

How Can Strategic Leadership be Applied to the Development of the Local Church?

A Discussion of Content and Process

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Abstract

Whether you want to or not, strategies are formed. Increased awareness of strategic choices increases the chances that one arrives where one intends to. This is probably an important reason why some local churches work to develop and implement strategies. At the same time, the discussion in this article shows that there is very little research literature that provides a guide to how strategic leadership can be done in a good way in a local church.

In this article, it is argued that the strategic leadership ideas developed in businesses can be used in the local church, taking into account the church's peculiarities. The church's theological-spiritual dimension must provide guidelines on how strategy processes should be designed and on the content of strategy. At the same time, strategic leadership can help support and develop the theological dimension of the church; an emphasis on strategy development would probably support the work of choosing a direction for a church, and this effort would probably contribute to creating progress in realizing the content of the strategy. Such an interaction can contribute to church development by making the church more able to be and do what it is called to be and do.

In the article, I try to apply the current knowledge base to formulate some assumptions about how the strategy process and content can be designed in the local church. Among other things, biblical material, revelation and the testing of its accuracy, time to listen to God, spiritual gifts, theological reflection, and prayer are of importance to strategic leadership in the church. These are very foreign elements in the general strategy literature but are still important for the church.

If one is to be able to give better and more concrete advice on strategic leadership in local churches, it is necessary to examine in more detail how such work takes place today and how it can support the church's theological-spiritual identity and development. Furthermore, closer theological studies are needed to discuss how the theological-spiritual dimension should influence strategic leadership in the local church.

Keywords: Strategic leadership, church strategy, church development, congregational strategy, volunteer organizations, church leadership, church management.

Purpose of This Study

Local churches work in different ways on the development of strategy (e.g., Decker & Griesinger, 1997; Grobler, Van der Walt, & De Klerk, 2012; Kohl, 1984; Sirris, 2018; Tucker & Woodbridge, 2012). Strategic leadership is somewhat used in the popular literature on church leadership (Barna, 1992; McFayden, 2009; Robinson-Dobson, 2015; Wagner, 1984; Wagner, 1989; Warren, 1995). A search in ATLA, the most comprehensive academic, religious database, using “church” and “strategy” in the title as search terms resulted in 49 peer-reviewed research articles but less than 19 of them were about the local church (July 2018).

Thus, research on strategic leadership in the local church is limited. At the same time, it is noted that strategic leadership fails in voluntary work, including in the church (Sirris, 2015; Ulstein, 1998). Over a few decades, comprehensive material on strategic leadership has been developed for companies that produce and sell goods and services in different markets. The purpose of this article is to improve strategic leadership in churches. The problem statement can be formulated as follows: *How can a strategic leadership approach be adapted and contribute as an instrument in the development of the local church?*

Strategic leadership is a comprehensive field of study, and many issues are discussed. Examples include visions, goals, organizational design, choice of markets, competition conditions, a variety of analysis methods for internal and external organization issues, implementation of strategies, and much more. The research field does not rely on one or some specific leadership theories but uses several of them to develop and substantiate reasoning (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 2009).

Against this background, it is necessary to further clarify the problem discussed in this paper: a) What content in the form of central topics makes sense to include in strategic leadership in a local church to stimulate church development direction and progress? b) How can the strategic leadership process be designed in a local church?

Church development is understood as a purposeful effort to make the church better able to be what it is called to be and to do what it is called to do (Hegstad, 2003, p. 6). The content side of strategic leadership must, therefore, contribute to church development by focusing both on the choice of direction (vision and overall goals) and the choice of means and on the implementation of them to create progress.

Strategic leadership is by its nature instrumental; it should help to develop the firm in the desired way (for growth, earnings, differentiation, etc.). The issue in this article is also instrumental in that it leads to some advice on content and process in the church-developing strategic leadership.

A further limitation of this article is that it is primarily and in contrast to, e.g., Sirris (2018), which focuses on the Norwegian Church (NC), aimed at strategic leadership in free churches (churches independent of the state) and the congregational context. The reason for this is related to the author’s knowledge of this context and because much of the church literature used in this article is from research on this kind of a church. Parts of the article will nevertheless be relevant to other types of churches, and parts of research in other ecclesiastical contexts are relevant to this article.

The instrumental approach in the strategy field has meant that other leadership and organizational research has been used quite eclectically. The focus on vision is, for example, found in Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1985; Bass, 1996; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978), the idea of using goals in implementation can be found in Goal Achievement Theory (Fried & Slowik, 2004; Locke, 1968; Tubbs & Ekeberg, 1991), the focus on the importance of participation and rolling processes can be found in various learning theories (Aranda, Arelano, & Davila, 2017; Argyris & Schön, 1978), the need for context analysis is, for instance, central to situational management (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993), etc. I do not start with one or a few leadership theories but with the strategy literature.

To discuss the research question of this article, it is necessary to discuss the questions of what makes strategic leadership different and what influence the unique elements of church context should have on the application of the literature on strategy to the local church. If the goal is to say something about how strategic leadership can be adapted and used in churches, one must both look at what is and what is not unique in the church context.

Sirris (2018) shows, among other things, that in a church context, there is a different understanding of what strategy or strategic leadership means. There is no generally accepted definition of the term, but according to Mintzberg et al. (2009), it is about important aspects of the organization, about how organizations relate to the environment and how the environment affects the organization. Strategic leadership often concerns where the organization is now, where one wants to go and how one can get there. Both analyses of the situation and choice of means and the implementation are part of strategic leadership (e.g., Mintzberg et al., 2009; Porter, 1980; Porter 1990; Sirris, 2018; Yukl, 2013).

Vision is about where one wants to move an organization and, in this way, its goals. Vision and goals at the overall level are important for developing lower-level goals. Strategic leadership focuses on overall goals or vision (Nag, Hambrick, & Chen, 2007).

Approach and Content

There are several challenges for an article on strategic leadership in the church. First, it is challenging to work in an area where two disciplines meet: leadership and theology. How I understand this relationship is formative of the approach and discussion and has importance for the methodological approach to the discussion of strategy in the church. Second, it is necessary to account for literature selection and how the literature is used in the discussion of strategy in the church. This I explain in the following two sections. Then, I give an overview of the content of the article.

