

Liberty University

A Biblical Model To Encourage Associate Ministers To Serve Effectively With Enjoyment

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to
the faculty of the School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

Department of Pastoral Leadership

by

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September 2019

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Abstract

“A BIBLICAL MODEL TO ENCOURAGE ASSOCIATE MINISTERS TO SERVE EFFECTIVELY WITH ENJOYMENT”

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Liberty University School of Divinity, 2019

Associate Ministers play a vital role in the growth and development of healthy churches. Yet, too often, they grow impatient with their role and frustrated with their current assignment. This frustration often leads to dysfunction and a lack of spiritual development that ultimately hinders the growth of the church. So, what are the challenges that associate ministers face in serving in subordinate roles of leadership? As an Associate Minister for seven years, this researcher experienced this frustration while serving and waiting on God to open the next door of opportunity.

The purpose of this project is to provide a biblical model that will encourage and empower associate ministers to stay faithful and focused while serving at their present church. To accomplish this, the journey of King David, from a shepherd boy to a mighty king, will help provide a biblical model for this project. David waited patiently on the Lord for over fifteen years before he was promoted to king. David’s model of preparation in the field, will aid associate ministers with relational conflict with senior pastors, serve faithfully through frustration, and develop a sense of trust in God. With trained and trusted associate ministers, churches can expand ministry, and pastors will not have to carry such extreme workloads, which will minimize the potential of burnout.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ministry Context

Over the past few years, there has been an enormous amount of emphasis on church growth and spiritual development. The swift growth of churches has become too large of a challenge for solo pastors. For this growth and development to be sustainable, it requires team members who are committed to a common goal. Today's church needs competent and committed staff to serve in subordinate leadership and give the necessary support to the senior pastor. As J. Oswald Sanders says, "Churches grow in every way when strong, spiritual leaders guide them with a touch of the supernatural radiating in their service."¹ This necessity highlights the significance of the role of associate ministers. Without competent and committed associate ministers on staff, the church cannot adequately meet the needs and demands of a growing membership. It is vital to develop and train associate ministers to maximize their gifts and talents in the role of subordinate leadership. Any entity that seeks to increase its impact and its effectiveness needs to train and develop these leaders.

The task of training and developing associate ministers is challenging because many associates are not focused on providing support for the pastor. Instead, many associates are seeking the satisfaction of becoming the pastor. Many associates are not content with serving in this role. This researcher served as an associate minister for eight years and noticed that many who are called into the ministry approach the role of the associate minister from different perspectives. Most associate ministers are not aware of the impact their perspective has on the

¹ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994), 18.

congregation and the growth of the minister. Not every associate minister is focused on their current assignment. After careful and considerable observations, four perspectives were noticed among associate ministers.

The first perspective is to view the role as a “stepping stone” to the next assignment. This person views their current assignment as seemingly insignificant, but necessary to get to their intended or desired destination. This person does not maximize this opportunity because they view it as literally a “temporary waste of time.” They consider this role as an internship to transition into their next assignment. Their mindset is: “I am only here until I get my own church or this pastor leaves.” They have the mentality, “I do not have to get too involved here; I do not need to know or support the vision; not going to be here forever.” This mentality is shortsighted, and it limits the possibility of acquiring what God has for them to learn in this particular place and at this particular time. Daniel Threlfall, in his article, *Pastoral Promotion: How Climbing Up Will Take You Down*, states, “discontent with their supposedly small-minded and backward congregations, some pastors are surreptitiously sending out resumes, dropping hints, phoning up friends, and keeping one eye open for their lucky break to a big-time church.”² This perspective prevents associate ministers from pursuing a sense of contentment and fulfillment in their current assignment. With this perspective, there is a danger of not developing the necessary skills needed for the next assignment.

The second perspective is the I am just happy to be here perspective. This person is not concerned with doing ministry or impacting the kingdom; they desire to sit in the pulpit and be noticed. They are excited to have a title and a position of prominence. They have found a sense

² Daniel Threlfall, “Pastoral Promotion: How Climbing Up Will Take You Down,” *ShareFaith* (August 2011).

of contentment with just being included in the staff directory and labeled as an associate minister of the church. They are not faithful to the ministry and are not fully committed to kingdom success. This person shows up on Sunday and is excited to be noticed. They have misjudged contentment for complacency. They are satisfied with waiting around for their next opportunity to preach but not seeking an opportunity to serve in some capacity. Billy Hornsby suggests that this person feels the position makes the significant. Instead, he states that “significance has nothing to do with position, but rather service and serving is the only path to significance.”³ This person’s attitude toward ministry is “whatever you need me to do, let me know.” Some have even asked, “if I am not going to preach, what else is there to do?” They fail to understand that there are many things needed to help fulfill the mandate of making disciples. These assignments may include leading worship service, teaching Bible study or Sunday School, visiting the sick, assisting with the youth and children, new member follow up, evangelism and outreach, and promoting the vision of the pastor. There is more than enough work to do if you are serious and committed to ministry and not just a position. Ministry is not a place of comfort; it is a place of leadership.

The third perspective is the one who is continuously looking for a new assignment. This person has a resume in every vacant church and is continually seeking new opportunities to become a pastor. They are enamored by the position of Pastor but are not willing to serve as an associate. This person feels they have the necessary gifts, talents, and abilities to serve as senior pastor and are not willing to settle for an associate role. Their mindset is, “I did not accept my calling to sit under someone else.” Their only desire is to preach and lead a flock. They have no

³ Billy Hornsby, *Success for the Second in Command* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House Publishing, 2004), 10.

interest in subordinate leadership positions. This person is not dependable, accountable, or faithful and desires position without sacrifice. The pastor and congregations can never build a sense of cohesion among the pastoral leadership team with ministers who share this perspective. Dr. David Hopewell suggests, “this person hinders the vision and work at their current church, and also hinders his or her own destiny.”⁴ This person is continually visiting other churches seeking positions and opportunities. Dr. Martin Hawkins refers to this person as the “unintentional assistant.” He says, “trying to keep this person on staff will usually only disservice him and the staff he serves because he will continually butt his head against the restrictions placed on his calling, his passion, and even his personality.”⁵ Their attention is fixed on position rather than purpose.

The final perspective is the associate who maximizes the opportunity to mature, develop, and grow as a leader. This person views the role of the associate minister as an assignment by God that serves a purpose. This individual is committed to assisting the pastor in bringing about the unity and maturity within the body of Christ. He desires to fulfill God’s call on his life in a way that brings glory to God. He is in full alignment with the vision of the pastor. This person is passionate about organizing and implementing programs that effectively impact the congregation. This viewpoint understands and embraces the opportunity to grow in subordinate leadership without the burden of senior pastor pressure. This person sees his value and worth to the pastor and congregation. This person sees the position of the associate minister as high potential. It is not just a temporary position, but rather a place where one could exercise their

⁴ David W. Hopewell, *Keys to Becoming an Effective Associate Minister and Church Leader* (Lithonia, GA: Orman Press, 2004), 32.

⁵ Martin E. Hawkins, *The Associate Pastor: Second Chair, Not Second Best* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2005), 21.

gifts and abilities. Their joy is seeing others succeed. This person does not view other staffers as competitors for the top spot but views every member as co-laborers in the ministry. They have a “bloom where you are planted” mentality. There is an excellent understanding that second-chair leadership provides an excellent opportunity to be a learner. Learning is the only thing that ensures growth, and it continues to feed your inner desire for improvement. These experiences can help teach, train, and prepare the minister to serve God’s people and maintain integrity in ministry and allows making mistakes behind the scene.

After carefully observing these various perspectives, this researcher concluded that the mindset toward the role of the associate minister must shift toward the fourth perspective. This perspective provides fantastic possibilities for associate ministers to grow into the leader that God has called them to be. The associate position will become a place of observation. The associate minister could have his eyes opened to the responsibility and accountability of a correct pastoral calling of God and view the role of the pastor differently. Many associates only see the glamour of Sunday morning preaching, and the celebrations of honorariums; but fail to see the behind the scenes burdens involved in leadership. David Hopewell points out that “If we truly understood all the long hours of prayer and study, hours away from family members, the misunderstandings, accusations, ingratitude, and everything else that goes along with the job of the pastor, we may no longer want it.”⁶

This perspective could also provide the associate minister with an opportunity to experience a season of preparation. While serving in the second chair, this researcher was able to receive more formal seminary training. The position allowed this researcher the time and

⁶ Hopewell, *Keys to Becoming*.

resources to be able to go and receive training that was necessary for ministry. In his book, *The Making of a Leader*, Dr. J. Robert Clinton suggests that “If you know that God will be developing you over a lifetime, you will most likely stay for the whole ride.”⁷ The right perspective will enable the associate minister to see the “Big Picture” of what God is doing in their lives. In this time of preparation, the right perspective will enable God to begin to transform the minister into an effective leader without the title or position. God begins to shape and mold methods of doing ministry. This researcher was challenged and committed to tap into the unproven potential. This role allows developing and cultivating an influence for the benefit of the congregation. This influence can only be done if the associate minister has the right perspective on their role.

After careful observation, there seems to be a shift in the culture and mindset of many associate ministers today. The role of an associate minister is not the desired position, but instead, it is a stop on the journey to the ultimate position of senior pastor. This is dangerous because many associates fail to take advantage of the opportunities provided for growth, training, development, and maturation in ministry. The culture suggests that titles, positions, and promotions are the real signs of success. Therefore, many associates are position driven rather than purpose-driven. This presents a problem within the church because the focus is not on finding fulfillment in your assignment but finding fulfillment in another position. Associate ministers seeking to find fulfillment in ministry must learn to be content to experience a growing sense of fulfillment. Associate ministers must understand that personal satisfaction is not the primary goal in ministry; serving God and being faithful is the ultimate goal.

⁷ J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress Publishing, 1988), 23.

This is a difficult task because many associates struggle to find fulfillment and significance in this role. This researcher understands the struggle to sustain focus, patience, and contentment while serving in second chair leadership. Although the task is difficult, the rewards are incredibly beneficial. After serving in the role of associate minister for eight years, this researcher was transitioned into the role of senior pastor. The training and preparation provided in the associate minister's role have enabled this researcher and the current church family to experience tremendous growth and development in the first seven years. This researcher was content with serving in the position of associate minister, but after several conversations with contemporaries, this contentment was not experienced by many others.

Problem Presented

This project will examine the problem of why associate ministers struggle to find fulfillment in subordinate leadership positions. Most associates are seeking fulfillment in the position rather than finding fulfillment in purpose. The root of the problem lies in the realm of perspective. How does one shift their perspective toward service, submission, and success in subordinate leadership? This project will seek to present a model that will shift the perspective from a position toward purpose.

Several factors present severe challenges to finding fulfillment. The first challenge to finding fulfillment is the lack of patience. Most associates struggle with finding the patience to wait as God grows, matures, and develops them into what they shall become. We live in a culture of quick, fast, and overnight success. Associate ministers must develop the patience to endure the process of becoming pastors. Too often, young ministers get in haste to become pastors. The journey where God is taking them is not an event; it is a process. This process is not easy, but it is necessary. Most associate ministers would prefer to leap from being called into the ministry to

the position of pastor without going through the lengthy process. John Wooden, the legendary Hall of Fame basketball coach, says, “When opportunity comes, it is too late to prepare. If you want to be a successful leader, learn to lead before you have a leadership position”.⁸ Without the necessary patience, many associate ministers seek to hurry the process of maturation and often get ahead of God’s timing and His will. God develops patience through a process of testing, trials, and harsh circumstances.

Another factor that challenges fulfillment is a lack of resources concerning associate ministers. There are a plethora of resources on pastoral leadership, but not much has been written to aid in being or becoming a faithful, committed, and dependable associate minister — very little support for associate ministers in the way of education, seminars, conferences, and associations. Very few seminaries offer courses or training on this role or position. Most pastors have not had any training on how to develop associate ministers. Without the necessary resources, many associate ministers struggle to understand the demands and requirements to lead effectively from the second chair, and they are left to figure it out on their own. The core of the problem is not finding material to show associates what to do. Several authors have quality literature on what to do as an associate. This researcher has accepted the challenge of shifting the focus on how one views the position. Kevin Lawson has produced a valuable book entitled, “*How To Thrive In Associate Staff Ministry*.” In his book, he suggests, “a spirit of contentment where you are, doing what are doing, is critical if you are going to find satisfaction in your

⁸. John Maxwell, Which comes first? Position or Preparation? <http://johnmaxwellonleadership.com/2011/02/07/which-comes-first-position-or-preparation/> (accessed March 1, 2014).

ministry.”⁹ His entire work is dedicated to changing the mindset from surviving in the role of thriving in the role.

Another factor that challenges fulfillment is conflict and dissension that may grow among the pastor and associate minister. There is always the possibility and potential for conflict to arise in this relationship. Conflict should not discourage or distract the associate ministers from finding fulfillment. Several factors can lead to conflict. These factors will be addressed in this project. Often when conflict arises, it can force the associate minister to leave out of frustration before their assignment is fulfilled. The right perspective will allow the associate minister to understand the value of conflict. God uses conflict in the process of developing one’s faith and dependence on God.

Finally, this project will focus on the significant challenge of finding fulfillment, which is perspective. Our society encourages employees to move up the corporate ladder and become executives. This mindset is a temptation for many associate ministers who feel the only way to measure success is to become a pastor. One associate minister says, “The younger generation is being trained more on the business model of looking at steppingstones and career moves rather than hearing from God.” Becoming a senior pastor is not the ultimate goal. Doing the will of God is. Your position or your title does not determine your value to the Body of Christ. God will reward faithfulness and fruitfulness, regardless of position or status. In his book, *The 360° Leader*, John Maxwell deals with the position myth. He suggests, “the number one misconception people have about leadership is the belief that leadership comes simply from

⁹ Kevin E. Lawson, *How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 2000), 43.

having a position or title.”¹⁰ He argues that authentic leadership has more to do with a disposition more than a position. This is valuable when it comes to shifting the perspective about the role of an associate minister. One does not have to have the position to find fulfillment and contentment in ministry.

Why Address This Problem

If the problem is not addressed, many associates will forfeit the necessary training and development needed to lead God’s flock. The only way to serve effectively and efficiently is to grow and mature as a leader. This project will highlight biblical examples of those who desired to lead God’s people without the training and guidance, and the people suffered as a result.

Also, without the necessary support and staff, pastors experience burnout. With the growing demands on pastors and leaders, churches need quality associate ministers to help bear the burden of leading God’s people. Unnecessary turnover in the position of the associate minister has ripple effects throughout the ministry. Some of the effects include significant vision is never carried out, the generational impact is lost, expectations are never clear as leadership changes frequently, associate staff question their place, protégés find no mentors, and lead pastors spend much of their time filling ministry positions rather than effectively building the Kingdom. If associates grasp the value of their supporting role, it will free up the senior pastor to focus more on teaching, preaching, and discipleship.

This issue is not exclusive to the ministry. The National Basketball Association discovered this dilemma several years ago and implemented the “One and Done Rule.”¹¹ This

¹⁰ John C. Maxwell, *The 360° Leader* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2011), 4.

¹¹ www.ncaa.org, “The One and Done Dilemma,” *Special Basketball Issue* (Fall 2018).

rule was implemented when the National Basketball Association and its players added an age limit that required players entering the draft to be 19 years old or have finished their freshman year of college. This prohibited high school players from making the leap from high school to the NBA. The league suggested that it hurt the college game as well as the NBA. The NBA was hurt because the players had forfeited the opportunity to grow, mature, and develop as college athletes. They recommended that high school players would get experience and training before entering the NBA. Colleges and Universities are complaining that many talented high school players only come to school because they have to. They are using college as merely a stepping stone to their next assignment. They do not respect authorities on campus because they know they will not be there very long. Our churches are being affected similarly to the NBA because they are being led by immature and talented individuals who are called to churches based on potential instead of proven pedigree.

Purpose Statement

This research will seek to provide a biblical model that will encourage, empower, and equip associate ministers to find fulfillment in subordinate leadership. This project is designed to encourage those who feel that their gifts, talents, and abilities are not being maximized to their full potential. This project will provide the reader with a clear, concise, and coherent understanding of how God trains, matures, and develops his leaders. This project aims to shift the perspective from finding fulfillment in the position to finding fulfillment and contentment in serving in the kingdom.

The researcher will provide a biblical model that helps focus on purpose and not position. When purpose becomes the object of fulfillment, associate ministers begin to develop a different mindset about serving. To achieve this goal, this project will examine the life of King David.

David exemplifies patience, trust, and fulfilling his intended purpose while waiting on God. After being anointed to be king at an early age, David served as a shepherd with a king's perspective. He continued to serve until God changed his assignment. David served faithfully under Saul's leadership for more than fifteen years. He was able to grow, mature, and develop into what God's purpose while fulfilling his assignment as a subordinate leader. This project, while examining some valuable tools that will enable associate ministers to serve effectively and efficiently in subordinate leadership positions.

How was David able to find contentment serving under Saul's leadership? There are seven principles that this research will highlight that are gleaned from 1 Samuel. These fundamental principles include: (1) being faithful over the simple assignments, (2) the development of your gift in private, (3) being patient through the process of preparation, (4) learning to handle early success, (5) developing healthy relationships, (6) resolving conflict, and (7) knowing when to leave the current assignment. These principles were exhibited in various stages of the life of King David and helped shape his character, integrity, and faithfulness.

Some of the principles and practices were drawn from the personal experiences of this researcher. These principles and practices have helped this researcher find fulfillment and contentment in ministry, despite the position or title. When faced with the temptation to seek position, fame, or popularity, this model helped the researcher focus on how God trains privately before public advancement. Every associate needs a biblical model of God's plan and practices. Throughout Scripture, we see how God prepares his leaders for greatness through the journey of process.

Basic Assumptions

There are four assumptions associated with this thesis project. First, the researcher assumes that there are too many associate ministers seeking titles and positions, rather than growing and developing as associate ministers. They aim to become a pastor instead of fulfilling their purpose in ministry. The second assumption is that those associate ministers are not content with serving in subordinate leadership positions. They are not finding fulfillment and satisfaction in serving under authority. This lack of fulfillment leads to frustration and pushes them toward the temptation of self-satisfaction. The third assumption is that most pastors struggle with helping associate ministers find fulfillment in their roles. Pastors have too much to deal with in leading their congregations and may not have the time, energy, or experience to train and mentor associate ministers. So, their desire is for them to find fulfillment in serving in some capacity. The fourth assumption is that all associate ministers who were interviewed for this project have a true calling and conviction for ministry. If one were not called into ministry, they would never find fulfillment in serving.

Definitions

There are some key terms used throughout this project that need definitions. Many churches give the terms separate and definite meanings; those meanings vary extensively from church to church, making it impossible to give a definite meaning that fits universally.

Associate Minister refers to one called by God and appointed by the church to be set apart for ministry. The call is what gives meaning and purpose. Even though he is called of God to preach, teach, and minister, yet he is not self-called to any church. The *Associate Minister* is not

a called office in the church setting as the pastor and assistant pastor. The Associate Minister serves in a supporting role to a church's senior pastor. They are often more specialized in certain areas of ministry.

Assistant Pastor refers to one who executes a designated list of duties, at the call of the senior pastor in his absence or designated by the senior pastor. This person is most likely a full-time staff member and works hand in hand with the pastor.

Second Chair Leader refers to one in a subordinate role whose influence with others adds value throughout the organization. This term can be used for anyone serving under the senior pastor.

