

THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF USING TRACTION FOR MINISTRY PLANNING

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## ABSTRACT

In ministry planning, proposed methods for planning are abundant. Congregations utilize those methods in many different ways to plan and carry out ministry. Over fifty congregations in WELS employ one method called “Traction.” This research explores the adaptation of the business planning method Traction™ into a congregational setting and answers the question: What are the benefits and challenges of a congregation using Traction™ to plan and carry out ministry? The researcher used qualitative research methodology to answer the research question. Four congregations were selected and interviewed, and their answers developed themes that demonstrated the benefits and challenges of using this method. Four benefits and two challenges emerged from the research. The benefits are: The Process, Visibility, Focused Meetings, and Accountability. The challenges are: A Tendency Toward Rigidity, and The Learning Curve. This paper adds to the literature on using these methods for ministry planning and provides the reader with the perspectives of congregations using Traction™ for ministry planning.

## INTRODUCTION

Jesus' disciples stood there staring up at the heavens. They were speechless. The one that they had followed and learned from for three years was gone. Jesus had taught them about the kingdom of God. He showed them God's love and demonstrated to them time and time again the saving work that he had come to do. The disciples witnessed that saving work and saw him after he rose from the dead. Now he had ascended into heaven, and he left his Church in their hands. His final instructions to them were, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20a NIV). They were now God's instruments for spreading his saving Gospel message. His instructions to them were simple, "Go and make disciples." They would accomplish this is by "baptizing" and "teaching."<sup>1</sup>

Simply put, the disciples' task was to teach God's saving Gospel to people with the Word and sacraments. How they went about doing the work of the Church varied as widely as the cultures of the world. They had to change and adapt for whatever context they were in. As the disciples faced the daunting task before them, their minds likely went back to all the teachings that Jesus gave them while he was here on the earth. He had given them everything they needed, fully equipping them for works in the Church. However, he never explicitly gave them a method for carrying out ministry. He only provided principles for them to follow. They started the task, and the New Testament Church has been planning and carrying out ministry ever since.

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1. Robert J. Voss, "The Great Commission." *Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Essay File*. January 24-25, 1974, 2

Roughly two thousand years after Christ ascended into heaven, the content of the Church's message has not changed. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, God still uses his Church to teach the saving Gospel message and administer the sacraments. The context, however, in which this ministry happens is varied, not only from country to country but also from church to church. What works in one church with one group of people might now work for another church. The form of a church's ministry in New York City will look different from one in Fairfax, Minnesota. As a result, the structures that support their forms of ministry will vary from congregation to congregation. Many methods for carrying out ministry have emerged throughout the years. Sometimes, valuable ideas for planning come not from the Church or religious establishments but from the business world. This paper will focus on one specific method from the business world for planning and carrying out ministry: Traction™.

The Traction™ model has been developed and promoted by the company called Entrepreneurial Operating Systems (EOS). EOS helps multimillion-dollar businesses get organized and increase their bottom line. Over fifty WELS congregations and organizations have adopted the methods used by EOS for planning and carrying out work.<sup>2</sup> This paper presents a qualitative study designed to expand the literature on the use of Traction™ in the church context. In doing so, the researcher answers the research question: What are the benefits and challenges of a congregation using Traction™ to plan and carry out ministry? The following sections will first present the methodology and qualitative research design used to answer this question. After that, the paper will synthesize the main benefits and challenges identified through the interviews. Finally, a discussion of the church leaders' perspectives on Traction™ will be provided and implications will be discussed.

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2 Personal correspondence with Grace in Action

## KEY CONCEPTS OF TRACTION™

A wide variety of planning resources are available, both secular and religious, for a congregation to study and work through. The considerable number of religious resources available for church planning provides a church with many planning strategies, backing them up with Scripture. As a secular resource, Traction™ was written for helping the business world plan and organize, so it obviously does not use Scripture to back up its points. If a church were to implement the ideas from a business model for planning, they would need to recognize the difference between a church and a business. Businesses are about the bottom line and profit; the Church's goal is to spread the saving Gospel message. Businesses only have a temperamental impact on people. The Church has an eternal impact. Because of this difference, the discussion of Traction™ that follows will be compared and contrasted with Scripture. Additionally, the discussion of Traction™ will be supplemented with other pertinent literature focused specifically on church planning.

### **Traction™**

Before this paper presents the benefits and challenges of using Traction™, as seen by four congregations who have been using the model, it is valuable to identify the ideas that Gino Wickman proposes in his book, *Traction*. This section will identify the basic concepts presented in *Traction* and compare those with Scripture and the other pertinent literature on church planning methods. EOS has multiple resources besides *Traction* available for a company to purchase and use. They also provide in-person consulting and training on implementing and

using the proposed methods. In 2007, EOS published a book entitled *Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business*. This is the primary resource that groups in WELS have been using as a guide for planning and carrying out ministry.

The main goal of Traction™ is to get everyone in an organization or business on the same page and moving forward. Wickman writes, "If you have 50 people doing everything 50 different ways, the increased complexity leads to mass chaos. Even worse, people experience incredible confusion and frustration."<sup>3</sup> Over 50,000 corporations use EOS's methods worldwide to increase productivity, save time, and strengthen their teams. Gino Wickman claims that his methods will improve the overall function of the business because their use is a lifelong journey. There's no specific end date which means that there is no specific time when a business has adopted them fully and is finished with them.<sup>4</sup> The success of this model in the business world is widely acclaimed today. Burkard Industries is one example of the success of the Traction™. They struggled to get everyone on the same page, but now they are highly productive after implementing Traction™.<sup>5</sup>

Within the church, WELS is not alone in seeing the EOS model as useful for congregational use. In his review of using the Traction™ method in a church, Dibbly writes, "While the overarching objective of *Traction* is increased growth and profitability, I do believe that there is significant transferability to churches of any size.... As a seasoned pastor, I wish that

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3. Wickman, Gino & Bouwer, Tom. *What the Heck is EOS?* (Dallas: Ben Bella Books, 2017), 2.

4. Wickman & Bouwer, *What the Heck is EOS*, 1-7.

5. Pennington, Tim, "Gaining Traction to be a Great Finishing Operation." *Product Finishing Journal* (April 2019): 22-5.

I would have read something of this nature far earlier in my ministry."<sup>6</sup> The ideas proposed in this book can be applied across various platforms, including churches.

What follows is a comparison of Scripture and other literature on ministry planning to the concepts proposed by Gino Wickman in his book *Traction: Letting Go of the Vine, Vision, People, Data, Issues, Process, and Traction*. In summarizing the main ideas of this book, the researcher does not intend to capture everything proposed in Traction™ but rather to give a brief overview of the model with a focus on the benefits and challenges in its application to ministry.