The Relationship Between Theology and Leadership

When using leadership research in the local church, it is necessary to look at what is unique about the context. It is beyond the scope of this article to go deep into this question, but it is important to emphasize that the church has two dimensions: a theological-spiritual and a sociologically human one. The theological-spiritual (hereafter the theological) dimension - or the

church's identity - sets the guidelines on how one can apply the leadership literature. At the same time, leadership research as part of the sociological-human dimension can help support the theological dimension of the church. This thinking is discussed in more detail in Jenssen (2018) with further reference to, e.g., Råmunddal (2011) and Hegstad (2013). A simple figure illustrates this way of thinking:

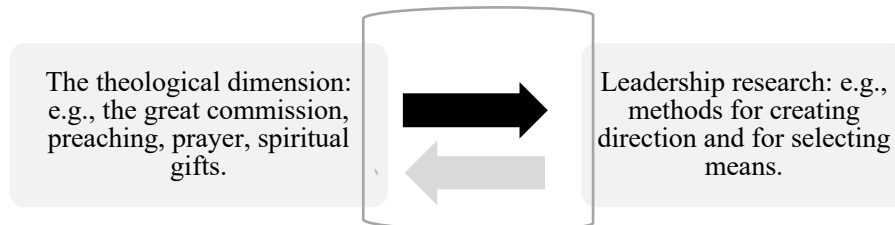


Figure 1: The relationship between the theological dimension of the church and leadership research.

The theological dimension seems to influence the use of leadership research and has the “right of way” in situations where this use should lead to behavior that violates the biblical truths (black arrow). At the same time, leadership research can influence the formation of the theological dimension or the church's identity, e.g., by contributing with methods to create direction, wholeness, and the use of spiritual gifts. There is probably also some overlap between theology and leadership, e.g., related to values such as honesty, or related to the importance of control span and delegation (Ex. 18). This point is illustrated with the “box” covering parts of both dimensions. Strategic leadership is a part of the leadership literature, and there is a similar relationship between the theological dimension and strategic leadership. The development of strategy in this interaction between theology and leadership can help to obtain a composition of means so that the church “is and does” to a greater extent what it should be and should do (Hegstad, 2003).

An important contributor to how I develop the reasons for the use of leadership research in the church in this article is also Clarke (2008). He shows that Paul used contemporary leadership thinking in the first churches but not without adapting it to the context. Paul used parts of the leadership thinking as it was used in his time: something was adapted to the church context, and part of the thinking that was common in Paul's time was dropped, because it included oppressive elements that were not in line with Christian ethics.

Selection and Use of Literature

Reproducing some key elements in the strategy literature about content and process does not require a broad review of literature, because there are sources with good summaries. The main sources are central textbooks and articles developed by important contributors to the strategy field. These provide an understanding of the key points on how this literature reasons concerning strategy with regard to content and process.

Then, I looked at how these topics are discussed in the literature on churches. There are no good summaries in this literature. Therefore, the selection of literature was performed in a broader way, using keywords in relevant databases (ATLA and EBSCO). ATLA is “The most important and comprehensive database for religious study” (Library, 2019). A search in EBSCO - one of the most comprehensive databases that the universities in Norway use in the field of organization and leadership - was performed to see if there is any more literature on churches in organizational and leadership research.

In ATLA, I used the keywords *church* and *strategy* (in the title) and obtained 49 results when I restricted the search to peer-reviewed academic articles. I then chose all the articles that were about local churches. Articles that dealt with the universal church or other issues that were not considered relevant were excluded. Additionally, articles from before 1980 and articles that did not use English as their language were excluded. This procedure resulted in 19 articles.

I used the same procedure for the keywords *church* and *purpose*, *church*, and *goal*. Here, I obtained one relevant article of 23 and one relevant article of 12. For the keywords *church* and *vision*, I found 103 articles, but none addressed the use of vision in the development of the local church. The articles were mainly about the vision for ecumenism and some were about the development of denominations.

When I removed the requirement that the literature should be academic, I obtained some titles related to the book *The Purpose Driven Church* (Warren, 1995). For the keywords *church* and *strategy*, I found 42 articles in the EBSCO host, of which ten were relevant. For the keywords *church* and *vision*, I found 103 articles, but only one dealt with the use of vision in the local church. For the keywords *church* and *purpose*, I found 7, but none were relevant. For *church* and *goal*, I found 8, of which one was relevant. Altogether, this resulted in a total of 33 articles (see the appendix).

In addition to ATLA and EBSCO, the selection was supplemented by some popular science books that address strategic leadership in the church. The reason for this supplement is that - especially in connection with the church growth movement - some books have been written that concern the subject in question (e.g., Barna, 1992; Brosius, 2017; Davis, Greg, & Payne, 2010; Hybles & Hybles, 1995; MacFayden, 2009; Malphurs, 2013; Wagner, 1984; Wagner, 1989). The academic quality varies a great deal, and the books are not traditional research books, yet they are insightful. The selection here is based on my overview of this literature and searches on Amazon.com using the same keywords as presented above. All books and articles from these searches are in English.

Such a selection has some weaknesses. Among other issues, the use of even more search criteria and more languages would give even more relevant results. To reduce this problem, the discussion is supplemented by some selected Norwegian-language articles.

In the review of the ecclesiastical literature on strategy, the conclusions of the general academic literature serve as aids to extract the main points of the ecclesiastical literature. This is done because strategic leadership is a well-developed area of research. In the main discussion of strategy, I use the literature developed inside and outside the church as a basis for looking at what is unique to the church and how strategic leadership can be adapted to a

church context. In this discussion, I also refer to some sources from the literature on church development, and I refer to a few Bible texts - not to justify a point made, but to illustrate how I think the theology can contribute to the development of church strategies.

Many of the studies I refer to cannot be generalized to churches in general or free churches, especially because they are carried out in a different context or because they are case studies. Some studies are theological and therefore based on interpretation. The practical implications of the article are, therefore, assumptions or assertions.

Content of the Article

In the next main chapter, in the first two subchapters, I present some key elements of the strategy literature on content and process. Then, an overview of the literature on strategic leadership in the local church is given. The main discussion in the article is presented in the following main chapter. I then sum up the article in the third chapter, with one subchapter on assumptions about practical implications and one subchapter on conclusions and suggestions for further studies.

Theory: Content and Process in the Strategy Literature

The Content of Strategy - from the Strategy Literature on Businesses

As part of the content of strategic leadership, the vision, or future images and goals for the organization, is often developed. The vision and goals are often seen as the starting point for a leader who wants to change an organization (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999). An important aspect of vision is that it describes an organizational condition that is different from the current state (Conger & Kanungo, 1987). Strategy with vision is thus a tool for change (Kotter, 1995; Mintzberg et al., 2009). Increasing strategy awareness increases the chances of change (f.eks. Decker & Griesinger, 1997).