Subordinate Leader refers to one who is not the first, not the primary, but is minor; and is not the dominant person in the organization.

The second Chariot is a term used by Reverend K. Edward Copeland. This term is used interchangeably for an associate minister.

Senior Pastor refers to the full-time leader/pastor of the congregation, the chief spiritual leader, under-shepherd, set in the church by God.

Fulfillment refers to a feeling of happiness and satisfaction. It is also a sense of completion.

Thrive in Ministry refers to a sense of personal well-being, contentment, and satisfaction in ministry. It is finding fulfillment and joy in service.

Statement of Limitations

The reader must understand the parameters of this project. First, this project will not focus on the daily activities of associate ministers. This project will focus more on the mindset and perspective rather than the methods of daily operations. Therefore, this project will not give

a detailed description of the duties of associate ministers. This project will not adequately examine the cultural aspect of the problem. Some of the issues addressed in this project may be cultural or denominational. This project is limited to mostly the Baptist denomination.

Methodology

This project will examine the model of David as God shaped him into a great king. The researcher is aware that David was not a pastor or an associate minister. This researcher also understands the terms “associate minister” or “assistant pastor” are not found in the Bible. Scripture does refer to elders who serve in support capacities. The Old and New Testament provide information about those who assisted the primary leader and God’s purposeful calling on their lives. The researcher has studied the practices and principles exhibited by David and has carefully crafted a model that promotes satisfaction and personal well-being in ministry. Much of the research for this project was conducted through personal interviews of associate ministers, senior pastors, and some associate’s wives. There were surveys sent via email and a forum at the Regional Baptist Convention that provided the necessary data to formulate this thesis project. The interviews were from a small sample size of associate ministers.

Thesis Statement

Associate Ministers play a vital role in the growth and development of healthy churches. Too often, they grow impatient with their role and frustrated with their current assignments. This frustration often leads to dysfunction and a lack of spiritual development that ultimately hinders the growth of the church. As an Associate Minister for eight years, this researcher experienced this frustration while waiting on God to open the door of opportunity.

The purpose of this project is to provide a biblical model that will encourage and empower associate ministers to stay faithful and focused while serving at their present church. To accomplish this, the journey of King David, from a shepherd boy to a mighty king, will help provide a biblical model for this project. David waited patiently on the Lord for over fifteen years before he was promoted to king. David's model of preparation in the field will aid associate ministers with relational conflict with senior pastors, serve faithfully through frustration, and develop a sense of trust in God. With trained and trusted associate ministers, churches will be able to expand ministry, and pastors will not have to carry such extreme workloads, which will lessen the potential for burnout.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Significance of the Problem

Church growth and development requires team members who are committed to the common goal. Today's church needs competent and committed staff to serve this present age. The Senior Pastor is still the visionary voice and spiritual authority of leadership, but no entity can maintain sustained success with everything depending on a single leader. Therefore, associate ministers play a vital role in the growth and development of healthy churches.

Many churches suffer, because of continuous turnover in the associate minister position. Why is there so much turnover in this position? One of the main reasons for this turnover is that many associate ministers struggle to find fulfillment and significance in their roles. This struggle to find fulfillment and significance may lead to frustration and a feeling of inferiority. Many associates often ask, "Is what I am doing significantly to the success of this church?"

Too often, associate ministers grow impatient with their role and responsibility in their current assignment. Kevin Lawson, in his book "*How To Thrive In Associate Staff Ministry*," reveals research that suggests many associates are just surviving rather than thriving. He writes that many associates view their role in ministry as dissatisfactory and lacks contentment.¹² In some cases, the associate's role has been simplified to "whatever the pastor asks me to do?"

Fulfillment challenges the core of human nature, which seeks to serve selfish desires first. How can associates be put in a position to thrive and not just survive? This problem surfaced from the researcher's struggle in experiencing growth in his sense of fulfillment as an associate minister. How does one give their all for the benefit of the body of Christ without crossing the

¹² Kevin E. Lawson, *How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 2000), 1.

invisible line and cause conflict with the senior pastor? If the problem is not addressed, associate ministers will always seek satisfaction rather than serve with sincerity.

Finding fulfillment in any subordinate leadership role has some significant challenges. The first challenge to finding fulfillment is a lack of quality resources for associate ministers. As an associate minister, the researcher was always seeking quality material to equip, encourage, and empower in the role of an associate minister. There is an enormous amount of research on pastoral leadership but not enough research on developing pastoral helpers. In their article, “*From C-Level To See-Level Leadership*,” Wellins and Weaver point out that while large volumes of training are available for those at the top, scant few are available to the second-in-command leaders.¹³

The second challenge to finding fulfillment is the lack of patience displayed by many associate ministers. While living in a quick-fix and overnight sensation generation, one must be mindful that God develops quality leaders by taking them through a process of training and development. This process prepares the associate minister for the unknown, the uncertain, and the unfamiliar. Waiting for the right ministry opportunity can become tedious. Patience must be exhibited throughout the preparation process. Paul J. Bucknell has done extensive research in the field of training servants and shares vital nuggets about the art of waiting on his website, wwwFOUNDATIONSforfreedom.net. On this site, he examines the challenges of waiting for God. He states, “A person eager to serve the Lord will often find himself hindered from going into full-time service and become frustrated in waiting.”¹⁴ He also gives some insight into the difference

¹³ Richard Wellins, “From C-Level To See-Level Leadership,” TD Magazine, September 2003,60

¹⁴. Paul J. Bucknell, Waiting for Ministry, <http://wwwFOUNDATIONSforfreedom.net/Topics/WaitingOnGod> (accessed October 8, 2103).

between seminary training and training God gives through experiences. Bucknell reveals that “God is very interested in training our hearts for specialized tasks.”¹⁵

The third challenge to finding fulfillment is how the minister and the congregation view the position of associate minister. How one views the position significantly affects their approach. In *Leading From the Second Chair* by Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, their research suggested that some ministers viewed the position of the associate minister as their lifelong calling while others viewed the position as a stepping stone to their next assignment. The latter view may describe the position as a “not at the top yet” position. This view can be dangerous because of the tendency to be continually seeking rather than committed to serving. The congregation’s view on the position also has an impact. Congregants have not been trained or taught the role and responsibility of subordinate leadership; so many associates have been faced with the question, “When are you going to get your church?”

The fourth challenge is the difficulty to gauge success from the associate minister position. How do I know if I am successful if there is little recognition, and the pastor receives all the credit for the behind the scene work that is accomplished? In “*7 Practices of Effective Ministry*,” Andy Stanley suggests that when one does not clarify success, you may force those in leadership roles to define winning in their terms.¹⁶ Many associate ministers only view success as being promoted to a pastoral position. One must set goals that make the entire congregation successful. Without team success, there is no success for the leader.

The purpose of this project is to provide a biblical model that will encourage and empower associate ministers to stay faithful and focused while serving at their present church.

¹⁵. Ibid.

¹⁶ Andy Stanley, “7 Practices Of Effective Ministry,” (Colorado, Springs: Multnomah Books, 2004),73

This project will seek to demonstrate that the associate minister's position can be both productive and effective and does not have to be viewed as a "stepping stone" to one's church. As an associate minister, there is the potential to find fulfillment, contentment, peace, and success despite not basking in the limelight. Associates must remember that value to the Body of Christ is not validated by position.

To complete this thesis project, the researcher reviewed multiple types of publications. This project will not focus on the day to day tasks of the associate minister but seek to highlight some challenges that lead to frustration and a sense of dissatisfaction in the role of associate ministers. *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams* by Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson was vital in showing the challenges that face associate ministers. These authors look at three paradoxes that associate ministers face in serving faithfully. These three paradoxes include subordinate-leader, deep-wide, and contentment-dreaming. This project will examine some of these challenges that have the potential to cause conflict in the pastor/associate relationship. Most associates face the challenge of how to do ministry without crossing the relationship line. This textbook highlights these challenges in the form of paradoxes.

Associate ministers must understand that they are a vital member of God's team. Robert J. Radcliffe, in *Effective Ministry as an Associate Pastor: Making Beautiful Music as a Ministry Team*, gives a biblical perspective as it relates to team ministry. There are several biblical and theological arguments for having associate pastors in a local church: the existence of multiple elders in a single church, the roles of elders in a local congregation, spiritual giftedness God distributes to all believers in the body of Christ, the need for disciples rather than converts, and the qualities of character that are necessary for elders in a local church.

How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry by Kevin Lawson was instrumental in showing how associate ministers work to improve the growth of the entire church. Lawson does an excellent job of highlighting many aspects of associate staff ministry, their challenges, and the joys that God provides in this specialized type of ministry. This book was instrumental in dealing with the importance of staff relationships. Associate ministers must understand the importance of cooperation instead of competition. Lawson suggests that a competitive spirit focuses on “my ministry,” while a cooperative spirit focuses on “our ministry.”¹⁷

When there is good chemistry with the senior pastor and the associates, the fruit is compared to the harmony of a well-conducted orchestra. *The Associate Pastor: Second Chair, Not Second Best*, by Martin E. Hawkins, seeks to show how a well-prepared associate pastor complements and harmonizes with the senior pastor's ministry to create an exquisite symphony. Dr. Hawkins brings a wealth of knowledge to this subject. He served as Dr. Tony Evan's assistant pastor at Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship for twenty-nine years. He breaks the assistant pastor's role down into three categories: the intentional assistant, the unintentional assistant, and the unintentional pastor.¹⁸ Knowing your role as an assistant will aid in finding fulfillment with the position.

Scripture provides precedence for effective subordinate leaders. God provides sufficient subordinates to accomplish His plan and plan. In his book, “*The Theology of the Second Chair: A Theological Foundation for the Subordinate Leader of the Local Church*,” Roger Patterson examines the model of subordinate leaders such as Aaron's subordination to Moses, Joshua's subordination to Moses, and Timothy's subordination to Paul. This work provided a theological

¹⁷. Kevin E. Lawson, *How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 2000), 32.

¹⁸. Hawkins, *The Associate Pastor*, 18.

foundation to demonstrate how to subordinate leaders have significant roles and responsibilities despite the position.

H.B. Charles is one of the most respected expository preachers in the country. He has a website entitled www.hbcharlesjr.com. He posted a blog on his site entitled, “*Help, I’m an Associate Minister.*” The best advice was given in his opening statement, “Preachers need the maturation that comes from serving with or under another pastor, before leading their congregation.”¹⁹ He discusses the dual challenges of both the senior pastor and the associate to make the time together with productive and fruitful. He gives ten ways to maximize one’s role as an associate minister that will be utilized throughout this project.

Alan Rudnick’s column, *The Risks, and Rewards of Being an Associate Pastor*, was also vital to this project. Rudnick identified the joy and pain of being an associate minister. Despite the possibilities of strained relationships and conflict among the clergy, he shares from personal experience that serving as an associate pastor can offer unique opportunities and rewards. It can provide the opportunity to grow and gain experience in a grace-filled environment under the tutelage of a more seasoned colleague.²⁰ He gives some principles and strategies that can be utilized to better the odds of enjoying the rewards of being an associate rather than experiencing the pitfalls that come with the territory. These principles will be explored throughout the project. This information can be found at <http://www.churchleadership.com>.

Despite the lack of recognition, compensation, and appreciation, associate ministers have an excellent opportunity to provide productivity without position, power, and prestige. Despite

¹⁹. H.B. Charles Jr., *Help, I’m An Associate Minister*, <http://hbcharlesjr.com/2012/08/10/help-im-an-associate-ministers/> (accessed January 13, 2014).

²⁰. Alan Rudnick, *The Risks and Rewards of Being an Associate Pastor*, http://www.churchleadership.com/leadingideas/leaddocs/2012/121024_article.html (accessed September, 2013).

the challenges of the position, it is possible to find fulfillment in serving in subordinate leadership.

The Model Examined

Because of the lack of resources and research on the subject, this project has carefully examined the biblical model of King David as someone who was anointed as king in 1 Samuel 16:13, yet he did not immediately go and serve on the throne. There was more than a 15-year process of preparation for David to become the leader that God intended for His people. David did not have to plot, plan, or scheme to become king. God said, “I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do” (Acts 13:22). This passage shows that God knows one’s location, and one does not have to seek positions and power.

From the life of David, this project will highlight seven fundamental principles that will aid in the empowerment and equipping of associate ministers to find fulfillment in their assignment. These fundamental principles include: (1) being faithful over the simple assignments, (2) the development of your gift in private, (3) being Patient through the process of preparation, (4) learning to handle early success, (5) developing healthy relationships, (6) resolving conflict, and (7) knowing when to leave the current assignment. These principles were exhibited in various stages of the life and development of King David, the son of Jesse.

Several authors have done extensive research on the life of King David. A.W. Pink’s work, *The Life of David*, is a literary masterpiece. He surveys David’s life as he developed from a shepherd boy to a prominent king. He gives expert insight into David’s patience as he operated in the will of God. Pink examines how the providence of God and David’s patience provided a recipe for success. Pink suggests, “When God has designed that any Christian should enter His service, His providence concurs with His grace to prepare and qualify him for it, and often it is

utilizing God’s providences that the discerning heart perceives the divine will.”²¹ This project will seek to show this is vital in the life of an associate minister.

Charles Swindoll has a multi-volume series exploring Great Lives from God’s Word and mining them for the qualities that made them great. His work, *David, A Man of Passion and Destiny* carefully examines the heart of King David. This best-selling author explored the many facets of this complex shepherd boy who became king. Swindoll gives sound practical application to the Scriptures. His chapter, “A Nobody, Nobody Noticed,” was vital to this project because it shows associates that God is never at a loss to know what He is going to do in their situations.²² David did not pursue the limelight; God found him with the sheep.

David’s life was filled with swift transitions. Each transition brought on new opportunities for achievement and development. In his book, “*And David Perceived He Was King: Identity – The Key To Your Destiny*,” Dale Mast highlights how David lived a balanced life amid great promotion and extraordinary opportunities. David transitioned from a shepherd boy in the field to a skilled musician in the king’s palace, to a trained warrior in battle, to a trained leader in the cave of Addulum, to finally a king on the throne. Dale Mast implies that “when David killed Goliath, it positioned him in the heart of Israel to be king.”²³ When the shifts occur in his life, he maximized every opportunity to reveal his identity as king, although he did not have the title.

Most associates struggle with the feeling that they are not doing enough or doing what they were called to do. David exemplifies how to remain faithful over the seemingly

²¹. A.W. Pink, *The Life of David Volume I*, <http://www.pbministries.org/books/pink/David/index.htm> (accessed July 29, 2013).

²². Charles R. Swindoll, *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny* (Nashville, TN: W. Publishing Group, 1997), 15.

²³ Dale Mast, *And David Perceived He Was King* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2015)

insignificant and straightforward assignments. There was not a task that was too big or too small for David. After being anointed as the next king, we find David in the field with the sheep. In *1 Samuel 17:17-18*, David is given a simple task: “take your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. Also, take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well and bring some token from them.” This assignment did not sound like the type of work for the next king. Despite the simplicity of the assignment, David displayed faithfulness. Scripture also tells us that David found someone to take care of his sheep and then fulfilled his next assignment. Associate ministers must not become consumed with just the preaching opportunities that they overlook the simple tasks of serving. The associate minister may be asked to clean up in the absence of the church custodian, lock up the building after choir rehearsal, drive the bus for a youth trip, make sure the light bulbs are working on the church marquee or change the batteries in the microphone. Whatever the tasks may be, do it to the glory of the Lord.

David Hopewell, Sr. in his book, *“Keys to Becoming an Effective Associate Minister and Church Leader,”* suggests that many associate ministers have a problem with serving. Hopewell writes, “some associates feel that once they have been called into ministry, then they are above serving. They do not want to gird themselves with the towel of humility, as Jesus did, and serve others.”²⁴ Serving is doing what needs to be done to support the vision of God in the ministry where one serves.

Although David had been anointed to be king, he is humble enough to continue his job as keeper of his father’s sheep. David’s humility is a critical component of his exaltation. Although he was anointed, he remained faithful over this assignment. This is consistent with *Matthew*

²⁴ David Hopewell, *Keys to Becoming an Effective Associate Minister* (Lithonia, GA: Orman Press Inc., 2004, 29)

25:21, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.” Many associates fail to pay attention to the details of the seemingly insignificant tasks. They are only focused on the task of preaching and the title of pastor.

Because David was faithful over the seemingly insignificant tasks, God arranged for him to come before the King. In *1 Samuel 16:18*, one of Saul’s servants, recommends David to come and play the harp to soothe Saul’s evil spirit. Although David was anointed to be King, his talent and gift allowed him to enter the palace for training. The writer of Proverbs informs us that “a gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great” (Proverbs 18:16.) This is similar to Joseph, who interpreted dreams in Genesis 41. His gift of interpretation brought him into Potiphar’s presence. After utilizing and exercising his gifts, Potiphar set Joseph over all the land of Egypt. He did not have to manipulate or scheme. God will use one’s gifts and talents to position one for destiny. As an associate minister, one must realize that one’s gift of web-design, writing curriculums, leading worship, or installing sound may be the tool God uses to position for service.

In *Next Generation Leader*, Andy Stanley discusses how David summoned up the courage to exploit an opportunity that other warriors only dreamed of.²⁵ Although he was not the military leader, he was prepared to seize the opportunity. This brought notoriety to his ability to serve effectively. Associates must be willing and able to step forward with conviction and courage when opportunity knocks.

David was faithful over his assignments because they were clear and concise. He knew exactly what was asked or demanded of him. Many associates are uncertain of their assignments

²⁵. Andy Stanley, *Next Generation Leader: 5 Essentials for Those Who Will Shape the Future* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2003), 60.

because of a lack of job descriptions. Donna Schaper's work on *Associate Ministers* was vital to this thesis project. Schaper emphasizes that the associate minister needs a clear job description.²⁶ She speaks on the value of implementing a description to serve as a road map for the expectations of the associate minister. This will help associate ministers from crossing that invisible line of responsibility that causes division among senior pastors. Schaper also suggested that associate ministers should do all they can to support the load of the senior pastor, and if you cannot; it may be time to leave; you have outgrown the position.²⁷

Because of a clear and concise assignment, David could see results that impacted the kingdom. When asked to play the harp for Saul, the Scripture says that "Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him." When he was chosen to fight Goliath, his victory enabled all the people of Israel enjoyed the victory. Associates need to understand the impact of faithfulness to every assignment. Serving in the subordinate leader can impact the body of Christ. Joseph was able to serve all of Egypt from the second-in-command position. Associate ministers must be able to maintain a broad influence even with limited responsibilities. One's faithfulness adds value to the organization.

Being faithful over the simple assignments will lead to great opportunities; therefore, associate ministers must be prepared to embrace and maximize every opportunity. Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson in *Leading From the Second Chair* suggest that associates be prepared to recognize and act on unique moments that can shape you and set you apart as a second chair leader. David maximized his opportunity when faced with the giant, Goliath. Defeating this giant shaped the rest of his life and set him apart from others in Saul's army. Dr. Joseph Walker III highlights this element of embracing every opportunity in his book, *No Opportunity Wasted: The*

²⁶. Donna Schaper, "Associate Pastors," *The Clergy Journal* 81, no. 8 (July/August 2005): 21.

²⁷. Ibid.

Art of Execution. Dr. Walker states, “You don’t get to determine what parts of the assignment you will embrace. When you are walking in complete purpose, brace yourself for all things you expect, as well as the unexpected.”²⁸

God will develop one’s gifts and talents behind the scene. David possessed an abundance of gifts, talents, and abilities. In *1 Samuel 16:17* a servant said to King Saul, “I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the Lord is with him.” This passage reveals that although David had gifts and abilities, he needed development and maturation for kingship. Many associates must fight the temptation to serve in first-chair leadership based on gifts and talents alone. Although David is anointed to be king, God develops his leader behind the scene.