### Letting Go of the Vine

Gino Wickman says that for the methods in Traction to be effective, people have to let go of what faulty system they are currently hanging on to. He says, "If you're not happy with the current state of your company, you have three choices. You can live with it, leave it, or change it. If the first two are not an option, it's time to admit that you don't want to live this way any longer."<sup>7</sup> That is what "letting go of the vine" looks like: admitting that something needs to change. The changes could include a new leadership team, simplifying, delegating, a new operating system, being open-minded, and being vulnerable.<sup>8</sup>

The idea that one needs to let go of the old ineffective operating method is not unique to the business world. When a church struggles, it often fails to recognize the real issue and sticks with the status quo. Klopp writes, "Many researchers who have analyzed various measures of church life and effectiveness in the U.S. have come to the startling conclusion that the American

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6. Dibbley, "Book Review," 160-1.

7. Wickman, Gino. *Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business*. (Dallas: Ben Bella Books, 2011), 16.

8. Wickman, *Traction*, 16-25.



church as we know it is in serious trouble....The question is whether churches, districts, and denominations are willing to see what's going on and make an effort to reverse the trends."<sup>9</sup> The idea that leadership needs to acknowledge the issues at hand and then let go to create change is proposed by both Klopp and Malphurs in their works on church planning.<sup>10</sup>

### Vision

A sharp, focused, and clear vision is essential to the Traction™ model. For everyone to be on the same page, everyone needs to see where the company is and where it is heading. Wickman writes, "Great companies have leaders who communicate a crystal-clear vision to the entire company. A company's vision, simply put, is a matter of defining who you are, where you are going, and how you will get there."<sup>11</sup>

Vision is prevalent in almost every strategic planning resource and also in Scripture. Multiple resources have been published for developing and casting a vision in the church. For Malphurs, who sees a church as a big ship, vision is the "port of call."<sup>12</sup> A church needs to have a specific direction they are heading. Otherwise, they would just be wandering about in the ocean lost at sea. There are several ways he proposes to achieve a vision. It all starts with understanding the Church's specific mission, similar to Wickman's understanding of how a vision works.<sup>13</sup> Stanly has a threefold approach to making a church's vision sick. He says that the three

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9. Henry Klopp, *The Ministry Playbook: Strategic Planning for Effective Churches*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 27.

10. Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 47-8.

11. Wickman & Bouwer, *What the Heck is EOS*, 33.

12. Malphurs, *Advance Strategic Planning*, 128.

13. Malphurs, *Advance Strategic Planning*, 128.

things one needs to do are, state the problem clearly, offer a solution, and give the rationale. If those things are accomplished clearly, people will be able to see the vision for the church.<sup>14</sup>

A church can often get stuck between the new vision and the old way of doing things when casting a vision. For a leader to establish a new, vibrant mission, he must first connect with the congregation's past. Berlin and Weems write, "Leaders must connect a congregation's new vision to its past visions."<sup>15</sup> They prove that when a leader connects the new vision with a congregation's story, effective change can happen, and everyone is on board.<sup>16</sup> This comports with Wickman's views on vision in an organization.

Scripture has examples of people's unclouded vision when carrying out the work that they were assigned to do. Two examples of this are Nehemiah and Jesus. Nehemiah had the task of rebuilding Jerusalem. He saw the state of the city and needed to get the people to work and improve it. The way he did that was by casting a vision for the people. He presented the problem and offered a solution. He said, "'You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.' I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, 'Let us start rebuilding.' So they began this good work" (Neh. 2:17-18). As the perfect Son of God, Jesus had a clear plan from God. The vision he was fulfilling was God's plan of salvation. One example would be when he healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law. The townspeople were amazed and wanted Jesus to stick around and continue to provide miracle after miracle for them. But that was not the plan that Jesus had. His vision was

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14. Andy Stanley, *Making Vision Stick*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 25-9.

15. Tom Berlin & Lovett H. Weems "A Lever for Change" *Christian Century* (April 2011): 10.

16. Berlin & Weems "A Lever for Change," 10-11.

greater than serving the needs of that town. He said, “Let us go somewhere else – to the nearby villages – so I can preach there also. That is why I have come” (Mk 1:38). Scripture demonstrates how Jesus had a clear vision when carrying out the work of the church.

The way “vision” is achieved in the Traction™ model is by forming a Vision Traction Organizer.<sup>17</sup> A V/TO, as Gino Wickman calls it, is a single-page, double-sided document that quickly depicts the organization’s vision by answering eight questions; “What are your core values?” “What is your core focus?” “What is your ten-year target?” “What is your marketing strategy?” “What is your three-year picture?” “What is your one-year plan?” “What are your quarterly rocks?” “What are your issues?”<sup>18</sup> The V/TO is essential because it is what the leadership team uses when planning the work they are going to do. It provides a picture of the business’s vision to everyone. It is a clear plan written down on paper, not just in the leaders' heads.<sup>19</sup>

The V/TO is not a document written in a matter of minutes. Instead, it takes hours and hours of work to cast a vision and answer the questions. Wickman recommends “that you try to answer all eight questions in a full one- or two-day off-site session.”<sup>20</sup> In Traction™, he explains how an organization can answer all the questions, using an in-depth process designed to get the leadership team to focus on what the business is truly about and how it will accomplish its goals. After the V/TO is completed, the leadership team will share it with the rest of the organization's employees so that everyone is on the same page. “The number one reason employees don’t share

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17. See appendixes one and two for an example of the V/TO

18. Wickman, *Traction*, 34-5.

19. Wickman & Bouwer, *What the Heck is EOS*, 34-5.

20. Wickman, *Traction*, 35.

a company vision is that they don't know what it is. The only way you can determine if your vision is shared by all is simply to tell them."<sup>21</sup> Thus, the shared V/TO is essential to the Traction™ model.

### People

"It all comes down to getting the right people in the right seats,"<sup>22</sup> Wickman says. For the business to succeed, you have to have the right people doing the right tasks. "*The right people* are the ones who share your company's core values. They fit and thrive in your culture. They are people you enjoy being around and who make your organization a better place to be."<sup>23</sup> A leader needs to evaluate the organization's positions and the people in those positions to accomplish this. If either the position or the person does not align with the organization's V/TO, they need to be removed or changed.<sup>24</sup>

One aspect of leadership that Wickman touches on is the difference between "visionaries" and "integrators."<sup>25</sup> Dibbley found this distinction useful in the context of the church as well. He writes, "The success of a church moving beyond its current barriers and eliminating many of its insufficiencies or lack of clarity requires the intentional partnership of a plurality of leaders/elders who work together to see the plan realized."<sup>26</sup> Dibbley sees this part of

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21. Wickman, *Traction*, 74.