A vision can be more or less oriented towards change; it can have different content, and it can be delivered in different ways. Howarth & Rafferty (2009) show that the content and manner of change-oriented vision is passed on to influence the emotional commitment of change and the willingness to act. The results of this study also show how important is the trust in the leader for how the content and delivery of the vision motivates employees to support change.

To accept change, it is probably necessary to understand where one is going. Employees need to see a better future that is worth sacrificing and working for. Vision can give employees hope and motivation (Rocke, 2017). Vision can be a positive motivation to work towards (Berson, Shamir, Avolio, & Popper, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2012), but it can also be threatening and stressful (Dent & Goldberg, 1999).

When an organization has “a clear sense of its purpose, direction, and desired future state and when this image is widely shared, the individuals can find their roles both in the organization and in the larger society of which they are a part. This empowers individuals... They gain a sense of importance...” (Bennis & Nanus, 1997, p. 1077).

The literature often distinguishes between vision, mission, overall goals, and values (Berg, 2000). Mission and long-term goals are often a central part of vision, because they describe a desirable future. A good vision will also show the key values that the organization should work for and realize. In other words, there is no clear distinction between vision, mission, overall goals, and values.

Strange and Mumford (2002) also summarize five mechanisms that lead managers through the vision to influence employees. A vision specifies the direction, purpose and the uniqueness of the organization (Conger & Kanungo, 1998), and motivates by arousing interest, creating involvement, and setting goals for the future (Berson et al., 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2012); it creates a sense of identity and meaning (Shamir & Howell, 1999), indicates a common pattern of action and hence helps coordinate and integrate various activities (Mumford, Connelly, Helton, Strange, & Osburn, 2001); and through its values, it helps develop norms and structures in the organization (Jacobsen & House, 2001).

Additionally, Bennis and Nanus (1997) point out that a vision helps members distinguish between what is worth pursuing and what is bad for an organization. It does, in other words, make it easier to delegate decisions down and out in the organization.

According to Yukl (2013), a vision should give a picture of the desired future situation, be easy to understand, appeal to the values and ideals of the people in the organization, and highlight the ideological goals of the future, rather than the near future. The vision must also be both challenging and realistic, highlighting central issues for the organization and its relationship with the environment and how people should be treated by the organization. Additionally, the vision must be sufficiently focused to guide the members of the organization when they make decisions and wide enough to be open to independent initiative and creativity in the work of realizing it. Finally, the vision should be simple enough so that it can be communicated.

Fry (2003) argues that the vision must have a broad appeal to the stakeholders: it must define goals, travel, and reflect high ideals, and it must encourage faith and hope. When leaders focus on vision, he says, the focus is on the emotional and spiritual resources of the organization, in which values, commitment, and purpose are key elements.

We have previously seen what strategic leadership is. Strategic planning is a formalized analysis of internal and external relationships; strategic thinking uses the analysis and synthesizes the information so that it becomes a strategy. Implementation is about how the strategy is translated into concrete actions. Mintzberg et al. (1988; 2003) conclude that strategy is not just a planned process. It is much more: a plan to achieve goals, a pattern of past actions with which strategy is realized over time, a position the organization chooses based on internal and external conditions (e.g., product selection and target audience delivery), a ploy or maneuver to win in the competition and a perspective that says something about how the organization should be run.

The positioning approach that is usually associated with Porter (1980) emphasizes how one should compete, which goals one should pursue, and which instruments one should use to achieve the goals. Positioning is about analyzing internal conditions and the environment to determine how to compete.

In strategic leadership, a whole range of methods has been designed to analyze organizational internal and external conditions (Ghemawat, 2002). It would be too extensive a discussion to go through all of them. Some examples are SWOT analysis (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), value chain analysis (divide the work into individual parts, among other things, to gain insight into where the most important value creation takes place), and analysis of core competence (what gives the organization advantage compared to other businesses). As we shall see later, some of the methods may also be relevant in a church context.

To summarize, the focus of strategic leadership content is related to a) *vision*, b) *analysis of external and internal matters*, c) *position*, and d) *choice and implementation of means*.

The Strategy Process - from the Strategy Literature on Firms

Strategies are designed in several different ways (Baum, Locke, & Kirpatrick, 1998; Berson et al., 2001; Larwood, Falbe, Kriger, & Miesing, 1995), and the thinking has changed substantially since it became a subject area. In the classic, rather rational way of thinking, strategic plans are developed through comprehensive *formal processes* with the full involvement of the organization's members by a large-scale analysis of the environment and the organization's internal resources. Recent thinking emphasizes more dynamic organizational processes and emerging strategies. Strategy can be seen as conscious and independent choices or as adaptations to the demands of the environment (Mintzberg et al., 2009).

In the case of business start-ups, strategies tend to develop in the minds of the entrepreneur(s) (Mintzberg et al., 2009). In established firms, strategies are, to a greater extent, shaped by several people (Mintzberg et al., 2009). If strategies are to act as a motivation and guidelines for work, they must be understood and accepted by the employees. They must have legitimacy (e.g., Drori & Honig, 2013). This does not mean that everyone needs to agree, but a sufficient group or critical mass of people must be involved so that one can put the firm in motion (Kim & Mauborgne, 2003).

In the leadership literature, the top leader's function is discussed extensively. The leader has, among other things, because of his or her expertise, responsibility for the whole organization, and access to resources, an important function in development and change processes (Boyd, 2011; Conger, 2000; Kotter, 1995).

It is important to realize that strategy is not something you can choose to have. Strategies are deliberately designed, or one allows the events to decide how the organization develops. If one does not make conscious choices, the strategy will often continue as before.

In summary, the focus on process in strategic leadership is related to a) formal and b) informal sides of the strategy process, c) the top-manager's function in the process, and the relationship between d) strategic choices and adaptation.

Content and Process in the Strategic Leadership Literature on Churches

The search for academic articles in the church-oriented literature shows that there is little research of varying quality on strategic leadership in the local church. This is interesting and different than for other types of organizations. The review of the church-oriented literature also indicates that there is not much help regarding how one can work with a strategy in such a context.