While in the field with his father’s sheep, God was developing a sense of trust with David. In *1 Samuel 17:34*, David gives us some insight into his training in private that prepared him for his public position. David shared with Saul how God had strengthened him to defeat a bear and a lion while tending his father’s sheep. David developed a dependence on God as a shepherd boy that would later be displayed as king. Associate ministers must understand that God will strengthen them in the dark nights of the field before he elevates them to the center stage of ministry.

While in the fields tending his father’s sheep, David was utilizing his skills as a shepherd. *Jeremiah 3:15* teaches that “God will give you shepherds after His own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.” David was maturing and getting valuable experience while God was orchestrating the affairs of his life. In this remarkable book, *Shepherd Leadership: Wisdom for Leaders from Psalm 23*, leadership experts Blaine McCormick and David Davenport

²⁸ Joseph Walker, “No Opportunity Wasted, The Art of Execution” (Nashville, TN: Heritage Publishing, 2017), 35.

introduce a new kind of leader by offering a new image of leadership— the leader as a shepherd. David was trained as a shepherd boy. This training enabled him to become the shepherd of the flock of Israel. What he learned in private was later manifested on the throne. This book was vital to this project because all pastors must understand their role as shepherds.

Blaine McCormick and David Davenport also provide some critical insight into the role of shepherd leadership in their literary journal, “*Leader As Shepherd.*” These authors highlight some vital principles from Psalm twenty-three. They show how King David learned to care for the needs of his father’s sheep by removing irritants and obstacles.²⁹ These principles learned in the field were valuable to King David on the throne.

John MacArthur adds to this theme of shepherding in his work, *Pastoral Ministry*. MacArthur defined the term “shepherdology” as (1) the study of shepherding, (2) the science of leading a flock, and (3) a method of biblical church leadership.³⁰ MacArthur gives some insight into how David’s leadership skills were developed among his father’s sheep. This plan of development was instrumental in developing a dependence on God and a devotion toward guarding what has been entrusted to him. Every leader must understand that God develops in various ways, and we must be mindful that every assignment has a purpose.

One cannot have a project that deals with any form of leadership without input from John C. Maxwell. In his work, *Developing the Leader Within You*, Maxwell looks at the attitude of effective leaders. Maxwell suggests that “Leadership is influence.”³¹ One is genuinely not a leader if there is no one following him. David displayed this characteristic in the cave of

²⁹. Blaine McCormick and David Davenport, “Leader as Shepherd,” *Executive Excellence* 21, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 7.

³⁰. John MacArthur, *Pastoral Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2005), 45.

³¹. John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1993), 1.

Addulum (I Samuel 22). David was given an army of misfits who were in debt, discontent, and in distress, and he became their leader in that cave, although he did not have the position.

Leadership is not about position, rank, or status but influence. One does not have to possess a particular title to exhibit influence. David's influence was not based on position but productivity. This will be further explained in this project.

J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, will show that God searches for leaders. Often these leaders are flawed and filled with shortcomings.³² Churches are often seeking young innovative leaders who are already prepared for leadership roles. Sander's work shows how God calls, qualifies, and develops His leaders. God seeks servants who are faithful in private. David learned to submit to the authoritative hand of God in the field as a shepherd. Every associate needs to be prepared to face crucial challenges that will influence their leadership. David was prepared for the challenge he faced with Goliath because of his battles behind the scene.

David did not let what others said about his position, minimize his efforts to please God. In *1 Samuel 17:28*, his oldest brother Eliab was angry that David showed up at the battleground and asked, "with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness?" David had the maturity and the presence of mind to turn away. He was proud of his assignment and faithful to his father and would not allow distractors to discourage him. This is valuable to every associate who faces the challenges of being turned away from an opportunity because one does not possess the title of Pastor. One must understand that God is developing for future assignments.

As an associate minister, preparation time can lead to frustration. Charles Swindoll reveals some fundamental principles in his book, *Hand Me Another Brick, Timeless Lessons on Leadership*, to help deal with preparation. These principles are (1) Changing hearts is God's specialty, (2) praying and waiting go hand in hand, (3) Faith is not a synonym for disorder or a

³². Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 16.

substitute for careful planning, and (4) Opposition is to be expected when God's will is carried out.³³ These principles are displayed in the life of David as he prayed with patience for God to move on his behalf. Associates must understand that God does not measure spiritual growth in months or years.

God trains leaders by taking them through a process. Joseph went from a pit to an unfamiliar place, to a prison, and then to the palace. He had an unusual journey, but, in every location, Scripture reveals that God was with him. Despite opposition and oppression, he was strengthened through the journey of preparation. Moses learned the culture, received training, and the skills needed to be a leader in Pharaoh's court. Although he had training in the king's court, he still needed to be developed on the backside of a desert. Paul was sent to Arabia for three years to train in isolation. He was called to minister to the masses, but he was sent immediately to Arabia to spend time with God for his next assignment.

How does one handle the applause and the assignment at the same time? *1 Samuel 18:6-8* reads,

When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Saul was very angry.

After defeating Goliath, the tension grows in the relationship between Saul and David. What caused this tension? The women began to lift the praises of David, and this made Saul very jealous. Associates must be careful about how they entertain the applauses of the people.

Associate ministers must be able to handle popularity and stay loyal to their leader. In *1 Samuel 18:30*, David's name became very famous because of his success, but he behaved himself wisely (*1 Samuel 18:5*).

³³. Charles R. Swindoll, *Hand Me Another Brick* (Nashville, TN: New Manuel Missionary Books, 2010), 47-48.

One of the challenges addressed in this project is maintaining a healthy relationship between the pastor and the associate minister. The relationship between David and Saul caused division and hindered the growth and progress of the nation. The same division can happen among church staff if the conflict is not resolved effectively. In his book, *Staff Your Church for Growth*, Gary L. McIntosh deals with managing staff conflict. He challenges senior pastors to increase the team member's responsibility for their ministry, and this will translate into greater ministry satisfaction and a heightened sense of motivation and loyalty to the team.³⁴ Several books aided in bringing clarity to this issue of resolving conflict and building healthy relationships. These books included: *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*, by James Berkley; *The Peace-Making Pastor* by Alfred Poirier; *Stand, Learning to Lead Through Conflict* by Dr. Timothy Sloan; *Seven Reasons for Staff Conflict* by Wayne Jacobsen; and *When Getting Along Seems Impossible* by Newton Malony.

Daniel Kennebrew added value to the project with his internet article “*Collaboration or Competition.*” This work can be located at <http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org> and deals with the relationship between the senior pastor and associate minister. Kennebrew compares the example of functional leader/associate relationship with Paul and Timothy with a dysfunctional relationship like Saul and David. Paul taught Timothy the keys to being successful in ministry.³⁵ This model teaches that associates should glean as much wisdom as possible from the senior pastor, and the senior pastor should be willing to prepare the associate for a life of ministry by sharing successes and failures openly.³⁶ Kennebrew understands that every

³⁴. Gary L. McIntosh, *Staff Your Church for Growth: Building Team Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 123.

³⁵. Daniel Kennebrew, *Collaboration or Competition: The Relationship between Senior Pastors and Associate Ministers*, <http://www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org> (accessed October, 2013).

³⁶. Ibid.

relationship in ministry will not be as functional as Paul and Timothy, so he gives several fundamental principles that David displayed to stay faithful in a problematic relationship with Saul. These principles will be explored later in this project.

When we face complicated relationships in ministry, we must understand “that well-managed conflict can strengthen the church,” says Carl L. Miller in his work, *Preventing Staff Infection: An Associate’s Perspective*. Miller reveals how the early church did not let disagreements and conflict prevent them from doing God’s will. Miller reveals some sources of conflict that are common among ministry staffs. These sources include poor communication between senior pastor and associates, ineffective management styles, weak leadership, dishonesty, and disloyalty.³⁷ Miller provides some significant ways to resolve staff conflict among senior pastors and associates on this very informative website, www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org.

In “*How To Thrive In Associate Staff Ministry*,” Dr. Kevin Lawson discusses the importance of work relationships. He suggests that a positive working relationship with the senior pastor enables the associate minister to thrive in his role. The power of trust, the power of loyalty, the power of feedback and evaluation, the power of mentoring, and the power of credibility brings renewed energy and excitement to the working relationship.

Every associate must understand the importance of being loyal to their leaders. Loyalty was a crucial component in the life and journey of David. Despite the difficulties displayed in his relationship with Saul, he remained steadfast, committed, and faithful. *A Leader After God’s Own Heart*, by Jim George, highlights the importance of loyalty in leadership. George states, “A

³⁷. Carl L. Miller, *Preventing Staff Infection: An Associate's Perspective*, http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200503/200503_082_infection_assoc.cfm (accessed October, 2013).

leader who wants to inspire others to follow after God's own heart must first desire to follow God's heart himself fully. He must first be loyal to his God.”³⁸

Pitfalls and Possibilities by Donna Schaper were useful to this project because it focused on the relationship between the senior pastor and the associate. This article warned about the dangers of being “triangulated” by the congregation with the senior pastor. This occurs when members of the congregation would intentionally make comments about the senior pastor to the associate to cause division and discord. Schaper highlights several pitfalls that associates fall into based on her nine years of experience. The author speaks of a creative balance. The place in between; where a person can both take and give direction, both cooperate and lead.³⁹

This project will deal with critical relationships that must be cultivated throughout the preparation process. David had a crucial friend in Jonathon whom he could confide. Patricia Tull's article, “*Jonathon's Gift of Friendship*,” provided some insight into how this relationship was cultivated. They did not have a surface friendship, but the Scripture informs us that “the soul of Jonathon was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul (1 Samuel 18:1). Jonathon saw the anointing on David's life and was not jealous or envious like his father. Every associate minister needs a Jonathon to promote his well-being, display sincere loyalty, and be there in times of discouragement. Tull highlights the “grace of friendship” in this journal article.⁴⁰ Jonathon can also be portrayed as another associate who may have the right to succession as a pastor but has not been anointed by God to be next. One must have a strong enough relationship to deal with the tension this may bring.

³⁸. Jim George, *A Leader After God's Own Heart: 15 Ways to Lead with Strength* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2012), 168.

³⁹. Donna Schaper, “Pitfalls and Possibilities: Understanding and Managing the Associate Pastor Role,” *Congregations* 36, no. 4 (September 2009): 8.

⁴⁰. Patricia K. Tull, “Jonathan's Gift of Friendship,” *Interpretation* 58, no. 2 (April 2004): 134.

For the partnership between the senior pastor and the associate minister to work, there must be clear and defined roles from the onset. Susan Beaumont's article, *Specialist or Generalists*, compares the role and responsibilities that associate ministers have depending on the size of the congregation. A Generalist role is not ministry specific but may include such duties as a youth director, adult discipleship, religious education, Sunday school teacher, and occasional preaching. This person will engage in ministries throughout the church. In any given week, their priorities may shift considerably, given the senior pastor's availability and changing expectations.⁴¹ The Specialist operates with a specialized portfolio of responsibility⁴² A specialist is usually trained and gifted in their area of assignment. There is limited role confusion in the field of the specialist. Their descriptions are clearly defined, unlike the role of the generalist. Beaumont suggests that "creating a healthy associate pastor role requires clarity about the impact of congregational size on role definition."⁴³

David also had an older mentor whom he could confide. In 1 Samuel 18:1, it says, "So he went to Ramah and told Samuel all that Saul had done to him." Every associate minister needs an older and experienced mentor to give seasoned advice in a time of adversity.

The key to dealing with conflict is first to admit there is conflict. Saul kept a jealous eye on David. Jealousy can kill any relationship. James 3:16 states, "For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice." Saul was determined to destroy David from this point forward. It is challenging to minister effectively in a church where there are envy and discord among the staff. Roger Patterson addresses jealousy in the second chair in his book, *"The Theology of the Second Chair."* Dr. Patterson examined Aaron and Miriam's

⁴¹. Beaumont, "Specialist or Generalist?: The Associate Role in the Large Church," 10.

⁴². Ibid.

⁴³. Ibid., 11.

jealousy of Moses and how this jealousy displeased God and brought significant consequences. As associate ministers, there must be caution and concern about envy of another's gifts and responsibilities.⁴⁴

Despite the discord and strife in their relationship, David remained loyal to his leader. He had several opportunities to kill Saul, but he was led by the Spirit and not by the flesh. In 1 Samuel 24, David has an opportunity to humiliate and annihilate his leader, but he responds in verse 6, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord." Despite the cruelty, jealousy, and malice that Saul displayed toward David, he did not return evil for evil.

1 Samuel, chapter 24, there is an attractive model on the value of communication. Communication is valuable in resolving the conflict between the senior pastor and the associate minister. When presented with the opportunity to harm his leader, David displayed restraint by not allowing others to motivate him into mischief. As associate ministers, one must be mindful of how they communicate with staff and monitor their motives in ministry. In verse 4, the men say to David, "Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'" If David did not have a relationship with God, he could have allowed others to convince him to harm his leader. Instead, David communicates effectively with Saul by asking, "why are listening to those who say, I am trying to harm you?" Although they conflicted, they were able to have a dialogue.

In his work, "*The Peacemaking Pastor, A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict*," Alfred Poirier addresses conflict that arises over authority. He suggests that authority issues can be classified into three types: 1) the right of authority, 2) the abuse of authority, and 3) failure to exercise authority. This book was useful in highlighting that David never abused his authority by

⁴⁴ Roger Patterson, *The Theology of the Second Chair* (Lexington, KY: Lulu Press, 2009).

undermining his leader, Saul. David also never questioned Saul's right of authority as Miriam and Aaron did with Moses. Associate ministers must understand that God has given the pastor the authority to lead his flock, and it is the pastor's right whether to delegate authority to his associate minister. Associate ministers must also realize that abused authority may result in divided allegiances.

Every associate must know when it is time to leave. After years of ministering on the run, David contemplates leaving from the place God had assigned him. In 1 Samuel 27:1, David says, "Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel, So I shall escape out of his hand." David did not consult God. He allowed the frustration of constant conflict to force him into a premature exit from his assignment. There will be times when the assignment is over, but this decision must be handled cautiously with prayer and supplication. God may dry the brook so that one can transition to the next assignment (1 Kings 17:5-15). God demonstrated through the prophet Elijah that it was time to move on. This was not the case with David. He was preparing to move prematurely because of fear and frustration. He was beginning to lose his mind because of the fractured relationship with his superior. Associates must be careful not to move too quickly and move based on emotions.

A premature exit can cause harm to others. At Ziklag, David lost everything because of not being in the position where God had placed him. This also caused a burden on those of whom he was connected. Many associates who leave an assignment prematurely can cause disaster to churches who elect them as pastors or bring them on staff for new assignments.

Many churches struggle with the transition. Church growth is often stunted by poor planning when the pastor retires, resigns, or is removed. If there is a competent associate who is being trained and developed through the process, the church minimizes the risk of declining membership and growth failure in this time of transition. Jim Collins, in his book *"Good to*

Great,” addresses the concept of “Level 5 Leadership.” Level 5 Leadership occurs when the senior pastor looks beyond his or her tenure as the leader of the company and prepares the company for the next generation of leadership that is to come.

Several pastors recommended, *Riding in the Second Chariot* by Rev. K. Edward Copeland. This book serves as a guide for associate ministers who are seeking knowledge that will enable them to support their pastor’s ministry. This book covers topics such as what you should be doing when you are not preaching, setting up personal boundaries to avoid sexual infidelity, and knowing when it is time to leave. Dr. Copeland gives excellent practical advice on the roles and responsibilities of an associate minister. For this project, his most significant contribution was the section on “*Leaving Well.*” Copeland suggests that “when it is time to leave your present assignment, make sure you leave right. You never know when you might need to come back.”⁴⁵

God also has a plan for His people. Jeremiah 29:11 reads, “For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” This should be a constant reminder to all associates, who get weary in waiting on God, that God has a plan that includes, involves, and invests in them. Galatians 6:9 reminds us, “Let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time; we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” God has a plan and a purpose, but we must remain faithful in doing well.

It can be discouraging at times as an associate minister, but it does not have to be wasted time. Time as an associate can be a time of spiritual nourishment and development. Be patient and consistent and allow God to lead through the process of fulfillment. When one finds that sense of fulfillment, knowing that one is fulfilling God’s will, then one can fully embrace its role as an associate.

⁴⁵. K. Edward Copeland, *Riding in the Second Chariot* (Rockford, IL: Prayer Closet Publishing, 2004), 156.

Theological Foundation

This project will seek to examine a biblical model to encourage associate ministers to serve in subordinate leadership. Those who serve as associate ministers must value the significance of their role and responsibility. After careful consideration, King David was chosen as a model for this project. Many will ask, “why King David?” David was chosen by God to be king but did not immediately take the throne. God proclaimed him king without immediate public promotion. In the book of Acts, the writer gives a statement that highlights the sovereignty of God and the submission required for effective service.

And when he had removed him, he raised David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all my will’ (Acts 13:22 ESV).

Through God’s sovereignty, he removed Saul from power but kept him in position. While at the same time, empowered David to become king while he prepared him for the position. This passage is vital for associate ministers who desire to find fulfillment in the position rather than purpose. God was seeking someone who would delight in fulfilling God’s will. This must be where one finds contentment and fulfillment. David later penned in Psalm 40:8, “I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.” This shows that David found joy and fulfillment not in the position of king, but in serving God and doing his will.

Associates who are struggling to find fulfillment must understand that God seeks those who will lead according to His will. David had gifts, talents, and unusual abilities, but the key to his success was found in his heart. He was described as a man after God’s own heart. This project will highlight how God prepared him for purpose and not just the position. Through

special preparation, God developed David's character, not to please the people, but to please God.

David was anointed to be king in 1 Samuel 16. This anointing was a symbol of God's choosing, but he became a leader through a process. In 1 Samuel 22, Scripture highlights a pivotal element to David's influence.

David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. ² And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone bitter in soul, gathered to him. And he became commander over them. And there were with him about four hundred men (1 Samuel 22:1-2, ESV).

Although David was not in the position of king, he exhibits influence from a subordinate position. John Maxwell, in *360° Leader*, suggests, "You do not have to be the CEO to lead effectively. And you can learn to make an impact through your leadership even if you report to someone who is not a good leader."⁴⁶ Because he was committed to doing God's will, not having the title did not stop David from influencing and impacting others. Associate ministers must grasp the concept of influence without being the pastor. God uses Joseph to provide food for Egypt from a subordinate leadership position (Genesis 45:8). As Pharaoh's steward, Joseph did his job faithfully. God put Joseph into this position to save the Patriarchal family. He was never in the top position, but he submitted to God's will and impacted a nation. Regardless of position, title, or status, submission to God's will lead to success.

Jesus gives an example of serving that is not driven by position in Mark 10. Two disciples were focused on seeking positions. Jesus is intentional in correcting their perspective

⁴⁶ John C. Maxwell, *The 360° Leader* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2011), 2.

about positions and prestige. The disciples requested, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory” (Mark 10:37). Some associates feel that fulfillment can only be found in titles and positions. The prize for their calling is found in becoming a pastor. Jesus provides a commentary that is valuable in obtaining the proper perspective about serving:

And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all (Mark 10:42-44)

Fulfillment does not come from a position, but it comes from servanthood, which is only made possible through submission. Jesus demonstrated this by becoming a servant to do the will of God. Paul admonishes us in Ephesians 6 to render our services not to man, but unto God with our sincere heart.

