

Liberty University

School of Music

**Characteristics That Make an Excellent Worship Leader According to the  
Perspectives of Baptist Congregants in North Texas**

**By Carlos Benson**

**Master of Arts in Music & Worship**

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APPROVED BY:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Jerry L. Newman D.W.S., Committee Advisor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Thomas A. Seel, M.B.A., D.M.A., Committee Reader

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sean Beavers, D.M.A., Dean of the School of Music

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## **ABSTRACT**

Despite many Baptists Churches in North Texas, most church congregants vary significantly in how they characterize an excellent worship leader. These congregants often rely on trial and error to establish characteristic traits that are acceptable for the whole of a particular church. There is a gap in the research study of characteristics that make an excellent worship leader according to the perspectives of Baptist congregants in North Texas. This study will find which attributes of worship leadership are most desirable according to the views of North Texas Baptist congregants. These literary examples do not specifically name what characteristics North Texas Baptist church congregants want from a worship leader.

There is no actual data from a North Texas regionalized study of what encompasses a good worship leader. Surveys of congregants can create a formidable list of worthy worship leader traits through digital platforms. This study is critical because it will help church seekers have a tangible list of characteristics when deciding which church might best suit their worship needs. This qualitative study supplies data that is currently lacking in contemporary research texts.

**Keywords:** Worship Leader, Baptist Churches, Regional, Characteristics, Congregants, North Texas.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Much research has been done to define the characteristics of an excellent worship leader. The analysis of this study focuses on the characteristics of an excellent leader in North Texas Baptist churches as defined by church congregants. This study's challenge is formulating a list of answers to the fundamental question. High school and college students from North Texas Christian schools comprise a large part of the membership in North Texas Baptist churches. In addition, there are many Baptists high schools and colleges in the North Texas area. Therefore, research for this study includes surveys of Baptist high school and college students in the North Texas area.

Baptists churches in North Texas include worship styles from conservative, to liberal, to blended. This study aims to provide research that serves conservative, liberal, and blended Baptist churches in North Texas. Questions are posed to congregants about what style of music they prefer worshipping in their Baptist church. Examples of these types include (1) Traditional Baptist (hymns), (2) contemporary worship music (modern praise and worship), and (3) urban Gospel. North Texas area churches enjoy a wide range of ethnicity and cultural diversity factors when relating to music:

DALLAS—The New Testament book of Revelation indicates people of every tongue, tribe, and nation will worship together in heaven, but most Christians tend to separate themselves when they congregate on Earth. Some Texas Baptists insist that's not always bad. Churches designed to reach specific ethnic groups make perfect sense for recent immigrants trying to navigate an unfamiliar culture and an unknown language, said Patty Lane, director of intercultural ministries with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. "If you go visit a church where you can't understand the language and the culture is confusing, how are you going to meet Christ?" Lane asked. "Even if you do somehow meet Christ, how are you going to get discipled when the message of Jesus isn't communicated in a way that you understand—if it isn't spoken in your heart language?" Lane emphasized the importance of giving people the opportunity to serve God in a way that doesn't feel like "a transplant of Americanism." Some Texas Baptist churches are

reaching out to specific ethnic groups in the state. Their ministries are as varied as their native languages and cultural backgrounds.<sup>1</sup>

A small number of ‘Cowboy’ Baptist churches in North Texas also cater to ranchers, farmers, and cowboys. Cowboy churches tend to use more acoustic music instrumentation in the country-western style adaptation to worship music. The challenge of this research is to answer the question: “Where do all these different types of Baptists Churches in North Texas have similarities, and what are the differences?” Between these two poles of answers, there is a list that finds common ground.

### **Background**

A literary abyss of content is available to one who wishes to know what constitutes a good worship leader. The question and challenge of this research are to understand how congregants of North Texas Baptist churches define an excellent worship leader. This study includes presenting a research background, a literary background, and other acceptable background criteria that a study of this nature would entail. The problem with this assessment of background criteria is that no research background, literary background, or acceptable data is readily available. This lack of information about what congregants of North Texas Baptist churches look to define as good worship leaders will become a new study. In essence, the term ‘background’ becomes unusable for this study. The topic of this study is new research, and it is the first of its kind.

The information provided in this research study lists the background of the variables connected to the ‘congregants’ or ‘churchgoers.’ For example, high school and college students

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<sup>1</sup> Ken Camp, *Intercultural Churches Connect People Groups to the Gospel*, date accessed: December 14, 2021, Baptist Standard, August 17, 2017, <https://www.baptiststandard.com/news/texas/intercultural-churches-connect-people-groups-to-the-gospel>.

from North Texas Christian schools include a large membership part of North Texas Baptist churches. In addition, there are many Baptists high schools and colleges in the North Texas area. Another variable of the North Texas Baptist church is the type of church it is: conservative, liberal (or contemporary), and blended. Finally, North Texas Baptist churches enjoy a wide range of ethnicity and cultural diversity related to their worship culture. All these congregant variables make up the components of the research study. The research will include survey questions to congregants, including the previously stipulated variables, in the formulation of the content analysis forming the list of what North Texas Baptist church congregants define as good worship leaders.

Another variable considered as background analysis is the regional aspect of this study. For example, what makes North Texas Baptist churches different from any other region of The United States worldwide?

### **Statement of Purpose**

As a matter of purpose, no more remarkable statement should resonate with Christians than the call to worship God. Colossians 1:16 states, “For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on Earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.”—Colossians 1:16 (NIV).<sup>2</sup> Worshipping God is not only the purpose established for the creation of man, but it also gives purpose to the lives of his people. If worshipping God has a superior value placed in the lives of his people, then God’s people should put an exceptional level of importance on the leaders of worship in the Christian churches.

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Bible verses are from the New International Version. Scripture quotations marked in N.I.V. are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica®, Inc. Used by permission of Zondervan.

Data and curricula congregants can gain information about a particular church in the North Texas area. This type of information is generally available on a church website. Staff information, vision and beliefs data, and archives of worship services all serve the reader with statistical data. However, this statistical information does not help inform the website viewer about the characteristics of a worship leader. Correct and valuable data is a void this research study eliminates.

Other sources available to one who wishes to know may find the vision for worshiping at a specific church in video resources such as YouTube. Likewise, one can find a church's worship music in video media outlets.

Specific core valuable information to the congregants helps define characteristics of worship leaders in North Texas Baptist churches that currently do not exist. The importance of supplying workable information about Baptist church worship leaders in North Texas is a welcome informational supplement to the seeker and the church community.

The worship leader has multiple tasks, from selecting the correct music, enhancing the theme of a worship experience, and working with many instrumentalists and Worship teams. However, effective leadership involves more than creating a song list. It is also about leading people to Christ and others to be Christ-like. This research examines how congregants view the importance of doctrine in the list of qualities and in tabulating characteristics that factor into the variables for a worship leader.

### **Research Questions**

Numerous fact-gathering data based on individual experiences, preferences, and applications will be crucial to serving as an effective worship leader. A list of characteristics that make an excellent worship leader presents a gap in the literature available to the congregants of

all styles of North Texas Baptist churches. The approach to finding and defining the list develops specific qualities, producing a workable leadership set, specifically in the North Texas Baptist churches. Therefore, there are two research questions examined throughout this study.

Research Question One: What characteristics do congregants of North Texas Baptist churches look for when choosing a worship leader?

Research Question Two: What impact is achieved when a completed research study is available to North Texas Baptist church congregants?

### **Hypothesis**

Researching what characteristics congregants want to find in worship leaders (in all styles of Baptists churches) offers a few possible answers to the research questions.

Hypothesis One: Characteristics congregants of North Texas Baptist churches look when choosing a worship leader may include (1) vital worship experience planning, (2) Bible theology correctness, and (3) strong leadership skills.

Hypothesis Two: The completed research study available to North Texas Baptist church congregants will allow congregants and churches to align better. It may serve as an employee-seeking tool for church administration seeking new worship personnel and draw churches together in community meetings and gatherings with similar worship leader characteristics. There is further examination of those themes in the second hypothesis. Initially, the common themes can seem similar once compared to each other. However, the accumulation of the integrated approach of proper and sustainable research is employed as the study advances, and the descriptive list shortens across the board of Baptist churches in the North Texas region.



### **Significance of the Study**

This research study benefits congregants of Baptist Churches across the North Texas area, but in addition to congregants, others will benefit from this research study. Church board members, elders of churches, perspective worship leaders seeking information about which churches fit their worship leading style, new church seekers, worship team, and band members looking to align themselves with like-minded worship characteristics.

There is also a community element to the significance of this study. Conclusive and tangible information helps various Baptist churches draw parallels to discuss this information and help pull it together in the community as a social and a business advent.

### **Research Plan**

The method and design of this study employs a quantitative and qualitative approach, also referred to as the mixed method approach. “In practice, most researchers agree that combining quantitative and qualitative techniques (sometimes called “mixed method” research) produces a richer and more comprehensive understanding of a research area.”<sup>3</sup> At the most basic level, data are considered quantitative if it is enumerative and qualitative if it is words. Qualitative data may also include photos, videos, audio recordings and other non-text data. Those who favor quantitative data claim that their data are hard, rigorous, credible, and scientific. Those in the qualitative camp counter that their data are sensitive, detailed, nuanced and contextual. Quantitative data best explain the what, who and when of a phenomenon while qualitative data best explain the why and how. Different techniques are used to collect

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<sup>3</sup> “*Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*”, accessed September 6, 2022, University of Denmark, <https://betterthesis.dk/research-methods/lesson-1-different-approaches-to-research/combining-qualitative-and-quantitative-methods>.

quantitative and qualitative data. This researcher uses, in a general sense, the qualitative research approach when stating the characteristics of a good worship leader. The quantitative research approach uses questions as a multiple-choice questionnaire-type survey. This survey is posed to congregants of various Baptist churches in North Texas. The survey explores multiple leadership levels, titles, and roles. The research in this study begins with examining existing research on the qualities of effective worship. Next, the literature compiled is used to collect information on the perception of qualities of influential worship leaders and proven impacts from those individuals in separate fields in a range of styles of Baptists churches.

This researcher uses, in a general sense, the characteristics of an excellent worship leader. Research questions, in the form of a multiple-choice questionnaire-type survey, will be posed to congregants of various Baptist churches in North Texas.

In Baptists churches in North Texas, Multiple levels of leadership, titles, and roles are explored. The research in this study begins with examining existing research on the qualities of effective worship. Next, the literature compiled is used to collect information on the belief of qualities of influential worship leaders and proven impacts from those individuals in separate fields in assorted styles of Baptists churches.

Researchers may collect earlier research data in two ways: First, study data about Baptist churches outside the region of North Texas, and second, data is studied in Baptist churches in North Texas.

The second approach will be conducted using a multiple-choice survey on social media platforms. This survey is also distributed to digital church platforms. In the first approach, leadership traits and qualities are examined through earlier information collected in multiple forms. They will focus on gathering information on the qualities of worship leaders, no matter

how remote this qualification may be. In addition, this research will thoroughly examine proven methods of practical attributes. Research is collected using a combination of books, magazine articles, journal articles, and dissertations. A survey of the church congregants of North Texas Baptist churches is conducted. The information gathered supplies a foundation for effective and impactful leadership in all styles of the role of the worship leader.

Research of the type found in this study does not exist. This research will enable others to define their search goals for worship leader qualities. This research helps to develop not only practical qualities but reproducible ones. Many factors will evolve during this research, and many subtopics will arise during the research process. The study takes an approach of collecting data without bias to age or other descriptive factors. This study also allows for data collection. In reviewing some possible elements and their impact, Ross Parsley says, "The older generation must also respect their younger collaborators by allowing them to give input, carry responsibility, and accept a place at the table where new ideas and creativity can improve our effectiveness in the church."<sup>4</sup>

Research may show that influential leaders' qualities are gained from individual experiences and relationships with past leaders before them. In the interview approach, specific questions are asked of those that fit the qualifications of the questionnaire. The leaders also discuss their life stories and what they believe contributes to their impact in their positions. There are also observations of the participants' roles as leaders in their sacred and secular lives. These observations yield data that is real-life and honest. "At some point in life, many people find themselves placed in a leadership position only to look around and discover that no one is

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<sup>4</sup> Ross Parsley, *Messy Church: A Multigenerational Mission for God's Family*, (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2012), 93.

following them."<sup>5</sup> This speaks to the influential part of effective qualities of leadership.

One of the questions asked throughout the research: With so many resources and opportunities both at work and away from work, how do leaders, who are pursuing the common good, choose among the many options? The interviews will give congregants a deeper understanding of how these specific leaders select their responses.

The research attempts to show the transformation of the idea of worship of the worship leader and its determination in usefulness to the church seeker, church administration, and the general inquiring audience seeking different results. "There can be no doubt that the New Testament evidence we have examined supports a transformed understanding of the nature of worship."<sup>6</sup> The worship leader must be worthy of said position, and as a result, worshipers choose and follow according to what worshipers are purposed to do: Worship.

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<sup>5</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville, TN: HarperCollins, 2007), 27.

<sup>6</sup> D. Michael Lindsay, *View from the Top: An Inside Look at How People In Power See and Shape the World*, (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2014), 14.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### Introduction

In examining various books, literary texts, research papers (particularly theses and dissertations), and journal articles, this author can assess what North Texas Baptist Churches congregants consider their highest-ranking worship leader characteristics. The literature review can provide a valuable tool for collecting data, which correlates with the research on worship leader attributes that church members include as their highest-ranking characteristics. In addition, the literary analysis can supplement other variables of this research, such as regional aspects, demographic considerations, and church type. While all these considerations are helpful in the study of characteristics of church congregants, it does not explicitly address the question of what North Texas Baptist congregants consider as their highest-ranking factors of a worship leader. Still, it will give insight into the nature of the region and its people.

### Fundamental Beliefs of the Baptist Church

Amanda Casanova, contributing author at Christianity.com, submitted *10 Things Everyone Should Know about Baptists*<sup>7</sup>, an online article about the beliefs of Baptists. The central premise of the Baptist church is Baptism. Listed below are six essentials of those beliefs (See Appendix D for the expanded context): (1) The Baptist church believes that a person can be baptized only after professing Christ as their Savior. Baptism symbolizes the cleansing of sins. (2) There is a strong belief in the authority of Scripture among Baptists. (3) Predestination is a central principle of Calvinism, according to which some people are predestined to be saved. Arminianism teaches that God chose us to bring salvation to all and that people can choose faith. (4) The Lord's Supper is a representation of submission. The Lord's Supper, commonly known as Communion, is a ritual Baptists observe to commemorate Jesus' death. Salvation is not

dependent on receiving Communion. (5) Evangelism and missionary work are heavily encouraged by Baptists. Many Baptists support evangelism and missionary activities in response to Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations." (6) Baptists are proponents of freedom of religion. The early church supported keeping church and state apart so that everyone might exercise their right to freedom of religion, whichever way they chose. Baptists backed "free exercise of religion" in the First Amendment, not a "national pastor."

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<sup>7</sup> Amanda Casanova, "10 Things Everyone Should Know about Baptists", accessed October 5, 2022, Christianity.com, April 11, 2022, <https://www.christianity.com/church/denominations/the-most-well-known-protestant-denomination-10-things-everyone-should-know-about-baptists.html>.

## History of the Baptist Church

W.S. Hudson, author of *Baptists*, outlines the history of the Baptist Church. Baptists are members of a group of Protestant Christians who share the fundamental beliefs of most Protestants but insist that only believers should be baptized and that it should be performed by immersion rather than sprinkling or pouring water. Most Baptists adhere to a congregational form of church government, despite the absence of a single Baptist denominational structure. Some Baptists emphasize the absence of a human founder, human authority, and human doctrine.

**Origins:** Some Baptists believe that Baptist churches have existed continuously since John the Baptist and the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Others trace their roots to the Protestant Anabaptist movement of the 16th century on the European continent. The majority of scholars, however, concur that English-speaking Baptists originated as an offshoot of Congregationalism within 17th-century Puritanism.

**Expansion in England and Elsewhere:** Even though Particular Baptists were to represent the primary continuing Baptist tradition, General Baptists appeared first. Smyth concluded that if the Separatist claim that "churches of the apostolic constitution consisted only of saints" was well founded, baptism should be limited to believers only. The Separatist claim, he argued, was the practice of the churches of the New Testament, as he could find no scriptural support for infant baptism. The Particular Baptists originated from a non-separatist church founded by Henry Jacob in Southwark, across the Thames from London, in 1616.

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<sup>8</sup> W. S. Hudson "Baptist." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 25, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Baptist>.

**Robert Walker:** The two decades between 1640 and 1660 were the heyday of Baptist expansion. Around the campfires of Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell's army, Baptist preachers won over many converts. Particular Baptists achieved the most significant advancements. The influence of the Evangelical Revival and the activity of the English Baptist clergypersons Andrew Fuller, Robert Hall, and William Carey stimulated a new growth spurt among the Particular Baptists in England. English Baptist Missionary Society missionaries founded Baptist congregations in Australia (1831) and New Zealand (1854).

**Growth within the United States:** Baptist churches in the English colonies of North America were largely indigenous in origin, resulting from a leftward movement among colonial Puritans co-occurring in England.

**Colonial Period, The First Baptist Church:** Roger Williams founded the First Baptist Church of America in Providence (present-day Rhode Island) in 1638, shortly after his banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In Newport, Rhode Island, between 1641 and 1648, a church founded by the physician and minister John Clarke adopted Baptist beliefs, making it the first significant Particular Baptist center in the American colonies. Although this intercolonial Particular Baptist body provided leadership for the growth that characterized American Baptist life in the decades immediately preceding the American Revolution, this growth was primarily the result of the Great Awakening, an 18th-century religious revival.

**In the Nineteenth Century:** Before the American Revolution, it is estimated that there were 494 Baptist congregations; 20 years later, in 1795, Isaac Backus estimated that there were 1,152. Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice were among the first missionaries appointed by the newly-



formed Congregational mission board. As a result of Rice's efforts, the Baptist General Convention was established in 1814. It became known as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society over time.

**Growth of African-American Churches:** Black churches constitute a significant portion of the American Baptist community. During the Great Awakening (the 1720s to 1740s), numerous enslaved people were converted and became Baptist church members. By 1900, Black Baptists outnumbered all other Black religious groups. During the Jim Crow era of segregation and exclusion from most aspects of American life, Black churches were the center of Black communal life. In the civil rights struggle of the 1960s, Black churches provided the majority of the leadership, including that of Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Education:** American Baptists have shown an interest in a well-educated ministry from the beginning of their denomination. In the 18th century, the Philadelphia Association collected funds to help finance the education of ministerial candidates.

**Throughout the 20th Century:** After 1900, theological controversies among Baptists led to several new Baptist groups forming. The formation of the American Baptist Association in 1905 by churches located primarily in Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas involved questions of organizational structure. In 1932, the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches and the Conservative Baptist Association of America were formed due to the Fundamentalist dispute (1947). In the years following World War II, the Southern Baptist Convention abandoned its regional restrictions.

**Expansion Beyond the United States:** During the 20th century, Baptists struggled with divisive tendencies, but there was also a trend toward greater unity and cohesion through the Baptist World Alliance. The nineteenth century was marked by significant Baptist missionary

activity. William Carey in India, Adoniram Judson in Burma, and Timothy Richard and Lottie (Charlotte) Moon in China led the mission in Asia.

**Theology:** Initially, Baptists were characterized by a strong to moderate Calvinism. Particular Baptist was the dominant tradition in England and the United States. By 1800, this older tradition was being supplanted with doctrines formulated by leaders of the evangelical revival in England and the Great Awakening in America. By 1900, the older Calvinism had nearly vanished, and evangelicism was the dominant religion.

**Religion and Administration:** It is challenging to distinguish Baptist worship from the older Puritan denominations (Presbyterians and Congregationalists) in England and the United States. It focuses primarily on the exposition of the Scriptures in a sermon and emphasizes impromptu prayers instead of predetermined prayers. The singing of hymns is also one of the defining characteristics of worship. Communion, received in the pews, is typically observed monthly. Baptists insist that, under Christ, the fundamental authority is vested in the local congregation of believers, which admits and excludes members, calls and ordains pastors, and orders its everyday life according to what it believes to be the mind of Christ. <sup>8</sup> (For the complete article, refer to Appendix A.)

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<sup>8</sup> H. Stephen Shoemaker, "An Overview of Worship in the Southern Baptist Convention." Worship Library, April 11, 2013. <https://www.worshiplibrary.com/blog/an-overview-of-worship-in-the-southern-baptist-convention/>.

### **Changes in Baptist Worship in the Twenty-First Century**

In the first twenty years of the twenty-first century, the changes in worship have changed dramatically. Likewise, the worship leader's role has changed significantly since the dawn of the twenty-first century. The difference in the worship leader's role is accompanied by the change in worship music in the twenty-first century. Nowhere are these changes more apparent than in the

Baptist Churches across the United States, and nowhere are these worship changes more abundantly clear than in the state of Texas.

Texas is home to a host of megachurches. There are 207 megachurches in the state of Texas. Which Pastor has the biggest church in Texas? "Only California (219) has more megachurches than the 207 in Texas. And Houston alone has 37, including the country's largest congregation at the Lakewood Church, where pastor superstar Joel Osteen is in charge. Osteen and several other preachers have achieved rock-star status in evangelical Christian circles.<sup>9</sup>

There are twenty-two megachurches in North Texas. Some of those megachurches are of the Baptist affiliation. Three of the most prominent Baptist megachurches in North Texas are (1) First Baptist Church in Dallas, (2) Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, (3) and Lakepointe Church in Rockwall. One of the most pronounced changes in Baptist worship music is transitioning from a pulpit to a concert atmosphere of worship.

Lakepointe Baptist Church is one example of dramatic worship changes over the past two decades. Many Baptist churches in North Texas followed the same chronological pattern of change as Lakepointe Church. Table 2.1 shows the changes in Worship at Lakepointe:

In the first twenty years, the transitioning of worship music and its platform is not indicative of all Baptist Churches in North Texas. First Baptist Church of Dallas has two sanctuaries for worship. The main sanctuary is strictly traditional, with a large choir using mainly hymns. First Baptist's other sanctuary is contemporary worship music with a praise and worship team.<sup>10</sup>

Prestonwood Baptist Church is a hybrid worship service where the choir and the praise and worship team share the platform.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Abrahamsen, *10 Largest Megachurches in Texas*, accessed March 4, 2022, Wide Open Country, November 17, 2017, <https://www.wideopencountry.com/10-biggest-megachurch-texas/>.

<sup>10</sup> *Worship Experiences*, accessed March 6, 2022, First Baptist Dallas, n.d., <https://firstdallas.org/worship-experiences/>.

<sup>11</sup> Prestonwood Worship, accessed March 6, 2022, Prestonwood Baptist, n.d., <https://prestonwood.org/connect/music-worship/Prestonwood>.