Except for some criticism of strategic leadership in the church (Moritz, 2008; Prebble, 2014), there is very little written about what is unique about the church context and how this should affect strategic leadership. Finally, most of the studies are based primarily on state-independent churches (with a few exceptions), and there are few studies from Europe. Most of the studies have been carried out in Asia, Africa, and the United States.

Reviewing the articles nevertheless says a great deal about how the concepts of strategy, vision, and purpose (and goals) are used by professionals who work with churches. The main points raised in these articles are (see appendix):

- The importance of a *vision* for the future and the church's growth (Cronshaw, Powell, Hancock, Sterland, & Wilson, 2014).
- The significance of clear *goals* for *commitment* and "wellbeing" of the church (Francis, Robbins, & Wulff, 2013; Hansson & Anderzén, 2009; Scalf, Miller, & Thomas, 1973) and how *goals* for specific services (websites and events) can contribute to the local church (Pfadenhauer, 2010; Sturgill, 2004).
- *Selection of means* to improve the church (create a commitment, growth, etc.) (Pfadenhauer, 2010).
- *Positioning* through a focus on specific activities (sport, Tucker & Woodbridge, 2012) and in specific contexts (for urban contexts, see Fukuzawa, 1993).
- *How strategy processes in local churches can be designed* (Grobler et al., 2012; Kohl, 1984). The strategy processes proposed are simple goal-means rational or bounded rational processes (Gigerenzer & Selten, 2002; Simon, 1957), but one can also see elements of emerging strategies, i.e., strategies that have been developed not only through a planned process and then subsequently implemented (Eriksen, 2018).
- Some want less strategy in the church but still suggest an alternative strategy (Moritz, 2008; Prebble, 2014). This is probably because strategy is linguistically alien to the church and because there is a desire for stronger theological-spiritual attention.

In summary, the referenced ecclesiastical literature has common features with the other literature. On the content side, a) *vision and goals*, b) choice of *means* and c) in part, *positioning*. The theological element is mentioned first and foremost in critical reflections relating to the use of strategic leadership as a method. This can be interpreted as a wish that the theological dimension should be integrated into strategic leadership in a stronger way. On the process side, the focus in this literature is, as we see from the discussion, primarily on creating a d) *formal* strategy process, but there is also a glimpse of e) *informal* elements (Eriksen, 2018).

Content and Context Adaptation of Strategic Leadership in the Church

Based on the discussion above, on the content side, I will look more closely at a) *vision*, b) *analysis of external and internal matters*, c) *strategic choices and context adaptation*, d) *means and positioning*, and e) *the Bible and revelation*. Regarding the process, I look at a) *formal* and b) *informal* sides of the process, c) *the function of the pastor*, and d) *theological/spiritual means* in the strategy process.

Discussion: Developing Strategic Leadership in the Local Church

Adapting the Content of Strategic Leadership to the Church

Strategic leadership is, as has been shown, about finding a direction, positioning in the environment, and developing purposeful means. The strategic opportunity space is limited and adaptation is also necessary (Scott, 2004) for churches (Sirris, 2018). Conscious strategic work increases, as has been shown, the chances of change. This is probably not different in the church context.

A) Vision: Above, I showed that a vision has significance for motivation and empowerment. This probably also applies to churches. Cronshaw et al. (2014) show that vision is important for a group of churches in Australia. Perhaps the need for an attractive vision is more important in churches than in businesses, because churches are not driven forward by market forces. The term vision is used in some places in the Bible, but not in the context of church development (e.g., 1 Samuel 3:15, Ezek. 1:1, Acts 10:3).

In a vision process, of course, knowledge about one's organization and its context will be formative, but intuition and spirituality will also be important, because a vision can hardly be formed solely based on fact-based knowledge. Bekker expresses this double-sidedness of vision (retrieved 2018, p. 2) as follows: "*Leadership is about dreaming with our eyes open, leading while present in the moment and to one-another and so finding ways to participate in the creation of a better tomorrow. Spirituality deeply informs this kind of leadership approach*".

For a vision, both facts and intuition are important. From a Christian perspective, we can also talk about revelation (Jenssen, 2018; Råmunddal, 2011). Although this is not necessarily unique to the church, it will probably be more legitimate in such a context. If the vision reflects God's will for the church and is acknowledged among leaders and coworkers, the vision can lead to a greater effort than the leaders and coworkers would or could achieve without such a vision. This is both because the vision has a normal motivational effect and because God is assumed to strengthen and bless church staff when they follow his will. The latter, of course, is difficult to prove empirically but is the basis for theological reasoning about strategy in the church (e.g., Moritz, 2008; Prebble, 2014).

The sources of visionary content are partly distinctive to churches. The first source is all the Bible material on the church, how it should work, and what it should do. This can and should inspire the design of the local church's vision. There are also several church leaders

who say that the vision is given supernaturally. The entire formulation of the vision of a growing and global church uses “I” in its vision with reference to the senior pastor and founder (<https://hillsong.com/no/vision/>).

If visions are created in this way, they must be tested by more than those who have “received” them (Råmunddal, 2011, 1. Cor 11:29). If visions are not formulated sentences but images or impressions, there is an opportunity to formulate them in more than one way.

As shown above, the management literature gives some advice on how a vision should be designed. This advice does not mean - as the studies by Moritz (2008) and Prebble (2014) referred to above could be understood - that the vision’s biblical and supernatural inspiration is reduced (Jenssen, 2018; Råmunddal, 2011). Rather, the advice indicates that the organization’s peculiarities, values, intents, ideological goals, high ideals, beliefs, and hopes, etc. (Fry, 2003; Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005; Yukl, 2013), should be more evident because of the church’s theological identity (Jenssen, 2018).

Many churches have formulated a vision for their work. There is great variation in how the visions are formulated regarding both content and scope. The longer they are, the more content there is, but at the same time the more difficult they are to remember. There are also differences regarding whether the I-form or the we-form is used in the formulations. The reason for this may be slightly different, but the I-form is probably related to how central the pastor is, and it is probably more common in churches where the pastor is the central person in the church planning. There is no systematic knowledge about this issue.

In the strategy literature, as discussed above, it is pointed out that the content of the vision affects change (Howarth & Rafferty, 2009). It is not inconceivable that the description of the vision also influences commitment and willingness to act in a church context.

When writing about vision, one tends to focus on the explicit and the written. Warren Bennis once formulated this as follows: *“If it is truly a vision, you will never forget it”* (cited from Mintzberg et al., 2009, p. 141). This means that the most important issue is not that the vision is written down but that it is known and that it creates a direction for the future. The content of visions can be clear even if they are not written down.