22. Wickman, *Traction*, 81.

23. Wickman, *Traction*, 81.

24. Wickman, *Traction*, 81-9.

25. Wickman, *Traction*, 92-9.

26. Kevin Dibbley, "Book Review" *Great Commission Research Journal* (Fall 2019):160.

Traction™ as especially helpful for the church because a church leader rarely fits in every leadership position. Therefore, there is a strong need to ensure that the person and the position are a good match even in the church.<sup>27</sup> Throop similarly sees both the visionaries and problem solvers of a congregation as necessary and helpful. He explains, “Integrating these working groups can create excellence in administration as a whole to enable and empower churches to get a great deal of work done.”<sup>28</sup>

After everyone is in the right seats, Wickman says that there needs to be an accountability system.<sup>29</sup> Such a system lays out to whom everyone in the organization reports. The chain of command needs to be clear, and everyone needs to be on the same page. Wickman proposes that people who tend to be *visionaries* should be near the top of the chain, and then people who can integrate ideas should be in the middle of the chain and in charge of a specific area of work.<sup>30</sup> When developing a team, it is essential to select people with the filter of the GWC. “GWC stands for *get it, want it, and capacity* to do it.”<sup>31</sup>

While the leader plays an important role in Wickman’s Traction™ model, the roles of others in the group are equally important for accomplishing work. The same is true in a church setting. Sorensen points out that pastors often would like to just make some of the decisions on their own because they know what the “right” decision is. However, he points out, “the point of planning is not just to make the ‘right’ decision – it is to see the hearts and minds of others move

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27. Dibbley, “Book Review,” 160.

28. John R. Throop, “Planning With Visionaries and Problem Solvers” *The Clergy Journal* (May/June 2008): 28.

29. Wickman, *Traction*, 99.

30. Wickman, *Traction*, 92-7.

31. Wickman, *Traction*, 99.

ahead. The quarterback might make the ‘right’ call for the next play, then break from the huddle and be the only one heading toward the ball.”<sup>32</sup> A church moves forward with the right people, working in the right seats, and everyone working toward the same goal. Sorensen adds, “Good planning includes others for the sake of cohesiveness, ownership, and follow through.”<sup>33</sup>

One difference between business and church planning is how the work gets done. A business is comprised of paid full-time people, but a church is typically made up of volunteers. There are some paid positions, but many of the council members and leadership positions are volunteer-based. Leith Anderson remarks, “The Church has a long history of using people to meet institutional needs.”<sup>34</sup> He promotes the idea that if a person is going to volunteer in the church, let it be in a position that matches their skillset. The thoughts presented in Anderson’s book are similar to what Gino Wickman proposes.

Likewise, Scripture presents that the right people need to be in the right positions since the efforts of the Church are planned and operated by men. God does grant success to those efforts according to his will, but it is important to have the right people in the right place. The Early Church was growing rapidly, and the twelve apostles realized that they were neglecting the ministry of the word by having to distribute food to the widows of the Church. They saw the problem and appointed the right men for the position. They said, “Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:3-4).

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32. David Allen Sorensen, “The Best-Laid Plans” *The Clergy Journal* (May/June 2008): 29.

33. Sorensen, “The Best-Laid Plans,” 30.

34. James Berkley, *Leadership Handbook of Management & Administration*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 314-5.

## Data

In order to understand what is going on in a business, the leader has to have an effortless way to measure and evaluate. This means that the correct data has to be reported clearly so that the business can measure progress and identify problems. Wickman proposes two ways of accomplishing this: using a scorecard and giving everyone a number. A scorecard is what is used to get the pulse of the business. The overall goal is to manage a business through only a handful of meaningful numbers. Wickman writes,

According to an old business maxim, anything that is measured and watched is improved. The concept of managing through a Scorecard has been around for a long time. The idea has been expressed through many different terms. It's been called a dashboard, flash report, scoreboard metrics, measurables, key performance indicators, smart numbers, and so on. Whatever you call it, it's a handful of numbers that can tell you at a glance how your business is doing.<sup>35</sup>

To accomplish this, everyone has to have a number they are achieving. These numbers set goals and hold people accountable because “with a completed Scorecard, you can track high-level numbers down to a single person as the source.”<sup>36</sup>

The data category of the Traction™ model is hugely important but also dangerous if a church decides to evaluate the wrong things. If the focus of the data is more on the ministry methods of man than on the importance and efficacy of the means of grace, it might fall into the theology of the Church Growth Movement, which emphasizes the strong need to use social science and research to plan and remove any barriers that might be preventing a church from winning people to Christ.<sup>37</sup> In Schultz's research on ministry planning resources, he found that

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35. Wickman, *Traction*, 116.

36. Wickman, *Traction*, 122.

37. Rainer, Thom, *The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology, and Principles*. (B&H Publishing Group, 1993), 19-20.

many ministry planning resources in publication today fall into this category.<sup>38</sup> Using Traction™ in the wrong way can quickly lead to this problem. In short, a church has to be careful with the data it chooses to evaluate. Data is important, but one has to measure the right things.

Additionally, the Church's success does not depend on the perfect number system but instead on God, who blesses the Church's work. God is the *principal cause* of salvation, and he causes success in the Church. The efforts of man are only secondary to God. Only by God's grace can we serve in his church, not by some successful data-driven plan.<sup>39</sup> In his evaluation of the Church Growth Movement, Wendland writes, "A Scripture-based methodology will set forth an unconditional gospel, one which above all emphasizes the objective declaration of God's grace to all mankind. It will also...emphasize a *qualitative* approach to the work of saving souls for all eternity rather than a quantitative one."<sup>40</sup> We never want to distort the truth that God entrusted to us, and the methods we employ must reflect what Scripture says, more than what a worldly perspective on growth would say.<sup>41</sup>

Godly planning and the use of data are certainly things that God calls on leaders to do. Jesus showed in a parable that not using data to plan is foolishness. "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you" (Luke 14:28-29). Data is a useful tool for leaders to evaluate a congregation's

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38. Joshua Schultz, "The Benefits of Comprehensive Ministry Planning and Its Correlation to Congregational Health" (An essay written for the senior thesis, 2015) P. 7

39. John Hein, "Treasures in Jars of Clay: The Synergy Between the Instrumental and Ministerial Causes in God's Plan of Salvation." <http://essays.wisluthsem.org:8080/handle/123456789/4166>

40. Ernst Wendland, "Church Growth Theology." Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Essay File, n.d. 9.

41. Wendland "Church Growth Theology," 9.



challenges and possibilities, but a congregation can get too fixated on it, losing sight of the main mission.