Table 2.1 Lakepointe Church Chronological Worship Format

Date	Worship Format	Format Minimized
2000	Worship music included a choir, a praise and worship team, and a solo vocal song, including hymns.	_____
2003	Worship Music included a once-a-month choir showing, a praise and worship team with a small vocal ensemble (8 vocalists), and a solo vocal song. Hymn usage dwindles. A traditional service is added in the gymnasium.	The choir was changed from weekly to monthly. Hymn usage dwindles.
2008	Worship Music included a praise and worship team, a small vocal ensemble (3 vocalists), and a solo vocal song. Hymn usage dwindles to twice a month.	Choir performances were removed from the main sanctuary. The vocal ensemble diminishes. Hymn usage dwindles.
2012	Worship Music included a praise and worship team, including a small vocal ensemble (3 vocalists). Hymn usage dwindles to once a month.	Solo songs cut. Hymn usage dwindles to once a month.
2015	Worship Music that included praise and worship team.	The vocal ensemble was eliminated.
2019	Worship Music that included a praise and worship team. Worship goes from a fully lit sanctuary to a dark sanctuary and a light show. Worship music becomes a concert—occasional hymn use.	Congregation alienated.

As worship music has changed, so have the responsibilities of the worship leader. In terms of religious preferences among the current residents of the state, 77% are affiliated with non-Christian based faiths, and 18% report no affiliation with any religion in particular.<sup>12</sup>

Another infusion of worship influence in the twenty-first century is the charismatic movement. “The charismatic movement of the twentieth century has impacted nearly every denomination and has given rise to many new churches and fellowships. This discussion traces emphasizes the influence of the charismatic movement in contemporary worship.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *World Population Review: Texas*, accessed March 6, 2022, Prestonwood Baptist, n.d., <https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/texas-population>.<sup>12</sup> *World Population Review: Texas*, accessed March 6, 2022, Prestonwood Baptist, n.d., <https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/texas-population>.these developments and

<sup>13</sup> *The Charismatic Renewal*, accessed March 6, 2022, Worship <https://www.worshiplibrary.com/library/twenty-centuries-of-christian-worship/a-history-of-christian-worship/movements-of-worship-renewal-in-the-twentieth-century/the-charismatic-renewal>.

## North Texas Demography and Geography

The demographic and geographical statistics for North Texas give insight into the region's character. North Texas runs the gamut of variations in lifestyle. North Texas has outlying areas entirely rural, and a slower lifestyle is predominant. On the other hand, North Texas also has one of the largest populations of industry and dynamic people. The following data gives a glimpse into the industrious nature of the area:

It is a 9,000-square-mile, 13-county region that is home to 7.5 million people. North Texas is made up of 150 cities – including Dallas and Fort Worth – with 15 of those cities boasting a population of more than 100,000. North Texas is the fourth largest region in the U.S.A. North Texas has the most diverse economy in Texas, and the 5th highest concentration of tech workers in the U.S. Labor and trade statistics about North Texas indicate the region ranks among the top 3 U.S. metro areas for business expansion, relocations, and employment growth. North Texas has the 8th largest export market in the U.S.<sup>14</sup>

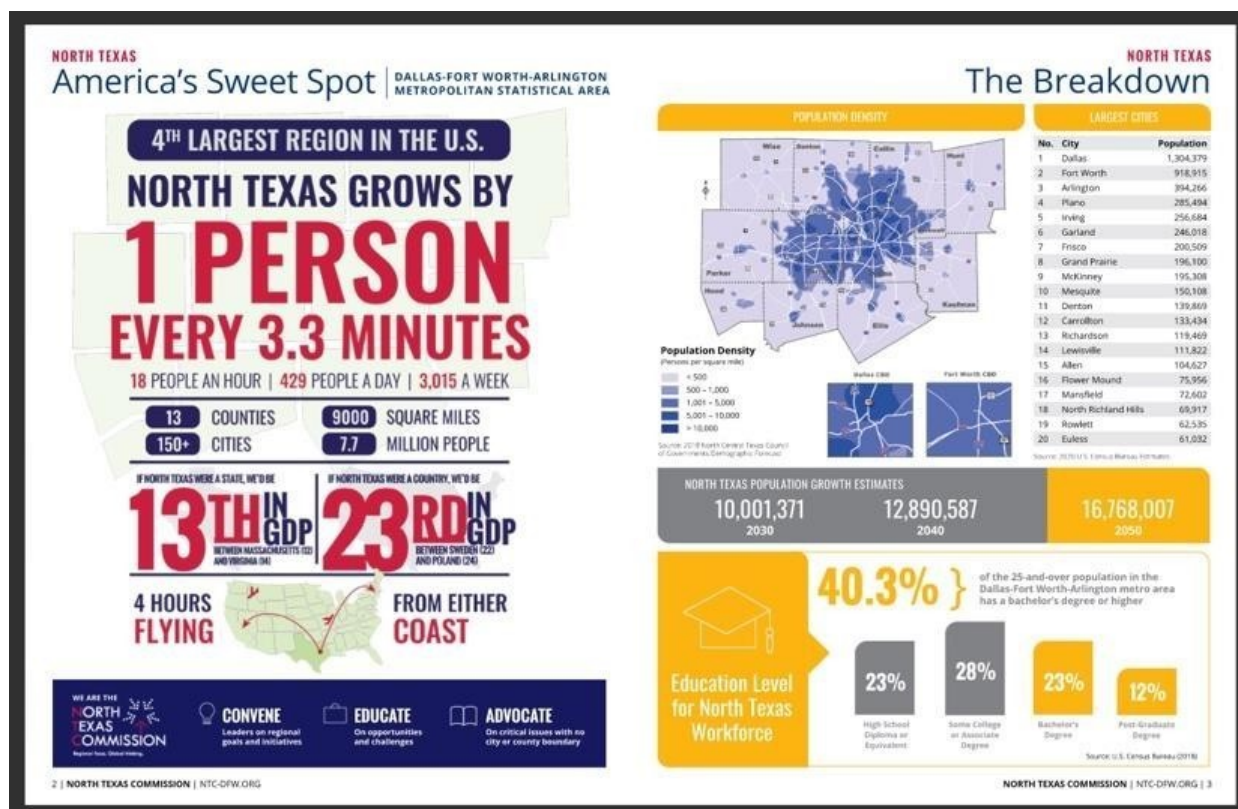
There is a saying that states, “Everything is bigger in Texas”:

Texans love to say, “The bigger the hair, the closer to God,” proving once more their proclivity towards magnitude. And while it may be difficult to substantiate hair height, it’s easier to evaluate the state’s impressive religious sites. At a staggering 190 feet in height, The Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is the biggest freestanding cross in the country — soaring nearly 19 stories tall. Even more astonishing, Houston’s Lakewood Church has a whopping weekly attendance of 52,000 people, making it one of the most attended megachurches nationally. And Second Baptist Church, also in Houston, has a total membership of 63,000 people spread across six city locations. And, of course, there is Texas pride, which seems to be residing within every citizen and is the biggest thing the great state has to offer.<sup>14</sup>

The following illustration (Fig.2.1) gives further details on the popularity of the North Texas area:

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<sup>14</sup> Why People Say, "Everything's Bigger in Texas": For the Love of God, accessed March 6, 2022, Trip <https://www.triptrivia.com/everythings-bigger-in-texas/XyB8z69wOwAGejBC>.

Fig.2.1: North Texas Statistics<sup>15</sup>

## North Texas Baptist Churches

### Baptist Denominations

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."—Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV).

North Texas Baptist Churches certainly hold true to the making disciples of all nations. The magnitude of geography and cultures of North Texas include many varieties of Baptist denominations. The following list includes Baptist denominations found in North Texas:

<sup>15</sup> *What is North Texas You Ask*, accessed March 6, 2022, North Texas Commission, n.d., <https://www.ntc-dfw.org/north-texas-1>.

<sup>16</sup> Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

1. Alliance of Baptists
2. American Baptist Association
3. American Baptist Churches USA
4. Baptist Bible Fellowship International
5. Baptist General Convention of Texas
6. Baptist Missionary Association of America
7. Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches
8. Converge
9. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
10. Foundations Baptist Fellowship International
11. General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC)
12. National Association of Free Will Baptists
13. National Baptist Convention/USA Inc.
14. National Baptist Convention of America Inc., International
15. National Missionary Baptist Convention of America
16. North American Baptist Conference
17. Pentecostal Free Will Baptists
18. Primitive Baptists
19. Seventh-Day Baptists
20. Southern Baptist Convention
21. Venture Church Network<sup>17</sup>

The largest Baptist affiliation in North Texas is the Southern Baptist Convention. There are 123 Southern Baptist Convention churches in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area (See Fig. 2.2).

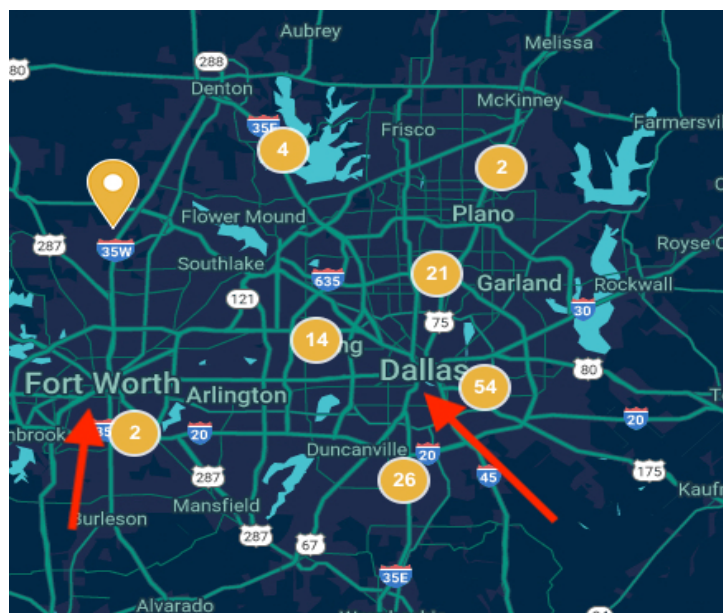


Fig. 2.2: Southern Baptist Convention churches in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> “Baptist Denominations in America”, n.d., Baylor University: Baptist Studies Center for Research, <https://www.baylor.edu/baptiststudies/index.php?id=9365>.

<sup>18</sup> “Find a Church”, n.d. Southern Baptist Texas Convention (SBTC), <https://sbtexas.com/find-a-church/>.



## The African-American Baptist Church

There are three hundred seventy-one Afro-American Baptist churches in Dallas Texas.<sup>19</sup>

There are four hundred one Afro-American Baptist churches in Ft. Worth Texas.<sup>20</sup>

## The Hispanic Baptist Church

“Currently, more than 3,400 Hispanic churches and missions are part of the SBC, reflecting a diverse cultural heritage of more than 20 countries.”<sup>21</sup> There are fifty-two Hispanic churches in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area (see Fig 2.3).

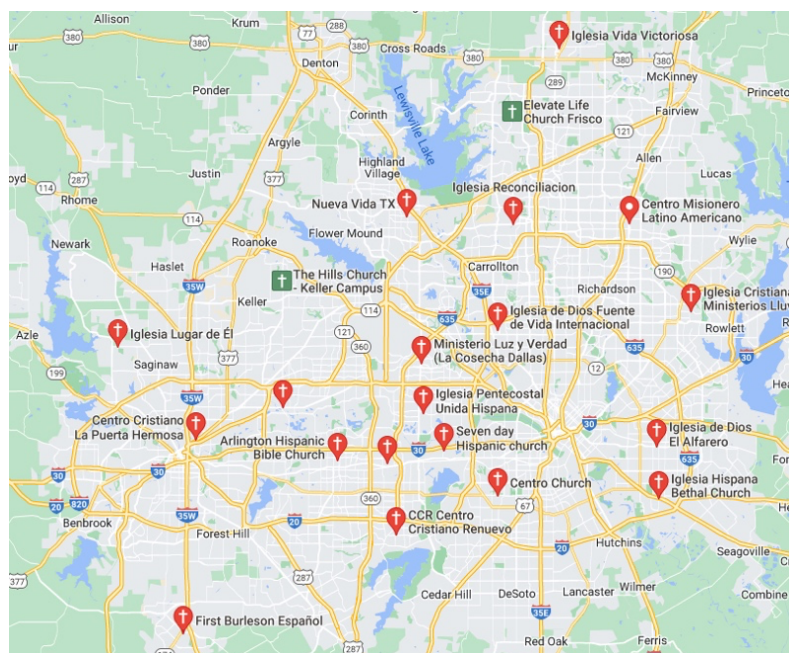


Fig. 2.3: Hispanic Baptist Churches in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> “Afro-American Baptist Churches in Dallas Texas” Texas, accessed October 8, 2022, Yellow Pages, n.d., [https://www.yellowpages.com/search?search\\_terms=black+baptist+churches&geo\\_location\\_terms=Dallas%2C+TX](https://www.yellowpages.com/search?search_terms=black+baptist+churches&geo_location_terms=Dallas%2C+TX)

<sup>20</sup> “Afro-American Baptist Churches in Fort Worth Texas”, accessed October 8, 2022, Yellow Pages, n.d., [https://www.yellowpages.com/search?search\\_terms=black%20baptist%20churches&geo\\_location\\_terms=Fort%20Worth%2C%20TX&page=15](https://www.yellowpages.com/search?search_terms=black%20baptist%20churches&geo_location_terms=Fort%20Worth%2C%20TX&page=15).

<sup>21</sup> Art Toalston, “Hispanic Unity Gaining Momentum as SBC Dallas Nears”, April 20, 2018, Baptist Press: Ethnicity, <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/hispanic-unity-gaining-momentum-as-sbc-dallas>.

<sup>22</sup> “Hispanic Spanish Churches in Dallas and Ft. Worth Texas”, accessed October 8, 2022, Church Finder, October 1, 2022, <https://www.churchfinder.com/churches/tx/dallas/hispanic-spanish>.



## The Asian Baptist Churches

There are three Chinese Baptist Churches in the Dallas/Fort Worth area:



Fig. 2.4: Chinese Baptist Churches in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area<sup>23</sup>

There are twenty Korean Baptist Churches in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. (See Fig. 2.5).

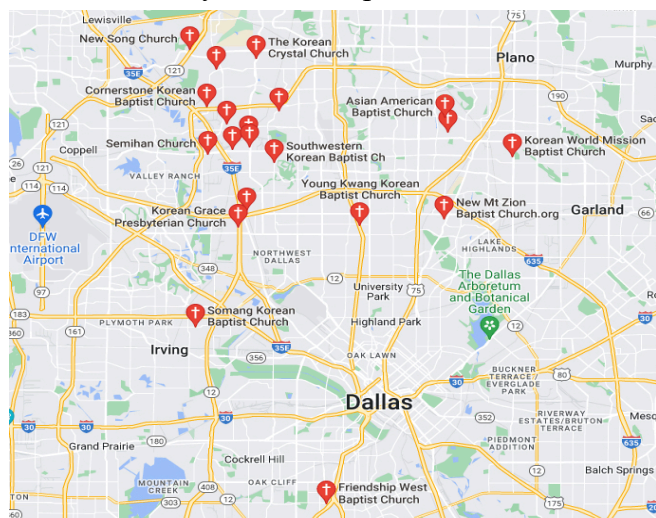


Fig. 2.5: Korean Baptist Churches in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area<sup>24</sup>

## The Cowboy Church

“Despite all the calculations and percentages that verify the state’s significant size, there’s something else that looms large in the state of Texas — and it can’t be measured. There’s the lingering love for the cowboy of the Old West, an iconic American figure that lives on in

<sup>23</sup> “Chinese Churches in Dallas and Ft. Worth Texas”, accessed October 8, 2022, Church Finder, October 1, 2022, <https://www.churchfinder.com/churches/tx/dallas/chinese>

<sup>24</sup> “Korean Churches in Dallas and Ft. Worth Texas”, accessed October 8, 2022, Church Finder, October 1, 2022, <https://www.churchfinder.com/churches/tx/dallas/korean>.

lore.”<sup>25</sup> Texas is known for its cowboy heritage. The church system has been infiltrated by the cowboy tradition to the point where the cowboys have formed a new church for themselves, simply known as "The Cowboy Church." There was no such thing as a cowboy church a few decades ago. Today, the American Fellowship of Cowboy Churches has at least 200 churches on its roster, and there are undoubtedly hundreds more that are difficult to count. There is at least one in nearly every state in the United States. Because of the American Fellowship's origins, many cowboy churches adhere to Baptist practices and theology. According to the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the movement's epicenter, a large number of cowboy churches adhere to Baptist and Convention practices.

### **The Contingency of Baptists in The United States**

Amanda Casanova, author of *10 Things Everyone Should Know about Baptists*, provides data about Baptists in The United States:

About 50 million Americans profess as Baptist. According to a Pew Research Center study in 2014, Baptists make up nearly 16 percent of the American adult population. In the Southern Baptist Convention alone, there are some 46,500 churches and some 15 million members among those churches. In 2016, there were about 280,000 baptisms reported in the Southern Baptist Convention. In the American Baptist Church USA network, there are some 5,000 congregations and about 1.3 million members. A 2015 Pew Research Center report said 36 percent of evangelical Protestants identify with Baptist denominations. In the Baptist World Alliance, the largest organization of Baptists in the world, about 48 million are part of the alliance, according to a 2016 report.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Maurice Chammah, *Where Have All the Cowboy Churches Come From*, accessed March 4, 2022, Texas Monthly, July 23, 2014, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/the-culture/where-have-all-the-cowboy-churches-come-from/>.

<sup>26</sup> Amanda Casanova, "10 Things Everyone Should Know about Baptists", accessed October 5, 2022, Christianity.com, April 11, 2022, <https://www.christianity.com/church/denominations/the-most-well-known-protestant-denomination-10-things-everyone-should-know-about-baptists.html>.

## The Responsibilities of the Worship Leader

### The Musical Responsibility of the Worship Leader

“Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; bless the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.” (Ps. 105:1-3).

The author of the book *God's Singers*, Dave Williamson, gives five elements of musical style: (1) rhythmic groove, (2) tone quality, (3) pronunciation, (4) vibrato, and (5) nuance.

Williamson list these five elements as important in the recording and choir settings.<sup>27</sup>

In the book of Psalms David offered songs to God. “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.” (Ps. 98:4). Possessing a dimension of its own, music often exceeds the spoken word in expressing moods and feelings of the soul. The scriptures offer many such references as expressions of love and reverence for the Lord. Music is important to God. The Bible is filled with references to the importance of music in the Bible. References include Bible verses about the angels singing in Heaven, David (God’s musician), the orchestration of musical instruments and singing, music in the temples and the new church of Jesus Christ. It follows then that music in worship, its relevance and excellence, should be of utmost importance to the worship leader.

Table 2.2: Music as Prayer in the Church Service

	Action	Outcome
1	Singing our prayers unites the gathered church.	When we sing, we sing as one, unifying voice to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2	Singing our prayers focuses our wandering thoughts.	Singing focuses our attention.
3	Singing our prayers inflames our withering affections.	Singing sparks inner passion and emotion.
4	Singing our prayers engages our entire bodies.	Singing involves the lungs, the brain, our vocal cords, our arms and legs. <sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Dave Williamson, *God's Singers: a guidebook for the Worship Leading Choir in the 21st century (Director's Edition)*, (Nashville: In:ciite Media, 2011), 74.

<sup>28</sup> Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), Kindle, loc. 855.

Many of these songs were also offered to God as musical prayers. Zac Hicks, author of *The Worship Pastor*, specifies four particular outcomes of music as prayer in the church service (see Table 2.2):

The worship leader is expected to be skilled as a musician. “Spirit-filled worship is a matter of the heart. But a heart for worship does not deny the importance of gifted hands and voices.” (Ps. 33:3). The worship leader is expected to lead with excellence for his/her worship team and his/her congregation.

Of course, there are other general responsibilities of the music: the planning of the music, rehearsals, writing/notating music, Planning Center (software), and on and on and on. However, these are not responsibilities of the soul; they are duties of the devotional, vocational sort of responsibility. It is still part of the all-for-one, all-in-one makeup that the worship leader is bound to, but these kinds of leadership duties are not of the transforming type.

### **The Emotional and Pastoral Responsibility of the Worship Leader**

The worship leader should have a spiritual connection with the members of their worship team and for members of their congregation. Dave Williamson, the author of *God's Singers* to lead worship with people you know well, who love and care about you”.<sup>29</sup> The key word in the previous quotation is *love* (emphasis mine). Christ-like love is the common thread in all the responsibilities of a worship leader.

The worship leader should be a prayer leader with the worship team, the congregation, the family, and personal prayer. Zac Hick's four steps to development 'meaning' in prayer? Hick's four steps to the development of 'meaning' in prayer:

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<sup>29</sup> Dave Williamson, *God's Singers: a guidebook for the Worship Leading Choir in the 21st century (Director's Edition)*, (Nashville: In:ciite Media, 2011), 99.

1. First, ask God for it.
2. Second, cultivate a prayer filled life.
3. Third, investigate the meaning—the why—behind your worship services various prayer practices, and then tell your people about the meaning of those practices in worship.
4. Fourth, fill your prayer practices with the appropriate emotion.<sup>30</sup>

The Bible lists four types of prayers (see Table 2.3). There are other forms of prayer:

Adoration, Confession, Vows, Healing, Deliverance and Help, Transformation, Intercession, and prayers for Blessing.

The worship should have an emotional responsibility for her/his congregation. "When we plan and lead worship services, we hold the flock's feelings in our hands. The context we create can either haphazardly manipulate emotions or intentionally guide people toward 'faithful feelings.' Worship leaders are emotional shepherds."<sup>31</sup> The worship leader should serve as a Christ-like example to his/her worship team, his/her congregation, in his/her public and private life. "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." (Heb. 13:7).

Table 2.3: The Bible's Four Types of Prayers

Form of Prayer	Scripture Associated with the Type of Prayer
Prayer of Thanksgiving	Philippians 4:6-7— <i>"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."</i>
Private Prayer	Matthew 6:6-8— <i>"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."</i>
Spontaneous Prayer	1 Thessalonians 5:16-18— <i>"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."</i>
Needful Prayer	1 John 5:14— <i>"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."</i>

<sup>30</sup> Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), Kindle, loc. 855.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 147.

Table 2.4 The seven sketches of prophetic pastoral worship leadership<sup>32</sup>

	Sketches	Responsibility
1	Word wielder	Word wielders study and listen to the Word of God in order to be used in preparation for and during worship.
2	Heresy fighter	Heresy fighters are on the watch for heresy and teach against it in their worship.
3	Future seer	As worship leaders we have a prophetic, future-seeing task: helping people to “see the end” (God’s judgment) in worship.
4	Idol expert	Worship leaders must guard theirs and their worshippers from their temptations (idols).
5	Complacency disturber	Displacing churchgoers’ mindsets of earthly thinking and replacing it with the things of God.
6	Alms giver	Worship leaders need to be especially attentive to the poor, both physically and spiritually.
7	Sheep protector	<i>“A sheep protector is concerned for those on the margins because these are the people most vulnerable to attack and susceptible to being forgotten.”</i>

Zac Hicks states that prophetic pastoral leadership should also be the responsibility of the worship leader.

