

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

**WORSHIP MINISTRY LEADERSHIP:  
PRINCIPLES FOR AGE-RELATED TRANSITION AND SUCCESSION**

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- *But the Lord has been my stronghold, And my God the rock of my refuge* (Psalm 94:22).

## Abstract

The tenure of a long-serving worship pastor is affected by many variables, but few are as impactful, challenging, yet unexamined, as the pastor's age. In this historical research study, the researcher assesses the best strategies of professional development necessary for aging worship pastors as they transition for lasting relevance and honorable succession. This study focused on the necessities of cultural engagement and people development as a means to maintain, among other things, platform credibility and leadership reproduction. Historic rationale and precedent was established through the examination of principles of age-related recalibration, transition, and succession from the researcher's own experience, as well as those of selected worship pastors who would characterize their final decades of ministry as fulfilling, and some who did not actually survive. Included in this study was the applicability of the advanced leadership levels of *Production* and *People Development* as defined by John Maxwell. Results show that attention to these advanced leadership levels best position worship pastors for graceful transitions and successions. Comparisons of the cognitive impact of aging were established between musicians and non-musicians. Results reveal that musicians outscore non-musicians on a composite measure of cognitive control, suggesting that sustained music training is associated with improved aspects of cognitive functioning in older adults. Analysis of suggested best practices will provide direction for transition and succession that will result in positive outcomes.

Keywords: *worship, aging, transition, succession, recalibration, production, people development, cultural engagement, ministry tenure, forced termination*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction

Worship pastors move through many significant leadership passages over the course of their ministry tenures. Close attention to sound principles and practices of behavior and character is required to navigate these passages. Years of experience, dedication to one's cause, and continuous training will aid in the vital tasks of sound leadership. Author David Dotlich advises all leaders to maintain open eyes and an open mind to consciously discern the lessons that accompany each passage. "If you go through them consciously and are open to the lessons they hold, you dramatically increase the odds of being a consistently effective leader."<sup>1</sup> Such is the example of Moses and Joshua who both recognized the tasks before them and oversaw the difficult transition in leadership for the Children of Israel. Before his death, Moses gave public affirmation to Joshua as the next leader of the nation.<sup>2</sup> This act provided reassurance to both the people and to Joshua himself, as he would lead the people into the Promised Land. This leadership transition was not age-related as much as it was relationally based. Moses demonstrated great wisdom while Joshua received the blessing with grace.

Not all transitions are nearly as successful. Moses could have been so focused on his great legacy that he was unwilling to equip and affirm his successor. Joshua could have scorned the outdated methods of his predecessor and sought to pave his own way into the Promised Land. Those who may have been particularly loyal to Moses did not distract Joshua nor was he

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<sup>1</sup> David L. Dotlich, James L. Noel and Norman Walker, *Leadership Passages; The Personal and Professional Transitions That Make or Break a Leader* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 34:9.

flattered by those who wanted to align themselves with the new young leader. Both of these leaders practiced principles of sound transition and succession that protected them and their constituents from mistrust, uncertainty, and fear.

Research suggests that the complexities of transition in the local church are influenced by factors such as timing, existing relationships and the extent or lack of preplanning. The tension of a pending transition is often evident long before a change is enacted. “That is, the transition may simply amplify or ignite the tensions or problems that led to the transition.”<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon reinforces the necessity of managed leadership transition in the church.

The unwillingness of the leader to adapt to the ever-changing skill set necessary for optimal effectiveness is a common source of tension in transitions. This is especially prevalent in worship ministry leadership. According to Page and Gray:

The modern worship renewal ushered in new skill requirements in the area of contemporary Christian music and technology. Many worship pastors trained prior to 1990 do not have these skills due to breakdowns in seminary and Christian college education for worship pastors. Second, because of a desire to connect with culture, a growing number of churches intentionally target younger leaders to be the ‘face’ of the worship service. This often results in retirement or reassignment, sometimes at the worship pastor’s initiative, other times not.<sup>4</sup>

These negative influences are often the cause of negative transitions, and can lead to forced terminations.

### Statement of the Problem

Many worship pastors are failing to develop professionally due to age-related factors. With a growing population of aging worship pastors many of these Baby Boomers are reaching

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<sup>3</sup> Erica Dollhoff, “Decline and Conflict: Causes and Consequences of Leadership Transitions in Religious Congregations.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 52, No 4 (December 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Frank Page and L. Lavon Gray. *Hungry for Worship: Challenges and Solutions for Today’s Church*. (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2014). 142.

retirement age. Many of them feel irrelevant and obsolete. They fear for the loss of their position or even fear forced termination. Closely associated with this phenomenon is a prevalent failure by church leaders and worship pastors to plan for Christ-honoring successions. Too many worship pastor successions are motivated by negative factors when they should rightly reflect prayerful planning and complete concurrence by the pastor himself, the church leadership and the entire congregation.

### Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative historical study is to examine age-related worship ministry leadership trends in terms of Christ-honoring transitions and successions. There are both negative and positive trends to examine. While there are many churches which are active in leadership development and planned transitions for their worship staff, there are other churches that desire a younger face and have no continued use for the aging worship pastor.

This study will serve to alert both worship pastors and church leaders to the common causes for avoidable age-related layoffs and forced terminations. It will point to the best practices for capitalizing on the positive talents and accomplishments of a seasoned worship pastor and for creating a strategic plan for a seamless succession.

### Statement of Primary Research Questions

In response to age-related transition and succession in worship ministry leadership, the following research questions will be addressed in this study:

RQ1: What is the proper focus of professional development pursued by aging worship pastors?

RQ2: What are the characteristics of a Christ-honoring leadership transition between a seasoned worship pastor and a new worship pastor?

### Significance of the Questions

A common source of tension and problems in transition surround the unwillingness of the leader to adapt to the ever-changing skill set necessary for optimal effectiveness. Over the past ten years, modern worship ministry has evolved with technological advances that are not natural for many aging worship pastors. The development and implementation of organizational, presentational and notational software like *Planning Center Online*, *Pro Presenter* and *Finale* have become common. They have, in many cases, become essential tools in modern worship ministry. Modern worship bands have incorporated the use of clicks, pads, loops, multi-tracks and stem mixes to enhance their sound. If aging worship pastors are unable or unwilling to recalibrate in their knowledge and use of these high tech methods, they run the risk of becoming obsolete and dated. It is especially disheartening for one who has served honorably for many years to be summarily dismissed because he/she did not employ basic survival tactics of professional development.

Successful leaders understand that in order to finish well, they must keep growing and changing; producing and reproducing. The core concepts of the study include the examination of leadership production (Level 3) and reproduction (Level 4), as advocated by leadership expert John Maxwell. He identifies people development (leadership reproduction) as the greatest fulfillment for a leader.<sup>5</sup> Over a career of many years, a leader will use his/her experiences to attain greater levels of production from which they receive recognition and the respect of their

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<sup>5</sup> John C. Maxwell, *How Successful People Lead: Taking Your Influence to the Next Level*, (New York, NY: Center Street, 2013), 97.

peers. They must continue to learn, however, aside from any recognition or respect that they enjoy. They must teach others to lead so that they might naturally enter the reproducing phase of people development.<sup>6</sup>

Additional concepts for the study will be identified through emerging themes noted from other scholarly research. Erica Dollhoph explores the complexities of leadership transition within the church. She examines such factors as timing, whether a candidate comes from inside or outside the organization, and how well-planned the transition is within the organization. Congregations can better manage these transitions if they are apprised of the processes as they unfold.<sup>7</sup>

The impact of musical training on improved cognitive functioning in older adults is evaluated by a team of researchers at the University of Toronto.<sup>8</sup> This study suggests that sustained music training or involvement is associated with improved aspects of cognitive functioning in older adults. This study, which was conducted on both musicians and non-musicians ranging in age between 50 and 77 years, provides evidence that an aging musician can still function with cognitive integrity. This is an asset that these aging servants must recognize and utilize.

Another study suggested that the aging worship pastor transition from the role of a quarterback to that of a head coach.<sup>9</sup> Moore encourages all worship leaders (regardless of age)

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<sup>6</sup> Maxwell, 148.

<sup>7</sup> Dollhoff, 675-697.

<sup>8</sup> Tarek Amer, Beste Kalender, Lynn Hasher, Sandra E. Trehub, and Yukwal Wong, "Do Older Professional Musicians have Cognitive Advantages?" *PLoS One* 8, no. 8 (08, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Dwayne Moore "Age and Worship Leaders." *Nextlevelworship.com*. (February 2014).

to: a) stay faithful to God and his church, b) keep growing as leaders and servants, c) never stop pouring into others, e) trust God to place and use these leaders for as many years as they have strength and breath.<sup>10</sup> In some churches aging musicians are marginalized and their experience is not recognized. In spite of this frustration, these faithful servants must continue to learn more about the deeper aspects of worship ministry.

Finally, the concepts of transition and succession will be evaluated from the standards revealed in the Scriptural examples of Moses, Joshua (Deut. 34:9) and Jesus (John 17). Joshua was full of wisdom. Moses had laid hands on him and blessed his new role as the leader of the Children of Israel.

“The leadership transition must include a public affirmation of the incoming leader in order for the transition to have a chance at being successful. This public display should affirm that the new leader has the capacity to embrace all generations and aspects of the existing members.”<sup>11</sup> This type of blessing pays respect to both the outgoing and the incoming leader.

Jesus reveals His grand design for succession as he prayed with his disciples in the Upper Room. The Father gives ultimate power to Jesus for the purpose of bringing eternal life to all people and Jesus passes this sacred trust to his disciples. “Succession in Christian leadership comes to its crux in the task of developing spiritually mature followers who are shaped by the word of truth and prepared to take on the leader’s role and the specific task for their generation.”<sup>12</sup> Jesus poured into the lives of his disciples, and embraced an even smaller, more select group in Peter, James and John, who in turn took the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

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<sup>10</sup> Moore.

<sup>11</sup> Marvin Anthony Moss, *Next: Surviving a Leadership Transition*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013). 15.

<sup>12</sup> David L. McKenna. *The Succession Principle*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015). 112.

Strong leaders in the church must recognize the importance of building into the lives of future leaders. The reproduction of more and more leaders will exponentially spread the good news of Jesus. The Apostle Paul uses this design in his charge to Timothy: “preach the word . . . do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (1 Timothy 4:2-5).<sup>13</sup>

### Statement of the Hypotheses

A possible answer to the first research question (What is the focus of professional development pursued by aging worship pastors?) is addressed in working hypotheses 1:

H1: The focus of professional development pursued by aging worship pastors concerns generational awareness, continuing education and planned succession.

The progressive transition addresses the need for the continual reassessment and recalibration of the necessary skills for a worship pastor who is culturally engaged and committed to life-long learning. He must not rest exclusively on the application of concepts that he may have learned 30 years ago. His learning must be progressive and strategic.

A possible answer to the second research question (What are the characteristics of a Christ-honoring leadership transition between a seasoned worship pastor and a new worship pastor?) is addressed in working hypotheses 2:

H2: The characteristics of a Christ-honoring leadership transition between a seasoned worship pastor and a new worship pastor must include leadership development, endorsement and deference.

Had Moses not invested in Joshua, the Children of Israel would not have enjoyed confidence in their new leader (Josh. 1:1-2).

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<sup>13</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *English Standard Version*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005).

During a leadership transition, a congregation's anxiety level is heightened because there is an expectation that change is going to take place. Any change represents a threat to the existing power brokers, as well as to those who have been in place for a long period of time and feel a sense of security. The incoming leader must be able to embrace the existing community and manage the change in such a manner that it is received in a less threatening way.<sup>14</sup>

Implementing such intentional steps of strategic reproduction will be of great benefit to both the retiring leader and the new leader.

### Research Method/Design

Qualitative narrative data will be gathered from the systematic examination of historic events as they are germane to the age-related principles of leadership, transition and succession within secular applications, the church, the Bible and specifically as related to the worship pastor. "Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem."<sup>15</sup> The study will focus on the interpretation of historic events in order to predict future events. The source of this data includes books, journals, magazines, and dissertations. The historical information gathered will be thoroughly investigated through contrasting, comparing, replicating and classifying<sup>16</sup> aging leaders who successfully managed transition and succession as well as those who failed to finish well. The best practices of those examined will be applied to the objectives of Christ-honoring transition and smooth succession within worship ministry leadership in the local evangelical church.

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<sup>14</sup> Moss, 13.

<sup>15</sup> John W. Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2014), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 205.



## Research Plan

After a thorough review of existing literature, the study will culminate in a number of recommendations which expedite transition and succession planning. One such recommendation favors relational transitions over generational transitions. As modeled by Moses and Joshua, the leadership transition must include a public affirmation of the incoming leader's capacity to embrace all generations and aspects of the existing ministry team members.<sup>17</sup> In reference to leadership succession from Boomers to Generation X in community colleges, Amy Morrison Going suggests a guided and robust pathway for this next generation of diverse leaders to thrive.<sup>18</sup> These and many other recommendations will be compiled into a systematic survival guide for the aging worship pastor. This guide will be included as an appendix to the thesis and will provide intentional strategies for smooth transitions and successions. It will also include intentional steps of strategic reproduction to assure smooth successions in the ministry. This guide will accentuate the hypothesis of the study, which suggests that intentional strategies of progressive transition and strategic reproduction will equip the aging worship pastor for survival and a succession plan that honors the ministry of a faithful servant.

## Definition of terms

### *Cultural Engagement*

For the purposes of this study, the term cultural engagement will refer to the aging worship pastor's efforts to identify with, recognize, understand, relate to and engage with generational, technological and/or ethnic advancements in worship ministry trends.

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<sup>17</sup> Moss, 15.

<sup>18</sup> Amy Morrison. "The Shift in Generational Leadership." *Community College Journal* 86, no. 6 (June, July 2016): 6, accessed June 25, 2018.

### *Ministry Tenure*

While most pastors look at the tenure of their calling as for a life-time, the term ministry tenure, for the purpose of this study, will refer to that period of time when the pastor is actually employed by a local church.

### *Production*

Leadership authority John C. Maxwell has identified five levels of leadership for influential leaders.<sup>19</sup> Level three, production, includes those leaders who are followed for what they have done for the organization.<sup>20</sup> This is a significant level for aging worship pastors due to their need to both excel in production and then their need to disengage in the production mode and focus on the next level.

### *People Development*

Following Production, People Development is Maxwell's fourth level of leadership for influential leaders.<sup>21</sup> This level relies on the leader's ability to empower others by investing in and guiding their leadership journey.<sup>22</sup> This ability to reproduce leadership is a key task in successful leadership succession plans.

### *Transition*

Transitions in writing are words and phrases that provide a connection between ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. Smooth transitions contribute to a good writing flow. Similarly, in ministry there are attitudes and actions that contribute to smooth transitions among personal and professional endeavors. For the purpose of this study, the positive use of the word transition will

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<sup>19</sup> Maxwell, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 9.

refer to the gradual professional development that leads to cultural engagement, people development, ministry effectiveness and extended tenure.

### *Succession*

For the purposes of this study, the word succession will refer to the process of leadership transition in worship ministry that reflects biblical examples, strategic planning and Christ-honoring outcomes. According to David L. McKenna:

We cannot lose sight of our primary task. It is to develop mature disciples who are ready to step into the role of leadership. This assigned task complements the strategic role of a Christian leader with a tactical process. An organic structure activated by synchronized functions aims at completion and closure. Along with Jesus, we must accept the fact that our role as a leader will come to an end, our task will be finished, and we will have to give an accounting to the Father for the task assigned to us.<sup>23</sup>

Finishing strong, closing well and positioning the next leader for success are the key goals of a Christ-honoring succession plan.

### *Worship Pastor*

It is not the intent of this study to argue for or against a specific Biblical position on gender for the role of pastor. However, an overwhelming majority of worship pastors in today's evangelical church are men. Furthermore the observations, examples and recommendations of this study are most applicable to men. For these reasons the term worship pastor will be designated in the male gender.

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<sup>23</sup> McKenna, 121-122.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

The historic approach of this qualitative research project requires extensive review of numerous literary sources. These sources include books, journal articles, magazine articles, Scripture and theses/dissertations. Following an examination of the theoretical background of this review strategy, the sources will be analyzed by categories that are germane to the interpretation of hypotheses presented. These categories include 1) leadership; 2) aging; 3) transition; 4) succession; 5) other literature related to the writing process. Finally, a critical assessment of the literature will establish a transition into the research methods employed as examined in chapter three.

#### **Theoretical Background**

The intersection of worship ministry, leadership, aging, transition and succession form the core elements of this research. Individually, each has been extensively researched and reported. For example, a Google Scholar search of the aforementioned six subjects yields the following results: worship 1,450,000 links; ministry 4,840,000 links; leadership 3,920,000 links; aging 3,280,000 links; career transition 1,040,000 links; career succession 256,000 links. The search results narrow significantly when the subjects are combined: worship ministry 328,000; leadership and aging 496,000; career transition and succession 235,000. Even more narrowing reveals the following: worship ministry leadership 164,000; aging, transition and succession

118,000.<sup>24</sup> There is a significant gap in scholarly literature on this subject as the variables become increasingly unique.

According to research expert Creswell: “Deficiencies in past literature may exist because topics have not been explored with a particular group, sample, or population.”<sup>25</sup> Such is the case with two specific variables in this research. Qualifying both the specific ministry of *worship* and the specific qualification of *age-related influence* has not been explored in any scholarly research on the subject of leadership, transition and succession in spite of exhaustive searches.

The topic of the aging worship pastor has been addressed in various magazine articles that would not fit the category of scholarly writing. Mike Harland, director of LifeWay Worship Resources, wrote a short article entitled “The Over 50 Worship Leader”<sup>26</sup> for *Worshiplife.com* in 2017. While he suggests several reasons why over 50 worship leaders still have much to contribute, the article does not address any proactive steps to facilitate ongoing effectiveness. David Staal helps define a key concept of this research in his article “Leadership Transitions: Let Go,” for *Christianity Today* in April, 2014.<sup>27</sup> He addresses the topic of leadership transition but does not offer any guidance on preparation and best practices in the years or decades leading up to the actual succession.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://scholar.google.com>. Accessed October 9, 2018.

<sup>25</sup> Creswell, 117.

<sup>26</sup> Mike Harland. “The Over 50 Worship Leader,” *Worshiplife.com*. July 7, 2017, 2.

<sup>27</sup> David Staal. “Leadership Transitions: Let Go.” *Christianity Today*, April, 2014.

## Review of Sources Used

As stated in the introduction to chapter two, the sources used in this research are drawn from five specific categories. This will not be an exhaustive review but instead will include the most significant information from the best sources representing each of the categories examined.

### *Leadership*

Leadership expert John Maxwell contends that everything rises and falls on leadership.<sup>28</sup> An aging worship pastor must become adept at addressing current issues within the organization. Furthermore, he must be a visionary who takes a leading role in charting his course and the course of the church he is serving. These are key tasks for a strong leader. The following authors provide concepts to support the objectives of leadership development, as identified in the hypothesis as a key component in establishing a Christ-honoring transition and succession.

In *Leadership Passages* Dotlich, Noel and Walker address 13 specific stages that most leaders experience in the course of their careers. One passage addresses the phenomenon of losing one's job or being passed over for promotion: "although it was once unusual, is increasingly common as companies restructure, reorganize, or seek to reduce employment costs."<sup>29</sup> This has become a growing practice in many evangelical churches.

Another passage that Dotlich and Walker discuss involves letting go of ambition. As a worship pastor nears retirement, he must begin the process of redirecting his energy. As he redefines his focus, he lets go of his ambition and prefers to develop the talent of others. In reference to the leader's legacy of service to others, the authors write: "they often receive

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<sup>28</sup> John C. Maxwell Quotes. BrainyQuote.com, Xplore Inc, 2018.  
[https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/john\\_c\\_maxwell\\_600859](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/john_c_maxwell_600859), accessed October 15, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Dotlich and Walker, 107.

tremendous respect for direct reports and other colleagues who know they're not operating with personal agendas. People seek them out for advice and support.”<sup>30</sup>

The Prophet Ezekiel continually called God's people to repentance. Much of their rebellion centered on their unwillingness to turn their hearts toward God. In Ezekiel 22:23-31 the prophet addresses the sins of Israel's leaders. Princes, priests and even the common people fail to escape the wrath of Ezekiel for neglecting their responsibilities. In verse 30 he begs for leaders who will take on the task of rebuilding the wall of righteousness. He pleads for someone to stand in the gap in order to avoid destruction as a consequence of their sin. This and other important Scripture passages will provide guiding principles for sound leadership.

In *How Successful People Lead*<sup>31</sup> by John Maxwell, the author identifies five levels of leadership that are directly related to the skills necessary to navigate the leadership passages of the aging worship pastor. After attaining and sustaining levels one and two (position and permission) for many years, the aging worship pastor can become stuck on level three (production) and fail to transition to levels four and five (production and pinnacle). With tenure comes raised expectations for a worship pastor. As he discerns issues and leads the people associated with those issues, he can activate his organizational skills and facilitate increased production. As Maxwell contends, level three leaders must “be active in breaking through obstacles, putting out fires, correcting mistakes and directing people.”<sup>32</sup> As the worship pastor matures in leadership skills he must address the responsibilities of a level four leader. “Good leaders on Level 4 invest their time, energy, money, and thinking into growing others as

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<sup>30</sup> Dotlich and Walker, 165.