If growth in church membership [i.e., numbers and data] is the way congregations measure the success of their evangelistic endeavors, then the primary question is no longer: What is needed to bring people out of darkness to light, out of death to life? Instead, the question becomes: What can we do to make our church – its buildings and grounds, its people, its worship, its programs – as attractive as possible so as to bring more people in?<sup>42</sup>

Vallesky provides a warning against taking numbers too far when measuring membership growth, which is one aspect of data that a congregation can fixate on. He points out how data, even though it is a helpful tool in many instances, might distract from the overall goal of the Church.

### Issues

Gaining traction in a business requires identifying the issues preventing the business from moving forward. Wickman writes, “Problems are like mushrooms: When it’s dark and rainy, they multiply. Under bright light, they diminish. In an organization where there is nowhere to hide, the problems are easily illuminated. EOS will create that strong light.”<sup>43</sup> A business needs to be open and candid about what processes, people, or circumstances prevent forward progression.

Issues come up in any organization, and the church is no exception. In his book on becoming an effective Christian leader, Klopp proposes that planning and carrying out ministry is like a sports game. One enters the game with a plan, but the opposing team could do

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42. Vallesky, David, *We Believe – Therefore We Speak: The Theology and Practice of Evangelism*. (Northwestern Publishing House, 2017), 125.

43. Wickman, *Traction*, 131.

something unexpected, so the team has to now deal with this new problem.<sup>44</sup> The same applies to ministry. He says, “Let’s face it, nothing ever goes exactly as we plan. There are always things that surprise us.”<sup>45</sup> A church needs to get at the root of the problem when evaluating an issue at hand. Schaller proposes that a church dig deeper and see the main thing driving the surface problem. Often there is a deeper issue at hand than what is on the surface.<sup>46</sup>

The way that Traction™ deals with issues is by listing them as they are identified. The list is compiled and visually displayed on the V/TO, so everyone knows what needs to be solved.<sup>47</sup> The company or leadership team adds issues to the list as they emerge and then begins to tackle those issues and solve the problems they face. This is accomplished in the weekly meeting through a three-step process; Identify, Discuss, and Solve.<sup>48</sup> The point is to get at the heart of the issue, *identify*. Then everyone gets one chance to say what they need to say on the issue, *discuss*. Finally, the group determines a conclusion or solution that becomes an action for someone to do, *solve*.<sup>49</sup> The resolution of an issue comes in three different ways. “The first is when the issue is solved and requires action....The second is when the issue is merely awareness, and the conclusion is that everyone concurs with that awareness....The third is when the issue needs more research or facts.”<sup>50</sup>

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44. Henry Klopp, *The Leadership Playbook: A Game Plan for Becoming an Effective Christian Leader*. (Grand Rapids: Baker books, 2004), 179.

45. Klopp, *The Leadership Playbook*, 179

46. Lyle Schaller *Effective Church Planning*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1979), 136.

47. Wickman, *Traction*, 133.

48. Wickman, *Traction*, 136.

49. Wickman, *Traction*, 136-44.

50. Wickman, *Traction*, 141.

Scripture shows us that the Church also has to deal with issues. A big issue presented itself in the early Christian Church, whether or not circumcision was necessary (Acts 15:5-11). The newly established Christian Church was not entirely sure about what to do with circumcision and the other Mosaic laws of the Old Covenant. As a result, the leadership of the early Christian Church had identified that issue and gathered together to discuss and solve it. Eventually, they came to this conclusion, “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead, we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, and from the meat of strangled animals and from blood” (Acts 15:19-20). They identified the issue at hand, discussed it, and solved it.

### Process

Knowing clearly how to function moves the machine of the business forward. People need to do things in a certain way to keep everyone moving in the same direction. The leadership needs to clearly lay out how exactly someone is to accomplish the task they have been assigned.<sup>51</sup>

Wickman provides some examples of what a business would need to describe. “The HR process is the way you search, find, hire, orient, manage, review, promote, retain, and fire people.... The sales process is the way you convert a prospect into a customer.”<sup>52</sup> If a business has clear plans for accomplishing something, then whoever is working in the business will know how they are supposed to accomplish that task. It sounds simple enough, but success will depends on how well a business packages and presents its process so people know what they have to do.<sup>53</sup>

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51. Wickman, *Traction*, 150.

52. Wickman, *Traction*, 152.

53. Wickman, *Traction*, 161.

When writing about managing the church, Osborne states that there are two types of rules, those written and unwritten.<sup>54</sup> These rules help guide the church and show people what exactly they need to do in any given situation. Also, any written rules need to be flexible enough to adapt to any change in the future.<sup>55</sup> Traction™ aims to eliminate the unwritten rules and just have written rules and policies, so everyone openly knows them. Malphurs describes the need for developing a transparent process, saying that church leaders should “begin with their mission and vision because both articulate and paint a picture of where the ministry should go.”<sup>56</sup> He then demonstrates how church leaders need to have a process in place in order to have everyone on the “ship” arrive safely and effectively at the destination.<sup>57</sup>

### Traction™

In Traction™, Wickman provides businesses with the practical tools to carry out their plans in using the five pieces of the Traction™ model already discussed above. Almost every resource on planning presents the same general ideas that Wickman proposes: a vision, a plan for the future, and a statement describing the mission. The way that Traction™ is different is in the way it ties all those components together in the final step. Once the first five components of the Traction™ model are in place, a business is ready to move forward. Wickman writes, “Gaining traction means making your vision a reality.”<sup>58</sup> This step is where the vision becomes more than just

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54. Berkley, *Leadership Handbook*, 360.

55. Berkley, *Leadership Handbook*, 362.

56. Malphurs, *Advance Strategic Planning*, 167.

57. Malphurs, *Advance Strategic Planning*, 167-8.

58. Wickman, *Traction*, 165.

steps on a page. It becomes real action.