### **The Responsibility of the Worship Leader as a Student of Worship**

The first word in the title of ‘worship leader’ is *worship* [emphasis added]. The worship leader will only contain the heart of Christian service if worship comes in seeking first the kingdom of God. Worship is not a performance. Maybe the best way to understand what worship is and what it means is to note what worship is not. Joe McKeever, contributing writer for Crosswalk.com, says there are *7 Things We Regularly Get Wrong about Worship*.<sup>33</sup>

**One is not Supposed to 'Get Anything Out of the Service':** Worship is about more than just any one person. It is not about "having one's needs met." It is not about a pastor, singer, choir, or musician's performance. "Give glory to the Lord for His name's sake." We have come to

<sup>32</sup> Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 90-94.

<sup>34</sup> Joe McKeever, “7 Things We Regularly Get Wrong About Worship”, accessed October 13, 2022, Crosswalk, October 28, 2021, <https://www.crosswalk.com/church/worship/7-things-we-regularly-get-wrong-about-worship.html>.

church to give. Now, if one is going somewhere to "get", but find out when they get there that they are supposed to "give," they may be disappointed. That is exactly what occurs in a typical church service. People leave frustrated because they did not "get". They did not because they were not there to "get", but to "give".

**Worship is About the Lord:** A worshiper is giving glory to God and not to man. Church congregants are aware of this and claim to. "...for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." How many times has that been said? How often has a Baptist church sung, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow..."? It is done so because glory is rightfully His. He is "deserving of worship." This is the central theme of the Bible's final book. Who is deserving? "You are worthy...for you were slain and have redeemed us," says the Bible. (Rev. 5:2). "The Lamb that was slain is worthy" (Rev. 5:12).

**Destroys All Worship:** When one enters a church, if the focus is self-serving--hearing a sermon that blesses oneself, having one's needs met, gaining knowledge, and being uplifted by the singing. Christ has no place in self-centered worship. Jesus becomes one's servant, while the pastor and all other "performers" exist solely for their own benefit. Everything revolves around the individual and not around Jesus. The church has strayed so far from the biblical concept of worship — honoring God in all the ways He has commanded — that it is a wonder that people still attend. Even more remarkable is that church leaders continue to encourage us to worship. It is impossible to satisfy the insatiable hunger of people, even the best and most devout ones. One week, the pastor gets it right and devours the praise. Just as he believes he has it figured out, the congregation leaves, complaining that they gained nothing from today's meal. The average church congregation today believes that the service is all about them: getting people saved, learning the Word, being inspired to last another week, having their sins forgiven, and collecting

an offering to support the Lord's global work. What exactly is wrong with those? Absolutely not. These actions are possible while attending church, but they do not constitute worship. "If you worship because it pays, it will not pay," says Warren Wiersbe.

**Evangelism, Discipleship, Giving and Praying, Grow Out of Worship:** While worshiping on the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and sent to the streets to testify about the living Christ (Acts 2). God appeared to Isaiah in the Temple, forgave him of his sins, and appointed him as a prophet to the people (Isaiah 6). During the worship service, the eyes of the two distraught disciples were opened to recognize Jesus at their table (Luke 24).

**We Owe Him Worship and Glory in All Ways:** According to 1 Chronicles 16:29 and Psalm 96:8, "Give the Lord the glory due His name and bring an offering." God does not despise a broken and contrite heart. All of these are mandated in worship in various biblical passages. Lord Jesus told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, "Those who worship God must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). That is, with their entire being, spirit, and not just their lips or bodies performing the motions. Furthermore, in reality, the revealed truth of God's prescribed worship. God is not content with "just anything" one calls worship. Spirit (the subjective aspect of the body, soul, and emotions) and truth must be worshipped in harmony (the objective aspect: all that God has revealed in His word).

**Upon entering the Lord's House, One Decides Whether or not to Worship:** If one does not worship, one cannot blame the preacher. He is unable to offer assistance. No one else may consume someone else's food, love someone's loved ones, or worship in one's stead. No pastor can decide or dictate whether we will worship based on the effectiveness of his leadership or sermon. Whether one worships today has nothing to do with how well the pastor does his job.



The choice to worship is up to the individual. One chooses whether to worship or not. This choice is within one's control. When it became evident that Mary was worshipping the Lord Jesus, He informed Martha that her sister had "selected the good portion," which "will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42). The time spent in worship was exceptional. Such minutes or hours are timeless. One cannot argue that Martha could have worshipped in her kitchen because of her service to Christ; one can only point out that she did not do so on that particular day. (7)

Remember That Worship Is a Verb: Worship is also a verb. We perform worship rather than having it performed for us. Even in the direst circumstances, it is possible to worship God. Paul and Silas worshiped in the Philippians' prison while their beaten backs were still oozing with blood (Acts 16:25).

Worship in this earthly life is a never-ending journey of commitment and devotion. For the Christ follower, being a student of worship should be a yearning for the heart of Jesus. Dr. Vernon Whaley, former director of the Center for worship of Liberty University, stated this about *The Role of the Worship Leader as a Student of Worship*: "There is much more to being a worship leader than leading songs and speaking encouraging words to engage the Lord in heartfelt love."<sup>33</sup>

Various tasks, responsibilities, and assignments are associated with the role of a worship leader. These roles include worshipper, disciple, theologian, professional artist, musician, servant leader, pastor, administrator, staff member, student, counselor, family man, and others. As the worship leader accepts these various tasks and responsibilities, he or she realizes that ministry is to the Lord and the entire church. Then the most pressing task becomes preparing for a more preparing for a more extensive congregational ministry. Being a worship leader entails being a

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<sup>33</sup> Vernon. Whaley, "Lesson15: The Role of the Worship Leader as a Student of Worship", accessed October 8, 2022, Liberty University, <https://canvas.liberty.edu/courses/328452/pages/watch-the-role-of-the-worship>.

student. A worship leader accepts the responsibility of mentoring, teaching, and educating others. The worship leader quickly realizes that they must also be students, particularly students of worship. What exactly is a student? A student has studied or is interested in a specific subject. A student also pursues a job, task, or career while studying. Being a student is a beautiful opportunity.

What are the guidelines for being a good steward of the gifts God has bestowed upon the worship leader as a student? (1) First and foremost, the worship leader must be committed to submission and surrender. (2) A worship leader must also have a teachable spirit. Then there is a commitment to understanding the truth. They then accept the discipline of focusing on depth rather than breadth. Then comes a commitment to excellence and understanding the importance of being a good student, followed by (3) ensuring that the worship leader has made time to learn.

First, consider what it means for a student to be dedicated to submission and surrender. Submission, obedience, and humbleness entail surrendering to the Holy Spirit as a teacher, trainer, motivator, and guide. These virtues include learning, listening, looking for places to merit, and leading others to be good students. It also requires the worship leader to be submissive and surrender to the role of a student, understand the history of worship, understand worship practices in different cultures, and watch the changes in the worship community. They are then attentive to the needs of the worshipers God has placed in their midst. It also entails being submissive and surrendering to the idea that we are students of God's Word, then learning the application of the Word to the lives and needs of those they serve and getting to know God. Finally, learning to live a worshipful life guided by the truth of God's Word. Working with people involves being submissive, surrendering to a student's role, and learning how to

collaborate with others. After all, the worship leader has been called by God to lead people in worship.

Being teachable is the second key to being a good student. Listening to other people's opinions, looking for ways to improve and develop skills, seeking advice when faced with challenges and following that advice when appropriate, and then waiting for the right time to make changes are all part of this process.

Third, being a student entails understanding the truth; we have already discussed the importance of being submissive to knowing God's Word. However, this principle entails the worship leader's commitment to understanding truth. This commitment necessitates the worship leader to be a student of God's Word. However, the worship leader must also be able to divide the word of God and apply it to worship ministries. This ability develops only as the worship leader becomes a student of God's truth, and this takes time. Set aside time each day to study God's word. Get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Find a quiet place to meet with God, and then devotion to learning from his word.

Comprehending the entire worship movement requires the worship leader to be disciplined. That implies a commitment to developing a depth of thought, idea, concept, application, and principles concerning worship. These roles need the worship leader to be a student to develop and ensure ministry depth.

Fifthly, the worship leader must study other experts' practices, which necessitates intentional exposure to and dedication to greatness. Almost everyone desires to exhibit excellence. The excellence defined here relates to the requirement for the worship leader to seek out mentors and teachers who will aid in the development of their musical talent and professionalism. This is when the iron sharpens iron principle comes into play. The worship

leader must be surrounded by those who can challenge and motivate their active development and skill level.

The sixth principle of being a successful student recognizes the necessity of education. We live in a rapidly evolving society: every two or three years, the entire method of worship communication changes. New music is being composed, and new technologies are being created. The worship leader must be an expert on good change and always be prepared. The guides assist the transformation process with care and affection. The seventh and final principle for successful students is reserving time for learning and remaining. Managing schedules and interactions is one of the most challenging tasks for worship leaders. The worship leader must resist the temptation to delay the time required for retooling and education. Consider the need to be a student of sound worship pedagogy. Enjoy gaining the skill of training and instructing others. Set aside time each week to commit to being a learner and gaining a deeper understanding of the discipline God serves. Remember, the worship leader is a God-appointed role. The responsibility is to fulfill life's calling.

### **The Responsibility in the Personal Life of the Worship Leader**

“A minister may fill his pews, his communion roll, the mouths of the public, but what that minister is on his knees in secret before God Almighty, that he is and no more.”

—John Owen<sup>36</sup>

The Bible is clear on this: The first responsibility in the private life of both the worship leader and the congregant is to keep God first. “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”—Matthew 6:33 (NIV). Private worship is

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<sup>36</sup> Moumita Dutta, “Top 70 John Owen Quotes From The English Nonconformist Church Leader And Theologian”, accessed October 12, 2022, March 19, 2021, <https://kidadl.com/quotes/top-john-owen-quotes-from-the-english-nonconformist-church-leader-and-theologian>.

essential for public Christian leadership. Who the worship leader is behind closed doors comes before any other purposes and devotions. “And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. .” (Mt. 22:37). Costi Hinn, the author of *Private Lives Define Public Leaders*, list three private areas that, for better or worse, will define a Christian leader.

**A Leader's Personal Devotion:** Private devotion ultimately defines genuine spiritual leadership when no one is present to patronize the leader's spirituality. A leader's job may be thriving, their friends may be envious of their oratorical skills, and a significant number of people may be captivated by their charisma; however, if private devotion to Christ is not their highest priority, all of this may be in vain. Know this: a leader who does not spend significant time on their knees and in God's Word will not endure the test of time. Knowing the most recent LifeWay research statistics and articulating topics such as church trends and growth strategies will be ineffective if a leader lacks proficiency in prayer and the Bible. Christian leaders are not expected to be culture experts. They are commanded to imitate Christ.

**The Private Marriage of a Leader:** Every Christian leader is happily married on Sunday morning. Men boast about their position as head of the household and flex their spiritual muscles while holding a Bible. Women select the ideal outfit and beam with delight, reminiscent of a woman who had a "respecting husband" week. Her Instagram posts provide evidence of this. It exemplifies public perfection! However, is this always the truth? How a leader's "first ministry" operates during the week will define who they are, not a Sunday (or social media) performance. While a leader's marriage should be progressing and growing in Christ – which will result in an excellent public example – it should also be progressing and growing in Christ.

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<sup>37</sup> Costi Hinn, “Private Lives Define Public Leaders”, accessed October 12, 2022, For the Gospel, February 1, 2022, <https://www.forthegospel.org/read/private-lives-define-public-leaders>.

Faking perfection is dangerous when things are falling apart because it lacks the diligence that God instructs Christian couples to have when working on their marriage. If a leader is unwilling to take the necessary steps to nourish their marriage, they are not leaders. Profound self-sacrifice must characterize a leader's marriage, a calendar with dates that correspond to biblical convictions, candor about weakness, confession of sin, and, if necessary, the involvement of qualified church leaders or counseling. What truly matters is how we live out Ephesians 5:22-33 behind closed doors, not how a leader's marriage may appear on the outside (or even if it is doing well).

**Private Conversations of a Leader:** Leaders engage in constant private and public communication, implying that many words are spoken that cannot be taken back. Every private conversation requires discretion and controlling one's tongue in environments where leaders feel most at ease is essential. A leader who "lets it fly" is a recipe for disaster. Many church leaders use vulgar language in the name of authenticity, but all they do is foster a locker-room mentality. In addition, many leaders use manipulative language with their staff for their benefit. Manipulative language could be sexual or production-based – pitting them against one another to spark competition for the advancement of the ministry. This behavior is unbecoming of a true Christian leader, although this is how many churches manage their business affairs. Since when did Jesus promise to build His church using corporate shark and verbally aggressive CEO leadership styles? A wise leader does not shame others regarding their frustrations. He replaces public "venting" (aka gossip) with private "vetting" (aka prayer) with Jesus. The best way for a leader to control his or her tongue in conversations is to bring every attitude, thought, and frustration to Christ in prayer. FHL is sometimes best represented by its abbreviation. It means "Few, trustworthy, and loving" and refers to the words we should use if we are

experiencing stress in our daily lives. Ministry is complex, and temptation is everywhere, but leaders must learn to control their speech in private.

Numerous additional instances could be provided, but they all point to the same truth. The private life of a leader can make or break their public leadership. **A leader's life is challenging.** Leaders must rely on God's grace to be at work in their lives more than anything else. Every pastor, elder, small group leader, deacon, teacher, parent, layman, and aspiring leader should remain humbly on their knees before God, pleading for His power to be at work in their prayer life, marriage, and words.

### **The Theological Responsibility of the Worship Leader**

"We will begin with worship, or as we prefer to call it, the divine service. This means starting at the beginning, for whatever passes for theology grows out of the divine service."

—Oswald Bayer, 1994<sup>38</sup>

James M. Hamilton, Jr., author of *What is Biblical Theology*, says this: "Studying biblical theology is the best way to learn from the Bible how to read the Bible as a Christian should. By the same token, studying the Bible is the best way to learn biblical theology."<sup>39</sup> Biblical principles, and scriptural understanding, are necessary for establishing the characteristics of a worship leader. In *Worship 365*, David M. Edwards states, "Worship is not just a time/space event. Worship is our highest priority. Worship at its core is all about a relationship between God His people."<sup>40</sup> If worship to God is the highest priority, then it would follow that within the core, and essential characteristics, knowing what the Bible has to say about qualifying the role of

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<sup>38</sup> Oswald Bayer, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey G. Silcock and Mark C. Mattes (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), 85.

<sup>39</sup> James M. Hamilton, Jr., *What is Biblical Theology?: A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 19-20.

<sup>40</sup> David M. Edwards, *Worship 365: The Power of a Worshiping Life*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 18.

worship leader would be at the heart of the service.

Revelation 14:6-7 makes clear the responsibility to communicate Gospel-filled Worship:

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the Earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the Earth, the sea, and the springs of water. (NIV).

Based on Revelation 14:6-7, author Alain Coralie states that worship leaders are called to know the Gospel.<sup>41</sup> Worship Leaders Must Understand the Gospel. Christian worship does not include any worship time or church service that does not tell the gospel story through word, song, or other expressions. Therefore, worship leaders must be well-versed in the gospel message and recognize its close relationship to worship. This gospel knowledge cannot be merely intellectual but also experiential. The everlasting gospel must be the air we breathe, the center of our piety, the sustenance of our reflection, and the source of our praise for us as worship leaders. From the perspective of the Cross, we must organize and offer worship. Our strength as worship leaders must not be based on our talents or abilities but on the power of the gospel bursting through us. Understanding God through Christ by immersing ourselves in the majesty of the gospel must therefore be our highest priority. (Details available in Appendix C).

Worship leaders also theologize through the songs they choose for a worship service: Many congregants do not open their Bibles between Monday and Saturday. This means that the only theological input congregants receive may be from a worship song.

Improvising on a theme of Martyn Lloyd-Jones, my friend Kevin Twit is known for saying, "Hymns are theology on fire." By this he means that our songs are nothing more and nothing less than theology enflamed, engulfing our hearts. Sung worship is one of the most holistic ways we can experience (hear, "know") theology, because song summons our whole self—mind, body, soul, intellect, will, emotions. When we sing about God, His works, and our response to Him, we are being deeply, indelibly theologized.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Alain Coralie, *A Word to Worship Leaders: Reflections on Revelation 14:6-7*, Ministry Magazine, accessed September 19, 2021, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2016/04/A-word-to-worship-leaders>.

<sup>42</sup> Kevin Hicks, *The Worship Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 72.



## The Leadership Responsibility of the Worship Leader

J. Oswald Sander's book, *Spiritual Leadership*, has long been a staple text for guiding those who want to understand spiritual leadership. Sander's classic book on Christian Leadership has illuminated the callings and journeys of Christian leaders across the years and into the future with each generation. In *Spiritual Leadership*, Sanders discusses qualities essential for spiritual leaders, such as being Spirit-filled:

Devotion practices that will aid in making an effective leader include prayer, time management skills, reading, self-discipline, vision, courage, integrity, humor, anger, patience, executive ability, and good listening skills. Providing successful succession of their leadership, leaving a healthy organization, and developing future leaders, are book highlights in qualitative leadership.<sup>43</sup>

Oswald Sander's book *Spiritual Leadership* and John Maxwell's book *Developing the Leader Within You* are specific to *influence*. This author has read both books and says both books hold more than *influence* as contextual offerings to their readership. Both books are Christian-based guidance books on various leadership aspects presented in forming and developing the Godly leader. On the other hand, Gary McIntosh's book is specific to fighting spiritual battles as a God-appointed leader. Consider the following for clarification from this book review of *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership* by Gary McIntosh.

The Christian world has been rocked by the number of prominent leaders in both church and parachurch organizations who have been compromised by moral, ethical, and theological failures. *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership* addresses this alarming problem and offers Christian leaders' valuable guidance in dealing with the inherent risks of their work. Using biblical and current examples, the authors describe the characteristics of five types of leaders and the problems they are most likely to have if their dysfunctions develop unrestrained. McIntosh and Rima offer a series of steps for leaders to consider so they can take control of their dark side and learn to harness its creative powers.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*, Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007, p. 7-199.

<sup>44</sup> Gary McIntosh, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, accessed March 19, 2022, Eden Co., n.d., <https://www.eden.co.uk/christian-books/careers-and-leadership/leadership/overcoming-the-dark-side-of-leadership/#descriptionSection>.

There are other aspects in the leadership role of the worship leader. Zac Hicks discusses these ways of leading through disposition, prayerful education, with backbone, and by empowering other leaders. Worship leaders need to be cognizant of their disposition both in countenance and physical display of worship. Being a hyperactive worship leader can have a reverse effect on a congregation that is more reserved. By contrast, a leader that is underwhelming in their worship presentation can remove the hope of a spirit-filled service. Worship leaders that have a reserved worship congregation should lead in baby steps towards a more revitalized worship. Worship leaders that have a congregation that focuses more on the physical aspects of worship may need to be led, again in baby steps, to a calmer spiritual experience in worship. “Ultimately, our goal is to tastefully and appropriately mirror to our congregations the kinds of affective dispositions we hope they have in a given moment in the worship service.”<sup>45</sup>

Educating church congregations about what worship is and what it does should not be treated as a classroom experience. Teaching about worship should be combined with experience. Worship should be spiritual and reactionary, not a head exercise. Hicks offers ways to incorporate teaching about worship within the worship service. “We see in these moments that when we combine our call to educate with our call to be prayer leaders and missionaries, we become much more effective informing our congregations theology of worship.”<sup>46</sup>

Two other methods that enhance and give aid to worship leadership are by empowering other leaders (equipping other team members that intermittently co-lead), and by leading with backbone (knowing when to lead with boldness rather than timidly). Author Steven Cole penned

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<sup>45</sup> Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), Kindle, loc. 4258.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, loc.3908.

an article about *The Responsibilities of Church Leaders*<sup>47</sup>. If the Bible is sufficient for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4) and equips God's people for every good task (2 Timothy 3:16-17), then it should speak to the crucial issue of church leadership. Since Christ vowed to develop His church (Matthew 16:18), we should look to His inspired Word for guidance regarding the characteristics and responsibilities of church leaders. While our text is not exhaustive, it does provide some essential concepts regarding the duties of church leaders. Godly church leaders are accountable for shepherding God's flock by living personally with God and assisting church members in doing the same. There are four primary components to this assertion:

**Religious Leaders have a Responsibility to Lead:** Leadership includes a clear biblical understanding of what the local church should be and what it should be doing and consistently conveys this to the church. It also necessitates addressing issues that develop within the church. President John F. Kennedy remarked (from an unidentified source), "The President of the United States never has an easy task. "If they are easy to solve, someone else has already solved them." Church leaders frequently avoid complex problems to appease everyone. Church leaders must actively pursue God and His truth and assist others in doing likewise.

**The Responsibility of Godly Church Leaders is to Walk Individually with God:** In 1 Timothy 4:16, Paul admonishes his younger colleague, "Pay particular attention to yourself and to your teaching...." In Acts 20:28, he admonished the Ephesian elders, "Be on alert for yourselves and for all the flock...." Our text highlights four characteristics of the personal walk of church leaders: Christian Church Leaders must be careful to maintain a good conscience in front of God and others (13:18). Paul told Felix (Acts 24:16), and he told Timothy (1 Timothy 1:5),

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<sup>47</sup> Steven Cole, "Lesson 58: The Responsibilities of Church Leaders (Hebrews 13:7, 17-19, 22-25)", accessed September 25, 2022, Bible.org, <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-58-responsibilities-church-leaders-hebrews-137-17-19-22-25>.

"The purpose of our instruction is love from a clean heart, a good conscience, and a true faith."

The primary way to maintain a clear conscience is to obey God's Word daily. If a person sins intentionally, they must promptly confess it to God and seek the forgiveness of the person they sinned against. Personal submission to God is a prerequisite for guiding others in submission to God.

**Godly Church Leaders Live with a View of Answering to God Someday (13:17):**

They are constantly aware that they will "give an account" before God, both for their own lives and for the church. Men of faith and prayer, Godly church leaders encourage others to pray (13:7, 18, 20-21). The church is to advance by faith in the living God and prayerful dependence on Him. Our goal as church leaders is not to lead by our collective intelligence but to seek God's will for His church through prayer and faith. If necessary, godly church leaders are willing to suffer for Christ (13:23). In the following years, we may be persecuted for our beliefs, and the leaders are always the enemy's primary targets. Even if we are not persecuted from the outside, leaders must be prepared to endure criticism and personal attacks from within the church.

"Blessed are you when you are insulted, persecuted, and unjustly accused of all manner of wrongdoing because of Me," Jesus said. "Rejoice and be pleased, for your recompense in heaven is great, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who came before you." Therefore, godly church leaders are responsible for leading, and they do it primarily by walking with God.