<sup>31</sup> Maxwell, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Maxwell, 78.

leaders.”<sup>33</sup> Failure to reproduce is a serious fault of aging worship pastors who allow their pride to create the delusion that they are impossible to replace. Leadership on both levels 4 and 5 requires the worship pastor to recognize the value of team. He is the coach of that team and he mentors selected team members to become coaches themselves. “If you reach the Pinnacle level (five), you have an opportunity to make an impact beyond your tenure and possibly beyond your own lifetime.”<sup>34</sup> This is accomplished by developing a generation of leaders who will develop the next generation of leaders.

Another significant Scripture passage addresses the proper motivations of spiritual leadership. In 1 Peter chapter five, the author provides valuable advice for elders and young men. In a day when too many worship pastors neglect their shepherding responsibilities in favor of simply making music, it is good to be reminded of the motive and manner of ministry. As the verse exhorts: “shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly (1 Peter 5:2).” According to Walvoord and Zuck “an elder’s motive must be from willingness, not from a sense of external compulsion; not because you must, but because you are willing.”<sup>35</sup> Later in the chapter, Peter offers valuable advice to young leaders. Verse 5 exhorts: “Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5). A spirit of submission and humility ought to mark the attitude of leaders at every stage of their ministry tenure.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>34</sup> Maxwell, 128.

<sup>35</sup> John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures. New Testament* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 1983), 855.



The apostle Paul's final instructions in his first letter to the church in Thessalonica reveal several guiding principles for those who lead. Paul instructs the church to "encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Mutual encouragement and edification are important skills for the entire church to practice; and especially for leaders. As the letter comes to a close Paul instructs the church regarding their interaction with their leaders. Their value is reinforced by the exhortations Paul makes to the rest of the church. He tells the church to respect them,<sup>36</sup> to hold them in the highest regard and to live in peace with each other.<sup>37</sup> Local church fellowship should reflect God's peace. Not only should leaders contend for the faith, they must contend for peace.

Sharing some similarities with John Maxwell's five levels of leadership, Thrall, McNicol and McElrath have used the illustration of the rungs of a ladder to describe four steps in *the Ascent of a Leader*.

- Rung 1: Discover what I can do
- Rung 2: Develop my capacities
- Rung 3: Acquire title or position
- Rung 4: Attain individual potential<sup>38</sup>

The authors describe the long journey toward servant leadership and acknowledge the pitfalls along the way. They acknowledge the sad reality that leadership failure is all too prevalent.

Dr. J. Robert Clinton, professor of leadership at Fuller Theological Seminary, believes that more than 70 percent of leaders do not finish well. He bases this startling statistic on six criteria, gleaned from common traits among leaders who did not finish well according to their self-analysis, the analysis of their peers and followers, or the teachings of their professed religion. First, leaders who do not finish well lose their learning posture. They stop listening and growing. Second, the attractiveness of their character wanes. Third,

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<sup>36</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:12.

<sup>37</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:13.

<sup>38</sup> Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol and Ken McElrath. *The Ascent of a Leader: How Ordinary Relationships Develop Extraordinary Character and Influence*. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 18.

they stop living by their convictions. Fourth, they fail to leave behind ultimate contributions. Fifth, they stop walking in an awareness of their influence and destiny. Finally, leaders who finish poorly lose their once vibrant relationship with God.<sup>39</sup>

It would appear that many leaders who finish poorly are more concerned with their efforts than with their character. They suffer from emotional, spiritual and relational immaturity. The research described and the case studies portrayed in this book will provide valuable data and aid in the formation of sound principles and practices in relationship to age-related transition and succession in worship ministry.

Space will not allow for a review of several other important sources of leadership insight; however a short list of some of these books include: *Equipped for Good Work: A Guide for Pastors* (Cothen, 1987), *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (Covey, 1989), *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors* (Criswell, 1980), *Leading Talents, Leading Teams* (Ellis, 2003), *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* (Finzel, 2007), *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership* (McIntosh/Rema, 2007), *Be A People Person* (Maxwell, 1994), and *On Being a Pastor* (Prime/Begg, 2004).

One final book that addresses issues of leadership is *Worship Leaders: We are Not Rock Stars*, by Stephen Miller. He addresses the issues of motivation in our worship ministry leadership. Every worship pastor must continually battle the temptation to exalt himself while pretending to point people to exalt Jesus. Miller explains man's penchant for worshipping the creation over the Creator: "We are always worshipping something or someone. We were made for it and we are exceedingly efficient at it. Our hearts are constantly on the lookout for the biggest,

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<sup>39</sup> J.R. Clinton. *The Making of a Leader*. (Colorado Spring, CO: 1992), 7. As cited by Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol and Ken McElrath. *The Ascent of a Leader: How Ordinary Relationships Develop Extraordinary Character and Influence*. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 14.

best, most bountiful, and most beautiful, so that we can ascribe glory to it.”<sup>40</sup> Throughout the book, Miller reminds worship leaders of their priorities. In addition to our obvious identities as worshipers and Christians, he identifies five additional roles that a strong worship leader must assume: pastors and deacons, theologians, storytellers (liturgists), evangelists and artists.

### *Aging*

The impact of aging defines the unique approach of this research. Leadership, transition and succession are all important subjects in the milieu of worship ministry. But the age-related issues of the worship leader’s transition and succession drive this thesis. While much literature exists on the subjects of aging and ageism, there is relatively little that connects those topics to that of worship ministry leadership. Every effort has been taken to identify literature that makes such important connections.

The research of Amer, Kalender, Hasher, Trehub and Wong from the University of Toronto has revealed a positive development for aging musicians. In their article *Do Older Professional Musicians have Cognitive Advantages?* the authors have concluded that sustained music training or involvement is associated with improved aspects of cognitive functioning in older adults. Professional musicians were matched with non-musicians in categories of age, education, vocabulary and general health, and given tests that measure cognitive control. “In general, musicians outperformed controls on the near-transfer task, consistent with various auditory processing advantages that have been behaviourally documented in young and older adults with high levels of music training.”<sup>41</sup> Older amateur musicians also outperform non-musicians on a variety of near-transfer tasks. This study gives veracity to the notion that aging

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<sup>40</sup> Stephen Miller. *Worship Leaders We are Not Rock Stars*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013), 31-32.

<sup>41</sup> Amer, Kalender, Hasher, Trehub, and Wong, 5.

musicians are capable of performing at a high level and that their musical skills are comparatively exempt from any cognitive decline they may experience in other functions. There are a host of biblical examples of the behaviors of aging leaders; both positive and negative.

Moses recognized the importance of passing wisdom from one generation to the next.

Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, “At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess” (Deut. 31:9-13).

By establishing this recurring ritual at the Feast of Tabernacles, Moses and the elders wisely reinforced the teaching of the home and of the priests. In the minds of the children, the law would take on an honored and dramatic importance as it was connected to a joyful occasion.<sup>42</sup>

A published research project from the Contemporary Issues in Education Research, *Ageism and the Baby Boomers; Issues, Challenges and the TEAM Approach* examines ageism discrimination facing Baby Boomers in corporate America. The authors have concluded that most older Baby Boomers are likely to encounter some type of age discrimination in the workplace. They suggest that organizations practice an intergenerational TEAM approach in retaining the massive knowledge base possessed by the Baby Boomer.

T – Team composition

E – Education and Training

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<sup>42</sup> Frank E. Gaebelin, Earl S. Kalland, Donald Harold Madvig, Herbert Woolf, F. B. Huey, and Ronald F. Youngblood. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible*. Regency Reference Library, 1992, 193.

A – Awareness/Accountability/Accommodation  
 M – Mentoring<sup>43</sup>

The findings of this report provide insights into the threat of ageism in the local church.

Managers and younger workers often assume that older workers are less flexible with change and lack technological skills or the willingness to acquire those skills. In actuality, opportunities to stay up-to-date may be in short supply for the older worker who is assumed to be “over the hill.”<sup>44</sup>

Churches must guard against this type of discrimination. Accommodations must be implemented to keep Baby Boomers fully engaged. With the technological and musical developments of contemporary worship, Baby Boomer worship pastors can easily appear to lack relevance and cultural engagement as perceived by younger congregants or staff members. Clear communication and trust is also necessary to ensure that each generation demonstrates appropriate deference.

A Scripture verse that reinforces the need for generational deference was penned by the Psalmist. He apparently had lived a long life that turned his hair gray and robbed him of his strength. Feeling vulnerable to those who might take advantage of his weakened state, he appeals to the God who had rescued him so many times before. “Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come” (Psalm 71:18). The psalmist had often proclaimed God’s mighty works to those around him and he asked the Lord to give him yet another reason to declare his glory.

The writer expressed his determination to hope in and praise God for His righteousness, fathomless salvation, and mighty saving acts. His life, from his youth had been filled with

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<sup>43</sup> Jane Gibson, J.P. Whitney, Jennifer Cella, Cory Clark, Alexandra Epstein, and Jennifer Haselberger. "Ageism and the Baby Boomers: Issues, Challenges and the TEAM Approach." *Contemporary Issues in Education Research* 3, no. 1 (January 2010): 53-59. Accessed October 18, 2018.

<sup>44</sup> Gibson et al.

praise for God's marvelous deeds. Now when he was old he still desired to praise Him, but God must not forsake him if he was to declare God's power.<sup>45</sup>

This text highlights the emotions of both fear and hope associated with the aging person's daily life.

The author of *Worship Evaluation*, David W. Manner, wrote a short article on the aging worship leader entitled *Facing Worship Leader Ageism...Stick the Landing!* He asks how the aging worship leader might stay viable, battle ageism and keep from coasting in order to stick the landing. He suggests four specific actions to help the worship leader finish well:

1. Learn something new

Manner makes the connection between learning and leadership. "Depending only on what we once learned means we're only prepared to lead a worship ministry that no longer exists. So it's never too soon or too late to learn something new."<sup>46</sup>

2. Force Quit

Rebooting a computer can correct a problem with slow and unresponsive performance. "Quitting doesn't mean we stop doing worship ministry or have to leave our present position. It just means recalibrating for a fresh start where we are now."<sup>47</sup>

3. Study a foreign language

In reference to the advances in worship ministry Manner suggests: "So even though we might be fluent in previous worship languages, we also need to learn the musical and technological vernacular of modern worship and what might follow it."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Walvoord and Zuck, *Old Testament*, 846.

<sup>46</sup> David W. Manner. *Facing Worship Leader Ageism...Stick the Landing!* <http://kncsb.org/blogs/dmanner/>.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

#### 4. Get another job

A diversified portfolio of income streams will allow the aging worship leader to survive in the event that he/she becomes a victim of unjust ageism. “So we can choose to live in a constant state of fear in the second half or we can proactively prepare in case ageism does occur.”<sup>49</sup>

Phyllis Moen, a professor of Sociology at the University of Minnesota, has coined the term “encore adulthood” which delineates the stage between traditional careers, childrearing and old age.<sup>50</sup> In her book, *Encore Adulthood: Boomers on the Edge of Risk, Renewal, and Purpose* she discusses the challenges and the opportunities that Boomers encounter as they transition between traditional careers and retirement. “Many Boomers teeter on a moving platform of mounting job and economic insecurity, as well as health and retirement insecurity. While some are actively fashioning what’s next, others find themselves unwillingly in the workforce or unwillingly retired.”<sup>51</sup> In addition to providing much pertinent data on Boomer career trends, Moen offers career suggestions and proposals aimed at identifying meaningful second act opportunities for marginalized older adults.

In February of 2014 Dwayne Moore wrote a short article for Next Level Worship Institute entitled *Age and Worship Leaders*. Responding to the concerns of older worship leaders, Moore offers perspective that addresses the preferences of young pastors without marginalizing older worship leaders.

Anytime age restrictions are placed on worship ministries it misrepresents the body of Christ. I think it’s OK-maybe even wise-to restrict the ages of the main singers and leaders on stage in certain strategic services designed to reach a younger target group.

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<sup>49</sup> Manner.

<sup>50</sup> Phyllis Moen. *Encore Adulthood: Boomers on the Edge of Risk, Renewal, and Purpose*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 5.

<sup>51</sup> Moen, 11.

However, to not allow older people to participate in any way ever on stage makes the statement that older folk aren't acknowledged or needed.<sup>52</sup>

He goes on to acknowledge the wisdom of hiring an older worship leader who possesses spiritual maturity, sharply honed people skills, and seasoned musical experience.<sup>53</sup> Moore shares an analogy from football. Whereas there are very few 50 year old quarterbacks who are still on the field, there is a high demand for the coaches who oversee those quarterbacks.<sup>54</sup> In conclusion Moore encourages all aging worship leaders to:

a) stay faithful to God and his church, b) keep growing as leaders and servants, c) keep sharpening our skills as musicians, d) stay fresh and relevant, e) never stop pouring our lives into others, and above all, f) trust God to place us and use us for as many years as we have strength and breath! The only one who can put us on a shelf is ourselves.<sup>55</sup>

One final literature review on the subject of aging examines a 2015 journal article by Barbara Raynor on the subject of ageism. In her study, "Ageism in Action? Ageism Inaction!" Raynor recalls the famous response from President Ronald Reagan when asked, if at age 73, he was too old to serve another term. He famously replied, "I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience." Raynor points out that "though his response elicited a laugh from his opponent, both the question and the answer were examples of ageism in action."<sup>56</sup> The preponderance of ageism will continue to rise as a huge group of American Baby Boomers (78 million) struggle with the reality that they are aging. Raynor cites several studies which revealed that negative

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<sup>52</sup> Moore.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Moore.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Barbara Raynor. "Ageism in Action? Ageism Inaction!" *Generations* 39, no. 3 (Fall, 2015): 58-63. Accessed October 19, 2018.



self-perceptions of aging result in poor health outcomes, hearing decline, poor memory performance, and shorter life spans. Conversely, positive self-perceptions of aging can improve memory, thinking, cognition, mood, self-confidence, overall functionality, and longevity; adding seven-and-a-half years to a person's life span.<sup>57</sup> For the past fifty years Baby Boomers have been known for their efforts to address injustices in our society. Raynor encourages Baby Boomers to seize yet another opportunity to address one of society's injustices; this time the prejudice of ageism.

### *Transition*

As clarified earlier, for the purposes of this study, the word "transition" will refer to the ongoing professional development that leads to cultural engagement, people development, ministry effectiveness and extended tenure. This literature review will focus on those sources which highlight, among other subjects, career adjustments, application of knowledge, conflicts in leadership transition, the impact of technology and issues of self-care.

Bob Buford, a bestseller author, focuses on a significant time of transition in one's career. As the title suggests (*Half Time: Moving from Success to Significance*), the second half of a career ushers in a period of life that can be very rewarding. "The key to a successful second half is not a change of jobs; it is a change of heart, a change in the way you view the world and order your life."<sup>58</sup> He offers advice to those who have worked their careers for twenty or more years and have mastered their field. Due to their experience they could probably work at half speed and still excel. Rather than caving to the uncertainty that paralyzes these aging workers and

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<sup>57</sup> Raynor.

<sup>58</sup> Bob Buford, *Halftime: Changing Your Game Plan from Success to Significance*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 97.

causes them to make the first half their permanent home, Buford advises that they stay in the game but adjust their game plan. He suggests that they take half the time it used to take to drive their career and put the other half into any number of new second-half commitments.<sup>59</sup> Such commitments focus on making life truly productive and adding significance to success.

There is a significant need in worship ministry leadership to retain knowledge as established worship pastors transition to retirement. The loss of expertise is a threat that applies to many organizational structures. Carmel Joe has written his PhD thesis on the retention of knowledge of older experts in an organizational context. He sounds the alarm for organizations that will suffer as they fail to implement knowledge retention initiatives. Joe explains a twofold problem:

First, Generation X — born between 1964 and 1981 — is numerically only 75% of the size of the baby boomer cohort. The workforce as a whole is predicted to grow at a slower rate after 2016 than it has between 1991 and 2006. Second, organisations will lose valuable knowledge if they do not act to remedy the potential impacts of this demographic phenomenon. The research topic is relevant at a time when few organisations have given serious consideration to the loss of expertise.<sup>60</sup>

This study recognizes the responsibility of both the organization and the Baby Boomer for establishing the strategies necessary for knowledge retention in the workplace.

Dollhopf and Scheitle have submitted a study entitled “Decline and Conflict: Causes and Consequences of Leadership Transitions in Religious Congregations” to the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. In this study the authors explain the complexities of leadership transition within the church. They examine such factors as timing, whether a candidate comes from inside or outside the organization, and how well-planned the transition is within the

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<sup>59</sup> Buford, 104.

<sup>60</sup> Joe Carmel. “Retaining the Knowledge of Older Experts in an Organisational Context and the Role of ICT.” Phd diss., Victoria University of Wellington, 2010 Accessed October 19, 2018.

organization. They conclude that congregations can better manage these transitions if they are apprised of the processes as they unfold. “As congregations break away from the denominational mold, changes in leadership may have become more difficult for the members, but the stakes of leadership change are no lower for the one assuming control.”<sup>61</sup> The authors establish a significant connection between the effects of transitions in both secular and congregational settings.

*Surviving Technopolis: Essays on Finding Balance in our New Man-Made Environments*, by Arthur W. Hunt III explores the effects of a high tech society on individuals, families, churches and societies. He touts the need for media ecology and utilizes historical and economical movements throughout our American history. To survive technopolis Hunt calls for a restoration to those things closest to us; the identity-forming institutions of home, church and community.

The question, “Why do we create things?” is obscured when progress has no clear end in sight. The reasoning behind technological innovation becomes circular: “We create things because we *can* create things.” But we can no longer afford this kind of thinking—that is, thinking without moral clarification—because our survival is at stake, and “progress” now has the capacity to jerk us back to the Dark Ages. Just because we *can* do a thing, does not mean that we *should* do a thing.<sup>62</sup>

Although Hunt did not overtly make the connection, one can see a vital role for the aging worship pastor in facilitating a healthy balance between those technological innovations we *can* indulge and the time-honored institutions and practices that we *should* embrace.

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<sup>61</sup> Dollhopf and Scheitle, 676.

<sup>62</sup> Arthur W. Hunt III. *Surviving Technopolis” Essays on Finding Balance in our Mew Man-Made Environments*. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 55.

James McClanahan has completed a thesis entitled “Pastoral Self-Care: Developing a Burnout-Resistant Approach to Life and Ministry.”<sup>63</sup> He maintains that many pastors struggle to maintain emotional health while facing the challenges of their ministry. His project reveals how practicing a balanced Christian life, developing intimate relationships, and implementing a theology of self-care can minimize the likelihood of burnout. In spite of frequent references to “burnout,” the author seeks to clarify his terminology: “Pastors can never burn out; there is always a spark of faith no matter the cold storm raging around him. He many need to fan the flame within him, or have another fan it for him.”<sup>64</sup> He reminds his readers that a pastor is limited in spiritual, emotional, and physical energies due to his humanity. Pastors who engage in rest-taking practices through Sabbath and in other ways throughout the week should attempt to apply these efforts to every part of their being.<sup>65</sup> These are sound recommendations for today’s worship pastors who are navigating life, transitions and leadership in an age of complexity.

As referenced in chapter 1, the writing of Frank Page and L. Lavon Gray speaks to the struggles of a worship leader who may be confronted with a perceived loss of his lifelong calling. In citing a study by Thom Rainer, the authors suggest that worship pastors are terminated at a higher rate than that of senior pastors.<sup>66</sup> They further suggest that a move to a younger worship leader is associated with this trend. They identified three typical outcomes of these struggles. First, they note that there are situations when termination is the right course of action. “Worship pastors who are incompetent (musically and/or relationally), lazy, resist change, or

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<sup>63</sup> James McClanahan, “Pastoral Self-Care: Developing a Burnout-Resistant Approach to Life and Ministry” (2018). *Doctoral Dissertations and Projects*. 1692. <http://digitalcom.mons.liberty.edu?doctoral/1692>.

<sup>64</sup> McClanahan, 127.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>66</sup> Page and Gray, 144.

refuse to expand needed skill sets must not be allowed to hide in the bushes and hinder the vision of the church.”<sup>67</sup> A second possible option for an aging worship pastor is reassignment to other ministry roles. “There are countless examples of former worship pastors who now serve in senior adult, pastoral care, or executive pastor roles with varying degrees of success.”<sup>68</sup> Finally, the sad truth of transitional disillusionment is that some worship pastors simply give up. “Many are tired of fighting battles over music style. Others feel they are no longer relevant to the modern worship culture. Whatever the reasons, thousands each year shift to new careers late in their ministries.”<sup>69</sup>

David Staal wrote an insightful article for *Christianity Today* in April, 2014 entitled “Leadership Transitions: Let Go.”<sup>70</sup> While the distinction between a sprint and a marathon is a metaphor often used to illustrate a realistic pace of professional development, Staal speaks in terms of a relay race that involves two runners. He asks a number of important questions related to leadership transition.