In Traction™, one way of accomplishing that is through the “90-day rocks.” A “rock” is what a business hopes to achieve in the next three months. Within Traction™, there is a ten-year vision, a three-year picture, a one-year goal, and finally ninety-day rocks. A “rock” is how a business will work toward those goals. The leadership team gets together every ninety days and determines their “rocks” for the next ninety days. Once those are established, a person or group of team members take ownership of those rocks and have ninety days to accomplish them.<sup>59</sup>

The other way that a business gains traction is through meetings. There are several meetings that Gino Wickman proposes through Traction™: the L10 meeting, Rock Reviews, and the annual planning agenda. How these meetings are structured and designed helps a business move forward with the V/TO they created. The meetings help hold people accountable and keep everyone moving in the same direction by keeping everyone on the same “meeting pulse.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Current WELS use of Traction™**

Congregations in WELS have been using Traction™ for around ten years now.<sup>61</sup> Current WELS use of Traction™ developed mainly through one WELS-affiliated organization, Grace in Action (GIA). GIA advises congregations, schools, and groups at the synodical level on how to use Traction™. They have been around since 2014, and the group members have been using Traction™ since 2011. For that reason, the researcher has consulted with GIA concerning the application and adaptation of EOS to WELS congregations. Additionally, some synodical level

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59. Wickman, *Traction*, 170-3.

60. Wickman, *Traction*, 176-98. For the purposes of this paper, the meetings will not be described. They can be found in chapter 8 of the book *Traction*.

61. Personal correspondence with Grace in Action

groups like the Board for Home Missions and the Board for World Mission use Traction™ to carry out their work. As a result of this, multiple WELS pastors, who serve on those boards, have also taken EOS's methods and applied them to their congregations. Some mission counselors have also begun advising the missions they serve to use Traction™ for planning and carrying out ministry.<sup>62</sup> As a result, the use of Traction™ in our WELS congregations is growing.

The goal of GIA is to “strive to serve ministry teams with innovative leadership program modules that enable them to be the best they can be in carrying out the Great Commission and practice good stewardship of resources.”<sup>63</sup> They will meet with a congregation, school, or ministry board and work with them to develop ways of planning and carrying out ministry that is not just surviving but thriving. Traction™ is the central resource they use when assisting a ministry in setting up a system. In general, they follow the models and ideas that the book presents. However, they also understand that each church has its unique situation, and they work with each one to develop a V/TO that works best for them.

At the time of the writing of this paper, it is difficult to ascertain the number of churches that are using the Traction™ model for planning. Currently, GIA has served fifty-six congregations with Traction™, and that number continues to grow. Since it is possible that some congregations have implemented Traction™ without using GIA, the total number in WELS may be higher.<sup>64</sup>

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62. Personal correspondence with Matt Vogt, a WELS mission counselor in the Arizona-California district.

63. Personal correspondence with GIA.

64. Personal correspondence with GIA.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the question, “What are the benefits and challenges of a congregation using Traction™ to plan and carry out ministry?” the researcher conducted interviews using a semi-structured interview. The author identified and interviewed four congregations that had a similar experience with Traction™ and could answer his interview questions knowledgeably. To do so, the researcher limited his research to congregations using Traction™ as their primary operating method for more than three years. He enlisted GIA's assistance to identify congregations matching the research criteria. Since GIA has been working with various WELS organizations and congregations since 2014, they had a list available of all the congregations they have served that are using Traction™. They also provided the researcher with a list of congregations that met his criteria for interviewing. Four congregations matching the criteria were selected at random, and each congregation was contacted.

Since the goal was to interview congregations who were knowledgeable about Traction™ and using it effectively to provide insight into the benefits and challenges they have seen when using this method, there was inherent bias in the interview. Specifically, because the congregations were already using Traction™ effectively, they would naturally think it is valuable and helpful. Therefore, they tended toward viewing the benefits more than the challenges. While this bias exists, the research demonstrated that they still understood the challenges they face as a congregation when using Traction™. It should be noted, however, that the challenges they

identified might differ from those of a congregation that has tried using Traction™ and stopped because but it did not work for them.

After identifying which congregations the researcher would interview, he contacted the pastor of each congregation. They were all invited to have another member of their ministry team join in on the interview. To protect the identity of the congregations and participants, the researcher will refer to the four interviews as C1, C2, C3, and C4. One congregation (C1) had both the pastor and a church council member. The three other congregations only had the pastor take part in the interview. Once they agreed to be interviewed, they all signed a consent form so the researcher could use their answers for this paper.<sup>65</sup>

When it was time for the interviews, the researcher used an open-ended, semi-structured interview format. He had four open-ended questions for them to answer, which allowed him the opportunity explore additional topics that came up in the interview. The four main questions used were (1) “Why did \_\_\_\_\_ start using Traction™?” (2) “What are the benefits you’ve seen from using Traction™?” (3) “What are the challenges you’ve seen from using Traction™?” and (4) “Is there anything else you’d like to say about Traction™?” If they were struggling to think of an answer, which rarely happened, the researcher had some prompting questions ready to help them look at the question in a fresh way. For example, one question was, “If a congregation that was planning to use Traction™ as a tool for ministry planning, what challenges would you say you’ve seen from using it yourself?” These questions were intended to help the interviewee look at the main question slightly differently.

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65. See appendix #3



After conducting and recording the interviews via zoom and cell phone, the interviewer transcribed them using an online transcribing service called “Otter.ai.”<sup>66</sup> After “Otter.ai” completed the transcription, the researcher listened to the interviews while reading them and made any changes to the transcription to ensure accuracy. He then identified the main benefits and challenges that each congregation identified and any other points that the interview brought out. After gathering each interview’s main points, the researcher then compared and contrasted them to discover any overarching themes that emerged from the interviews. The themes which emerged will be discussed in the following section.

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66. <https://www.otter.ai/>

## FINDINGS

Although each congregation was unique in their setting and how they implemented the EOS method into their congregation, they shared some common themes. For the purpose of this research, themes occurring in three or more congregations were considered significant and are reported in the findings. Under the category of benefits, four themes matched the criteria: The Process, Visibility, Focused Meetings, and Accountability. Under the category of challenges, two themes emerged: A Tendency Toward Rigidity, and The Learning Curve. In this section, each of these themes will be presented.<sup>67</sup>

### **Research Participants**

All four congregations had been using Traction™ for three years or more. They had all used GIA's consulting service. While their reasons for starting varied, each church saw a way that Traction™ could help them solve their problems. C1, C3, and C4 all pointed out that they wanted to move their churches forward. They all felt stuck for various reasons, and they wanted to see progress. C1 and C2 noted that it was the "time of the judges" before they started using Traction™. They saw a need for everyone to share a common direction and focus. They did not want each ministry area to do whatever they saw fit. There was a strong need for everyone to be moving in the same direction. C3 simply wanted a way that they could see the things they accomplished. Ministry was happening for C3, but they were not always aware of how much was

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67. See appendix #4 for the complete list of all the themes that emerged from the interviews.

happening because there was no clear way of seeing that accomplishment. Whatever the reason was, each congregation decided to work with GIA and start using the Traction™ method.