Theoretical Foundation

Although there is not an enormous amount of resources available for associate ministers, there are some quality works that focus on finding fulfillment in the role. Through the years, several writers, who are currently serving in the position have been inspired to attempt to empower other associates who struggle to find contentment and fulfillment in the position. Kevin Lawson, The North American Professors of Christian Education, and Biola University did extensive research to find practices to empower and encourage associate ministers to thrive in the role and not just survive. This research was conducted among 400 long term associate ministers across the country. The focus of the research was to identify practices that promote longevity, satisfaction, and personal well-being. The aim was to help associate ministers develop an

understanding of how to thrive in associate staff ministry. This results in the research were documented in his work, “*How To Thrive In Associate Staff Ministry.*” The book produced eight major aspects of the associate staff ministry experience that would help move one from barely surviving to thrive. These aspects included:

1. The ability to find satisfaction in following God’s direction.
2. The ability to develop good working relationships with supervisors and fellow associates
3. The development of key personal attitudes and commitments
4. The selection or development of a supportive church environment for ministry
5. The regular pursuit of means to nurture personal spiritual vitality and growth
6. The development of multiple supportive relationships
7. Attention to strengthening family relationships
8. The ability to savor the joys and weather the storms of ministry.⁴⁷

His research concluded that these aspects and elements were vital to finding fulfillment in the role of associate minister. The model of King David examined in this research will include some of these same aspects in great detail. Although 94% of those involved in the research expressed a strong sense of thriving in their role, he did express moments of frustration and discouragement.

Finding fulfillment as an associate minister is challenging, but it can be a rewarding experience filled with joy and contentment. When we understand that there will be challenges involved in serving in subordinate leadership, it enables one to serve the church, fulfill their role, and realize their dreams. In their book, *Leading From the Second Chair*, Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson highlight three paradoxes that those serving in subordinate leadership will face. They describe these paradoxes as:

Subordinate-leader, deep-wide, and contentment-dreaming. They are paradoxes because, at first glance, they seem to be mutually exclusive. But we

⁴⁷ Kevin E. Lawson, *How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Publication, 2000), 7.

contend that these pairs do not represent either-or choices. Rather, effective second chair leaders need to live within each paradox and master both ends of the spectrum.⁴⁸

The model of King David will highlight some of these challenges that associate ministers face in ministry. The project will examine the difficulties of serving as a subordinate with the gifts, anointing, and expectations of being a leader. King David did not usurp his authority, although he was anointed to be king. Instead, he focused on fulfilling every assignment given to the glory of God.

To serve effectively and efficiently in the role of an associate minister, Martin Hawkins suggests, one must understand their role in the position. In his work, *The Associate Pastor: Second Chair, Not Second Best*, he describes the associate minister's role in three categories: the intentional assistant, the unintentional assistant, and the unintentional pastor. The intentional pastor belongs in a supportive role. If forced to take the primary leadership role long-term, he will flounder and lose his passion for ministry. He will burn out.⁴⁹ This person knows and understands his role and responsibility and does not seek positions outside of his passion or purpose. The second category is the unintentional assistant. This person takes on the associate position to transition himself before he takes a church.⁵⁰ This person has been gifted to the pastor but has the desire to learn as an associate. Finally, he identifies the unintentional pastor. This person becomes a senior pastor, but after two or three or even ten years, he is fired, he quits, or

⁴⁸ Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 4.

⁴⁹ Hawkins, *The Associate Pastor*, 19.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

he realizes that he is not senior pastor material.⁵¹ Often this person has misidentified their role and has attempted to do something God has not gifted them to do. This project will highlight the dangers of not recognizing one's role and responsibility. Understanding one's role will aid in finding fulfillment in the position of associate minister.

This project will present a biblical model that seeks to provide insight and a greater appreciation of the role of subordinate leadership. This researcher believes that the right perspective toward purpose will overcome the desire only to be satisfied with the position. If the problem is not addressed, associate ministers will continuously face the temptation to be drawn toward power, prestige, and paychecks. The right perspective will encourage associate ministers to recognize the authority God has placed on their calling and their ministry.

⁵¹ Ibid., 25.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter will focus on the research for this thesis project. This project aims to develop a biblical model to encourage and empower associate ministers to find fulfillment in serving in subordinate leadership. To accomplish this task, this researcher has implemented a qualitative analysis to support this model. The qualitative analysis allowed the researcher to gain various perspectives from those who have shared experiences in serving as an associate minister.

The applied research portion of this thesis project consists of three primary segments. First, a broad-based anonymous web-based survey was used to assess knowledge about various aspects of ministry for associate ministers. Second, based on the responses to the broad-based anonymous surveys, detailed interviews with specific subject matter were done to highlight and support the biblical model for the thesis project. Finally, a focus-group study was done to introduce the biblical model and receive some feedback from associate ministers and pastors on how the model could be implanted to empower the associate minister to find fulfillment in serving.

Throughout this study, this researcher has made a conscious effort not to approach this project with preconceived predispositions. This researcher's personal experiences and ministry shortcomings aided in the formulation of the biblical model and prompted the researcher to seek out universal themes that aligned with the model. When a common theme was recognized, the researcher was compelled to analyze deeper to find typical results, reactions, and lasting effects on the ministry. The survey provided an opportunity to identify the common themes and the interviews provided the details and descriptions necessary to support this thesis.

Research Participants

The target for participants in this research was local, regional, and national. This researcher is affiliated with the 13th District Missionary Baptist Association in Shreveport, Louisiana. This association is comprised of 43 African American Baptist Churches in the Shreveport/Bossier City area. This affiliation has provided the researcher the opportunity to network with the local pastors to assemble several seminars that target associate ministers within the district. This network provided the researcher with a database of 113 associate ministers locally. This researcher was familiar with the framework and culture of the local churches and was able to personally contact many of the associate ministers to seek their participation in the survey.

This researcher also served as an associate minister in Nashville, Tennessee, at a church with 6,000 members. At the time (2003-2006), the church had 19 associate ministers. This researcher was able to communicate with some of the associate ministers from this region to provide necessary input toward this project. Because of the size of the congregation and the number of associates, this group provided a different perspective than most of the local churches.

As a student at Liberty University, this researcher has also connected with pastors and leaders across this country that has provided quality input for this project. The national scope of these pastors includes Jacksonville, Florida, Dallas, Texas, Detroit Michigan, Jackson Mississippi, Lafayette Louisiana, Orlando Florida, and Fairfield California. The researcher desired to provide a survey that varied in demographics. The attempt was to gather a balanced response in various age levels, experience levels, and church sizes.

The focus of the Survey

The focus of the survey was two-fold. First, to collect general information from the associate ministers to find out how many have found fulfillment in serving as an associate minister. Second, the survey would lead to trends that may provide support for the biblical model recommended by this research. The associates who found fulfillment would be able to identify with the biblical model. Those who were not fulfilled may be introduced to the model to encourage and empower them to find fulfillment in serving as an associate minister. The results of the survey were analyzed to determine which aspects and practices supported the biblical model for finding fulfillment.

The Timeframe of the Research

The initial research began in February 2012 with just general questions about serving as an associate minister. At the time, this researcher did not have a complete understanding of the biblical model but was receiving great insight from associate ministers who believed that something was missing in their ministry. They were not being fulfilled for various reasons. This lack of fulfillment had led many to question their calling and others to seek fulfillment in places that may not have been ordained by God.

After examining the model of David serving as a subordinate leader, the survey was revised to lead each associate to answer questions that could be categorized into each principle of the biblical model. After carefully crafting the concept of the biblical model, the electronic web-based survey was distributed to over 140 associate ministers to complete within sixty days. The goal was to have 100 associate ministers respond to the survey. After receiving the surveys, only 83 associate ministers responded to the survey. At this point, the researcher personally contacted

17 associate ministers who agreed to complete the survey by the due date given to them. The researcher was successful in gathering 100 electronic surveys by May of 2018.

Survey Instruments

The primary survey was used by setting up a designated web page that was linked to the researcher's church website. This webpage was designed specifically for this research project. The page was made available by email and text message to over 140 associate ministers. The survey was created through WordPress Forms. The forms were simple, secure, and easily accessible, which allowed for maximum participation. By using a web-based survey, the results could be analyzed in real-time. Based on software analytics, each survey was completed in less than 25 minutes. The survey was constructed using twenty-two questions (See Appendix A).

A Seminar for Associate Ministers was held in October of 2015 at the Congress of Christian Education. This researcher was allowed the opportunity to facilitate this workshop that included twelve associate ministers. The seminar focused on the biblical model that is supported by this research. At the time, the biblical model was not a thesis, just a concept. An essential core of questions was provided, and each associate minister had an opportunity to share their experiences with the class. Each associate minister had a unique experience based on their perspective regarding the position. The input provided was used to formulate the survey for the research. It was at this workshop where the researcher understood the need and value of empowering the associate minister to serve effectively in their role.

Interviews were conducted after the initial questionnaires were compiled and analyzed. Everyone who completed the questionnaire was not interviewed. Only the ones who would have vital input towards the biblical model were interviewed. The interviews were recorded with a

digital MP3 player and transcribed with software through a local media team using Sonix software.

Confidentiality

Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was sought from Liberty University. Before sending the survey/questionnaire to the targeted participants, each targeted participant was asked to complete an Informed Consent Authorization. A consent form was emailed to all participants advising them of the nature and purpose of the survey, the procedures involved, the risks and benefits of participating, and finally, the procedures to minimize risks and maintain confidentiality. A copy of the consent can be seen in Appendix A. Informed consent is critical to integrity in research. The researcher made every effort to provide a comfort level to each participant before the process began. After getting proper consent, the researcher provided safeguards to make sure that the names and identities were not associated with the data collected through research. The data collected was secured in a password protected electronic files and locked in file cabinets.

Observations from The Survey

Each question in the survey can be categorized to support an element of the Biblical model. The Biblical model was not introduced to the survey participants. These questions provided a framework to aid in finding common themes and perspectives. The questions enabled the researcher to have measurable data to support the need for the biblical model. Each participant has experienced peculiar situations that have shaped their perspective about serving in the role of an associate minister. The questionnaire provided an opportunity to gather facts and data to be used during the interview process.

Demographic Questions

The first set of questions was to assure that the research had diversity among its participants. The first group of questions would allow the researcher to explore trends, patterns, and tenure of service in ministry. The researcher was seeking to observe the difference between opportunities and responsibilities based on size, tenure of service, and age.

Survey Questions {1-5}

RQ1 – City and State Where You Serve?

RQ2 – How Long Have You Served in Ministry?

RQ3 – What Is Your Age Range?

RQ4 – What is the Size of Your Church Where You Serve?

RQ5 – Have You Ever Served as Pastor?

A total of 100 responses were received through October 1, 2018. This number of participants was intentional from the start of the research plan. This would enable the researcher to analyze the data more effectively. The participants were from 9 states across the country (see Figure 1).

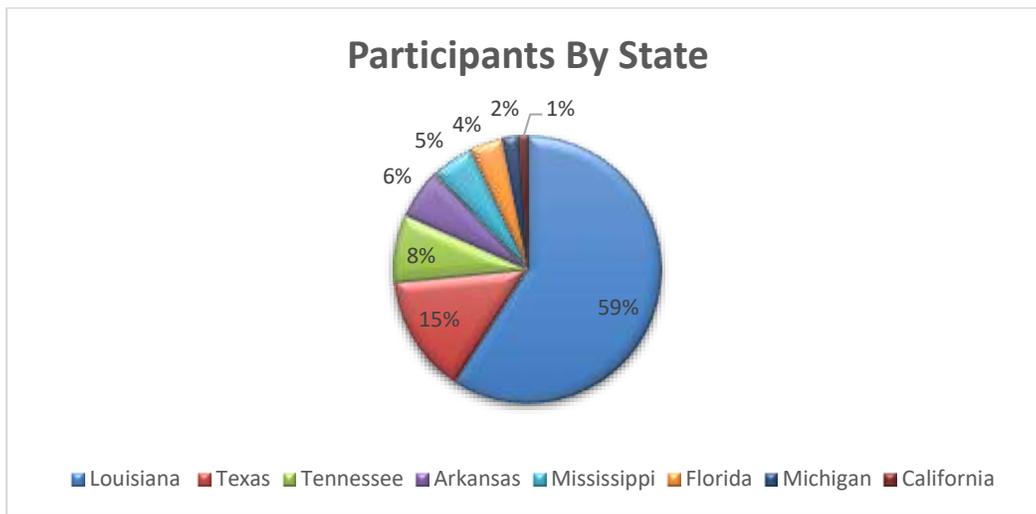


Figure 1

The next questions revealed the age range and years of service of those who participated in the survey. The researcher was pleased to have a variety of ages to analyze. The participants ranged from 17 to 81 (see figure 3). The length of service varied from 11 months to 73 years in ministry (see Figure 2).

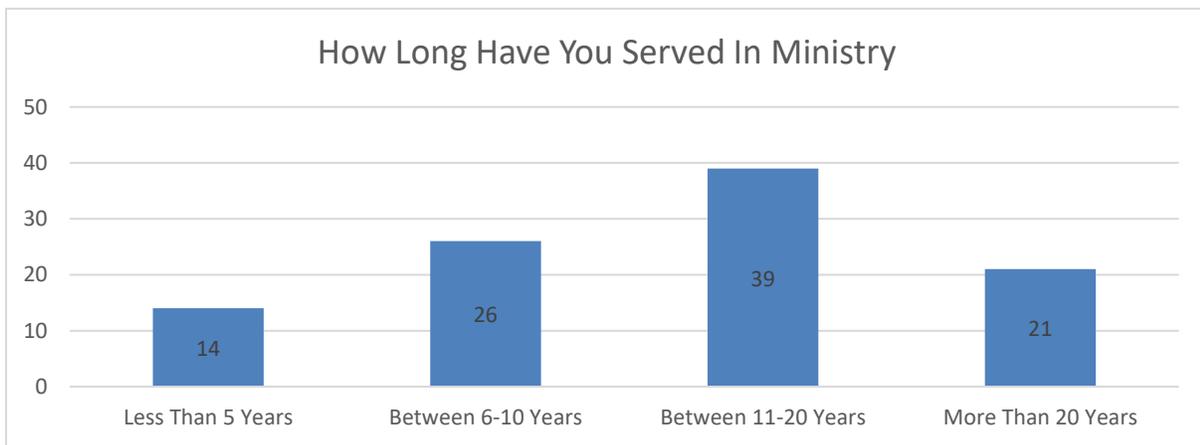


Figure 2

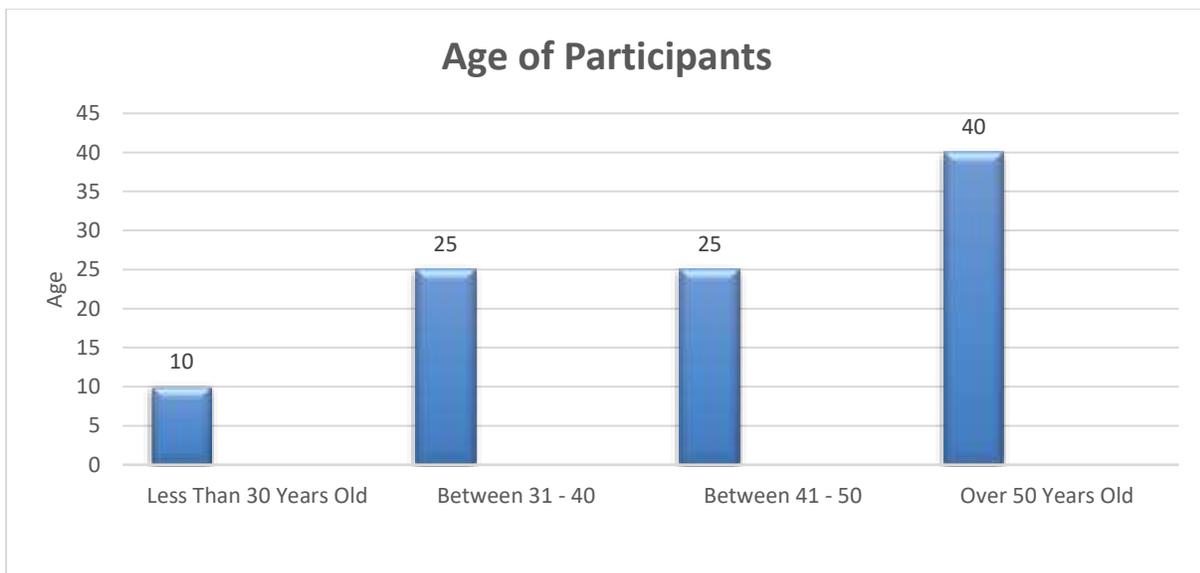


Figure 3

The participants served in varied sizes of churches. The majority of those who participated served in churches with less than 250 members. The breakdown of the membership size of each participant is a critical element in finding contentment (see Figure 4).

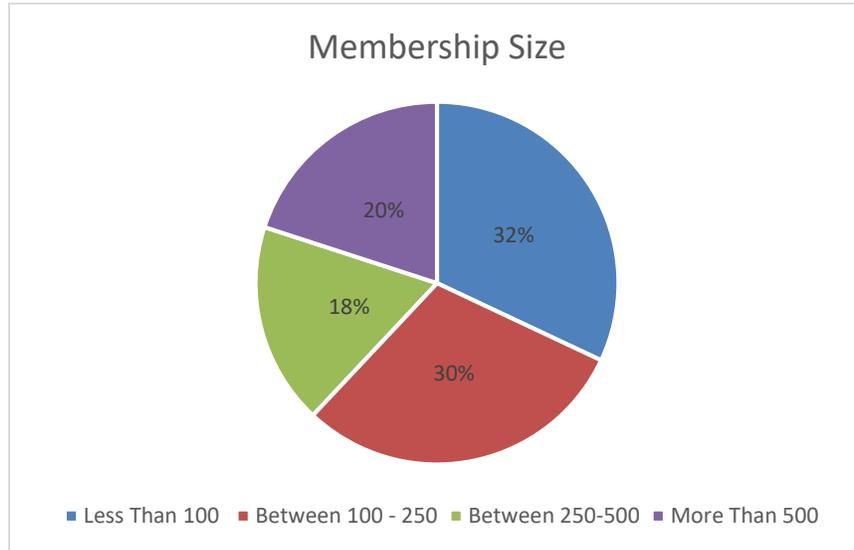


Figure 4

The final question was asked: Have you ever served as a Pastor? The majority of those participating in the survey have never served as pastor. The results showed that sixty-three percent of the participants had never served as a pastor. This will command some attention in later analysis. This researcher found that the data supported 80% of those over the age of sixty were fulfilled, serving as an associate minister. Based on their experience, 40% of them had served as both a senior pastor and as an associate minister and are now satisfied with serving in subordinate leadership roles. This data indicates that as one gains experience, they find their niche' in ministry. Younger ministers are seeking clarity to their calling. Therefore, 62% of those between the ages of 35 and 49 were not fulfilled in serving as an associate minister. They felt something was missing in their ministry that was causing them to seek satisfaction in other areas. The data also suggested that larger congregations with memberships over 500 were able to offer

more preaching opportunities to associate ministers. With the increase in opportunities, 90% of those in larger congregations found fulfillment in serving as an associate minister. This suggests that as the church grows, it provides more opportunities for service than smaller congregations.