- 1) What does a successful transition look like for you?
- 2) What do you, as an outgoing leader, fear going into a transition?
- 3) How did you know it was time to leave?
- 4) What are signs of trouble?
- 5) What does it look like for the new leader to drop the baton?
- 6) What is a trust-breaker?
- 7) Your role: what should it be? What should it not be?
- 8) What does a founder wish the new leader understood?<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Page and Gray, 144.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Staal.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

Especially insightful was Staal's answer to question number three: how did you know when it was time to leave? "When I realized much greater potential existed for the organization than did my capacity to lead; combined with fatigue and the need for fresh personal energy. My time to leave arrived, and that truth helped me to let go."<sup>72</sup>

One final source of information in this category comes from a dissertation by Reginald Weems, entitled "Transitions: Surviving Congregational Change."<sup>73</sup> This study examines the 21-year tenure of selected Tennessee pastors who have successfully navigated change. This particular association of pastors is known for short pastoral tenures. The study is addressed to leadership, pastors and anyone seeking the benefits of pastoral longevity.

The norm for pastoral ministry is longevity, which, in turn, produces the most good for the people in and the advancement of God's kingdom. By it, God works all things together for the good of both pastors and congregants (Romans 8:28). Sainthood requires a lifetime of cooperation with the Holy Spirit. This is true for both pastors and members. For this reason, everything that can be done to enhance the possibility of pastoral longevity should be undertaken. And whatever can be done to teach men to survive transitions in the local church should also be encouraged.<sup>74</sup>

This quote speaks to the necessity of divine intervention to assure survival in the struggle of ministry transition.

Space will not allow for a review of several other important sources of insight into the transitions associated with professional development. A short list of some of these books include: *The SBC and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Allen, 2016), *Culturally-Conscious Worship* (Black 2000), *The Catalyst Leader* (Lomenick, 2013), *Leadership Shift* (Murren, 1994), *Messy Church* (Parsley,

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<sup>72</sup> Staal, 2.

<sup>73</sup> Reginald Weems, "Transitions: Surviving Congregational Change": (2013). *Doctoral Dissertations and Projects*. 649. <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/649>.

<sup>74</sup> Weems, 649.

2012), *Growing Stronger in the Seasons of Life* (Swindoll, 1983), *Can't Wait for Sunday* (Walters, 2006), and *Replenish* (Witt, 2011).

### *Succession*

The keys to a Christ-honoring succession plan include finishing strong, closing well and positioning the next leader for success. As with other topics germane to this study, there is ample literature that generally addresses leadership succession. However, there is little that speaks specifically to leadership succession within the worship ministry of the local church. The examination of two specific Scripture passages and five books will provide the background necessary to inform the discussion of Christ-honoring leadership succession in worship ministry.

The succession in leadership from Moses to Joshua is described in the first chapter of the Old Testament book of Joshua. Joshua did not seek a place of leadership, but he was called and trained by God to be Moses' successor. God had equipped Joshua to replace the revered Moses. God had encouraged Joshua by giving him His promise and the assurance of His presence.

Be strong and courageous for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:6-8).

Joshua fully recognized the task before him: lead the people across the Jordan River into the land God was about to give to them. Even though he had served as one of the spies years earlier and had seen the Promised Land, Joshua still drew confidence from God's fresh word of encouragement and commendation. It is apparent that Joshua was specifically prepared and divinely appointed to his new leadership role.

*Next: Surviving a Leadership Transition*, by Marvin Anthony Moss, addresses a number of succession-related issues in a practical and biblical manner. In chapter two, Moss draws helpful insights from the examples of Moses and Joshua as described in Joshua chapter one. He shares the wisdom in making successions relational as opposed to generational. While there is an age component to succession, it should not define the succession. Any change in any environment will initially be perceived as a threat. Although it is impossible to eliminate these perceived threats, it is the task of both leaders (old and new) to minimize them. Moss emphasizes that “the leadership transition must include a public affirmation of the incoming leader in order for the transition to have a chance at being successful. This public display should affirm that the new leader has the capacity to embrace all generations and aspects of the existing members.”<sup>75</sup> This type of affirmation is clearly evident in the example of Moses and Joshua.

The High Priestly Prayer of John 17 records Jesus’ final report to the Father before going to the cross. He reveals his spiritual priorities through his prayer. He prays that He might glorify the Father (v. 1), he prays for the unity of the church (vv. 21-23), the sanctity of the church (v. 17) and the winning of a lost world (vv. 18-19). He also reveals the gifts he has given his people: eternal life (vv. 2-3), the Word (v. 8, 14) and his glory (v. 22).

The implications of this prayer on the principles of leadership succession are significant. It speaks to the legacy that Jesus left his disciples. The disciples recognized the trust that existed between the Father and the Son. They recognized that Jesus had left them the word of truth which they would share with others. They recognized the love that Jesus demonstrated was sacrificial. “Jesus’ petitions for believers are four: preservation, sanctification, unity, and

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<sup>75</sup> Marvin Anthony Moss. *Next: Surviving a Leadership Transition* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013). 15.



participation in Jesus' glory."<sup>76</sup> These implications are especially significant in implementing a succession plan from a seasoned worship pastor to a new worship pastor.

Having served as the president of two Christian universities, David McKenna has great insights to the phenomenon of leadership succession. He has written on the process of how leaders make other leaders, and has developed what he calls:

The Succession Principle:

What we bring to our leadership is *important*;  
What we do in our leadership is *more important*;  
What we leave from our leadership is *most important of all*.<sup>77</sup>

McKenna illustrates many parallels from the High Priestly Prayer of John 17. In fact he has given this prayer a secondary title: The Prayer of Succession.<sup>78</sup> This prayer answers the three questions of the succession principle, which are: 1) What does Jesus bring to his leadership? 2) What does Jesus do in his leadership? And 3) What does Jesus leave from his leadership?<sup>79</sup> The answers to these questions are all found in John 17: the legacy of trust (vv.1-5), the legacy of truth (vv. 6-9) and the legacy of love (vv. 20-26).<sup>80</sup> Just as the Father bequeathed trust, truth and love in his Son, McKenna recommends that an outgoing leader recall the gifts entrusted to him/her and pass them on to the new leader.

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<sup>76</sup> Walvoord and Zuck, *NT*, 334.

<sup>77</sup> McKenna, xi.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>79</sup> McKenna, 10.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

*Mastering Life Before It's Too Late* gives readers a glimpse into the life and practices of pastor and author Robert J. Morgan. He posits the expectation to live a life of purpose that is based on biblical principles. Living such a life will make one “pleasantly productive”.<sup>81</sup> He introduces ten patterns for pleasantly productive people, regardless of their age or position in life. These strategies of spiritual and practical wellness will position the aging worship pastor well for continued relevance in ministry and a strong finish.

While the first five patterns speak to issues of organization and efficiency, the final five are especially helpful for the aging worship pastor. In pattern five, *Pull Off at Rest Stops*, the author emphasizes the need for Sabbath. In pattern six, *Operate on Yourself*, Morgan highlights the importance of equipping oneself through emotional and spiritual wellness. In pattern seven, *Live As If*, the message involves the psychology of the soul. When confronted with stressful situations in life, there is great benefit in training one's mind to act *as if* the situation were not so overwhelming. The eighth pattern: *Bathe in the Dead Sea*, is another important principle for equipping that needs to be learned early in one's ministry career. Because of the heavy saline and mineral content of the Dead Sea, it is almost impossible to sink. As one who bathes in the Dead Sea is kept afloat, we too can learn to live life with an attitude of joy. In like manner, we will be buoyed by the strength that accompanies the joy of the Lord. The ninth of Morgan's patterns is entitled *Practice the Power of Plodding*. As in the manner of compound interest, there is great return in the time-honored practice of plodding along in life. “I'm convinced we're too enamored of the dramatically big when most of life is blessedly small.”<sup>82</sup> The culminating principle for equipping that Morgan shares is pattern ten: *Remember There are Two of You*. Following Paul's

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<sup>81</sup> Robert J. Morgan. *Mastering Life Before It's Too Late: 10 Biblical Strategies for a Lifetime of Purpose*. (New York, NY: Howard Books, 2015), 3.

<sup>82</sup> Morgan, 225.

confession to the Galatians (2:20) he acknowledges his dependence on a daily dying to self in his quest to live by faith in the Son of God. Regardless of what one does, whether he conducts a rehearsal, leads a worship service, writes a paper, or tackles a leadership crisis, he/she needs to do all with the clear understanding that Christ is carrying most of the load.

Leonard Sweet has penned an autobiographical diary outlining the steps necessary to live in God's pleasure. *The Well-Played Life: Why Pleasing God Doesn't have to be Such Hard Work*, is divided into three distinct life stages; 0-30, 30-60 and 60-90+. The second and third stages provide insight into the subject of the aging worship pastor. "Second Age disciples never get done learning, exploring, playing, or singing, but now they must learn to play with God in a much bigger sandbox. The Second Age is a time of maturing, anointing, and commissioning."<sup>83</sup> Sweet contends that the second age child ceases to be lost in wonder and love, and instead often becomes lost in work and workaholism.<sup>84</sup> He defines third agers (60-90+) as master players and game changers. This is a time when life does not wind down but instead winds up. It is "not the time for rocking-chair readiness, indemnified dreams, or risk-free investments. It is the time to blaze new trails, find undiscovered truths, explore strange lands, search for better worlds in which to live and love."<sup>85</sup> For the aging Christian, Sweet reinforces reliance on the Holy Spirit of God in dealing with unplanned opportunities and unexpected occurrences.

Dr. Bruce Wilkinson reminds his readers that what they do for God today has a lasting impact for eternity. In his book, *A Life God Rewards: Why Everything You Do Today Matters Forever*, Wilkinson directs attention to that day when their citizenship transfers from earth to

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<sup>83</sup> Leonard Sweet. *The Well-Played Life: Why Pleasing God Doesn't have to be Such Hard Work*. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2014), 139.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 189.

heaven. While on earth there are two key considerations. The first key involves belief: what one believes will determine where one spends eternity. A large portion of this book centers on the second key: how one's works on earth are repaid in heaven. He emphasizes the importance of stewardship in the management of our earthly treasures. "No matter how large or small your gift, you put your life in motion by answering two simple questions: What treasure has God given me? and What is God asking me to do with my treasure?"<sup>86</sup> The answers to these questions definitely must be pondered and answered by the aging worship pastor.

### *Other*

All of the literature reviewed to this point has a close connection to one of the four topics identified at the beginning of the chapter. A final category (other) is reserved for those resources that provide structural and organizational clarity to this thesis. Also included in this category is one book and one scripture passage that will be alluded to in the final chapter.

*A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian serves as the standard and required writing style for the Doctor of Worship Studies curriculum at Liberty University. According to the LU Doctor of Worship Studies handbook, the current edition of Turabian will serve as the essential guideline for thesis form.<sup>87</sup>

*Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* by John W. Creswell, has provided valuable guidance in the design of this research project. The construction of the abstract, research questions, hypotheses, and research method are all clearly defined by Creswell. Furthermore, he provides excellent guidance for writing strategies, literature review,

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<sup>86</sup> Bruce Wilkinson. *A Life God Rewards: Why Everything You Do Today Matters Forever*. (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc.), 87.

<sup>87</sup> Liberty University School of Music Thesis Handbook. Doctor of Worship Studies. WRSP 880: Introduction to Thesis Writing Project, WRSP 889 Thesis Project Proposal & Research, WRSP 890 Thesis Project Defense. 2017-2018. 2.

and the ethical considerations of the study. The qualitative research method of this thesis is outlined in chapter eight. One important characteristic of this particular qualitative study is that of reflexivity.

The inquirer reflects about how their role in the study and their personal background, culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations, such as the themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data. This aspect of the methods is more than merely advancing biases and values in the study, but how the background of the researchers actually may shape the direction of the study.<sup>88</sup>

Creswell has taken much of the confusion out of the research process and has provided content that is conveniently accessible to the researcher.

1 Chronicles chapter 12 reveals many lessons about leadership, character and wisdom. David sought out loyal soldiers who were skilled, trained and were not afraid of hard work. Unlike Saul, who drafted men into his army (1 Sam. 14:52), David attracted them because of his outstanding example. He attracted soldiers who knew how to keep rank and face the enemy together (vv. 33, 38). He attracted soldiers, like the men of Issachar, who understood the times in which they were living (v. 32). These men of Issachar were part of a wide cross-section of Hebrew soldiers who were loyal to David. Because the men of Issachar “understood the times” they cast their lot with David rather than Saul.

The chronicler also enumerated the soldiers (many of them brave and experienced) who made up the delegations seeking to encourage David to expand his rule beyond Hebron. They came from Judah, Simeon, Levi, Benjamin, Ephraim, western Manasseh, Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, Dan, Asher, Reuben, Gad, and eastern Manasseh—a total of well over 300,000 men of war. All the tribes were named in order to show that David’s support was broad-based.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> John W. Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2014), 186.

<sup>89</sup> Walvoord and Zuck, *Old Testament*, 605.

The example of these men should serve the pastor who likewise wishes to understand the days in which he lives and ministers. This model should serve the leadership teams of churches who wish to oversee pastoral transition and succession in a God-honoring manner.

Based on the 1 Chronicles 12 passage, Glen Martin & Gary McIntosh have written *The Issachar Factor: Understanding Trends that Confront Your Church and Designing a Strategy for Success*. The authors describe the wisdom of these men.

When the future King David was running from Saul, God sent hundreds of thousands of men to help him. All of the men were chosen for battle for a reason. Some for their fighting ability and others for their expertise with special weapons. And, still others were chosen for their character, courage or loyalty. But, perhaps the most important men in the entire army were the 200 “men of Issachar.” They were the strategists who developed the master plan of battle. And they were chosen for their insight and foresight—their ability to look beyond the details of day-to-day life, discern the underlying issues, and chart an accurate course into the future.<sup>90</sup>

The men of Issachar understood chronological, spiritual and political time. They could discern when a leader was falling and another leader was rising. They could even tell you who the next leader should be. They knew who to follow and when to follow him or her. In fact, God chose the sons of Issachar as one of the three tribes to go out in front of Israel whenever the nation moved. Judah (the praising people) went first, then Issachar (the wise and discerning ones) and finally Zebulun (the financiers). Such a strategic approach to the issues of this study are necessary to best position aging worship pastors and their church boards to make wise decisions, for the sake of the aging pastor and the church that he serves.

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<sup>90</sup> Glen Martin & Gary McIntosh, *The Issachar Factor: Understanding Trends that Confront Your Church and Designing a Strategy for Success*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), back book jacket.

### Critical Assessment of the Literature

This review purposed to identify those published resources that offer scholarly support to the themes of the project's research questions. The importance of the Scripture passages reviewed must not be underestimated. The account of the leadership transition between Moses and Joshua will serve as an excellent model for leadership transitions in today's church. The High Priestly prayer of Jesus will serve as a model for leadership succession in a manner that encourages trust, legacy and love. Considering the lack of literature on the specific applications of transition and succession in the area of worship ministry, the relatively few existing (primarily in dissertations and journal/magazine articles) documents will provide the greatest relevancy to this project. In critically assessing the literature reviewed in this chapter, it is this author's opinion that these sources provide sufficient fundamental background information to support the objectives, hypotheses and research methods being addressed in this thesis.

## CHAPTER THREE

### TRANSITION PRINCIPLES FOR THE AGING WORSHIP PASTOR

#### Introduction

Bob<sup>91</sup> was raised in a church with a great music program. He quickly developed a fine singing voice and was affirmed by his teachers and the leadership of the church. In the nineteen-eighties he went to a Christian college and studied church music. He became accomplished in vocal performance, hymnology and theology. For the first 25 years of his ministry tenure, he enjoyed great success and the support of both the congregation and church leadership. Bolstered by affirmation and accolades, Bob turned a blind eye to changes that were taking place in worship ministry. He became critical of the dynamic culture and stuck to the methods that had become comfortable for him through the years. As other churches and musicians sought to engage the evolving culture, Bob failed to recognize the necessity of recalibrating his skill set accordingly. Younger adults in the church began to view Bob as old-fashioned and out of touch. His choice of dated music, fear of technology and unwillingness to evolve eventually led to conflict with church leadership, who associated his dated approach with congregational dissatisfaction and people leaving the church. The leadership of his church eventually replaced Bob with a younger worship pastor. Bob left the ministry a broken and bitter man.

Bob is representative of a growing number of Baby Boomer worship pastors who are struggling to adapt to the changes in worship ministry over the past 20 years. His dilemma could have been avoided had he focused on several principles of ongoing spiritual, personal and professional development. Regrettably, Bob (and so many like him) failed to recalibrate his skill set. He did not address the generational distinctions of a diverse congregation. His response to

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<sup>91</sup> Names have been changed and stories are composites of real-life examples.



the cultural changes in his community and church was reactive rather than proactive. Bob did not adapt to the growing emphasis on contemporary music and technology. He did not recognize the value of team collaboration and leadership development. His answer to professional development was to seek out like-minded worship leaders who attended like-minded conferences. Bob did not recognize the value of being a life-long learner and sought out no continuing education opportunities.

Like the proverbial frog in the pan of boiling water, Bob gradually drifted into professional irrelevance. The damage was already beyond repair and any attempts to make wholesale changes would be too little too late. Periodic and consistent self-analysis over the course of his ministry tenure would have allowed Bob to make strategic changes and adjustments in his methods and mentality. Had he engaged with a variety of individuals, organizations, and institutions leading him to consistently reexamine and adapt his approaches to worship ministry, perhaps Bob would still be in a position to capitalize on his experience, gifting and wisdom for the benefit of the church.

The first stated hypothesis of this research project calls for the aging worship pastor to focus on professional development as realized by generational awareness, continuing education and planned succession. This chapter will break down three categories of development for the aging worship pastor to address in his pursuit for lasting relevance and graceful transition. Those categories include spiritual, personal and professional development.

Spiritual development is no less important for the aging worship pastor than for the young man just starting his ministry tenure. Aging leaders can sometimes develop character flaws associated with ongoing sinful behaviors like pride. A love for all ages and cultures is borne out of spiritual maturity. The practice of spiritual disciplines should not be neglected as the

leader ages. The development of a pastoral heart will naturally flow from the practice of and attention to spiritual disciplines.

Personal development takes on many unique facets for the aging worship pastor. There are significant physical and emotional challenges that go along with growing older. The worship pastor must not prematurely concede to the inevitable liabilities of aging when there are proactive steps he can take to promote personal wellness. Personal development must account for a balanced lifestyle that addresses life beyond the church. Attention to family, community and leisure activities are an important consideration for personal development.

A third category of development for the aging worship pastor addresses the need to grow in the areas of musical, technological, educational and leadership development. No amount of spiritual and personal development will save the aging worship pastor if he is unwilling to address these four vital areas of professional development.

### Spiritual Development

The growth and spiritual development of a worship leader is dependent on the habitual and relentless practice of several spiritual disciplines. According to Foster; “The Spiritual Disciplines are those personal and corporate disciplines that promote spiritual growth. They are the habits of devotion and experiential Christianity that have been practiced by the people of God since biblical times.”<sup>92</sup> Various authors have offered differing lists of those habits. Such a non-exhaustive list includes Bible study, prayer, worship, evangelism, service, stewardship, fasting, silence, solitude, journaling, learning, meditation, simplicity, submission, confession, guidance, and celebration. Richard Foster has divided the spiritual disciplines into three categories: 1) the

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<sup>92</sup> Donald S. Whitney. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1991). 15.

inward disciplines of meditation, prayer, fasting and study, 2) the outward disciplines of simplicity, solitude, submission and service, and 3) the corporate disciplines of confession, worship, guidance and celebration.<sup>93</sup> The spiritual growth of an aging worship pastor must be reflected in all three of these dimensions.

The inward disciplines are those that most typically are practiced in private. They feed the soul through an intimate walk with the Lord. They are not intended for public exposure. All four of these disciplines (meditation, prayer, fasting, study) are closely related and emanate spiritual growth.

The spiritual discipline of meditation has been maligned in many evangelical circles due to what some see as an association with the New Age movement and Transcendental Meditation. Anyone who knows God's Word can provide biblical precedent for meditation. Words like meditate, meditation, think, thinking and thoughts occur multiple times throughout Scripture. Robert J. Morgan has said in a most recent publication: "In a world where everyone is overwhelmed and undervalued, our survival, sanity, and saintliness depend on reclaiming the lost art of biblical meditation."<sup>94</sup> The impact of meditation on prayer and fasting is incalculable. James 4:8 says that when we draw near to God He will draw near to us. Together with prayer and fasting, meditation will develop intimacy with our Lord, and deep long-lasting joy.

The benefits of the discipline of prayer are innumerable. Jesus told his disciples "Whatever you ask in my name, this will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:12-14). It is the responsibility of the

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<sup>93</sup> Richard J. Foster *Celebration of Discipline: the Path to Spiritual Growth*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1978), 132.