B) Analysis: We have seen that in the literature on strategy inside and outside the church, it is important to obtain a necessary understanding of internal conditions and of the surroundings that one will work within. Analysis of which internal resources one has in the form of buildings, equipment, money, people, etc., is useful both for understanding what resources one has for different types of work and for gaining insight into how to develop these resources so that the organization can move towards the goals.

This is not unique to the church. However, the resources to be used are partly different. A dependency on volunteer employees is common for volunteer organizations. This often involves greater scarcity/uncertainty regarding financial and human resources than in business.

More specific to the church is the need to work on developing the theological dimension of the church (Jenssen, 2018; Råmunddal, 2011), e.g., preaching, prayer, and spiritual gifts. This should be captured in the development of the content of the strategy. Several of the

referenced articles and books on the ecclesiastical context of strategy emphasize that the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 18-20) lays out the guidelines for church strategy (e.g., Brosius, 2017; Bryant & Chin, 2000; Cronshaw et al., 2014; Davis et al., 2010; Fukuzawa, 1993; Tucker & Woodbridge, 2012; Wagner, 1989). This is distinctive to the church, although Christians should also let the Bible characterize the work in other areas of life.

C) Choices: In parts of the referenced strategy literature, it is assumed that firms choose how they will work in their surroundings largely based on analyses (Porter, 1980). Opportunities for choosing are challenged by institutional theory (Scott, 2004) but are not excluded (Raynard, Johnson, & Greenwood, 2015). Understanding the environment is significant. This probably also applies to churches, but there may be differences regarding which conditions are important. For businesses, questions about demand and the market are included in the external analysis.

The importance of understanding the church's environment probably applies quite independently of what influence the church's theology allows the culture of the environment to have (Niebuhr, 2001). An analysis of the church's surroundings may look a little similar to a market analysis in a company that is aimed at the consumer market. For example, the church should attempt to gain insight into the demographic composition of the local population (Fukuzawa, 1993; Jenssen, 1995; Tucker & Woodbridge, 2012; Wagner, 1989).

D) Position and means: When the vision and main goals are designed, the church's inner and outer context is analyzed; then, one must choose the position and means in line with the vision and analysis.

Although it is probably reasonable to be challenged by other churches to increase efforts, other churches are essentially not competitors. Nevertheless, in some situations, it may make sense to position the church in relation to other churches, e.g., by investing in geographical or cultural segments of the population that others do not do in the same way. The church will then aim at reaching more segments of the population. In some of the referenced studies from the ecclesiastical context, positioning is important (Fukuzawa, 1993; Tucker & Woodbridge, 2012). In most places, there is such a small proportion of Christians that it is also not problematic that more churches focus on the same segments of the population.

In a way, churches compete with other activities in an area, even though the concept of competition is not commonly applied. It is also probably reasonable for a church to gain insight into other offers in the immediate area so that the church can choose to compete, adapt, or cooperate with the various offers. For example, a church will probably choose to compete with some offers (the local nightclub), while it will facilitate, e.g., young people, to participate in both sports and the church at the same time. In the church-oriented academic literature that has been referred to, there are examples of how the church itself uses popular activities in its work to reach specific population groups with the gospel (Tucker & Woodbridge, 2012).

Corporate strategy is also, as pointed out, about the choice of means and positioning - about choosing how the company will compete in an environment (Porter, 1980). The means in churches will be, as for most organizations, about developing and selecting employees and

volunteers with different skills and material resources such as money and buildings and intangible resources such as motivation and legitimacy. The church's peculiarity also means that the means have a theological dimension. Development and application of spiritual gifts, preaching, prayer, worship services, small groups, etc., will have to be included among the church's means.

E) Theology and content: The criticism of strategic leadership referred to above (Moritz, 2008; Prebble, 2014) contains a desire for a stronger focus on theology and spirituality. The church's identity and purpose are theologically justified (Råmunddal, 2015), and the strategy must, therefore, aim to contribute to this purpose. The Bible material about the church and its purpose should, therefore, influence the content of the strategy.

Adapting the Strategy Process to Churches

Who then has the responsibility for developing strategies and how should church leaders and coworkers participate in the process? Regardless of how strategies are developed, the purpose - also in churches - is to give direction to the work and to motivate leaders and coworkers. Therefore, in the strategy literature, as shown, there is an emphasis on participation in strategy development and implementation by different stakeholders. The idea is that the process should give "ownership" to the strategy. How can one do this in a church?

I pointed out in the theory review that the strategy process must contribute to creating legitimacy for the strategy to have an intended effect (e.g., Drori & Honig, 2013) and that trust in the leader is important (Howarth & Rafferty, 2009). The church is hardly different in this area. The ability to build trust, create good processes, understand different interests, have a good dialogue with managers in different parts of the organization, etc., is of importance. In the ecclesiastical literature, the importance of building commitment is mentioned by Howarth and Rafferty (2009).

Creating legitimacy for the strategy is partly about the skills and competencies of the leaders and coworkers and is hardly unique to the church, but it is perhaps even more demanding because many of the leaders and coworkers work voluntarily. Volunteers are probably also partly motivated in a different way than employees (Sirris, 2015), and the leadership responsibilities are more challenging (Sporsheim & Sirris, 2018). This may increase the need for creating legitimacy in volunteer organizations. The need to build legitimacy must influence the way we develop the strategy process.

The work with strategy often involves specific words and expressions. Using the thinking from the strategy literature in the church can affect the language we use. This language can seem alien to employees and volunteer workers in a church context. This probably explains some of the criticisms made by Moritz (2008) and Prebble (2014). Alienation due to language is also mentioned in connection with the use of Natural Church Development in Norwegian churches (Råmunddal, 2011).

A) Formal process: As shown above, the strategy processes can be broad, explicit, and formal, and/or they can be developed over time more informally. First, a little more about the formal element.

Comprehensive formal strategy processes are challenging and do not always lead to implementation. Such processes can be even more challenging for local churches, because most workers are volunteers with the abovementioned challenges that volunteers may cause.

At the same time, as shown above, analysis and choice of means are important. Moreover, for legal and practical reasons, most churches must design budgets or forecasts and accounts from year to year, because they manage employees, buildings, volunteers, etc., that create obligations. One must, therefore, regularly make choices that are important to the church. Strengthening such processes with somewhat more focus on strategy can increase the focus of the church and improve the choice of means. Annual formal processes in which one is virtually forced to think about the overall development of the church and how it should be influenced by strategy, plans, and budgets are thus important.

