social media were beneficial?
        i. Could you please describe?
    d. Can you think of a specific example outside of your church where social media have been helpful?
    e. What kind of support do you feel from members of the church/youth group in adopting social media for use in the church?
    f. What kind of support do you feel from members in the church in terms of actual usage of social media?
3.) Harms of social media
    a. What harms, IF ANY, do you think social media like Facebook can do to a church?
    b. In what ways, IF ANY, can Facebook hinder or harm spiritual growth in the church?
    c. Can you think of a specific situation in your church/youth group where social media have been harmful?
        i. Could you please describe?
    d. Can you think of a specific example outside of your church where social media have been harmful?
    e. What kind of resistance do you feel from members of the church/youth group in adopting social media for use in the church?
4.) Is there anything else about the harms or benefits of social media that you haven't already discussed?

Great! I think I have an idea of the benefits and harms you perceive from social media in general. Now, I'd like to talk a little more specifically about how your church uses social media.

5.) Use of Social Media
    a. For all churches
        i. Do you think social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ are useful tools for churches/youth groups?
            1. *If YES:* What uses do you think they are most appropriate for?
            2. *If NO:* Why not?
        ii. Do you believe social media can help people in your church strengthen their faith? ***PROBE***
        iii. Assuming Jesus and the Apostles had access to Facebook, what do you think they would use it for?
    b. For churches with Facebook/Twitter/Other SM presence (As found through web searches prior to interview).
        i. I did a little bit of work before this interview and found that your church/Youth group is represented on Facebook/Twitter/etc. Are there other sites or software, not including your own website, that your church uses?
            1. What would they be?
        ii. How did your church/youth group start using social media (use specific site when applicable)? ***PROBE***
            1. What was your involvement in this process?
        iii. Do you think your church/youth group uses social media effectively? ***PROBE***
    c. For churches with no Facebook/Twitter/Other SM presence (As found in web searches prior to interview.
        i. I did a little bit of work before this interview could not find your church/youth group listed on any social networking sites. Do you actively maintain a presence on Facebook, Twitter, MyChurch or a similar site?
            1. What would those be? *(If media are listed move to previous question)*
        ii. Has your church/youth group held any discussions about using social media?
            1. What is your involvement in those discussions?
        iii. Do you think social media would be effective in your church/youth group? Why or why not? ***PROBE***

Ok. Now that I have an idea of how you use social media, I'd like to get a feel for how you use websites in general. Specifically, I'd like to talk about the website your church maintains.

6.) Website usage

a. In your opinion, what would the perfect church website look like for your church?
    i. What would you be able to do with it?
    ii. What information could you find on it?
    iii. How frequently would it be updated?
b. How should a church website differ from the website of a secular organization?
c. *If the church has a website:* Do you think your church/youth group website is adequate for your organization's need?
    i. *If YES:* Why are you satisfied with what the website does?
    ii. *If NO:* What do you think the site could do better?
d. *If the church does not have a website:* Do you think your church would benefit by constructing a site?
    i. *If YES:* What is preventing you from taking that step?
    ii. *If NO:* Why not?
e. Some churches have started streaming their services online. This means people with Internet access can watch a live or pre-recorded video of the church service on their personal computer.
    i. Do you think this is an effective ministry tool?
    ii. What do you think are the differences, if any, between online streaming video and a televised service?

Thank you. I think I have a pretty good idea about social media and website usage in your church. I'd like to close by asking a few demographic questions then giving you a chance to add any closing thoughts.

7.) Demographics
    a. Note Gender
    b. How long have you worked at this church?
    c. How long have you been in ministry?
    d. How old are you?
8.) Closing Thoughts
    a. Is there anything about social networking or websites that I didn't ask but you think would be important for me to know?
    b. Can you think of any colleagues who might provide a unique perspective for this research, positive or negative?

APPENDIX B: PRETEST INSTRUMENT

Page 1: Consent Form

Based upon your position as an ordained clergy in a church, you are invited to participate in this research. The study is being led by Wyl McCully, a PhD student at Michigan State University as part of a dissertation on the use of social media in religious organizations. The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete and is comprised of questions about how your church uses different types of media and how you perceive organizational processes. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study.