<sup>94</sup> Robert J. Morgan. *Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation; Find True Peace in Jesus*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson. 2017). vii.

disciplined Christian to recognize what it is to ask in Jesus' name and then to simply ask. Two chapters later Jesus clarifies. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full (John 16:24)."<sup>95</sup> According to an Unknown Christian; "This truly marvelous promise is given to us six times over. This is the greatest—the most wonderful—promise ever made to man. Yet most men, even Christian men, practically ignore it. Is it not so?"<sup>96</sup> Such realizations support the value of prayer as a vital spiritual discipline.

Even though Jesus both practiced and taught fasting, this spiritual discipline is almost as misunderstood as meditation. "Few disciplines go so radically against the flesh and the mainstream of culture as this one."<sup>97</sup> This inward discipline significantly contributes to the process of transformation. We are transformed when we create a hunger for God as we deprive the body of physical nourishment.

The spiritual discipline of study is primarily devoted to the study of God's Word. Foster outlines four processes that are essential for such study: repetition, concentration, comprehension and reflection.<sup>98</sup> The Old Testament instructed the Israelites to write the Laws on their gates and on their doorposts in order to enable repetition. However, sound study involves more than simple repetition. It requires concentration by the mind as well. Once concentration is achieved we enjoy a greater level of comprehension. Comprehension leads to a greater knowledge of the truth. It brings about insight and discernment. Finally, the significance of this newly acquired knowledge is understood as we reflect on the truth.

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<sup>95</sup> *King James Bible*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>96</sup> An Unknown Christian. *The Kneeling Christian*. (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House. 2013). 19.

<sup>97</sup> Whitney, 152.

<sup>98</sup> Foster, 64-66.

The impact of these inward disciplines in the life of the worship pastor cannot be overemphasized. The Gospel writer makes the connection between a man's heart and his actions. "The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). The aging worship pastor, who has given attention to the inward disciplines over many years, will sow the seeds of his example to countless individuals through his outward and corporate influences.

The outward disciplines of simplicity and solitude conjure up images of asceticism. The Bible speaks often of the necessity of avoiding the temptations of material things that lead to idolatry. Then again, there is a type of legalistic asceticism that is every bit as idolatrous as the love of things. Practices in extreme austerity and self-denial cannot become ends in themselves. Christian leaders must practice balance in the discipline of simplicity. Jesus practiced solitude during the time of his temptation in the desert. He frequently sought solitude from the multitudes and in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus went away from his disciples in order to commune with His Father. Like Jesus, man can benefit from silence and solitude. It will help him to avoid distractions and allow him to focus on the realities of his sin, salvation, sanctification and Savior.

The outward spiritual discipline of submission is denigrated in our society in a manner similar to the discipline of service. In a society that values self-fulfillment and self-actualization, there is little appreciation for self-denial and subservience. To make matters worse, there is historical and current precedent for spiritual abuses by leaders in the church. Our submission must follow the example of Jesus when he said: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Mark 8:34)". Foster has suggested that this type of self-denial strengthens our recognition that many of our desires will often be denied and that we

do not have to have our own way. Our happiness is not dependent upon getting what we want.<sup>99</sup> Jesus demonstrated self-denial when he gave up his position and status in the ultimate act of submission that culminated in the cross. Whether a worship pastor is just beginning his service journey or if he has been serving for years, he must be a faithful disciple who gives of himself freely. The gospel of Jesus transforms enemies of God into servants of God. In the book of Matthew Jesus declared: “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for man (Matthew 20:28).” God works through the gospel of Jesus in part to make people like Jesus. “The risen Christ beckons us to the ministry of the towel. Such a ministry, flowing out of the inner recesses of the heart, is life and joy and peace.”<sup>100</sup> As Jesus came not to be served, but instead had the heart of a servant, so those who believe the gospel of Jesus are given Christ-like servant hearts.

The corporate disciplines are at the heart of the worship pastor’s task. He plays a major role in leading the congregation in confession, worship, guidance and celebration. When individuals and congregations confess their sins, they are agreeing with God, who already knows their transgression, that they have disobeyed his holy standards. A consistent practice of confession brings about an awareness that man is frail in his humanity and totally dependent on the forgiving and empowering grace of Christ.

Both public and private worship are spiritual disciplines whereby believers grow in Christlikeness. Worship is an ongoing cycle of human response to divine revelation. It is the act of responding to the attributes and marvelous works of God as revealed in his Word through praise, thanksgiving and adoration.

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<sup>99</sup> Foster, 113.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 140.

God offers his children guidance in accordance with their faithfulness to the other spiritual disciplines. Similarly, celebration is central to all the spiritual disciplines. “Without a joyful spirit of festivity the disciplines become dull, death-breathing tools in the hands of modern Pharisees. Every discipline should be characterized by carefree gaiety and a sense of thanksgiving.”<sup>101</sup> Joy is not achieved through some shortcut of worship or prayer. It is achieved through transformation. Paul told the Philippian believers to “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice (Phil. 4:4)”<sup>102</sup> This spirit of celebration is enjoyed as the believer, in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, lets his requests be made known to God. Then the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep his heart and his mind in Christ Jesus.<sup>103</sup>

As a worship pastor ages, the spiritual disciplines described here become healthy habits. Pursuing spiritual maturity is a lifelong calling for those who lead in ministry. The worship pastor must not fall into the trap of establishing his identity around his role rather than his relationship with the Lord. His walk with the Lord must take priority over his work for the Lord. He must have the mind of Christ as witnessed in the first recorded words of twelve-year-old Jesus. As a young boy, Jesus grew in stature and wisdom. His mother, Mary, was anxious over his disappearance. Upon finding Jesus holding court with the Jewish theologians, Mary asked him why he had caused her alarm. Jesus replied “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s house (Luke 2:49)?” This was a demonstration of Jesus’ purposeful commitment to obey the will of God and to fulfill His mission.”<sup>104</sup> Not only does

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<sup>101</sup> Foster, 191.

<sup>102</sup> KJV.

<sup>103</sup> Philippians 4:6-7.

<sup>104</sup> Morgan, *Mastering Life*, 13.

Jesus demonstrate his obedience to the Father, he provides an excellent example for ministry preparation and spiritual equipping. On the night before his death Jesus provided the other bookend statement of his earthly ministry when he prayed these words: “I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.”<sup>105</sup> Prioritizing his walk and finishing his work should be the desire of any servant-minded worship pastor.

Consistent spiritual development is, by necessity, the first mark of a balanced leader. The Apostle Paul outlines thirteen additional marks in his instructions to both Timothy and Titus. The goals and objectives of a spiritually mature leader need to emulate these spiritual attributes:

1. Above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2a and Titus 1:6).
2. Husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2b and Titus 1:6).
3. Temperate (1 Tim. 3:2).
4. Prudent (1 Tim. 3:2).
5. Respectable (1 Tim. 3:2).
6. Hospitable (1 Tim. 3:2).
7. Able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2).
8. Not addicted to wine (1 Tim. 3:3 and Titus 1:7).
9. Not pugnacious (1 Tim. 3:3).
10. Gentle (1 Tim. 3:3).
11. Not contentious (1 Tim. 3:3).
12. Free from the love of money (1 Tim. 3:3).
13. Manages his household well (1 Tim. 3:4).

Fueled by these thirteen marks, the spiritually balanced leader is free to experience the character of God and thereby encounter him. As Rory Noland has stated in *The Worshiping Artist*, “Whether reading Scripture, interacting with others, singing in corporate worship, or out in nature, be attentive not only to God’s presence but also to his character.”<sup>106</sup> Spiritual balance is a necessary prerequisite for one who would lead others in worship.

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<sup>105</sup> John 17:4. *New International Version*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018).

<sup>106</sup> Rory Noland. *The Worshiping Artist* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 54.



As the spiritually mature worship pastor ages he will naturally elevate his pastoral responsibilities over most others. Matt Boswell explains.

God cares deeply about how His people worship Him, and so it stands to reason that He also cares about who leads His people in worship. For worship leaders to understand their identity, the Word of God must inform them. What we find from a cursory view of Acts 20:17-38 is that *overseers* (*episkopous*, v. 28) or *elders* (*presbuteros*, v. 17) are mandated with the sacred task of shepherding the people of God. These terms of leadership are interchangeable throughout the New Testament, and are given the unique role of teaching the church (1 Tim. 4:11-16). It is through this lens of leading and teaching that the modern practice of the worship leader can be seen. From deciding the songs of the local congregation, to leading in public prayer and praise, the worship leader is a shepherd and teacher. In light of this reality the worship leader in many churches serves as a *functional elder*, and therefore should exhibit the qualities that the New Testament expects of elders.<sup>107</sup>

As such, the worship pastor must acknowledge the gravity of his shepherding responsibilities. In his description of the 16 roles of a worship pastor, Dr. Vernon Whaley offers a three-fold charge in the role of a pastor. 1) I seek to serve as a spiritual compass to set the directions and confirm the goal of the worship ministry; 2) I seek to be a spiritual caregiver and as such, love and shepherd our people; 3) I seek to contend for the truth as a theologian.<sup>108</sup> The worship pastor must utilize every opportunity to provide spiritual food, leadership, care and protection for every sheep in his fold. As the worship pastor boldly leads, the sheep will benefit from the green pastures of sustenance, growth and protection.

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<sup>107</sup> Matt Boswell. *Doxology & Theology: How the Gospel Forms the Worship Leader*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2013), 24.

<sup>108</sup> Vernon M. Whaley. *The Role of the Worship Leader Workbook*, (Virginia Beach, VA: Academix, 2010), 85.

## Personal Development

*Pastors can only encourage people over the long haul when they themselves are moved, inspired, spirited. That means self-care.<sup>109</sup>*

Pastoral self-care necessitates one's close attention to the healthy rhythms of rest, restoration and relationships. Attention to emotional, spiritual, social, intellectual and physical care will ensure that pastors remain effective in the great work God has entrusted to them. Paul speaks of the necessity of remaining effective in ministry. "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24)." The exploration of personal development for the aging worship pastor will focus on the physical, social and intellectual dimensions.

Attention to the physical matters of self-care requires the wise leader to look at the big picture. If he is to establish a healthy rhythm of physical fitness, what priority must he assign to this ongoing task? How much of a priority is it and what are acceptable excuses for neglecting his physical condition? As with maintaining spiritual disciplines, the physical disciplines must be addressed consistently and with care. Both spiritual and physical disciplines are necessary for sustainable leadership and longevity in pastoral ministry.

Alan Taha, in his DMin dissertation entitled "Physical Self-Care Practices for Sustainable Pastoral Leadership in Local Church Ministry,"<sup>110</sup> identifies several common physical self-care commonalities among pastors who were maintaining sustaining pastoral leadership in their local church settings. All of Taha's survey subjects maintained an elevated activity level above the

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<sup>109</sup> Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman and Donald C. Guthrie. *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 61.

<sup>110</sup> Alan Taha, "Physical Self-Care Practices for Sustainable Pastoral Leadership in Local Church Ministry" (DMin diss., Covenant Theological Seminary, 2010).

norm, also maintaining a regular course of both aerobic exercise and weight conditioning. None negated what they had accomplished in physical exercise or work through poor eating habits, and all took regular time off every week.<sup>111</sup> These results reveal that each subject valued exercise, a healthy diet and consistent rest.

The American Heart Association has provided five recommendations for physical activity among adults.

1. Get at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity, or a combination of both, preferably spread throughout the week.
2. Add moderate-to high-intensity muscle-strengthening activity (such as resistance or weights) on at least 2 days per week.
3. Spend less time sitting. Even light-intensity activity can offset some of the risks of being sedentary.
4. Gain even more benefits by being active at least 300 minutes (5 hours) per week.
5. Increase amount and intensity gradually over time.<sup>112</sup>

The National Institute on Aging recommends four types of exercise for aging adults: endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility.<sup>113</sup> Endurance, or aerobic activities, support breathing and heart health. Strength exercises contribute to muscle strength and improved function. Balance exercises aid in preventing falls and any long-term disability that may result. Flexibility exercises allow for increased freedom of movement. As pastors age they need to make the transition to these recommended exercise modifications.

There is an unfortunate stereotype often associated with individuals in full-time ministry who are fond of good food and who are given to obesity. Sadly, this stereotype is supported by evidence. One study shows that 76 percent of clergy were either overweight or obese, compared

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<sup>111</sup> Taha, 75.

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/aha-recs-for-physical-activity-in-adults>.

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-physical-activity>.

to 61 percent of the general population.<sup>114</sup> The same clergy who warn of other sins, fail to see the connection between spiritual and physical disciplines. They must not attempt to justify neglecting their health by claiming that their schedules are too busy or that their work often revolves around meal-centered responsibilities. Pastor Rick Warren, who has struggled with obesity, recommends a process of dietary stewardship. “Maintain your ideal weight, balance your diet, reduce or avoid drinking alcohol, and live in harmony with God.”<sup>115</sup>

Together with exercise and diet, a third component to balanced physical development is the establishment and consistent practice of sabbath. According to Robert J. Morgan, “Biblical rest is the state of mind and body that allows God to restore our souls and replenish our strength. For God, rest was enjoying the interval between tasks completed and work to come.”<sup>116</sup> The busy worship pastor must recognize that he cannot do everything. He must understand that his rest is contingent on his ability to delegate many of his tasks. He must recognize that only **he** can be a husband to his wife and a father to his children. Furthermore, **he** is the only person that can care for his body and nourish his soul.

If a worship pastor is unable to manage his self-care, he may need to rely on others for encouragement, exhortation and accountability. With age, one would hope that the worship pastor might learn to manage his own self-care. Even so, he may need help in establishing consistent working hours, days off and vacations. In the church once pastored by John Piper, his

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<sup>114</sup> Fred Lehr, *Clergy Burnout: Recovering from the 70-hour Work Week and Other Self-Defeating Practices* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2006), 5.

<sup>115</sup> Rick Warren. "Pastors, Your Physical Health Is a Spiritual Matter." Church Leaders. <http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/172167-rick-warren-pastors-your-physical-health-is-a-spiritual-matter.html/3>.

<sup>116</sup> Robert J. Morgan. *Mastering Life*, 144.

staff was encouraged to divide their work week into 21 segments<sup>117</sup> (3 per day: morning, afternoon, evening) and aim to work no less than 11 and no more than 15. If a worship pastor's church has not established a vacation benefit, he should take the lead in encouraging leadership to document and enforce their practices. There are unique needs in renewal, inspiration and creativity for the worship pastor that must be accounted for in his schedule. This schedule must include the necessary time off to recharge, reflect and reenergize. He must not elevate his desire to be a people pleaser over his responsibility to establish sabbath in his life; for his own sake, the sake of his family and ultimately for the sake of the church.

Attention to the social component of self-care requires that the worship pastor manage all relationships: those within the church, outside of the church and in the home. Wisdom is required to navigate the social component of colleagues within the church. Burns, Chapman and Guthrie clarify the difference between an ally and a confidant. Both are vital, but typically cannot be the same person. An ally shares many common values but cannot always be loyal due to some relational or organizational ties. In contrast, confidants have few, if any, conflicting loyalties and typically operate outside the organization's boundary.<sup>118</sup> Acquaintances, casual friends and many close friends would fit into the ally category. Pastoral staff, other worship ministry staff and volunteers would also fall into this category. Intimate friends would fall into the confidant category and typically number between one and five people.

A worship pastor's ministry tenure is greatly enhanced through the wise navigation of personal friendships. According to Burns, Chapman and Guthrie, "Failure to distinguish between

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<sup>117</sup> <http://www.hopeingod.org/document/church-employee-handbook> . Accessed on June 29, 2016. This link is no longer active.

<sup>118</sup> Burns, Chapman and Guthrie, 81.

these varied types of relationships has hurt many pastors.”<sup>119</sup> Pastors cannot cut off friendships from a fear of being betrayed. This would result in isolation and loneliness. On the other hand they must take care not to divulging too much to allies who may not be trustworthy.

Furthermore, the development of close friendships in the church leaves the worship pastor vulnerable to the criticism of those who accuse him of “playing favorites”. One pastor did nuance this distinction from his own experience: “I think we have a vital body life and great connections within the church (allies). But there are deeper things, things too great for them to bear. It’s helpful to have someone not associated with the situation (confidants).”<sup>120</sup> Such confidants can be found in the church but are typically from the outside.

The aging worship pastor is advised to engage with a peer group that can enhance his ability to reflect, learn and vent, a group that provides a safe place of unconditional support. One such group for pastors of all types identified the following benefits of having a peer group:

- Peer groups strengthen the pastor’s ability to deal with conflict in their congregations.
- Peer groups enhance the pastor’s understanding of ministry skill.
- Pastors improve in emotional health.
- Pastors develop better self-care habits.
- Pastors experience church growth.
- Pastors find a place of relational safety and support in the group.<sup>121</sup>

Designing and compiling a similar peer group, addressing the unique needs of worship pastors, will further enhance the effectiveness of his personal development strategy.

As a pastor grows closer to retirement it is vital that he sustain and cherish relationships outside of the church. His wife and children will remain long after his associates and congregants

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<sup>119</sup> Burns, Chapman and Guthrie, 82.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 87.

cease to play a significant role in his daily life. If he has not grown in his love for and desire to spend time with his family, he will not be a blessing to them in his retirement. One seminary professor cautioned his students with these words:

A man must take the time and care necessary to help his wife develop with him as he grows in the Lord's work. The task is not simple, but the pastor and his wife must devise ways for the two of them to grow together. No man can afford to fail at this point. The cost of failure is too severe, and the incentive for success is too great. The man of God must be Christ like wherever he finds himself, and especially when he finds himself at home.<sup>122</sup>

Attention to his marriage and family is especially important for the worship pastor who often receives encouragement and praise from the church for his ministry. He cannot rely on these temporary relationships and fleeting affirmations when he is no longer part of that ministry. He must establish and embrace his identity in Christ as his first priority. Similarly, his identification with his wife and children (grandchildren too) must take priority over any status he derives from his congregants.

The intellectual development of the aging worship pastor is influenced by many unique factors and begs some basic questions. What impact does aging have on the cognitive health and performance of a worship pastor? What is the impact of ageism in our society and its influence on the church? How can an aging worship pastor mitigate the inevitable struggles of aging and capitalize on the advantages of his wisdom and experience?

The effects of aging are clearly observed in the decline of several bodily systems. Web MD identifies some of the normal signs of aging:

1. Your heart works harder.
2. You find it harder to see and hear.
3. Your teeth and gums change.
4. Your bones become more brittle.

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<sup>122</sup> Joe H. Cothen. *Equipped for Good Work: A Guide for Pastors*. (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1981), 7-8.

5. It's harder getting around or staying strong.
6. You may experience urinary incontinence.
7. Your sex life changes.<sup>123</sup>

These are hardly the characteristics that a church first looks for in a vibrant worship pastor.

Yet, despite the liabilities of the aging process, there is an encouraging report based on the investigation of cognitive advantages for older professional musicians. A group of researchers from the University of Toronto have concluded that long-term music training and practice are associated with enhancement of general cognitive abilities in late middle-aged to older adults.<sup>124</sup> Professional musicians were matched with non-musicians on age, education, vocabulary and general health and given tests that measure cognitive control. Older amateur musicians also outperformed non-musicians on a variety of near-transfer tasks.

The implications from the results of this study are significant. First of all, it is important for the aging worship pastor to continually hone his musical craft. Consistent musical practice and performance will aid in retention of vibrant cognitive health. Secondly, he must not resign himself to a diminished role in the musical component of the worship ministry. Finally, this study gives veracity to the notion that aging musicians are capable of performing at a high level and that their musical skills are exempt from any significant cognitive decline.

Among the 78 million Baby Boomers in the United States, there are many who are approaching the final decades of their working career. Studies have shown that older Baby Boomers are likely to encounter some type of age discrimination in the workplace.

Managers and younger workers often assume that older workers are less flexible with change and lack technological skills or the willingness to acquire those skills. In

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<sup>123</sup> [www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/guide/normal-aging](http://www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/guide/normal-aging).

<sup>124</sup> Amer, et. al., 8.



actuality, opportunities to stay up-to-date may be in short supply for the older worker who is assumed to be “over the hill.”<sup>125</sup>

To combat this trend, Baby Boomers must battle to stay viable and productive as they reach the end of their careers.

The injustices of ageism have not eluded the church. As the praise and worship movement swept through the American church in the seventies and eighties, many churches hired full-time worship pastors who are now Baby Boomers. Unfortunately, many churches have begun to place age restrictions on their worship leaders. Platform credibility has come into question and aging worship leaders are becoming marginalized. Aging worship pastors can look upon such trends with fear or with a determination to remain committed to their calling.