B) Informal process: The idea of emerging strategies emphasizes the importance of informal processes. Can one plan for such strategy development by creating spaces in different contexts and forums (e.g., leadership meetings) to discuss the overall development of the church (strategizing)? Can such spaces allow for moving back and forth between the whole church and its parts or between the bird's-eye view and the details? Such an informal discussion may contribute to the exploration of opportunities, adjustment of strategies, or to strategies that are gradually emerging. Mintzberg (2009) seems to find support for such thoughts in research.

The peculiarity of the church concerning this issue also probably lies in the scarcity of resources and the importance of the theological dimension. I will return to the theological dimension below. Creating a space where a more informal process alternates between strategy and action can be unfamiliar and probably requires a great awareness and competence of the leaders. Such competence may be especially scarce in a church with many volunteer workers.

C) The pastor: What function should the pastor and his or her leadership team have in the strategy process? The top manager, as shown in the theoretical part, has an important function in the strategic leadership of companies (Boyd, 2011; Conger, 2000; Kotter, 1995). Is this different in the church? In the study on strategy in The Norwegian Church (DNC), Sirris (2018) emphasizes, with reference to Askeland (2016), the need for an institutional leader, i.e., a leader who helps develop a strategy from the holistic perspective of congregation building. Perhaps the pastors in independent churches are closer to having such a role than the priests in the DNC who have to deal more with employees from different professions and functions inside and outside the congregation and with a more formalized governance structure.

The referenced articles from the church context give few answers to this issue. In the referenced popular literature on church management, the pastor has an important function in growth and change processes (e.g., Hadaway, 1991; Pilot, 2018; Wagner, 1976; Wagner, 1979, 1988). The arguments for this are similar to those presented in the general strategy literature. However, I argue that some special conditions for churches may exist.

The competence profile of pastors can be different, either because the person has less leadership education or because his or her training as a leader is more limited than what one finds in other types of organizations. Døving, Elstad, and Storvik (2016) point out that the profession of a leader can reduce his or her efforts to aim for a holistic strategy. This may be the case in churches and should, in such cases, influence the strategy process. It may be more important to complement the pastor's expertise in leadership teams and strategy development. Additionally, the trust in the leader(s) that is central to the development of church strategies may be related to the extent to which the congregation believes that the pastor is able to receive supernatural impulses. This is not focused on in the church research. The degree of such confidence can affect how broad the participation is and should be included in the strategy process.

As mentioned above, in the classic strategy literature, strategic plans are developed, the members of the organization are widely involved, and a comprehensive analysis of the surroundings and the organization's internal resources is carried out. The strategies are developed and implemented in formal and often comprehensive processes. This way of thinking is partly facilitated for in a church context by Grobler et al. (2012). In the referenced church-growth literature, such an approach is common (e.g., Wagner, 1984; Wagner, 1989). The need for the pastor to function as a top executive and to understand the whole is accentuated in this literature. This is probably an important point, but to use the expertise in different parts of the church in strategic leadership, top-down processes will probably have to be supplemented with elements of bottom-up processes (Sirris, 2018).

D) *Theology and process*: Based on the idea of the church as the body of Christ and Christ as the head, God leads the church (Råmunddal, 2011, Eph. 5). Taking this as given, this means that it is necessary to let the biblical texts and God's speech to us today shape the strategy process. Therefore, in the process of developing strategies, theological reflection and prayer must be facilitated, and there must be room for listening to God. To a certain extent, this is reflected in Eriksen (2018) presentation of strategy in ethnic churches in Norway, but at the same time, it seems that leaders' and coworkers' awareness of this work is limited.

It can create challenges if one or a few in the church claim that the main features of the strategy are revelation. If so, as mentioned above, testing processes will be required. This can be facilitated in the development of strategies in churches.

Summary of Practical Implications

The problem statement in this article is how can strategic leadership be adapted and contribute as an instrument to the development of the local church. Regarding this issue, I look at what content in the form of central themes it makes sense to include in strategic leadership in a local church and how the process for strategy development can be designed in such a context.

To answer the research question, I have tried to say something about what the terms mean in the strategy literature, how the terms are used in a church context and how they should be adapted to such a context. The table below shows the main points from the discussion above. The summary comprises more assumptions or assertions than conclusions, because part of the empirical source material is not representative studies that can be easily generalized to churches. Some studies I refer to are also theological. These studies, in the social science sense, support nothing but claims.

In columns one and two the theme of the rows in the table is shown. In column three, some statements from the strategy literature are given that probably apply to most organizations, including churches. Because theology should influence most aspects of the strategic leadership in the church, a fourth column is introduced. In this column are summaries of what should be different in strategic leadership in a local church, i.e., how the theological dimension should influence this work.

Theme		In strategic leadership, this is important for most organizations, including churches	In strategic leadership, this is important and distinctive for churches: the importance of the theological dimension
The content of the strategy	Vision and direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulate/reformulate the vision in a way that indicates which direction one is going in so that it contributes to development and necessary change - Formulate the vision so that it gives a picture of the desired future, and as far as possible, so that it is understandable, challenging, achievable, and appealing; so that it sets long-term ideological goals, deals with the essentials of the organization, allows for individual initiative; and so that it can be communicated - Ensure that the length of the vision is such that the most important content is included, and at the same time, such that it is possible to remember 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulate/reformulate the vision and main goals so that they contribute to the realization of the church's theological-spiritual purpose and mission, as it appears in Scripture (e.g., the Great Commission) - Ensure that the Bible material on the church, how it should function and what it should do, as well as the revelation to leaders and coworkers, inspire the design of the vision. The legitimacy of strategies in the church will depend on whether they are well founded in the theological base of the church - The language of the church's vision should be adjusted so that it creates legitimacy and not alienation
	Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze internal conditions to understand where one stands as an organization (are vision/goals realized?), what resources/means of different types one has available, and how these resources/means should be further developed - Analyze external conditions to create an understanding of the context one should work in as regards demographic, social, institutional, and cultural conditions - Follow the developments in the environment and in the organization closely so that one can see if the work carries the fruit one wants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of the church's internal affairs must include analysis of the theological-spiritual dimension of the church: Do we help to realize the special purpose of qualitative (spiritual) and quantitative growth in the church and are spiritual gifts developed? etc. - Analysis of the church's situation (externally) must include analysis of the theological-spiritual dimension (theological understanding, spiritual situation/practice, etc.)
	Adapt./choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze to what extent the content of the strategy should be adapted to the environment and how much the organization can influence the environment and make its own strategic choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A church must consider the limits of adaptation to the environment considering the biblical material