Job Responsibility Questions

The second set of questions provided support for Principle One: Faithful Over the Simple Assignments. This section aimed to analyze the job responsibilities given to each associate minister. In the literature review, there was a caution that many associates only desire to preach and fail to maximize opportunities in other areas. The lack of preaching opportunities has led some associate ministers to seek opportunities in places they were not assigned. The questions in this section are included in Table 2 below:

Survey Questions {6-8}

RQ6 – What Are Your Job Responsibilities?

RQ7 – How Often Do You Preach at Your Church?

RQ8 – Do You Preach at Other Churches? How Often?

The second group of questions was designed to analyze if the associates were given specific tasks to accomplish. The research suggests that many associates do not have a specific job description. When asked about their specific job responsibilities, an overwhelming majority did not have specific assignments. Most associates were not fulfilled because there were not any measurable goals or tasks that could offer opportunities for achievement. A common theme from fifty-nine percent was “whatever is needed” or “whatever the pastor assigns for me to accomplish” (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1

What Are Your Job Responsibilities?	Responses
Whatever Pastor Assigns Weekly	34%
It Varies Depending On What is Needed	11%
Not Sure	8%
Do not Have Anything Concrete or Specific	6%
Those with Specific Job Description	29%
No Answer Provided	12%

Questions 7 and 8 asked about preaching responsibility and frequency. This question was designed to gauge the opportunity that excites most associates. Of the 100 survey participants, many are not afforded opportunities to preach in the place where they serve. Only 25% of those surveyed were satisfied with the number of preaching opportunities afforded to them at their local congregations.

The researcher concluded that many associates had connected fulfillment to preaching. God has given us a purpose. The research suggests that in order to find fulfillment, the minds of associates need to be transformed from position-centric to purpose-driven. Many associates have concluded that if I had the position, I would get more opportunities and would find greater fulfillment. Fulfillment will not be found in position, but in maximizing every opportunity to be purpose-driven.

Gifts, Talents, and Training Questions

The next set of questions deal with gifts that require development. God develops the gifts of those serving in ministry through a process of growth and development. In this section, the

questions will be significant in analyzing the areas of development. This will be valuable as we examine Principle Two: The Development of Your Gift. The questions in this section include:

Survey Questions {9-11}

RQ9 – Have You Identified Your Spiritual Gifts?

RQ10 – What Ministries Are You Involved In At The Church?

RQ11 – Have You Received Any Formal Seminary Training?

If Yes, Any courses on associate ministry or subordinate leadership?

The third set of questions in the survey was designed to see if the associate ministers were active in their gifts. If they have not identified their gifts, they may not find fulfillment in serving. This set of questions help verify that most associates surveyed were not actively involved in ministries they enjoyed. Question 9 asked about the spiritual gifts of the participants. Seventy-Five percent of the participants have identified their spiritual gifts (see Figure 5).



Figure 5

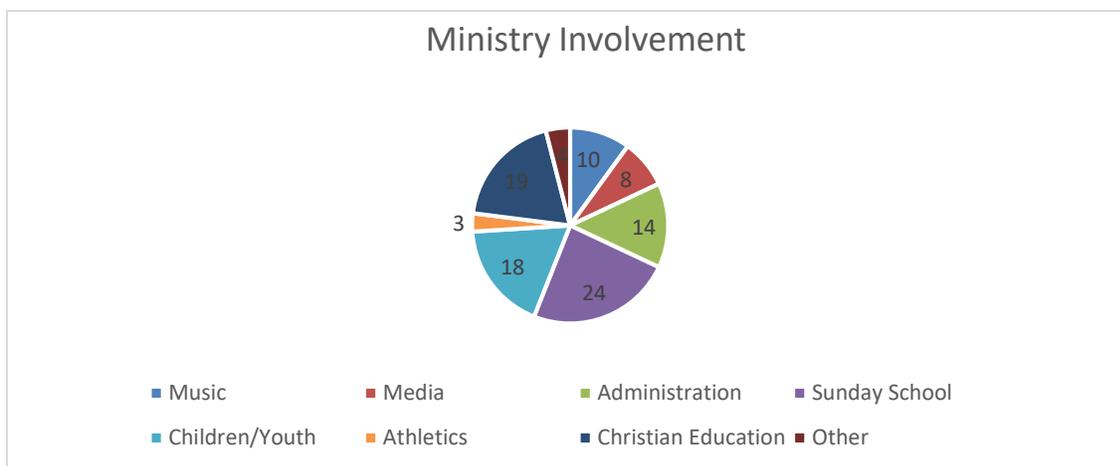


Figure 6

After careful observation, several participants identified their gift as teaching or Word of Knowledge but were not serving in Sunday School or Christian Education. This observation will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter.

To grow and develop, one must take advantage of seminary training. Question eleven asked: Have you received any formal seminary training? Of the 100 participants, fifty-nine percent have received formal seminary training. And not one of them has taken a course on associate ministry or subordinate leadership. The data supports the need to train and produce a curriculum that aids in developing associate ministers. The courses offered at seminaries only deal with pastoral leadership. Therefore, many associates do not receive the proper training on how to serve as an associate.

Questions Regarding Patience

Survey Questions {12-13}

RQ12 – Would You Describe Yourself As A Patient Person?

RQ13 – How Would Define Patience?

This group of questions will help indicate how they view patience. Patience is vital and imperative in serving as an associate minister. Of the 100 participants, sixty percent described

themselves as patient. When asked to define patience, only seventy-one percent defined patience. Many associates surveyed viewed themselves as patient but were growing impatient with how their pastors were utilizing them. This is critical in finding fulfillment. God does not have a timeframe or time limit. The data suggests that many have a flawed understanding of patience that is not biblical. James 1:2-5 connects patience with trials and a process that produces a complete and mature Christian.

Handling Early Success Questions

There is often difficulty in handling success in ministry. This concept may be perplexing to some, but often conflict arises when success is experienced in ministry. This set of questions is designed to measure their view of success in ministry. To guard against pride and self-exaltation, we must be mindful not to pursue selfish gain to achieve personal success at the expense of the ministry. These questions will aid in supporting Principle #4: How to Handle Early Success.

Survey Questions {14-15}

RQ14 – How Would You Describe A Successful Ministry?

RQ15 – What Are Your Most Memorable Accomplishments in Ministry?

The common theme among 60 percent of those who answered this question centered around a preaching moment. For some, it was preaching at a specific location, for a particular pastor, or preaching for the first time. This highlights a belief by many scholars who suggest that many associates only find contentment and joy in the preaching moment and not in serving. This mentality could lead some associate ministers to become disappointed in ministry because they have not identified success correctly.

Developing Key Relationships Questions

The next section is geared toward relationships in ministry. This is vital in the journey toward spiritual growth and development. This set of questions will help identify where each associate minister receives input and advice about ministry. The research revealed that very few had mentors who were associate ministers. The research also revealed that twenty percent did not seek advice from those of age — these questions aid in supporting Principle Five: Developing Key Relationships in Ministry.

Survey Question {16}

RQ16 – Do you have at least two Mentors in Ministry?

List Their Position and Age Range?

All 100 participants say they have at least two mentors. The age range was unique. Only 12 percent of those who have at least two mentors have mentors who are not pastors. The other 88% have mentors who serve as pastors. After carefully analyzing the data, it seems that younger associates today, have mentors who are less than 60 years old. The older generation has mentors who are in their 80's.

This is critical in supporting the concept of iron sharpening iron. As an associate minister, it is vital to partner with someone with similar responsibilities and tasks. It is also vital to find someone who has experienced the joys and burdens of ministry. Throughout Scripture, God used mentors to train, develop, and guide those who was a novice in ministry through the journey. The data supports that associate ministers under 40 years of age have mentors who are close to the same age and are serving in pastoral capacities.

Dealing With Conflict Questions

In every ministry, one will experience some form of conflict. The key is handling conflict with caution and compassion. This set of questions will analyze if they have experienced any conflict in ministry. This survey did not ask for any descriptions about the conflict. This survey was only interested in identifying if any conflict was experienced. This section will support Principle #6: Resolving Ministry Conflict.

Survey Questions {17-19}

RQ17 – Rate Your Relationship with Your Pastor?

RQ18 – Rate Your Relationship with Other Staff Members?

RQ19 – Have You Experienced Conflict in Ministry?

Resolving conflict in ministry is vital to sustaining spiritual growth and development. Of the 100 participants surveyed; 57 percent stated that they have a great relationship with their pastor; 30 percent stated that they have a good relationship with their pastor; 8 percent stated that they have a working relationship; and 5 percent stated they don't have a relationship with their pastor (see Figure 7). Resolutions to conflict are handled differently among clergy based on their personalities and style (See Appendix C).

The relationship with the pastor is not the only relationship that is vital to sustaining spiritual growth and development. One must be able to work in cohesion with other ministry staff personnel. The participants were also asked about their relationship with other staff members (see Table 7.1).

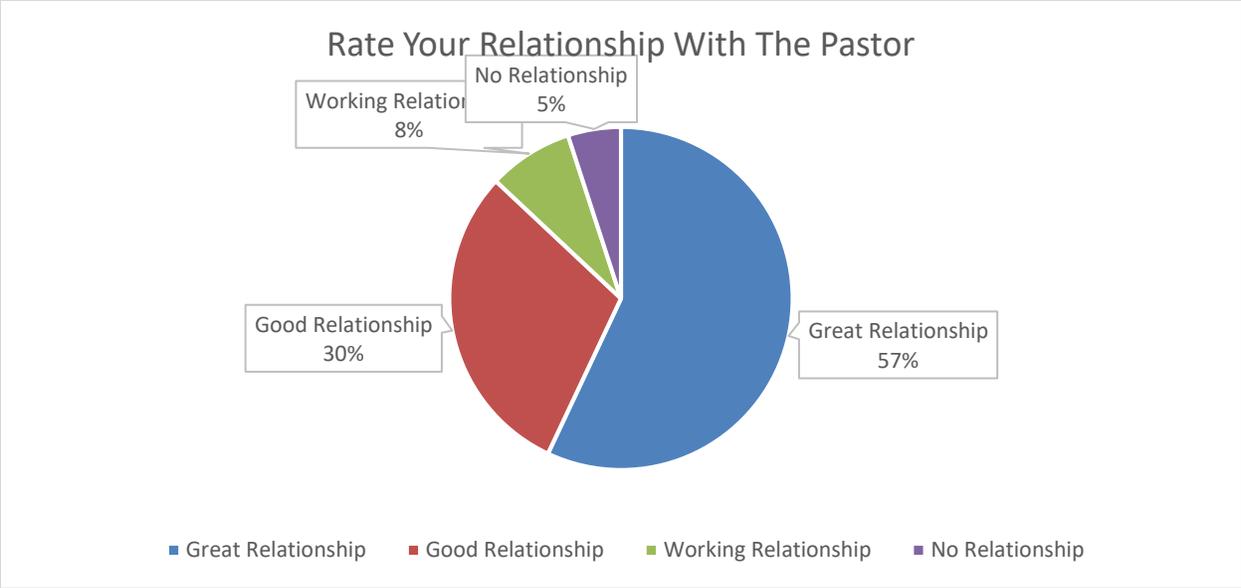


Figure 7

Relationship with Staff

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Some of them, Not All</i>
71	14	15

Table 7.1

How To Exit With Dignity Questions

The Last set of questions in the survey deals with a desire to exit. These questions support Principle Seven: When Is It Time to Exit. Based on the literature review, one must be mindful of how and when to exit. Some associate ministers exit prematurely based on frustration, discontentment, and anxiety. They are eagerly desiring the opportunity to pastor and lead and may forfeit their period of development.

Survey Questions {20-21}

RQ20 – Do You Have A Desire To Pastor?

RQ21 – Have You Presented A Resume? Have You Interviewed? What Position?

This set of questions was designed to see if they were planning to exit. This section was geared to examine if they would leave for another associate position or only a pastoral position.

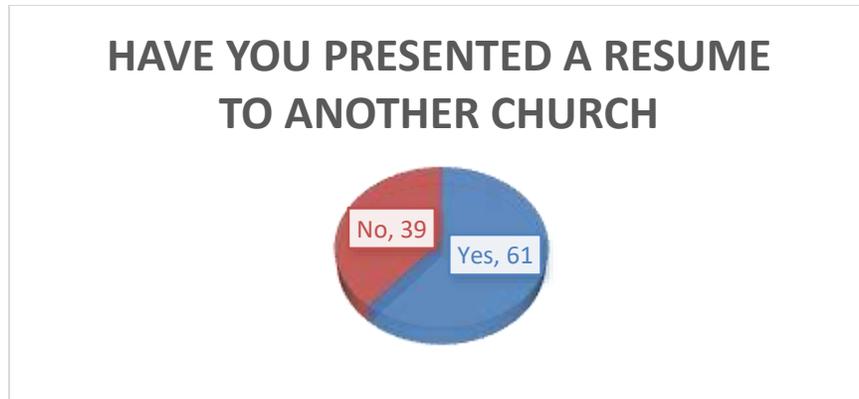


Figure 8

After responding that 61% had presented a resume to another church (see Figure 8), the next question was asked about the position desired at another church. The data suggests that many are leaving for an opportunity to become a pastor and not be an associate. Of the 61 that presented a resume to another church, 59 were seeking a pastoral position, and two were seeking an available associate minister position at a larger church.

Final Question

The purpose of this project is to provide a biblical model that would empower associate ministers to find fulfillment in serving as an associate minister. All the research and study was to encourage fulfillment. The final question asked if they found fulfillment serving as an associate minister. Of the 100 participants in the survey, 68 responded that they do not find fulfillment in serving as an associate minister. This response provided an opportunity to analyze what was missing in their ministry of serving.

Survey Question {22}

RQ22 – Do Find Fulfillment In Serving As An Associate Minister?

Those who responded with a yes answer, the research shows that they have an alignment with the biblical model. If not, the researcher desired to analyze what areas would the biblical model enhance their opportunity to find fulfillment.

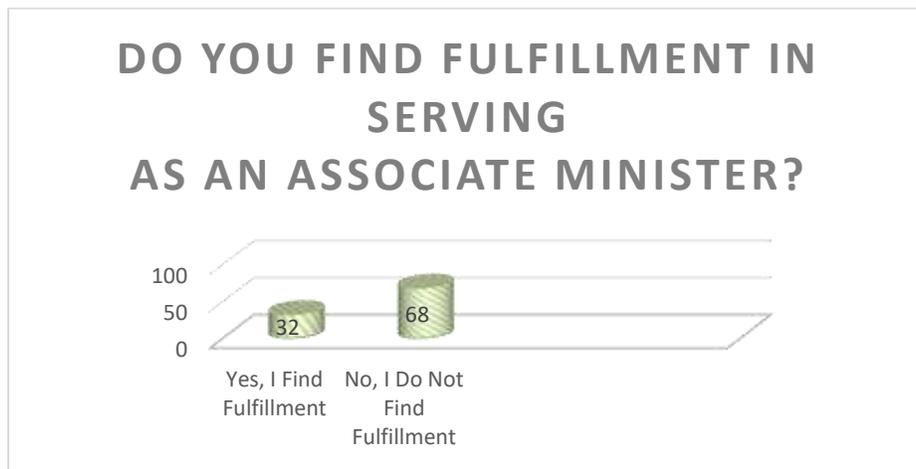


Figure 9

After finding out which associate ministers are not being fulfilled in serving as an associate minister, the next challenge would be to find out why? The research aim would be to find common themes that are prohibiting fulfillment. The results from the questionnaire led the researcher to interview specific participants to hopefully lead them down the path to fulfillment by implementing a biblical model.

The Interviews

After analyzing the data from the surveys. The researcher called and asked for an opportunity to interview designated participants in an attempt to explore deeper into their experiences as an associate minister. While the 22 survey questions were limited to specific

responses, the focused interviews were open-ended questions to allow each participant to give personal responses without prearranged restrictions. The purpose of the research interview was to examine the opinions, principles, and motivations of the targeted participants on specific topics. Interviews provided an opportunity to listen to the participants and build an understanding based on shared thoughts, concepts, and experiences. Various factors determined which of the 100 participants would be interviewed. These factors included:

- Those who had served as pastor, but are now serving in an associate role
- Those who often preach at other churches
- Those who are not active in ministry at their home church
- Those who do not have a good working relationship with their pastor
- Those who have a desire to pastor and have submitted resumes to other churches
- Those who do not find fulfillment in serving as an associate minister

The calls were made, and an appropriate time was set up for the interviews. Only 20 interviews were conducted. The geographical ranges were Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Florida, and Tennessee. Of the 20 interviews, only four were done by phone. The other 16 interviews were done in person at the location requested by the participant. The interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes. The researcher engaged in a responsive style of interviewing to create open-ended dialogue. The researcher analyzed the data from the surveys of the 100 associate ministers to formulate specific questions that pertained to a particular experience in their ministry. Each participant had questions that were unique to their situation.

The audio recordings from each interview were transcribed by a local media service. After receiving all 20 transcripts, the audio files were erased to maintain confidentiality. The transcripts were locked in a secured cabinet in the researcher's office. After gathering the transcripts, the researcher began to record notes and analyze the data for common themes. After working through the data from the interviews, the researcher began to organize the data into each

principle of the biblical model. The analysis for the in-depth interviews was organized based on the responses to the survey and how the responses supported each principle in the biblical model.

For this study, the researcher wanted to know did they find fulfillment in serving as an associate minister. After this initial response was established, then the researcher began to find some significant reasons why or why not. For those who were fulfilled, the aim was to align the principles introduced in the biblical model. If not, could the principles from the biblical model make a significant transformation in their service (See Appendix C)?

Focus Group Study

Finally, a focus group workshop was done to present the biblical model that was produced by the research. This model was done with a group of twelve pastors in the local ministers' fellowship. The researcher presented the biblical model and asked to give feedback based on their encounters with their associate ministers. The ministers were asked to identify the everyday experiences within their churches. Several of the pastors could identify with the frustrations of the associates because they had dealt with similar experiences and determined not to make the same mistakes with their associate ministers. The workshop lasted for 4 hours, including two fifteen-minute breaks for refreshments. The session was held at a local church in the Shreveport area and was recorded by their media team. The results will be analyzed in the next chapter.

The goal of this chapter was to outline the research method used to answer the research question: Are associate ministers finding fulfillment in serving in their positions? The questionnaire, interviews, and focus-group studies all conclude the need for training in the area of associate ministers. The local churches are struggling to find committed ministers who are willing to serve effectively and efficiently without the position or title. This is a

challenge because most associate ministers are not finding fulfillment in serving in subordinate leadership. The research suggests that there is a lack of training, appreciation, and attention given to the position, which causes many to exit their assignments without the proper preparation. The insight gained through personal interviews has helped formulate a biblical model to train and develop associate ministers. This researcher believes the biblical model introduced in this project will enhance the training necessary to prepare associate ministers for the work of the ministry. The next chapter contains the findings, discussions, and recommendations for the biblical model.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The findings from the research revealed in Chapter 3 that many associate ministers are not finding fulfillment in their roles. The research revealed that many factors contribute to this lack of fulfillment and contentment. It is reasonable to assume that if the necessary steps are not taken, the church may not reach its full potential in making and growing disciples. This task cannot be accomplished if senior pastors are not surrounded by capable associate ministers who can help support the work of the ministry.