Several aging worship leaders share their concerns:

Terry - Rampant age discrimination is the dirty little secret of the 21<sup>st</sup> century church. Almost all my fellow church musicians who I knew in college have left the ministry or switched to senior adult ministry. As for me, I chose to go back to making the music I love and recruit other “old dudes” to join me; i.e. I went outside the church boundaries. I discovered that deep down I am still the young “contemporary” musician God made me to be. To the young person who asks how old guys can do “modern” worship, I just laugh and say because we invented it.<sup>126</sup>

C. Holden – I lost my full time position at age 57. I am now 62. Never could find another full time position but I am serving part time. I had to start another career because most churches were looking for someone younger. I lost my position not because of poor job performance, but because of a narcissistic Pastor who fooled a lot of people.<sup>127</sup>

Page and Gray suggest two factors in the preponderance of aging worship pastors who are forced to adjust their roles, are reassigned or are terminated. As previously cited in chapter one these two factors include: 1) the need for new skills in contemporary music and technology

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<sup>125</sup> Gibson, Whitney, Cella, Clark, Epstein, and Haselberger. 53-59.

<sup>126</sup> Harland. 2.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

and 2) the desire of some churches to have younger leaders become the face of the worship service.<sup>128</sup>

Successful aging pastors have offered several helpful suggestions.

Chris – Real musicians mature in understanding and technique and develop to become valuable contributors to the Body of Christ. I have also seen, to be fair, “lifers” who become old wine skins, won’t upgrade their gear, don’t progress musically, and become “dated” in style and approach to the point they find it difficult to adapt to current styles and new music.<sup>129</sup>

Promoting balance and self-awareness in addition to daily rituals and ideas for managing challenges, interviewees offered key advice for promoting balance and better living. Suggestions included finding a holistic balance – “physically, mentally and spiritually,” said Melissa – and also managing one’s time effectively, putting ministry aside on occasion and dedicating time to favorite hobbies. Vaughn stressed the importance of a healthy diet in his life. “I’ve changed my eating practices,” he said, “because I notice as I am aging that if I eat a greasy hamburger, I feel like a greasy hamburger!”<sup>130</sup>

While younger church leaders must avoid the practice of ageism in the church, the aging worship pastor must be proactive in managing his own future and the future of the church.

The fears of the marginalized and the suggestions of the survivors both acknowledge the necessity for proactive steps to promote personal wellness. The worship pastor must not prematurely concede to the inevitable liabilities of aging. Personal development must include a balanced lifestyle that addresses life beyond the church. Spiritual and personal self-care are necessary prerequisites to a third component of transition principles for the aging worship pastor: professional development.

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<sup>128</sup> Page and Gray, 142.

<sup>129</sup> Harland. “The Over 50 Worship Leader,” *Worshiplife.com*. July 7, 2017.

<sup>130</sup> Scott Bledsoe & Kimberly A. Setterlund “Thriving in Ministry: Exploring the Support Systems and Self-Care Practices of Experienced Pastors” <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306372306>. Accessed November 24, 2018.

## Professional Development

Amid a shifting worship landscape in the local church, the aging worship pastor is well-positioned to provide stability, perspective and wisdom. He must take care to address current issues in worship with grace and openness rather than with an attitude of superiority, pretentious piety and stubbornness.

The Center for Worship at Liberty University has identified five “Current Issues in Twenty-First-Century Worship” that the center believes will impact worship practices in the United States for the next decade. These include: *Missions and Evangelism, the Emerging Church and Postmodern Worship, the Charismatic Renewal, Reformed Theology and Intellectual Worship Influences*, and *Liturgical Influences*.<sup>131</sup>

The impact of these influences will require the guidance of seasoned worship pastors on the ground in the local church. These pastors must reflect the spiritual and personal maturity necessary to lead by example and to navigate wisely. Another important component of development is the ongoing need for professional engagement and growth.

The mature worship pastor must establish a strategic plan for his professional development and this plan will be vital for his ongoing effectiveness in worship ministry. There are several components of professional development that are worthy of consideration, but for the purposes of this study, we shall focus on the importance of musical development, technological development, continuing education and leadership training.

The aging worship pastor’s attention to ongoing musical development reaps several benefits. The power of music in the lives of older people has been documented. “There is substantial evidence that throughout the Third and Fourth Ages older people—including both the ‘well’ old and those constrained by age-related conditions—are able to engage with music,

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<sup>131</sup> Elmer L. Towns and Vernon M. Whaley. *Worship through the Ages: How the Great Awakenings Shape Evangelical Worship*. (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2012), 356.

establish musical identities and develop as musicians.”<sup>132</sup> This study included musicians of all proficiencies, levels of training and experience. Enhanced social cohesion, positive health and well-being and culturally meaningful activities are associated with making music in the general older adult population.

Another way that the professional development of musical skills benefits the mature worship pastor is by helping him prepare for his life after his full-timed ministry tenure is completed. The benefits of creative leisure activities in his retirement are experienced through musical outlets. Community choirs and bands for retirees would be fortunate to experience the leadership of a former worship pastor. Opportunities to minister through music provide former worship pastors a continued sense of purpose and outlet for their talents. One former worship pastor shares his experience. David writes, “I am 83 and still serving on a church staff as part-time Minister of Sr. Adults and enjoying pouring my years of music ministry experience into my 50 voice Sr. Adult Choir. After 65 years in the ministry I am thrilled to still be active and an encourager to all I come in contact with.”<sup>133</sup> Real musicians mature in understanding and technique and develop to become valuable contributors to the Church, regardless of their age.

Bob, who we met at the beginning of the chapter, represents a church musician who failed to acknowledge the diversity of music available for the church. He did not surround himself with younger people and their ideas. He failed to invest in those who are still learning. It is important for worship pastors to reach out to those musicians who represent different cultures and generations. If he feels comfortable by leading with his voice alone, he should consider learning to lead from a guitar or a keyboard. If he is more comfortable playing from a score he

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<sup>132</sup> Andrea Creech, Susan Hallam, Hilary McQueen and Maria Varvarigou. “The Power of Music in the Lives of Older Adults” from *Research Studies in Music Education*, June 2013.

<sup>133</sup> Harland, 2.

should consider learning to play from a lead sheet. If he is more comfortable working with a choir and orchestra he should consider working with a band. “Paul Baloche and Tommy Walker are two guys who come to mind whose voices are still heard loudly and whose influence is still felt by several generations of worshippers. They don’t wear ripped jeans, they are over 50, but they do life intentionally with all generations.”<sup>134</sup> An effective worship pastor must not forfeit his influence due to his unwillingness to address the need for continuous musical development.

While many older American adults have been hesitant to access the world of technology, research infers that the same cannot be said for most maturing worship pastors. A recent Pew Research Center survey<sup>135</sup> found that 59% of seniors report they go online and 47% say they have a high-speed broadband connection at home. In addition, 77% of older adults have a cell phone. In spite of these numbers many seniors remain largely unattached from online and mobile life - 41% do not use the internet at all, 53% do not have broadband access at home, and 23% do not use cell phones. The study also revealed that younger, higher-income, and more highly educated seniors use the internet and broadband at rates approaching—or even exceeding—the general population. Whereas many aging worship pastors cannot be considered higher-incomed, most are under 65 and they generally fall into the category of highly educated. Thus, one could conclude that the majority of maturing worship pastors are generally accepting and adaptive to technology like the internet, mobile communication and social networking. Furthermore, one could infer that the aging worship pastor would be equally accepting and adaptive to other digital technology that is associated with worship ministry.

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<sup>134</sup> Harland, 2.

<sup>135</sup> Aaron Smith. “Older Adults and Technology Use.” Pew Research Center, April 3, 2014. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/04/03/older-adults-and-technology-use/>. Accessed on November 27, 2018. 1.

Compared to their younger colleagues, maturing worship pastors did not grow up in a digital world. They have had to first accept these new technologies, and then learn them. Like all users, he has had to discern between those technologies which he *can* indulge and those he *should* embrace. Is it a toy or a tool? Arthur W. Hunt has asked the question: “Why do we create things when the progress has no clear end in sight? Just because we can do a thing, does not mean that we should do a thing.”<sup>136</sup> Older adults are just as susceptible to technology obsession and abuse as younger adults and children. Users must search for balance and not allow the man-made environments of technology to negatively affect individuals, families and churches.

The Pew Research Study by Smith also concluded that once the aging adult has learned a specific technology, he/she will tend to make it a consistent part of their regular routine. “In addition to using digital tools with some frequency, seniors who have integrated the internet and other digital technologies into their lives tend to view them as essential resources that positively impact their daily life.”<sup>137</sup>

Some aging worship pastors may be skeptical towards the potential benefits of new technologies and their relevance to worship ministry. Care must be taken to wisely discern the impacts and benefits of all technologies. What are the liabilities and amenities of new or upgraded worship technologies in the church? The maturing worship pastor must overcome his skepticism in the event that the use of technology will greatly enhance productivity. In spite of a steep learning curve, he must make a commitment to learn and apply technology that is both visible to the worshiping community, and that which enhances from behind the scenes.

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<sup>136</sup> Hunt, 55.

<sup>137</sup> Smith, 3.

In the past 10-15 years, several organizational tools have become available for the benefit of worship ministry. *Planning Center Online* has become standard in many churches. This tool for service planning and volunteer scheduling will coordinate multiple services and aid in staffing musicians and technicians. Notational and lyric management has been greatly facilitated by means of orchestration software like *Finale* and internet based services like *Song Select* and *Praise Charts*. Presentational tools like *ProPresenter* and *Media Shout* have become indispensable in managing multiple video inputs like graphics, image magnification and video clips. With advancements in contemporary worship music, many worship leaders are utilizing audio enhancements. Clicks, loops, stem mixes, pads and multi-tracks have become common in many churches. *Loop Community* and *MultiTracks.com* provide studio mixes of many new worship songs to aid in supplementing and enhancing missing and/or weak instrumentation.

As with musical development, the aging worship pastor will benefit from the professional development of his technology skills as he surrounds himself with knowledgeable users from a wide range of ages and backgrounds. As he wisely discerns the benefits of technology for his local church, he must remain open-minded to those tools that will best present the Gospel of Christ in a clear, concise and relevant manner.

Continuing education is an important component of professional development for all worship pastors, even older ones. Not all who go back to school are looking for a career change. Many may want to learn for the sake of learning. Staying mentally active does wonders for cognitive function, alertness and memory, and learning new things can offer personal enrichment and fulfillment. Many older pastors desire to learn new skills and/or improve existing skills to continue advancing their careers. With most churches shifting increasingly to all-digital

resources, it may be desirable or necessary to improve one's knowledge of computer technology and digital industries.

Dr. Stacey Brown reinforces the power of learning in the life of a worship leader.

The worship leader's ability to be a life-long learner will increase his ability to lead effectively. The importance of obtaining formal education, the ability to teach, and an awareness of the need for personal evaluation create for the worship leader a strong foundation for life and ministry.<sup>138</sup>

She identifies musical skill, worship studies, pedagogy and evaluation as the important focuses of continuing education for the worship leader. The Liberty University Doctor of Worship Studies curriculum addresses the important areas of biblical and theological studies, advanced worship studies, worship and culture studies, practicum and research studies courses that include the proposal, research, writing and defense of a thesis.<sup>139</sup> This degree program was designed "to expand your skill set, knowledge, and expertise to function in a variety of music and worship cultures and contexts within the evangelical community."<sup>140</sup> A well-rounded curriculum will produce a worship pastor who is knowledgeable in the theology, philosophy and methodology of worship, as well as in the foundations and history of corporate worship.

Aging worship pastors have a significant need for continuing education, revitalization and recalibration. He must recognize that over sixty percent of the American population is under the age of 45. The training that he received over 30 years ago is in desperate need of updating. Failure to address his education and training sends the message that he is content to only accommodate the spiritual, emotional, and artistic needs of senior adults. He cannot educate millennials if he cannot understand and articulate their culture, philosophies and preferences.

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<sup>138</sup> Stacey Brown, "Five Principles to Empower the Worship Leader" (2016), *Doctoral Dissertations and Projects*. <http://digitalcommons.Liberty.edu/doctoral/1217>.

<sup>139</sup> [www.liberty.edu/online/degrees/doctoral/worship-studies/](http://www.liberty.edu/online/degrees/doctoral/worship-studies/).

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.



Higher Christian educational institutions are transforming their worship studies curricula to better equip new and returning students for the challenges of a shifting worship landscape. “In 2005, only 7 schools offered undergraduate education in worship. As of 2013, more than 120 colleges and universities boast degrees in worship studies, worship leadership, worship and music, worship technology, worship ministry, worship arts, and more.”<sup>141</sup> This trend reflects the need for balance and controlled growth in worship education.

For those worship pastors who can see more of their ministry life in their rearview mirror than in their windshield, there is a danger of boredom and loss of passion in ministry. Lance Witt, author of *Replenish: Leading from a Healthy Soul*, suggests a couple of options for older men in ministry. “We have a gut-wrenching choice to make. We can put our ministry on autopilot and move into image-management mode. Or we can do the hard work of reinventing ourselves, of reworking the last chapters of life.”<sup>142</sup> As their productivity increases with years of experience, most maturing worship pastors can find educational opportunities to fill the discretionary time in their schedules. The demands of a young family no longer stand in the way of continuing education. Affordable tuition and online modalities make new opportunities for active worship pastors. While leisure activities are important, an aging worship pastor must consider a strategic plan for facilitating continuing education. He may need to sacrifice an improved golf game or other personal pursuits. Continuing education cannot be overlooked.

Leadership development is an important task for professional development. Much has been written in recent years on the subject of leadership in the local church. Unfortunately, the books, blogs and articles often focus on a corporate model that emphasizes vision and leadership

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<sup>141</sup> Page and Gray, 83.

<sup>142</sup> Lance Witt. *Replenish: Leading from a Healthy Soul*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 81.

technique, without actually equipping pastors to be spiritually healthy leaders. According to Witt, “In trying to fill the gap with leadership resources, inadvertently we have marginalized the soul side of leadership. The result is a crisis—one of spiritual health among pastors.”<sup>143</sup> Yes, leadership training is important and addresses a need for organizational leadership, staff management, vision casting and change management, but it must also focus on fixing neglected souls and mismanaged character. Surprisingly few pastors actually retire as pastors. Godly leadership must emanate from men who are emotionally sound and spiritually healthy.

It is important for an aging worship pastor to manage his personal and professional leadership strategies. Several authors have described leadership in terms of levels to be gained by certain targeted actions. Regardless of how these levels are defined, it is vital that the emotional and spiritual components are accounted for in any leadership strategy. It is vital that he acknowledges the timeliness of this strategy as he grows older. A fifty-year-old worship pastor must lead differently from how he led as a thirty-year-old.

The five levels of leadership as defined by John Maxwell serve as an outline for the leadership development journey of a worship pastor. A young worship pastor’s future role in leadership is often far from his thoughts early in his ministry tenure. His attention to the subject may be confined to his own insecurities and how to function given his fledgling leadership skills. As a young professional who is embarking on his first ministry opportunity, he is probably not aware of any process for leadership training and development. His is an entry level approach to leadership. John Maxwell warns of many pitfalls to entry level (he calls this “Position”<sup>144</sup>) leadership opportunities. It is easy for a young professional to focus on his rights over his

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<sup>143</sup> Witt, 19.

<sup>144</sup> Maxwell, 5.

responsibilities. Conversely, a level one leader has earned his position due to his leadership potential. Given good role models and the opportunity to thrive in a new position, the young worship pastor must advance to the responsibilities of a level two (Maxwell calls this Permission<sup>145</sup>) leadership rank. This type of leader recognizes that his title is not enough. He needs to develop relationships and trust among those with whom he serves and among those over whom he exercises leadership. Consequently, the worship leader is in a trajectory that will allow him to continue his rise to the higher levels of leadership as he perseveres in his ministry position.

After the first decade of a worship pastor's tenure, he must redirect his attentions to the top three levels of leadership development; Production, People Development and Pinnacle.<sup>146</sup> At level three, people follow the leader because of what he has done for the organization.<sup>147</sup> It would be impossible for a worship leader to retain his position for any reasonable length of time without advancing to and excelling in this level of leadership.

As the worship leader becomes more and more adept in Production leadership, he must naturally evolve to become a People developer (level four). Level four leadership will not occur unless the worship leader develops at level three leadership to the extent that he has the time necessary to devote to leadership development. Leading at this level is very rewarding and sets the leader apart from other leaders. Developing leaders allows an organization to recognize that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. It evokes seven great behaviors as listed by Maxwell: 1) Recruiting, 2) Positioning, 3) Modeling, 4) Equipping, 5) Developing,

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<sup>145</sup> Maxwell, 7.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 8-10.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 8.

6) Empowering, and 7) Measuring.<sup>148</sup> Many wise worship leaders have reached the level 4 of leadership engagement. Far too many have not discovered the benefits and fulfillment of this important form of discipleship in ministry.

Pinnacle (level 5) leadership is the ultimate in professional engagement and should be the goal of every maturing worship pastor. “Not only is leadership at this level a culmination of leading well on the other four levels, it also requires both a high degree of skill and some amount of natural leadership ability. It takes a lot to be able to develop other leaders so that they reach Level 4; that’s what Level 5 leaders do.”<sup>149</sup> Maxwell lists six behaviors of Pinnacle leaders: 1) Make room for others at the top. 2) Continually mentor potential level 5 leaders. 3) Create an inner circle that will keep you grounded. 4) Do things for the organization that only level 5 leaders can do. 5) Plan for your succession and 6) Leave a positive legacy.<sup>150</sup>

By the second decade of a worship pastor’s ministry tenure, he should be solidly positioned as a level three leader. However, the demands of Production must not take priority over the need for People development. People development will exponentially increase Production as more leaders are sharing the burdens of worship ministry. Modeling, equipping, empowering and encouraging must take priority over producing. The aging worship pastor’s time management must reflect these goals. He must be focused on developing new level four leaders. That is how he will become a level five leader.

Bill,<sup>151</sup> like Bob, who was introduced early in this chapter, was raised in a church with a great music program. He too quickly developed fine vocal and keyboard skills and was affirmed

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<sup>148</sup> Maxwell, 111-120.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 134-140.

<sup>151</sup> Names have been changed and stories are composites of real-life examples.

by his teachers and the leadership of the church. In the nineteen-eighties he went to a Christian college and studied church music. He became accomplished in piano performance, hymnology and theology. For the first 25 years of his ministry tenure he enjoyed great success and the support of both the congregation and church leadership.

In the nineteen-nineties, Bill began to recognize changes that were taking place in worship ministry. He recognized and began to adapt to a changing culture. He acknowledged that his skill set needed updating. He carefully managed a gradual shift in adapting to more contemporary music and technology. He recognized the importance of training and equipping the next generation of worshippers without marginalizing his peers and the senior citizens in the church. He introduced fresh ideas and a diversity of styles without compromising the theological distinctiveness of church doctrine.

Bill is representative of a Baby Boomer worship pastor who maintained a high level of spiritual and personal wellness as he aged. His proactive attention to professional development set him apart as a wise and respected leader in the church, as well as in the local Christian community. As his ministry tenure transitioned, he was content in his service to the church and the church was grateful for his example in Godly leadership. He was well-positioned and prepared for a Christ-honoring succession to a new worship pastor.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUCCESSION PRINCIPLES FOR THE AGING WORSHIP PASTOR

#### Introduction

An aging worship pastor, who has managed his spiritual, personal and professional development with wisdom, is well-positioned to embark on a Christ-honoring succession process. He has remained true to his calling and has endeavored to build a team that will remain long after he is gone. He has established rich relationships in the congregation and has contributed to the heritage of the church. His experience provides stability and history that benefits the institutional memory for the church. Page and Gray list some of these benefits.

- They remember significant celebrations and tragedies in the lives of church members.
- They have celebrated victories and lamented losses, both in their ministry area and church wide.
- They have an awareness of potential roadblocks that can hinder progress.
- They bring a sense of perspective in the midst of a rapidly changing culture.
- They can serve as catalyst for consensus in moving forward.<sup>152</sup>

Having contributed so significantly to the heritage, health and spirit of the flock, the worship pastor and the church recognize that his eventual departure will create a significant impact. It will be a bitter-sweet process that will require forethought and careful management.

Over the course of this chapter, we will explore both an Old Testament and a New Testament example of godly succession. In Joshua chapter one, Moses and Joshua provide a compelling example of leadership succession that demonstrates love, respect, deference and deliberate preparation. The High Priestly Prayer of John 17 records Jesus' final words to his disciples before going to the cross. This account provides succession principles for both the worship pastor and for the team that will carry on the ministry after he is gone.

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<sup>152</sup> Page and Gray, 145.

A Christ-honoring succession plan involves both the worship pastor and the congregation. We will examine the role that the worship pastor must assume as he prepares himself and his family for the next chapter of his ministry. Equally important in this process is the role of the church. How must church leadership prepare for and manage this process? What is the task of the congregation? Finally, we will present a unified plan for a godly succession that gracefully transitions from a seasoned worship pastor to a new worship pastor.