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Strategy process	Position and means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a wanted position in the environment (which means should be emphasized) based on vision and analysis - Facilitate to select the means that move the organization in the right direction in an effective way - Help the employees to see that the chosen means are effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finding the church's position can be about finding and strengthening its position in a geographical, cultural or a social segment - In the choice of the position and means, the biblical material and revelation must be central, and it must define the limits for what can be done - When choosing means, it must be ensured that everyone can develop and apply their talents and spiritual gifts - The language used in the strategy should be adjusted to the church to create legitimacy
	Informal process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the informal process of strategy development and implementation, the following should be emphasized: - create a dialogue with various stakeholders (middle managers, employees, opinion leaders, etc.) - create "ad hoc arenas" where strategic issues are discussed and where ideas/opportunities can be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in the design of strategies and motivational processes must be considered in the light of spiritual gifts - The development of trust in the church is related to whether one believes that the leaders receive supernatural impulses - Develop a dialogue with Christian leaders outside the church who can help support/legitimize the strategy process
	Formal process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop competence in good strategy processes so that the process moves forward and is implemented - Provide regular "space" in various formal forums to discuss overall issues so that there is a regular alternation between "the whole" and "the parts" of the organization that allows strategies to emerge - Develop annual processes for strategy development, plans, and budgets - Facilitate a formal communication process with various stakeholders who can help the strategy be understood, accepted and "owned" by a critical mass of leaders and coworkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate a strategy process that is adapted to the extent of the capacity and competence in the church - Create a process of prayer and theological reflection, and create "space" for listening to God - Create "space," acceptance, and methods for testing of visions and strategies that have been revealed to someone in the church - Make sure that the various "spaces" or arenas created in the strategy process also address the theological-spiritual aspects of the church's work
	CEO/pastor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make the top executive a driving force in the strategy process - Create participation by key stakeholders in the formulation of strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make the pastor the theological-spiritual leader and driver in the strategy process. The pastor must build trust with other leaders and coworkers to achieve a proper functioning in the strategic leadership - If the strategy is perceived as legitimate, it can be designed by the pastor alone, through a participatory process, or by a combination of these approaches

Table 1: Summary of assumptions concerning strategic leadership in churches

Conclusions and Further Research

Whether one wants to or not, strategies are formed. Increased awareness of strategic choices increases the chances that one will reach a wanted destination. Analyzing the organization internally and externally can provide knowledge that helps to develop good tools for efficiently

achieving goals, and it can help to find the right position in the environment so that the organization reaches target groups and contributes in a desired manner to the surroundings. A clear strategy with inspiring vision can provide motivation and provide a basis for delegation of authority.

The discussion in this article shows that strategic leadership developed for businesses can be used in the local church if one considers its peculiarities. The theological dimension lays down guidelines for how the strategy process should be formed and the content of the strategy. In the church, one will be concerned about whether the strategies are well founded in the theological-spiritual dimension of the church's work.

Such an approach in strategic leadership is a prerequisite for developing a church that is and does what it should. Without the means of the church's theological-spiritual dimension (column 4 in the figure above), the identity of the church will be in danger of not being promoted. At the same time, the outlined strategic leadership for all organizations (column 3) can contribute to the work of the church by making it more targeted and the composition of the means more efficient. In this way, strategic leadership contributes to church development by contributing both to a pattern of action that makes the work of being and doing what the church is called to do more targeted.

Important elements for the design of the vision and goals and the many means, such as the Bible, prayer, fellowship, and teaching, are given in Scripture, but how these means are applied can be adapted to the situation. At the same time, strategic leadership can help support and develop the theological dimension by helping the church realize direction and progress in the work.

If one is to go further in the understanding of strategic leadership in local churches and be able to give better advice, it is necessary to investigate more closely how strategic leadership takes place in churches today. The Sirris (2018) study on strategy in the DNC is a good step forward, but several studies are needed. Good studies on strategy processes in independent churches hardly exist. Such studies can provide an even better basis for discussing what is special about the church and what works well and badly in the way that the work is done in terms of strategy development and implementation in the church. As mentioned earlier, several methods of analysis are used in strategic leadership, but we know little about which of them are suitable in a church context and how they can be adapted to the church.

I also think that it is necessary to conduct theological studies that try to show how Scripture and spirituality should influence strategic leadership in the church. Finally, I think it makes sense to continue working with guidance and templates for how strategic leadership can be set up and implemented in practice.

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Appendix

Author	Title	Theme and methods
ATLA Park (2017). Journal of Pastoral Theology	Pedagogical Strategies for the Transformation of Church Cultures: An Examination of a Spiritual Leadership Development program in Korean Immigrant Churches	Shows the development of a program for leadership development of women who are not ordained. An empirical case study with elements of action research.

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Ma (2017). Journal of Asian Mission	Evangelism and Church Planting: A Strategy for the Growth and Mission of the Korean Church	A literature-based discussion of the historical development of the Christian church in South Korea and the importance of the church evangelism and church planting strategy to the mission.
Anderson and Frazier (2017). The Journal of Youth Ministry	Leadership Strategies and Practices of Long-Tenured Youth Ministers in the Church of Christ	How leadership development, etc., can contribute to youth leaders. A quantitative survey.
Williams (2015). Ecclesiology	Ecclesial Reconstruction, Theological Conservation: The Strange Exclusion of Critical Theological Reflection from Popular Strategies for the Renewal of the Church in Britain	A critique of the strategy of “ecclesiastical reconstruction” and “theological preservation” as short-sighted and too narrow in focus. These should go together, the author argues. Literature based.
Prebble (2014). Colloquium	Missional church: More a Theological (Re)Discovery, Less a Strategy for Parish Development	Based on literature and experience, the author discusses what missional churches are. He seems to think that such churches are focusing less on strategy and more on parish development. A question is whether his description of missional churches is just an adjusted strategy.
Oduro (2014). International Bulletin of Missionary Research	Arise, Walk Through the Length and Breadth of the Land: Missionary Concepts and Strategies of African Independent Churches	Shows how AIC (Pentecostal denomination) does not talk about the mission but still has churches in many countries. Refers to different sources and uses some observations. An informal method.
Francis et al. (2013). Practical Theology	Assessing the Effectiveness of Support Strategies in Reducing Professional Burnout Among Clergy Serving in the Presbyterian Church (USA)	Studies the impact of strategies to reduce burnout. A quantitative study with 744 respondents.