### **Benefits of Using Traction™**

Each congregation brought up many positive points about the Traction™ model. After comparing all the benefits described by each congregation, four themes emerged from at least three congregations: The Process, Visibility, Focused Meetings, and Accountability. These views arose from all aspects of the Traction™ model. Both the planning and execution portions of the book were emphasized as being beneficial to the congregations. It is important to note that each congregation used Traction™ in a slightly distinctive way, but common benefits nonetheless arose.

#### The Process

The implementation of Traction™ takes a long time. To fill out a V/TO correctly, the leadership team needs to meet for at least a couple of full days. GIA often accomplishes this with a congregation by spending an entire weekend with a congregation completing the V/TO.<sup>68</sup> All four participant congregations indicated the process itself was a benefit of using Traction™. C1 pointed out that a result of this process was not only that a congregation had a completed V/TO, but that they saw and internalized their core values and the other parts of the V/TO. They said, “The real benefit of all of this is not the actual plans that you write down. It’s the process of actually going through the planning portion of it.” For C1, there was as much value in being part of the planning process as there was in the plan's implementation

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68. Personal correspondence with GIA

While commenting on the process, C3 said, “It allows people who are long term strategy people and those who are short term doers, to work together with a language that they can understand.” They saw a benefit in that people of all personalities and skill sets can work together and formulate the V/TO. As a result of that formulation process, everyone in the congregation's leadership now has ownership of the V/TO. C4 emphasized that in the formulation of the V/TO, everyone was allowed to have input and buy-in. This created unity and allowed everyone to be going down the same path. A final step in the V/TO creation process is setting and assigning “rocks” to people. C2 pointed out that since everyone worked together to create the V/TO, “everybody has their duties. And everyone as agreed that this priority is going to be number one.” They saw unity and ownership resulting from the process.

### Visibility

A benefit that all four congregations suggested was the visibility of the V/TO itself after it is formed. A variety of perspectives contributed to the overarching theme of “visibility.” The simple and straightforward format of the V/TO and its components allows for a congregation to clearly show what the plan is to all who are involved. For example, C2 saw the usefulness of the V/TO when talking about recruiting volunteers. Since everything is clearly laid out on one page, a volunteer knows precisely what they are signing up to do. C2 said, “Everybody’s got access to the V/TO, and they can look at it and say, ‘Okay, well, that’s what evangelism is responsible for’ and so forth.” They saw the benefits of having a clear and focused way of presenting what an individual ministry might require from a volunteer.

C3 noted the usefulness of a V/TO as a public document for each area of ministry within a congregation. C3 is a group that has a large number of smaller ministry teams and one

executive committee. They saw the value in each ministry team creating their own V/TO, which fit into the larger overarching congregational-wide plan. They noted that a benefit of Traction™ was the ability to look at another ministry team's V/TO and know what they were working on and accomplishing. They also expressed the effectiveness of managing various ministry teams because all they had to do was submit their V/TOs to the leadership committee. Then everyone knew the work that was getting done.

Participants also found that the visibility of the Traction™ model was a benefit because it allowed them to communicate plans to the congregation easily. While C4 discussed that they would not give the whole V/TO to the congregation and expect them to understand it, they used it to publicize their core values. "We have all of our core values at the entrances and also in the fellowship hall." (C4). Their goal in using the Traction™ model was to communicate the congregation's ethos to its people by showing them why they are there and what the congregation is about. C1 had similar notions about how one could easily communicate the ideas of the V/TO to the congregation. But, unlike C4, C1 argued that the V/TO's simple two-page layout might benefit a congregation since it would allow them to see all of the plans in one place. C1 stated that everyone could know where the congregation is heading because of the V/TO.

### Focused Meetings

Every congregation brought up meetings and how Traction™ has helped them be more focused. C1 noted that Traction™ does not just help a congregation plan ministry, it also provides methods for carrying it out. Two chapters in *Traction* describe how to run meetings in the business world. All four congregations easily adapted those meeting styles into a church setting and quickly pointed out how useful they were to create more focused meetings.

C2 mentioned that before they implemented Traction™, everyone was on different pages and going in different directions. This led to long meetings. They said that sometimes they would have four-hour meetings where nothing got accomplished. The reason Traction™ helped them was largely due to the quarterly rocks set every ninety days. In their congregation, each person is assigned a specific task through those rocks and knows how the task fits in with the overall goals of the V/TO. Everyone knew who had what task and everyone had a purpose in the meeting. Therefore, the meetings were drastically shorter. One or two people reported for any given topic, and the meeting then moved on. C1 also observed the usefulness of reporting on the rocks in meetings. “You’re maximizing your time. And you’re also encouraging those who are having issues with some of the things they are tasked with. It gives you an opportunity to say, ‘How can I help you?’”

Participants also found that the increased meeting focus with the Traction™ model helped their meeting from becoming sidetracked. C3 noted, “It keeps the main thing, the main thing.” That is easier said than done. The meetings modeled in Traction™ allow a group to stay focused on the task at hand. C4 agreed. “That’s one of the things I have gotten used to is just being very efficient, and being firm in the meetings, firm enough to be able to say, ‘Hey, we are getting off in the weeds. Let’s get back on topic, or let’s move on to the next subject.’ And it just makes the meetings flow very well, where there isn’t a lot of droning on.” They noted that, due to Traction™, people have an agreed upon way of operating. When the agreed-upon process is not working, leaders have an opportunity to point it out without ruffling anyone’s feathers. C4 pointed out that some meetings call for a deep dive into specific topics. They observed that the regular Traction™ meetings are not helpful for that while noting that the deep dive meetings are rarer than a typical congregational meeting.

## Accountability

A final theme about the benefits of Traction, described by three of the congregations, was accountability. In meetings, people are typically assigned tasks to accomplish. If their task is incomplete at the time of the next meeting, how are they held accountable? Is there anyone following up to make sure they are accomplishing their task? Traction™ has accountability built into their proposed way of operating. First, each person is assigned a task. The whole group agreed upon that task as essential and necessary. Then, when the next meeting rolls around, they will be asked about their “rock” to see how it is coming along. C1 acknowledged, “It’s a law term, but we do have a sinful flesh that needs accountability.” Too often, they felt, people in meetings are given a task which is forgotten about until the next meeting. They saw value in Traction™ holding people accountable for their assigned tasks. C2 pointed out that this accountability ensures that people are accomplishing their tasks.