**Godly Church Leaders are Obligated to Collaborate:** Leaders is a plural noun. The New Testament indicates unequivocally that local church leadership is to be numerous (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Titus 1:5). Plural leadership is a precaution against authority misuse. Also, unless the church is tiny, the responsibility of shepherding a local church is just too enormous for a single man. This truth has two implications: (1) Godly church leaders must collaborate. The

author works closely with Timothy (13:23) and the leaders of the Hebrew church in this chapter. He instructs the congregation to greet their leaders (13:24). The leaders maintain watch over the congregation's souls (13:17). Clearly, they could only accomplish this by working as a team. Paul became the leader of the first missionary team, despite Barnabas having been a Christian for longer than Paul. However, all these men surrendered to one another in the Lord and taught that as Christians, we ought to do likewise (Eph. 5:21).

**Godly Church Leaders Put a Priority on Godly Relationships:** The Bible is summed up by the two great relational commandments: love God and love people. The implication is that godly church leaders must work at lovingly relating to one another and must also work at helping church members love one another. The responsibility of godly church leaders is to assist church members in their personal relationships with God. Again, our material is not exhaustive, but at least four components of this task are revealed.

**Godly Church Leaders Help Church Members by Keeping Watch Over Their Souls (13:17):** These responsibilities demand insight to determine the spiritual status of individuals and whether they are headed toward spiritual peril. Leaders must have sufficient love for God and people to confront those who are slipping. "Keeping watch over souls" is a daunting duty, and church leaders do not bear sole responsibility. Every spiritually developed believer is accountable for helping those who have fallen into sin and bearing one another's burdens (Gal. 6:1-2). We must all collaborate to care for one another spiritually.

**Godly Church Leaders Help Church Members by Faithfully Teaching God's Word (13:7, 22):** Paul's nearly final words to Timothy were found in 2 Timothy 4:1-5: I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of

season; rebuke, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. The time will come when people will no longer tolerate solid doctrine; instead, to have their ears tickled, they will seek out teachers who cater to their whims, turn their backs on the truth, and embrace fables. Be sober, bear adversity, and carry out the mission as an evangelist.

**Godly Church Leaders Aid Members by Seeking Joy and Spiritual Progress (13:17):**

"Let them do this with joy and not with sorrow, for that would be unproductive for you," refers initially to the leaders' delight but extends to the members' joy and spiritual profit. Those who walk in submission to Christ will experience His joy (John 15:10-11). Godly leaders are elated when they observe members of the flock walking in the truth (3 John 4).

Godly Church Leaders Help Church Members by Emphasizing God's Grace (13:25): Far too many Christian churches and homes are characterized by legalism, but leaders must foster an environment of God's love. Grace is never an authorization to sin; instead, it instructs us "to refuse ungodliness and worldly cravings and to live rationally, righteously, and godly in this age" (Titus 2:11-12). God's grace pardons and restores us when we sin. God's grace is compassionate with the weak and encourages their spiritual growth.

The conclusion of Paul's statements about the ministry: After asking rhetorically, "Who is qualified for these responsibilities? Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as originating from ourselves, but our adequacy comes from God, who made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the word kills, but the Spirit gives life." (2 Cor. 2:16; 3:5-6). All things are feasible with God's help, despite the impossibility of church leadership. (See the whole article in Appendix F).

**The Administrative Responsibility of the Worship Leader**

The past twenty years have seen an extensive growth in the tasks associated with the

worship leader role. The twenty-first century has changed the title of the worship leader (formerly known as a Music Minister) to various titles (see the following list). As the titles have changed, so have the responsibilities. Long gone are the days of the Music Minister whose sole responsibility was with music. The twenty-first century has given the worship leader many more responsibilities. To say that the twenty-first century is a multi-tasker would be an understatement. (See Appendix B for detailed descriptions of the following titles):

1. Worship & Creative Arts Pastor
2. Minister of Music
3. Worship/Creative Pastor
4. Contemporary Worship Leader
5. Global Worship Pastor
6. Worship & Arts Pastor
7. Worship & Youth Pastor
8. Worship Minister
9. Worship, Tech/ Media, and Dramatic Arts
10. Creative Arts Director <sup>48</sup>

The administrative duties of the worship leader include being a curator. Merriam-Webster defines it this way, “Definition of curator: one who has the care and superintendence of something.” <sup>49</sup> “Cultural analysis tell us that today we live in a curated reality.” <sup>50</sup> Zac Hicks states, “Worship pastors are curators. Starting with the architecture of a service, a worship curator creatively fills that space with the right elements arranged in the right way. A curator brings a variety of perspectives to bear on the selection and presentation of worship materials.” <sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> “Find Church Jobs”, accessed September 30, 2022, Church Staffing, n.d., <https://www.churchstaffing.com/jobs/search/1/10/q=Worship%2C%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20Tech%2FMdia%2C%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20%20and%20Pantry&categories=144&desc=False>.

<sup>49</sup> *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “curator,” accessed March 2, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/curator>.

<sup>50</sup> Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), Kindle, loc. 3888.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, loc. 3908.

Zac Hicks list six materials of worship:<sup>52</sup>

1. Music
2. Prayers
3. Readings
4. Preaching and Sacraments
5. Transitional Content
6. Other Materials (mission reports, ministry spotlights, announcements)

Music worship pastors are the curators of the elements they present to their congregations. These elements include musical style (indigenous, cross-cultural, global), hospitality (music selection that engages the church's varying sensibilities), lyrical content that aids in spiritual warfare, and having missionary goals as it relates to cultural idolatries. Music as sung prayers is another element that should be given high regard as it recognizes praise, adoration, Thanksgiving, confession, petition, intercession, and supplication.

Of course, there are other general responsibilities of the music: the planning of the music, rehearsals, writing/notating music, Planning Center (software), and on, and on, and on. But these bound to, but these kinds of leader duties are not of the transforming type.

### **The Ultimate Responsibility of the Worship Leader**

What is the thing, the one sole thing, that a worship leader is responsible for doing? More than anything else, the utmost responsibility of a worship leader is to bring a person(s) to the place where worshipping the splendor of God and understanding the miracle that is the King, the King of Kings, Jesus Christ, is the most joyous privilege. It opens the divine secret, revealing what it means to be a child of God. It opens the future to a new place, a holy eternity, a New Jerusalem, and the glory of God's heaven. Life's purpose, the ultimate call, is to worship God,

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<sup>50</sup> Zac Hicks, *The Worship Pastor*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), Kindle, loc. 3908.



and when the worship leader can transcend into their flock: knowing God brings new understanding, a supernatural experience beyond all comprehension. The goal is to let people know about their life's purpose and then fall in love, deeper and deeper, with the knowledge of the holy. In this way, the role of the worship leader is also to be a spiritual leader. Or should the ultimate responsibility of a worship leader be to fall deeper in love with Jesus? Hopefully, this falling deeper in love with Jesus has a snowball effect on the church's congregants. How can a worship leader be an example to his congregants if he is not pursuing his relationship with our Lord God? The goal is to let people know about their life's purpose, their life in Christ, and then fall in love, deeper and deeper, with the knowledge of the holy.

Yet if we would know God and for other's sake tell what we know we must try to speak of his love. All Christians have tried but none has ever done it very well. I can no more do justice to that awesome and wonder-filled theme than a child can grasp a star. Still by reaching toward the star the child may call attention to it and even indicate the direction one must look to see it. So as I stretch my heart toward the high shining love of God someone who has not before known about it may be encouraged to look up and have hope. — A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*<sup>52</sup>

Another 'ultimate' responsibility of the worship leader is to engage the church congregation. Engage does not simply mean, "I'm singing along...for the most part." Engaging a person in worship also involves the 'bringing in.' The 'bringing in' is integral to the worship leader-church congregant experience. It is bringing a person into the understanding of what it means to be able to sing praises to our Lord God. It carries a lineage of praise-singing that made a 360-degree turn when the Early Church of Christ added a new dimension to the purpose of singing praises to God, and that purpose's name was our Savior, Jesus Christ. They are all the ultimate responsibility of the worship leader. As the Trinity is three-in- one, the worship leader's foremost responsibilities are many responsibilities built into one. Which commitment will be

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<sup>52</sup> A.W. Tozer, "The Knowledge of the Holy", accessed October 13, 2022, Goodreads, n.d., <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1313-the-knowledge-of-the-holy-the-attributes-of-god-their-meaning-in-the-c>.

needed at which time, being ready to respond to the call, and other duties, are all the worship leader's mantras.

While seriousness typically accommodates the thought of responsibility, these responsibilities include built-in variables of joy. Worship Leaders should be able to exude a spirit of joy. Joy does not mean enjoying stand-up comedy, although it can be. It is not the falling-on-the-floor variety, although it can be. What is a greater joy than the joy of the Savior? It means the real joy of the Lord. "Though you have not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls." —1 Peter 1:8-9. (Neh. 8:10; Rom. 15:13; Ps. 16:11; Phil. 4:4; Rom. 14:17; Jn. 15:11p; Jn. 16:22; Psalm 30:5.) What is the most significant part of a secret? The greatest part of a secret is sharing it with someone else. Worship leader responsibilities include helping others attain the joy of the Lord.

### **The Responsibilities of the Church Congregant**

A church congregant should be devoted to the church where God has placed them, however long or short that time may be. The church congregant is responsible for gaining knowledge and understanding of worship, their role in worship, and being informed about what to look for and pray for in a new worship leader. North Texas Baptist Congregants are not excluded. In this research, the church congregant's responsibility applies to the worship leader's characteristics. Knowing the worship leader's essential, fundamental, and rudimental elements is especially good for the church congregant. Why? Because the congregant has the most to get out of this knowledge. Pursuing a deeper relationship with God should be a congregant's chief motivator in the parallel pursuits of purpose in life and an expanding joy and peace of the Lord.

When congregants feel secure in their worship, they can define which characteristics of worship they are drawn to in knowing the characteristics of an excellent worship leader. Joining a church is not only about what you will gain. Church membership also brings some important responsibilities and expectations in the church and community.

### **Expectations of the Congregant**

The expectation of the congregant is to be engaged in worship and to be a participant in worship. Being engaged in worship means to be engaged with God.

"We must remember that worship is something that we, the people of God, perform. Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth. Worship is not passive but is participative. Worship is not simply a mood; it is a response. Worship is not just a feeling; it is a declaration. Therefore, it is we, God's chosen people, who must declare his praises. We must engage in obedience when it comes to praising God."<sup>53</sup>

God has given each congregant a gift to serve the church. The gift may be a musical talent, a gift of communicating, teaching, administrative, etc. The church congregants need to work in one accord to be a complete and unifying body in Christ. Paul says it this way:

"Paul states that we are one with many different functions. We all have different gifts, according to the grace given to us. We must encourage and permit the use of each other's gifts as God designed. If we do not permit all members to use their gifts, we quench the working of the Spirit of God. Therefore, we need to make the necessary adjustments for the body of Christ to function according to its gifting."<sup>54</sup>

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an

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<sup>53</sup> Kevin Navarro, *The Complete Worship Leader* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 146.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 147.

eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact, God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. —1 Corinthians 12:12–26" (NIV).

In an article written by author Clayton Craby, *8 Responsibilities of Church Members*,<sup>55</sup> church members have eight vital responsibilities. Members are urged to prioritize corporate worship with their church family by attending regularly (Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:42). Pray Consistently: It is crucial that the church be unified in prayer, seeking God's blessing on the church's activities and the influence of the Gospel on one's congregation. There are a variety of ways to create relationships with others in the church. Whether you are part of a ministry team, small group, Bible study, or other group, you are asked to create strong connections with others so that you can encourage one another, pray for one another, build each other up, and hold one another accountable as Christ-followers. Run the Christian race with others! Church members are required to submit to the leadership and teaching of the church. Hebrews 13:17 states, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will be held accountable." Let them do this with joy rather than moaning, as that would do you no purpose. Does this imply that we offer pastors and elders blind allegiance even when they fail to lead and teach biblically? Of course not. What it does mean is that we are required to support, pray for, and submit to the spiritual authority of church leaders. Jesus stated, "By this, everybody

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<sup>55</sup> Clayton Craby, "8 Responsibilities of Church Members", accessed on October 4, 2022, January 22, 2019, <https://reasonabletheology.org/8-responsibilities-of-church-members>.

will know that you are my disciples: if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). All believers are responsible for maintaining the peace and unity of the body by overlooking offenses when appropriate (Proverbs 19:11), bearing with one another and forgiving one another (Colossians 3:12-14), and pursuing biblical and God-honoring peacemaking when conflicts arise. Discord, rumor, and discord should not characterize the believer's life. . Members are expected to contribute to the financial support of the church and its missions as the Lord directs. Each of us has been equipped with the ability and commanded to serve the Lord in some form. Members should seek out opportunities to serve and use their spiritual skills for the benefit of others (Romans 12:1; Ephesians 4:11-13). Pursue Holiness: The Christian's life should be characterized by a growth in Christlikeness and victory over sin. Despite the fact that we can never be sinless on this side of eternity, we are obligated to resist sin and embrace Christ entirely in this life (Romans 12:2). Regular Bible study, prayer, and worship should be given the highest emphasis.

### **Congregants are Members of the Household of God**

Renowned theologian and ordained pastor R.C. Sproul was the founder and chairman of Ligonier Ministries. In an article for Ligonier.org, Rev. Sproul ask the question *Do You Love the Church?*<sup>56</sup>

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul gives ecclesiology, the church's doctrine, and many considerations. We could say that Ephesians provides the answer. What exactly is the church? Paul's primary architectural metaphor in Ephesians 2:19–22 is the household of God. Christians

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<sup>56</sup> R.C. Sproul, "Do You Love the Church?", accessed October 8, 2022, Ligonier.org, June 21, 2021, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/do-you-love-church>.

are household members because they have been adopted into the family of God, another image used to describe the church in the Bible. However, this passage emphasizes less the family of the household than the household itself: "[We] are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets." (Ephesians. 19–20).

Paul asserts that the prophets and apostles, the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament, comprise the church's foundation. Why? Because prophets and Apostles are the agents of revelation through which God communicates with His people. They communicated God's Word. Another way to say this is that the Word of God is the church's foundation.

Therefore, we must pay close attention to our biblical doctrine. The attacks against the integrity, authority, sufficiency, and dependability of Scripture are not directed at a side alcove of this structure. They leave no mark on the roof of the church. They are attacks on the very foundation of the church. Without Apostolic authority and the Word of God as its foundation, a church is built on sand, not rock. The foundation laid by the prophets and Apostles is essential for the stability of the entire structure of the church.

Paul continues the architectural metaphor in 2:20b: "Christ Himself is the cornerstone." Christ is the cornerstone, the central support of the foundation. If the cornerstone is removed, everything collapses. "In Christ, the entire structure becomes a holy temple in the Lord as it is joined together. In Him, you are also being constructed as a dwelling place for God by the Holy Spirit (vs. 21–22). The church is a new temple constructed in Christ, by Christ, and for Christ. According to 1 Peter 2:5, Paul is not implying that the church is a brick-and-mortar structure, but rather that we are the stones, the living stones. Each believer is as much a part of this church as each stone is of a structure. The new temple, the church, is still under construction. Each day, additional stones are added. This new temple will not be completed until the return of Jesus and

the consummation of His kingdom. Christ continues to build His church, not by adding cement but by adding individuals who are the stones that hold the church together.

Paul continues in Ephesians 3:14–19, "For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ."

Paul explains the church's doctrine in order for us to comprehend what God has done and who we are. Paul asserts that we are the church when he urges us to comprehend who we are and what we are called to do. We are the church that God ordained before the beginning of time. We are His people, His family; therefore, let the church be the church.

We currently reside in a time of crisis. Numerous Christians lament the decadence of American culture and criticize the government and its values. However, if we are concerned about our nation and culture, the renewal of the church must be our top priority. We are the world's guiding light.

Government merely reflects and echoes the customs adopted by the populace in a particular generation. Our government is what we want it to be, or else it would not exist. Culture does not constantly shift from the top down. Typically, it comes from the bottom up. Renewal within the church is the change for which we must strive most. As the church becomes a community of heavenly citizens who demonstrate what it means to be Christ's family, and as the church walks in the power of the Holy Spirit, God's people will become the world's light. When people observe this light, they will praise God (Matt. 5:16). This will impact the entire planet.

However, according to Paul, the church must remember who we are, who the foundation is, who the cornerstone is, who the Lord is, and who is the head of the church's structure.

Do we cherish the church? There is little doubt that there have been many times in our nation's history when there has been as much anger, hostility, disillusionment, and disappointment with the institutional church as there is today. Because it has failed us in many ways, it is difficult not to criticize the church. However, if the church has failed, then we have also failed. We are called to serve the church through the Holy Spirit's power.

We, the church, have been equipped for this mission by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. However, we are called not so much to ascend as to genuflect. If we bow to our Lord, as Paul writes in Ephesians 3:14, the church will be the church, and our light will penetrate the darkness.

### **The Role of the Congregant in Selecting a Worship Leader**

The selection of a new worship leader in Baptist churches follows a uniform procedure across all denominations. The congregation members play a crucial part in this process. This procedure may require considerable time. Selecting a new worship leader requires a church to be guided by prayer. On two levels, Baptist church members are involved in the worship leader selection process: (1) Certain congregational members are asked to serve on a worship leader search committee. (2) The congregation is invited to a general business meeting at which a vote is taken. The worship leader must receive a majority vote from the congregation to be accepted.

Although the following framework is geared toward searching for a pastor, the method is identical for a worship leader. In *How to Handle the Process of Getting a Pastor for a Baptist*



*Church*, author Karen Hollowell list six steps in the process of selecting a worship leader.<sup>57</sup>

**Assess the Requirements of the Church:** Evaluate the church's needs. Is the current worship leader transferring to another church or retiring? Is the church relatively new? The responses to these questions will assist the church in determining the level of experience and education expected from a future worship leader.

**Appoint a Search Committee for the Worship Leader:** Appoint a search committee for a worship leader. The church body generally nominates and confirms a committee during a business meeting. Numerous churches attempt to have a representative from key departments, such as Sunday school, and ask them to pray about finding the one God is calling to them. These individuals contact the majority of church members and are best suited to represent them.

**Screen Candidates:** The worship leader search committee, often known as the pulpit committee, collects resumes from a variety of sources. The church typically utilizes numerous internet recruiting sources and websites focusing on church employment roles to find a worship leader. These website services outline the qualifications and requirements the church seeks in a candidate. Multiple candidates are considered for the position.

**Observe the Worship Leader(s) Conducting a Service:** Meet with qualified applicants. Listen to the candidates for the worship leader position. After the committee has selected several potential candidates, it might begin to observe their worship services. Committee members must frequently travel to different churches to observe the worship leader.

**Meet with Selected Candidates after Observing Them Lead a Worship Session at the Church:** The committee should ask questions about both doctrinal and biblical teachings.

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<sup>57</sup> Karen Hollowell, "How to Handle the Process of Getting a Pastor for a Baptist Church", accessed October 10, 2022, Classroom Synonym, September 29, 2017, <https://classroom.synonym.com/how-to-have-a-church-reception-for-a-new-pastor-12084217.html>.

Inquire about the pastor's expectations and needs, such as compensation, housing, and other benefits.

**Suggest a Candidate, Introduce a Candidate Before the Congregation, and Request a Vote:** Typically, the committee will select one candidate from the group and endorse him or her in a general business meeting. Occasionally, the vote will take place at this meeting, or the committee may request that the congregation take some additional time to prayerfully ponder their choice before holding a second meeting within two weeks. The worship leader selection procedure finishes with a vote and acceptance by a majority vote of the church congregation. Accept the religious leader and hold a special ceremony to welcome the community's new worship leader. This participation by church members demonstrates why the church must educate the congregants on the essential attributes of a worship leader. Although superb singing and platform presence are part of the criteria, additional characteristics and qualifications should be considered when selecting a worship leader.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

Researching *Characteristics That Make an Excellent Worship Leader According to Perspectives of Baptist Congregants in North Texas* requires surveying the congregants and analyzing the answers they choose. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology used by this researcher to present the survey, and subsequently, chapter four will reveal the survey results. Discussion of the methodology includes the (1) Research design, (2) Participation, (3) Setting, (4) Procedure, (5) Data Analysis, and (6) Summary.

### **Research Design**

The design of the study (quantitative/qualitative), as well as the method (historical, phenomenological, descriptive, quasi-experiment, experiment, etc.).

### **Participation**

The participation includes congregants of North Texas Baptist Churches that meet the consent form criteria. The following lists the descriptor elements:

1. Number of Participants - 128
2. Male/Female Both male and female
3. Demographic Information – North Texas
4. Age – 18 or older
5. Denomination - Baptist
6. Grade – High school (at least 18 years of age) and grades after high school

### **Setting**

Participants choosing to involve themselves in the survey go to a website, in this case, a Facebook group page. The survey was established on a Facebook group page established by this researcher. See Fig. 3.1 to see a photo of the Facebook group page website:

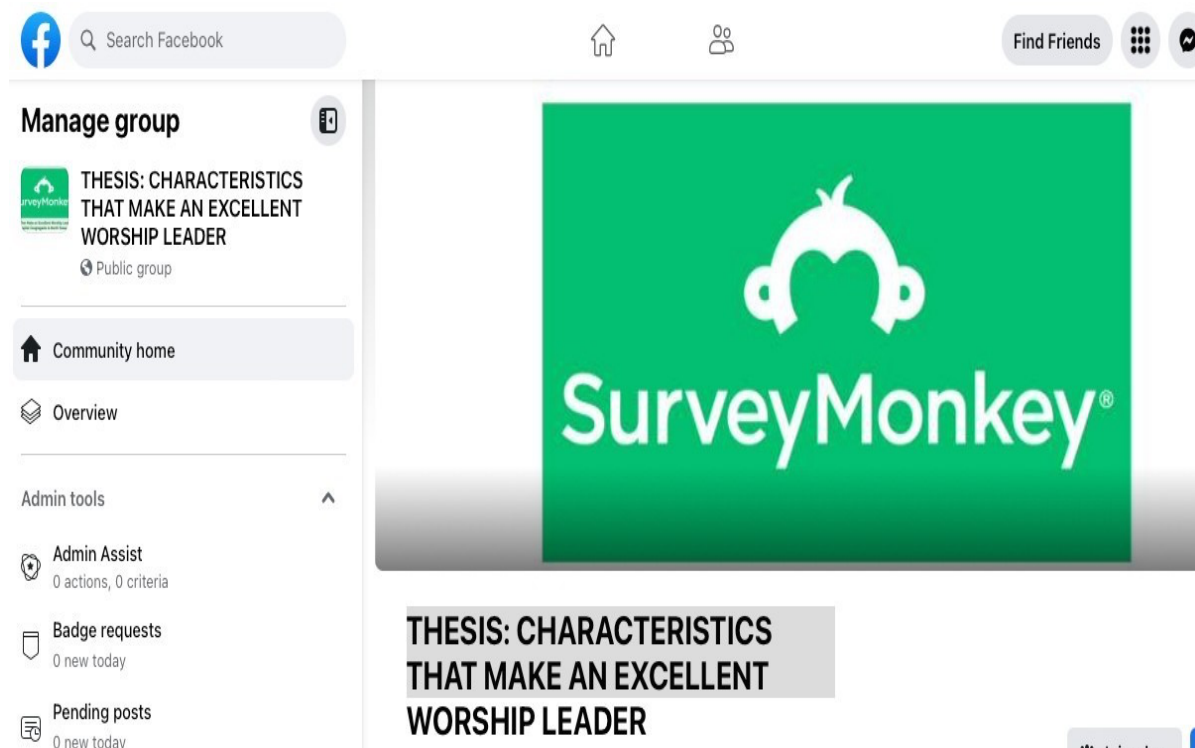


Fig.3.1: Facebook Page of Survey

### Procedure

The survey screening questions are used as participants' consent forms. The consent form is posted first, and participants must approve the consent form before being able to move forward to the actual survey questions. The text used in the survey is shown below:

1. Characteristics That Make an Excellent Worship Leader According to Perspectives of Baptist Congregants in North Texas
2. Question Title
3. SCREENING IRB NUMBER: IRB-FY21-22-758

Fig.3.2 shows what the participant sees upon entering the consent form:

## Characteristics That Make an Excellent Worship Leader According to Perspectives of Baptist Congregants in North Texas

### 1. PAGE TITLE

#### CONSENT

Title of the Project: Characteristics That Make an Excellent Worship Leader According to Perspectives of Baptist Congregants in North Texas

Principal Investigator: Carlos Benson, Graduate Student, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To[MJM(E1)] participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and a congregant or a member of a north Texas Baptist church that is affiliated with a Baptist denomination. North Texas refers to the area that is north of the central part of the state. It includes, roughly speaking, the metropolitan areas of Dallas-Fort Worth and Wichita Falls and their surrounding counties. North Texas does not include Abilene to the west, Waco to the south, or Tyler to the east. Our map of the regions of Texas places 29 counties in north Texas. These include:

1. The 16 counties in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area that make up the North Central Texas Council of Governments: Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, Tarrant, and Wise.
2. The 11 counties surrounding Wichita Falls that make up the Nortex Regional Planning Commission: Archer, Baylor, Clay, Cottle, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young.
3. The 3 counties on the Red River that are in the Texoma Council of Governments: Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson.

Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research. What is the study about and why is it being done? The purpose of the study is to determine what North Texas Baptist church congregants deem important in the characteristics of a worship leader. What will happen if you take part in this study? If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Complete[MJM(E3)] an online survey. The survey will take about 2 minutes to complete.
2. Once finished, you will click on the 'done' button.

How could you or others benefit from this study? Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. The benefits to society include an increased public knowledge on the topic, especially to north Texas, Baptist church congregants and those in affiliation with worship ministries. What risks might you experience from being in this study? The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means that they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. How will personal information be protected? The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous. The answers for the survey are sent back to SurveyMonkey website. The only person able to view the submissions is the researcher, Carlos Benson.

- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all

Fig. 3.2: Survey Consent Form

The screening ensures that the individuals who express interest in this study meet these participant criteria. The first screening question is: Are you 18 years of age or older?

Participants in the survey are asked to answer (1) yes or (2) no. (see Fig.3.3).

## Characteristics That Make an Excellent Worship Leader According to Perspectives of Baptist Congregants in North Texas

### 1. **SCREENING IRB NUMBER: IRB-FY21-22-758**

The screening involves ensuring that the individuals who express interest in this study meet these participant criteria.

- Are you 18 years of age or older?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Fig.3.3: Consent for Age Approval

The second screening question is: Are you a member or congregant of a north Texas Baptist church affiliated with a Baptist denomination? North Texas refers to the area north of the state's central part. It includes, roughly speaking, the metropolitan areas of Dallas-Fort Worth and Wichita Falls and their surrounding counties. North Texas does not include Abilene to the west, Waco to the south, or Tyler to the east. Our map of the regions of Texas places 29 counties in north Texas. These include:

1. The 16 counties in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area that make up the North Central Texas Council of Governments: Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, Tarrant, and Wise.
2. The 11 counties surrounding Wichita Falls that make up the Nortex Regional Planning Commission: Archer, Baylor, Clay, Cottle, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young.
3. The three counties on the Red River in the Texoma Council of Governments are Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson. (See Fig.3.4).

Participants in the survey are asked to answer (1) yes or (2).

**2. Are you a member or congregant of a north Texas Baptist church that is affiliated with a Baptist**

**denomination?** North Texas refers to the area that is north of the central part of the state. It includes, roughly speaking, the metropolitan areas of Dallas-Fort Worth and Wichita Falls and their surrounding counties. North Texas does not include Abilene to the west, Waco to the south, or Tyler to the east. Our map of the regions of Texas places 29 counties in north Texas. These include:

1. The 16 counties in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area that make up the North Central Texas Council of Governments: Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, Tarrant, and Wise.
2. The 11 counties surrounding Wichita Falls that make up the Nortex Regional Planning Commission: Archer, Baylor, Clay, Cottle, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young.
3. The 3 counties on the Red River that are in the Texoma Council of Governments: Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson.

☐ Yes

☐ No

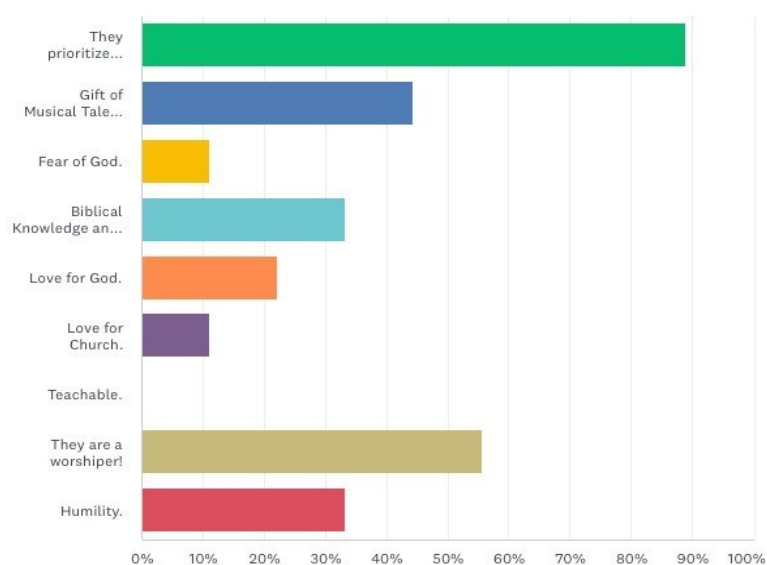
Fig.3.4: Consent for Baptist Affiliation

### Data Analysis

The data analysis of this research study employs the use of descriptive statistics. The company Survey Monkey tallies the participants' answers at SurveyMonkey.com. They are displayed in bar graph form (See Fig 3.5):

Please select (3) answers from the list below.

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



1. Fig 3.5: Survey Data Analysis

The descriptors in text form that are used in the questionnaire survey are as follows:

1. They prioritize their relationship with Jesus.
2. Gift of Musical Talent. An effective worship leader should have some kind of musical talent.
3. Fear of God.
4. Biblical Knowledge and Faith.
5. Love for God.
6. Love for Church.
7. Teachable.
8. They are a worshiper.
9. Humility Participation.

Fig. 3.6 shows the website descriptors from the survey page.

3. Please select (3) answers from the list below.

- ☐ They prioritize their relationship with Jesus.
- ☐ Gift of Musical Talent. An effective worship leader should have some kind of musical talent.
- ☐ Fear of God.
- ☐ Biblical Knowledge and Faith.
- ☐ Love for God.
- ☐ Love for Church.
- ☐ Teachable.
- ☐ They are a worshiper!
- ☐ Humility.

Fig. 3.6 Survey Descriptors

The results are assessed by tabulating the number of descriptors.

### Summary

The survey is the part of this study that asks congregants of North Texas Baptist Churches to choose what is important to them when considering the characteristics they look for in a worship leader. The information, presentation, and accessibility factors revealed from this research study result from the methodology given in the previous headings.



## Chapter 4: Research Findings

### Introduction

Research question one asks the researcher to define the main characteristics congregants of North Texas Baptist churches look for when choosing a worship leader. Substantial research shows that there are nine main qualifiers for answering research question one (see Fig. 3.6). The characteristics qualifiers serve to answer the qualitative stance for this research. Research question two asks about the impact achieved when a completed research study is available to North Texas Baptist church congregants. The results of the survey help to determine how the congregants of North Texas Baptist churches ranked the nine characteristics of a worship leader. These survey results serve to substantiate the quantitative approach implemented in this research.

### Results

#### Explanation of Results

The total amount of survey participants was one hundred twenty-eight. Each participant chooses their top three choices from the list of nine descriptors (see Fig. 3.6). One hundred twenty-eight respondents multiplied by three responses equals three hundred eighty-four responses. Table 4.1 ranks the descriptor results of the survey responses. The table identifies the rank of the descriptor in the left column and the descriptor in the right column. Clearly identified from the tabulation of the results the top-rated characteristic is: *Prioritize Their Relationship with Jesus*. This characteristic received a 90% response tally with 115 responses. The lowest ranking descriptor is: *Teachable* with 0% and zero responders/responses.

### Research Question One

Research Question One: What characteristics do congregants of North Texas Baptist churches look for when choosing a worship leader?

Table 4.1: Characteristics for Choosing a Worship Leader

Rank	Characteristic
1	Prioritize Their Relationship with Jesus
2	They are a Worshiper
3	Gift of Musical Talent
4	Biblical Knowledge and Faith
5	Humility
6	Love for God
7	Fear of God
8	Love for Church
9	Teachable

Hypothesis One: Characteristics congregants of North Texas Baptist churches look for choosing a worship leader may include (1) vital worship experience planning, (2) Bible theology correctness, and (3) strong leadership skills.

### Research Question Two

Research Question Two: What impact is achieved when a completed research study is available to North Texas Baptist church congregants? The impact that is achieved when this research study is completed in one of a hopeful nature and not a factual nature. It is hoped that this research will be viewed by both congregants and worship leaders in North Texas Baptist Churches. This would be a much shorter study if the stated research questions were the only outcome variable. There is much more that this study prompts the congregants and the worship leaders to gain knowledge. The impact from both the congregants and the worship leaders depends solely on what is done with the material provided within this research. The impact that

this study offers is more than quantitative statistics and numbers. Thomas Rainer, author of *I Am a Church Member* and former President of Lifeway Christian Resources has stated that one third of congregants have biblical knowledge and a true understanding of what worship is.<sup>58</sup> With that information from Rainer it is hopeful that this study will serve as a worship guide both for the congregant and the worship leader. It is an invitation for *all* people of their respective churches to be more responsible to the duties that Jesus calls the parts of the body of the church to participate in (reference Paul's verses). It is an invitation to fall in love with Jesus and to fall in love with His church.

Hypothesis Two: The completed research study available to North Texas Baptist church congregants will allow congregants and churches to align better. It may serve as an employee-seeking tool for church administration seeking new worship personnel and draw churches together in community meetings and gatherings with similar worship leader characteristics. There is further examination of those themes in the second hypothesis. Initially, the common themes can seem similar once compared to each other. However, the accumulation of the integrated approach of proper and sustainable research is employed as the study advances, and the descriptive list shortens across the board of Baptist churches in the North Texas region.

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<sup>58</sup> Thom Rainer , "I Am Going: To be a Church Member - 1 Corinthians 12." Accessed October 19, 2022, YouTube.com., March 8, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kcga8yAKl2w>.

Table 4.2: Survey Results Text

Characteristic	Responses	Percentage
They prioritize their relationship with Jesus	115	90.00%
Gift of Musical Talent. An effective worship leader should have some kind of musical talent	51	40.00%
Fear of God.	13	10.00%
Biblical Knowledge and Faith.	51	40.00%
Love for God.	25	20.00%
Love for Church.	13	10.00%
Teachable.	0	0.00%
They are a worshiper!	77	60.00%
Humility.	39	30.00%
<b>Total Respondents: 128</b>	<b>384 Responses</b>	

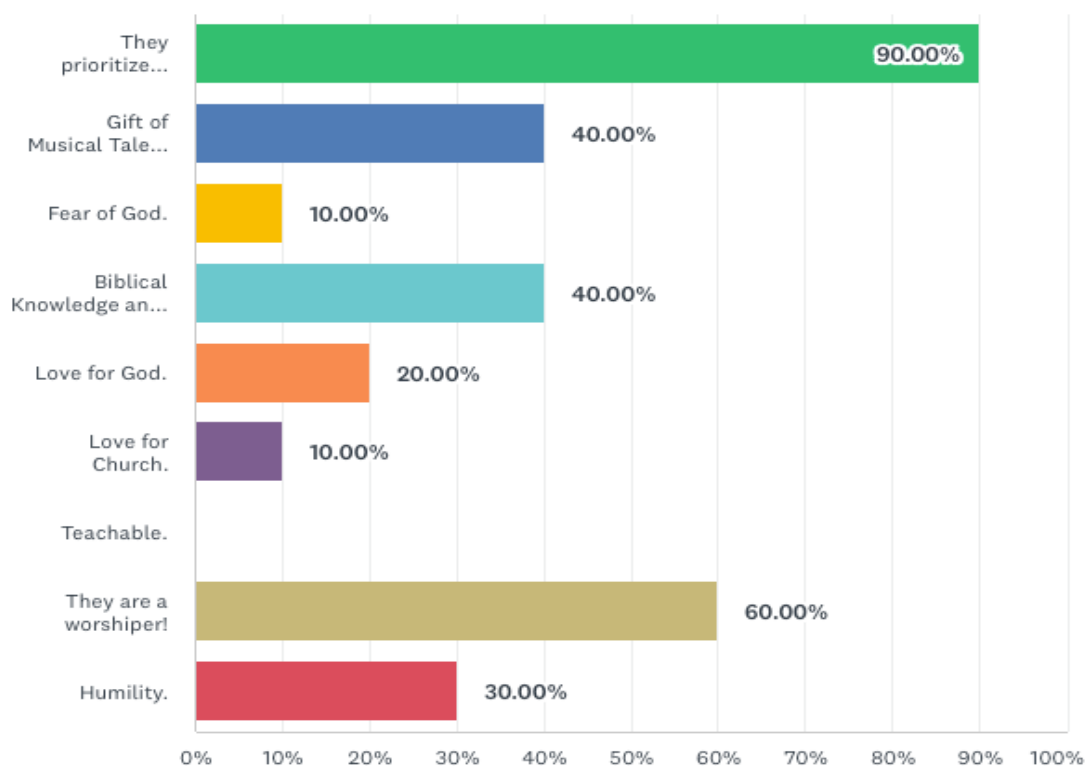


Fig. 4.1: Bar Graph of Survey Results

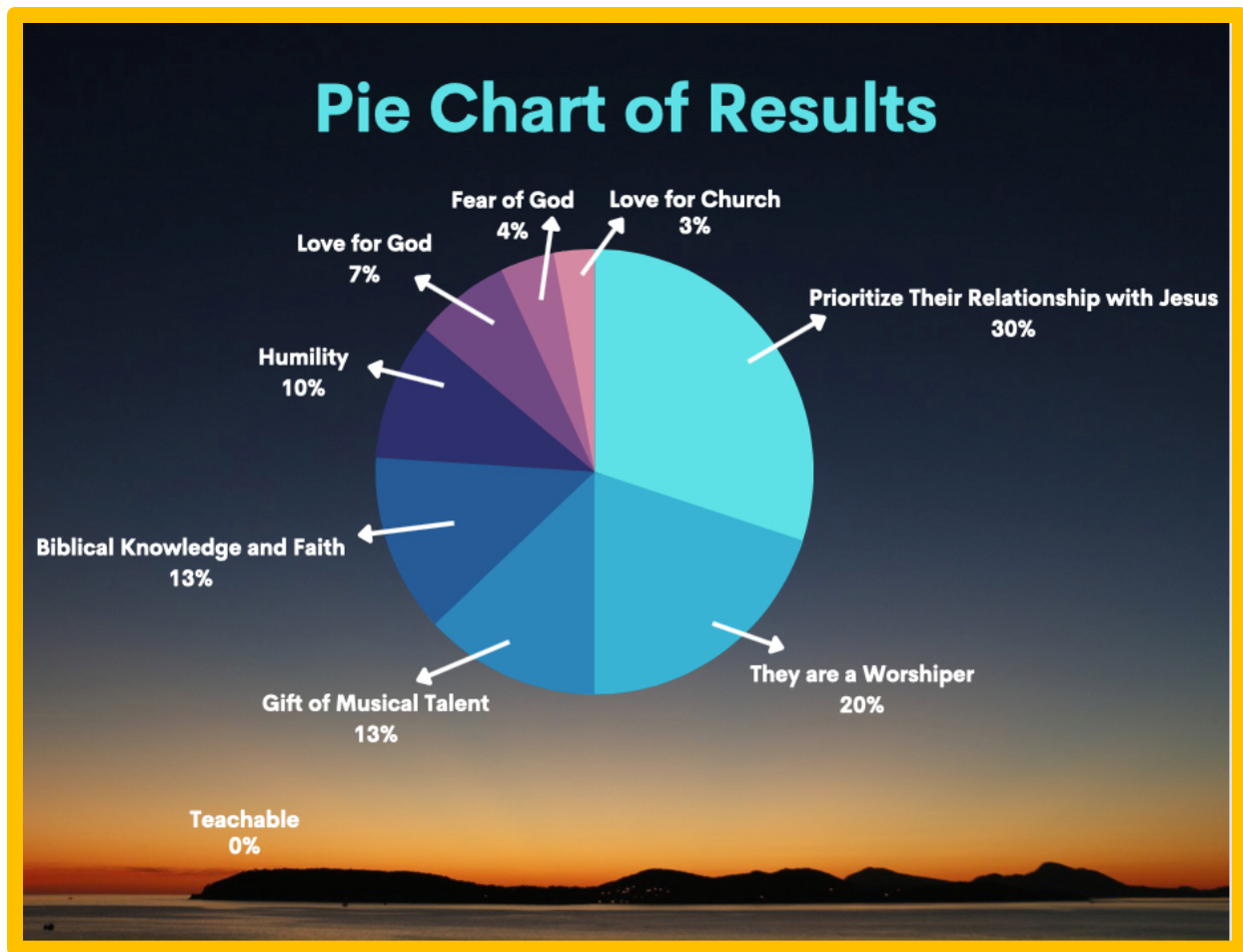


Fig. 4.2: Survey Results Pie Chart

### Summary

The summary of chapter four includes the results of the survey, the characteristics that congregants of North Texas Baptist churches look for when choosing a worship leader, and what impact is achieved when a completed research study is available to North Texas Baptist church congregants. The results found in chapter four substantiate the quantitative portion of this study.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion, Relationship of the Results to the Literature Review, Limitations, Considerations for Future Study**

### **Introduction**

The importance of this chapter is that it gives an overview of the entire study and defines each subtopic. Chapter five subtopics include:

1. Summary of Findings
2. Significance
3. The Benefits of This Study
4. The Importance of This Study
5. Recommendations
6. Considerations for Future Study
7. Conclusion

### **Summary of Findings**

The title of this research is Characteristics That Make an Excellent Worship Leader According to Perspectives of Baptist Congregants in North Texas. The quantitative research employed in this research was formulated by an online survey administered by Survey Monkey. Previous research of this study states in text and illustrative form the questions posed to the participating congregants (see chapter 3). Understanding and knowing the characteristics that make an excellent worship leader is more involved than taking a survey.

The following information lists the descriptors according to (1) the resulting rank of the survey, (2) a brief characteristics description with scriptural reference, and (3) the meaning of the survey descriptor result.

#### **1. They prioritize their relationship with Jesus.**

1.1. Worship leaders put Jesus first in their work and their lives. “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” (Prov. 16:3).

1.2. The number one ranking is not surprising to this researcher. A worship leader that

prioritizes their relationship with Jesus as the number one focus in their lives was also number one with the survey respondents. The meaning of this is that, above all else, 90% of the surveyed congregants want a worship leader whose heart belongs to Jesus.

## **2. They are a worshiper.**

2.1. Worship leader is two words. If one takes the worship out of the leader, they are no longer a worship leader. “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.” (Jn. 4:23).

2.2. 60% of the surveyed congregants ranked this the number two most essential characteristic of an excellent worship leader. A worship leader should have an engaging and yearning desire to worship God and to engage their congregants in worship.

## **3. Biblical knowledge and faith.**

3.1. Theological knowledge and scriptural basis for faith are necessary components in the work and life of a worship leader. “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

3.2. A 40% response was given to the importance of a worship leader having Biblical knowledge and faith. The worship leader should be devoted to reading and studying the Bible. Congregants want a worship leader whose knowledge of scripture is building their leader’s knowledge of God, establishing a theological foundation, and God-inspired worship.

## **4. Gift of musical talent. An effective worship leader should have some kind of musical talent.**

4.1. The worship leader is expected to lead with excellence for his/her worship team and

his/her congregation. Although the Bible does not clearly define 'leading with excellence,' it does refer to musicians being skilled. "Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy." (Ps. 33:3) does not deny the importance of gifted hands and voices. The element that is underestimated is a heart for worship. If a worship leader is not as skilled as another, that is fine. The vital element is engaging the congregation in worship with what musical skills the worship leader possesses. Worship and heart are not subjective with the role of worship leader, but being a skilled or excellent musician is subjective.

4.2. Gift of musical talent also garnered a 40% rating from respondents in the survey.

Congregants agree that an effective worship leader should have some kind of musical talent.

## **5. Humility.**

5.1. Humility is a required state of heart and mind within and without the church walls. A worship leader needs to lead with an even temperament with patience in reasoning, teaching, leading, and other essential elements of a Christlike leader. "In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another because God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." (1 Pet. 5:5).

5.2. Humility ranked a 30% rating from survey respondents. This percentage rating places this descriptor in the middle of all survey choices.

## **6. Love for God.**

6.1. He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and Love your neighbor as yourself." (Lk. 10:27). There is a difference between minimally maintaining one's love for God and loving the Lord God with all one's heart, soul, strength, and mind. Spirit-filled worship is a heart for worship.

6.2. This descriptor is synonymous with the number one ranking of a worship leader prioritizing their 20% rating.



## 7. Love for Church.

7.1 In many worship leader job postings, there is a requirement that reads, “First one in the church on Sunday mornings and the last one to leave.” There is a reason for this requirement. It takes a substantial time devotion associated with being a full-time worship leader. A devotion of this sort necessitates a love for the church. The love for the church is associated with the job aspect of the worship leader role and the people element. Worship leaders need to love their church people. Far too many worship leaders equate themselves with the introverted musician mentality to be about the music, not the people. The love for people is amplified within and without the church walls. “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. The whole building is joined together in Him and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” — (Ephesians 2:19-22).

7.2 The Love for Church ranked a 10% rating from the survey respondents. It could be said that a 10% rating does not amount to much or that a congregant’s mentality is exiting the church service as quickly as some worship leaders. However, this researcher believes that the titles of the other descriptors simply bear heavier weight than *Love for Church*.