### Biblical Examples

The account of the leadership succession from Moses to Joshua provides many important lessons that can serve as a blueprint for a Christ-honoring succession from an older worship pastor to one who is younger. Joshua receives instructions from the Lord following the death of Moses: “Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel.”<sup>153</sup> This was Joshua’s opportunity to demonstrate his leadership skills after the death of his predecessor. This was a time of great anxiety for the new leader and for those he served. According to Moss, “The incoming leader must be able to embrace the existing community and manage the change in such a manner that it is received in a less threatening way.”<sup>154</sup> In the worship ministry of a local church, there are time-honored traditions and practices that are associated with the tenure of the out-going leader. Impending change can be perceived as a threat to those who have served a revered leader. “Many have used this passage (Joshua 1:1-2) to speak to change of leadership from a generational perspective rather than a relational one. All too often when this passage is

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<sup>153</sup> Joshua 1:1-2. *Holy Bible: New King James Version*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2018).

<sup>154</sup> Moss, 13.

used to deliver a message of theological significance, it is used to highlight ‘out with the old and in with the new!’”<sup>155</sup> This is a simplistic application of Moses and Joshua’s transition.

Fortunately, this account of the transition between Moses and Joshua had a wonderful prequel that is recorded in the book of Deuteronomy.

Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed” (Deuteronomy 31:7-8).

Prior to his death, Moses positioned Joshua for acceptance and success. Moses performed two important actions that positioned Joshua for his new role. A later Deuteronomy passage records Moses laying his hands on Joshua. As a result the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.<sup>156</sup> Not only did Moses assure the people of Joshua’s capabilities as a warrior and leader, his endorsement provided a sense of confidence for Joshua himself. “The leadership transition must include a public affirmation of the incoming leader in order for transition to have a chance at being successful. This public display should affirm that the new leader has the capacity to embrace all generations and aspects of the existing members.”<sup>157</sup>

One would assume that Moses genuinely believed that Joshua was the next God-ordained leader for the children of Israel. If Moses had doubts about Joshua, he would not have endorsed him so heartily. If Moses was not convinced that Joshua was the best choice, this passage would not have been included in the narrative. One must conclude that a retiring worship pastor must be genuine in his public affirmation of his successor. From the passage it was obvious that Joshua

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<sup>155</sup> Moss, 3.

<sup>156</sup> Deuteronomy 34:9.

<sup>157</sup> Moss, 15.



was full of the spirit of wisdom. So should the outgoing man be confident of the new leader of the worship ministry. He must be convinced of the new man's wisdom, calling and spiritual maturity. In addition, he should trust the pastoral, leadership and musical skills of the new man. In order to assure such confidence, it is vital that the process of choosing the new leader be bathed in prayer, careful consideration and consensus among the leadership and the congregation.

The High-Priestly prayer of John chapter 17 is the longest of Jesus' prayers, and speaks about much more than His imminent death on the cross. After praying about his own glorification (vs. 1-5), Jesus shifts his focus to his disciples (vs. 6-19) and concludes by praying for those who would eventually believe (vs. 20-26). McKenna identifies this prayer as a succession prayer because it answers three questions as related to succession: (1) What does Jesus bring to his leadership? (2) What does Jesus do in his leadership? and (3) What does Jesus leave from his leadership?<sup>158</sup>

Morris explains the true character of this prayer:

The last words are important. We so often understand this prayer as though it were rather gloomy. It is not. It is uttered by One who has just affirmed that he has overcome the world, and it starts from this conviction. Jesus is looking forward to the cross, but in a mood of hope and joy, not one of despondency. The prayer marks the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, but it looks forward to the ongoing work that would now be the responsibility first of the immediate disciples and then of those who would later believe through them. Jesus prays for them all.<sup>159</sup>

This prayer of encouragement and promise holds many principles that are easily adapted and applied to a succession process in the local church.

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<sup>158</sup> McKenna, 10.

<sup>159</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John: Revised*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 635.

In addressing his disciples (vs. 6-19), Jesus recognized them as having come from the world and he praised them for responding to the message of God in Jesus Christ (v. 6). Jesus prayed for the disciples' preservation (v. 11) and for their sanctification (v. 17). "Since the disciples would be in the world, Jesus prayed for their protection. The hostility against God which fell on Jesus would now fall on the tiny band of apostles, and subsequently on many of Jesus' followers."<sup>160</sup> Overall, Jesus spoke words of comfort to his disciples. "Following His Passion, they would recall His words and experience the full measure of His joy. Joy came to them because they knew from His words that He had conquered the evil one and brought eternal life to them."<sup>161</sup> Furthermore, Jesus reminded them of both their value (v. 8) and the danger that was coming to them. Jesus did not promise to remove the disciples from danger, but instead to preserve them in the midst of that danger. "Jesus is the model for every believer. He was in the world but He was not of the world. He was sent into the world on a mission by His Father. So believers are sent into the world on a mission by the Son, to make the Father known."<sup>162</sup> By his actions, Jesus had modeled this example for the past three years. Now he was reminding the disciples of what they had witnessed.

The final portion of the High Priestly Prayer is addressed to future believers who would come to Jesus through the message of the apostles. Jesus' offers four petitions for believers: preservation, sanctification, unity and participation in Jesus' glory.<sup>163</sup> His chief concern is for unity and for divine glory to be evident in future generations of believers. He prays that future

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<sup>160</sup> Walvoord and Zuck. *New Testament*, 332.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 334.

believers might be as one like He and the Father are One. Just as Jesus' glory culminated in the cross, the true path of glory for future believers lay in the acts of lowly service wherever it might lead them.

The applications from this prayer to a succession process within worship ministry of the local church are many. It is significant that Jesus' prayer for his disciples and for those who would believe in the future centered on spiritual endeavors rather than in personal protection, prosperity or accomplishments. In transitioning to new leadership, the spiritual aspirations of preservation, sanctification, unity and participation in God's glory must take precedence over leadership and musical skills as well as over theological and intellectual knowledge. Jesus reminded the disciples of the legacy given to Jesus from his Father and transferred to them. He assured them of the gifts entrusted to them. He reminded them of their great responsibility to care for these gifts and for their responsibility to pass them on. McKenna recalls his own parting words as he handed over leadership in a college presidency.

The legacies of trust, truth, and love lead in only one direction—to the evidence of greater things giving glory to God the Father and to his Son, Jesus Christ. All other outcomes fade into vaporous ends. The gifts I leave to you as my successor now become the debt you owe as a leader. May you and those entrusted to you be true to his trust, transformed by his truth, and unified by his love. The gift of greater things awaits you.<sup>164</sup>

There is a great temptation to base the effectiveness of a worship pastor's tenure on great worship services, the size of his ensembles, the songs he has written, and the awards he has won. The aging worship pastor must seriously discern if this is the legacy that he chooses to leave behind. Only by focusing on giving glory to Jesus and to his Father, can he avoid such temporal aspirations.

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<sup>164</sup> McKenna, 127-128.

### The Role of the Worship Pastor in the Succession Process

The worship pastor's role in his succession process begins long before his actual transition. Many necessary preparations must precede his scheduled succession launch. The first consideration ought to be his financial plan to account for a likely loss of income and benefits. Another vital consideration involves a plan for his next phase of work, leisure activity and family life. A final consideration is the impact of this transition on his future ministry.

It is important that a strategic financial plan begin with the end in view. If the worship pastor plans to retire at age 65, he should have started (at minimum) a ten-year plan at age 55. If he plans to be free from any full-time financial dependence on a single local church, he must clearly identify his income sources, source of health care, and financial obligations going forward.

A diversified list of income sources is vital and will guard against hardship in the unforeseen loss of a major income generator. Such income sources typically include social security (including his spouse), other retirement savings, investments, and part-time employment. The average Social Security retirement benefit was \$1238 per month in 2015 and the maximum at full retirement age was more than \$2600 per month. The exact amount depends on lifetime income and age when collection begins.<sup>165</sup> For those pastors who opted out of social security years earlier, it is imperative that they had planned for an adequate replacement (IRA or 403b) and for the Part A premiums of Medicare insurance costs that are not available to those who failed to meet their required quarters of contributions.

There are several part-time income opportunities for aging worship pastors after they are no longer employed by the church full-time. Based on the pastor's experience, he is uniquely

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<sup>165</sup> <https://www.ssa.gov>.

qualified to be an interim worship pastor or a part-time worship pastor at another church.

Because of his musical skills, he is also often qualified to teach, consult, coach or be paid for performances as a professional musician.

The worship pastor must take into consideration his monthly living expenses, including utilities and health insurance. He must take care to completely account for all Medicare costs: Part A (Hospital Insurance), Part B (Medical insurance), Part C (Medicare Advantage) and Part D (Medicare prescription drug coverage).<sup>166</sup> Two other financial responsibilities are charitable giving and leisure expenses. His desire to give to others continues even when his major source of income ceases. The needs of ministry and family should be included in a financial plan. If God blesses the retired pastor, he would likely enjoy a reasonable amount of leisure dining, travel and entertainment. Accomplishing his financial goals after retirement requires long-term financial planning that includes frequent, and sometimes painful, refinements, sacrifices and adjustments.

After settling the issue of finances, the retiring pastor would be wise to give thought to his life after the church. There are several ministry options which will be discussed later. In addition to ministry, there are countless options for new work opportunities, volunteering, leisure and family activities which may have been neglected in the past but are now available. A new life stage coming after career and family-building but prior to the infirmities associated with old age offers unique options that deserve dynamic planning for various possible scenarios. A gradual shift from full-time career employment to retirement provides a measure of economic and social transition that brings less stress to the process. It may be desirable to shift from a challenging, purpose-driven ministry to more of a flexible and less demanding work that brings

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<sup>166</sup> <http://www.medicare.gov>.

new and welcome challenges. Another source of purpose may involve taking up unpaid volunteering or engaging in low-paying jobs in the social and public sectors.

Any plan for leisure activity depends on financial means, family traditions and personal preferences. If travel, dining and entertaining are strong priorities during a pastor's career, in retirement he will naturally desire this pattern going forward with minimal interruption. His new freedom may allow him to spend significant time away from home either visiting family members or living in warmer climates during the winter months. Implementing such a plan requires careful planning and concurrence with his wife. Phyllis Moen, the author of *Encore Adulthood*, points out that most Boomers are now part of dual-earner couples, navigating two not always linear career paths and deciding about both of their lives in this new life stage.<sup>167</sup> Together, they must map out their plan and relish new opportunities, while heeding the uncertainties they will likely encounter.

The character of a pastor's ministry will undoubtedly undergo significant modifications after he has left the full-time ministry of a single church. The pastor's adjustment to these modifications does not presume that his calling to ministry has ceased. Derrick Prime and Alistair Begg define the call as "the unmistakable conviction an individual possesses that God wants him to do a specific task."<sup>168</sup> This definition seems to indicate that calling is not unique or specific to only those who go into full-time ministry. The operative components of the definition point to "unmistakable conviction" and that it is God-ordained. This conviction does not disappear as a pastor grows older. He must recognize both his assets and his liabilities in this new stage of ministry and plan accordingly.

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<sup>167</sup> Moen, 96.

<sup>168</sup> Derrick Prime and Alistair Begg, *On Being a Pastor: Understanding Our Calling and Work*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2004), 18.

While his worship leading opportunities may wane, the retiring pastor can always continue to provide pastoral care, shepherding and mentoring. There are some who may enjoy serving as a part-time worship pastor at a smaller church thereby gifting a struggling church with a wise and experienced leader. Church consultant Thom S. Rainer has recently created an interim pastor university which provides specialized training in interim pastorate work. According to Rainer, the role of interim pastor is becoming a retirement vocation for many Boomer church leaders. “A number of these leaders may do 20 or more interim pastorates as a retirement ministry. Boomer church leaders will not fade gently into the sunset. This reality is a new phenomenon that is changing the way people look at interim pastors.”<sup>169</sup> Whether the retired worship pastor takes a new (modified) ministry position or if he manages his own ongoing ministry plan, he should refresh his calling in this new season of life.

Having prepared himself and his family for the financial, personal and ministry changes that come with the succession process, the worship pastor also plays a vital role in preparing his church for changes on the horizon. Important conversations, considerations and actions ought to take place between himself and three subgroups within the church: the leadership, the worship ministry staff and the congregation.

Long before activating a succession plan, the aging worship pastor needs to enter into an agreement with church leadership regarding the roles that each will play in the process. These decisions are ultimately determined by leadership, whether it be a deacon board, elder council, search committee or personnel committee. Many churches may view this process in a manner similar to that of a presidential transition, where the outgoing leader delivers an established

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<sup>169</sup> Thom S. Rainer. “Six Reasons the Role of Interim Pastor is Changing Dramatically” from Growing Healthy Churches Together. Nov. 5, 2018. <https://thomrainer.com/2018/11/six-reasons-the-role-of-interim-pastor-is-changing-dramatically/>.

worship ministry to the new leader with a general understanding of any resemblance, or lack of resemblance, that the new ministry will reflect. In such cases, the retiring pastor has little input in the choice of his successor. However there are three important responsibilities he can still assume; 1) be as gracious as possible to the new, 2) publicly affirm the new choice and, 3) cooperate in any way with the transition of responsibilities.

If, on the other hand, the leadership of the church values the input of the established worship pastor and plans to utilize his wisdom in this process, the entire succession plan takes on a decidedly different look. Research has shown that loss of membership and congregational decline is a frequent result of leadership transition, and that these typical declines can be avoided depending on the context of the transition.<sup>170</sup> Establishing a succession plan that has been crafted in cooperation by the pastor and the leadership team will help to minimize questions and assumptions about the future. Such assumption may lead to suspicion and insecurity by either party as well as by the congregation. The pastor's role in this plan is to use his expertise and experience to make recommendations that will best serve all parties involved. He can offer his informed opinion on a number of questions that often arise in this process. Will the new leader be chosen from within the congregation or from the outside? What level and type of experience should the new leader possess? How can a new leader compliment the strengths of the worship ministry and address its weaknesses? What personality type will fit well with the rest of the pastoral staff and the worship ministry staff? Offering recommendations to these and many other questions that may arise will undoubtedly bring clarity and grace to the process.

Not only does the departing worship pastor have a responsibility to coordinate with and submit to church leadership, he also has a responsibility to shepherd his staff through a

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<sup>170</sup> Dollhoff and Scheitle, 52.



succession process; this includes both his professional staff and his volunteers. As soon as the departing pastor and church leadership agree on a succession plan, the worship ministry staff should be informed. Managing the staff's expectations will require great wisdom. They have a significant investment in the worship ministry and in many cases have followed the same leader for number of years. They will have a number of questions that will need clarity. If one of the staff members feels that he is the heir apparent to the position, his expectation must be managed with great care. Ideally, an inside hire would have been planned for some time, but this is not always the case. Hiring from within presupposes that the worship pastor has implemented the leadership principles of people development (described earlier) leading up to this time.

In a larger church, a new worship pastor may desire to hire his own staff. If this is the case, the existing staff may be fearful of the security of their present positions. Regardless of the plan determined by leadership, all parties need to submit and avoid any comments or actions that could cause dissension. The retiring worship pastor sets the tone for the support of the plan.

The worship ministry volunteers are similarly invested in the process. The new pastor will probably not be a Baby Boomer and there is a contrast in leadership style between a Boomer and a Gen X leader.<sup>171</sup> The musicians will have a number of questions and concerns. "Will the new leader change things too much?" "Who will be singing all of the solos?" "Will I need to change my seat in the choir?" While the retiring pastor cannot address all of these concerns he can help to shepherd these loyal servants. He should challenge the volunteers to continue their stewardship of the resources entrusted to them. He can remind them to follow the example of

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<sup>171</sup> There is a shortage of Generation X leaders. It is the smallest generation since the Great Depression. According to Generation X college president Amy Morrison Goings, "Soon enough the baton will be passed to the millennials. Communication styles will shift again as this generation adapts to the changing times, just as the Boomers and the Gen-Xers have. We just need to be sure we're creating their pathway, just as the Boomers created ours." ("The Shift in Generational Leadership", *Community College Journal* 86, no. 6 June-July 2016: 6).

Jesus who continually sought to bring glory to the Father. The volunteer's example will pave the way for a new leader to carry on the work, encouraged by a great band of supportive servants.

A third part of succession preparation involves the congregation as a whole. As the aging worship pastor thinks about the mark he will leave on the Kingdom he may be tempted to consider his reputation or the great programs that he developed over the years. However, if he looks ahead through the eyes of a shepherd, he will take comfort in the knowledge that he cared for, protected and tended to the sheep of his congregation. Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders in the book of Acts. "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock."<sup>172</sup> Witmer advises shepherds on protecting their flocks.

Effective in macro-protection includes an awareness of the particular cultural 'wolves' that threaten the flock. Examples of those wolves might be materialism, sensuality, pluralism, relativism, and the panoply of sins flowing from them. In a culture saturated with these destructive values, the sheep not only need to be warned about the dangers but equipped to stand against them.<sup>173</sup>

During a time of pastoral transition, a congregation is especially vulnerable to destructive thoughts, words and actions. The aging worship pastor has the perfect opportunity to guard the congregation from the wolves of gossip, conjecture, worry and dread. Through acts of kindness, clear communication, and a strong show of unity within leadership, the worship pastor can allay negative behavior in the congregation.

The transitioning pastor can send a comforting message to the congregation by featuring other worship leaders on the platform. This action assures the congregation that the worship

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<sup>172</sup> Acts 20:28-29. *Holy Bible: New American Standard*. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2018).

<sup>173</sup> Timothy Z. Witmer. *The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2010), 172.

ministry is not dependent on a single dynamic personality. As he empowers other leaders in the platform ministry the congregation will become better prepared for the changes that are about to come. Some of these rising leaders may have a bigger role to play during a potential interim gap in leadership between a retirement and a new hire.

### The Role of the Church in the Succession Process

There are four important roles for the church to assume as they oversee the succession process in worship ministry leadership. The first consideration of church leadership must be the oversight of a strategic plan for succession. Secondly, leadership should embark on the important work of identifying the profile of the new leader. They must be prayerfully empowered to conduct the search, interview, choice, and introduction of the new leader. Thirdly, the church leadership should lead the way in paying tribute to the retiring servant. Finally, they must empower and welcome the new pastor in a manner that will assure him of their ongoing support.

Much like the role of the aging worship pastor, the role of the church in the succession process ideally begins years earlier (before the actual transition date) with important strategic planning. Research has emphasized the importance of advanced planning in leadership succession plans for both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Such planning plays an important role in the success of both the new leader and the organization under the new leader. Advanced planning also contributes to enhanced communication in the process of ultimately choosing the “right” leader.<sup>174</sup> If an aging worship pastor has not approached church leadership with some sort of an “intent conversation” by the time he has reached age sixty, the church should begin the dialog. If this conversation is initiated by the worship pastor, it will be a blessing to the leadership team. He should share his thoughts about his plan for his retirement.

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<sup>174</sup> Dollhopf and Scheitle, 679.

These plans should include a general timeline. They will be spared from broaching a subject that could be misinterpreted by the pastor as a lack of confidence in his service or as a veiled hint of a pending forced termination.

Through clear, honest and forthright communication the aging worship pastor and his superiors (his colleagues too) would ideally construct a succession plan that would address several questions.

1. What is everyone's role? The leadership team must determine how much input they desire from the retiring worship pastor.
2. When will this take place? A general timeline will allow all parties to make the necessary preparations. As the time draws closer, the details need to be more defined.
3. Who will the next worship pastor be? The leadership team must determine how this decision will be made and if they desire any input from the retiring worship pastor.
4. How will it ultimately look? If a church wishes to allow the retiring pastor to continue some leadership or fellowship role, this role must be agreed upon by all parties, including the new worship pastor.

Having answered these questions and established a consensus among all parties, the leadership team must next take on the important work of identifying the new leader. Depending on the church, this leadership team may consist of a single lead pastor, a subcommittee of the deacons and elders or an appointed search committee. If the new leader candidate has already been identified, the leadership team can skip the search and move on to the interviewing process. According to Pastoral Care Inc., there are several important steps in the process of finding any pastor. Several of these steps include: (1) prayer for God to send the right person to fill the vacancy; (2) identify and appoint an interim minister if such a person is needed; (3) establish a schedule for gathering and reviewing resumes; (4) have the team make a visit to the prospective pastor's current church; (5) conduct necessary background checks.<sup>175</sup> After identifying the top

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<sup>175</sup> Guidelines for finding a new Pastor. [www.pastoralcareinc.com/resources/guidelines-for-finding-a-new-pastor](http://www.pastoralcareinc.com/resources/guidelines-for-finding-a-new-pastor).

three candidates, the committee will check their references and schedule an interview with the first choice.

The unique role of the worship pastor will require an extended interview process that may last for more than a weekend. It would be good for all parties if the candidate were able to plan and lead an actual worship service along with any necessary rehearsals related to that service. Several informational and fellowship sessions will provide the leadership team and the worship ministry staff and volunteers the opportunity to ask the candidate questions. This will afford the candidate an opportunity to share his vision and heart for ministry. Once all interviews have been conducted and the candidate has led a Sunday worship service, the leadership team must decide if they will recommend this man for a church vote or if they will move on to the next choice and repeat the process. Once the search committee makes a recommendation and that recommendation is confirmed by the necessary leaders, it will be time to inform the congregation and schedule a church vote. If the vote is affirmative and the candidate is satisfied with the margin of the vote, the church will present the candidate with an employment package. Once the offer is accepted, the next step in the process is the transition period.