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Isiorho (2012). Black Theology, An International Journal	A Tale of Two Cities: Implicit Assumptions and Mission Strategies in Black and White Majority Churches	Compares two smaller Catholic churches. One is mainly white and one black. Qualitative interviews with a total of 24 people in each church. The question is what can the white church learn from the black church about the mission of the church?
Moritz (2008). Dialog	Beyond Strategy, Towards the Kingdom of God: The Post-critical Reconstructionist Mission of the Emerging Church	A popular theological discussion of Emerging Church's strategy. Based on literature and experience.
Grobler et al. (2012). In die Skriflig	A Framework for Crafting and Implementing a Congregational Strategy in the Local Congregations of the Reformed Churches of South Africa	Outlines a method of development and implementation of a strategy in a church. Theoretical discussion using literature.
Vokurka and McDaniel (2004). Review of Religious Research	A Taxonomy of Church Marketing Strategy Types	Develops strategic configurations of churches. A quantitative survey of 247 churches in the Southern Baptist denomination.
Rippy (1994). The AME Zion Quarterly Review	The Church Must Be the Church: Examining Strategies for Change	The author discusses and formulates a change strategy for local churches in his denomination. Literature and experience based.
Ekemam (1994). The AME Zion Quarterly Review	An Episcopal Address: Strategies for Church Planting and Church Financing	The author gives reasons why church planting is important in his denomination and then outlines several methods of evangelism. Additionally, he discusses the need for servanthood. Literature and experience based.
Decker and Griesinger (1997). Quarterly Review. A Journal of Theological Resources for Ministry	Mainline Churches in Decline: Turnaround Strategies for United Methodists	The author tries to say something about what is needed to achieve a church turnaround. A quantitative study with interviews of 480 respondents.

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Fukuzawa (1993). New Theology Review	Developing a Strategy for the Urban Parish: the Lessons of the Church Closings in Detroit	A study of the decision-making process of the closure of a local as- sembly. The decision-making pro- cess is assessed based on the extent to which it deviates from a strategic planning process. Analysis of docu- ments and of a survey that was al- ready available.
Thompson (1987). Theology	A Strategy for Engagement: a Sketch of an Alternative Ap- proach to the Church's Ministry	Discusses the effects of letting church bodies instead of the local assembly to take care of the maintenance of buildings, etc., and to let the local assembly focus on its mission. Uses literature to jus- tify a new policy.
Anderson (1985). The Journal of the Interdenomina- tional Theological Center	Economic Dimensions of the Black Church: Managerial and Financial Strategies for Survival and Development	Discusses various strategies for how black churches can have a stronger economy. This is partly a literature review and partly an ex- perience-based discussion.
(Houts, 1977). Pastoral Psychol- ogy	Pastoral Care for Pastors: To- ward a Church Strategy	Discusses how one can take better care of pastors' health. An experi- ence-based discussion with the use of some literature.
EBSCO Brosius (2017). Journal of Minis- try & Theology	Culture and the Church's Disci- pleshship Strategy	Discusses how churches should de- velop a more focused strategy re- lated to discipleship. An experi- ence-based discussion with some references to the literature.
Tucker and Woodbridge (2012). Conspec- tus (South Afri- can Theological Seminary)	A Strategy for Developing a Sustainable Sports Ministry through Soccer Evangelism in the Local Churches in Tshwane Using Browning's Multidiscipli- nary Model	Discusses how sports can be used in the evangelistic work of churches in South Africa. An infor- mal literature review.
Low and McEwen (2012). Common Ground Journal	Renewing Christian Community Identity and Educational Strate- gies Through Communities of Practice: Considerations for Sin- gapore Churches	Discusses how churches in Singa- pore should meet the Chinese com- munity in a better way and with a less Western approach (contextual- ization). An informal literature re- view.

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Pfadenhauer (2010). International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing	The Eventization of Faith as a Marketing strategy: World Youth Day as an Innovative response of the Catholic Church to Pluralization	Studies how a large “event” can affect the understanding of the Catholic Church. An ethnographic analysis.
Davis et al. (2010). International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing	Stale in the Pulpit? Leader Tenure and the Relationship Between Market Growth Strategy and Church Performance	Studies how different market strategies in a church context affect results. A quantitative study.
Joseph and Webb (2000). Journal of Ministry Marketing & Management	Marketing Your Church with Advertising and Promotion Strategies That Work	Discusses the choice of marketing strategy (advertising and promotion) for churches. A literature review.
Tangen (2009). MF Norwegian School of Theology	Ecclesial Identification Beyond Transactional Individualism. A Case Study of Life Strategies in Growing Late Modern Churches.	An empirical examination of two late-modern churches. A qualitative and quantitative survey.
Webb and Joseph (1998). Journal of Professional Services Marketing	Church Marketing: Strategies for Retaining and Attracting Members	A study of strategies to retain and attract members. A quantitative survey (64 respondents).
Bryant and Chin (2000). Journal of the Operational Research Society	Integrating Approaches to Revitalize a Church’s Mission Strategy	Examination of how a church achieved direction in its mission work. A case study from Singapore.
Kohl (1984). Long Range Planning	Strategies for Growth: Intervention in a Church	Shows how an external intervention in a small rural church in the United States contributed to a better understanding of challenges and needs. A case study.
ATLA Sturgill (2004). Journal of Media and Religion	Scope and Purposes of Church Web Sites	Attempts to describe how churches use the internet. A descriptive and quantitative study of 303 churches of the Southern Baptists denomination.

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Scalf et al. (1973). SA. Sociological Analysis	Goal Specificity, Organizational Structure, and Participant Commitment in Churches	Discusses different effects of target specificity on bureaucracy and member commitment. A quantitative study of 51 people in 7 churches.
EBSCO Cronshaw et al. (2014). Australian e-Journal of Theology	Churches with a Vision for the Future: A Profile of the Baptist Union of Victoria	Discusses the importance of vision for growth in local churches. A quantitative study of 79 churches in Australia.
Hansson and Anderzén (2009). Work	Goal Clarity as an Instrument for Improved Organizational Well-being in the Church of Sweden	Looks at the importance of the specificity of goals for an organization's "wellbeing." A quantitative study of 624 leaders in the Swedish Church.

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