Part of the way that Traction™ provides accountability is that it helps each participant see that the ministry is larger than individual people. C3 mentioned that the V/TO allows people to see that the ministry is bigger than the person when discussing accountability. They commented that a person could see the plan and process right away. Then, when they can see the overall goals, people are more likely to accomplish their tasks. It is clear to them that this task advances the overall objectives. C3 continued, “That accountability, for someone who really wants to make a change, is awesome because it forces them to not come to a meeting unprepared.” The three congregations who brought up accountability saw it as necessary to curb the sinful nature, which causes one not to do the work assigned to them or not to realize that they are answerable to others in the group.

## Challenges of Using Traction™

Various perspectives were expressed when the congregations identified the challenges they saw from using Traction™. In this regard, only two common themes emerged from the interviews: A Tendency Toward Rigidity, and The Learning Curve.

### A Tendency Toward Rigidity

The one challenge that all of the congregations brought out in their interviews is a tendency toward rigidity. When a congregation implements Traction™, much work goes into that effort. People have to learn the language, plan the future, evaluate the present, formulate the V/TO, figure out how to run a new style of meetings, and learn a new culture. Because of all that work, it can be easy for a congregation to think that the V/TO they formed is the final product. C4 noted that just because it was on paper did not mean it would work. “Just keep in mind flexibility and adapt it to your own needs. Don’t be so very rigid, where you have to follow every aspect of it. It just is not going to go very well for you.” C3 also saw the danger of being too rigid with the V/TO, noting how it required flexibility. They saw that if they were so tied to their V/TO, they did not recognize the new opportunities around them. “I think you have to be careful that you’re not so structured that you don’t take advantage of what God drops into your lap.” From a slightly different angle, C2 pointed out that there are a vast number of things that come up in ministry that one has to address. These can even change a three-year or ten-year goal, and changing what a person has written down on paper can be challenging.

Emphasizing that you can become so rigid with the Traction™ model that you can lose sight of the ministry at hand, C1 said, “Something I’m always struggling with is walking the fine line between trying to find some sort of benchmark to be tracking on your scorecard and not



going so far as to try and quantify your ministry in ways that are unhelpful and unbiblical.” They were against rigidly looking at the numbers because they did not want data to be the sole driver of the Church. They emphasized the challenge of holding too rigidly to Traction™, which might cause them to focus too much on the wrong aspects of ministry.

### The Learning Curve

Three out of the four congregations expressed the learning curve as a challenge in implementing Traction™. While C1 observed that the learning curve was not particularly difficult once they had learned the method, they pointed out, “it takes a while to learn the language and speak that language.” They also mentioned, “to get over that hump takes some work.” C1 acknowledged that any change in structure would be a challenge for a congregation, but their point was that the language of Traction™ adds to that challenge. C1 added, “It’s challenging because it was originally taken out of the business world and then modified for ministry. And so, for certain individuals, that’s going to be a real turnoff.” C4 brought up that they were not gaining traction for months when they started working with Traction™. They talked about how it is an arduous and challenging task that a congregation must face if they want to utilize Traction™. Implementing Traction™ takes a massive culture shift, which might not be for every congregation.

The difficulty of learning the new model presents itself vividly when there is turnover in leadership positions. Participants observed how turnover within congregational leadership, especially if someone was a leading influencer for the culture shift leaves, could strain the use of Traction™ in any congregation. C2 said, “Right after elections are held, and people begin a new term of office, the whole thing should be reviewed.” They knew that both people starting with

the model and people who have been using it for a while might need a refresher. The learning curve takes time and effort to overcome, challenging a congregation. Leaders who know and understand Traction™ are crucial for helping the congregation operate with the model. C4, commenting on the learning curve of this model, noted that the congregation as a whole would rank their understanding of the model at a four-point-five on a scale of one to ten. Anyone from the congregation on a ministry team using Traction™ would need to learn the language. C1 similarly pointed out that people may get frustrated and might not want to put in the time to learn a new method. Therefore, they noted that a strong leader is necessary for helping with the learning curve.

## DISCUSSION

The present study was designed to answer the question: What are the benefits and challenges of a congregation using Traction™ to plan and carry out ministry? The researcher accomplished this by conducting a qualitative study to expand the literature about the use of Traction™ in WELS congregations. From this research, four significant themes emerged under the category of benefits, and two significant themes under the category of challenges. The themes presented as benefits are: Process, Focused Meetings, Visibility, and Accountability. The themes presented as challenges are: A Tendency Toward Rigidity and The Learning Curve. In this section of the paper, the impact and application of these themes will be discussed. Limitations and threats to validity will be addressed. And areas for future research will then be identified.

### **Impact and Application**

In general, the benefits that arose comport with Wickman's emphasis on accountability, clarity, and more effective meetings as the goals of Traction™. The fact that the four congregations identified benefits that agree with Traction™'s original purpose shows the model's effectiveness. Based on those benefits, the researcher can see how a congregation might strongly consider implementing Traction™ for planning and carrying out ministry. For example, accountability played a considerable role in the success of Traction™ for the four congregations.

Accountability becomes easy to handle when everyone is on the same page about how the assigned task is vital to the overall goal because people are doing work with a clear purpose and

direction. The visibility of the V/TO would be an asset for any congregation both in the running of meetings and allowing the congregation to see the plan for ministry. The overall process of planning and carrying out ministry using Traction™ is hugely beneficial to the leaders and the congregation because it forces them to ask tough questions and address them. As a result of the planning process and answering those difficult questions, the congregation is left with a clear plan and purpose unique to their specific context.

A congregation also needs to be aware of their challenges when implementing Traction™. It is a business model, which means that no scriptural principles drive its methods and propositions, and not everyone in the congregation is a businessman. There are also issues a church needs to address, which are different from a business' problems. The challenges identified by the four congregations demonstrated this. For example, the V/TO is designed to be followed rigidly, letting the data and plan drive the corporation's decisions. Traction™ does allow for changing the plan whenever any significant issue arises, but numbers still drive those changes. However, in a congregation, data and plans do not make up every aspect of ministry. This is a challenge of taking a model proposed for the business world and implementing it into a congregational setting. Another challenge with adapting it to a church context is the language used. "V/TO," "Rock," "Level-10 Meeting," and "Scorecard" are just some of the business terms that are used in this model. A congregation can learn them, but it takes work and a strong leader who is willing and able to help the congregation learn those terms.