Among the many transition tasks that must be considered during this time, one of the most important is that of honoring the retiring worship pastor. Paul told the Thessalonians, “We ask you to honor those leaders who work so hard for you, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you along in your obedience. Overwhelm them with appreciation and love! Get along among yourselves, each of you doing your part.”<sup>176</sup> One who has faithfully served in worship ministry for many years is certainly deserving of expressions of appreciation and love. The retiring worship pastor and his wife have undoubtedly been subjected to both

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<sup>176</sup> 1 Thess. 5:12-13. Eugene Peterson. *The Holy Bible: The Message*. (Navpress Publishing Group, 2019).

positive and negative seasons of spiritual, emotional and financial health through the years. It is fitting to honor those servants who have labored tirelessly while often enduring criticism and opposition.

The church has an obligation to commend the departing servant in both word and deed. Ideally, the church will assist the retiring pastor in preparing for his new chapter of life. A church is to be commended if they will be attentive to the financial needs of their aging pastors. The church can be confident that their faithful servant of many years is able to live comfortably. Depending on the culture of the church, there are numerous ways to show public honor to the retiring worship pastor. A list of options may include:

- Inviting present and past musicians from the church to a farewell concert
- Commissioning a choral anthem or orchestration in his honor
- Presenting him with a vacation or other financial gift
- Buying a piece of technical equipment or a musical instrument for the church in his honor
- Posting an article in the local newspaper or denominational publication

Regardless of the manner chosen, the church must account for this commendation in their transition/succession planning and budget. Not only will an honorable farewell be an encouragement to the retiring pastor and his family, it will send a message to the new worship pastor that he has come to a church that cares deeply for those who serve.

One final task for the church to administer in the succession process is the orderly transition of leadership responsibilities. Bringing clarity to this process will demonstrate that the church planned carefully and that leadership is confident in the process and in the new leader. Providing such clarity will aid in preventing potential congregational conflict and membership decline that is often associated with the transition. Research has shown that congregational conflict over leadership issues is significantly greater in those congregations that have recently

gone through a leadership transition.<sup>177</sup> Whereas new leadership in worship ministry may not be as impactful to the congregation as new leadership in the preaching ministry, a worship pastor is often the second most visible of the pastoral staff members, and as such, wields significant influence in the culture of the church.

Planning a warm welcome for a new worship pastor will send a message to all involved. It will tell the congregation that, even though they may miss the retiring pastor, there is a new leader in this position who now enjoys the support and endorsement of the entire leadership team. This is an opportunity for the church to demonstrate clear communication and strong leadership from four different groups.

First of all, the senior leader, whether a senior pastor or the chairman of the elders, must exhibit total confidence in the new worship pastor. This should be clearly evident to the new worship pastor, the retiring worship pastor, the entire pastoral staff and the congregation. The relationship between the senior pastor and the Worship pastor is crucial as these two have to function in total unity before the congregation each week. Andi Rozier from Harvest Bible Chapel warns that this relationship can easily become a magnet for stress, pride, and conflict of agenda.<sup>178</sup> A healthy relationship “will breathe life into the mission, vision, values, and even the creative functioning of the church.”<sup>179</sup> This relationship must be persistently maintained through submission and wisdom.

Secondly, the pastoral staff should welcome their new colleague with open arms, integrating him into all aspects of their team dynamic. Thirdly, the associate leadership team

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<sup>177</sup> Dollhopf and Scheitle, 690.

<sup>178</sup> Rosier, 161.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 162.

within the worship ministry organization of the church needs to welcome the new worship pastor unconditionally. All staff members who will report to the new worship pastor must be reminded that they have a new boss. They are like the sergeants in the military. Their submission to their leader will serve as an example for the rest of the volunteer worship ministry team. A congregation can quickly pick up on both division and unity. This team has to model unity.

The final demonstration of support must come from the retiring worship pastor. Even as Moses summoned Joshua, in the sight of all Israel, to be strong and courageous, so should the retiring pastor give public commendation to the new worship pastor. He must assure the new leader of God's empowering presence for the task that is before him.<sup>180</sup> As the leadership of the church takes these important steps the new leader will be encouraged and equipped with the confidence needed to launch a new chapter in his ministry tenure.

One final task that is advised and often necessary, especially in a larger church, is a written agreement between the church and the retiring pastor outlining the status of their ongoing relationship. The complexity of this agreement could range anywhere between a simple memorandum of understanding to a legal separation agreement. There are often a myriad of issues that may need to be clarified so as to avoid suspicion and misunderstandings. For instance:

*Non-compete Agreement*

When a worship pastor has served faithfully in the same church for many years, he will have naturally established many lasting relationships which were built on mutual affection and years of co-labor in the ministry. It is quite natural for the laity to form loyalties and attachments which could cause harm to the church if not managed properly. If a retiring worship pastor were to take on a part-time position at a nearby church, there may be a temptation for some of these

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<sup>180</sup> Deuteronomy 31:7-8.



co-laborers to follow him. To prevent this from happening, the church may want to create a non-compete agreement that establishes the parameters of both time and distance. The time factor may establish the number of years a retiring pastor must wait before serving as a worship pastor at a nearby church. The distance factor will determine how many miles must be maintained between the church he has left and a church where he may begin to serve. There are several sample non-compete templates, available through an internet search, which may assist in clarifying these factors.

### *Future Church Membership*

Most churches have a clause in their constitution and by-laws that defines the status of any vocational pastor who resigns, retires, or whose services are terminated. Conventional wisdom and common practice indicate that such pastors are to typically withdraw themselves from the congregation within a set time. This writer serves in a church that has the following clause (Section 2, letter F) in their by-laws: “Any vocational pastor who resigns, retires, or whose services are terminated shall withdraw himself from the congregation within thirty (30) days unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the Council of Elders and that pastor.”<sup>181</sup>

### *Pastoral Relationships*

Many important pastoral relationships are keenly impacted when any worship pastor retires. The expected cessation of pastoral services may include counseling, baptisms, weddings, funerals, and even hospital or nursing home visits. It is important for both the congregation and the departing pastor to understand and honor these boundaries.<sup>182</sup> Requests for pastoral services should properly be directed to pastors who are currently under the call of the congregation; this

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<sup>181</sup> Bylaws of Patterson Park Church. <https://www.pattersonpark.org/what-we-believe/>.

<sup>182</sup> Sample Agreement between Congregation and Departing Pastor. Trinity Lutheran Church. [www.trinity-ec.org/Transitions/Agreement](http://www.trinity-ec.org/Transitions/Agreement).

includes worship pastors as well. Many well-meaning congregants fail to recognize the connection between the ministry of a pastor and the local church where he serves.

### *Commitment to a Good Report*

There is an understood protocol that former presidents should speak respectfully of their successors, or at least with some measure of restraint. Such an example is also applicable to the leadership succession in a local church worship ministry. Not only is it an honorable practice, it is biblical. Paul encouraged the Ephesians. “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear” (Ephesians 4:29). In a similar manner he instructed the Colossians. “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person” (Colossians 4:6). Giving attention to these and other biblical mandates, the church must exhort all parties involved in the succession process to commit to Christ-honoring words and actions. Paul’s letter to Titus instructs Christians to live in a manner befitting their office. Paul asks them to be ready for every good work:

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned (Titus 3:1-11).

When a church takes responsibility for a Christ-honoring succession process, they will not only be following wise human resource practices, but will more importantly be following God's design for disciplined living and mutual submission.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY

#### A Unified Plan for Christ-Honoring Transition and Succession

A thorough understanding of Christian leadership principles will necessitate the recognition and examination of the ongoing cycle of three specific stages for each leader: selection, service and succession. McKenna has posed important questions to ask for each of these three stages.<sup>183</sup> In the selection stage, “What do we expect a person to bring to Christian Leadership?” In the service stage, “What do we expect a person to do in leadership,” finally, in the succession stage, “What do we expect a person to leave from leadership?” Although this thesis has not concentrated on the selection aspect of the cycle, there are basic assumptions about the leader in the selection process that ideally will become evident in the service and succession stages. According to McKenna, there is a general assumption that the selection process of a Christian leader will identify and choose a person of character and competence, and that he will fit the culture of the organization.<sup>184</sup> As a worship pastor ages and transitions through the service and succession stages of his ministry cycle, his character and competence will become evident.

The service and succession stages of the worship pastor’s ministry cycle have been the emphasis of this study. Special attention has been focused on the age-related transitional aspects of service, and on succession that is necessitated by age or retirement. Having studied these two principles separately, it is now important to establish a strategy for their convergence. What would this strategy for establishing a unified plan for Christ-honoring transition and succession look like?

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<sup>183</sup> McKenna, 7-9.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 7.

When a young pastor takes his first ministry position, he is not likely to be concerned with his eventual age-related transition and succession. He is probably more absorbed in his orientation and assimilation to a new ministry. More likely, he may be concerned about his income and ability to support his family. Similarly, a church does not typically think about their new pastor's development plan and eventual retirement (whether the retirement is from that church or from another). Church leadership is more inclined to watch and see how well the new pastor relates to the congregation and fulfills their expectations for his position.

Based on the research of this thesis, a holistic response to the principles of age-related transition and succession concludes that the responsibility for developing a Christ-honoring plan falls on both the pastor and the church where he serves. What follows are several practical considerations that should and must be implemented in all three of the aforementioned ministry stages: selection, service and succession. Parenthetically speaking, if the church fails to establish a comprehensive plan for transition and succession, then the pastor himself must expedite the conversations and subsequent policies and procedures.

#### *During the Selection Stage*

It is recommended that those who supervise the human resources of the local church (in cooperation with leadership) establish a standard checklist of developmental objectives and procedures for a new pastor. While most of the items in such a checklist would be the same for each new hire, some of them should be tailored to the experience, strengths and weaknesses of the particular pastor. It is recommended that this checklist address the details of the development plan presented as was described in chapter three. Such a plan covers spiritual, personal and professional development.

The spiritual development of a new pastor should be his first priority as well as the first priority of the church he serves. Regardless of his age, any new pastor must be submissive to his supervisor, whether that is a senior pastor, executive pastor or an elder or deacon board. He should also be mutually accountable to his fellow pastors. These relationships can be strengthened by entering into a mentoring relationship with another man who has more age and maturity as well as experience in pastoral ministry. This mentor would ideally meet with the young pastor weekly for a time of fellowship, prayer and accountability. It is also important that the young pastor seek a spiritual mentor who is not part of his new congregation. This would allow him to confide in someone who is not directly associated with a particular ministry issue that may occur and for which the young pastor needs unbiased advice. These mentors would assist the young pastor in establishing an accountability plan as well as a plan for developing his spiritual disciplines.

The personal development plan of a newly appointed pastor must include recommendations for his financial, time management, leisure and family considerations. Most of these early financial decisions will take place in the orientation stage of a new pastor. Pastors can legally opt out of Social Security on religious grounds. Financial expert Dave Ramsey advises pastors to utilize this option, but only if they are willing to make provision for many needs that will be forfeited by opting out. These needs include term life insurance, long-term disability insurance, long-term care insurance and retirement savings.<sup>185</sup> With the exception of long-term insurance (which can be addressed in a few years), it is critical that a young pastor address each of these needs if he opts out of Social Security. Even if he continues to contribute to Social Security, it is important that he establish a plan for term life insurance and retirement savings. It

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<sup>185</sup> Dave Ramsey. "Should Ministers Opt Out of Social Security?" <https://www.daveramsey.com/blog/should-ministers-opt-out-of-social-security>. Accessed on January 9, 2019.

is a good practice for him to set funds aside when first hired and as a result reap the benefits of his youth and many years in which to contribute.

The subject of time management must be addressed in all three phases of ministry: spiritual, personal and professional. The counsel of a wise mentor will be of great benefit for the worship pastor who must juggle many new responsibilities. He must intentionally build margin into his schedule. It is within this margin that creativity and fresh ideas are generated. Times of private worship are necessary for a worship pastor as well and they will not occur unless adequate time is devoted.

Physical fitness, a proper diet and time off are three important components of personal development that can often take a back seat to responsibilities that seem to be more critical. Care must be taken to prioritize these vital needs at the beginning of the worship pastor's career. Establishing good habits from the beginning will position the worship pastor for a long and fruitful ministry tenure.

The proper prioritizing of earthly relationships at the start of the selection phase will establish habits that will aid the pastor for years to come. If he is married, his wife is his first priority, followed by his children. Never should a wife or a child sense that the demands of ministry are more important to their husband/father than his own family. Once again, a wise mentor will provide invaluable insight to help a young pastor navigate these components of personal development.

Professional development in the selection phase will require a plan for networking, continuing education, musical refinement and participation in professional organizations and conferences. A staff mentor would be wise to introduce the new worship pastor to other worship pastors in the community. As he begins his professional network, the worship pastor needs to be

introduced to not only other pastors but other musicians and ministry related professionals. He needs to meet local music teachers, professional performers and representatives from music and worship-related industry.

Depending on the long-term goals of a worship pastor, he would be wise to make plans for graduate school as soon as he feels comfortable in his new position. If a church is willing to fund continuing education, the pastor is well-served to utilize this benefit, even by simply taking 1 or 2 courses each year. It is easier to begin such studies early rather than waiting until the demands of a young family make it so much more difficult. There are a number of Christian institutions that offer distance education options in worship ministry. The local church provides an excellent setting for the application of principles learned in continuing education.

A professional worship pastor must continue to refine his musical skills. Early in his tenure, he would be wise to establish written goals for training in applied music. This provides the opportunity to address musical performance weakness or to bring even greater proficiency to an already refined skill. If a worship pastor considers voice to be his primary instrument, he would be well-served to learn either the guitar or keyboard, as a secondary instrument.

Another important practice for the new worship pastor to develop is his participation with various professional organizations and ministry-related conferences. Many larger cities offer fellowship groups for area worship pastors. While denominational affinity serves to enhance unity, there is much to be gleaned from interacting with a diverse group of worship leaders and their conferences. The newly hired worship pastor must be familiar with the professional benefits that are included in his employment package. What is his conference budget? Is he ever permitted to devote a Sunday morning to attending a different church for the purpose of observing and gleaning new ideas?



The following checklist offers several practical steps for the newly hired worship pastor that will equip him for continued development in the service stage of his ministry.

| Selection Stage Checklist |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Spiritual Development     | Secure an in-house mentor                            |
|                           | Secure another mentor not associated with the church |
|                           | Plan for developing spiritual disciplines            |
| Personal Development      | Decide about Social Security                         |
|                           | Retirement plan                                      |
|                           | Exercise and diet plan                               |
|                           | Time management plan                                 |
|                           | Managing time off                                    |
| Professional Development  | Networking   |
|                           | Continuing Education                                 |
|                           | Musical training                                     |
|                           | Conference attendance                                |

### *During the Service Stage*

The majority of chapter 3 was devoted to the development plan of a worship pastor as he reaches the final decades of his ministry tenure. As with the selection stage, the service stage can also be evaluated in terms of spiritual, personal and professional development. As the years progress, many of the best practices established during the selection phase serve to enhance the effectiveness of the worship pastor. Furthermore, he must make several adjustments and evaluate his development plan in light of his age. More attention is directed to leadership development and raising up the next generation of worship leaders. His role gradually shifts from that of a quarterback to that of a head coach. There are a number of best practices that will enable a worship pastor, in the service phase of his ministry tenure, to grow in his spiritual, personal and professional development.

The spiritual development of a worship pastor should be plainly evident as he matures in his personal life and in the ministry. Years of worship, Scripture reading and prayer will be evident in his countenance, his conversation and his pastoral demeanor. Mentoring still plays an

important role in the worship pastor's spiritual development. Not only must he be mentored, he must become a mentor himself. He would be wise to take a serious inventory of his spiritual development. Which spiritual disciplines need more work? What besetting sins and attitudes are hampering his fellowship with the Spirit of God? What are his passions? Is he drawn to that which is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely and of good repute?<sup>186</sup>

Many worship pastors struggle in the area of personal development as they grow older. They fail to recognize that others look to them for direction and as an example. Whether they realize it or not, they are esteemed as a model to emulate. Foolish decisions may have a greater impact than he realizes. It is during this phase that the worship pastor should closely monitor his financial status. Eliminating debt and saving for retirement must become new priorities. These priorities should weigh into each of his financial decisions and transactions so that he will be able to comfortably retire someday.

Another area of personal development where aging worship pastors often struggle is managing workloads. Failure to develop new leaders will compound their work load, which in turn leads to several other problems. A workaholic will naturally struggle in his personal development. Inattention to physical fitness and diet often results from a schedule that does not allow time for regular exercise, rest and a balanced diet. Another victim of the workaholic worship pastor is his family. Spending too much time in ministry will take its toll on a family as well. A worship pastor's wife and children need his attention. They must be prioritized over the ministry. There are too many wives and children who have received a Purple Heart in the ministry because their husband/father did not protect them, spend time with them and make them his priority. As an elder, a pastor must be blameless, faithful to his wife and a man whose

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<sup>186</sup> Philippians 4:8.

children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.<sup>187</sup> The entries in the personal development checklist at the end of this section are highlights among several other important components of personal development that are not listed.

The professional development of a worship pastor reaches its zenith as he matures in the ministry. One of the most important new considerations for professional development in the service phase is committing additional time and energy to leadership development. Time that had been previously devoted to production must be strategically reassigned to people development. Networking continues to be a necessary component of professional development and should also focus on people development. Another important consideration for networking in this stage of ministry involves diversity. It is easy (and short-sighted) to align with like-minded colleagues in the ministry. Worship pastors will age gracefully and maintain their relevance as they learn from brothers and sister in the ministry that represent a variety of denominations, cultures, styles and generations.

The advantages of continuing education during the service phase of ministry are significant. Continuing ones education as an older adult is a great way to improve personal marketability, efficiency and confidence. The desire to learn new skills and/or improve existing skills is necessary as worship technology is increasingly moving to digital platforms. Furthermore, many older adults simply want to continue their lifetime commitment to learning. Staying mentally and physically active does wonders for cognitive function, alertness and memory, not to mention that learning new things can offer personal enrichment and fulfillment to individuals.

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<sup>187</sup> Titus 1:6.

Closely related to continuing education is the need for ongoing musical and worship technology training. This need can be addressed in many different manners. Continuing education and networking have already been mentioned. The wise aging worship pastor should align himself with younger colleagues who are proficient in technology. Conferences provide an excellent means for gaining a basic overview of new technologies and for meeting individuals who can help with training. Current topics for new technology training were covered in a recent worship conference.<sup>188</sup>

*Using Tracks in Worship: MultiTracks Made Easy*  
*Reaching Your Community with Content Marketing*  
*Changes and Trends in Worship Ministry*  
*Should You be Streaming?*  
*The 5 W's of Church Audio: A Hands-on Experience with the Behringer X32*  
*The Balance Between Worship and Production*  
*Network Audio Solutions-- Steps to Better Sound: The Mixer*  
*Live IMAG 4k with Simultaneous HD Traditional Workflows in HOW*  
*Visual Design for Worship*  
*How to Create an Effective Blend for Multi-Gen Worship*

The wise aging worship pastor should be proactive to learn new technologies, even if he is not yet incorporating them into his worship services or worship planning. Attention to diversity is also necessary for training in musical and worship technology. If an aging worship pastor has attended the same conference for many years, he is most likely becoming stagnant in his professional development. The following checklist offers several practical steps for the maturing worship pastor that will equip him for continuing development and a smooth transition into the succession stage of his ministry.

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<sup>188</sup> Worship 2:24 Conference. Cedarville University. Cedarville, OH. January 24-26, 2019.  
<https://www.cedarville.edu/Event/Worship424.aspx>.

| Service Stage Checklist  |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Spiritual Development    | Utilize a mentor                        |
|                          | Become a mentor                         |
|                          | Take inventory of spiritual development |
|                          | Be a spiritual leader                   |
| Personal Development     | Be an example                           |
|                          | Be a good money manager                 |
|                          | Avoid becoming a workaholic             |
|                          | Manage exercise and diet                |
|                          | Manage ones family well                 |
| Professional Development | Leadership development                  |
|                          | Networking                              |
|                          | Continuing Education                    |
|                          | Musical and technology training         |

### *During the Succession Stage*

A unified plan for a Christ-honoring succession begins during the service stage of a worship pastor's ministry tenure. Frequent communication between the worship pastor and the leadership team of his church will eliminate uncertainties, assumptions and mistrust often associated with pastoral succession. Such communication will foster confidence among both parties, as well as within the congregation--confidence that all parties are committed to a prayerfully empowered strategic plan which seeks God's best for the pastor, the leadership team and for the church.