No personally identifying information will be collected and your responses will remain anonymous. Data collected through this study will be analyzed and reported in aggregated form only. Although the information collected may be considered private, items in this survey have been designed to minimize risk and there are no known harms to participation. Neither you nor your church will receive any specific benefits from your participation in this research.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to respond to any survey item and may decide to end your participation at any time.

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of the survey, or to report and injury, please contact the researcher (Wyl McCully, 317 E Elm, Mason, MI 48854, mccullyw@msu.edu, (517)969-3005).

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wishm the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or email irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

This is a pretest version of this survey designed to identify any problems. As you take the survey, please note any questions you find difficult to answer and provide feedback at the conclusion of the survey.

Thank you for your willingness to participate. By clicking the "Next" button below, you are indicating that you have read and understand the description of the study, and that you are agreeing to participate.

Page 2: Media Perceptions

Please indicate how effective or ineffective you feel each of the following media are at helping people in ANY church communicate organizational information (5-Point scale, 1=”Very ineffective”; 2=“Somewhat ineffective”; 3= “Neither effective nor ineffective”; 4=“Somewhat effective”; 5=“Very effective”)

1.) Mailed paper communication (Like Newsletters, bulletins, or letters from staff).
2.) Emailed communication (Like newsletters or letters from staff).
3.) Meeting parishioners face-to-face.
4.) Broadcast communication (Television or radio).
5.) Online streaming.
6.) Telephone conversations.

7.) Social media (Like Facebook, Google+, or Twitter).
8.) Text messaging.
9.) Website.
10.) Blogging.

Page 3: Media Perceptions

Please indicate the extent to which you feel social media (like Facebook, Google+, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) are effective at helping ANY church accomplish each of the following tasks (5-Point scale, 1="Very ineffective"; 2="Somewhat ineffective"; 3= "Neither effective nor ineffective"; 4="Somewhat effective"; 5="Very effective").

1.) Alerting clergy or other religious leaders to problems in people's lives.
2.) Giving pastors an opportunity to respond when problems arise.
3.) Providing church members with Bible verses or thoughts about religious practice.
4.) Discussing spiritual matters.
5.) Alerting people in the congregation to needs or issues in individuals' lives.
6.) Providing a tool for individuals who cannot be physically present at church activities to find out what's happening at the church.
7.) Allowing individuals who cannot be physically present to actively participate in church events.
8.) Informing community members about upcoming church events or activities.
9.) Allowing volunteers and/or staff to coordinate details about upcoming church events or activities.

Page 4: Issues with Media Usage

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
(5-point Likert, 1="Strongly Disagree"; 2="Disagree"; 3="Neither agree nor disagree"; 4="Agree"; 5="Strongly Agree").

1.) When I consider social media use in my church, I have concerns for the privacy of my congregation.
2.) Too many members of my congregation lack access to the Internet to make social media use worthwhile.
3.) Not enough people in my congregation own or use computers to make using social media worthwhile.
4.) Individuals willing to take responsibility for updating social media in my church lack sufficient computer literacy.
5.) It has been difficult to find someone in the church with enough time to maintain or develop social media.
6.) We have not yet found the right person to develop social media for our church.
7.) Not enough people in my church are interested in using social media for church purposes.
8.) My church has not yet developed an appropriate policy for organizational Internet use.
9.) My church has struggled to maintain consistent updating of our social media.

10.) It is my personal preference not to use social media in my church.
11.) My church cannot afford to use social media.

Page 5: Organizational Perceptions

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the church where you are currently serving as pastor.
(5-point Likert, 1="Strongly Disagree"; 2="Disagree"; 3="Neither agree nor disagree"; 4="Agree"; 5="Strongly Agree").