This chapter will explore a biblical model that will guide associate ministers toward finding fulfillment in serving in subordinate leadership. David served with faithfulness and loyalty as God prepared him for leadership. This model will examine seven principles that may serve as a model for associate ministers to grow and develop in their role of service. These principles will help associate ministers view the role of subordinate leadership from a different perspective.

Although David did not serve as an associate minister, he modeled the essence of making an impact from a subordinate position. He found contentment by using his gifts to serve God effectively. Although he was anointed to become a king, gifted to be king, he needed to become a leader of God's people. As Charles Swindoll states in *David, A Story of Passion and Destiny*, "He needed to learn life's major lessons alone before he could be trusted with responsibilities and rewards before the public."⁵² This describes every associate minister. Learn to trust God in training and exaltation.

⁵² Charles R. Swindoll, *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny* (Nashville, TN: W. Publishing Group, 1997), 9.

Principle #1 – Be Faithful over the Simple Assignments

David's loyalty was displayed in his faithfulness in every task, even the seemingly insignificant tasks. We are introduced to David in 1 Samuel 16 when it is anointed to be the next king. In Chapter 17, we do not see David on the throne as king; we find David tending his father's sheep in the field. This does not seem like a fitting task for a king. David demonstrates the faithfulness in subordinate leadership. He is anointed to be the next king, but he remains faithful until he becomes. This faithfulness is demonstrated in 1 Samuel 17:17-23:

Now Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them. They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines." Early in the morning, David left the flock with a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines, and greeted his brothers. As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it.

David was given a clear description of what his father wanted him to accomplish. The tasks seemed small and insignificant: take some food, see how they are doing, and bring back assurance that all is well. He did not feel disrupted because of his anointing. He did not feel these tasks were beneath him. He demonstrated faithfulness, and a door of opportunity was presented that changed his life forever. It all begins with his father, given him an assignment.

This study revealed that the majority of associate ministers do not have specific job responsibilities or assignments. Martin Hawkins defines a job description as, "a document that clarifies for both the hiring party and the one hired what is expected of him, what compensation and benefits he expects in return, and the various details that will make the working relationship

run smoothly.”⁵³ Leaders must articulate in writing what is expected of associate ministers. Which brings up the question: how do they know if they are completing their tasks, and how can they measure faithfulness? The associate minister should not be expected to execute the assignment without a sufficient, written job description. Of the 100 participants surveyed, 59% were not given a specific job description, and they felt frustrated, and discontent with an absence of a job description and would prefer to have a structured assignment that would allow them the opportunity to gauge their effectiveness and faithfulness (See Table 2.1).

The Bible gives several illustrations of clear and distinct expectations and role responsibilities to maximize the opportunity for one to fulfill their assignment. One such example in the Bible is God’s assignment for Aaron to operate in subordinate leadership with Moses. God gives specific instructions to clarify his role and responsibility. In Exodus 4:14-16, God says to the leader Moses,

Then the Lord’s anger burned against Moses, and he said, “What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him.

Aaron’s role was to be a spokesman for God. He was never given the assignment to lead; only speak what God says. His greatest success occurred when he operated within his clarified assignment. In Exodus 7:1-2, God commands Aaron to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. Once again, the assignment is clear: only speak. Aaron was given a job description, which came with the responsibility and authority to operate effectively and efficiently. As long as he was following his assignment, he was successful, but in Exodus 32, he begins to operate

⁵³ Hawkins, *The Associate Pastor*, 69.

outside of his assignment and attempts to lead. This was displeasing to God. Associate ministers must understand the dangers of operating outside of your designed and specified assignment.

In Exodus 18:17-23, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, gave Moses some advice on how to prevent burnout. His advice included choosing subordinate leaders who can help share the burden of ministry. He also gave clear and distinct responsibilities and authority to those serving in subordinate leadership.

But select capable men from all the people; men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, the fifties, and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter because they will share it with you. If you do this, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.

This passage demonstrates that God was concerned with leaders being able to delegate responsibility and authority to those who had the character to lead and serve. Each judge was given a specific assignment based on their capacity to facilitate. They were given a task to handle simple cases and give those significant matters to Moses. This description enables each judge to operate in their role without usurping authority from their leader. Although they were given a specific assignment, they were given a line not to cross and let the leader handle the difficult tasks. Often lines are expressed within the job description.

Without a specific assignment, associates could run the risk of crossing the line. In their work, *Leading From the Second Chair*, Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson addressed the problem of crossing the invisible line. They suggest that the line defines responsibilities and authority. Without a proper job description, there will be the potential to cross the line of your authority. This will bring friction into the relationship with the senior pastor and could eventually destroy trust. If one is not careful, a lack of clarification can lead to conflict and confusion. Some

associates cross the line accidentally and some cross intentionally. Even with a job description, some feel they know what will be better than the senior pastor. They display a level of insubordination that could be detrimental to the effectiveness of the ministry. One participant expressed an experience that caused significant division within the ministry.

I was given the task to grow the youth ministry. I was not given any stipulations or parameters. I decided to do a series of youth rallies and off-campus socials at local venues that most Christians did not attend. Our rallies began to grow, and a large number of youths began joining the church. The congregation began to murmur about the young people with tattoos and unusual hairstyles. This caused some tension in the congregation that affected our relationship. I was scorned in a staff meeting and told the House of God is not some nightclub hangout, and this church has a standard. This caused friction that was never repaired. It damaged the church long term, and I eventually moved to a church that allowed me to reach the lost without parameters.⁵⁴

This situation could have been avoided if the line had been clarified from the beginning. Preset boundaries would have helped alleviate this misunderstanding and avoid ministry conflict. One must understand that these lines of roles and authority must be clearly defined from the outset to maintain healthy working relationships. Bonem and Patterson state, “The best solution whenever the line seems too restrictive is to turn it over to God. Make the situation a matter of focused prayer, and while you do continue to serve your leader and your organization with excellence.”⁵⁵

The research suggested that many associates were not satisfied with their limited preaching opportunities. They were always seeking opportunities to preach. One pastor expressed that a job description can also be utilized to reward faithfulness to the simple

⁵⁴ #13 Participant, “Interviewed by This Author,” *A Biblical Model To Encourage Associate Ministers To Serve Effectively* (November 2018).

⁵⁵ Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson, *Leading from the Second Chair: Serving Your Church, Fulfilling Your Role, and Realizing Your Dreams* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 60.

assignments. The pastor rewarded his associate ministers with opportunities to preach during the worship services. Preaching is not a right; it is a privilege that is predicated upon a calling that is grounded and founded in the call that God has placed upon the preacher, and that evidenced by how God has equipped and gifted him. As stated by several associate ministers, more preaching opportunities were the result of being faithful in simple assignments. Because so many associates have a strong desire only to preach, one would recommend that assignments would allow them to focus on more tasks than preaching only. The research revealed that because there were not available preaching opportunities at the ministry where they currently served, they would seek opportunities in other locations. During the Focus Group study, pastors revealed that they purposely did not grant preaching opportunities because they did not sense a commitment to ministry with their associate ministers.

Associate ministers must understand that ministry is more than preaching. The desire to preach must not be the driving force for one's ministry. The survey shows that only 75% of those surveyed were not satisfied with their lack of opportunities. Many asked, "What is there for me to do if I never get an opportunity to preach?" In his book, *Riding In The Second Chariot*, Reverend K. Edward Copeland answers this question. He suggests, "Every minister needs to learn how to lead a congregation in worship."⁵⁶ This is a concept that many associates have not comprehended. They feel that if they are not preaching, they have the right and privilege to share at other churches. Copeland also suggests, learning how to teach Sunday School, learning how to visit the sick, elderly, and shut-in, learning how to preach to children in youth worship, learning how to lead outreach ministries, learning how to follow up on new members and learning how to

⁵⁶ K. Edward Copeland, *Riding in the Second Chariot: A Guide for Associate Ministers* (Rockford, IL: Prayer Closet Publishing, 2004), 55.

promote the vision of the church. These tasks cannot be accomplished if one is always seeking opportunities to preach rather than serve. One must learn to be faithful over the simple assignments.

When one has been faithful over every assignment, they can share in the glory of God. This can be seen in Jesus' discourse with his Father in John 17. Jesus says, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began". In essence, Jesus says, I have been faithful over the tasks given to me.

Principle #2: God Will Develop Your Gifts In The Process

Although David was gifted in many areas, God developed him into the leader he desired. This is the plan of God. He uses experiences to shape, mold, and develop our gifts for the journey ahead. When David was brought into Saul's palace as a teen, he was already gifted beyond measure, but his gifts needed to be developed. Notice what the servant said about David as a teenager in 1 Samuel 16:18, one of the servants answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him."

God knew David was gifted, but he needed to be developed to lead His people. Leadership is not dependent on gifts, talents, and abilities alone. Giftedness alone does not produce results in ministry. Several gifted and talented ministers have not allowed their gifts to be developed. The research revealed that associate ministers would be more productive if they were allowed opportunities to serve their church in areas of their gifts. Knowing your spiritual gifts will allow you to position yourself to be productive. The data suggest that associates could be significant assets to their church if appropriately placed. Some associates found fulfillment,

not because of preaching opportunities but simply because they were in a position to serve in areas of enjoyment. In his book, *Success For The Second In Command*, Billy Hornsby suggests, “In the day to day operation, the skills must match the task. Talent may add a dimension of quickness or creativity, but skill is what produces results.”⁵⁷ The area of involvement enhanced Their fulfillment.

One survey participant stated, “I am an avid sports fan and former college athlete, who was called into ministry. My talents were in the area of athletics. The pastor asked me to start a youth bible study group, but I did not feel comfortable, so I prayed earnestly before I declined. After much prayer, God instructed me to start an athletics ministry that aligned with my skills, gifts, and abilities. My pastor approved the new ministry and budget that we needed, and now we are thriving in this area. This was only possible because I was positioned in my area of passion and purpose.”⁵⁸

Multiple gifts allow for more flexibility as well as the ability to adapt to changes in the ministry. David was called into the palace because of his gift to play music. His musical gift was the vehicle God utilized to put his position to serve effectively. After his musical gift positioned him in the palace, he was allowed to fight in battle because he was a skilled warrior. God will enable the gifts to be utilized when one has the heart to serve.

It was behind the scene that God began to develop David’s character, integrity, and loyalty. It was in the fields that God developed his leadership skills as a shepherd. What you learn in private with God will be displayed in public. Associate ministers must be mindful of God’s private preparation plan of development. There are some valuable lessons in the wilderness that cannot be learned in the limelight. Dave Earley says that “Often we mistake what qualifies us to minister effectively to others. Gifts are important, but we often overlook the fact

⁵⁷ Hornsby, *Success for the Second*, 54.

⁵⁸ Participant #6, “Interviewed by This Author.”

that it is in the loneliness of the wilderness and the difficulties of the desert that God truly prepares us to minister to others. God uses wilderness for training ground; it is there that God teaches dependence, trust, and obedience.” The associate minister must understand that God is using this opportunity as one serves in the role of an associate as a time of preparation and development.

While ones are being developed in private, one should sharpen its tools for ministry through some form of formal training. Seminary training will improve one’s social and spiritual maturity. It will assist in the minister’s training by providing tools that will increase the knowledge of biblical languages and enable the minister to divide the Word of God rightly. While serving as an associate minister, this will be an excellent opportunity to pursue seminary training before one enters the responsibilities that come with the office of pastor. This researcher maximized the opportunity to attend seminary and complete three degrees while serving as an associate minister. Every associate minister must maximize every opportunity.

One of the reasons for this study was that there was not sufficient literature and training for associate ministers. The data supports that seminaries do not offer courses to equip and empower associate ministers for their roles and responsibilities. They have classes for pastoral leadership, but nothing is designed explicitly for associate ministers. Of the 100 survey participants, not one associate has taken a seminary course dealing with subordinate leadership. There is a lack of training and material designed to empower, equip, and encourage associate ministers. Seminary training equips the minister with knowledge and information about leadership, but God trains through personal experiences in the local church. For this reason, this researcher has sought to develop a biblical model to aid in serving effectively and efficiently in subordinate leadership.

Although many associate ministers desire to learn through formal training, one must not become immune to God's training and development that may come through troublesome circumstances. In 1 Samuel 22:1-2, we see a stage of development that many associates fail to recognize.

So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's household heard of it, they went down there to him. Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him, and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.

David became a leader in the cave of Addulum. Many associate ministers fail to maximize the opportunity of leadership training in stressful situations. Leadership training is not based on the position one has, but the influence one exhibits. John Maxwell describes this influence in his work, *Leadership 101*, by stating, "Real leadership is being the person others will gladly and confidently follow. A real leader knows the difference between being the boss and being a leader".⁵⁹ During the focus study group, many senior pastors regret not taking advantage of the opportunities to follow their pastor to funerals, sitting in business meetings, and inquire of their pastors the reason for making critical decisions.

Principle #3: Patient In The Process

As David reflected on his journey to being king, he acknowledged the need for patience as God worked on his behalf. Waiting in ministry is difficult. The study suggests that associate ministers can define patience but struggle with displaying and applying it. Learning the skills and

⁵⁹ John C. Maxwell, *Leadership 101: What Every Leader Needs to Know* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2002), 73.

developing the character to be a successful subordinate leader takes time and patience. God does not measure spiritual growth in minutes, months, or years. He trains His leaders by going through a process of development that requires patience.

When one reads the Psalms, there is evidence of David's patience being developed. In Psalm 40:1, He recalls, "I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me and heard my cry." In Psalm 25:3, He recalls, "Surely none who wait for You will be put to shame; but those who are faithless without cause will be disgraced." In Psalms 27:14, he admonishes others, "Wait patiently for the LORD; be strong and courageous. Wait patiently for the LORD." In Psalm 37:7, he says, "Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him; fret not when men prosper in their ways when they carry out wicked schemes." David understood that God had a plan and a purpose for his life and his responsibility was to remain patient in the process.

The study revealed that a lack of patience caused several associate ministers to move ahead of God's plan and purpose. Their desire to lead and serve as a pastor forced them to develop a sense of frustration with their pastor, who would not allow them to operate on their terms. The study revealed that 40% of the associate ministers described themselves as impatient. They knew they did not have the patience to wait. The 40% also revealed they had submitted a resume to another church for another assignment. The danger of impatience is getting ahead of God's plan and purpose without proper preparation. Patience will aid in bringing clarity to God's plan and purpose. Throughout the study, the word patience was repeated by those who found fulfillment in serving as an associate minister. Their patience enabled them to overcome the challenges of balancing the daily duties of serving in subordinate leadership and awaiting their next assignment.

Principle #4: How To Handle Early Success

Leaders must learn to not only guard against failure, but also guard against early success. David did not allow early success to influence his behavior. He maintained his integrity and loyalty toward his superior. There is a challenge to handling the applause of people and remaining faithful to the assignment of God. David modeled for all associates how to handle success in a manner that pleases God. In 1 Samuel 18:30, he displayed that he could remain loyal to his superior while the people were praising his name. Notice what Scripture records, “Then the commanders of the Philistines went out to battle, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed.”

David did not allow the success he experienced as a subordinate, causing him to lose focus on the task at hand: serving faithfully. The women began to applaud, which in turn caused division between David and Saul. David understood that God was the orchestrator of his destiny. Therefore neither applause nor anger would deter him from his assignment. He demonstrates that success is the by-product of faithful service in one’s purpose.

This is valuable because if one is not careful, they may not expect success to cause division among the staff. Too often, the ministry is viewed as spiritual competition, and ministers fail to take advantage of the partners we encounter daily. Several participants expressed their experiences with how success splintered their relationships with those they were serving. Some felt compelled to “out-do” the senior pastor to garner more opportunities to serve.

One associate minister stated, “early in my ministry, I had to learn that serving was not a competition. My pastor would give me opportunities to preach in his absence, and I listened to the applause of the people, and it caused me to have an inflated evaluation of

my ministry. I soon began to seek a church. I was given an opportunity to pastor, and it did not go well. I was voted out after only seven months. It was a disaster. I began to think too highly of myself because of the applause.”⁶⁰

The research also revealed that associate ministers viewed success very differently. There was a common theme that identified success for most. It was the preaching moment. For some, it was their first sermon, for some at specific locations; and some success was preaching in front of huge crowds. These moments were essential milestones in their ministry. This is valuable because if they view preaching as a success, they may never be satisfied with just serving without the preaching opportunities. Those who found success in serving as an associate found success in seeing people’s lives changed and making a difference from the second chair. In *Seven Practices of Effective Ministry*, Andy Stanley suggests that churches must be intentional about defining what is considered a success. He says, “If the win is unclear, you may force those in leadership roles to define winning in their terms.”⁶¹ Most associates have not been informed of what the goals and objectives are for success. Therefore, they celebrate what they consider essential.

Principle #5: Developing Key Relationships

David and Jonathan were connected at heart. They encouraged each other in times of discouragement and disappointment. Every associate minister needs someone they can confide in times of celebration and conflict. Johnathan represents that friend who sees your gift and encourages you to persevere despite the pain. David and Johnathon were connected at the soul.

⁶⁰ Participant, “Interviewed by This Author.”

⁶¹ Andy Stanley, *7 Practices of Effective Ministry* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2004), 73.

With the tension between Saul and David, he needed a close companion and confidant to walk through the tough times with him. Notice how Scripture details their companionship:

Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David. So Jonathan told David, saying, "Saul, my father is seeking to put you to death. Now, therefore, please be on guard in the morning and stay in a secret place and hide. I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you; if I find out anything, then I will tell you." Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul, his father, and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds *have been* very beneficial to you. For he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw *it* and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death without a cause?"

Every associate minister needs someone in the ministry who understands the burdens and blessings of serving in ministry. This study reveals that every associate had at least two mentors in their life. Jonathan could identify with David because they were both candidates to be king. David by anointing and Jonathan by succession. The research revealed that most associates had mentors who served as pastors, not associates. Robert Radcliffe, in his work, *Effective Ministry As An Associate Pastor*, suggests that we must find other ministers that share common ground. The advantages of having someone on the common ground would connect the associates with others who share many of the same problems and joys. They can rejoice and commiserate together, and this can provide them with joint ground fellowship. Although it is great to have mentors who serve as pastor, it will also be advantageous to have standard ground fellowships with those who identify with your struggle to find fulfillment.

One must carefully choose mentors who can invest in their ministry to aid in producing long-term results. In *Success For The Second In Command*, Billy Hornsby writes, "The advantages of strategic alliances are many. You gain new relationships, increase your influence,

and leap-frog the learning curve in some instances.”⁶² There should be a relationship with the mentor. One of the exciting themes that seem unique to this generation is the acceptance of YouTube pastors who influence associates from across the country. When interviewing 20 associates, nine revealed that they have never spoken with this mentor, but they listen to him daily through social network platforms, and he has the most significant influence on their life.

This is contrary to Paul’s mentoring style who states to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others.” He mentored with a personal and intimate touch. A mentor that can only be streamed will not impact the full scope of one’s ministry. True mentors not only shape preaching, but character, integrity, and personality. As Howard and William Hendricks describe in their work, *As Iron Sharpens Iron: Building Character In A Mentoring Relationship*, “A mentor promotes genuine growth and change: the goal of every mentor should be the emotional, social, and spiritual growth of his protégé or the person he mentors.”⁶³ Sixty-four percent of associates referred to former pastors, college or seminary professors, and family members who have served in ministry as their mentors.

The study also revealed that this generation of associate ministers prefers peers as mentors; rather than older mature pastors who have served for a length of time. This biblical model revealed that it would be advantageous to have a mentor who can share wisdom from the journeys of life. David had Samuel, who impacted his life in ways that Jonathan did not. In 1 Samuel 19:18, scripture reveals, “Now David fled and escaped and came to Samuel at Ramah

⁶² Hornsby, *Success for the Second*, 153.