## 8. Fear of God.

8.1 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” (Prov. 9:10).

8.2 Respondents also gave Fear of God a 10% ranking. It is hard to think that a Baptist congregant would not have weighed in heavier with this descriptor given the ‘hell, fire, and

damnation' stigma associated with the fundamentalist Baptist church. However, for better or for worse, the times have changed, and with it, change has come to the church. Again, respondents may have placed other descriptors ahead of *Fear of God*.

## **9. Teachable.**

9.1 "Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance." (Prov. 9:10).

9.2 Although Proverbs 9:10 makes a sound claim for listening and learning, the survey respondents ranked this descriptor with a 0% ranking. None of the respondents chose a worship leader being teachable in their top three choices. Understandably, this descriptor would not bear a ranking percentage. Congregants do not think about a worship leader being teachable, or at least none of the congregants of this survey.

Clarifying the meaning of the results of the survey involves stating each descriptor (characteristic), providing each descriptor result, analyzation of the results of the entire survey, and the relationship of each descriptor result to the other descriptors.

The descriptors listed in the survey and this researcher's analyzation of the results of the entire survey (see Table 4.3).

## **Significance**

Reporting a survey's results requires minimal data concerning the extended significance of what this research study has to offer. The results of this completed thesis far outweigh the numbers and statistics.

### **The Benefits and Importance of This Study**

Earlier in this study (chapter two) there is content associated with the background necessary to establish a level of relative criteria. Chapter two states: A literary abyss of content is available to one who wishes to know what constitutes a good worship leader. The question and challenge of this research are to understand how congregants of North Texas Baptist churches define an excellent worship leader. This study includes presenting a research background, a literary background, and other acceptable background criteria that a study of this nature would entail. The problem with this assessment of background criteria is that no research background, literary background, or acceptable data is readily available. This lack of information about what congregants of North Texas Baptist churches look to define as good worship leaders will become a new study. In essence, the term 'background' becomes unusable for this study. The topic of this study is new research, and it is the first of its kind.

Summarizing the benefits of this study entails listing the above points and how the study benefits each point:

1. A literary abyss of content is available to one who wishes to know what constitutes a good worship leader.

Benefit: This study creates content available to one who wishes to know what constitutes a good worship leader.

2. The question and challenge of this research are to understand how congregants of North Texas Baptist churches define an excellent worship leader.

Benefit: The quantitative statistics of the survey produces results as to how congregants of North Texas Baptist churches define an excellent worship leader.

3. The problem with this assessment of background criteria is that no research background, literary background, or acceptable data is readily available. Benefit: This study's quantitative and qualitative results substantially expand the available information of research background, literary background, and acceptable data. This lack of information about what congregants of North Texas Baptist churches look to define as good worship leaders will become a new study.

Benefit: This study helps to fill the void of the lack of information about what congregants of North Texas Baptist churches look to define as good worship leaders.

4. The term 'background' becomes unusable for this study. The topic of this study is new research, and it is the first of its kind. The establishment of this study does create new research, and it is the first of its kind.

Benefit: The concluding statement of the background section of chapter two (point four) says this, “In essence, the term ‘background’ becomes unusable for this study.

The topic of this study is new research, and it is the first of its kind.” This researcher’s exhaustive investigation of available various sources and media concludes that the results of this study, both quantitative and qualitative, are beneficial to the congregant, the worship leader, church personnel, and anyone desiring to advance their knowledge of the included themes and topics.

### **Limitations**

There are limitations to the type of research and the methodology that directly affect the results of the study. There are limitations to both the quantitative and qualitative research design.

### **Limitations and Weakness of Quantitative Research Methods**

A research study's skeleton is its research methodology. The primary objective of quantitative research is the quantification of data. Measuring the opinions and responses of the sample population permits generalizations of the results. Every research methodology consists of two phases: planning and implementation. Consequently, it is evident that during these two phases, there will likely be constraints beyond our control. Priya Chetty gives her findings in her work of *Limitations and Weakness of Quantitative Research Methods*.<sup>60</sup>

**Improper representation of the intended audience:** An incomplete representation of the target population may impede the researcher's ability to attain the desired aims and objectives. The subject representation depends on the probability distribution of observed data despite applying an appropriate sampling plan. This could lead to a miscalculation of the probability distribution, resulting in a false proposition. Therefore, the study's findings cannot be generalized to a larger population but can only be suggested.

**Insufficient means for data collection:** Quantitative research methodology typically necessitates a sizeable sample. However, the lack of resources renders this extensive research impossible. In some developing nations, interested parties (e.g., government or non-government organizations, public service providers, and educational institutions) may lack the knowledge and resources necessary to conduct comprehensive quantitative research.

**Lack of ability to influence the environment:** Sometimes it is difficult for researchers to control the environment in which respondents answer survey questions. Responses frequently depend on a particular time, and the conditions present during that period.

**Limited findings from quantitative research:** In quantitative research, a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions is utilized. It results in the limited outcomes described

in the research proposal. Therefore, the results cannot always represent the actual occurrence generally. In addition, respondents have limited response options based on the researcher's selection.

**Costly and time-intensive:** The analysis of quantitative research is difficult, expensive, and time-consuming. This type of research requires meticulous planning to ensure complete randomization and accurate designation of control groups. A substantial proportion of respondents adequately represents the target population. In order to obtain in-depth responses to a question, quantitative data collection methods are frequently more expensive than qualitative methods.

**Complexity of data analysis:** The quantitative study requires extensive statistical analysis, which can be challenging for researchers without a background in statistics. Due to the scientific nature of the statistical analysis, it is difficult for non-mathematicians to perform. Quantitative research in the social sciences, and education, is significantly more complicated. Rather than a simple "yes" or "no" response, the effective response should depend on the research problem.

### **Limitations of Qualitative Research Methods**

The weaknesses of qualitative research are unique. Data can be subtly altered by the data collector's methods and their observations. Valentin Radu, in his online article *Qualitative, Research, Definition, Methodology, and Limitation Examples*<sup>61</sup> has concluded that qualitative research has the following limitations:

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<sup>61</sup> Valentin Radu, "Qualitative, Research, Definition, Methodology, and Limitation Examples", accessed October 8, 2022, Omniconvert, <https://www.omniconvert.com/blog/qualitative-research-definition-methodology-limitation-examples/>.

**The process is time-consuming.** The primary disadvantage of qualitative research is its time-intensive nature. A second issue is that interpretations are limited. Personal knowledge and experience affect observations and conclusions. Thus, qualitative research may take weeks or months to complete. In addition, since this process involves personal interaction for data collection, discussions frequently stray from the topic being studied.

**You cannot verify qualitative research results.** Because qualitative research is exploratory, participants have greater control over the collected data. Therefore, the marketer cannot objectively compare the results to the scenarios provided by respondents.

**Qualitative research is a labor-intensive method.** Categorization, recoding, and other labor-intensive analysis procedures are required for qualitative research. Similarly, qualitative research requires marketers with extensive experience to collect data from a representative sample of respondents.

**It is challenging to investigate causality.** Qualitative research requires careful planning to ensure the accuracy of the results. There is no mathematical method for analyzing qualitative data. This type of research relies more on opinion and judgment than on empirical findings. Because qualitative studies are all unique, it is challenging to replicate them.

**Statistically, qualitative research is not representative.** Because qualitative research is a method of research based on perspective, responses are not measured. Comparisons are possible, and this may lead to duplication, but quantitative data are typically required for situations requiring statistical representation, and this is not part of the qualitative research process. When conducting qualitative research, it is essential to cross-reference the obtained data with quantitative data. By continuously polling prospects and clients, marketers can construct a more robust database of useful information.

### Other Limitations

The most challenging limitation of this research involves participation in the survey. This is a time in history when people are overly cautious about participation in social media and opening digital links, such as the one that is employed to open the link for participating in the research survey. Furthermore, the survey is listed as a group page on Facebook, a social media website. In the past ten years there has been growing fear of engaging Facebook. The following online article titles this fear of Facebook as “Visiolibriphobia”, a term created by sociologist author Afshan Jafar.

People oppose Facebook because it encourages one to view themselves as commodities and creates opposition to the McDonaldization of ourselves and our relationships. Facebook exhibits at least three of the four characteristics of McDonaldization.

We post pictures of ourselves or status updates, and everyone can view them; we no longer need to send individual emails. We measure ourselves with numbers: the number of friends, the number of likes, and the number of comments. As we manage the content of our Facebook pages, it appears that we have control over Facebook. Despite these concerns, we have less and less control over how information about us is utilized as more and more information about us leaks. As we become addicted to technology – constant feedback, instant validation, a comment, a message – we have less control over our lives. There has also been a growing dread of establishing digital connections (website URLs). People are hesitant to click on unfamiliar or suspicious-looking links due to the fear of being "hacked."

**Social Engineering Strategies:** How does social engineering manifest in practice? It could appear to be an email from a reputable organization, such as a message provider, FedEx, or bank. However, one may install malware or ransomware when opening the email and clicking on



the attachment. It could disguise itself to appear to originate from a trusted member of an organization one is associated with, such as using an unusual title such as IT@yourorganization. Furthermore, if one replies to the email with one's username and password, one's computer is vulnerable to compromise. The rule is to *Consider Before Clicking*.

**Social Manipulation Attacks:** The technical director of Symantec Security Response stated that malicious actors rarely attempt to exploit technical Windows vulnerabilities. They are instead pursuing the recipient. One does not need as many technical skills to find one who might be willing to open an attachment containing malicious content in a moment of weakness. Approximately 3% of all malware they encounter attempts to exploit. In the end, it does not matter whether a person's workstation is a PC or a Mac, as the remaining 97% of malware attempts to deceive users through social engineering. The most prevalent type of social engineering:

**Phishing:** Phishing and spear phishing is the most common social engineering attacks, which can vary based on current events, natural disasters, and tax season. Due to the fact that phishing is responsible for approximately 91% of data breaches, it is now one of the most prevalent forms of social engineering. Examples of phishing: (1) Court Appearance Notice, (2) IRS tax refund malware, (3) Proofpoint researchers have recently uncovered a phishing campaign from specific CareerBuilder job postings, and (4) phishing emails containing malicious attachments, phony FedEx and UPS tracking notices, and even through pop-up ads.

**Banking Link Scam:** Hackers send one an email containing a bogus link to their bank to trick them into entering their bank ID and password.

**Fake fax notice:** It is a fake link to a fake fax. However, it will severely damage one's computer. containing a bogus link to their bank to trick them into entering their bank ID and

password. This is quite common, particularly among document management, title, insurance, and other financial services firms that rely heavily on faxes.

**Dropbox Link Fraud:** We have a surprise for one waiting in Dropbox. Several variations of this appeared in 2014. One was a bogus Dropbox password reset phishing email that, when clicked, led users to a page stating that their browser was out of date and they needed to update it (with a "button" to update). This would initiate the execution of a Zeus-family Trojan. Another email contained Dropbox links hosting malicious software, such as "CryptoWall" ransomware.

**Fraudulent Court Secretary Complaint Link:** Here is a fake link that confirms one's complaint. Something suggests that one will soon be complaining about something else. This has been in use for quite some time.

**Facebook Message Link Scam:** Vin Diesel has just died. This link will provide information about when one's computer will die. This phrase is frequently employed when a celebrity dies. When Robin Williams passed away, this was exploited with the Robin Williams goodbye video. A fake Facebook phishing message urging users to click a link to view an exclusive video of Robin Williams saying goodbye via his cell phone appeared. There was no video, and the link led to a fake BBC news page that attempted to trick users into clicking on other links leading to fraudulent online surveys. It was a two-stage attack designed to obtain one's credentials.

It becomes understandable why congregants of North Texas Baptist churches would be overly cautious when presented with participating in an online survey located on a Facebook page.

## **Recommendations**

This study could be distributed as an educational handout to churches, not only Baptists. It is well known that more education about worship is needed in the church. This study proves brief educational materials on a variety of worship subjects that would benefit both worship leaders and congregants. As an addendum to themes associated with worship, this study could provide valuable, but brief, topics that could aid Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, worship conferences, and other worship related activities

This study contains substantial and viable content on a variety of topics within the realm of the qualitative nature. Topics that this researcher would recommend from this study to others desiring to further their knowledge of Baptist church background, congregant information, and North Texas regional information include:

1. Fundamental Beliefs of the Baptist Church
2. History of the Baptist Church
3. Changes in Baptist Worship in the Twenty-first Century
4. North Texas Baptist Churches
5. Baptist Denominations
6. The African American Baptist Church
7. The Hispanic Baptist Church
8. The Asian Baptist Church
9. The Cowboy Church
10. The Contingency of Baptists in The United States
11. The Responsibilities of the Worship Leader
12. The Musical Responsibility of the Worship Leader
13. The Emotional and Pastoral Responsibility of the Worship Leader
14. The Responsibility of the Worship Leader as a Student of Worship
15. The Responsibility in the Personal Life of the Worship Leader
16. The Theological Responsibility of the Worship Leader
17. The Leadership Responsibility of the Worship Leader
18. The Administrative Responsibility of the Worship Leader
19. The Responsibility of the Worship Leader as A Church Lover
20. The Ultimate Responsibility of the Worship Leader
21. The Responsibilities of the Congregant
22. Expectations of the Congregant
23. The Congregant's Responsibility to the Church
24. The Role of the Congregant in Selecting a Worship Leader

Furthermore, people enter into the role of worship leader either with an educated background (Christian colleges with worship leading programs) or they enter into the role without previous experience or education as a worship. This study offers a brief glimpse into the worship leader role to those without previous experience in worship leader education. Topics from this study that would aid those without previous experience in worship leader education include:

1. The Responsibilities of the Worship Leader
2. The Musical Responsibility of the Worship Leader
3. The Emotional and Pastoral Responsibility of the Worship Leader
4. The Responsibility of the Worship Leader as a Student of Worship
5. The Responsibility in the Personal Life of the Worship Leader
6. The Theological Responsibility of the Worship Leader
7. The Leadership Responsibility of the Worship Leader
8. The Administrative Responsibility of the Worship Leader
9. The Responsibility of the Worship Leader as A Church Lover
10. The Ultimate Responsibility of the Worship Leader

### **Considerations for Future Study**

Studies, such as this study, could be done in other locations. Suggested locations may include city, county, designated limited region, nationally, and internationally.

### **Summary**

*Characteristics That Make an Excellent Worship Leader According to the Perspectives of Baptist Congregants in North Texas* covers a vast amount of territory. In the case of this study, ‘territory’ is not limited to geography. North Texas is multi-cultural, multi-industrial, and, importantly to this study, a multi-church location. North Texas is also a place that is home to a significant and diverse number of Baptist churches. That adds up to a lot of Baptist congregants and worship leaders.

Answering the question of what makes an excellent worship leader to Baptist

congregants of North Texas has concluded with an exciting and surprising set of answers. The stigma attached to worship leaders is that they are basically musicians, but this study has inferred that worship leaders are much more than musicians. In the hearts and minds of North Texas Baptist congregants, a worship leader being a musician ranked third in the characteristics of the study survey. The characteristics of (1) a worship leader's relationship with Jesus and (2) being a worshiper came before the music. The study survey results provide refreshing data, but it is as it should be. After all, praising God with music that creates an engaging environment is key to engaging God. Worshiping God would not be authentic without a worship leader that is excellent at keeping Jesus as their life's focus and driven to worship with the heart of David.

## Appendix A

The traditional hallmarks of Baptist Worship have been the centrality of preaching, fervent singing, and extemporaneous prayer. Worship renewal in the Southern Baptist Convention is moving in divergent directions. Those influenced by the more formal British tradition seek renewal along the lines of the ecumenical consensus. Those more influenced by the revivalist tradition drawing on the praise-and-worship style and the church growth movement. Because of its congregational polity and the wide diversity in the social status of its membership, Southern Baptist worship today takes place in a wide growth movement. Because of its congregational polity and the wide diversity in the social level of its membership, Southern Baptist worship today takes place in a wide variety of styles. As one Baptist Pastor put it, "Some burn incense, others bay at the moon." Southern Baptist worship today bears the influence of both traditions. Charleston's influence can be seen in the set order of worship, formality and dignity, hymns focusing on God, and sermons characterized by learning and piety, head and heart. Sandy Creek's influence manifests itself in gospel hymns and songs focusing on the spiritual state of the worshiper, extemporaneous prayers, folksy informality, and fiery evangelistic sermons that leave ample room, even if carefully prepared, for spontaneous improvisation prompted by the Holy Spirit. A typical (if there is such a thing) Southern Baptist worship service in the mid/late twentieth century would look like this: Prelude Call to Worship (choral or spoken) Hymn of Praise Invocation Welcome and Announcements Scripture Pastoral Prayer Offering Anthem or Solo (instrumental or vocal) Sermon Hymn of Invitation Presentation of "Decisions" Benediction Postlude The last ten years have seen two major developments in Southern Baptist worship. The first movement, found mostly in Charleston-traditional churches, has begun to draw upon the worship tradition of the larger ecumenical church. The congregations in this movement celebrate the major seasons of the Christian year (Advent, Lent, Easter, Pentecost). They make considerable use of symbols and other visual enhancements in worship such as banner art and sacred dance, celebrate Communion more often, and often include two Scripture readings. While the sermon is still central in these congregations, other features of worship take on an inherent importance rather than being simply "preliminaries" ancillary to the sermon. The second movement is found mostly in conservative churches of the Sandy Creek tradition. It has been influenced by televised religion, the praise-and-worship movement, and the church growth movement. Worship comprises the song service, which includes the singing of many choruses and gospel songs, as well as solo performances, and the preaching service, which includes the sermon and the invitation. Overhead projectors and other visual media are used to project song texts and sermon outlines. Hymn books are little used; set liturgy is nonexistent. The worship is performance and entertainment-oriented, the solo and sermon being the main attractions. This movement seeks to make worship "user-friendly"—accessible and enjoyable to anyone who comes, regardless of religious background. Denominational distinctiveness is minimized. Both movements are considered "renewal" movements by their practitioners. Both are a response to a changing American religious culture where denominational lines are being blurred by social mobility. Both are trying to breathe new life into Baptist forms, some of which are becoming as ritualized as the Anglican Worship that Baptists first sought to reform. The ecumenically influenced movement responds by becoming ecumenical or multi-denominational. It also entails a recovery of the historic roots of Christian worship in the New Testament and early church period. Its weakness is a tendency toward aestheticism and theological obscurantism. The praise and evangelism movement responds by becoming post-, non-, or anti-

denominational. It is fueled by intense desire to reach the unchurched and those disaffected by mainstream religion. Its adherents try to eliminate the "strangeness" of liturgy that becomes a barrier to the visitor and seeker. Its weaknesses are a proneness to reduce worship to entertainment and accommodate worship to the whims of American consumer culture. Worship then becomes a blend of Christianity, patriotism, self-help psychology, and self-help and feel-good religion.

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<sup>63</sup> H. Stephen Shoemaker, *An Overview of Worship in the Southern Baptist Convention*, accessed March 4, 2022, Worship Library, April 11, 2013, <https://www.worshiplibrary.com/blog/an-overview-of-worship-in-the-southern-baptist-convention/>.

## Appendix B

### Worship Leader Titles and Descriptions

Table A.1: Job titles, with descriptions, which are associated with worship leaders:

<b>Worship &amp; Creative Arts Pastor</b>	<p>Responsibilities:</p> <p>Creative Programming (40%) Create irresistible environments</p> <p>Utilize an online church management system to establish a strategy for developing services on a weekly, monthly, seasonally, and annual basis. Assemble creative teams and tech teams to produce all elements for the weekend services and events with excellence.</p>
<b>Minister of Music</b>	<p>The Minister of Music is responsible for the planning and leading of the weekly worship service along with the development of the adult choir ministry.</p> <p>Responsibilities:</p> <p>Work with the Pastor in planning, conducting, and evaluating the worship services so to assist people to encounter the presence of God.</p> <p>Rehearse and prepare vocal solos/duets/ensembles for the worship service.</p> <p>Rehearse and prepare instrumental solos/duets/ensembles for the worship service.</p> <p>Rehearse and prepare dramatic (spoken and unspoken) elements as needed for the worship service.</p> <p>Rehearse and prepare the adult worship choir for the worship service.</p> <p>Serve and minister to the adult choir members.</p> <p>Supervise age graded choir programs from preschool to senior adults.</p> <p>Enlist, motivate, rehearse, and prepare volunteers for musical and dramatic presentations for special seasons of the year (I.e., Easter, Christmas, Patriotic, etc.).</p> <p>Oversee and direct sound and light technicians and other music ministry volunteers.</p> <p>Prepare and manage budgets as approved by the church in conjunction with the Finance Committee.</p>



<b>Worship/Creative Pastor</b>	<p>Reports directly to the Lead Pastor</p> <p>Meet monthly with the Lead Pastor for encouragement, support, and sharing the vision for the Worship/ Production area of the church. Follow and support all Vision/Values and Standards in the Worship and Production area. Assist in the creation of weekly standards for the ministry area.</p> <p>Plan, oversee and evaluate all components of the Worship Ministry. Lead weekly rehearsal and Sunday run-throughs.</p> <p>Ability to lead worship vocally and with musical excellence on weekends while at the same time raising and empowering volunteer worship leaders. Identify, equip, and empower worship and production leaders in keeping with the principles taught in scripture</p> <p>Regularly communicate with the Lead Pastor concerning the strategies and activities of the Worship Ministry.</p> <p>Plan and manage all worship services through Planning Center. Be diligent to stay organized and plan ahead.</p> <p>Plan and manage all ProPresenter software for weekly services.</p> <p>Plan, create and manage all tracks in Ableton for each week's service. Manage the Worship/Production budget and maintain all equipment. Ensure sermons are recorded, saved, and uploaded each week.</p> <p>Oversee a team to consistently create relevant worship environments—stage designs, lighting, etc.</p> <p>Create sermon series graphics for Sundays and students.</p> <p>Oversee all social media accounts and online graphics. Ensure consistent and relevant content is posted.</p> <p>Oversee creation of all videos and photography.</p> <p>Oversee creation and upkeep of graphics for printed material.</p>
<b>Contemporary Worship Leader</b>	<p>The Worship Leader will lead the congregation in worship at our Contemporary Worship service on Sundays at 9:30 am. This includes selecting music for the service, leading the Contemporary Worship Team in Sunday morning rehearsals, contributing strong vocal/ instrumental support at the service, and helping to provide a good flow between elements of the service.</p> <p>The worship leader will also oversee contracted guest musicians for the 9:30 service, use PlanningCenterOnline to post music, schedule rotation of</p>
<b>Global Worship Pastor</b>	<p>The primary purpose of the Global Worship Pastor is to develop aa worship ministry capable of maximizing the spiritual; value of all main campus services and special events by providing inspiring and engaging experiences of corporate and personal worship.</p>



## Appendix C

### Five Elements That Worship Leaders Are Called to Do

#### 1. **WORSHIP LEADERS ARE CALLED TO KNOW THE GOSPEL**

Despite its strong symbolism, our text contains an important element that cannot be overlooked: one cannot separate the preaching of the gospel (v. 6) from the call to authentic worship (v. 7). To know the gospel is to know God, and to know God is to worship Him. Consideration given to another angle: one can say that the ultimate purpose for proclaiming the gospel is that nations truly worship God. Consequently, we should understand that worship leaders need to grasp the fact that all true worship centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Although Trinitarian in nature, Christian Worship remains Christ-inspired, Christ-shaped, Christ-centered, and Christ-focused. The Cross is central to worship. True worship flows from Christ's work on the cross. No celebration exists without Calvary, no glory without Golgotha, no blessings without the blood. Through His death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, Christ has brought salvation to humanity and made true worship possible. Authentic Christian Worship is hence the celebration of a redeemed people. Any worship time or church service that does not tell the gospel story through word, song, or other expression is not Christian worship. Therefore, worship leaders must familiarize themselves with the gospel message and see how it is closely related to worship. This gospel knowledge cannot be purely intellectual; it also needs to be experiential. For us as worship leaders, the everlasting gospel must be the air we breathe, the heart of our piety, the nourishment of our reflection, and the fountainhead of our praise. The Cross needs to be the vantage point from which we plan and offer our worship. Our strength as worship leaders must not rest on our talents or skills but the power of the gospel bursting in and through us. To know God through Christ by immersing ourselves in the riches of the gospel must therefore be our top priority.