In chapter four the succession plan outline focused on responsibilities and tasks for the retiring pastor, as well as tasks for the church leadership in the succession process. While there are responsibilities that are uniquely designed for each specific party, the necessity of unified planning and execution is amplified during the succession stage. If past succession practices of a church are not common knowledge, predetermined by a denomination or defined during the selection stage, they must be addressed early in the service stage. Gaining answers to a number of succession questions, years before an actual retirement, will eliminate potentially hurtful

misunderstandings years later. All parties can appropriately focus on the ministry without awkward and unaddressed assumptions hampering the ongoing mission of the worship ministry. Many general and specific questions and considerations about succession are worthy of review. They address both strategic planning and tactical implementation of the succession process.

#### Strategic Questions:

1. At what point in a worship pastor's tenure should succession conversations begin?
2. To what degree will the retiring worship pastor be involved in the process?
3. Is there a mandatory or implied retirement age?
4. Can the plan be implemented in phases or all at once?
5. What role, if any, will the retiring worship pastor be expected/permitted to fill once a new worship pastor has been installed?
6. How will the process be communicated to the congregation?

#### Tactical Considerations:

1. Publish candidating and voting schedules for the new pastor.
2. Plan a farewell event for the retiring pastor.
3. Plan a welcome event for the new pastor.
4. Develop and approve a severance package.
5. Define post-employment privileges and prohibitions.
6. Publicize succession information in house and for the local community.

The following checklist offers several practical steps for all parties to consider in the worship pastor's succession stage of ministry.

| Succession Stage Checklist |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Strategic Considerations   | Early discussions                             |
|                            | Role assignment in succession process         |
|                            | Implementation schedule                       |
|                            | Communication with congregation and community |
| Tactical Considerations    | Farewell activities                           |
|                            | Welcome activities                            |
|                            | Severance package                             |
|                            | Post retirement privileges and prohibitions   |
|                            | Press releases                                |

### Suggestions for Further Study

It has become evident in the course of this research that the principles of age-related transition and succession are sufficiently addressed in the general corpus of scholarly literature but not as they generally apply to the clergy, and specifically as they apply to worship ministry leadership. Such targeted sources are limited to select chapters in worship-related books (e.g. *Hungry for Worship* by Page and Gray) and magazine articles and blogs (*Facing Worship Leader Ageism...Stick the Landing!* by Manner and *The Over 50 Worship Leader* by Harland). There is a growing body of literature that addresses these principles as they apply to the clergy in general and these sources were liberally gleaned for applicable information.

There is a need for further study in the causes and prevention of age-related burnout and involuntary termination among worship pastors. There is a proportionate number of worship pastors among the growing pool of Baby Boomers reaching retirement age. A large number of vocational worship pastors began serving in conjunction with the praise and worship movement of the 70's and 80's. As that number grows, the impact of age-related transition and succession will become increasingly significant. There appears to be some evidence of ageism creeping into the local church, especially directed at worship pastors. This trend deserves more investigation.

The twenty-first century has ushered in many current issues in worship, the navigation of which require flexibility and open-mindedness by aging worship pastors. A worship pastor's ability to manage the impact of movements like the emerging church, postmodern worship, the Charismatic renewal, Reformed theology, multi-generational and multi-cultural worship deserves more study and recommendations. Because some worship pastors are unable or unwilling to navigate the turbulence that is often associated with age-related transition and succession, there is a critical need for more research and guidance. Denominational associations and Christian Universities are best positioned to educate and advise this growing segment of aging church leaders.

### Concluding Remarks

The sons of Issachar were one of the twelve tribes of Israel. According to the Old Testament text, they always knew what to do and when to do it.<sup>189</sup> They had such perception and wisdom that a whole nation followed them, anticipating and heeding their example. They had a unique ability to discern the times and seasons, and thereby had inside knowledge and understanding of God's activities. In their wisdom they cast their lot with David rather than with Saul. They were not taken by surprise when unexpected things happened. They wielded great influence as a result of their unique ability to understand times and seasons. They understood chronological, spiritual and political time and could discern when a leader was falling and another leader was rising. Furthermore, they could even tell who the next leader should be. Wise worship pastors need a similar anointing. They need to ask God to give them the ability to discern the times and seasons and always know what to do.

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<sup>189</sup> 1 Chronicles 12:32.



Worship pastors live and minister in changing times. Dynamic changes in society are forcing them to reexamine their ministry practices. Good, sincere, well-meaning, and intelligent worship pastors continue to pursue ministry with methodologies and programs which once worked well, but today are not as effective. Like the men of Issachar, aging worship pastors need to be strategists who understand their times, know what to do and have the courage to do it. In a tribute to his late father, former president George W. Bush stated “I once heard it said of man that the idea is to die young as late as possible.”<sup>190</sup> This is good advice for the aging worship pastor.

The principles for age-related transition and succession require a balance of faith and forethought. Reconciling strategic planning with the will of God, Martin and McIntosh write:

Many leaders hesitate to do too much planning, fearing that they are demonstrating a lack of faith. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Holy Spirit knows the future as well as the moment. Planning, by its very nature, increases faith by encouraging leaders to look at the future, anticipating the results by setting goals and trusting God to bring about the results.<sup>191</sup>

King Solomon was the primary writer of the Proverbs. He wisely stated, “Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be established” (Proverbs 16:3). Whether a Christ-honoring plan for the tenure of a worship pastor is developed by the pastor himself, the church he serves or through the unified efforts of both, such a plan must be prayerfully empowered and portray complete dependence on God. It must be accomplished with a spirit of humility and ultimately seek God’s glory.

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<sup>190</sup> <https://www.c-span.org/video/?455342-1/president-george-hw-bush-state-funeral-service>.

<sup>191</sup> Glen Martin & Gary McIntosh. *The Issachar Factor: Understanding Trends that Confront Your Church and Designing a Strategy for Success*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 67.

## APPENDIX

### A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE AGING WORSHIP PASTOR

Outline:

- I. INTRODUCTION
- II. 10-YEAR PLAN
- III. 7-YEAR PLAN
- IV. 5-YEAR PLAN
- V. 3-YEAR PLAN
- VI. 18-MONTH PLAN
- VII. S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS
- VIII. S.M.A.R.T. GOALS
- IX. SUMMARY

#### I. INTRODUCTION:

This plan recognizes and takes into consideration basic guidelines for a reasonable strategic plan process. We begin with the end in view. I started constructing this plan in February 2018. In the 10-year plan, the end is a target 10 years in the future. In February 2028 (10 years from now) I will be 71 years old. In March 2025 (7 years from now) I will be 68 years old. In March 2023 (5 years from now) I will be 66 years old. In September 2019 (18 months from now) I will be 62 years old. Each of these plans will address ministry, family/leisure and financial plans. If God so leads and the plan evolves as this project unfolds, the following will reflect my status.

#### II. 10-YEAR PLAN

##### A. Ministry – Active in church music leadership on a part-time basis

In ten years I would still like to be active in church music leadership; albeit on a part-time basis. I would like to be considered for interim worship leading opportunities as well as for speaking, consulting and clinic work in both music education and church music. My love for the church extends well beyond the worship ministry. I hope to be active as a volunteer in the church and greater Christian and neighboring communities. If our health will allow I trust that my wife and I might be able to continue serving on short-term domestic and international mission trips.

##### B. Leisure/Family - Spend time with my wife, children/grandchildren and friends

In 2028, my wife and I hope to be able to escape the cold winters of Ohio for 2-3 months each year. We also anticipate spending more time traveling with our growing family. Speaking of family, I plan to be more active in mentoring my children, grandchildren and selected individuals within the church and the greater worship leading community. Two of our grandchildren, Samantha and Bennet, will be ten years old in 2028. We would like to plan a special occasion or vacation with each of them sometime during that year to mark the occasion.

In my leisure time, I hope to be pleasantly productive (Robert Morgan term) in completing home repair and organizational projects at home and for my loved ones. Physical fitness is important to me, so I anticipate continuing with an organized exercise program at least five days a week. An exercise program is not enough for maintaining physical fitness. I must also be diligent in wise eating habits. Finally, I hope to be able to participate in more musical activities. I would love to play in or lead a community choir or band. I enjoy playing the piano at rest homes to encourage the residents. And I plan to be able to spend more time in the practice room regaining and improving my brass and keyboard skills.

#### C. Financial – free from any full-time dependence on a single local church

In order to be free from such dependence on a single local church, I need to closely track both my income and expenses. A diversified list of income sources will guard against any unforeseen loss of a major support. At this time, my income sources will include two different 403B accounts, my social security, my wife's social security, my wife's home business income, anticipated part-time work in adjunct teaching, itinerant work in worship ministry, consulting, substitute teaching, entertaining, coaching and possible extra jobs in non-music related fields.

My financial responsibilities at this point need to be as Spartan as possible and closely aligned to the personal goals of my life mission statement. I must assume responsibility for typical monthly living expenses like utilities and insurance. It is my hope that our living accommodations will not require any monthly rent or mortgage expenses.

A second priority with regard to expenses involves our desire to give to others. We hope to be able to gift ministry needs, family needs and other unforeseen needs as they arise.

A third priority involves funding leisure. If God so blesses us, we would enjoy having the means to participate in a reasonable amount of dining, travel and entertainment.

### III. 7-YEAR PLAN

#### A. Ministry

Seven years from now, I will be 68 years old. This will be a good time to step back from my position as the worship pastor of my church--a position that will (at that time) have reached a 40-year tenure. Most of the transition activity associated with this "retirement" will have already been completed. I will be available to answer any questions or concerns that the next worship pastor may have, but only when requested.

As the time I spend at the church diminishes, I need to ramp up my efforts in volunteering, speaking and teaching. At this time we will need to either need to petition the elders to continue to attend the church or we will need to seek out another congregation.

Too many men make the mistake of having no plan after they retire. I must formulate a plan to replace my time plan that is consistent with my mission in retirement. My wife needs to be in agreement with this plan as well. Her expectations for me are a high priority. I want to be a blessing to her rather than a nuisance.

## B. Leisure/Family

As with the ministry plan, my plan for leisure and family engagement at this time must be strategic. It would be overwhelming for my family to change their daily routines to account for my newly established availability. It will take a few months for me to establish a pleasantly productive routine. I hope to be available for my wife, children and grandchildren when they need and/or want me to spend time with them. I must not impose myself upon them. I must maintain a healthy balance between scheduled and spontaneous activities. I recognize that this will not be an easy process. There will always be unmet expectations, either by myself or by my loved ones. The first year of this transition will be the most difficult. With each passing year, it should get easier as we establish daily, weekly and seasonal routines. Our grandson AJ (Aubrey John) will be eleven years old, and our granddaughter Olive will be nine years old. We would like to plan a special event or vacation with them to mark the occasion.

This is the time to plan for and activate our winter seasonal relocation and other vacation plans. Furthermore we must establish annual objectives with regard to family celebrations, traditions and observations. This is also the time to network with other retirees and begin to participating in interesting activities. Will I schedule weekly trips to entertain the residents at a rest home? Will I join or establish a community band? Will my wife and I join or establish a community chorus?

## C. Financial

This is the time to activate my 403B accounts. By this point, both my wife's and my social security benefits should have kicked in. Our Medicare should also be in place so that we can surrender our employer health care benefit as previously provided by the church. Lord willing my anticipated part-time work in adjunct teaching will be in place and I will be able to add to my class load. This is the time to actively pursue itinerant work in worship ministry, consulting, substitute teaching, entertaining, coaching and possible extra jobs in non-music related fields. If we have planned adequately, we should be able to survive at our chosen standard of living once the full-time income of the church ends.

Our financial goals of surviving, giving and living must be closely monitored. I must now cover typical monthly living expenses like utilities and insurance from the new income sources. It is my hope that our living arrangements will not require any monthly rent or mortgage expenses.

Another priority, with regard to expenses, involves our desire to give to others. We hope to be able to gift ministry needs, family needs and other unforeseen needs as they arise. Lord willing, our ability to give will not be diminished by the transition of income sources.

A third priority involves funding leisure. If God so blesses us, we would enjoy having the means to participate in a reasonable amount of dining, travel and entertainment. If we have failed to plan accordingly, this is the area that will be cut back.

#### IV. 5-YEAR PLAN

##### A. Ministry

In April of 2023 (5 years from now) I will be 66 years old. This will be a good time to share my transition plan with the elders of the church. They need to answer a basic question. To what degree would they like me to be engaged in the process? There are 2 schools of thought: (1) I manage the transition and participate in helping to choose, mentor and equip my successor(s); (2) We set a date of transition and I basically hand off the ministry to them to determine the future direction and personnel. Once the elders make this determination, I will need to create a schedule for all aspects of this transition.

This would be a good time to transfer any of my non-worship ministry responsibilities. Will I continue to serve on the Elder council? Will I plan to gradually diminish the weekly schedule of hours worked? As the time I spend at the church decreases, I need to ramp up my efforts in volunteering, speaking and teaching. It will be my goal to make this transition as non-disruptive as possible for the worship ministry and for the church as a whole. If I have other ministry alternatives lined up, it will make my departure easier for the people to accept.

Although it is often difficult to measure, I trust that certain aspects of my leadership imprint will have reached what Maxwell calls the “Pinnacle” (level five) at this point. This will mark the 38th year of my tenure with this church. I trust that I will leave behind other leaders who will have the convictions to carry on my legacy. Maxwell shares six behaviors of the level 5 leader: (1) Make room for others at the top; (2) Continually mentor potential level 5 leaders; (3) Create an inner circle that will keep him grounded; (4) Do things for the organization that only level 5 leaders can do; (5) Plan for the succession; (6) Leave a positive legacy.

##### B. Leisure/Family

This will be a good time to down-size our living space. We currently live in a 2-story, 4-bedroom home. We have an acre of property to maintain. We will be wise to move into a single story home or condo that has less grounds to maintain. This process will require the elimination of many of our possessions. If we manage this process wisely, our children will not eventually have to shoulder the burden of disposing of our “stuff”. We recognize that our children and grandchildren have an emotional connection to our home and relocating may be difficult for them as well as for my wife and me.

##### C. Financial

Lord willing, we will have managed our finances in such a manner that our home improvements will make our home more marketable. We would also manage our leisure budget so as to accommodate family vacations and similar experiences. By this point in time, we will have a savings storehouse worth six months of living expenses. And we will make final projections and adjustments to assure that our retirement savings is adequate. Lord willing, the resale value of our home will provide us with adequate funds to purchase our new downsized home without requiring a mortgage.

## V. 3-YEAR PLAN

### A. Ministry

In April of 2021 (3 years from now), I will be 64 years old. At this point in my ministry life I must get serious about people development. Maxwell identifies this fourth level of leadership development as reproduction. I endeavor to become much more than a producer. I need to become a developer. As I endeavor to bring out the best in other people, this will become a catalyst for bringing out the best in our entire team. It may be difficult for me to delegate tasks that I really enjoy in order to empower others. Even so, I must make a conscious effort to readjust the way I spend my time. I must intentionally plan for those tasks that foster reproduction. I must transfer time spent in production to reproduction.

I must identify those present and future leaders who will step up to carry the ministry mantle for the future. Maxwell identifies 7 tasks that are necessary for reproduction. (1) Recruiting – finding the best people possible; (2) Positioning – placing the right people in the right positions; (3) Modeling – showing others how to lead; (4) Equipping – helping others to do their jobs well; (5) Developing – teaching them to do life well.

### B. Leisure/Family

I must not let the pressures of the ministry distract from my family. My family will play a much greater role in the next 20 years of my life than will the ministry. I hope to encourage my wife by completing home projects in preparation for putting the house on the market. In 2020 I plan to completely remodel our kitchen; then in 2021, I plan to paint the exterior of the home.

I must begin to learn how to relax more. I have often viewed vacations and leisure as selfish indulgence, when they are actually necessary components of ministry. I must learn how to recharge. If I fail to learn this art before I retire, I will struggle later on. Now is the time to work on this. I have often thought that we should plan an exclusive trip or experience with each of our grandchildren when they reach a certain age. Our granddaughter Ella will be 10 that year. This would be a good practice to begin.

### C. Financial

At this point in my career, my income will probably be its highest. I must practice storehouse-saving for the future. I hope to be able to finance all of my home improvement projects without incurring any debt. By this date I hope to have 6 months of living expenses sitting in a liquid savings account. Once this objective has been achieved, I will divert income to my retirement. I must anticipate/initiate extensive financial planning sessions with the managers of my retirement accounts. The conclusions from these sessions will determine any corrections I will need to make to my retirement savings plan.

## VI. 18-MONTH PLAN

### A. Ministry

In September of 2019 (18 months from now), I will be 62 years old. I anticipate that my workload at the church will be at an all-time high. I have recently taken over operational oversight of our church and will manage the office, business and facility managers. This responsibility has been added to my existing workload with worship ministry. The number of employees that fall under my oversight will have surpassed 20. This will require that I invest much more time working in Human Resources overseeing such tasks as position descriptions, performance appraisals and a host of budget, staffing and facility issues. It will be incumbent upon me to produce at a high level.

Production is Maxwell's third level of the leadership ladder. He shares six upsides to the production leader: (1) Leadership production gives credibility to the leader; (2) Leadership production models and sets the standard for others visually; (3) Leadership production brings clarity and reality to the vision; (4) Leadership production solves a multitude of Problems; (5) Leadership production creates momentum; (6) Leadership production is the foundation for team-building.

### B. Leisure/Family

The summer of 2019 marks two significant milestones in my life. This year, I will finish this degree program and celebrate my commencement ceremony for the DWS program at Liberty University. In June, my wife and I will celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. These two events are cause for a special vacation. We plan to take an Alaskan cruise that summer. We hope to set aside three weeks for this land and sea vacation.

Paying cash for home improvements is a high priority as we prepare the home for resale. In the summer of 2018 we remodeled our guest bathroom. In the summer of 2019, we plan to remove the carpet and install hardwood flooring in the three remaining bedrooms.

Given the workload I anticipate over the next 18 months, it is vital that I am strategic about inserting Sabbath into my life. If I fail to plan for down time, family time, and fun time, the rigors of ministry responsibility will certainly consume me.

### C. Financial

In the summer of 2018 my wife and I eliminated all debt. This has required a reallocation of funds that formerly supported a mortgage. We have decided that one third of that excess will be redirected to savings. Another third of the excess will be reallocated to retirement savings. The final third will be retained in the family account to cover the expenses of taxes and insurance which were formerly covered in an escrow account. By the summer of 2019, we will need to reassess this plan with the likelihood that more will need to be allocated to retirement savings.

## VII. S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS<sup>192</sup> OF THIS PLAN

- Strengths
  - It resonates with my desires and is consistent with my life mission statement.
  - It addresses financial, ministry and personal goals.
  - It accounts for a healthy blend of service and leisure, legacy and self-care.
- Weaknesses
  - Does not account for unforeseen health issues.
  - Does not account for unforeseen financial issues.
  - Some of the income sources are not presently secured.
- Opportunities
  - Having a 10-year projection allows for adequate positioning and pre-planning.
  - Build in flexibility to account for some of the potential unforeseen issues.
- Threats
  - insufficient income to fund the plan
  - the economy
  - my health or the health of my wife

## VIII. S.M.A.R.T. GOALS<sup>193</sup>

- Specific - A lot can change in 10 years. For this step (10-years) in the strategic plan I must maintain a healthy measure of both specificity and flexibility. I cannot allow vagueness to cloud the big picture nor can I paint myself into a corner with an overly-detailed plan.
- Measurable – In looking at the 10-year plan, it should not be too difficult to measure. If the income is sufficient to cover the financial responsibilities (both our needs and some of our wants) then the goal has been met. Other aspects of this plan tend to be more subjective and more difficult to measure, such as level of satisfaction derived from our leisure goals or effectiveness in ministry.
- Attainable – The necessary steps to achieve the goals stated in this plan must be clearly articulated in the subsequent 7-year, 5-year, 3-year and 18-month strategic plan assignments.
- Realistic – With 10 years to plan and prepare, I do not feel that this plan is unrealistic.
- Time-bound – The beauty of this exercise lies in its strategy. Someone once said: *If we fail to plan then we plan to fail*. A sound 10–year plan must be supported and fed

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<sup>192</sup> Multiple sources conclude that the origins of the acronym remain obscure.

<sup>193</sup> G. T. Doran (1981). "There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives". *Management Review*. 70 (11): 35–36.



by specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time-bound plans that address short-term goals. This assignment clearly supports the goal of being time-bound.

## IX. SUMMARY

In preparing this plan I was overwhelmed by the comfort and satisfaction derived from a sincere trust in the Lord to order my days and provide for my future. God has been so faithful throughout my life. There have been plenty of storms and struggles in the past and there will certainly be more to come.

Kenna Turner West has penned this prayer that reflects the state of my heart as I look to the next ten years of my life.

*I'll remember You're the God  
Who moves mountains,  
Remember You're the One  
Who fights my battles  
And in Your way and in Your time,  
Ev'ry promise You've made will be mine.  
And I'll remember You're nothing but faithful,  
Remember You alone are able.  
So while I wait for answers to come,  
Lord, I'll praise You,  
Praise You for what You've already done.<sup>194</sup>*

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<sup>194</sup> Kenna Turner West. "What You've Already Done". Sonlite Records 2017.

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