1.) Most of the decisions in this church are made by only a few individuals.
2.) Most of the work of this church is done by a small handful of individuals.
3.) My church would function effectively without strong pastoral leadership.
4.) This church typically response to organizational needs by hiring someone to do the job.
5.) Most of the leadership roles are held by only a small handful of individuals.
6.) Making decisions in my church involves numerous staff and/or volunteers.
7.) My church relies heavily on pastoral leadership.
8.) Many new individuals are given leadership roles every year.
9.) My church has what I would consider to be a large paid staff.
10.) Adopting a new idea in my church requires gaining support from many people.
11.) Everyone in this church chips in to do their fair share of the necessary work.
12.) Most people would say that power in this church is widely dispersed.
13.) Most of my church members recognize the value of my seminary training.

PAGE BREAK (Question repeated)

14.) In my church, we make decisions first and build support afterwards.
15.) As a pastor, I feel more like a follower than a leader.
16.) Leaders in my church make sure that a significant number of members support an idea before we make changes.
17.) Every member has an equal say in all organizational decisions.
18.) My church relies more on the efforts of volunteers than paid staff.
19.) Activities in this church are often directed by one or two people.
20.) People in my church rely heavily on the staff to make sure the church is running effectively.
21.) Decisions in this church are typically made by an individual, like a pastor or committee chair.
22.) Lay leaders in this church have more power than the pastor.
23.) We spend a significant amount of time in staff or committee meetings discussing new ideas.
24.) Most people in my church are uncomfortable with tasks like teaching a Bible study.
25.) It is always easy to find volunteers for the jobs that need to be done around my church.

Page 7

Does your church use any form of social media like Facebook, Google+, Twitter, YouTube, etc. in an official capacity?

Page 8: Church Media Usage

Please indicate how many times each month you or other church leaders engage in each of the following activities for your church.

1.) Using Facebook (or other social networking site) to keep individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities up to date about church news.
2.) Reading parishioners' Facebook (or other social networking site) statuses for information about what is happening in their life.
3.) Using Facebook (or other social networking site) to interact with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.
4.) Coordinating attendance, volunteers, or participation for church activities using Facebook (or other social networking site).
5.) Sharing information about parishioners on Facebook (or other social networking site) so others in the community can pray for the situation.
6.) Responding to a parishioner because of something posted on Facebook (or other social networking site).
7.) Posting announcements on Facebook (or other social networking site) about upcoming church events or activities.
8.) Discussing spiritual or religious issues with parishioners on Facebook (or other social networking site).
9.) Using Facebook (or other social networking site) to post religious thoughts or information to encourage spiritual growth within the church.
10.) Participating in discussions through Facebook (or other social networking site) to interact with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.

Page 9: Survey Conclusion

Were there any items you felt were particularly difficult to answer? If so, please provide any comments you might have that would help to improve the survey for future respondents.

Thank you for your participation. Your responses will be extremely helpful in understanding how churches can make use of new communication technology as interaction patterns change. If you have any further questions about this research, please contact me at mccullyw@msu.edu.

Thank you again.

APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

The following email was sent to conferences willing to participate in the study as well as every district in those conferences:

Administrative Email

Dear fellow United Methodist,

My name is Wyl McCully and I am currently collecting data for my dissertation at Michigan State University. This project is focused on how United Methodist churches make use of new forms of communication technology, including social media. The goal is to survey as many pastors across the nation as possible so I can develop an accurate picture of what is happening in the United Methodist Church. Hopefully, results from this research will help provide practical advice for churches as they deal with changing environments.

If you are willing to continue, what I am asking is that you share the link below and accompanying invitation, preferably through email or other electronic means, with every ordained elder in your district twice, once as soon as possible, and the second two weeks following.

Please respond to this email to let me know when the link has been shared, or if you are unable to participate. Again, thank you for your interest in this project. My results are intended to help strengthen and enhance the quality of ministry our church can provide.

Thank you,
Wyl McCully
PhD Candidate
Michigan State University

PLEASE SHARE THE FOLLOWING INVITATION:

Recruitment Email

Dear pastor,

You are being invited to participate in a research project designed to understand how United Methodist churches have adapted as methods of communication have changed. As a pastor you are in a unique position to report on your own congregation. Please follow the link below to take the survey. For your participation, you may choose to be entered into a drawing for one of 5 $20 gift certificates to Amazon.com.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NSVRFVF

Again, thank you for your time

Wyl McCully
PhD Candidate
Michigan State University

APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The following survey was made available through Surveymonkey.com and accessed through a link in the recruitment email.