#### 2. **WORSHIP LEADERS ARE CALLED TO BE CULTURALLY SENSITIVE**

Verse 6 describes the angel carrying the eternal gospel in the midst of heaven and proclaiming it in a loud voice to “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.” This indicates that both the proclamation of the gospel and the call to true worship cannot be done in a vacuum. Worship needs to be culturally sensitive to be an authentic response to the gospel. Every worship service expresses a certain culture. Our worship, whether traditional or contemporary, did not come straight from heaven. Worship expressions reflect theological perspectives and cultural influences. Our background and milieu influence the way we worship. To fight over whether to sing the songs of Isaac Watts or Chris Tomlin sometimes has more to do with style than substance. And yet a crucial and critical dimension of the gospel proclamation and worship is cultural adaptation. Thoroughly undergirded by Bible principles, our worship needs also to be contextualized. In other words, our regional and ethnic background, our cultural context, and our socioeconomic milieu inform the way we worship because they all encompass and influence who we are. Hence, leading out in public worship requires both theological robustness and cultural sensitivity. In an increasingly complex and diverse world, worship leaders must hold firm to biblical principles while remaining open to diversity in practice. In so doing, they should never forget that the principle of attraction in worship

must be Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:1), not ingenious ceremonies or entertaining rituals. Only through His sacrifice can we draw near to God (Heb. 10:19–22). This means that no matter our worship styles, our focus needs to remain on the transforming power of the Cross. When God is magnified, the people are edified. When Jesus is lifted up, He will draw people to Himself (John 12:32).

### **3. WORSHIP LEADERS ARE CALLED TO “FEAR GOD”**

“Fear God” are the first words proclaimed by the angel. The biblical notion of “fear” (phobeo) should not be understood as “to be afraid” but “to respect, to revere.”<sup>4</sup> It is essentially a matter of faithfulness and obedience as we walk in God’s ways and keep His commandments.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, this notion of fearing God can be very odd in an age that evokes a lack of gravitas. There can often be a shortage of a sense of weight, glory, or awe in church services. This is not a new phenomenon. Ellen White wrote more than a century ago, “It is too true that reverence for the house of God has become almost extinct. Sacred things and places are not discerned; the holy and exalted are not appreciated. . . We have abundant reason to maintain a fervent, devoted spirit in the Worship of God...But an enemy has been at work to destroy our faith in the sacredness of Christian Worship.” Worship leaders need to remind themselves constantly of “the sacredness of Christian worship” and approach their ministry with godly fear and humility, praying that God will use them as they lead worship. They will refuse to succumb to the cultural pressure to trivialize worship. They will set an example of reverential awe and joyful wonder as they lead worship. Sermons should never degenerate into platitudes. Talks ought not to fall into the trap of irrelevance, and singing must never become a show for people. True worship should always be a selfless offering to God. Conversely, good worship leaders will also refuse to be so rigid in traditions just for the sake of keeping them. Rather, their fear of God will manifest itself in dignity and a sense of wonder. Hence, leading out in public worship requires both theological robustness and cultural sensitivity. In an increasingly complex and diverse world, worship leaders must hold firm to biblical principles while remaining open to diversity in practice. In so doing, they should never forget that the principle of attraction in worship must be Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:1), not ingenious ceremonies or entertaining rituals. Only through His sacrifice can we draw near to God (Heb. 10:19–22). This means that no matter our worship styles, our focus needs to remain the transforming power of the Cross. When God is magnified, the people are edified. When Jesus is lifted up, He will draw people to Himself (John 12:32).

### **4. WORSHIP LEADERS ARE CALLED TO GLORIFY GOD**

At the core of any true worship ministry is the desire to see people glorify God. Worship leaders must themselves be passionate about God’s glory. They must have no other agenda than to lift up the name of Jesus Christ. Here, in Revelation 14:7, the angel summons the nations to fear God and glorify Him at a time when “the hour of His judgment has come.” Interestingly, the book of Revelation shows a close link between the manifestation of God’s character in judgments and His glorification in worship. In Revelation 15:3, 4, the redeemed sing and declare: “Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations

shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.””

Through the judgment, God reveals who He is and what He has done. This revelation of God’s character leads the saints of God to worship Him. Put differently, giving glory to God means acknowledging, displaying, and magnifying the unparalleled radiance and beauty of God’s character, for, in essence, God’s glory is His character on display. How are we to give glory to God as worship leaders, then? By making Him most precious to our souls. This involves contemplating His infinite nature and marvelous deeds as well as responding to His glorious name. Our reflection on who God is and what He has done inspires our response to Him in Worship. Yet, magnifying God’s greatness implies putting self aside. God cannot be glorified where self reigns. This could be one of the greatest challenges that worship leaders face. Have you ever gone through your sermon notes while waiting to preach because you felt that what preceded the sermon was unimportant, that they were just preliminaries? Have you ever conducted song service while being more preoccupied with your stage presence and musical abilities than God’s glory? When the self is at the center, it becomes impossible to glorify God. This is why, as worship leaders, we need to constantly remind ourselves that worship is not about us but about God. The Creator is the One who is worthy of honor and praise. We need to understand that worship is not primarily about our preaching, leading, voice, or skills. Worship is about God. Worship is not a performance; it is an act of service. Our responsibility as worship leaders is to make sure that God is glorified in our lives and among His people. This is our imperative duty.

#### **5. WORSHIP LEADERS ARE CALLED TO WORSHIP GOD**

The angel in Revelation 14:6, 7, in an echo to the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:1–11), summons people to worship God for three reasons:

- a. Because He is Creator (“Worship Him who made the heavens and earth . . .”)
- b. Because He is Redeemer (“the everlasting gospel”)
- c. Because He is Judge (“the hour of His judgment has come”)

The doctrines of Creation, Redemption, and eschatology are closely intertwined here. This means that God cannot be Savior and Judge unless He is Creator. We need to always keep in mind this exalted vision of God. Is it possible for a worship leader to lead worship and yet not Worship, to sing and not really sing, to pray and not really pray? What happens when leading worship becomes so mechanical and routine that we go into liturgical autopilot? Yet, we know that in order to lead others in worship, worship leaders must themselves be full-fledged worshipers. The problem is that sometimes we fail to bring before God’s people a vision of the majesty and glory of God. Imagine a worship service that is unplanned—announcements take too long, the platform party is never ready—where the congregation acts like spectators, prayers are long and dry, the singing is lethargic, and the sermon empty and boring. In short, worship services become an anesthetic valley-of-Gilboa experience. Do you think people leave such services with a sense of God’s greatness? They might, in fact, leave with the impression that worship is irrelevant, and that God makes no difference at all. Worship must be led with the vision of an exalted God who is worthy of all praise and honor. As worship leaders, we need to be worshipers 24/7. Worship is about the whole life lived in adoration before God. It is as much about what we do during the week as it is about what we do on Sabbath morning. In God’s economy, religious services do not take precedence over worshipful hearts, for God is more interested in our hearts than in our offerings; He takes more delight in our

dedicated lives than our finely tuned and timely, choreographed worship services. In essence, Christian Worship is more relational than cultic. For that reason, unless we cultivate a deep relationship with God, true worship cannot take place.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Alain Coralie, *A Word to Worship Leaders: Reflections on Revelation 14:6-7*, Ministry Magazine, accessed September 19, 2021, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2016/04/A-word-to-worship-leaders>

## Appendix D

### Ten Things Everyone Should Know about Baptists

Amanda Casanova, contributing author at Christianity.com, submitted *10 Things*

*Everyone Should Know about Baptists*, an online article about the beliefs of Baptists. The central premise of the Baptist church is Baptism. Listed below are six of the most essential of those beliefs:

1. The Baptist church believes in Baptism only after a person has professed Christ as their Savior. Baptism symbolizes the cleansing of sins. Some churches use a sprinkling of water as Baptism, but most practice full immersion, where the candidate is fully immersed in water. This symbolizes the disciples' own baptism as stated in John 3. The practice also stems from Romans 6, which says Christians are "buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Baptism is not a requirement for salvation and many churches do not subscribe to infant baptism. Instead, Baptism in the Baptist church is a public expression of faith. "While it is personal, it is not private," an article from the Southern Baptist Conventions' journal says. "Such an act of obedience actually then clarifies their testimony and opens the door for ministry in the church.
2. Baptists are traditionally strong believers in Biblical authority. Since the origins of the church, Baptists have said the Bible is the only authority for Christian faith and practice. Baptists believe that the Bible is the only authority because it is divinely inspired or has a divine nature. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 is an oft-cited example of why Baptists believe strongly in the Bible. The verses say, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible and empowered men to record the truth about God and give directives on how to apply the Bible to the Christian life. Some Baptist churches may disagree on certain practices, but many say the Bible is their sole authority.
3. Baptists have differing beliefs about Calvinism versus Arminianism. Often considered a major division in the Protestant church is Calvinism vs. Arminianism. Calvinism is named after John Calvin, a theologian and pastor during the Protestant Reformation.

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<sup>65</sup> Alain Coralie, *A Word to Worship Leaders: Reflections on Revelation 14:6-7*, Ministry Magazine, accessed September 19, 2021, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2016/04/A-word-to-worship-leaders>.

Within Calvinism and Arminianism in the Baptist church, there are differing beliefs and many conversations about it. The Southern Baptist Convention itself has held many conferences centering on the long-standing Protestant debate.

4. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience. In the Baptist church, the Lord's Supper, also known as communion, is a symbolic practice meant to honor the death of Jesus. Communion is not necessary for salvation. The practice comes from Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. At the meal, unleavened bread and wine were served. The bread symbolizes the purity of Christ and the wine (sometimes grape juice) symbolizes the blood of Christ that was shed for his people. The Lord's Supper is meant as a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Unlike other denominations of Christianity, such as the Catholic church, the Lord's Supper is not literally the blood and body of Christ. There is no set calendar for partaking in the Lord's Supper among Baptist churches, but each time it is practiced, it is meant to be a time of devotion and prayer. In many churches, all are able to participate in the Lord's Supper. Baptists strongly encourage evangelism and missionary work.
5. In response to Christ's call to "make disciples of all nations," many Baptists encourage missionary work and evangelism opportunities. Baptists say that millions of people around the world have not heard of Jesus and evangelism is the mission of sharing Christ's message. Evangelism has a long history in the Baptist church. According to the American Baptist Churches USA, historians used books, tracts, and other resources in evangelism as early as 1824. Former evangelist, Billy Graham's events have inspired waves of new evangelistic conferences and conventions, which draw in millions of people. Locally, Baptists encourage each other to share their faith openly and take the message of Christ to their neighbors, workplaces, schools, and other day-to-day activities. Baptists believe in a "calling" to share the gospel and in many churches, Baptists are learning to adapt their approach to better deliver the message of Christ.
6. Baptists are supporters of religious freedom.  
Aligning with Thomas Jefferson, early Baptists held strongly to a view that supported religious liberty. Facing some persecution for their own belief in believer's baptism, Baptists endured fines, harassment and sometimes jail time. In Massachusetts 1645, for example, the colony outlawed Baptists, calling them "the troublers of churches in all places," according to the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. In response to that persecution, Baptists later helped influence the First Amendment. The early church believed in separation in church and state so that religious liberty was available to all and all were free to practice as they saw fit. With the First Amendment, Baptists supported "free exercise of religion" and not a "national pastor."<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Amanda Casanova, "10 Things Everyone Should Know about Baptists", accessed October 5, 2022, Christianity.com, April 11, 2022, <https://www.christianity.com/church/denominations/the-most-well-known-protestant-denomination-10-things-everyone-should-know-about-baptists.html>.



## Appendix E

### History of the Baptist Church

Baptist, member of a group of Protestant Christians who share the basic beliefs of most Protestants but who insist that only believers should be baptized and that it should be done by immersion rather than by the sprinkling or pouring of water. (This view, however, is shared by others who are not Baptists.) Although Baptists do not constitute a single church or denominational structure, most adhere to a congregational form of church government. Some Baptists lay stress upon having no human founder, no human authority, and no human creed.

#### 1. Origins

Some Baptists believe that there has been an unbroken succession of Baptist churches from the days of John the Baptist and the Apostles of Jesus Christ. Others trace their origin to the Anabaptists, a 16th-century Protestant movement on the European continent. Most scholars, however, agree that Baptists, as an English-speaking denomination, originated within 17th-century Puritanism as an offshoot of Congregationalism. There the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Although Williams's general Calvinist theological position was roughly analogous to that of Spilsbury, prior to becoming a Baptist he had adopted the narrower Separatist view of the church. Williams soon came to the conclusion that all churches, including the newly established church at Providence, lacked a were two groups in early Baptist life: the Particular Baptists and the General Baptists. The Particular Baptists adhered to the doctrine of a particular atonement—that Christ died only for an elect—and were strongly Calvinist (following the Reformation teachings of John Calvin) in orientation; the General Baptists held to the doctrine of a general atonement—that Christ died for all people and not only for an elect—and teachings of John Calvin) in orientation; the General Baptists held to the doctrine of a general atonement—that Christ died for all people and not only for an elect—and represented the more moderate Calvinism of Jacobus Arminius, a 17th-century Dutch theologian. The two currents were also distinguished by a difference in churchmanship related to their respective points of origin. The General Baptists had emerged from the English Separatists, whereas the Particular Baptists had their roots in non-Separatist independency.

Both the Separatists and the non-Separatists were congregationalist. They shared the same convictions with regard to the nature and government of the church. They believed that church life should be ordered according to the pattern of the New Testament churches, and to them this meant that churches should be self-governing bodies composed of believers only.

They differed, however, in their attitude toward the Church of England. The Separatists contended that the Church of England was a false church and insisted that the break with it must be complete. The non-Separatists, more ecumenical in spirit, sought to maintain some bond of unity among Christians. While they believed that it was necessary to separate themselves from the corruption of parish churches, they also believed that it would be a breach of Christian charity to refuse all forms of communication and fellowship. While many non-Separatists withdrew and established a worship of their

own, they would not go so far as to assert that the parish churches were devoid of all marks of a true church.

## 2. **Growth in England and Abroad**

Although the Particular Baptists were to represent the major continuing Baptist tradition, the General Baptists were first to appear. In 1608 religious persecution induced a group of Lincolnshire Separatists to seek asylum in Holland. A contingent settled in Amsterdam with John Smyth (or Smith), a Cambridge graduate, as their minister; another group moved to Leiden under the leadership of John Robinson. When the question of baptism arose during a debate on the meaning of church membership, Smyth concluded that, if the Separatist contention that “churches of the apostolic constitution consisted of saints only” was correct, then baptism should be restricted to believers only. This, he contended, was the practice of the New Testament churches, for he could find no scriptural support for baptizing infants. Smyth published his views in *The Character of the Beast* (1609) and in the same year proceeded to baptize first himself and then 36 others, who joined him in forming a Baptist church. Shortly thereafter Smyth became aware of a Mennonite (Anabaptist) community in Amsterdam and began to question his act of baptizing himself. This could be justified, he concluded, only if there was no true church from which a valid baptism could be obtained. After some investigation Smyth recommended union with them. This was resisted by Thomas Helwys and other members of the group, who returned to England in 1611 or 1612 and established a Baptist church in London. The parent group in Amsterdam soon disappeared. The Particular Baptists stemmed from a non-Separatist church that was established in 1616 by Henry Jacob at Southwark, across the Thames from London. In 1638 a number of its members withdrew under the leadership of John Spilsbury to form the first Particular Baptist Church.

## 3. **Robert Walker: Portrait of Oliver Cromwell**

The two decades from 1640 to 1660 constituted the great period of early Baptist growth. Baptist preachers won many adherents around the campfires of the Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell’s army. The greatest gains were made by the Particular Baptists, while the General Baptists suffered defections to the Quakers. After the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660 both groups were subjected to severe disabilities until these were somewhat relaxed by the Act of Toleration of 1689. During the following decades the vitality of the General Baptists was drained by the inroads of skepticism, and their churches generally dwindled and died or became Unitarian. The Particular Baptists retreated into a defensive, rigid hyper-Calvinism. Among the Particular Baptists in England renewal came as a result of the influence of the Evangelical Revival, with a new surge of growth initiated by the activity of the English Baptist clergymen Andrew Fuller, Robert Hall, and William Carey. Carey, in 1792, formed the English Baptist Missionary Society—the beginning of the modern foreign missionary movement in the English-speaking world—and became its first missionary to India. A New Connection General Baptist group, Wesleyan in theology, was formed 1770, and a century later, in 1891, it united with the Particular Baptists to form the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. By the end of the 19th century Baptists, together with the other Nonconformist churches, were reaching the peak of their influence in Great Britain, numbering among their preachers several men with international reputations. Baptist influence was closely tied to the fortunes of the Liberal Party, of which the Baptist David Lloyd George was a

conspicuous leader. After World War I English Baptists began to decline in influence and numbers.

Baptist churches were established in Australia (1831) and New Zealand (1854) by missionaries of the English Baptist Missionary Society. In Canada, Baptist beginnings date from the activity of Ebenezer Moulton, a Baptist immigrant from Massachusetts who organized a church in Nova Scotia in 1763. In Ontario the earliest Baptist churches were formed by loyalists who crossed the border after the American Revolution, while other churches were established by immigrant Baptists from Scotland and by missionaries from Vermont and New York.

#### 4. **Development in the United States**

Baptist churches in the English colonies of North America were largely indigenous in origin, being the product of the leftward movement that was occurring among the colonial Puritans at the same time as it was in England. While some emigrants went to the New World as Baptists, it was more typical for them to adopt Baptist views after their arrival in the colonies, as happened in the case of Henry Dunster, the first president of Harvard College, and Roger Williams.

#### 5. **Colonial Period: First Baptist Church in America**

The First Baptist Church in America was established at Providence (in present-day Rhode Island) in 1638 by Roger Williams shortly after his banishment from proper foundation, and that this defect could be remedied only by a new apostolic dispensation, when new apostles would appear to reestablish the true church.

The defection of Williams left the church with no strong leadership and thus made it possible for it to be reorganized on a General Baptist platform in 1652. There was scattered General Baptist activity throughout the colonies, but the only large cluster of General Baptists was in Rhode Island, where the churches were united into an association in 1670. The early General Baptists never gained great strength. Most of their churches decayed, and some, including the Providence church, were reorganized as Particular Baptist churches. The half dozen churches that survived never entered the mainstream of American Baptist life and exerted little influence upon its development.

The earliest strong Particular Baptist centre in the colonies was at Newport, Rhode Island, where, between 1641 and 1648, a church that had been gathered by the physician and minister John Clarke adopted Baptist views. Except for a church that had a brief existence at Kittery, Maine, there were only two other Particular Baptist churches in New England for the better part of a century. One was at Swansea, Massachusetts; the other was organized at Boston in 1665. Another Particular Baptist church was established at Charleston, South Carolina, in 1683 or 1684.

The centre of Particular Baptist activity in early America was in the Middle Colonies. In 1707 five churches in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware were united to form the Philadelphia Baptist Association, and through the association they embarked upon vigorous missionary activity. By 1760 the Philadelphia association included churches located in the present states of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia; and by 1767 further multiplication of churches had necessitated the formation of two subsidiary associations, the Warren in New England and the Ketchikan in Virginia. The Philadelphia association also provided leadership in organizing the Charleston Association in the Carolinas in 1751. Although

this intercolonial Particular Baptist body provided leadership for the growth that characterized American Baptist life during the decades immediately preceding the American Revolution, that growth was largely a product of an 18th-century religious revival known as the Great Awakening. Though they participated directly in the Awakening only during its last phase in the South, Baptists attracted large numbers of recruits from among those who had been “awakened” by the preaching of others. In addition to strengthening and multiplying the “regular” Baptist churches, the Awakening in New England produced a group of revivalistic Baptists, known as Separate Baptists, who soon coalesced with the older New England Baptist churches. In the South, however, they maintained a separate existence for a longer period of time. Shubael Stearns, a New England Separate Baptist, migrated to Sandy Creek, North Carolina, in 1755 and initiated a revival that quickly penetrated the entire Piedmont region. The churches he organized were brought together in 1758 to form the Sandy Creek Association. Doctrinally these churches did not differ from the older “regular” Baptist churches, but what the older churches saw as their emotional excesses and ecclesiastical irregularities created considerable tension between the two groups. By 1787, however, a reconciliation had been effected.

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## 6. In the 19th Century

The problem of travel had made it difficult for the Philadelphia association to serve as a bond uniting Baptists, and the rapid multiplication of churches made it impossible. It has been estimated that immediately before the American Revolution there were 494 Baptist

congregations; 20 years later, in 1795, Isaac Backus estimated the number at 1,152. The initial expedient of the Philadelphia association had been to organize subsidiary associations, but during the war the churches, left to their own devices, proceeded to organize independent associations. By 1800 there were at least 48 local associations, and the main problem was to fashion a national body to unite the churches. The final impetus in this direction came from an interest in foreign missions. Among the first missionaries of the newly organized Congregational mission board were Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice, who had been sent to India. On shipboard they became convinced by a study of the Scriptures that only believers should be baptized. Upon arrival at Calcutta, Judson went on to Burma, while Rice returned home to enlist support among American Baptists. As a result of Rice's efforts, a General Convention of the Baptist denomination was formed in 1814. Its scope was almost immediately broadened to include, in addition to the foreign mission interest, a concern for home missions, education, and the publication of religious periodicals. In 1826 the General Convention once again was restricted to foreign mission activities, and in the course of time it became known as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. Other denominational interests were served by the formation of additional societies with similar specialized concerns, such as the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the American Baptist Publication Society. The unity achieved through these societies was disrupted by the slavery controversy. During the decade prior to 1845 various compromises between the proslavery and antislavery parties in the denomination were attempted, but they proved to be unsatisfactory. As a result, a Southern Baptist Convention was organized at Augusta, Georgia, in 1845. Although its constitution provided for boards of home and foreign missions, education, and publication, its energies were devoted largely to foreign missions. Consequently, the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the American Baptist Publication Society continued to operate in the South after the Civil War. Later the Southern Baptist Convention began to develop its own home mission and publication work and to protest the intrusion of the older societies in the South. The final separation between Baptists of South and North was formalized in 1907 by the organization of the Northern Baptist Convention (in 1950 renamed the American Baptist Convention and after 1972 called the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.), which brought together the older societies and accepted a regional allocation of territory between the Northern and Southern conventions.