⁶³ Howard and William Hendricks, *As Iron Sharpens Iron: Building Character in a Mentoring Relationship* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), 25.

and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth”.

Although David and Jonathan were knit together at the soul, he needed the sage advice from Samuel. He represents that older and seasoned leader who has gone through some battles and speaks from experience.

One researcher stated, there were several days I desired to leave the ministry. There were days when the burden of serving as an associate seemed unbearable. I am grateful for my mentor, who serves as an associate at our church. He has been an associate for over fifty years. I asked him, why don't you have a church? He responded, 'God didn't call me to get a church. He called me to serve.' This advice reshaped my perspective about serving as an associate minister.⁶⁴

David did not allow this conflict with Saul to prevent him from doing God's will. He was able to minister effectively despite the lack of a healthy relationship with his supervisor. Based on the research, 87% of associate ministers have a good relationship with their pastor. The 13% that said they did not have a good relationship also stated they did not find fulfillment in serving as an associate minister. In “How To Thrive In Associate Staff Ministry,” Dr. Kevin Lawson discusses the importance of work relationships. He suggests that a positive working relationship with the senior pastor enables the associate minister to thrive in his role. Unresolved conflict can hinder the progress of the church.

⁶⁴ Participant #10, “Interviewed by This Author.”

Principle #6: How To Resolve Conflict

David and Saul's relationship was extremely toxic. Saul was determined to kill David, but David maintained a sense of loyalty despite the friction. His loyalty was continually on display as he refrained from doing anything that caused harm to his leader. Saul had become extremely jealous of David and desired to destroy him at every opportunity. David did not retaliate or treat Saul with resentment. Scripture reveals that David had two opportunities to harm Saul but refused to touch God's anointed. In 1 Samuel 24:6, David says, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord anointed, or lay my hand on him, for he is the anointed of the Lord." He refused to return evil for evil.

Associate ministers must understand their responsibility not to slander the senior pastor despite the toxicity of the relationship. David dealt with conflict by communicating with Saul and confiding in those he trusted. It was not his intention to take over the throne, although he was anointed to be the next king. He trusted in the sovereignty of God.

How was David able to maintain dedication and devotion to someone that made life difficult? Scripture reveals some key elements for resolving conflict. These elements include: a healthy respect for authority, a trust God's sovereignty, do not allow others to compromise one's character, confront error with compassion, and allow working it out.

David understood that God chose Saul and was given the mantle of authority. He demonstrated a healthy respect for leadership. He understood the conflict and strife that was evident in their relationship. He realized that Saul was setting traps to destroy him, yet he remained loyal to the position of authority. The survey revealed that 13% who did not have a good relationship with their pastor stated they were only there until God opened a door or until something better came along. David did not just have the mindset of remaining in the position,

but he faithfully served under authority. This is critical in helping to endure and finish one's assignment despite the broken relationships with leadership. One's loyalty in service may eliminate some discord in the ministry. David's loyalty suggests, one must respect the leaders that God has appointed, even if they are not perfect.

David knew that God had anointed him to be king. He trusted in God's sovereignty to open a door of opportunity. He remained confident in God and refused to take matters into his own hands. Several associate ministers discussed times when they felt like leaving the ministry because of conflict and dissension with the senior pastor. It is in these moments that one must trust the sovereignty of God to protect from making crucial and critical mistakes in ministry. Scripture reminds in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure."

David did not allow others to lead him away from his convictions. In 1 Samuel 24, an opportunity arrived when David could have retaliated against Saul. His men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" David could have listened to these men who sounded spiritual, but their advice did not align with God's Word: "Do not touch My anointed ones; do my prophets no harm (Psalm 105:15)." Many associate ministers are faced with this in their local congregations. The congregation, staff, or family members speak evil against the pastor and suggest something that one may not agree with. Some refer to this as "triangulation." This happens when associate ministers allow themselves to become victims of unnecessary gossip and slander against their pastor or leaders. Associate ministers must be mindful not to allow others to persuade their actions against authority.

David was respectful, loyal, and faithful to Saul, but he did confront errors and wrongdoings with compassion. As Charles Swindoll suggests, “when you have been wronged, it is necessary for you to declare the truth, whomever it might be.”⁶⁵ Notice the conversation between him and Saul in 1 Samuel 24:11-12,

Now, my father, see! Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it. May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD avenge me on you, but my hand shall not be against you.

David was respectful, but he expressed his displeasure in the way Saul was treating him. Carl Miller, in his article, *Preventing Staff Infection*, suggests, “healthy senior pastor and staff pastor communication is nurtured by honest and constructive feedback in the safety of openness.”⁶⁶ Associate ministers should have the courage and compassion to have a dialogue about matters that may be leading to their frustration with leadership without feeling inferior and afraid. The research revealed that many associates would instead leave than resolving conflict. Of the 100 surveyed, 46% revealed they had submitted resumes to other churches because they were frustrated with the conflict. They have allowed conflict and dissension to drive them away from places where God planted them for purpose. Overlooking conflict and pretending it is not present will not make it go away. It must be verbalized to create an atmosphere of change.

It is necessary to have a good relationship between the pastor and staff in order to be effective in ministry. After communicating with Saul on multiple occasions (1 Samuel 24 and 1 Samuel 26), David was hopeful that the partnership in ministry would be productive. Through

⁶⁵ Swindoll, *David*, 88.

⁶⁶ Carl L. Miller, *Preventing Staff Infection: An Associate's Perspective*, accessed October 2013, http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200503/200503_082_infection_assoc.cfm.

constant dialogue, Saul acknowledged his error and vowed that things would be better. His vows had no substance. As an associate minister, one can only control one's actions, attitudes, and service. David demonstrates that one must give a concerted effort to make the ministry a success, but it does not guarantee a happy ending. Some relationships are productive for seasons, and one must be mindful when the season has ended.

Principle #7 – How To Exit Properly

David was a man after God's own heart. He was a faithful servant. Although David was able to overcome the tension with Saul, frustration finally caused him to stray away from his place of purpose.

But David thought to himself, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand." 1 Samuel 27:1

The study revealed that 61% of those who participated had presented a resume at another location. They were seeking to transition to a new location. For some, the frustration of how they were being treated pushed them into the pursuit of another opportunity. David reveals that although one may have a strong relationship with God, frustration and fear can alter our judgment. As David demonstrates, there comes a time when one feels it is time to transition to another assignment. The pressure that existed between David and Saul forced him to move based on feelings rather than faith. David was not found praying even once in his transition. A lack of prayer may lead to an act of panic. Jim George, in his work, *A Leader After God's Own Heart*, says, "Prayer makes you wait, slows you down. One cannot pray and plow forward at the same

time.”⁶⁷ Associate ministers must be prayerful in their exit. David’s exit from his assignment prematurely led to emotional damage, not only for David but for all of those connected with him. One must count the cost when determining when to exit. The associate needs to exit well. You never know when one may need to come back. Dr. K. Edward Copeland suggests, “Leave the house with clean feet so that when you get to your new home, you will not be tracking in any mud.”⁶⁸ The question then becomes how does one exit well. The research revealed some lessons that proved valuable when an exit was necessary:

1. Do not criticize leadership and authority when one exits.
2. Do not reveal secrets or weaknesses that one learned while serving at this ministry
3. Do not attempt to take members with you. Although relationships have been established, do not intentionally persuade members to follow you to your new assignment.
4. Complete your assignments. Finish what you started
5. Be grateful for the opportunity to serve at this location
6. Always remember you will reap what you sow.

One participant stated, “I regret how I treated my pastor. I now have eight sons under my leadership, and five of them remind me of how I treated my pastor, and it bothers me tremendously. I have a different perspective now that I occupy the seat of the pastor. I encourage every associate to be careful whom you treat your pastor; it is very different when you are on the other end of the spectrum.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Jim George, *A Leader after God's Own Heart: 15 Ways to Lead with Strength* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2012), 37.

⁶⁸ Copeland, *Riding in the Second*, 156.

⁶⁹ Participant, “Interviewed by This Author.”

How Can One Find Fulfillment?

The ultimate purpose of this study was to present a biblical model to encourage associate ministers to find fulfillment while serving in subordinate leadership. The study revealed that the majority of those serving are not finding fulfillment. Sixty-eight percent expressed they were not fulfilled in their role as an associate minister. The frustration of not being fulfilled has forced many to seek positions without proper preparation. The research suggests those who are finding fulfillment are focusing on purpose rather than position. These associates understand their purpose and have chosen to utilize this time as necessary preparation for the journey ahead.

This model is designed to challenge the perspective of the value of serving as an associate minister. As David's example demonstrates, God has a purpose and a plan for those He calls. David's model demonstrates key aspects that each associate can utilize to enable them to find fulfillment in serving God and their local congregation. The key is not just to survive but find ways to thrive in serving. This model aims to generate an enthusiasm for serving that will become contagious throughout the congregation and lead to fulfillment as an associate minister.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

For a church to operate at its highest level of potential, it must have effective associate ministers to help alleviate the extreme burdens of the senior pastors. Associate ministers must remain involved and seek to impact the ministry if the church is going to have sustained growth. This will not happen if the associate ministers do not feel appreciated or utilized effectively in their current positions. Therefore it is vital to examine the mindset and hearts of those serving in associate minister positions.

This research has led this author to conclude that the majority of associates serving in their current positions are not finding fulfillment. The research concluded that 68% of associate ministers participating did not find fulfillment in serving as an associate. If fulfillment in the associate minister position is to be obtained, associates must create a heart to serve faithfully without continually seeking their next assignment. This project reveals that associate ministers must shift their focus from position to purpose. Perspective is vital to achieving this goal. One's perspective comes from their particular point of view and is molded by life experiences, values, and assumptions. With this in mind, the perspective of the associate minister position must be transformed.

Acknowledgment of Issues

In order to change the perspective of associate ministers, we must first acknowledge that there is a problem. This researcher was introduced to some of the frustrations experienced by associate ministers across the country. This frustration has led some to walk away from ministry, develop bitter feelings toward their pastors, and seek opportunities based on emotions rather than the Holy Spirit. The lack of fulfillment being experienced by several associate ministers has caused division and conflict among congregations who are forced to choose between the young

gifted associate and the experienced senior pastor. This problem must be addressed with the associate ministers, the senior pastors, and the congregations. The associate ministers have to understand their role and responsibility in order to find fulfillment. They must realize that their time as associate ministers is a time of spiritual development. Senior pastors must realize the value in their associate ministers and not treat them as second class citizens who are there only to do what is not enjoyable and desirable for the pastor. The congregation needs to realize that the pastor and his associates are not in competition but collaboration for kingdom service. They do not have to choose the better of the two.

This researcher approached this project with a biased opinion based on the personal encounters of ministry. This researcher served as an associate for seven years before being called to pastor. In those seven years, this researcher experienced the applause of the people that led to dissension among the staff. The results from this research confirmed that this issue goes beyond the researcher's biased opinion and spreads throughout congregations nationwide. The impact of the participants' frustration could lead to a failure to capitalize on the training and preparation for the next assignment. In hindsight, this researcher now has a greater appreciation for the time serving as an associate minister. The knowledge and training received have enabled this researcher to have a measure of success in serving as senior pastor and appreciate the associate ministers on staff. With a different perspective, other associate ministers will realize that this moment in their ministry is for spiritual growth and development. Because some associates are leaving their assignments without the proper training and development, it forces churches to elect untrained, unlearned, and undisciplined pastors who are not prepared for the challenges of ministry. This issue cannot be ignored but must be addressed.

The research also suggests that many senior pastors are not equipped to train and develop associate ministers. This is a result of their lack of training and lack of time to devote and

concentrate on preparing their associates. Many pastors expressed they had not received any training themselves and felt the associates could learn as they did. This mentality is not healthy for the growth and development of associate ministers. One must not also overlook the fact that not too many pastors are not willing to train their potential successor. Some pastors have a sense of insecurity when it comes to young gifted associates who are seeking the very positions they currently occupy. The biblical model highlights how Saul was not displeased with David's service, but with the applause, he was receiving from others (1 Samuel 18:7).

Highlighted Concerns

This project highlights some concerns that command attention. Associates have a greater desire for position rather than fulfilling the purpose. Of the 63% that were not being fulfilled, 75% said they just wanted to be a pastor because it was something they wanted to do. Only 5% stated it was God's will for their life. Desiring the position of pastor without prayer and preparation could lead to ministry failure. The researcher reminded these associate ministers of James 4:3 that says, "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." Why do so many associates desire the position of the pastor? Do they understand the role and responsibilities demanded by this position? Do they understand the impact and influence it has on the eternal destiny of so many souls? This project highlights the severity of why associate ministers need the proper perspective about serving in their current positions.

Another concern that needs to be addressed is conflict resolution. Partnering with the senior pastor in serving God's people will not always be smooth and enjoyable. There will be difficult days that are marked by disagreements and moments of frustration that require much prayer. Most associate ministers expressed disappointments based on their expectations. They expected to preach more, have more responsibilities, and receive more recognition for their

achievements. Misguided expectations are a concern that was magnified after the completion of this research. Developing a ministry partnership with the senior pastor does not mean a 100% agreement on how to accomplish the goal. Overcoming obstacles and remaining committed through conflict makes one stronger and spiritually mature during the process.

A final concern that needs attention is the lack of resources for associate ministers. The most intriguing response from the research was dealing with Q11: Have You Received Any Formal Seminary Training? If Yes, Any courses on associate ministry or subordinate leadership? The response from 100 associates was astounding. Not one associate minister attending seminary has taken a class on how to serve as an associate minister or subordinate leader. We are preparing ministers for pastoral counseling and pastoral leadership, but they may serve as an associate for the entirety of their ministry. The seminaries do not offer any training on how to serve as a subordinate or associate on staff. This must be addressed as we focus our attention on associate ministers. We are asking them to serve in capacity without any material or training. Several books are being written about what to do in the second chair but a limited amount to training on the perspective of serving with purpose and not the position. The project aims to produce a biblical model that could be used as a curriculum for training associate ministers across the country to serve with purpose and find fulfillment in pleasing God.

Applications and Implications of the Research

This biblical model gives local pastors a guide to train and develop their associates for the work of the ministry and prepare them for success in serving. This researcher has begun to meet with pastors to implement this biblical model produced from this study within the district churches in the Shreveport community. In this focus study group, the pastors were asked to

review the model and give valuable feedback about their relationship with their associate ministers.

Although the model was produced for the associate ministers to have a guide for serving, it also gives the senior pastors a tool to utilize for training. In their focus study, we examined Principle #1: Faithful Over the Simple Assignments. The pastors agreed that they needed to do a better job of assigning specific tasks for their associates. Some suggested that they only gave the associates tasks that they did not have time to do or disliked doing themselves. We shared the importance of having a written job description that helped clarify roles and responsibilities. The research enabled the pastors to examine the value of giving the associates opportunities to celebrate achievements when their assigned tasks were completed with success. This principle also eliminated the temptation of overstepping their boundaries. There were not any gray areas because their assignments were written with specifics and clarity. The research suggests that associates need to find fulfillment in serving behind the scenes with faithfulness rather than awaiting the glamour of platform performances.

When asked about seminary training, there was a common thread. Those who were trained themselves urged their associates to receive formal seminary training. Although every associate will not attend seminary, their pastors can provide some necessary training and development. The model encourages in Principle #2: The Development of Your Gift, to find out what are the specific gifts of their associates. Many pastors admitted they did not allow their associate ministers to excel in areas of their gifts. After examining the results of the research, the pastors indicated that they felt a sense of guilt for not putting their associates in the position to succeed and thrive in ministry. How can associates excel when they are not put in the proper position? One pastor suggested that associates are like interns, who are there to soak up all the knowledge and wisdom for a limited amount of time.

The question was asked among the pastors in the focus study group, were you adequately prepared to pastor your first church? The overwhelming answer was no (10 of the 12). They admitted that they were anxious to step into the role of pastor and may have rushed the process. The researcher asked if they had shared their personal experiences and difficulties they are experiencing with their associates? All of them said, “No.” This is vital to Principle #3, Developing Patience in the Process. The model of David is valuable in showing how he remained steadfast in the process while God was developing his character. David continually talks about how he waited patiently on the Lord. Patience is a virtue that must be cultivated in the life of associate ministers.

The most compelling discussion was with Principle #5, Developing Healthy Relationships and Principle #6, Resolving Ministry Conflict. The pastors in the focus study group agreed that they struggle with dealing with conflict, especially with associate ministers. All of the pastors agreed that this generation of associate ministers is seeking promotion without preparation, and it frustrates them tremendously. Some suggested that the advent of social media and the rise in popularity have created a desire for fame and fortune that was not prevalent before in ministry. The biblical model allowed the focus study group to examine David and Saul’s contentious relationship. The researcher asked the group of pastors to reveal if they had a David/Saul or Paul/Timothy relationship with their associate. The survey revealed that 60% said it was somewhere in the middle. David gives some valuable lessons on how to deal with conflict, success, and failure.

Finally, the focus study group examined Principle #7, When Is It Time To Leave. The researcher expressed the concerns of associate ministers having resumes in vacant churches with regularity. Several pastors expressed the level of frustration this presents because it limits their level of trust. Eight of the twelve pastors present in the focus study group revealed they are

currently seeking new positions themselves. This was an eye-opening moment in the study. This suggests that the movement from place to place is not merely an issue with associates. The concern is that leaders in our local churches are operating as NBA free agents rather than God's servants. The model highlights David's catastrophic consequences of being in a place that God did not assign. There is an extreme caution in leaving the assignment prematurely.

After carefully examining the model, the group of pastors revealed they were excited about the possibility of training their associates to serve with passion and purpose. The results inspired them to create an atmosphere where their associates could find fulfillment in serving in their current positions. This researcher desires to continue with workshops to offer this model as a curriculum for further training.

Future Studies

This researcher has concluded that more intense study should be done in the area of associate ministry and subordinate leadership. As the research suggests, there needs to be more material available for associate ministers. Authors such as Mike Bonem, Roger Patterson, Billy Hornsby, and Martin Hawkins have done a tremendous job of giving valuable insight into serving in associate ministry. There is still more research that could be done to enable more associate ministers further to find fulfillment in serving in their current roles.

For future studies, this researcher would like to examine the cultural implications and differences among associate ministers. Is there a greater fulfillment being experienced based on ethnicities and denominations? Time would not allow this researcher to survey and interview other ethnicities and denominations. This research was 100% African American and Baptist denomination. Further research needs to be done to better understand the effects of race, size of the church, tenure of service, and salary when it comes to being fulfilled in serving. In 1996, Dr.

Kevin Lawson, the Louisville Institute, and Biola University provided research for a study of “thriving” in associate staff ministry. They surveyed 414 associate ministers, and 94% responded they were fulfilled in serving in their role as the associate minister. These results were contrary to the outcome of this thesis project. One common factor that this researcher noticed is that only 5% were African American, and 91% were Caucasian.⁷⁰ Because of these opposing outcomes, more research should be conducted to analyze the differences in models and mindsets of the ethnicities. Dr. Lawson’s research did reveal a few common threads that were presented in this model. These include (1) Develop good working relationships with supervisor and fellow associate staff, (2) pursuit of means to nurture personal spiritual vitality and growth, and (3) The ability to savor the joys and weather the storms of ministry.