Page 1: Consent Form

Based upon your position as a pastor in a United Methodist church, you are invited to participate in this research. The study is being led by Wyl McCully, a PhD student at Michigan State University as part of a dissertation on the use of social media in religious organizations. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete and is comprised of questions about how your church uses different types of media and how you perceive organizational processes. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your input is extremely important in helping understand how churches can improve their reaction to changes in communication patterns.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of the survey, or to report an injury, please contact the researcher (Wyl McCully, 305 Comm. Arts & Sciences Bldg., MSU Campus, East Lansing, MI 48824, mccullyw@msu.edu, (517)969-3005).

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or email irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Thank you for your willingness to participate. By clicking the "Next" button below, you are indicating that you have read and understand the description of the study, and that you are agreeing to participate.

Page 2: Social Media Usage

Does your church use any form of social media like Facebook, Google+, Twitter, YouTube, etc. in an official capacity?
(If “Yes,” go to Page 3. If “No,” then go to Page 7.)

Page 3: Social Media Perceptions

Consider YOUR CONGREGATION AS A WHOLE, and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about social media like Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter.

(5-point Likert, 1="Strongly Disagree"; 2="Disagree"; 3="Neither agree nor disagree"; 4="Agree"; 5="Strongly Agree")

1.) My church would have a hard time functioning without social media.
2.) Using social media requires a lot of mental effort for most people in my church.
3.) Using social media gives my church greater control over its ministry.
4.) Interacting through social media is often frustrating to members of my church.
5.) My church is more effective because we use social media.
6.) Overall, social media is easy for most people in my church to use.
7.) Most people in my church feel comfortable using multiple forms of social media.
8.) Overall, social media are useful to my church.

Pages 4-5: Social Media Usage

Please indicate how frequently YOU OR OTHER CHURCH LEADERS use Facebook (or any other social networking site) to engage in the following activities.
(7-point scale, 0="Less than once a month."; 2="Monthly."; 3="2-3 times per month."; 4="Weekly."; 5="2-6 times per week."; 5="Daily."; 6="Multiple times each day.")

1.) Keeping individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities up to date about church news.
2.) Reading parishioners' statuses for information about what is happening in their lives.
3.) Interacting with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.
4.) Coordinating attendance, volunteers, or participation for church activities.
5.) Sharing information about parishioners so others can pray for the situation.

PAGE BREAK – Question repeated.

6.) Responding to a parishioner because of something posted on Facebook (or other social networking site).
7.) Posting announcements about upcoming church events or activities.
8.) Discussing spiritual or religious issues with parishioners.
9.) Posting religious thoughts or information to encourage spiritual growth in the church.
10.) Participating in discussions with individuals who are unable to be physically present at church activities.

Page 6: Issues with Media Usage

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
(5-point Likert, 1="Strongly Disagree"; 2="Disagree"; 3="Neither agree nor disagree"; 4="Agree"; 5="Strongly Agree")

1.) When I consider social media use in my church, I have concerns for the privacy of people in my congregation.
2.) Too many members of my congregation lack access to the Internet to make social media use worthwhile.
3.) Individuals willing to take responsibility for updating social media in my church lack sufficient computer literacy.
4.) It has been difficult to find someone in the church with enough time to maintain or develop social media for our church.
5.) Not enough people in my church are interested in using social media for church purposes.
6.) My church has struggled to maintain consistent updating of our social media.

Pages 7-10: Organizational Perceptions

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about YOUR CONGREGATION.
(5-point Likert, 1="Strongly Disagree"; 2="Disagree"; 3="Neither agree nor disagree"; 4="Agree"; 5="Strongly Agree")

1.) Church members recognize that professionally trained staff members have unique skills.
2.) Activities in this church are often directed by one or two people.
3.) My church would function effectively without strong pastoral leadership.
4.) It is usually easy for people in my church to find leadership roles when they want to participate.
5.) Paid staff perform the most important jobs in the church.
6.) Decisions in this church are typically made by an individual, like a pastor or committee chair.