7. **Development of Black churches: Martin Luther King, Jr., at Montgomery**

Black churches constitute a major segment of American Baptist life. Many slaves were converted and became members of Baptist churches during the Great Awakening (1720s to '40s). While there were Black Baptist churches prior to the Civil War, they rapidly multiplied following the Emancipation Proclamation (1863), an edict that freed the slaves of the Confederate states in rebellion against the Union. State and regional conventions were formed, and the National Baptist Convention was organized in 1880. By 1900 Black Baptists outnumbered Black adherents of all other denominations. Throughout the Jim Crow years of segregation and exclusion from most aspects of American life, Black churches were the focal point of Black communal life. In the civil rights struggle of the 1960s the major leadership, including that provided by Martin Luther King, Jr., came out of Black churches.

## 8. **Developments in Education**

From the beginning, American Baptists displayed an interest in an educated ministry. The Philadelphia association in the 18th century collected funds to help finance the education of ministerial candidates. Hopewell Academy was established in 1756, and in 1764 Brown University was founded in Rhode Island. After 1800, educational institutions multiplied rapidly. The educational advance culminated in 1891 in the founding of the University of Chicago.

## 9. **During the 20th century**

After 1900, Baptists were troubled by theological controversies that led to the formation of several new Baptist groups. Some of the tensions arose over questions of structure of church organization, some arose over refusals to adopt an authoritative creedal statement, some were created by converts among new immigrants, and some were the product of dissatisfaction with the affiliation of the American Baptist Convention with interdenominational and ecumenical bodies. Questions of organizational structure were involved in the formation of the American Baptist Association in 1905 by churches located primarily in Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas. Two other groups were products of the Fundamentalist controversy: the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, organized in 1932, and the Conservative Baptist Association of America (1947). During the post-World War II period, the Southern Baptist Convention abandoned its regional limitations. Because of increasing mobility of population, it became necessary for the convention to follow its members to the growing urban centres of the North and West. By the second half of the 20th century Southern Baptists had become the largest Protestant body in the United States, and their churches were located in every part of the country.

Following World War II, Southern Baptists increasingly isolated themselves from other Christian churches, feeling no need to cooperate with them in common enterprises. During these years they also developed centralized operations through the boards and agencies of the Convention. Participation in the "Cooperative (mission) Program" and utilization of the materials and activities supplied by the Sunday School Board became badges of loyalty. These programs were carefully devised and eminently successful in promoting numerical growth. Meanwhile, dissident Southern Baptists, based initially in the old southwest of Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and especially Texas, began to become influential elsewhere. They were heirs of an older isolationism that had long been kept in check but gained major new impetus from a radical fundamentalism developing strength in the South after World War II. Led by a small coterie of Texas strategists, the dissidents put a plan into operation in 1979 by which they gained control of and imposed their views on the bureaucracy and theological seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention. No room for a difference of opinion was left except at the local level.

## 10. **Growth Outside the United States**

While Baptists were troubled by divisive tendencies during the 20th century, there was also a tendency toward greater unity and cohesiveness through the Baptist World Alliance. The 19th century was a period of great Baptist missionary activity. The endeavour in Asia was led by William Carey in India, Adoniram Judson in Burma, and Timothy Richard and Lottie (Charlotte) Moon in China. The initial Baptist presence in Africa began in 1793 when David George, a former slave from South Carolina, reached

Sierra Leone by way of Halifax, Nova Scotia. More organized activity was initiated in 1819 by Black Baptists of Richmond, Virginia, who sent Lott Cary to Sierra Leone in 1821 and then shifted his base of operations to Liberia in 1824. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century there were major concentrations of Baptists in Congo (Kinshasa), Nigeria, and Cameroon. Of later origin is the Baptist community in Latin America. The pioneer Baptist in Europe was Johann Gerhardt Oncken, who organized a church at Hamburg in 1834. Oncken had become acquainted with Barnas Sears of Colgate Theological Seminary, who was studying in Germany, and with six others he was baptized by Sears. From this centre, evangelistic activity was extended throughout Germany, and missions were established elsewhere in eastern Europe. Baptist activity was initiated independently in France, Italy, and Spain. Swedish Baptist beginnings date from the conversion of Gustaf W. Schroeder, a sailor baptized in New York in 1844, and Frederick O. Nilsson, also a sailor, who was baptized by Oncken in 1847. The expansion of the Baptist community in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe led to the formation of the Baptist World Alliance in London in 1905. The purpose of the alliance is to provide mutual encouragement, exchange of information, coordination of activities, and consciousness of the larger Baptist fellowship. The most notable growth occurred in Russia, where a Russian Baptist Union was formed in 1884 as the result of influences stemming from Oncken. Another Baptist body, the Union of Evangelical Christians, was organized in 1908 by a Russian who had come under the influence of English Baptists. Persecution of Baptists, which had been severe, was relaxed in 1905, and within the remaining disabilities a moderate growth occurred. The Revolution of 1917, with its proclamation of liberty of conscience, marked the beginning of a period of astonishing advance: by 1927 the Russian Baptist Union numbered some 500,000 adherents, while the Union of Evangelical Christians embraced more than 4,000,000. The Soviet constitution of 1929 subjected them to pressure once again, however. Membership in the two groups, which combined in 1944 to form the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians–Baptists in the U.S.S.R., declined sharply, but an estimated membership of more than 500,000 in the 1980s testified to the tenacity with which these believers held their faith.

### **11. Teachings: History**

Initially Baptists were characterized theologically by strong to moderate Calvinism. The dominant continuing tradition in both England and the United States was Particular Baptist. By 1800 this older tradition was beginning to be replaced by evangelical doctrines fashioned by the leaders of the evangelical revival in England and the Great Awakening in the United States. By 1900 the older Calvinism had almost completely disappeared, and evangelicalism was dominant. The conciliatory tendency of evangelicalism and its almost complete preoccupation with “heart religion” and the experience of conversion largely denuded it of any solid theological structure, thereby opening the door to a new theological current that subsequently became known as modernism. Modernism, which was an attempt to adjust the Christian faith to the new intellectual climate, made large inroads among the Baptists of England and the United States during the early years of the 20th century, and Baptists provided many outstanding leaders of the movement, including Shailer Mathews and Harry Emerson Fosdick. Many people regarded these views as a threat to the uniqueness of the Christian revelation, and the counterreaction that was precipitated became known as fundamentalism (a movement

emphasizing biblical literalism).

As a result of the controversy that followed, many Baptists developed a distaste for theology and became content to find their unity as Baptists in promoting denominational enterprises. By 1950, outside the South, both modernists and fundamentalists were becoming disenchanted with their positions in the controversy, and it was from among adherents of both camps that a more creative theological encounter began to take place. While the majority of Baptists remained nontheological in their interests and concerns, there were many signs that Baptist leadership was increasingly recognizing the necessity for renewed theological inquiry.

## 12. **Worship and Organization**

Baptist worship is hardly distinguishable from the worship of the older Puritan denominations (Presbyterians and Congregationalists) of England and the United States. It centres largely on the exposition of the Scriptures in a sermon and emphasizes extemporaneous, rather than set, prayers. Hymn singing also is one of the characteristic features of worship. Communion, received in the pews, is customarily a monthly observance. Baptists insist that the fundamental authority, under Christ, is vested in the local congregation of believers, which admits and excludes members, calls and ordains pastors, and orders its common life in accord with what it understands to be the mind of Christ. These congregations are linked together in cooperative bodies—regional associations, state conventions, and national conventions—to which they send their delegates or messengers. The larger bodies, it is insisted, have no control or authority over a local church; they exist only to implement the common concerns of the local churches.

The pattern of organization of the local church has undergone change since the 20th century. Traditionally, the pastor was the leader and moderator of the congregation, but there has been a tendency to regard the pastor as an employed agent of the congregation and to elect a lay member to serve as moderator at corporate meetings of the church. Traditionally, the deacons' functions were to assist the pastor and to serve as agents to execute the will of the congregation in matters both temporal and spiritual; there has been a tendency, however, to multiply the number of church officers by the creation of boards of trustees, boards of education, boards of missions, and boards of evangelism. Traditionally, decisions were made by the congregation in a church meeting, but there has been a tendency to delegate decision making to various boards. The relationship of local churches to the cooperative bodies has undergone similar change, which has occasioned ongoing discussion among all Baptist groups.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> W. S. Hudson "Baptist." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 25, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Baptist>.



## Appendix F: The Responsibilities of Church Leaders

If Scripture is sufficient for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3-4), and it equips God's people for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17), it should say something about the important matter of church leadership. Since Christ promised to build His church (Matt. 16:18), we should look to His inspired Word for direction on what church leaders should be and what they should do. Two weeks ago, we looked at our text from the standpoint of the duties of church members toward their leaders. Today we will reverse this. While our text is not comprehensive, it does give some vital principles about the responsibilities of church leaders. We learn... ***Godly church leaders are responsible to lead God's flock by walking personally with God and by working together to help church members do the same.*** There are four main aspects of this statement:

### 1. ***Godly church leaders are responsible to lead.***

That sounds like a tautology, but it needs to be said. The New Testament does not teach a distinction between "clergy" and "laity," in that every believer is a priest with full access to God (1 Pet. 2:9). But it does teach a distinction between leaders and followers in the local church. The New Testament uses different names or titles to refer to church leaders. They are called *elders* (Acts 20:17), which refers to maturity in the faith. At other times, they are called *overseers* (1 Tim. 3:1, 2), which refers to their function of superintending the church. (In Titus 1:5, 7 and Acts 20:17, 28 the two terms are used of the same office.) They are called *pastors* (Eph. 4:11), which means *shepherds*. Peter uses all three of these terms (1 Pet. 5:1, 2) when he exhorts the *elders* to "*shepherd* [pastor] the flock of God among you, exercising *oversight* ...." He goes on (verse 4) to refer to Christ as "the Chief Shepherd" (or, Pastor). Another word for church leaders is the Greek verb, *prohistemi*, (lit., "to stand before") which is translated "have charge over" (1 Thess. 5:12). It refers to the function of elders "who rule well" (1 Tim. 5:17). It also refers to a man's responsibility to "manage" his own household (1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12). The word in our text (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24) is a different word (our English word, hegemony, comes from it) that simply means, *leaders*. It is used of Paul, to distinguish him from Barnabas (Acts 14:12) as "the chief speaker." It is also used of Judas Barsabbas and Silas, who are called "leading men among the brethren" (Acts 15:22). But the point is, *leaders* should *lead*. Leadership is primarily influence, and the way that church leaders influence others is by their godly example and by their teaching of God's word (Heb. 13:7). Because elders in the local church must lead by example, most of the qualifications for that office in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are godly character qualities. The one exception is that they should be "able to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2), or to "exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9). Leadership requires having a clear biblical picture of what the local church ought to be and what it ought to be doing, and continually communicating that to the church. It also requires dealing with problems that arise in the church. President John F. Kennedy observed (source unknown), "No easy problem ever comes to the President of the United States. If they are easy to solve, somebody else has solved them." Often, out of an attempt to please everyone, church leaders dodge difficult problems. They don't want to confront an influential church member who is in sin. They don't want to teach on doctrines that are not popular, even if they are biblical. They don't confront someone who is teaching error, for fear of stirring up conflict. They don't want to get involved in resolving relational conflicts in the church or in church families. But to

dodge such difficult matters is to fail to lead the church. Church leaders must actively pursue God and His truth, and help others to do the same.

2. ***Godly church leaders are responsible to walk personally with God.*** In 1 Timothy 4:16, Paul exhorts his younger co-worker, “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching....” In Acts 20:28, he told the Ephesian elders, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock....” Our text brings out four aspects of the personal walk of church leaders:

A. GODLY CHURCH LEADERS MUST BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN A GOOD CONSCIENCE BEFORE GOD AND OTHERS (13:18). Paul told Felix (Acts 24:16),

“I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.” The conscience is that inner sense of right and wrong that God has put in every human heart (Rom. 2:15). It is not infallible, in that it must be informed by God’s Word of truth. It can become seared or hardened (1 Tim. 4:2; Eph. 4:18-19). Even if your conscience is misinformed, it is always a sin to violate it (Rom. 14:14, 23; James 4:17). Thus, Paul told Timothy (1 Tim. 1:5), “The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” The main way to keep a clear conscience is to walk in daily obedience to God’s Word. If you knowingly sin, confess it immediately to God and seek the forgiveness of the one you sinned against. Personal obedience to God is the prerequisite to leading others in obedience to God.

B. GODLY CHURCH LEADERS LIVE WITH A VIEW OF ANSWERING TO GOD SOMEDAY (13:17).

They are continually cognizant of the fact that they will “give an account” to God, both for their own lives and for the church over which God has placed them as overseers. No man or group of men has final authority over the church. We are merely under-shepherds, accountable to Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd. It is *His* church, not mine! Church leaders are stewards or managers of the church for Christ, who bought it with His blood. Keeping this fact constantly in mind prevents any abuse of authority or any taking advantage of people for personal gain. Every church leader should read often Ezekiel 34, where God confronts the shepherds who have not tended and cared for His flock, but have used it for their own selfish ends. He will call us to account!

C. GODLY CHURCH LEADERS ARE MEN OF FAITH AND PRAYER, WHO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO PRAY (13:7, 18, 20-21).

In verse 7, the author tells the Hebrews to remember and imitate the faith of the leaders who have gone before them. In verse 18, he asks them to pray for him, and in verses 20-21, he models prayer by praying for them. (See also Hebrews 11 on faith.) Here is precisely where American business principles do not apply to the local church. The church is not to be run as a business, where we make plans and implement those plans according to the best of human wisdom. The church is to move forward by faith in the living God and by dependence on Him through prayer. Our aim as church leaders is certainly not to lead by our collective wisdom, but rather to seek the mind of the Lord for His church as we wait upon Him by prayer and faith. Speaking for myself (and, I’m sure, for all of the elders, too), I’m in way over my head! I don’t have all the answers that I need to lead this local church.

#### D. GODLY CHURCH LEADERS ARE WILLING TO SUFFER FOR CHRIST IF NEED BE (13:23).

The author mentions Timothy, who has just been released from prison. Paul had exhorted Timothy (2 Tim. 2:8), “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God.” Apparently, Timothy had followed Paul’s admonition.

We easily could face persecution for our faith in the years ahead, and the leaders are always the main targets for the enemy. Even if we do not suffer persecution from without, leaders must be ready to suffer criticism and personal attacks, often from those in the church. Charles Spurgeon’s *Autobiography* ([Banner of Truth], 1:303-327) contains an entire chapter on the early criticisms and slanders that were leveled against him, often by other pastors. Late in his life, he went through many other unfair attacks because he stood against the growing liberalism in the Baptist Union. Leaders who hold firmly to biblical truth will face such attacks, because no matter how kindly you say it, God’s truth always offends someone. They don’t dare attack God directly, so they attack the leader who delivered the message. It is never fun, but it goes with the job. Spurgeon’s wife helped him deal with the attacks by putting Matthew 5:11-12 on a plaque, which he read every morning, “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Thus, godly church leaders are responsible to lead, and a main way that they do so is by walking personally with God.

### 3. ***Godly church leaders are responsible to work together.***

“Leaders” is plural. The New Testament clearly teaches that leadership in the local church is to be plural (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Titus 1:5). Plural leadership is a safeguard against the abuse of authority. Also, the task of shepherding a local church is far too great for one man, unless the church is very small. There are two implications of this truth:

#### A. GODLY CHURCH LEADERS ARE CALLED TO WORK TOGETHER.

In our text, the author works closely with Timothy (13:23) and with the leaders of the Hebrew church. He tells the church to greet their leaders (13:24). It is the leaders (plural) who keep watch over the souls of the flock (13:17). Obviously, they could only do this by working together as a team.

In the New Testament, the only example of one dominant leader is negative. The apostle John confronts Diotrephes, who loved to be first among them, and who took it upon himself to put people out of the church (3 John 9-10). By virtue of personality, spiritual gifts, and spiritual maturity, there are examples of spiritual leaders who were first among equals. Peter was the spokesman for the twelve. James was a dominant leader in the early Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13-21; 21:18-26; Gal. 2:6, 9). Paul became the leader of the first missionary team, even though Barnabas had been a believer longer than Paul had. But all of these men submitted to one another in the Lord and taught that as believers, we must do the same (Eph. 5:21).

#### B. GODLY CHURCH LEADERS PUT A PRIORITY ON GODLY RELATIONSHIPS.

- The author is concerned that the Hebrews work harmoniously with their leaders, so that they may lead with joy, not with grief (13:17). He asks for prayer, stating his intention to conduct himself honorably in all things, and his desire to be restored to them soon (13:18-19). He mentions Timothy and traveling with him to visit them. He asks them to greet both the leaders and all the saints on his behalf. Relationships ooze throughout these verses. The whole Bible is summed up by the two great commandments, which are both relational: Love God and love others. This means that godly church leaders must work at relating to one another in love, and they must work at helping church members relate to one another in love. This was Paul's concern when he wrote Philippians, that two women, Euodia and Syntyche would "live in harmony in the Lord" (Phil. 4:2). (How would you feel if Paul named you like that in an open letter!) He was concerned for the Corinthian church because Chloe's people had told him of the quarrels that were taking place there (1 Cor. 1:11-13). Whenever you get several hundred people together, especially when the group consists of those from different backgrounds, ages, and even nationalities, you have a huge potential for conflict. When you throw in different personalities, differing preferences, and the need to confront sin and false teaching, it's a miracle that the church has survived all of these centuries! One of the main responsibilities of church leaders is to be examples of godly relationships and to help others work through relational problems. Thus godly church leaders are responsible to lead the flock by walking personally with God and by working together in godly relationships. Finally,
4. ***Godly church leaders are responsible to help those in the church walk personally with God.*** Again, our text is not comprehensive, but it reveals at least four aspects of this task.

#### A. GODLY CHURCH LEADERS HELP CHURCH MEMBERS BY KEEPING WATCH OVER THEIR SOULS (13:17).

The Greek word translated "keeping watch" means "to keep oneself awake," and thus, "to keep watch, guard, or care for" (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Walter Bauer, William Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich [University of Chicago Press], Second Edition, p. 14). The image was drawn from shepherds keeping watch over their flocks (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* ([Harper & Brothers], 1887, p. 9). Shepherds had to stay alert in order to guard their flocks from predators. They had to know the sheep and observe them carefully enough to know when a sheep was sick or missing. They had to go after the strays and try to restore them to the flock. They had to lead them to pasture and clean water (see Ezek. 34:1-16). These tasks require the discernment to know where people are at spiritually and when they are heading toward spiritual danger. Leaders must love God and people enough to have the courage to confront those who are drifting. While you can only lead those who are willing to be led, godly leaders must always make the effort. The task is more difficult in our day when there are many different churches in town. If people get upset at one church, or if the leaders there try to confront some sin in their lives, they just move down the road to another church that welcomes them. Sadly, they usually carry their problems with them. "Keeping watch over souls" is an over-whelming task, and the responsibility for it does not fall only on church leaders. Every spiritually mature believer is responsible to help restore

those who are caught in any trespass and to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:1-2). If you know of someone in the church who is straying from the Lord, but you don't know what to do, go to one of the elders for counsel. We do our best to keep watch over the flock, but often we are not even aware when someone is in need. We all need to work together to care for one another spiritually.

**B. GODLY CHURCH LEADERS HELP CHURCH MEMBERS BY FAITHFULLY TEACHING GOD'S WORD (13:7, 22).**

In verse 7, the author mentions the leaders who spoke the word of God to the flock. In verse 22, he mentions his own brief "word of exhortation" (the Epistle to the Hebrews). While all elders should be "able to teach," some especially "work hard at teaching and preaching" and should be financially supported for that task (1 Tim. 5:17). I assure you that it *is* hard work, although spiritually rewarding! In one of the strongest admonitions in the Bible, Paul's almost final words to Timothy were (2 Tim. 4:1-5), I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

**C. GODLY CHURCH LEADERS HELP CHURCH MEMBERS BY AIMING AT THEIR JOY AND SPIRITUAL PROFIT (13:17).**

"Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." This refers first to the leaders' joy, but it obviously extends to the joy and spiritual profit of all of the members. Those who are walking in obedience to Christ will know His joy (John 15:10-11). Godly leaders rejoice to see those in the flock walking in the truth (3 John 4).

**D. GODLY CHURCH LEADERS HELP CHURCH MEMBERS BY EMPHASIZING GOD'S GRACE (13:25).**

"Grace be with you all" is a salutation, but it is far more than a mere formality. It is a spiritual desire and emphasis throughout the New Testament. In Hebrews, he mentioned that Jesus, "by the grace of God... might taste death for everyone" (2:9). He encouraged us to "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (4:16). He has warned against insulting the Spirit of grace (10:29) and falling short of God's grace (12:15). In 13:9, he cautioned against legalism, adding, "for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace...." Far too many Christian churches and homes are marked by legalism, but leaders are responsible to create an atmosphere of God's grace. Grace is never a license to sin, but rather, it instructs us "to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:11-12). When we sin (and we all do!), God's grace forgives and restores. God's grace is patient with the weak, encouraging them to grow in the Lord.

## Conclusion

D. E. Hoste, who was a missionary leader with the China Inland Mission, wrote (cited in *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*, by Iain Murray [Banner of Truth], 2:423), What is the essential difference between spurious and true Christian leadership? When a man, in virtue of an official position in the church, demands obedience of another, irrespective of the latter's reason and conscience, this is the spirit of tyranny. When, on the other hand, by the exercise of tact and sympathy, by prayer, spiritual power and sound wisdom, one Christian worker is able to influence and enlighten another, so that the latter, through the medium of his own reason and conscience, is led to alter one course and adopt another, this is true spiritual leadership. Before all of our elders (including me!) resign and run for their lives, and no others ever aspire to the office of elder, I conclude by reminding you of Paul's words regarding the ministry. After asking, rhetorically, "Who is adequate for these things?" he stated, "Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 2:16; 3:5-6). The responsibility of church leadership is impossible, but with God's strength, all things are possible! As leaders, we join the author of Hebrews in asking you, "Pray for us."<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Steven Cole, "Lesson 58: The Responsibilities of Church Leaders (Hebrews 13:7, 17-19, 22-25)", accessed September 25, 2022, Bible.org, <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-58-responsibilities-church-leaders-hebrews-137-17-19-22-25>.

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