An additional understanding emerging from the interviews is that these WELS congregations understand the necessity of ministry planning and the Biblical principles behind planning. The four congregations interviewed mentioned the need for help in the mechanics of ministry planning, not the need for Scriptural advice that planning is important, which they

already had a pretty good handle on. While Traction™ is a planning model for the business world, a reason that Traction™ might be so appealing to congregations is its simplicity in design and its adaptability. Despite it having some challenges, a congregation can adapt the model from a business setting to a congregational setting because they already know the scriptural principles of planning. For this reason, Traction™ is a tool that congregations might consider adding to their planning toolbox.

### **Limitations and Threats to Validity**

The study's small sample size allowed for in-depth interviews, but it did not allow the study to represent the larger perspectives of all WELS congregations using Traction™. The benefits and challenges expressed are only from four congregations. At least fifty other congregations and groups in WELS could weigh in on the use of Traction™. While the four chosen were among those using traction the longest and had the most experience with it, there might be more benefits and challenges than what they brought up.

Another source of weakness that could have affected the study results is a form of selection bias. The congregations interviewed used Traction™ as their primary way of planning and carrying out ministry for a long time. A group would only use Traction™ as their primary operating method if they thought it had significant benefits. Therefore, they might naturally recognize more benefits than challenges. The benefits that arose through the interviews were more numerous than the challenges. Challenges were presented, but they were particular to each congregation's setting.

### **Areas of Future Research**

The scope of the paper did not allow for a complete and thorough presentation of the concepts presented in Traction™. Instead, this research provided a brief analysis of the use of Traction™ in WELS congregations. Further research could be conducted on each of the areas of Traction™. For example, one might research how Traction's principle of having the right people in the right seats works with the scriptural doctrine of the call. Another example might be focusing on how its use in a congregation differs from its use in the business world. Along a similar vein would be an analysis of the best resource to use when implementing Traction™. This could involve identifying the pros and cons of using GIA, a mission counselor, or some other method when implementing the model.

In this research, study participants were limited to congregations that have been primarily using Traction™ for longer than three years. Further research could be done with congregations that are just beginning to implement Traction™ or those that have tried to use the method and discontinued using it. That would deepen the understanding of the use of Traction™ in the church, and specifically in WELS congregations. In addition, future research could examine congregations using Traction™ for ten years or more. Such a study would help validate or refine the current research findings. Then their answers could be compared to the results found in this study. Another item that could use further research would be to figure out the exact number of congregations using the Traction™ by sending out a synod-wide survey. These areas of further study would help gain a broader perspective on the use of Traction™ in WELS.

The final area of suggested future research comes in other forms of qualitative research. A researcher could conduct an in-depth comparison of Traction™ to the leading church planning models. They might even consider picking a single influential model and making a one-to-one

comparison. Another study that could be done is a generic study of business methods in congregational settings and how that connects with the ideas proposed in the Church Growth Movement.

### **Conclusion**

This study has shown the benefits and challenges of using Traction™ for planning and carrying out ministry. The benefits are: The Process, Visibility, Focused Meetings, and Accountability. The challenges are: A Tendency Toward Rigidity, and The Learning Curve. These findings may be helpful to congregations considering using Traction™, by providing perspective of congregations working with the model for several years. These findings have also added to the conversation of ministry planning and offer deeper insight into the use of the Traction™ model in WELS congregations.

APPENDIX #1: THE FRONT PAGE OF A V/TO



# THE VISION/TRACTION ORGANIZER™

ORGANIZATION NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## VISION

<p><b>CORE VALUES</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> </ol>	<p><b>3-YEAR PICTURE™</b></p> <p>Future Date: _____</p> <p>Revenue: \$ _____</p> <p>Profit: \$ _____</p> <p>Market: _____</p> <p>What does it look like? _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p> <p>• _____</p>
<p><b>CORE FOCUS™</b></p> <p>Purpose: _____</p> <p>Our Mission: _____</p>	
<p><b>10 YEAR TARGET™</b></p>	
<p><b>MARKETING STRATEGY</b></p> <p>Target Market™ The List™</p> <p>Three Unique:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p>Process Process:</p> <p>Guarantee:</p>	



APPENDIX #2: THE BACK PAGE OF A V/TO



# THE VISION/TRACTION ORGANIZER™

ORGANIZATION NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TRACTION

1-YEAR PLAN	ROCKS	ISSUES LIST																																																							
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### APPENDIX #3: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear participant,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research. My name is Joel Prange, a senior at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. I am conducting this study as part of my senior thesis project (TH3300) on the topic of the pros and cons of using Traction for ministry planning. This project is in partial fulfillment of my MDiv degree. You have been invited to participate in this research because I believe that you can provide valuable information on the topic. I will be asking you questions about how your congregation uses Traction for ministry planning and to identify any benefits and/or challenges from using this model. The interview will last approximately 1 hour 15 minutes.

Your involvement in this research will be shared in the following ways;

- You will remain anonymous in the paper.
  - o That means your name will be changed to, "Participant #1," for example.
  - o Your church's name and location will remain anonymous.
- The things you say can and will be quoted directly from the interview.
- Your answers will be compared with answers from the other interviews to identify themes.

If you agree to the audio recording of the interview, the recording will be deleted after the research project is completed.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may choose not to answer any or all questions. You may fully withdraw from the interview at any time and information that you provided will not be reported in the research.

"By signing this consent form, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study under the conditions described."

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

"I furthermore agree to the audio recording of this interview and understand that the recording will be deleted upon completion of the research project." \_\_\_\_\_ (initials)

APPENDIX #4: THEMES FROM THE INTERVIEWS

	C1	C2	C3	C4
<b>Reasons for Starting Traction™</b>				
Move the Church Forward	X		X	X
A Shared Way of Discussing Problems	X		X	
Leave the “Time of the Judges”	X	X		
Get More People Involved		X		
See the Things They Accomplished			X	
<b>Identified Benefits</b>				
The Process	X	X	X	X
Focused Meetings	X	X	X	X
Visibility	X	X	X	X
Accountability	X	X	X	
Shared Vocabulary	X		X	
Availability of Tools	X			
A Filter for New Ideas		X		
Easy to Use Meeting Style				X
Satisfaction Instead of Frustration				X
<b>Identified Challenges</b>				
A Tendency Toward Rigidity	X	X	X	X
The Learning Curve	X	X		X
Bad for Those Who Want to Talk	X			X
More Outside Work than the “Traditional Model”	X			X
Designed for Business Employees, not Church Volunteers		X		
Some Congregations Will Require 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Reviews		X		
Can Develop Bad Habits			X	
The Negative Side of Accountability			X	
Called Workers Take Too Many Rocks				X
Laity Can’t Take Ownership of the Unfamiliar				X
People Still Don’t Accomplish Their Rocks				X

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