Finally, an associate ministry network would be beneficial for those serving in this role. This researcher is involved with an association of local pastors that is exclusively for pastors. The concept behind the network is to model the mentality of iron sharpening iron. As pastors, we gather to collaborate on ideas and concepts that are productive in our local congregations. A network among associate ministers would be advantageous in highlighting the value of learning and growing as associates rather than seeking the next position of status. Such a network would aid in bringing an awareness of the need for training and development among associate ministers.

Final Summary

This research has provided insight into the importance of the associate minister position. Associate ministers are valuable to the growth and development of the local congregations. Associate ministers play a vital role in carrying out the vision of the church. Pastors are

⁷⁰ Lawson, *How to Thrive In*, 218.

experiencing extreme burnout because of a lack of aid from those who are called to serve and support. This researcher believes that more emphasis should be placed on transforming the perspective of the position. Associates need to view their position as an opportunity to grow, learn, and develop. This position can no longer be viewed as a “stepping stone” to a more significant position. God has a purpose and plan for one’s ministry, and every minister that has been called is equipped to serve where God has planted them.

A biblical model will aid in understanding God’s idea of preparation and purpose. David was faithful in serving God despite the conflict from his superior. His goal was to please God, the only one who called him into service. David was full of tenacity and desired a hunger to please God through service. These qualities were developed as a young shepherd boy keeping watch over his father’s sheep. This model is consistent with others who have served effectively while in subordinate leadership. Joseph had an impact on others in prison and Potiphar’s house. He did not obtain the highest position, but he had influence. Daniel was elevated because he had a spirit of excellence and a mind to serve God. Elisha served faithfully with Elijah. Aaron and Joshua served in various capacities with Moses. Although they were given distinct assignments, they served effectively at God’s command. Scripture is filled with great leaders who were molded and transformed during the process. Associate ministers must be mindful of the process and not necessarily the position.

Associate ministers need the development that comes from serving with or under another pastor, before transitioning into the leadership of their congregation. The process is valuable for their maturation. This model will provide a tool for training and development of associate ministers as they seek to serve their purpose rather than seek to find higher positions. God is not going to evaluate ministers on their positions but their faithfulness. At the end of our journey, we would love to hear those words from Matthew 25:23, “Well done, good and faithful servant!

You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness.”

Appendix

Appendix A: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

Interview for Associate Minister's Project – Doctor of Ministry Research
Principal Investigator – Marcus Ellison
Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary

You are invited to be in a research study of encouraging associate ministers to serve effectively. You were selected as a possible participant because you have served as an associate minister, or you have associate ministers serving under you. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Marcus L Ellison, M.Div., a Doctor of Ministry student at Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia. The principle investigator can be reached at mlellison@liberty.edu or (318) 828-1473 at any time for questions or concerns.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to provide a biblical model that will encourage and empower associate ministers to remain effective and faithful in serving until God prepares them for their next assignment. So many young ministers become frustrated and fatigued while serving as associates, and they leave the place where God planted them before their assignment is complete. This study will help give them some valuable and vital resources to help them remain effective and efficient until God says move.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I ask you to let me know what day of the week would be good for us to do an interview. The interview will be approximately 30-45 minutes. This interview will be audiotaped for research only. After the interview is completed, that will conclude your participation in this study. The names of individuals and churches will not be used in the thesis project, but only the information and data revealed through the study will be utilized and referenced.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has minimal risks to this interview. The minimal risks associated would be the possibility of the identity of the participant being cross-referenced to the survey results. Safeguards have been put in place to minimize this possibility. At the time of consent, each participant will be given an anonymous identification number that is not associated with the name of the participant or the church. Although there are not any direct benefits to the individual participants, there is a tremendous potential benefit to the body of Christ as a whole. If we can encourage and empower associate ministers to serve effectively, the church can operate more efficiently and help carry out the mandate of the Great Commission. We have too many young pastors who are struggling to serve because they have not gotten the proper training and tutelage needed to serve as Senior pastors.

Compensation:

You will not receive payment or any other type of compensation for your participation.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Each interview will be recorded but will only be used for the purpose of research only. The data will be stored in a safe and password secured location for three years. After this time, the recordings will be erased.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Marcus L. Ellison. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact the researcher at mlellison@liberty.edu or (318) 828-1473. In addition, the mentor of this project is Dr. Robert Gowins, and he can be reached at (615) 972-4505 or ragowins@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

I give the researcher consent to audio-record our interview for purpose of this study:

Signature:

Date:

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

IRB Code Numbers:

IRB Expiration Date:

Appendix B: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

- RQ1 – Name of City and State Where You Serve
- RQ2 – How Long Have You Served In Ministry
- RQ3 – What Is Your Age Range
- RQ4 – What is the Size of Your Church Where You Serve
- RQ5 – Have You Ever Served As Pastor
- RQ6 – What Are Your Job Responsibilities?
- RQ7 – How Often Do You Preach at Your Church?
- RQ8 – Do You Preach At Other Churches? How Often?
- RQ9 – Have You Identified Your Spiritual Gifts?
- RQ10 – What Ministries Are You Involved In At The Church?
- RQ11 – What Are Your Interests Outside of Church?
- RQ12 – Have You Received Any Formal Seminary Training?
If Yes, Any courses on associate ministry or subordinate leadership?
- RQ13 – Would You Describe Yourself As A Patient Person?
- RQ14 – How Would Define Patience?
- RQ15 – How Would You Describe A Successful Ministry?
- RQ16 – What Are Your Most Memorable Accomplishments in Ministry?
- RQ17 – List Your Three Closest Mentors in Ministry? List Their Position and Age Range?
- RQ18 – Rate Your Relationship With Your Pastor?
- RQ19 – Rate Your Relationship With Other Staff Members?
- RQ20 – Have You Experienced Conflict In Ministry?
- RQ21 – Do You Have A Desire To Pastor?
- RQ22 – Have You Presented A Resume? Have You Interviewed? What Position?
- RQ23 – Do Find Fulfillment In Serving As An Associate Minister?

Appendix C: INTERVIEW RESULTS

Principle #1	Faithful Over the Simple Assignment	Response
Question #1 Participant #4	You served as Pastor and Now serve as an associate, are you seeking another opportunity to serve as pastor? <i>Follow-up: Is that why you are not finding fulfillment?</i>	Yes, Difficult to serve under someone, when you are accustomed to being the leader. Yes, that is the primary reason.
Question #2 Participant #1	I noticed that you preached at least 2 Sundays a month at other churches, but only preach at your church 4 times a year.... would you like more preaching opportunities at your church? <i>Follow-up: Is that why you are not finding fulfillment?</i>	Not really.... I just want to exercise my gift... If it is not at my church, I have enough friends to preach somewhere... Yes, that is part of the problem.
Question #3 Participant #14	You were one of 45 associates whose responsibility is to do whatever the pastor asks you to do? Is that frustrating not having a job responsibility? <i>Follow-up: Have you ever crossed the line?</i>	Yes, some weeks, we don't know what we supposed to be doing, so we just help out with the youth or some other ministry. Yes, it caused significant division when I did something that the pastor said was his job! Caused major conflict.
Question #4 Participant #2 Participant #19 {Same church}	You were one of the twenty-nine associates who have a specific job responsibility. Are you evaluated? <i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are fulfilled in your role as an associate minister?</i>	Yes, we are evaluated quarterly, so see if we are completing our tasks. This is one of the methods used to give preaching assignments.
Question #5 Participant #6	I noticed that you only preach 2 times a year at your church and don't preach at other churches either; do you have a burning desire to preach? <i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are fulfilled in your role as an associate minister?</i>	No, I love teaching Sunday School and singing in the choir. I just love my church, and when I am needed to preach, I am available. Yes
Question #6 Participant #12	If you don't have job responsibilities, how do you know you are productive in your service? <i>Follow-Up: I noticed that you preach every month; Is that why you are fulfilled in your role as an associate minister?</i>	We have a small church, so I just help out wherever I am needed. Pastor travels a lot with revivals, so there is always something to do.

Table 11

Principle #2	The Development Of Your Gift	Response
<p>Question #7 Participant #11</p>	<p>You identified teaching as your spiritual gift, but you do not teach Sunday School or work with Christian Education? Why?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are not fulfilled at your church?</i></p>	<p>We have older teachers that have been teaching for years, and Pastor does not desire to remove them. I asked to start my own class, but he did not approve.</p> <p>Yes, that is part of the reason.</p>
<p>Question #8 Participant #16</p>	<p>You were one of three who identified athletics as the ministry that you serve. You also identified sports as your outside interest. Is this coincidental?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are fulfilled in your role as an associate minister?</i></p>	<p>No, I love sports. I am a former basketball player, and I noticed that our church did not have an athletics ministry, so I asked the pastor to start one. He approved and made a ministry of it?</p> <p>Yes, I find joy in doing it!</p>
<p>Question #9 Participant #18</p>	<p>I noticed that you had received formal seminary training, what level of training? Why didn't you take any courses on being/becoming an associate minister?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Do you think that course should be offered at seminaries?</i></p>	<p>I have a DMin; I have never taken any courses dealing with associate ministry. There has not been any offered at the 4 seminaries I have attended.</p> <p>Yes, it is necessary.</p>
<p>Question #10 Participant #3</p>	<p>Any reason you have not pursued any formal seminary training? Has your pastor/church offered to send you for training?</p> <p><i>Follow-up: What are you doing to sharpen your tools?</i></p>	<p>I have a desire to attend seminary, but it is not in our budget. Our pastor does not have any training, so he does not include that as part of the budget.</p> <p>Nothing really, just show up and see what happens.</p>
<p>Question #11 Participant #8</p>	<p>You indicated that you have the gift of administration; do you work in the church office? Why not?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are not fulfilled in ministry?</i></p>	<p>The Pastor has family in administration. I am a CPA for a major firm, but not being used at my church.</p> <p>Yes, that is part of the reason, but so much more.</p>

Table 12

Principle #3	Developing Patience In The Process	Response
<p>Question #12 Participant #15</p>	<p>I noticed that you are not a patient person. You also have a desire to pastor. You also said you have presented a resume and interviewed at a few churches. Do you think God is developing your patience?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are not fulfilled in your role as an associate minister?</i></p>	<p>Not sure; I have a burning desire to pastor, and I don't feel like I am being utilized in this church. I know God is in control, but it is frustrating.</p> <p>Yes, I am not happy serving in this position. I want more.</p>
<p>Question #13 Participant #20</p>	<p>I noticed that you are not a patient person. You also have a desire to pastor. You also said you have presented a resume and interviewed at a few churches. Do you think God is developing your patience?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are not fulfilled in your role as an associate minister?</i></p>	<p>Yes, I know that God is testing my patience, but I also know that he does not want me to sit here and be idle. An idle mind is the devil's workshop.</p> <p>No, that is not why? I would be fulfilled in another church.</p>
<p>Question #14 Participant #5</p>	<p>I notice that you described yourself as a patient person; do you think that helps you as an associate minister who desires to pastor?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are fulfilled in your role as an associate minister?</i></p>	<p>Yes, I know that God has a plan and a purpose for my life. I do not chase after opportunities; I realize that my gift will open doors for me; therefore, I will wait on God. I am still young, and I have plenty of time to pastor one day. Yes, that is why I love my role.</p>
<p>Question #15 Participant #13</p>	<p>I notice that you described yourself as a patient person; do you think that helps you as an associate minister who desires to pastor?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are fulfilled in your role as an associate minister?</i></p>	<p>My pastor meets with us every 4th Saturday. He opens up the meeting by reading from Proverbs 37:7. He instills in all of us that patience is a virtue.</p> <p>Yes, I am fulfilled.</p>

Table 13

Principle #4	How To Handle Early Success	Response
<p>Question #16 Participant #7</p>	<p>You described success in ministry as growing the church? Are you referring to numerical growth, spiritual growth, or financial growth?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Who gets the credit for the numerical growth?</i></p>	<p>You can only measure growth by the number of people. When we evangelize in the community, we celebrate when people join.</p> <p>I am the evangelism director, so the pastor usually recognizes my team when we have a good month.</p>
<p>Question #17 Participant #1</p>	<p>You described success in ministry as growing the church? Are you referring to numerical growth, spiritual growth, or financial growth?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Who gets the credit for the numerical growth?</i></p>	<p>Yes, when the church is packed, that is a sign that we are doing something right. I know that it is not all about numbers, but that is how we measure success. The church gets the credit not one person</p>
<p>Question #18 Participant #10</p>	<p>You described your most memorable moment as when you preached for a noted pastor in Texas. Why was the moment so memorable?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: I noticed that you preach at other churches more than your church; does that frustrate you?</i></p>	<p>That is my homiletical hero. I watch him all the time on YouTube. Just having the opportunity to preach for him was huge for me. I get preaching opportunities everywhere; I am not hurting to preach. My father was popular in the late 1990s, so many pastors know my family.</p>
<p>Question #19 Participant #17</p>	<p>You described your most memorable moment as when you preached your first sermon; how often have you preached since.</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are not fulfilled in your role as an associate minister?</i></p>	<p>Twice, I don't preach too often. I have only been preaching for two years. My pastor does not believe in letting young preachers preach. He often says he waited for two years to preach his second sermon.</p> <p>No, I work full-time, and my desire is to be in ministry full-time, not about preaching.</p>

Table 14

Principle #5	Developing Healthy Relationships	Response
<p>Question #20 Participant #9</p>	<p>What makes this Pastor your mentor? How has he impacted your ministry? How often do you talk to him?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: There is not a pastor in your area that you look upon as a mentor?</i></p>	<p>I watch him every day on YouTube. I love how he handles the Word of God. He has a large church, and I have read all his books on preaching. I have never talked to him or met him. Not really, I don't have to meet him to learn from him.</p>
<p>Question #21 Participant #1</p>	<p>What makes this Pastor your mentor? How has he impacted your ministry? How often do you talk to him?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: How does your pastor feel about you preaching for him so frequently.</i></p>	<p>He gives me an opportunity to preach at his church. He knows that my pastor does not allow me to preach, so he opens his door for me to exercise my gift.</p> <p>They don't get along that well. My pastor feels I need to be at my church every Sunday. I don't agree</p>
<p>Question #22 Participant #12</p>	<p>What makes this Pastor your mentor? How has he impacted your ministry? How often do you talk to him?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: I notice that he is older; do you think that makes a difference?</i></p>	<p>He helps me with my studies and discipline; he holds me accountable. He provided my family with a place to stay when we were displaced by the hurricane. I love him, dearly. We talk almost every day. Yes, he has experience and wisdom that he can share with me.</p>
<p>Question #23 Participant #2 Participant #19 Participant #5 {Same Church}</p>	<p>What makes this Pastor your mentor? How has he impacted your ministry? How often do you talk to him?</p>	<p>He is my pastor. I learn from him daily. He gives us opportunities to serve at our church, so we don't have to go out and pursue opportunities. We meet weekly with our staff of associate ministers.</p>
<p>Question #24 Participant #6</p>	<p>I noticed that you have a mentor that is not a pastor. Describe the relationship?</p>	<p>We are at the same church, and he mentors me on how to prepare daily. He is older than I am, so I learn from his wisdom.</p>

Table 15

Principle #6	Resolving Ministry Conflict	Response
Question #26 Participant #2	<p>What makes your relationship with your Pastor great?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is this why you have served in this church for so long without presenting a resume at another church?</i></p>	<p>My pastor takes the time to invest in our ministry. He gives us every opportunity to grow and develop outside of the preaching moment. He gives us tasks to complete to earn our preaching privileges. Yes, I love it here.</p>
Question #27 Participant #15	<p>Why do you only have a working relationship with your pastor?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Have you had a conversation about your frustration with him?</i></p>	<p>We don't see ministry from the same lens. He only allows us to preach 2 or 3 times a year. We don't have any responsibilities. He brings in other pastors to preach all the time. No, it will not do any good.</p>
Question #28 Participant #1	<p>Can you highlight the experience that caused you not to have a relationship with your pastor?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is that why you are not feeling fulfillment in ministry?</i></p>	<p>Yes, when I preach, people respond to my preaching. He always criticizes the people. I love the people, and he feels upset because of the response. Now he does not allow me to preach. Yes...</p>
Question #29 Participant #14	<p>Can you highlight the experience that caused you not to have a relationship with your pastor?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Have you had a conversation about the conflict?</i></p>	<p>I was asked to lead the youth ministry. I began children's worship. It grew tremendously. I started getting invited to Youth programs and took the youth with me. This made the pastor furious. I did not intend to cause division. No, probably too late.</p>
Question #30 Participant #18	<p>You stated that you don't have a good relationship with other staff members; please explain.</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Is your pastor aware of the dissention?</i></p>	<p>My pastor trusts me to lead services and preach when he is out of town. The other associate ministers don't like the favor I receive. Yes, he is aware.</p>

Table 16

Principle #7	Knowing When to Leave	Response
Question #32 Participant #4	<p>What happened when you tried to exit your assignment?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Are you paid staff? Why was he so upset?</i></p>	<p>It caused dissension between my pastor and me. He said I should have informed him that I wanted to leave. Yes, I am the executive pastor. The church is in the same neighborhood.</p>
Question #33 Participant #2	<p>What happened when you tried to exit your assignment?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Has it changed your perspective?</i></p>	<p>I was elected as Pastor. It lasted for two years. I was not prepared for this challenge. The people were stubborn and disrespectful. I was not ready. Yes, I have a greater appreciation for my pastor.</p>
Question #34 Participant #7	<p>What happened when you tried to exit your assignment?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Did you pray before leaving?</i></p>	<p>It did not work out well. I left my home church and joined another church because it was vacant. They selected another pastor who did not allow any other ministers in the pulpit. I should have stayed where I was. No, I did not pray.</p>
Question #35 Participant #12	<p>What happened when you tried to exit your assignment?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Did you pray before leaving?</i></p>	<p>It nearly destroyed my family. We moved to another state to a large church. My wife resigned from a great job to follow me. It did not work out.</p> <p>Yes, but my flesh said go.</p>
Question #36 Participant #19	<p>What happened when you tried to exit your assignment?</p> <p><i>Follow-Up: Did you pray before leaving?</i></p>	<p>It worked out well. I am an associate at this church. The pastor treats us with dignity and respect. I am not a pastor, but I am a full-time staff. Yes, God showed me this assignment and talked with my former pastor and received his blessing.</p>

Table 17

Thesis Question	Have You Found Fulfillment	Response
Participant #1	No	I have a desire to preach but lack opportunities at this church
Participant #2	Yes	We have a great staff; a team
Participant #3	No	No structure; just show up and see what happens weekly
Participant #4	No	Served as pastor before; seeking another opportunity to lead again
Participant #5	Yes	A pastor who desires to see us grow
Participant #6	Yes	I have opportunities to teach the Word on a weekly basis
Participant #7	Yes	I enjoy evangelism and growing the church
Participant #8	No	Not able to operate in my gift of administration
Participant #9	Yes	I preach at other places and just fill in here when needed
Participant #10	Yes	I love the people here
Participant #11	No	Not utilizing according to my gift to teach/preach
Participant #12	Yes	Smaller church with great opportunities to serve the people
Participant #13	Yes	Great Pastor and Staff
Participant #14	No	Conflict and Dissention makes it almost unbearable
Participant #15	No	Ready to move on to the next level; nothing left to do here
Participant #16	Yes	Love the Athletics Ministry
Participant #17	No	Work Schedule makes it a chore to serve effectively
Participant #18	Yes	Enjoy learning and growing
Participant #19	Yes	The staff is amazing
Participant #20	No	Constant Conflict

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