PAGE BREAK – Question repeated.

7.) People in my church allow staff members to make most of the important decisions.
8.) This congregation prefers to hire professionals to serve in key roles.
9.) A large number of volunteers are involved in the work of this church.
10.) People would say the work of this church is done by a few rather than many.
11.) Leaders in my church make sure that a significant number of members support an idea before they make changes.
12.) Decisions in my church tend to be made by consensus, regardless of how long the process takes.

PAGE BREAK – Question repeated.

13.) Most of the decisions in this church are made by only a few individuals.
14.) Adopting a new idea in my church requires gaining support from many people.
15.) It is always easy to find volunteers for jobs that need to be done around my church.

16.) Everyone in this church chips in to do their fair share.
17.) Every member of the congregation has an equal say in all organizational decisions.
18.) Most of the leadership roles in this church are held by only a small handful of individuals.
19.) Most of the church members recognize the value of my seminary training.

PAGE BREAK – Question repeated.

20.) I make a point of soliciting input from as many members as possible before making a decision.
21.) Most people would say that power in this church is widely distributed.
22.) When we hire hew staff members, their professional training is very important.
23.) Many new individuals are given leadership roles every year.
24.) My church has what I would consider to be a large paid staff.
25.) In this church, every member plays an important role in keeping the church running.

Page 11: Media Perceptions

Consider your experience with social media like Facebook, Google+, Twitter, YouTube, etc. HOW EFFECTIVE are these tools at helping ANY church ACCOMPLISH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING TASKS?
(4-point scale, 1="Completely Ineffective,"; 2="Somewhat Ineffective," 3="Somewhat Effective," 4="Very Effective")

1.) Alerting clergy or other religious leaders to problems in people's lives.
2.) Giving pastors an opportunity to respond when problems arise.
3.) Providing church members with Bible verses or thoughts about religious practice.
4.) Discussing spiritual matters.
5.) Alerting people in the congregation to needs or issues in individuals' lives.
6.) Providing a tool for individuals who cannot be physically present at church activities to find out what's happening at the church.
7.) Allowing individuals who cannot be physically present to actively participate in church events.
8.) Informing community members about upcoming church events or activities.
9.) Allowing volunteers and/or staff to coordinate details about upcoming church events or activities.

Page 12: Media Perceptions

Please indicate how EFFECTIVE OR INEFFECTIVE you feel each of the following media are at helping people in ANY church COMMUNICATE ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION.
(4-point scale, 1="Completely Ineffective,"; 2="Somewhat Ineffective," 3="Somewhat Effective," 4="Very Effective")

1.) Mailed paper communication (like newsletters, bulletins, or letters from staff).
2.) Emailed communication (like newsletters or letters from staff).
3.) Meeting parishioners face-to-face.
4.) Social media (like Facebook, Google+, or Twitter).
5.) Text messaging.
6.) Church website.

Page 13: Demographic Questions – Last Page!

1.) How long (in years) have you been pastor at this church?
    a. Less than 1
    b. 1
    c. 2
    d. 3
    e. 4
    f. 5
    g. 6
    h. 7
    i. 8
    j. 9
    k. 10
    l. More than 10
2.) How long have you been employed as a pastor in the United Methodist Church?
    a. Less than 1
    b. 1-2
    c. 3-10
    d. 10-20
    e. More than 20
3.) Which of the following best describes your position within the church?
    a. Senior pastor
    b. Associate pastor
    c. Pastor of multiple charges
    d. Local pastor of a single charge
    e. Local pastor of multiple charges
    f. Other (please specify)
4.) How old are you?
    a. 18-25
    b. 26-30
    c. 31-40
    d. 41-50
    e. 51-60
    f. Older than 60
5.) Which of the following best describes overall participation by the members of your church over the last year?
    a. Strong growth

b. Weak growth
c. Neither growth nor decline
d. Weak decline
e. Strong decline

6.) How many members does your church currently have?

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